

# Local Author's Memoir Tumbles into the World

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**COMBERMERE** – Local resident and author Brenda Missen is thrilled that her second book, which took fifteen years from conception to publication, has tumbled into the world at last.

The Madawaska Valley Public Library hosted the first official book launch on the evening of May 30, at the Combermere Community Centre, to an engaged and attentive crowd.

What began as journal entries written during solo canoe trips in Algonquin Park from 1998 to 2005, evolved like a finely polished stone into *Tumblehome: One Woman's Canoeing Adventures in the Divine Near Wilderness*; part memoir, part spiritual autobiography and part wilderness adventure.

"In addition to the chronicles of my canoe trips, where I'm relieved to say that nothing much happens, this narrative traces my journey from a debilitating sense of unworthiness, guilt and self-criticism to an all-encompassing love and acceptance for myself and others," said Missen.

On this occasion, Missen reflected on the release of her first book almost eleven years ago to the day. In June 2011, John and Sandy Lynch were gracious book launch hosts for Missen's literary thriller *Tell Anna She's Safe* at their nearby store, Pilgrim Reader Books.

Missen welcomed the return of the Lynchs, who generously sold copies of both of her books at last Monday's launch. At the same time, she was missing the presence of Luciana Ricciutelli, former Editor and Chief of Toronto-based Inanna Publications.

Missen recalled with fondness and appreciation, "Lu" Ricciutelli; "a force to be reckoned with," who played a vital role in her first book getting published.

She was first introduced to Ricciutelli in the local Rapid Readers book club during the time Ricciutelli and her family ran the Wingle Inn in Schutt. Missen had asked the book club to read the novel manuscript as a book club selection. Not only did Ricciutelli come to the meeting with excellent suggestions and feedback, but she also put in a strong vote of confidence, saying she felt it would be a good fit

for Inanna.

Missen recalled the integral role and support Ricciutelli continued to provide to the success of first book and launch, along with the years leading up to the second book being published. Sadly, Ricciutelli, a breast cancer survivor, died suddenly in December 2020, just weeks after her cancer resurfaced.

"I know she's here," Missen said with assurance as she stood at the podium.

Her book title was inspired by the design term "tumblehome," which refers to the inward curve of a boat's sides that allows a solo paddler to lean closer to the water for greater paddling control.

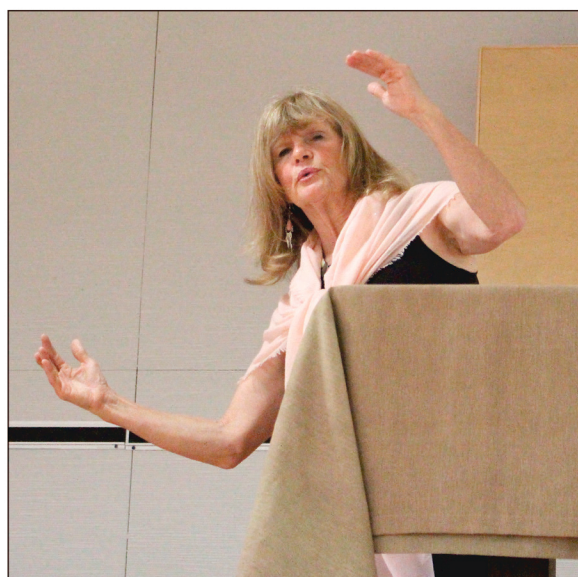
"As a title it captures the spirit of this work not only because of its association with solo paddling but also because it evokes a sense of 'tumbling home' on different levels - to one's literal home, to being at home in one's self and to something that might be considered Grace," Missen revealed to *The Valley Gazette*.

Missen was delighted to have local artist Linda Sorensen's beautiful painting *Autumn Sojourn* adorn her book cover. At Missen's request, the book was printed on Forestry Stewardship Council (FCS)-certified 100% recycled stock to make it as "green" as a printed book could be. Black and white photos and maps are included throughout, highlighting Missen's adventures and special friends and family along the way.

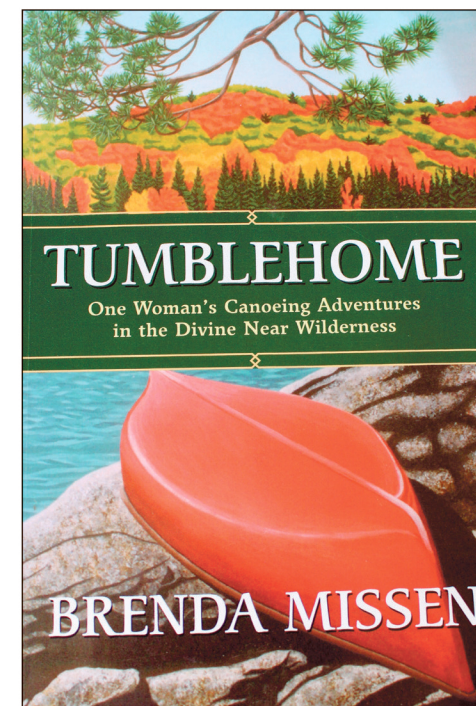
Missen said she wept when her publisher sent the comments of the reviewer who recommended it for publication, author Jan Rehner. "Her first words were, 'I hate camping, but I loved this book.'"

"It told me I had succeeded in what I set out to do, which was to appeal not just to those who love roughing it outdoors, but anyone interested in personal transformation," Missen said.

Missen shared with *The Valley Gazette* what sets *Tumblehome* apart from other wilderness travel/adventure books or nature memoirs is its exploration of the intrinsic connection of our humanity with the natural world.



Missen demonstrates "tumblehome," a design term that refers to the inward curve of a boat's sides, which allows a solo paddler to lean closer to the water for greater paddling control. She chose this term for the book title to evoke different meanings of tumbling home.



Missen's book cover features her favourite painting by local artist Linda Sorensen: *Autumn Sojourn*.

"It provides an authentic and very personal account of the spiritual nature of all earthly things, as well as acknowledging the spiritual core of our 'being' outside of a religious context, without denigrating conventional religious paths. It offers an intimate portrait of the divinity of humanity and our ability to rise above our own, often self-induced suffering; from the point of view of a woman chronicling her interior journey as she travels in the near wilderness by canoe," Missen said.

Accolades to caterer Tiffany Klatt, of Datsa Tasty Street Eats for the amazing spread she provided at the event.

"It was such a lovely gathering, and for me, my first in more than two years. I am so blessed to live in such a supportive

community and to have such good friends," Missen said.

A busy but exciting time lies ahead for Missen, as she promotes *Tumblehome* with readings, book signings and other events across Canada. More details can be found on her website, [brendamissen.com](http://brendamissen.com)

Missen has also been chosen to be one of the four authors at the Bonnechere Authors Festival in Eganville; one of Ottawa Valley's signature events. Her night to speak is July 25.

"It's a huge honour," Missen said.

Missen lives in the Madawaska Highlands near her canoeing home, Algonquin Park, where she has been paddling for 35 years.



Bonnechere Union Public Library CEO and Head Librarian Susan Artymko receives warm greetings from Missen along with a personal message in her copy of the book.



Audience members line up for the chance to chat with the author and have their books signed.



The crowd gathers at the Combermere Community Centre to support *Tumblehome's* first book launch.  
Photos Jen Juhasz