



Ms. Cynthia Brouse

June 19, 2010

1957 - 2010

Canadian magazine readers who value the beauty and strength of accurate facts, immaculate punctuation and elegant, precise prose have lost a best friend. Cynthia Brouse, the country's finest fact-checker, copy editor and teacher of those same skills died on June 19, 2010 at age 52.

For 30 years, Cynthia's diligent and spirited behind-the-scenes labour has burnished articles and news features in all of Canada's top-rung publications. She worked as a copy editor, researcher and writer for Maclean's, Chatelaine, Toronto Life and Saturday Night (where she was also managing editor for two years), Report on Business Magazine, Canadian Business, and the Globe and Mail. A natural teacher, she trained scores of current magazine editorial staff in the best procedures for fact-checking contentious quotes, assessing the credibility of sources and avoiding lawsuits they could ill afford. Her book, *After the Fact, A Guide to Fact-Checking for Magazines and Other Media*, is the go-to manual for both magazine interns and corporate communicators nationally. In 2009, she received the National Magazine Awards' most prestigious individual honour, its Foundation Award for Outstanding Achievement. She was the longtime co-ordinator of the Magazine Publishing Certificate Program in Ryerson University's G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, and for five years a member of the communications

faculty at Toronto's George Brown College. Although her ability to save the world from misplaced modifiers was prodigious, she strived to never make any writer feel diminished. She approached her calling with the same counsel she gave every new fact-checker: "Don't be snooty. If they didn't make mistakes, you wouldn't have a job."

In addition to excelling as an editor, researcher and instructor, Cynthia was also an accomplished writer of creative non-fiction and personal journalism. Her painstakingly well-researched pieces earned her two National Magazine Awards. The blog entries she wrote after her breast cancer reoccurred in late 2008 were so rich with frank, funny and jargon-free details about being a seriously ill patient that both intimate friends and complete strangers admitted to her, with no small bewilderment, that they "enjoyed" the read.

Just as she always had your back if you were a freelance writer without the time or ability to hand in pristine copy, Cynthia was a stalwart friend and often the connecting thread between unlike communities in her wide and diverse circle of acquaintances. She publicly supported gay rights before many of her contemporaries understood how important it was for straight people to do so. She startled many a hip Torontonians with her rhapsodies on the glories of Alberta, and Edmonton in particular.

She had a lovely singing voice and adored John Lennon and Max Webster, punk rock, and folk music, symphonic and popular choirs in equal measures. Although she never achieved her desire to become a mother, she was a cherished friend and guide to her nephews and niece, and a vibrant, much-admired significant other to her friends' offspring.

A native of Massey, Ont., Cynthia was a small-town girl deeply enamoured of northern Ontario and rural Canada. But she was also a booster of micro communities in the city, such as she found and enriched during her 14 years

as a resident of Toronto's Little India district. A recording of Cynthia describing one of her 'hood's favourite retail sections can still be heard if you press a button on a certain north-side corner of Gerrard Street.

She leaves her parents, Jean and Terry Brouse, her siblings Mark, Paul and Lori, their spouses Susan Fullerton, Mirella Diodati and Robert Brazeau, and her beloved nephews and niece, Terence and Nicholas Brouse, Hannah and William Lamoureux, plus scores of dear friends and hundreds of colleagues. All of them will miss her chatty postcards, book recommendations and great meals, her incisive observations and uncensored anecdotes, her gifts of tolerance and kindness, and her vast capacity to love us all.

A private family service and interment will take place in Massey, Ontario. As well, a memorial service will be held in Toronto for family and friends in September.

