

FAREWELL TO INKSHED on CASLL-L, April 10, 2017

1. **Message posted to CASLL-L listserv, 10:57am on April 10, 2017, by Brock MacDonald (wb.macdonald@UTORONTO.CA), with the subject line "Farewell to Inkshed":**

Hi, all.

(I'm sending this message to both the CASLL and CASDW lists, in the hope of reaching all former Inkshedders. Apologies for duplications!)

The announcement Roger Graves recently sent out re the latest book from Inkshed Publications makes this a timely message . . .

This is the second year in a row without an Inkshed conference. None of our efforts to reboot and reinvigorate the conference in the years 2012 through 2015, though sometimes moderately successful as one-off meetings, have generated the collective commitment needed to truly revive Inkshed and keep it going. Taking stock of this situation, the CASLL Board of Directors has decided that it's finally time to face the music and accept that Inkshed and its parent association aren't coming back. (Re the association, it effectively no longer exists: for several years now there have been no paid-up members apart from some of us on the Board and Margaret Procter, who manages the Inkshed/CASLL website.)

No doubt there are a number of reasons for this situation: one is the growth of CWCA in recent years, based on its great success in bringing together the Canadian Writing Centre community; another is the way that CASDW has become a big tent association for Canadian writing studies and writing pedagogy in general since its metamorphosis from CATTW. Most pertinent of all may be the fact that a great many (almost all?) of Inkshed's founding generation of members have retired in recent years: the core of the community that once sustained the conference and its parent association just isn't there any more.

I'm sure many of us will feel some sadness about this, remembering how significant Inkshed has been in our professional lives. However, although the Board has decided that it's time to shut CASLL down, this isn't an absolute ending. The Board proposes to transfer the remaining funds in the CASLL bank account, roughly \$7000.00, to Inkshed Publications. Unlike the Inkshed conference, Inkshed publications is very much alive: besides the recently published *Cross-Border Networks in Writing Studies*, it has two more books coming out in the near future, following which it will still have sufficient funds to produce perhaps one more. The infusion of the funds from CASLL will make possible up to four more books over the next few years, following which new funding will be needed, perhaps from CASDW and CWCA. According to its Constitution, the purpose of CASLL is "to provide a forum and common context for discussion, collaboration, and reflective inquiry in discourse and pedagogy in the areas of writing, reading (including the reading of literature), rhetoric, and language." We on the CASLL Board feel that devoting the association's remaining funds to supporting Inkshed Publications, the one and only

Canadian imprint devoted to work in our field, is the best way to ensure that CASLL's dissolution is in keeping with its fundamental purpose.

Regarding the association's online presence: it's currently (and rather awkwardly) in two cyber-places, the Inkshed newsletter/blog site that Margaret maintains (<http://www.inkshed.ca/blog/>) and the older Inkshed site (<http://inkshed.ca/>), now essentially an archive of material from the association's earlier years. Ideally all the association's records should be brought together on one site, either under the aegis of CASDW or as part of an independent Inkshed Publications site (which would be effectively a repurposed version of the Inkshed newsletter site, where Inkshed Publications currently has its online presence). The key thing is that the association's archive needs to be maintained by an active organization to ensure its long-term viability. This will be on the agenda for discussion at the CASDW AGM at Congress. As for the CASLL list serve, once the association has been dissolved it would be shut down.

I should say something regarding the constitutional aspects of dissolving CASLL. The one explicit mention of dissolution procedures in the CASLL constitution is a clause that says "In case of dissolution of the association, the profits and liabilities of the association will be shared equally among all of the paid-up current voting members." The Board's plan to transfer the association's remaining funds to Inkshed Publications is in effect an agreement among the paid-up current voting members to use their "shares" that way, rather than simply cashing out (!!).

As for the decision to dissolve the association, while there is no specified procedure for this, the constitution does say that "The Board of Directors of the association shall have the responsibility of carrying out the management of the association. This responsibility should be carried out with the knowledge and cooperation of the membership." In our view, in the absence of any specific clause re dissolution, it clearly comes under "management of the association." As for "the knowledge and cooperation of the membership," as I've already mentioned, at present the membership is effectively non-existent, leaving the Board on its own. However, in keeping with the spirit of the constitution, the Board agreed that this notice should be sent out: we hope it will reach all former CASLL members and prompt some discussion, from which we further hope will emerge general agreement in support of the decision we've taken.

