

LOOKOUT

P.K. PAGE: WINNER

10th annual Terasen Lifetime Achievement Award

"For the past forty years, P.K. Page has been an enduring influence on younger British Columbia writers, poets and filmmakers." — BIOGRAPHER SANDRA DJWA

Patricia Kathleen Page is one of the most esteemed and beloved writers of British Columbia, having shared ideas with Atom Egoyan, Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, Rosemary Sullivan, Constance Rooke, Brian Brett, Susan Musgrave, Lorna Crozier and Patrick Lane—to name a few.

"She was very generous, I think, with [such] help—even with a young writer, like me, whose style and subject matter were quite different than her own," recalls **Alice Munro**. "But what was really important to me was just her existence, as a good Canadian writer, whom I read in the Forties and Fifties when Canadian writers were so rare."

Born at Swanage, Dorset in the south of England on November 23, 1916, P.K. Page came to Canada in 1919 when her parents Major General **Lionel Frank Page** and **Rosa Laura Whitehouse** settled in Red Deer, Alberta.

After completing high school at St Hilda's School for Girls in Calgary, she spent a year in Europe, and later worked in a store and on radio in Saint John, New Brunswick. She has lived in many other parts of Canada, including Montreal where in 1941 she became a member of the Preview Group with **F.R. Scott** and **A.M. Klein**, co-editing the literary periodical *Preview*. She lived on the West Coast from 1944 to 1946, participating in the development of **Alan Crowley's** *Contemporary Verse*.

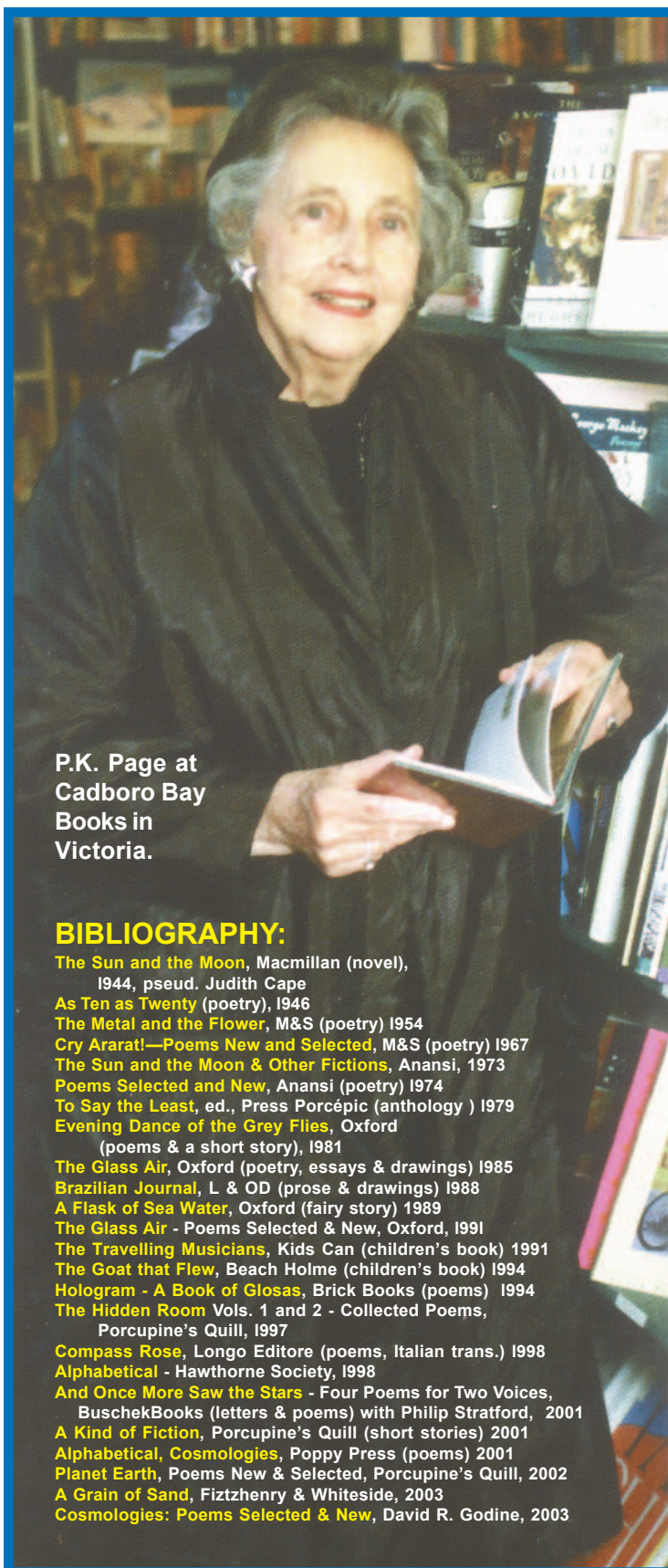
Moving to Ottawa she worked at the National Film Board where she met and married (in 1950) the new NFB chair **W. Arthur Irwin** who had previously been editor of *Maclean's* magazine, having first worked for that publication in 1925.

In 1953 the couple moved to Australia for three years when Irwin was appointed Canadian High Commissioner. They moved to Brazil in 1956, and Mexico in 1960, due to Irwin's appointments as Canadian Ambassador. In Rio de Janeiro she began to study painting.

In 1964, upon his retirement from External Affairs, Irwin accepted the job of publisher for the Victoria Daily Times, and the couple moved to Victoria where Page brought Alice Munro to the attention of publisher **Jack McClelland** in 1966. She has since remained active as a mentor to writers such as **Marilyn**

Bowering and **Patricia Young**, and helped to organize the Signal Hill Poetry Group in the 1980s, and a season of readings at Open Space, with poet **Doug Beardsley**. She was an early member of the League of Canadian Poets.

As a painter, she has exhibited at countless galleries under her married name P.K. Irwin. She has works in the National Gallery, the AGO, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, and private collections in Canada, Mexico and Europe.



P.K. Page at Cadboro Bay Books in Victoria.

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PORCUPINE'S QUILL PHOTO

In addition to her honorary degrees and numerous awards, some other highlights of her career include:

- A symposium called *Extraordinary Presences: The Worlds of P.K. Page* at Trent University in 2002.
- Her poem *Planet Earth* was chosen by the United Nations as the centrepiece for a year-long Dialogue Among Nations Through Poetry; 2000.
- A dramatised version of *Unless the Eye Catch Fire*, 1994.
- *A Children's Hymn*, music by Harry Somers, for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, 1995.
- A two-part sound feature about her work, *The White Glass*, for CBC Ideas.
- A special issue of *The Malahat Review*, 1996.
- The Margaret Laurence Memorial Lecture, 1999.
- *A Somewhat Irregular Renga* with Philip Stratford, for the CBC, 1999.
- Text (poems) for *The Invisible Reality*, an oratorio by Derek Holman, 2000.
- *A Children's Millennium Song*, Music by Oscar Peterson, for the opening of the Trans-Canada Trail.
- Page is the subject of *Still Waters: The Poetry of P.K. Page*, produced by the NFB.

When her father served with the Canadian forces in World War I, he sent back verses for his young daughter. Her mother illustrated them. Almost 50 years later, Page added a short memoir to the combined poems and drawings for *Wisdom from Nonsense Land* (Beach Holme, 1992).

Page is the subject for a forthcoming biography by **Sandra Djwa**.

In February of 2004, **P.K. Page** was selected as the 10th annual recipient of the Terasen Lifetime Achievement Award for an Outstanding Literary Career in British Columbia.

A plaque in her honour will be added to the Vancouver Public Library's Writers' Walk and the Mayor of Vancouver will proclaim a day in her honour.

In addition, P.K. Page receives \$5,000 from Terasen Gas, who co-support the annual lifetime achievement award with the Vancouver Public Library and Pacific BookWorld News Society.

For info: 604-736-4011.

Bakan forth:

During anti-APEC protests at UBC in 1997, a young law professor named Joel Bakan looked out his office window, grabbed his library card—to identify himself as a professor—and took his copy of the Constitution of Canada with him to monitor the Sgt. Pepper Spray demonstrations.

It proved to be a memorable day. The RCMP defined where protestors could respond. It was automatically impossible for leaders of China and Indonesia to witness the protestors, and vice versa. The mounting frustration of demonstrators as they tried to scale a fence made a strong impression on Bakan. Canadians protesting the presence of dictators in their own country were portrayed on the evening news as anti-social elements.

Having just begun to develop a film project with Tom Shandel and Mark Achbar, maker of *Manufacturing Consent* with Noam Chomsky, Bakan and Achbar roamed the campus with Achbar shooting proceedings with his video camera. That day became a turning point in their efforts to make *The Corporation*, the controversial documentary that has won the top documentary award at Robert Redford's Sundance Film Festival.

