



Renaud's keen eye for a story

Description

Administrative assistant to Westmount Mayor Peter Trent and children's book author

By Mona Andrei

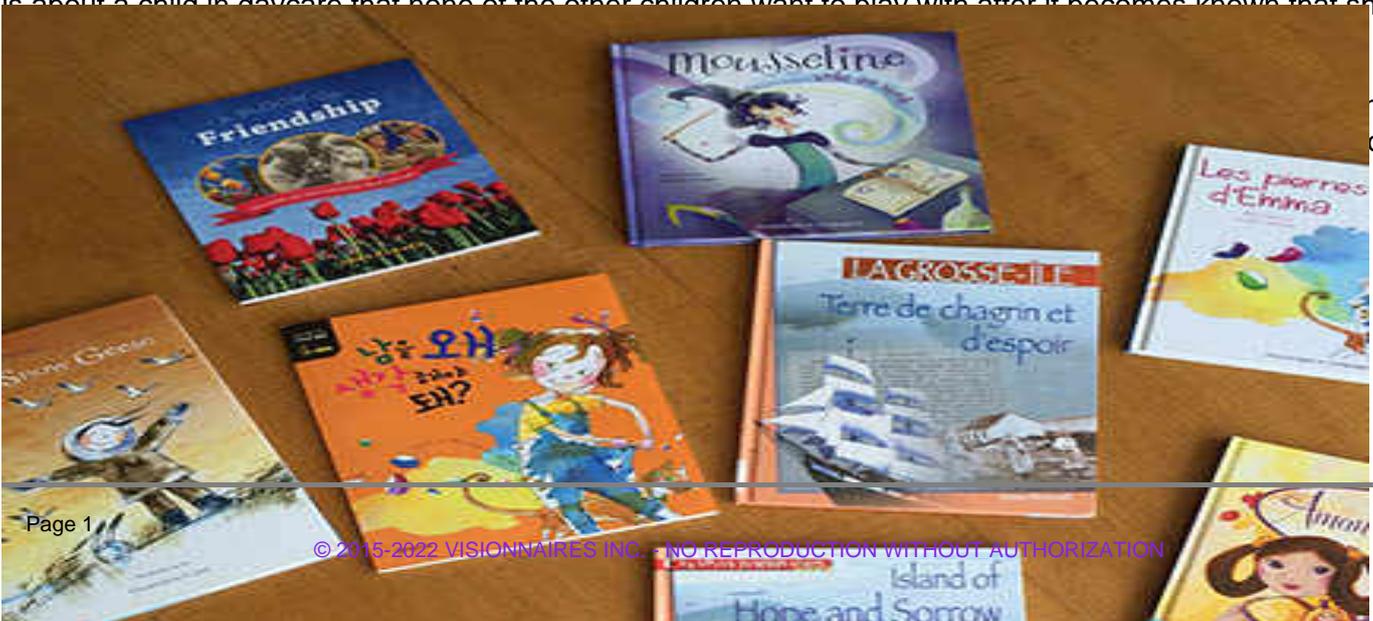
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You may have heard of her. You may have called the mayor's office at city hall and spoken to her. Or maybe you've seen her name on books at the Westmount Library. She is Anne Renaud, administrative assistant to Mayor Peter Trent and children's book author.

With 10 published books and a new one coming out next year, Renaud has clearly mastered the art of efficiently honing her creativity despite a full-time job. To her credit, she has broken the excuse barrier of limited time to pursue her passion for writing non-fiction and picture books for children.

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Although books and reading have been a part of her life since early childhood, Renaud didn't actually start writing until the 1990s, when she came across a book by Margaret Merrifield entitled *Come Sit By Me*. The story is about a child in daycare that none of the other children want to play with after it becomes known that she is



translate
book

years later, in 1995, during the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands, another story found its way to Renaud. “My uncle, who had served in the Second World War and who was part of the Canadian troops that helped liberate the Netherlands, went back for the 50th anniversary,” recalls Renaud. “There was a huge amount of media attention about the celebrations and I remember watching these very proud and elderly Canadian veterans on TV, marching in the streets. Everyone was cheering, even children. It suddenly struck me that these generations of Dutch know what the Canadians did and yet we here in Canada have no idea.”

It was upon her uncle’s return from the Netherlands that Renaud saw the true potential for a story. “My uncle told me about how he had been wounded near the end of the war and brought to a barn that belonged to a Dutch family with children. It was during this recent trip that he was able to find the exact barn that had sheltered him during the war. He even spoke to one of the children, now grown up and who remembered him. I knew it would make a great story,” said Renaud.

