



Above Two of the five Canadian Lit Chix, Helaine Becker, left, Kathy Buckworth, right.

# CANADIAN LIT CHIX

BY KATHY BUCKWORTH PHOTO BY STEVE UHRANEY

Being a writer is a unique profession. There are many, many hours spent in total isolation, just you and the blank computer screen, waiting for inspiration to strike. In my case, these moments of quiet contemplation are often interrupted by one of my four children, making the time spent alone all the more intense. You write the book, are lucky to find someone who will publish it...and then you learn about the business of promoting and selling the book. Every writer has two sides to their personality – the quiet introvert behind the keyboard, and the extroverted sales agent (first to the publisher, then to the public) who must also possess some business savvy in the marketing of their work. Their work, which is in essence, a piece of themselves.

Book signings are an integral piece of selling a writer's work and name, but unless you're John Grisham or J.K. Rowling, most writers find themselves sitting alone behind a table, their books stacked high, while busy shoppers avoid eye contact and rush past on their way to... well the Harry Potter shelves. Book signings by lesser known writers are often considered a necessary evil by both book retailers and the writers themselves.

When I entered the writing profession five years ago, (after 20 years in the corporate world), I made a conscious effort to meet other writers for the purpose of networking, learning, being mentored, and basically finding a business community in a very fragmented and individual profession. I was lucky to meet four other women who were

very much interested in the same objectives. I approached them with the idea of banding together and shaking up the traditional book signings we'd all been suffering through. Together, we formed the "Canadian Lit Chicks" and for the past year have been doing joint signings, trade shows, panel discussions on writing, and are trying to bring together and talk about Canadian women writing about the things that Canadian women care about. Call me "ChiefChick".

While my books focus on the humorous side of family life, Helaine Becker focuses on making books fun and educational for children. A Silver Birch award winning writer, Helaine has written over a dozen books, including Boredom Blasters, Secret Agent Y.O.U., an entire Scholastic line of "Looney Bay" adventures, and her most recent best seller, "Mother Goose Unplucked". Helaine wrote "Mama Likes to Mambo" after she found herself bored reading the same old children's books every night to her then young sons. "I wanted to make bedtime stories fun for adults as well." She does. Helaine's our "SillyChick".

Leslie Garrett, award winning journalist, editor, and writer of 14 best selling children's books on subjects such as Mohammed Ali, and Helen Keller, has turned her writing and research skills to a very important topic; the environment. She recently released "The Virtuous Consumer: Your Essential Shopping Guide for a Better, Kinder, Healthier World", and writes a column for the Toronto Star called "The Virtuous Traveller". Leslie has 3 young kids of her own and is dedicated

to keeping the world in a usable state for them and their children. Meet "EnviroChick".

Every new parent has heard of Ann Douglas, the prolific writer of the "Mother Of" books, including blockbuster "The Mother of All Baby Books" and over 20 others. Ann's books are a constant presence on the bestselling parenting list and she dedicates herself to providing solid, practical advice on every part of a baby's and child's life. The mother of four children herself, Ann is also a tireless advocate for social justice and contributes to many charities and women's organizations in her community. Ann is our "Mother-of-all-Chicks", of course.

Rounding out the Lit Chicks is Tammy Benlolo, author of "From My Side of the Table", which she wrote, published, distributed, sold, and promoted...all by herself and by the age of 25. Tammy now works in the publishing industry and is busy researching and writing a new book she hopes will help young people decide how to choose a profession that they will ultimately love and be successful at. Tammy is our "BabyChick."

You can find all of us on our website at [www.canadianlitichicks.com](http://www.canadianlitichicks.com), to check in where we'll be next. We love to talk, and we never run out of things to say.

The Canadian Lit Chicks will be at Bookers Bookstore, 170 Lakeshore Rd E, in Oakville, on Saturday November 10th at 1:00, and at the [www.workingmoms.ca](http://www.workingmoms.ca) Mom's Show at the Glen Eagle Golf Course, Caledon, on Sunday, November 25th. Check the website for show times. **GOODLIFE**