Meet Victoria’s Third Poet Laureate

Date:  Friday, January 20, 2012  For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — At last night’s City Council meeting, Janet Marie Rogers read her poem Change-Makers and was announced as the Capital City’s third Poet Laureate. Selected by nomination, the Poet Laureate serves as Victoria’s literary and cultural ambassador for a three-year term.

A Mohawk writer from the Six Nations band in southern Ontario, Janet Rogers was born in Vancouver, British Columbia and has resided in Victoria since 1994. A published and award-winning poet, she has worked and studied in the genres of poetry, short fiction, spoken word performance poetry, video poetry and recorded poems with music and scriptwriting.

“We are pleased to welcome Janet Rogers as Victoria’s third Poet Laureate,” said Mayor Dean Fortin. “The Poet Laureate plays an important role in raising the profile of poetry and showcasing the talent of local poets in our community.”

Victoria’s Poet Laureate is required to produce a minimum of three new original works each year that reflect or represent ideas and issues of importance to the people of Victoria. The Poet Laureate also recites poems at City events, City Council meetings and official functions including the annual Victoria Book Prize Awards Gala. In addition, the Poet Laureate hosts a number of poetry events in the community each year.

“Over the next three years, I look forward to creating opportunities where the community can come together in celebration of our poetic voices on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish people,” said Janet Rogers.

Janet Rogers hosts Native Waves Radio on CFUV 101.9fm and Tribal Clefs every Tuesday on CBC Radio One. Her video poem What Did You Do Boy, created in support of a spoken word track from her CD Firewater, earned nominations at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards 2009 and the Native American Music Awards 2010. Rogers’ radio documentary Bring Your Drum (50 Years of Indigenous Protest Music), aired last July on CBC’s Inside the Music and won the Best Radio award at the imagineNATIVE Film and Media Festival 2011. Her newest poetry collection is titled Unearthed.

The Poet Laureate, also known as “the people’s poet,” is an honorary position that was established by Victoria City Council in June 2006 to honour and celebrate the contribution of literature and poetry in Victoria. For more information, visit: www.victoria.ca and click on What’s New?

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