If there is strong opposition to the Board's decision, those opposed would need to take a number of steps to give their opposition effect, starting with paying fees in order to become current CASLL members and thus be entitled to vote on the Board's plan. If a sudden flood of membership payments materializes, obviously we'll have to think again! However, we sincerely hope that this will not happen — that everyone will agree that it's best to bid CASLL and Inkshed a fond farewell and let them rest in peace.

Best wishes,
Brock

On behalf of the CASLL Board of Directors (membership as of 2016, when we met and made this decision): Clare Bermingham, Kim Garwood, J. Barbara Rose, and Dena Taylor

W. Brock MacDonald

RESPONSES ON THE CASLL-L LISTERV, APRIL 10-12, 2017:

1. Ginny Ryan, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Oh, dear.

I for one, while remembering with gratitude the unique intellectual stimulation and camaraderie of the Inkshed/CASLL community, sadly but respectfully bid the entity that fond farewell and the wish that it rest in peace.

With wonderful memories,
Ginny Ryan

2. Kathryn Alexander, SFU:

Dear Brock, Roger, CASLL Board and all the members

Thank you for the amazing learning and experiences that this organization provided to a fledgling academic and writer, teacher and adult learner. I have so many great memories and inspiring moments from the conferences and the newsletter. It is hard to let go but it is fitting that there will be a gift back to the community with the dissolution the organization.

Thank you

Kathryn

3. Anthony Paré, UBC:

As a participant at the first Inkshed conference, a regular attendee for 13 years in a row, an Inkshed conference organizer (twice), an early *Inkshed Newsletter* editor, and a frequent newsletter contributor, this news makes me feel sad and nostalgic. The community was absolutely central to my development as a teacher and researcher. And, most importantly, as a human being; no other scholarly collective in my experience was so welcoming of me as a whole person.

But I do reluctantly support the Board's decision. I think Brock is right on in his analysis; all things must pass.

Thanks to Brock, Clare, Kim, J. Barbara, and Dena for steering the ship to shore.

Anthony

4. Jo-Anne André, U of Calgary:

I second Anthony's comments. This is a sad day for writing studies, but I'm so heartened to hear that Inkshed Publications will live on to serve the community. Thanks to the executive for seeing CASLL through these final phases.

Jo-Anne André

5. Neil Besner, UWinnipeg

I also want to thank Inkshed. One of the very first places to accept a paper, and full of people who supported and befriended me early in my career. Too many of them to name, but thanks to them all and to the organization. (My daughter, now 35, wore an early Inkshed t-shirt -- the red one with black lettering -- for years when she was a little girl!)

Best to all,
Neil

6. Janice Freeman, UWinnipeg

Thanks, Brock, and the remaining members of the board who have hung on in hope for so long. I have really appreciated the years of Inkshedding together and getting to know all the people who contributed over the years.

Inkshed was the first academic conference that I went to that was actually fun! I will remember some of the "Teeny tiny talent night" sketches long after I have forgotten the conference theme/content.

As Anthony said-- I felt accepted as a whole person at Inkshed gatherings.

Thanks again!

Janice Freeman

7. Russ Hunt, St. Thomas University:

As someone who goes all the way back with Inkshed, I too would like to thank all the people over the years who've pushed my thinking and writing -- and reading -- and made a profound difference to my teaching, and my life.

I imagine some people will remember that I've been saying, off and on, since about Inkshed 25, that it seemed to me about time to recognize that, as Anthony says, all things, etc. I do sort of wish we'd found a way to put it in a longboat and set it out to sea aflame. You can't always get what you want.

But if you try sometimes you can get what you need, and Inkshed was, for most of my professional life, what I needed. My gratitude will last as long as I do.

-- Russ

(May I add that I agree with Brock and the Board -- and, I expect, everybody else-- that keeping as much of the record archived as we can would be a good thing. When the CASLL-L list is shut down, I'd be happy to do whatever I can to help make sure all these conversations over the decades are accessible to posterity.)

8. Anthony Paré, UBC:

Sorry to jump in here again, but it would be horribly remiss of us not to mention the central role of Russ Hunt and Jim Reither, especially, and Doug Vipond and Thom Parkhill as well, in the founding of Inkshed.

They are responsible for helping to set in motion a million good ideas.

Anthony

9. Neil Besner, Winnipeg:

Anthony is exactly right. These people were the real progenitors.

Neil

10. Natasha Artemeva, Carleton:

This is heart-breaking...

Natasha

11. Andrea Lunsford, Stanford:

Yes, bravo to all Inkshedders and especially to those early leaders.