"Most students in mid-1990s North America were building investment portfolios, not social movements," writes Bakan in *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power* (Penguin \$37.00). "Yet here they were, thousands of them, braving pepper spray and police batons to fight for ideals. Even more unusual, the students were protesting against corporations—against their destruction of the environment, exploitation of workers, and abuses of human rights."

In the wake of that APEC demonstration at UBC, anti-globalization protests followed in Seattle, Prague and Geneva. Then Wall Street scandals—at Enron, WorldCom and Tyco—confirmed suspicions that large corporations were often corrupt and largely out of control.

Bakan and Achbar, later joined by Jennifer Abbot, proceeded to gather interviews with CEOs, activists and philosophers—including Noam Chomsky and Michael Moore. They canvassed opinions across the corporate divide, from the likes of Michael Walker, head of the arch-conservative Fraser Institute, to Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman; from Oscar Olivera, who organized people's protests to water privatization in Bolivia, to Ray Anderson, CEO of Interface, the world's largest carpet manufacturer.

Now the film version of *The Corporation* has played to sold-out audiences across Canada. It won audience awards at the Vancouver, Toronto and Sundance festivals, along with the Joris Ivens Special Jury award at Amsterdam—the most prestigious documentary film festival in the world. It opens in U.S. and U.K. theatres in June.

Whereas Bakan's first book called *Just Words: Constitutional Rights and Social Wrongs* was an academic work about the protection of free speech under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, *The Corporation* is intended to be more provocative. As in the film, corporations are compared to Frankenstein, sharks and psychopaths.

To grab attention, Bakan has incorporated the work of Dr. Robert Hare, an expert on psychopathy, whose checklist to identify psychopathic behaviour is used around the world. By referencing that list, Bakan and Achbar have determined corporations are, by their

nature, essentially psychopathic. They allege that corporations often exhibit a callous unconcern for the feelings of others, they lack the capacity to maintain enduring relationships, they often show a reckless disregard for the safety of others, they can be deceitful through repeated lying and conning others for profit, and they rarely have the capacity for guilt.

Bakan contends the legal structure of the corporation is to blame for bad behaviour in the corporate world. That is, when a business chooses to 'incorporate,' the people running the show get a benefit called 'limited liability.' It means a director of a corporation can't get sued for wrongs committed on the job, so long as they're done in the 'best interests of the corporation.' Those interests are defined, quite simply, as making profits for shareholders.

Bakan showcases the anti-social record of General Electric, a corporation with repeated environmental violations and hundreds of millions of dollars in fines. But even more telling is the example of Henry Ford. In 1916 the car-maker learned an important lesson. He had decided to return some of his company's handsome profits to his workers, with the idea that they could use their higher wages to buy a Ford motorcar along with more wealthy Americans. Ford's major shareholders, John and Horace Dodge, took Ford to court for this socialist concept and Ford was summarily rebuked by the judge for forgetting that a corporation could not be run "for the merely incidental benefit of shareholders and for the primary purpose of benefiting others."

This case is still taught as an introduction to corporate law: students learn that it's illegal for a corporation to do anything but make money for shareholders. Hence causing environmental damage or violating workers' rights, can be justified in the interests of capitalism as a necessary part of doing business, particularly when profits can outweigh the costs of defending a lawsuit or paying a clean-up fine.

These days sophisticated marketing departments understand that people are disenchanted by companies that destroy the environment and exploit child-workers. The resultant new phenomenon of the socially responsible corporation is central to Bakan's scrutiny. The likes of Kathie Lee Gifford and Puff Daddy have recently scrambled to press conferences to denounce their involvement with foreign sweatshops. Shell Oil currently has a series of television commercials portraying employees who look more like foreign aid workers than oil executives. The message about these bright and compassionate people is clear: "they don't fight the oil company, they are the oil company."

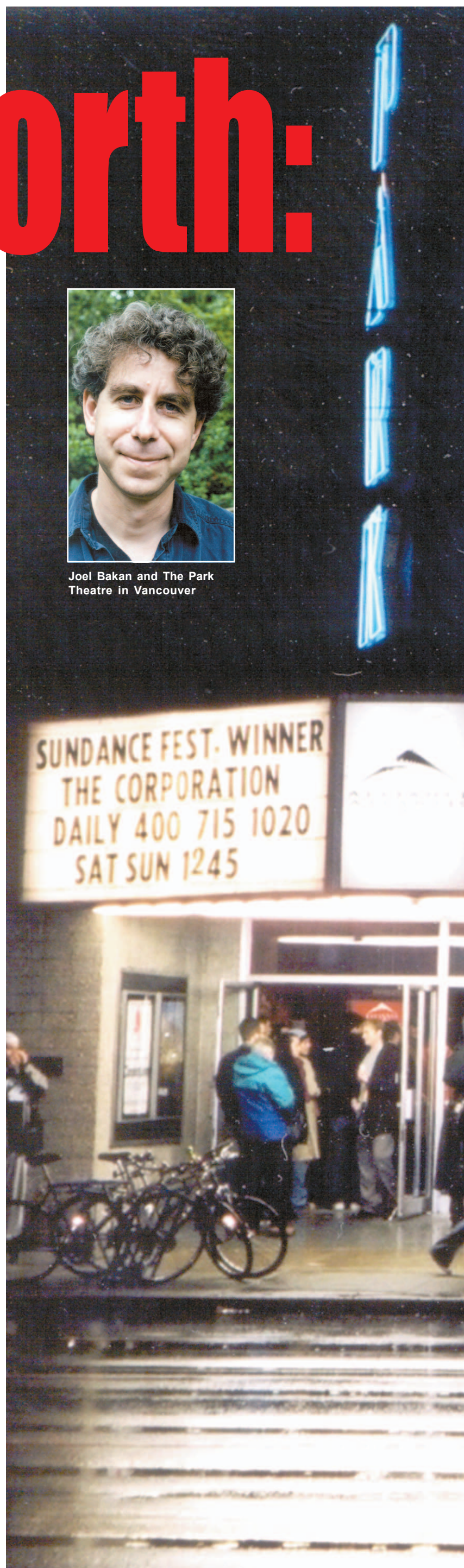
"There's a sense out there today that *because* corporations can be socially responsible," says Bakan, "they can regulate themselves, and we no longer need regulation from the government in the form of laws. There's a real pairing of deregulation on the one hand and the appearance of social responsibility on the other, and that's the point to which I object. It's fine if CEO guys and gals want to be decent, but corporate benevolence is not a replacement for legal standards that constrain what corporations can and should do."

Or, as Noam Chomsky has pointed out, "it is better to ask why we have tyranny than whether it can be benevolent."

The Enron scandal shows what can happen when legal standards are eroded. In Bakan's book, the Enron story isn't just about worthless stock and lost pensions. Bakan traces how Enron began as a pipeline company, but soon moved into the more lucrative energy trade business. In the 1990s, Enron officials led by former CEO Kenneth Lay focused on political lobbying efforts to deregulate the trading of energy futures.



Joel Bakan and *The Corporation* Theatre in Vancouver



PARK Lisa Kerr interviews Joel Bakan, the Noam Chomsky of Kitsilano

SUNDANCE FEST. WINNER
THE CORPORATION
DAILY 400 715 1020
SAT SUN 1245



LISA KERR PHOTO

Bakan describes a remarkable process of political fumbles as Enron succeeded in getting rid of government supervision of its business, by way of the Commodity Future Modernization Act. Once that law was passed, Enron used its newfound freedom to begin manipulating the California energy market.

Over the next six months, there were 38 blackouts in California. "The company helped manufacture an artificial energy shortage that drove the price of electricity, and consequently its profits, sky high," says Bakan. Ultimately on December 7, 2000, millions of Californians were suddenly without power. California residents had to pay outrageous power bills for what power they could get. In June, 19, 2001 the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission finally responded by imposing price controls on California's energy market. Enron was caught by surprise, left with billions of dollars of contracts worth way less than what they had paid. Enron filed for bankruptcy four months later.

Naomi Klein, author of *No Logo*, points out that modern-day activists protest in front of Nike Town instead of Parliament. Bakan maintains it's time to return to government, and that the answer lies in changing the laws that regulate corporations. He cites **Franklin D. Roosevelt's** depression-era New Deal as the first package of regulatory reforms aimed at "curbing the powers and freedoms of corporations." That era came to an end with **Ronald Reagan**, and for the next 20 years the mantra of privatization and deregulation took over.

Since then, corporations have been vying with government to take over public services. Claims for greater 'efficiency' abound, but the privatization of essential public services is riddled with problems. Bakan looks at the example of Edison Schools, a U.S. business with 133 schools under its control. When Edison's stock price fell it cut back on staff – 600 students in each school would make up for it with one hour of office work per day. When its Philadelphia schools weren't making enough money, the company sold off textbooks, computers, supplies and musical instruments.

