

**Submitted by Bernice Friesen  
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I have been publishing – and getting paid for my writing since the age of 17. When I started sending my work out, I made a commitment to myself to never send work to magazines that did not pay. It was a simple decision of self-respect. Even when the pay was not huge, it was a matter of principle. Writing is hard work.

I have published several books with small art presses, and some years, when I've earned Provincial or Canada Council grants, I have earned a very, very modest living – only once above the poverty line for my family of 4 -- when a Canada Council grant was added together *with the money I received from Access Copyright*.

I am personally offended by the attempt of so many school boards to stop paying for my work. I am one of those writers who have produced short stories for the young adult audience. My first book – written when I was 25 years old, and still classified as an adolescent -- was put on the Saskatchewan curriculum for grade eleven, and the title story won the Vicky Metcalf Award for best short story in Canada. My stories have been included in anthologies aimed at the young adult education market, and, 25 years after writing them, they are *still* being used in the schools. I can claim that my work is certainly worth paying for.

It is simply outrageous that Canadian universities and school boards are making attempts to steal my work – our work -- when most writers earn below the poverty line. It is certainly not “fair use.”

Writers resent the demands to give our work for free, as if we were not human beings. Writers need to eat, need to have a roof over their heads, need to raise and feed their children, just like teachers, professors, and administrators, and anyone who attempts to make the theft of our work legal. What an uproar there would be if teachers, professors, and administrators were sued to work for free.

Writers are inventors – very few people can claim this -- and *need and deserve* to get paid for our work.