Andrea

12. Judy Segal, UBC:

Hello, I tried to post this message to the list earlier, and it was rejected. My address was not somehow authorized, although I receive CASLL messages at this address. Anyway, this is the message I wrote:

Just adding my voice to say goodbye to Inkshed, to thank it. I gave my first talk ever at Inkshed 1984 in Fredericton. I'll never forget the warm, exciting, generative experience of the whole conference (I was a graduate student and came away with the impression, or illusion, that academia would be like that), and the similar experience of other Inksheds for years and years that followed.

Adding my thanks too to Brock and the other CASLL Board members for this fitting, if sad, ending.

Judy

13. Doreen Starke-Meyerring, McGill:

Could the generative and generous spirit of Inkshed, along with its particular mission perhaps be rekindled –perhaps in a different form—at CASDW meetings? It seems that perhaps something like an Inkshed Scholars Forum (perhaps with a particular focus on research development and reflection? Or something else?) could be very valuable for many of us. And who knows what that may give rise to at some point?

Doreen

14. Natasha Artemeva, Carleton:

You have my support, Doreen.
I owe both CATTW and Inkshed my introduction to and acceptance by the writing community.

Natasha

15. Roger Graves, UAlberta:

Are today's reports of the demise of CASLL/Inkshed both too early and too late? I just read half a dozen of the first issues (<http://www.inkshed.ca/backs.htm>) to find out when *Writing and Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* took the name *Inkshed* (1983, for the curious), and in so doing came across a rather strongly-worded mission statement that the newsletter's readers "will not give credence to pedagogical practices not soundly and explicitly grounded in the best of research and theory" (Issue 1, page 2, <http://www.inkshed.ca/backs/198210.pdf>).

I think this mission continues on, and the reinvigoration of the [Canadian Journal for the Study of Discourse and Writing](#) with a strong editorial team of Joel Henge Hartse, Sibó Chen, Marie-Josée Goulet, Shurli Makmillen bodes well for the future(<http://journals.sfu.ca/cjsdw/index.php/cjsdw>). The Editorial Board is drawn from institutions across Canada, in ways not dissimilar from the early editions of *Writing and Rhetoric: Theory and Practice*. In addition, the [Canadian Society for the Study of Rhetoric](#) publishes another journal, *Rhetor*. Together with [Inkshed Publications](#) we have a good start on continuing to develop the academic field of writing studies in Canada.

Of course, Inkshed as a gathering ended effectively several years ago, and so reports of the demise of that activity are too late. But many of the people Jim Reither and Russ Hunt wanted to contact 35 years ago now meet as the [Canadian Writing Centre Association](#) (CWCA) and have found a home there that provides much of what *Writing and Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* was aiming for in 1982. The [Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing](#) provides a meeting place for others that fulfills the same function for yet another group of Canadian academics interested in writing studies. In addition, the [Canadian Society for the Study of Rhetoric](#) provides a gathering place for yet another group of academics. In contrast to the early 1980s, there are several meetings of writing studies groups in Canada today.

I think these organizations and publication venues provide what the writing studies community needs now, just as *Writing and Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* provided what was needed 35 years ago. While writing histories is never uncomplicated (as Andrea Lunsford, Robert Connors, and Ed Corbett taught me), perhaps it might be useful to consider what about the past 35 years mattered so much to people (the “whole person” as Anthony and others have pointed to) in a special issue of *Canadian Journal for the Study of Discourse and Writing*? Or as an edited collection from Inkshed Publications? And perhaps at the same time point to what people need right now and in the near future?

Roger Graves

16. Tania Smith, UCalgary:

Thank you to all fellow Inkshedders who have encouraged me over the years.

Dear Inkshed scholars and colleagues, you were my first academic community in writing and rhetoric, back since I believe 1996/7, during my 2 years off between my MA and PhD. My first presentation was about the ethical challenges of being a freelance tutor of university student writers in Edmonton. I believe I presented that shortly before I returned to studies at the U of Alberta, where I did year 1 my PhD.

Inkshed had a firmly entrenched value for informality and collegiality that I appreciated ... the talent nights, the sharing of drafts, etc. I hope I sufficiently communicated and extolled that aspect of its character in my ethnography of Inkshed, which Inkshed kept posted online on their

website (I wrote it as part of an ethnography course while pursuing the rest of my PhD at Ohio State U).