Michael Walker of the Fraser Institute has advocated for more private control of the planet and its

resources on the theory that when you own something you take better care of it. "What about when the most profitable way to exercise your ownership might be to exploit your property?" Bakan asks. "Or when taking care of the things you own means causing harm to those around you?"

The guy who carried a copy of the Constitution of Canada into a public demonstration is not a radical Bakan is a former Rhodes Scholar and law clerk to Chief Justice **Brian Dickson** of the Supreme Court of Canada. He doesn't advocate the destruction of the corporate structure, nor does he seek to vilify the business men and women who spend their working lives in the service of a profit-seeking enterprise. His work simply sheds light on the motives of corporations, in order to instigate public awareness about the need for regulated industries.

But the huge success of *The Corporation* – a three-hour documentary that has sold far more tickets than most Canadian movies – has put Bakan and Achbar into the spotlight, and spotlight has brought them some heat. The *Vancouver Sun's* **Katherine Monk** was among those who criticized Bakan and Achbar for their acceptance speech at Sundance, a speech in which they noted moviegoers had voted for their film on a Coca-Cola-sponsored ballot. They thanked Coca-Cola, sponsors of their prize, for a taste of the future, when corporations sponsor everything including elections.

Bakan thought the crowd at Sundance appreciated the irony of the situation and they "took it in the spirit in which it was given, a bit of light-hearted ribbing from a couple of filmmakers who were standing there receiving an award for a film called *The Corporation* which was critical of the corporation in a context that was totally overwhelmed by corporate sponsors."

But some commentators have accused Bakan and Achbar of impudence. Such a response reaffirms to Bakan a major treatise in their film, and his book—soon to be published in the U.S. and beyond. When corporations show their benevolent side, critical voices are expected to fall silent.

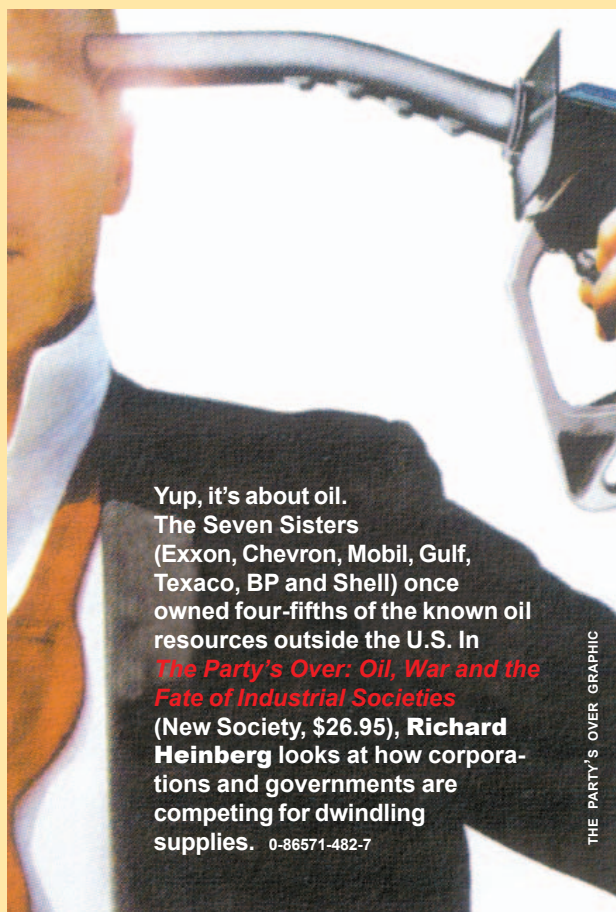
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Lisa Kerr is a law school student and former employee of B.C. BookWorld

Social unrest & corporate scandals

In the wake of the Enron and WorldCom scandals, UBC law professor **Janis Sarra** has edited **Corporate Governance in Global Capital Markets** (UBC Press \$85), an examination of the role of corporations in terms of their accountability and ethics in relation to decision-making and efficiency.

0-7748-1004-1



Yup, it's about oil. The Seven Sisters (Exxon, Chevron, Mobil, Gulf, Texaco, BP and Shell) once owned four-fifths of the known oil resources outside the U.S. In *The Party's Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies* (New Society, \$26.95), **Richard Heinberg** looks at how corporations and governments are competing for dwindling supplies. 0-86571-482-7

THE PARTY'S OVER GRAPHIC

Charles Dobson of the Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design has prepared a how-to guide for mobilizing activists, **The Troublemaker's Teaparty** (New Society \$23.95). It's about how to knock on doors, win friends and influence people—and keep spirits from flagging when the going gets rough.

0-86571-489-4



The Arrest Handbook is free from the non-profit B.C. Civil Liberties Association, and covers such issues as arrest, search and seizure, plus poverty and drug laws. The BCCLA has also published **The Arrest Pocketbook**. Both are available in Spanish, Vietnamese and Arabic.

Call 604-687-2919 for info.



George Melnyk has edited **Canada and the New American Empire: War and Anti-War** (University of Calgary Press \$19.95), an examination of Canada's decision not to support the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

1-55238-130-7

Tender is the bruise

The writing voice of **Anne Cameron** is as unmistakable as the singing voice of Willie Nelson or Johnny Cash. She's not copying anyone. You're either a fan or you're not.

I am. I've read enough of her 30-some-odd books to trust her. You just have to hold on for the ride. Having written lots of kids books, an award-winning screenplay or two (*Ticket To Heaven*, *Dreamspeaker*), two bestsellers (*Daughters of Copper Woman*, *Dzelerhons*), Anne Cameron is first and foremost a prolific and imperfect novelist. Like other impassioned storytellers, such as **George Eliot** and **Tolstoy**, her mind is fraught with diversions and her pacing can be problematic. She doesn't write so much as she bubbles over. She has lived and loved and fought and taught.

The heroine of her new novel **Family Resemblances** (Harbour \$24.95) is Cedar Campbell, daughter of Kate, a battered wife in a small coastal town. Her Dad, Gus, is a chronic womanizer and logger who dotes on his various children, legitimate or otherwise. Trouble is, Gus can be depended upon to go ballistic, to brutalize. Cedar soon learns there is no safe place to hide if she emulates the passive behaviour of her mother. She resolves, unconsciously, to be different.

It's scarily believable. "While the children napped, Kate soaked in a deep tub of almost hot water and looked sadly at the bruises on her arms and legs. Irregularly shaped, almost but not quite round, the marks were spots where Gus had gripped her with his strong fingers. Even the insides of her thighs felt battered, and while she couldn't say the ache inside her was a pain, it was a dull ache, and she knew it was from the rough way he'd thumped at her, banged into her, not so much taking her as using her with no sign of love or even sexual desire, just using her, as much a punishment as a slap in the face. She felt degraded, and the worst of it was, it wasn't something you could talk about to anybody, not even your sister. If it wasn't for the fact that they were married, she would have considered it to be rape. But how could a man rape his wife? She'd never heard of such a thing. It didn't occur to her that she hadn't heard of it because nobody else could bring herself to talk about it, either."

Whereas novels of high-born marital

intrigue often involve money and property, the currency at stake in *Family Resemblances* is pride, self-esteem. In this latest Cameron novel of deceptions and conceptions, Cedar Campbell grows up to take responsibility for herself and others. Cedar fights back at school, then finds comfort in taking care of hogs on a nearby farm. She takes pride in doing a good job as waitress in the café where her mother works. We follow her all the way from the cradle to her independence as a truck driver and homeowner. It makes for a tender, funny and heart-stoppingly violent journey.

The character of Cedar Campbell is the through-line so perhaps a title such as Cedar might have been better. As well, Cameron's narrative is prone to big leaps. She can spend several pages discussing methods of pig farming, then suddenly Cedar's mother is having an affair with some new character and that takes only a few paragraphs. And we're never quite sure why women flock to Gus.

But Anne Cameron novels are fun to splash around in. She has intense sympathies, a flair for colourful language, a penchant for didactic truths and she is not interested in becoming the flavour of the week. She only knows outsiderism. In a literary world where it's *de rigeur* to teach post-modernist crud in universities, Anne Cameron, has moved to the fringes—now living in Tahsis—to embrace her own fierce brand of revolution. Despite her physical estrangement from the writing game, her crusading spirit is always meshed with good humour.

Candace Walker is a freelance writer in Prince George.

By Candace Walker

Escape from Alberta

In **Lisa Grekul's** first novel **Kalyna's Song** (Coteau \$19.95) a gifted young pianist and singer named Colleen Lutzak loses unfairly in a music competition and learns the politics of ethnicity in northern Alberta.



Lisa Grekul: new kid in town

The novel explores the process by which Colleen learns to accept herself as a young Ukrainian Canadian woman and find peace with the loss of friends and family, including her aunt Kalyna, for whom she composes a commemorative song.