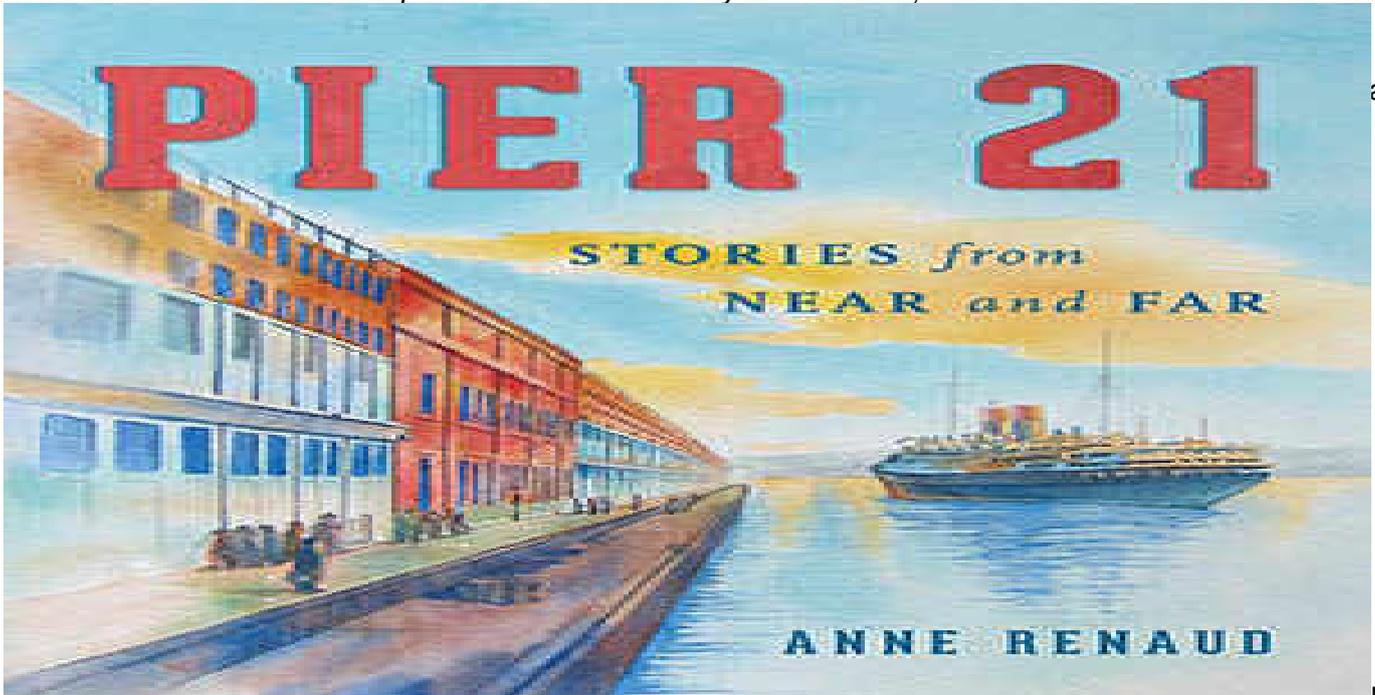
This realization became the impetus for Renaud’s first non-fiction book, *A Bloom of Friendship: The Story of the Canadian Tulip Festival*, originally published in 2004 and later nominated for several awards.

It’s Renaud’s keen eye for a story that has led to her success as an author. While writing *A Bloom of Friendship*, she realized that there are other such stories that if aren’t preserved, would be lost forever. A shame indeed!

‘It’s Renaud’s keen eye for a story that has led to her success as an author.’

“I look for a hole in literature,” Renaud says of her writing process. “More specifically, I look for a hole in Canadian children’s literature. We have so many wonderful stories that have yet to be written for the youth market.”

With a penchant for stories that have a Canadian and historical slant, Renaud has gone on to write four other non-fiction books: *Island of Hope and Sorrow: The Story of Grosse Île*, *Pier 21: Stories from Near and Far*, *Into*



as

picture

books often stem from her short stories. Such was the case with *Mousseline vole au vent*, a story about a

friendly witch who is unable to stay on her broom on windy days. After trying different child-endearing solutions, including turning herself into an octopus to be better able to hold on to her broom, and then an elephant who is big and heavy and should logically be immune to the wind, Mousseline finally decides to take the train, demonstrating that sometimes the best solutions are the simplest.

When it comes to picture books, Renaud first writes the stories in English and then translates them into French herself. This, she feels, increases her chances of publication since the author does not work with a literary agent, but instead has found success by approaching publishers directly.

Along with *Mousseline vole au vent*, Renaud's picture books include *How the Sea Came to Marissa*, *Missuk's Snow Geese*, *Amande Lavande*, and *Les Pierres d'Emma*, which has since been translated into Korean. As well, her newest title, *La Boîte à Sourires*, will be available May 2016.

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With such a repertoire of books to her name, you would think that this author holds some sort of secret to managing her time and juggling her writing with her full-time position at the mayor's office. But according to Renaud, there are no secrets.

"I write during weekends and in the evenings or from 5 to 7 before I go to work. I don't always feel like writing but when there's a story that I'm keen on developing, it just kind of takes over."

For more information about Anne Renaud, visit her website at annerenaud.net

More articles by [Mona Andrei HERE](#)



Mona Andrei is a technical writer for a serious company in a serious industry. When she's had enough serious for one day, she likes to write irrelevant humour posts for her personal blog, Moxie-Dude.com

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