I kept one leg firmly in Canada through Inkshed, CSSR and CATTW (which is now the CASDW) while studying composition & rhetoric in the USA. I continued to be involved in all three organizations after graduation in 2002 when I was hired in my home province, at U of Calgary. Inkshed friends, you were supportive in my very rocky and traumatic early years as an assistant prof. I hope I also offered a good dose of my sincere encouragement and collegiality to you in return.

I agree with Doreen that CASDW can, and already has been carrying forward the mandate to support writing studies that it has shared with Inkshed all these years. Since CASDW's name change from CATTW it is more clearly not just about "technical writing" but broadly about discourse and writing, and a large cohort always present their research and inquiry into writing instruction across many disciplines. CASDW could embrace and take up many other things Inkshed did.

I also hope that some former Inkshedders will see the CSSR (rhetoric) community as a place to go as well. I am currently president of CSSR, and we share part of its mandate by supporting the interdisciplinary study and teaching of rhetoric (viewing discourse, language and literature primarily through a rhetorical lens). In between the many rhetorical criticism papers and a few rhetorical history papers, people do present about the teaching of rhetoric and writing across many disciplines and even sometimes in nonacademic settings. This year, 2017 we have a significantly larger percentage of graduate students presenting, as well as a larger number of Americans. This year also I've invited Heather and Roger Graves, old Inkshedders like me, to present the keynote on rhetoric and inter/disciplinarity. All this I hope bodes well for CSSR's organizational renewal and diversity.

The siblings, children, and grandchildren of Inkshed are carrying on the mandate.

Tania Smith

17. **Boba Samuels, UToronto:**

As a late-arriving member to Inkshed, I cannot claim the same fond memories and sense of attachment as Anthony and others, but I do appreciate the sentiments. The impetus behind Inkshed is one that is important for building the type of academic communities that value members for more than simply the contents of their latest research. I am sorry to see the tradition go, but I do believe that we see such engagement and support in CASDW, CWCA, and CSSR, as Roger so nicely summarized.

Doreen has made a suggestion that I think is well worth considering. In fact, Andrea Williams, Brock MacDonald and I met last week regarding plans for CASDW's conference in Toronto, and we are working out details for a new initiative to take place at our annual gathering. We

envisioned a type of mentoring-networking event, over breakfast, in which established scholars could meet informally with new scholars, or researchers who have not worked together might meet to consider new projects. I will let Andrea provide details when she has finalized our program, but I do hope we can draw on members to participate in the hopes of encouraging greater interactions like those that Inkshed promoted. Although we hadn't envisioned something like Inkshed for this event, if response is positive perhaps we can put Doreen's suggestion onto our AGM agenda and consider how such an initiative could extend the best of Inkshed's traditions.

In the meantime, thank you to Brock and the other Inkshed members for so graciously closing this chapter in Canadian writing studies.

Best,
Boba

18. Tania Smith, UCalgary:

Brock, in reply to your initial message about the \$7k left, and the 2 current Inkshed websites.

I agree that it's better to put the funds into Inkshed publications.

I think it's a little silly to divvy up funds between current members, possibly including new members, when past members had an equal or greater share in making Inkshed what it was. It makes better sense to pool the funds in a place that carries on its mission, and if there is enough for "up to four" forthcoming books, that makes sense!!

However, I am just wondering who will manage Inkshed Publications and its funds after inkshed is gone? CWCA, or CASDW, or an independent "board" constituted by the current Board of Inkshed?

I also agree it's best to consolidate its web materials in one place, and why not ask the CASDW if they are willing to house it as an archive on their site? FYI I created the blog's logo with the inkblot and the words creating a "shed" shape, so I selfishly hope my logo artwork goes into the archive, if there is one established.

Tania

19. Lois Provost, UToronto:

This is indeed sad. And how could Inkshed have metamorphosed to include other languages and dual language learning, bilingual language learning and interlanguage learning at a time when our society most needs intercommunication ...

Lois

20. Margaret Procter, UToronto:

Dear fellow (now nearly former) Inkshedders:

I'm sad too to think of this organization shutting down. It's been a great way to find and keep in touch with others in the field, in fact to work with them to invent the field. Inkshed in its various forms let us know we had colleagues within reach when needed.

But I'm also relieved that there are plans to keep the Inkshed archives available to honour this history. I fully agree that transferring the funds to Inkshed Publications is the right thing to do. Then the organization can retire gracefully rather than just collapsing.

Going forward, if CASDW agrees to open up a section on their website for the newsletter files, I'll gladly help transfer them. Russ Hunt did a fine job of collecting all the early issues and making them into PDF files, so transfer would be easy. Or if Inkshed Publications is the adopter of the archives, I can help in the same way.