Following the death of her beloved piano teacher Sister Maria and an alienating first-year experience at university, Colleen accepts an unexpected academic scholarship

to attend a college in Swaziland.

Africa is no easier than Alberta. While overcoming a bitter cultural rivalry with a Polish student, she attempts to befriend a shy, local girl Thaiwende, but loses her to suicide following the girl's unwanted pregnancy.

Colleen witnesses post-apartheid South Africa first-hand while volunteering at hospitals and is present when celebrations erupt with news of Nelson Mandela's release from prison.

Grekul grew up in St. Paul, Alberta, worked as a musician and has attended school in Swaziland. In 2003, she began teaching in the English department of the University of British Columbia.

—by Martin Twigg

1-55050-225-5

CATCHING COYOTE

A Gulf Islander’s cocktail of suspense, kookiness & idealism.

In **Brian Brett**’s ethical thriller, *Coyote* (Thistledown \$19.95), West Coast Inspector Janwar Singh and Constable Kirsten Crosby investigate the disappearance of a woman linked to ‘America’s first eco-terrorist’ named Coyote.

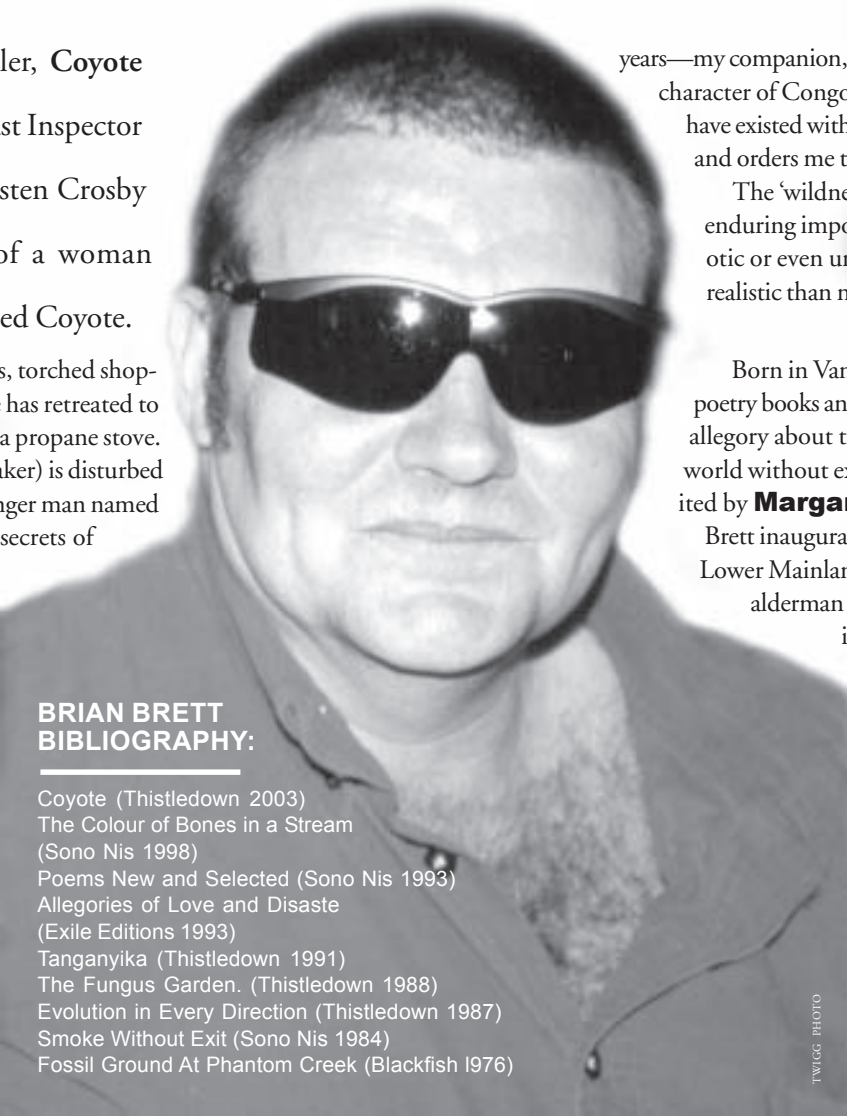
Having blown up bridges to clearcut logging sites, torched shopping malls and ‘liberated’ zoos in the 1970s, Coyote has retreated to Artemis Island to live peacefully in a treehouse with a propane stove. The reclusive and meditative Coyote (aka Charlie Baker) is disturbed at the outset of the novel by a visit from a crazed younger man named Brian who poses as a writer who hopes to unlock secrets of Coyote’s urban guerrilla past.

This intruder has a narrative voice in the story. “Yes, it’s Brian again—as he was twenty years ago. This is my story, I’m telling it, so why can’t I make myself a character?”.

A former lover of Coyote’s named Rita Norman mysteriously connects Brian, Coyote and Inspector Singh.

The range of styles in this novel—conventional police procedure, post modern narrative, and distillation of West Coast manners—makes Coyote into an original concoction replete with fembos, magic mushrooms, mackinaws, Tai Chi, a New Age retreat called The Last Resort and a talking parrot named Congo.

“All speeches by Congo, except three or four, are courtesy of the parrot I’ve lived with for twenty



**BRIAN BRETT
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- The Fungus Garden. (Thistledown 1988)
- Evolution in Every Direction (Thistledown 1987)
- Smoke Without Exit (Sono Nis 1984)
- Fossil Ground At Phantom Creek (Blackfish 1976)

years—my companion, Tuco,” writes Brett in an afterword, “Though the character of Congo is different and not nearly as clever, he couldn’t have existed without Tuco, who is an endless source of inspiration, and orders me to work every morning. And that’s no story.”

The ‘wildness’ of the Gulf Island locale and emphasis on the enduring importance of kookiness and idealism could seem exotic or even unrealistic to some readers, but the blend is more realistic than might be imagined.



Born in Vancouver in 1950, Brian Brett is also the author of poetry books and a novella about termites, *The Fungus Garden*, an allegory about the survival of artistic sensibility in a totalitarian world without exits. His next book after *Coyote* is now being edited by **Margaret Atwood**.

Brett inaugurated Poetry in Schools workshops throughout the Lower Mainland in the early 1970s and served as a White Rock alderman from 1980-84. Long involved in the Writers Union of Canada, Brett is also a ceramics artist who lives on a Salt Spring Island farm.

1-894345-53-5



Also now living on Salt Spring Island with his novelist/partner **Pearl Luke**, as well as in Calgary, **Robert Hilles** has released *A Gradual Ruin* (Doubleday \$29.95), a novel about hard choices made in the German countryside during World War II and in Winnipeg’s mean streets during the 1960s. Previously Hilles’ *Raising of Voices* won the Writers Guild of Alberta award for best novel and he’s won the Governor General’s Award or poetry.

0-385-65961-X

Heddlīne

Aoccdrnig to a rscheearchr at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae.

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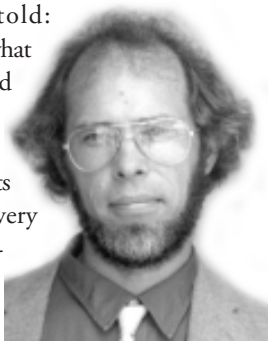
Keven Naphtali
Vancouver

New Cliché

Ernest Hekkanen's excellent piece, 'Wrestling with Demons' (BCBW, Winter 2003) brings up the need for a new cliché about writing. Instead of telling aspiring writers "Write about what you know," they should be told:

"Write about what you observe and seek to understand." BC BookWorld gets better with every issue. Congratulations on keeping up the quality.

Jim Lotz
Halifax



Ernest Hekkanen

I want to hold your issue

When my copy of (BCBW, Winter 2003) arrived, I eagerly scanned the pages hoping for a line or 2 announcing *All You Need Is Love*. I gasped, literally, when I saw the review. Thank you so much; you have given me such an unexpected break and I am very appreciative.

Jewelle St. James
Revelstoke

Take one

I just picked up a copy of (BCBW, Autumn 2003). Thank you so much for the great blurb on "Recording Tips For Engineers" and the photograph. (page 11)

I am a big fan of your fine magazine, and it is a real honour to be included in your pages. As well, I appreciate you mentioning the other books that Black ink Publishing carries. Thanks again for promoting and helping local authors and publishers. You do a great service to the people of BC.

Tim Crich
Vancouver

Mojo working

Just wanted to express my sincere appreciation for your generous coverage of my new book. Lots of kind remarks from people who've seen the issue (BCBW, Autumn 2003) already. We should be honouring our regional standard-bearers, like you folks, the way they do in Hawaii. Living treasures. Keep yer mojo working,

Trevor Carolan
Vancouver

Write to:

BC BookWorld, 3516 W. 13th Ave.,
Vancouver, BC V6R 2S3
email: bookworld@telus.net
Letters may be edited for clarity & length.

