



# 1ST ANNUAL INSPIRING

# Thinkers' Conference

## Agenda for April 28th:

8:45 - 9:00

Greetings from the board

9:00 - 10:00

Keynote: Joseph Boyden – TH325

10:00 - 10:15

Nutrition break and transition to second session

10:15 - 11:15

Students to attend one workshop:

Grant Lafleche-TH257

Richard Scrimger-TH255

Antanas Sileika-TH256

Gord Deppe-TH258

Diana Zlomislic-TH259

1:15 - 11:25

Transition to third session

11:25 - 12:25

Students to attend one workshop:

Joseph Boyden-TH257

Richard Scrimger-TH255

Antanas Sileika-TH256

Gord Deppe-TH258

Diana Zlomislic-TH259

12:25 - 1:30

Lunch and reflection for students and teachers  
Holy Cross, Saint Francis and Blessed Trinity-TH325

Lakeshore Catholic-TH255

Notre Dame College -TH256

Saint Paul -TH258

Saint Michael -TH259

Denis Morris -TH257

1:00 - 1:30

Teacher question and answer session with  
Joseph Boyden - TH254

1:30

Dismissal of students and return back to school



Connecting students' talents to **real-world opportunities**



# Joseph Boyden

## Biography

Joseph Boyden is a novelist and short-story writer from Toronto. Joseph Boyden is of Irish, Scots, and Métis descent and the son of a highly decorated medical officer of World War II (Raymond Wilfrid Boyden). Joseph became widely known in Canada following the publication of his debut novel *Three Day Road* in 2005, which won numerous awards and was nominated for a Governor General's Award. His second novel, *Through Black Spruce*, won the 2008 Scotiabank Giller Prize, and his third book, *The Orenda*, was named the winner of the 2014 edition of Canada

Reads. Joseph's work focuses on the historical and contemporary experience of First Nations peoples of northern Ontario.

## Keynote

"The Writing Life: How Finding Your Story Might Change the World"

Joseph will talk about how he became a writer and how that journey opened his eyes to realizing he needed to help youth facing crises, including suicide and mental health issues. He will talk about how he fights the stigmas attached to mental health issues by speaking

publicly about facing down his own depression. Joseph's talk will lead us through his personal journey and end on a strongly redemptive note.

## Workshop

Joseph will present workshop-goers with a rules of the road for new fiction writers titled "Notes on Our Communal Tools: Learning the Rules of Fiction" and allow students time to practice some writing of their own.



# Gord Deppe

## Biography

As singer, guitar player and songwriter for the Canadian new wave band *Spoons*, Gord Deppe has been in the music business for over 30 years. Born in Vancouver, B.C., his family moved back and forth between Canada and Germany several times before finally settling in Burlington, Ontario. There, in 1980, fresh out of high school, Gord, Sandy Horne, Rob Preuss and Derrick Ross would go on to make Spoons a different kind of household word. The young band would also catch the wave of a brand new video-driven phenomenon that was about to hit TV screens nationwide. The video for

their hit *Nova Heart* would be aired on the very first broadcast of MuchMusic. *Romantic Traffic*, shot in the subways of Toronto, remains as one of the most iconic Canadian music videos of all time. Gord's autobiography *SpoonFed*, his first published book, tells the story of his life and the Spoons and how the two still intertwine today.

## Workshop

"Writing as Psychotherapy"

Coming to Canada as a grade-schooler not speaking a word of English Gord soon found refuge in his imagination. Whether writing stories

in school that quickly got him noticed to becoming a songwriter, he learned very early on that being different and true to your ideas, no matter how strange, is paramount to making your little mark on the world. This lack of concern for "normal" in his writing, especially in music, led him down a very different path in life. Gord believes that writing has to reveal a piece of yourself, no matter how flawed or strange. Writing should be more psychotherapy than documentary!

Open yourself up, put your pen on the page and don't hold back!

# Antanas Sileika



## Biography

Antanas published his first novel, *Dinner at the End of the World* in 1994. It is a speculative story set in the aftermath of global warming. His second book, a collection of linked short stories, *Buying On Time* (1997) was nominated for both the City of Toronto Book Award and the Stephen Leacock Award for Humour, and was serialized on CBC Radio's *Between the Covers*. His latest

novel, *Underground*, was released by Thomas Allen & Son in early 2011. The novel is a love story set in the underground resistance to the Soviet Union in the late 1940s.

## Workshop

“From Fact to Fiction - How to transform everyday events into stories”

Antanas will give students creative license to transform what they may see as ordinary into something engaging to readers. Students will leave with a sense of how seeing things differently is an important component of crafting incredible



# Diana Zlomislic

## Biography

Diana Zlomislic is a journalist at the Toronto Star, where she has worked since 2002 as a reporter and editor. In 2012, the Port Colborne native travelled to West Africa for three months with Journalists for Human Rights, helping reporters in Liberia expose government and corporate corruption.

## Workshop

“Instajournalism”

Diana will talk to students about how to use social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook to tell powerful, true stories and build a sharp portfolio.

# Richard Scrimger



## Biography

Richard Scrimger has been writing professionally since 1996. He has published books for adults and children, and written for television and print media. His children's fiction is acclaimed in Canada and the US and translated into a dozen languages. *Zomboy* is just out. It's a creepy and funny story about friendship and school bussing – oh, and zombies. *Viminy Crowe's Comic Book* was released in 2014. It is an out-of-this-world comedy with a wacky plot that even Richard doesn't really understand. These two books are his latest efforts, and there's more forthcoming! When he's not writing or drinking coffee or driving his children around, Richard teaches at Humber College

in Toronto. Visit him at [www.scrimger.ca](http://www.scrimger.ca) and find out about all the projects he's juggling right now.

## WORKSHOP

"The Need for Story"

We each have a story to tell, and this workshop will be around bringing out the story within us. Stories are lies, of course, but they are lies that reveal truth. And, as Richard will show, they are lies that begin with truth. In telling stories, we are looking deeply into our lives, examining why we act the way we do, and who we are and what we should be doing about it. These are the questions underlying all moral teaching.

Adding your story to the total stories in the world, counting yourself in, is a necessary step towards inner peace, good citizenship, and tolerant community.

This workshop will be entertaining and interactive. Concrete examples from real life to model techniques of story building will be used. Role play and question-answer techniques will also be explored.



# Grant LaFleche

## Biography

Grant LaFleche is an award winning journalist and columnist with the St. Catharines Standard. He has been nominated for 18 Ontario Newspaper Awards (including two this year) and two National Newspaper Awards, the biggest professional prize for journalists in Canada. He has won awards for his writing on organized crime, politics, health care and boxing. He has appeared on the History Channel's documentary TV program "Outlaw

Bikers" because of his more than a decade of coverage of the Hells Angels and outlaw biker gangs in Ontario.

## Workshop

"How to arm yourself as a writer"

Thanks to the dawn of social media, everyone writes all the time. On Twitter, on Facebook, on Blogs. But most people have not armed themselves with the tools of the craft. Writing is more than words on

a page. It is no different than painting a masterpiece or sculpting a statue. There are tools, skills and methods by which the writer can reach out and communicate to his or her readers. Grant LaFleche will discuss what some of those tools are and how they can be effectively used. In particular, he will talk about literary journalism and narrative writing, dos and don'ts, and how to arm yourself as a writer to make your work stand out.

