



THE WRITERS'
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THE WRITERS' UNION OF CANADA VOTES TO ADMIT SELF-PUBLISHED AUTHORS

Referendum on Membership Criteria to be Held

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ottawa, June 1, 2013 – In a unanimous vote, members of The Writers' Union of Canada (TWUC) attending their 40th Anniversary annual general meeting today approved a resolution opening membership in the Union to professional, self-published authors. The resolution will be presented to the entire TWUC membership (over 2000 Canadian book authors) in a referendum and will come into force with a two-thirds majority.

"This is a landmark decision," said a delighted Marilyn Simonds, Chair of TWUC, "one that addresses our sincere desire for inclusion and innovation, while maintaining our tradition of defining and upholding professional standards for writers in Canada."

The resolution allows for self-published books as professional credit toward membership, as long as three important criteria are met. Self-published books presented by authors applying to join the Union must contain an International Standard Book Number (ISBN), must demonstrate commercial intent, and must be peer reviewed before being forwarded to the membership committee of the Union for approval based on existing criteria.

During a long and detailed afternoon of discussion, TWUC members spoke both to the importance of recognizing shifting realities in the world of professional writing and publishing, and of protecting the standards of professionalism for authorship.

"In an increasingly fractured literary landscape, others in our sector are looking to TWUC to define what it means to be a professional book author," Simonds continues. "If this resolution is approved by the general membership, we hope that granting agencies, festivals, residencies and other support programs for writers will follow TWUC's lead and expand their own definitions to welcome what is becoming an increasingly important practice among professional writers."

The Writers' Union of Canada held its inaugural AGM in Ottawa in 1973, with such iconic Canadian writers as Margaret Laurence, Marian Engel and Graeme Gibson as founding members. Interestingly, Mr. Gibson was present for today's discussion and was the enthusiastic seconder of the self-publishing resolution, moved by Ottawa writer, Eric Enno Tam.

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The Writers' Union of Canada is our country's national organization representing more than 2,000 professional authors of books. Celebrating 40 years in 2013, the Union is dedicated to fostering writing in Canada, and promoting the rights, freedoms, and economic well-being of all writers. www.writersunion.ca

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