Robert Strandquist illuminates the precarious human gravity of his fellow man in a novel partially inspired by bad luck, Social Assistance and the travails of love. **by JEREMY TWIGG**

It's an average day at the shoemaker's shop where Leo works until a woman comes through the door pushing a stroller with two white geese. Leo reluctantly agrees to make custom booties for the birds.

"He finds a lovely piece of alligator, but it's wrong, somehow, for a goose. He digs up a couple of scraps of fine brown cow lining... He caresses the thin leather with his thumbs, turning it over in his mind and eventually the challenges coalesce into specifics and potential weaves itself into an idea, a place to begin."

So begins **Robert Strandquist's** first novel *The Dreamlife of Bridges* (Anvil \$18), the story of Leo, a divorced father trying to cope with his son's suicide. Leo just wants to keep to himself, but bad luck sticks to him like glue.

He's a handyman capable of fixing most things except himself.

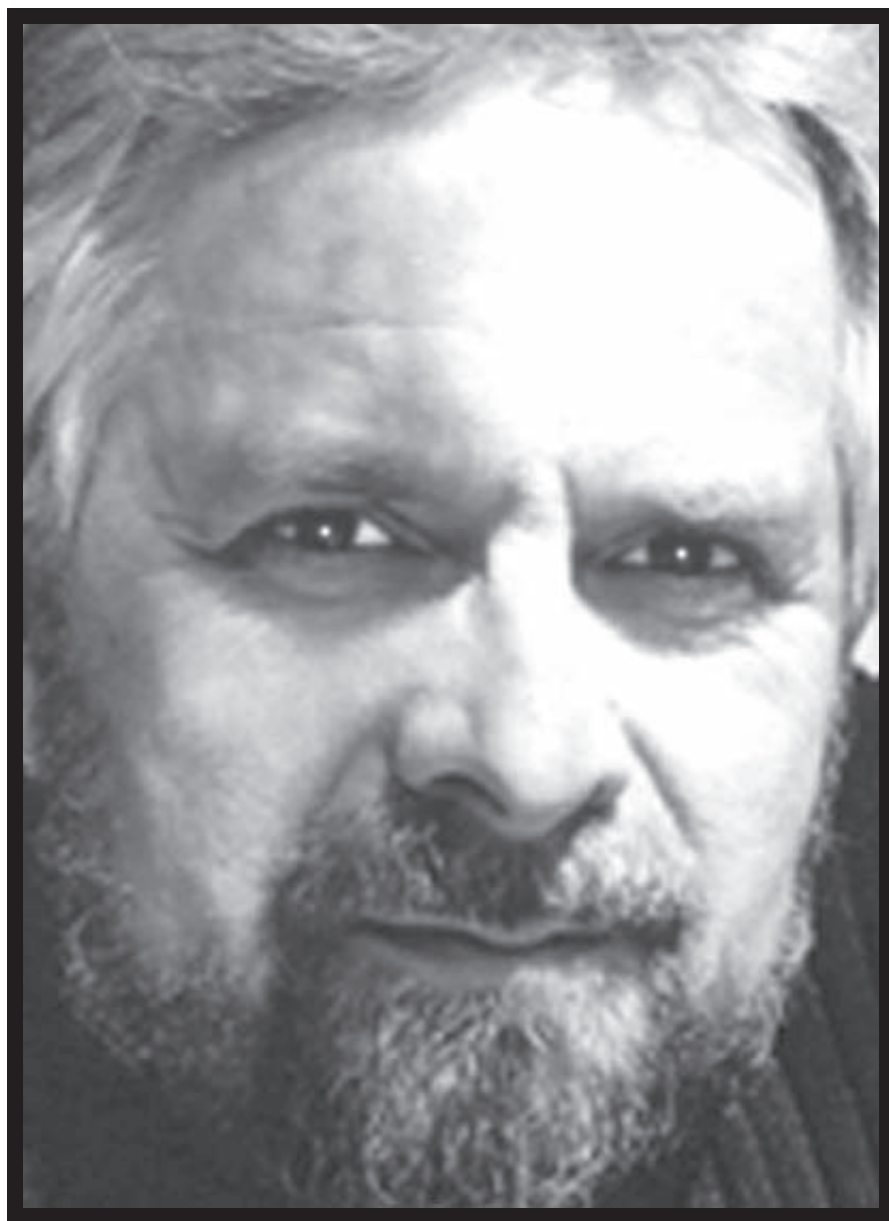
Leo's walk home to False Creek shows his dark frame of mind as he passes between the brewery's chain-link fence and the rail yard siding "where a couple of boxcars have been wasting gravity for the past week." The Burrard Bridge, at its apex, "achieves a height sufficient to clear the masts of ships and gives suicides a better than fifty-fifty chance."

June is Leo's upstairs neighbour. She's a separated stock trader fighting to retain custody of her son. A blown fuse creates darkness and the opportunity for romance. "The scent she's wearing has a stormy wildness about it, and he longs for the sheltering nape of being in love, to be out of reach of his memories. He wants to get on his knees and beg her to love him. But the glare of banality breaks over them when June locates the switch."

They're both damaged goods but they give dinner a try. The mood is broken when two social workers and an RCMP officer arrive to check on June's boy.

Late for work one too many times, Leo gets fired from the shoemaker's. He finds cheap housing—shared with the goose woman, an explosives artist, a cyclist, an intellectual and a young female student—and gets fired from a string of blue collar jobs. Returning from Social Services, wanting only to curl up in bed, he finds the contents of his room strewn on the sidewalk. He has slept with the young student and the goose woman is jealous. "His scaffolding pride crumples around his feet and he just stands there waiting for the first breeze to knock him over." With no place to stay, little money and less pride, Leo ditches his possessions for a life on the streets. "He could take his room back, occupy it by force, demand his rights under the law, but for some reason this was easier, to just walk away." It's hard to fight back where you're tired.

FIXING THE HANDYMAN



There's a lot of me in Leo. I've had to run into a few walls. I've had to look at myself in the mirror a few times. I have lived on welfare at one point. But I don't plan. Planning to me would be death. My reasons for writing stories are always different from how they turn out. My intention is just to explore myself and enjoy the language.

"The day I become didactic I will stop writing."

✍

Strandquist carries on with two story lines. June cavorts with a sleazy stock trader and drinks too much while Leo copes with life on the street. But the story belongs to Leo, as he beats recycling trucks to the punch and savours the luxury of laundry day. "He finds a clock and winds it up, creating a major personal crisis when he can't turn the alarm off... He surrenders his absurd pride. It makes no difference if he's a bum or somebody else is. There has to be a bum, a mannequin for people to dress up with their moods. Places to shit are at a premium."

After the catharsis of losing everything, he finds himself back with the goose woman and her unlikely housemates—part of a family again. But as with Strandquist's stories in his collection *The Inanimate World*, it's the writing that matters as much as the plot. There are surprises on each page, geysers of inventiveness, so the downbeat landscape of Leo's precarious life is never, never dull. We pull for him because he's a sentient being like us, and we recognize bits of ourselves in Strandquist's frequent moments of brilliance.

Leo gets pleasure from eating a sandwich. "The tough crust, the yielding cheese, the cheerful cucumber, tomato with mayonnaise—together it all equaled a deep and lovely kiss."

✍

Born in Vancouver in 1952, Robert Strandquist grew up in Nelson and Kelowna. After a brief period in Lethbridge, he graduated from UVic's Writing Department, then received his M.A. from UBC in 1986.

"I didn't set out to write a topical book," he says, in reference to B.C.'s new Welfare legislation taking effect, "but I find social conscience seems to go with language in some inextricable way.

"Sure, I have politics like anybody else. I find it is deeply disturbing, what is happening. It's really a shame that in the past hundred years, or even much longer than that, we have developed an infrastructure to support people and that it is being pulled out from under us in a matter of months. But I never set out with a political agenda.

"I just set out with a character and let him or her lead the book wherever it goes.

CUCKOO CHRONICLE

Profit of doom **Jan Lars Jensen** was beset by paranoid delusions that his soon-to-be published novel would set in motion the end the world.

Depictions of madness in the popular imagination are mainly derived from actors—people faking it. **King Lear** as a ranter; **Hamlet** as a philosopher. **Jack Nicholson** in Cuckoo's Nest, as a rebel. And **Van Gogh** cut off his ear, right?

But there aren't any Shakespearean soliloquies, no playing towards the camera for sympathy, in **Jan Lars Jensen's** *Nervous System* (Raincoast \$34.95). In this play-by-play depiction of insanity, Jensen reprises the period of his life, in his late 20s, when he overdosed on pills, became convinced someone was going to kill him and was beset by paranoid delusions that his soon-to-be published novel would set in motion the end of the world.

