

306 words, column #16
Java Talk
(for August 9, 2007 to August 15, 2007)

Every Age Is The Best Age

When Nobody Said No

The Canadian Authors Association (CAA), the first and oldest national professional writers' organization in Canada, is now 86 years old. Branch groups still continue across the country.

On June 22, 1991, when I joined the CAA Victoria & Islands Branch, and naively offered to fill the unexpectedly vacated treasurer's chair, (a position I held for seven years), June Cable, who had just moved to Victoria from Cortez Island, accepted the role as the Branch's president. Three years later, June proposed to the Branch that we host the 1995 CAA Annual National Conference—a significant two-year project. Although many in the group were exceedingly long-time members, in their eighties and nineties, no one said no, so we accepted the challenge. The Conference was a great success, and those of us who were part of it now share a proud place in the CAA's remarkable history, much of which is archived at the University of Victoria.

Also during all the years, members often performed in skits written and directed by Walt McConville, and sang his songs at many CAA events, even across the country. Walt, the Master of Ceremonies at all our superb events, was June's mentor during those early years, as well as the archivist for the Branch. Immediately after the 1995 National Conference, June officially became my mentor. She referred to all of us as her writing family.

Sometimes family members can go for a long time without seeing each other. Sometimes they come together because someone dies. Writing families, however, also come together when there is a book to launch. This week, Walt McConville, active member of the CAA, who will be 93 in November, will be entertaining his friends and family, while hosting the launch of his latest book, *Meaningful Melodies*, out in Brentwood Bay. It is where I want to be. Congratulations, Walt!

Deidre Hill