Before that last bow, however, I'd like to collect the email responses to yesterday's news for a final issue of the Inkshed online newsletter. Then that newsletter issue will go into the archives too -- bearing Tania's distinctive logo of the Inkshed blot, and subject to Roger's ideas for further retrospection. So please keep your responses coming, and I'll ask for author permissions to collate them on the Inkshed website: no editing or revisions needed, just a collection of inksheds (!) responding to Brock's message.

In sympathy,
Margaret.

21. Kenna Manos, NSCAD:

Dear fellow Inkshedders,

Like Russ and Anthony, I attended our first working conference in 1984. Inkshed has informed my teaching life ever since.

As a nineteenth-century poetry specialist, I had suddenly been transported to teaching "writing" in 1974. My national community at that point was ACUTE (as it was then spelled), a traditional talking heads' conference whose members viewed writing as a discrete skill, like riding a bicycle. Once you got it, you got it.

I had no larger group to talk to, to question assumptions with, to argue with, to work through half-baked ideas about real writing in real contexts. Over many years, Inkshed became not only

a cherished cohort of companions, but also my central intellectual community. (And although I wasn't part of the group that proclaimed itself "dysfunctional" during the year we tried to write together, I was certainly pushed often well outside my comfort zone---for which I am hugely grateful.)

My debt to Inkshed continues in my current work with Grades 3-6 in a small Quaker community in the mountains of Costa Rica, where I teach for six months of the year.

Thank you, my friends.
Kenna

22. Roger Graves, UAlberta:

Just a quick reply to Tania's question about Inkshed Publications:

However, I am just wondering who will manage Inkshed Publications and its funds after inkshed is gone? CWCA, or CASDW, or an independent "board" constituted by the current Board of Inkshed?

Inkshed Publications is a separate organization from CASLL/Inkshed and it has separate bank accounts. For the last three years or so Heather Graves and I have served as publishers, with an editorial board that makes decisions on which projects to publish.

When the Inkshed money is gone (in or about 2021 at the rate we are going of 1 or 2 books per year), we will have to seek further funding from one source or another because few publications make back the initial investment. We've established a partnership arrangement with Parlor Press and the WAC Clearinghouse in the US, but these are unlikely to provide funds.

Sustainable financial options include e-edition only publishing. Three of the four projects we are working on have brought substantial funding with them from the institutions or funding agencies who sponsored the research. So if you are preparing a funding proposal, be sure to add \$1000-\$1500 for publishing costs. Many universities have small grants (under \$1000) to support scholarly publishing as well.

I think that we might also consider publishing instructional materials that might generate revenue that could be re-directed to scholarly publishing, but I'm not sure if the board wants to go that way or not (or even if anyone would want to do that with us!).

So the immediate future for Inkshed Publishing is good; the longer term is less clear, but not insurmountable.

Roger

23. Michael Ryan:

I thank you for the opportunity Inkshed provided to participate in an academic community. I have "used" , though very gently, inkshedding techniques in multiple settings in among others conferences in Costa Rica, China and the US of A. The courage to do so was in every way aligned to the spirited yet open introduction I was provided to inkshedding.

Many thanx

Michael J. Ryan

24. Margaret Procter, UToronto:

... Russ Hunt and Jim Reither, especially, and Doug Vipond and Thom Parkhill

Those are key names for me too. I met them all at the deer-in-a-bottle conference in Fredericton early on: was it 1992?

Russ Hunt not only helped start things happening in the 1980s, but also kept them going through the next decades. One good idea he put into action was the Inkshed listserv. For years, it was a lifeline for me and others scattered across the country. He also created and maintained the Inkshed website until 2011. Russ, I miss seeing you at conferences!

And speaking of Jim Reither, Louise Wetherbee Phelps does just that in the newest book from Inkshed Publishing, *Cross-Border Networks in Writing Studies*. Her chapter focusses on Reither as one of the "Four Scholars, Four Genres" central to the development of discourse and writing studies in Canada through his editorship of the Inkshed newsletter. "This humble genre, the organizational newsletter," as she calls it, has a lot to account for.

Margaret

25. Leslie Sanders, York:

Want to echo what all have said. My first one was in Halifax -- don't know what number, but very early. Many wonderful conferences, and learned a lot from everyone,. I also want to thank yawl for the start (and end) of my (talent night) dramatic career -- !!

Leslie