"Eventually they would seize me, inject me, drag me to their hidden room. They would punish me for the novel and the things it was going to do. The police were here on the ward, the nurses were their collaborators."

Jensen had a faithful, employed wife. His life was full of promise. Raised in the Fraser Valley, he had attended UVic's Writing Department and sold a novel to a large and prestigious American firm while he was working within the Fraser Valley library system. But that futuristic fantasy novel, *Shiva 3000*, about destructive forces in the universe, drove him to the brink of self-destruction while he awaited the novel's release.

Desperate to forewarn the human race of the imminent apocalypse, he retreated to a blinkered and lonely place. That's where we meet him in *Nervous System's* opening pages.

"I can only wait for my executioner (now I understand why prophets are slain because nothing scares people worse than someone who jeopardizes their material world)..."

In just 48 hours, J.L. Jensen went from being an atheist to someone who deduced, on paper, an equation that proved the existence of God. "You know your life has changed when you wake up in a psych ward. There is the time in your life before this moment, and the time after."



Nervous System is mostly set in an unnamed Lower Mainland hospital, and would be ideal substance for a one-man play. It begins like some **Stephen King**

novel, as Jensen hears his killer singing, 'She'll be coming round the mountain when she comes, when she comes...'

Spooky stuff, alright. But Jensen is mostly worried that some innocent person on the ward will be shot by mistake instead of him. He understands why someone would want to kill him. That novel of his. He should never have written it. It's a Pandora's box.

Having stumbled upon an internet site in which irate Hindus take severe objection to superficial interpretations of their religion, Jensen quickly became obsessed with the hideous notion that his own glib appropriation of Hindu terms will incite controversy. This ruckus, in turn, will generate a global conflict.

At first, when he is delivered to the emergency ward by the husband of a co-worker in the library, Jensen seems absurdly crazed, an unfunny **Woody Allen** who can't stop himself from percolating fresh anxieties. When his loving wife Michelle brings him homemade grape juice in the hospital, he fears it could be poison. But the more we become privy to Jensen's fears, the more we follow the inner logic of his paranoia, the more we come to realize, ohmigawd, this is what it's really like to go bonkers, *this* is insanity.

He's no Rushdie wannabe. He's genuinely stuck inside mental torment, not someone manufacturing drama for a bravura performance in order to come up with a second book. All this stuff really happened to him, it's not a novel, even though it's recorded by someone who often tells his story with the skills and instincts of a novelist.

But this narrator is so deeply self-absorbed, we don't necessarily feel compassion for him from the outset. How can someone so precise and articulate be simultaneously so feckless? Can't this guy just snap out of it? The question arises as to what extent mental illness could sometimes be some twisted form of self-indulgence.

We remain on the periphery of Jensen's predicament, neutral but entertained, until we come to realize Jensen is provid-

ing us with a very privileged viewpoint. *Nervous System* is a deeply human reporting of a remarkable journey. We gradually come to appreciate, along with him, that *lots* of people must feel and think as he does. Jensen is a rare messenger from the land of inner torment, an ambassador of madness, a **Marco Polo** of paranoia, who has come a long way back to unravel his tale.

"Ping-pong should probably be declared the official sport of mental patients. The pairing just seems right: something to do with the sound of that taut plastic sphere hitting the table, the back and forth of it, the unexpected angles, not to mention the platypus-bill oddness of the implements with which you were expected to manage the ball's frantic ferrying back and forth."

The story is subtitled *Losing My Mind in Literature*. With that slant, initially we wonder if the narrator is considering himself to be a special case. Writers are often complex people so perhaps there's a conceit that madness is some sort of occupational hazard, like booze for journalists.

It's a relief when Jensen comes to view himself as an over-medicated Everyman. He evolves from being a loner in the psych ward, trying to outthink his psychiatrist to gain a quicker release, to someone who feels camaraderie for his fellow sufferers. This change for the better is, to some extent, not just the product of his circumstances. Jensen does a lot of hard work—thinking work—experimenting with prayer, re-examining his family background and questioning the nature of his character.

"...my thoughts had turned to my life and decisions that shaped it, and even if I

my motivation wasn't evil, it was undeniably self-centred.

"I must incorporate good acts in my life—selfless behaviour—if there was to be any chance of feeling comfortable with my place in the universe. I wanted to make this change immediately, make an effort."

The parts of Jensen's memoir that seem forced are his retrospective ramblings about his life prior to becoming shrink-wrapped. This middle section of his book often seems like padding.

There are some valuable clues that Jensen considers as to how and why he detoured into madness, such as a bout of obsessive handwashing in 1975, a strange fit prior to an algebra exam in 1987, and his adverse response to an injection for an anti-malarial medication prompting a near-hysterical response to a long-planned trip to India that had to be cancelled, but these recollections suffer in comparison to his riveting accounts of life in the psych ward.

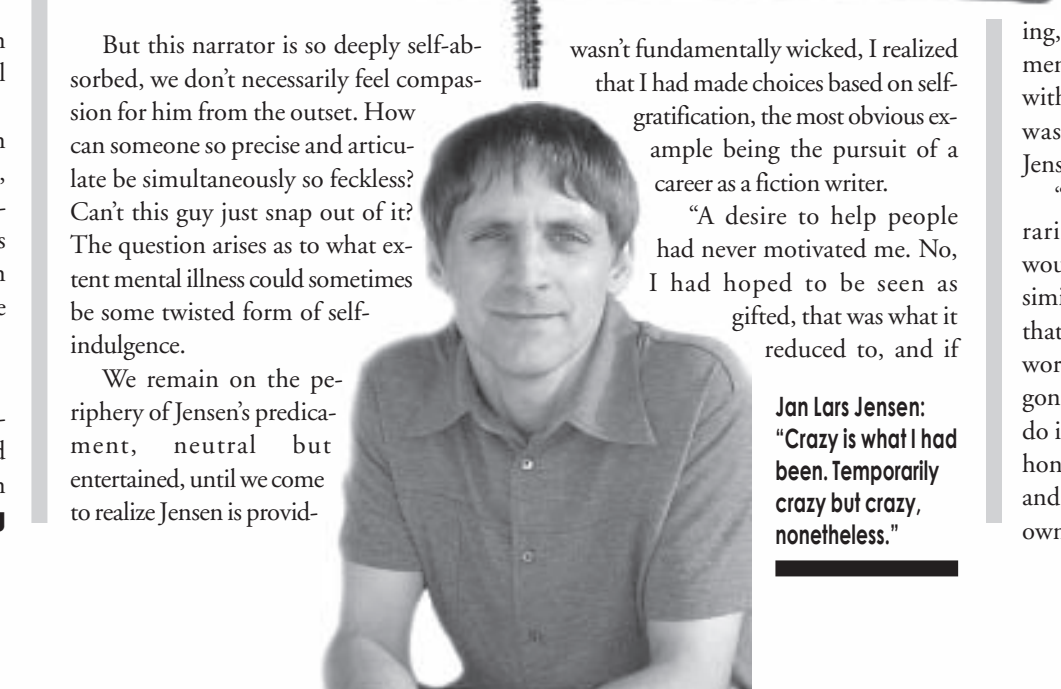
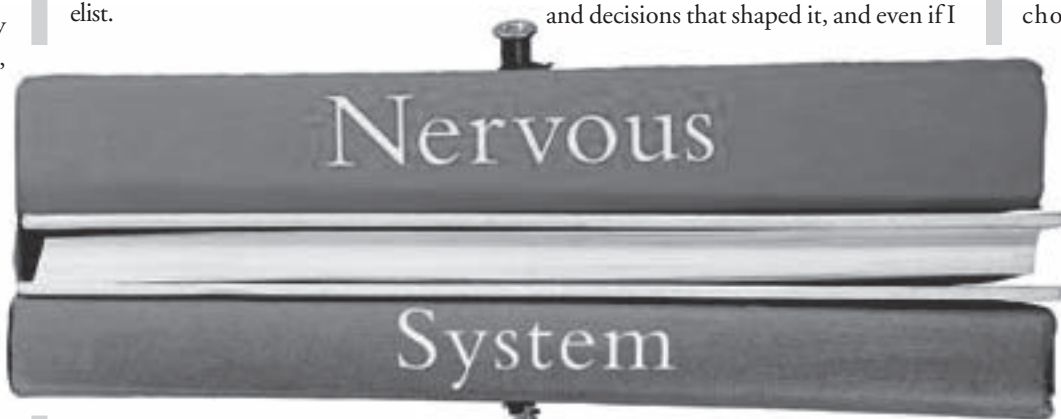
We learn that Mefloquine, a preventative drug for malaria, can cause psychiatric problems including hallucinations and psychosis, and that Jensen's mother also suffered mental illness, but Jensen never accepts heredity or previous events as the cause for his decline. That would be taking the easy way out—or back in.