Donations in Cynthia's name should go to the building fund of the Massey Area Museum, 160 Sable St., Massey, Ont., POP 1PO.

www.masseysareamuseum.com

Tribute Wall



“ I just learned of Cynthia's death today when I google searched her name. I took an evening copy editing course from Cynthia in the 90s and it was one of the best investments I have ever made. Today, just wanting to understand if I was using "rubric" appropriately and without a definitive source, the Oxford Canadian seeming somewhat unsatisfying, I thought of her as I have on so many occasions. She made an incredible impression on me and my work. I followed her career at a distance and cheered when her odd obsession with Paul Gross became a cover story. I never wrote her to tell her this, though her voice, tips and tricks continue to support my work. I just wanted you to know there are probably thousands of writers out there like me who if they knew would be grieving like me. I am so sorry for your loss.##imported-begin##Christine Campbell##imported-end##

October 25, 2010 at 02:26 PM



“ Dear Hilary:

Thank you so much for your kind words re Cynthia. I remember her mentioning you through the years. Her service was lovely and nice to see so many there. I will send you a program and picture.

All the best

Jean [her mom]##imported-begin##Jean Brouse##imported-end##

September 15, 2010 at 10:21 PM



“ I'm sorry I'm not to be able to attend the memorial service for Cynthia this Saturday but my thoughts are with all her family and friends who attend, especially those whom I knew when I lived in Toronto and attended Ryerson, RTA course in the 70s. I kept in touch with Cynthia for many years following my return to the UK in 1980. She herself came to London to live for some months in the early 80s. I last saw her in 1987 when I visited Toronto and have a picture up in my bedroom of her and other RTA classmates at the reunion gathering she gave for me at her apartment.

In recent years, I have read her blog and other articles on line to keep in touch from over here. I'm glad to have fond memories of her and am very sad that I won't see her again.##imported-begin##Hilary Gould##imported-end##

September 09, 2010 at 10:08 AM



“ Hi Marlene:

Thank you for your kind words. I am thinking of your family as you are all going through the difficult time too. It was so nice having conversations with you at St. Mikes and I will always remember that. The care there was wonderful. We are having a memorial service for Cynthia on Sept 11 at 1:00 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Norway Anglican church at 470 Woodbine at Kingston Rd. it is a large church so all are welcome.

best & take care

Jean##imported-begin##Jean Brouse##imported-end##

August 25, 2010 at 12:09 AM



“ I worked with Cynthia at Toronto Life. What I loved most about her was her absolute "present-ness." When she was speaking to you, she was with you totally, giving you her full and undivided attention – no matter what was going on in her life, no matter what she might have been struggling with. Her focus on you was like a lovely laser beam, warm and flattering and reassuring.

Such generosity of spirit!

Another "g" word – genuine – sums her up in a word. A genuine talent, a genuine friend, a genuine helper.

The world is a poorer place sans Cynthia Brouse.##imported-begin##Michael Totzke##imported-end##

June 24, 2010 at 11:49 AM



“ To Jean and family: I met you for a few days at St. Michael's Palliative Care and admired your love strength and compassion. May our family have the same strength when our time comes. The family of David Trace room accross the hall from your dear Cynthia.

WHAT A GREAT LADY SHE WAS##imported-begin##Marlene Trace##imported-end##

June 24, 2010 at 08:19 AM



“ I only knew Cynthia through her blog, which was wonderful. I feel like I missed something, but I'm so glad for all that I learned through her writing.##imported-begin##Renee##imported-end##

June 23, 2010 at 11:13 PM



“ Cynthia was a colleague off and on over some years. I didn't know her well, but well enough to recognize (and benefit from) her generosity and openness - such wonderful and rare traits.##imported-begin##Mary Newberry##imported-end##

June 23, 2010 at 10:55 AM



“ Cynthia always came to my Linguistics courses with personal mysteries that needed solving. In sociolinguistics, she made a study of blog-writing as a genre, way ahead of its time. In Canadian English, she figured out why her grandparents from Massey always said, among other interesting things, "bop" for 'Bob' and "doc" for 'dog'. Cynthia was street-smart and grammar-savvy. She was a student who taught me a lot.##imported-begin##Jack Chambers##imported-end##

June 23, 2010 at 09:00 AM