May 4, 2013

MacEwan University alum wins Leacock Medal

Edmonton—MacEwan University is pleased to announce that Cassie Stocks, a graduate of the Bachelor of Applied Communications in Professional Writing has been awarded the coveted Stephen Leacock Medal for humour in Canadian writing. Cassie admits it’s all a bit surreal. “It’s so rewarding to know that people are reading and enjoying the novel and my slightly warped sense of humour.”

Stocks had been working on sections of her novel for a few years before deciding to pursue writing more seriously. “I've written for as far back as I can remember.” The catalyst came in 2002, while working in an office job in a steel fabrication plant; she decided to attend a week-long Writing With Style workshop. The experience left her inspired and wanting more.

“I went back and quit my job,” said Stocks. “I was in my mid-30's and I thought ‘if I don't do it now I never will’.” She worked on refining her award-winning novel throughout her fourth year of study, and upon graduation she started submitting the manuscript to various publishers. With no prospects on the horizon, Stocks decided to once again focus on her writing and traded life in Edmonton for the small town of Eston, SK.

Two months after she moved, NeWest Publishing tracked her down, and the rest is history. Now that she’s a celebrity, she is often approached by aspiring writers for advice. Her advice is simple, seize the day, and don’t wait until there is more time, or the kids are grown.

As often is the case with writers and their stories, there are some parallels in the life of Stocks and the lives of the characters she’s crafted. The journey of writing this novel has been a long one. “I held on tooth and nail, and it’s been a real struggle,” she admits. So what would Stocks want the readers to take away from her novel? “What’s ordinary for most is not ordinary for all, the main character of this book is desperately trying to give up on her art; she want to become an ‘ordinary person’ and forget it all. But she can’t because that’s not who she is. So always be true to yourself.”

Founded in 1971, MacEwan University is a comprehensive university offering more than 65 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training. Its philosophy of inspiring minds, academic excellence, and providing career opportunities continues to be its guide as it serves the educational needs of students across Alberta, Canada and the world.

For further information, please contact:
David Beharry, Media Relations Advisor
(780) 497-5586
Cell: (780) 231-5954
email: beharryd@macewan.ca