The first night Jensen was sent home, he was plagued again by his inability to sleep. His wife took him back to the hospital at 6 a.m. the next morning. It was a very arduous road to recovery through a maze of drugs (Xanax, Doxepin, Risperdal—an anti-anxiety, an antidepressant, an anti-psychotic—to name a few) and some questionable psychiatric probings.

That first novel gets published, with minimal fanfare. It fails to earn the publishers back his advance. The fact that Jensen chooses to provide that information, when he might just as easily not mentioned it, typifies the level of honesty for which Jensen is aiming.

Rather than give away the ending, or divulge details of Jensen's predicament—as he further dehydrated himself with tears and contemplated the ways he was ruining his wife's life—some of Jensen's own conclusions might be best.

"Crazy is what I had been. Temporarily crazy but crazy, nonetheless. I would understand if other people with similar problems disliked or even feared that label, but I had struggled to find a word to match the experience I had just gone through and only 'crazy' seemed to do it... The best I could do was try to be honest in my writing—true, somehow—and let people draw conclusions on their own."



Jan Lars Jensen: "Crazy is what I had been. Temporarily crazy but crazy, nonetheless."

Retro makes the grade

Espousing arousal, **Gord Martin**, chef/owner of Vancouver’s Bin 941 and Bin 942, promises sexy food for stylish people in his first cookbook **Tongue Twisters** (Arsenal Pulp \$23.95).

Hep to be hip, **Kenji Hodgson** and **James Nevison**’s **Have a Glass** (Whitecap \$19.95) is a wine guide that attempts to banish snobbery for the young-at-palate.



Yes, there’s a recipe for granola, but even though **Linda Solomon** and **Moreka Jolar**’s **Hollyhock Cooks** (New Society \$29.95) emanates from the Cortes Island retreat centre for the body, mind and soul, it doesn’t skimp on desserts. Nothing like a dream bar for wellness.



Meanwhile one of the big hits for seasonal sales was the decidedly retro **Cooking with Mona** (Whitecap \$24.95), a nostalgic re-issue of the Original Woodward’s Cookbook recipes from **Mona Brun**.

A food consultant for Woodward’s Food Floors for 28 years, Brun promoted B.C. food products and hosted cooking shows, from the PNE



and the Abbotsford’s Agrifair, and also on TV (Culinary Capers, Creative Cooking).

The original **Cooking with Mona** cookbook appeared in 1977. Mona rocks.



In the same vein, originally dedicated to the medical staff at Victoria’s Royal Jubilee Hospital—who provided its author with a good-as-new ticker in 1982, the year of original publication—**Jack Whelan**’s bestseller **Smoking Salmon & Trout: Plus Canning Freezing, Pickling & More** (Harbour \$22.95) is another retro classic in terms of both content and packaging.

Whelan (1917-1994) was a rancher, photographer, food scientist, feedlot operator and inventor who studied methods of preserving and processing fish. He branded several patents in food science and engineering.

Dig that white turtleneck.

Tongue –55152-149-0; Glass 1-55285-470-1;
Holly 0-86571-488-6; Mona 1-55285-449-3;
Smoking 1-55017-302-2

ALSO RECEIVED:

Eating Up Vancouver Island (Whitecap) by
Rosemary Neering
Chef’s Salad (Whitecap)
by **Bill Jones**
Everyone Can Cook: Over 120 Recipes
for Entertaining Everyday (Whitecap)
by **Eric Akis**



The Nahanee Family, Gloria Nahanee (second from right)

POWWOW NOW

SQUAMISH: When **Gloria Nahanee** attended St. Paul’s Indian Day School in the 1950s, she was taught Scottish, Irish, Ukrainian, Dutch, Spanish and square dances by nuns. When the Squamish Nation held their powwows in the 1940s and 1950s, sometimes lasting ten days, she sometimes ran away and hid at the other end of the field.

“I thought I had to dance,” she recalls in **Spirit of Powwow** (Hancock \$39.95). “The regalia and the noise scared me at first. But I can remember the stage where our ancestors Uncle Dominic Charlie and August Jack did the Squamish songs and dances.”

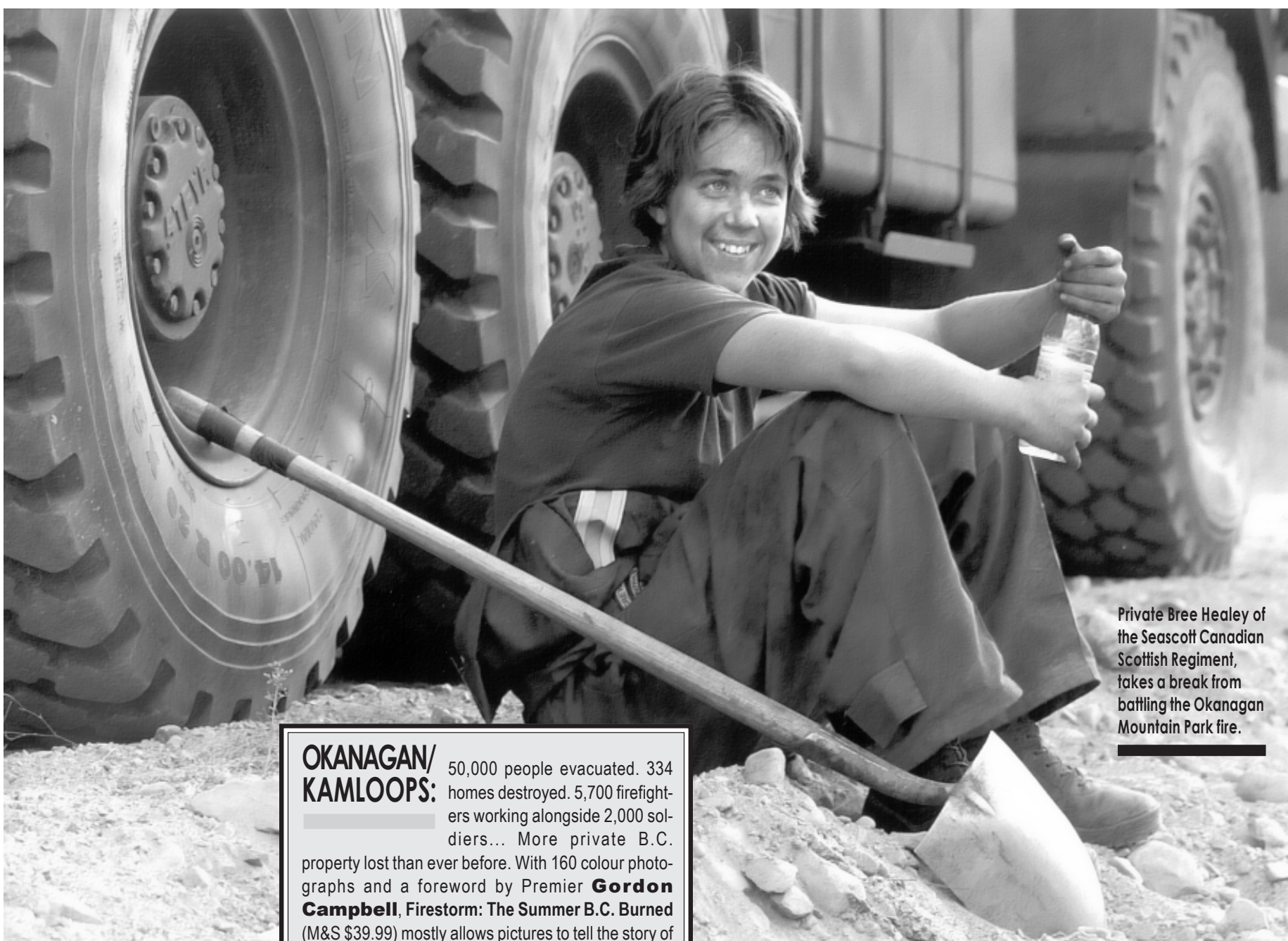
Powwows at Squamish disappeared for 30 years after 1958. It wasn’t until Nahanee’s own daughter began to naturally dance at age six that she began to explore the traditional dances of her own culture. Nahanee travelled to powwows for two years and co-founded the Squamish Nation Dancers in 1987, then organized a revival of the Squamish powwow in 1988.

“The old spirits told me they wanted the powwow revived,” she says, “and that our young people would carry this on.”

The annual Squamish pow-wow is now a three-day event that attracts 200 dancers and an audience of up to 4,000. *Spirit of Powwow* is Nahanee’s illustrated introduction to, and celebration of, the powwow dances and traditions, co-written with **Kay Johnston**.

0-88839-520-5

A R U N D



Private Bree Healey of the Seascott Canadian Scottish Regiment, takes a break from battling the Okanagan Mountain Park fire.

OKANAGAN/KAMLOOPS: 50,000 people evacuated. 334 homes destroyed. 5,700 firefighters working alongside 2,000 soldiers... More private B.C. property lost than ever before. With 160 colour photographs and a foreword by Premier **Gordon Campbell**, **Firestorm: The Summer B.C. Burned** (M&S \$39.99) mostly allows pictures to tell the story of the unprecedented devastation wrought by last summer's fires in the B.C. interior—but there are some odd details. Returnees were instructed by health officials to discard their taped-shut fridges rather than re-open them, for fear of spreading molds. Whereas media coverage of the fires was Kelowna-centric, concentrating on folks who were losing swimming pools, this book has a section for Kamloops and another for other fronts. It's compiled and edited by freelancer **Ross Freake** and Kelowna reporter **Don Plant**. 0-7710-4772-X

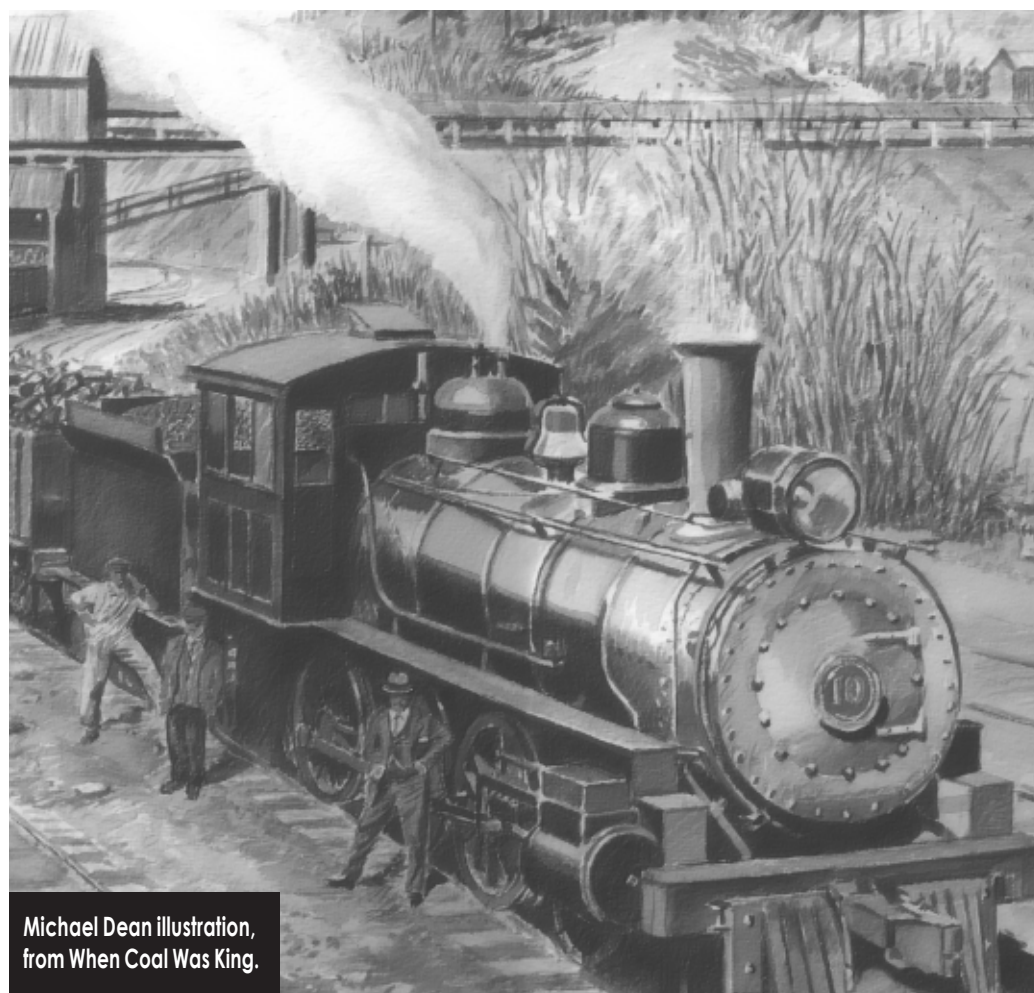
NANAIMO: After her *Black Diamond: Nanaimo—The Victorian Era*, **Jan Peterson's** second installment of her trilogy, **Hub City: Nanaimo 1886-1920** (Heritage \$19.95), covers from the arrival of the E&N Railway to the end of World War I, including the emergence of the labour movement, the Great Strike of 1912-1914, the rise and fall of coal baron **James Dunsmuir** and the Spanish influenza epidemic. In the aftermath of the 1887 mining disaster, mining inspector Archibald Dick wrote, "Seven persons... were all that were got out alive of the 154 that went down to work on the afternoon of the 3rd May... The pumps were kept going for about two weeks before it could be said that the fire was extinguished." On the lighter side, Peterson recalls Nanaimo's 1896 bicycle craze led to speed limits of eight miles-per-hour on streets and six in intersections. **George Bird** was the first person to ride a bicycle across Vancouver Island (in 13.75 hours) and Nanaimo's **William Good** was the world's fastest sprinter in the 400-meter race at the San Francisco World Fair—but was not awarded the medal because he was Native. 1-894384-66-0

LADYSMITH: **John H. Hinde** has explored the history of coal mining in B.C., which began at Fort Rupert in 1848, by concentrating on the town of Ladysmith. The origins of the Great Strike of 1912-1914 are illuminated in **When Coal Was King: Ladysmith and the Coal-Mining Industry on Vancouver Island**

(UBC Press \$85, \$29.95). In 1911, prior to the Great Strike, the Island's collieries employed more than 4,600 men and mined a record 1,855,661 gross tons of coal. Following an agreement to exclude the Chinese from underground work at Wellington and Nanaimo in 1888, the Chinese were only allowed to work underground at the most dangerous mine on the

Island, at Union. Trade unionists later argued Chinese labourers should not take jobs because they were inherently unsafe workers. As the author of *Jacob Burckhardt and the Crisis of Modernity* (McGill-Queens 2000), UVic and Malaspina College professor Hinde has received the Wallace K. Ferguson Prize from the Canadian Historical Association.

0-7748-0935-3 cl; 0-7748-0936-1 pb.



Michael Dean illustration, from *When Coal Was King*.

ALERT BAY: As two old-time mariners take their last voyage on a 1920s seiner called the *May S.*, Alert Bay-born and raised **Pat Wastell Norris** describes the classic vessel down to her engine, and hearkens back to a time when whales were called blackfish and pubs were beer parlours in **High Boats** (Harbour \$32.95). Ostensibly a history of West Coast fishing, *High Boats* doubles as a paean to the unique hybrid culture of Alert Bay, the fishing community on Cormorant Island, off the northeast coast of Vancouver Island. Beyond the roll of the boat, the tang of the bull kelp, Norris provides a social history of the region and its prominent personalities. The title refers to the term used to describe seiners with the highest total catches, as usually cited in the local paper—not unlike boxscores for baseball. 1-55017-289-1

Camp Vernon—544 pages of memories

VERNON From the early 1900s, Camp Vernon trained soldiers for the Boer War, WWI, WWII, Korea and peacekeeping. **Hugh Rayment** and **Patrick Sherlock**

have assembled **Camp Vernon: A Century of Canadian Military History** (Kettle Valley \$49.95) from 500 pounds of research material. Independent writer/

publisher **George Matheson** has combined 429 photos and 50 illustrations for this comprehensive 544-page doorstopper.



George Matheson

In his foreward, historian and Camp Vernon trainee **Pierre Berton** recalls, “I have a confused impression of that first morning, when we discarded our civilian clothes forever and were herded, shambling and bleating, onto the parade square in the heart of that grey and somber camp in the rolling Okanagan hills.

“There we stood, with the fuzzy new battledress hanging slackly on our frames, the service caps sitting uneasily on our heads like fezzes, the gaiters buckled backward, the webbing hopelessly tangled, and the freshly greased rifles car-

ried like truncheons... We were taught to do weird things. The weirdest of all was to hurl ourselves at a sack of straw, thrust into it with a bayonet while shouting ‘Kill! Kill! Kill!’”

— **Pierre Berton**



ried like truncheons... We were taught to do weird things. The weirdest of all was to hurl ourselves at a sack of straw, thrust into it with a bayonet while shouting ‘Kill! Kill! Kill!’ and then jump on it while clobbering it with the butt of a rifle...

“Each barrack room, with its double row of two-tiered bunks, was like a cave hermetically sealed from intruders. When we entered, slapping our hands together to get rid of the chill of the night, a wall of suffocating heat almost drove us back.

“The scene was Dantesque: the stove, glowing red hot in the centre of the hut, causing our shadows to leap against the walls, and the blanketed figures, squirming, snoring, and groaning on their sheetless cots.

“In that dense atmosphere, as thick as soup, it was difficult to breathe; and the stench, compounded of rifle oil, sweat, Lysol, unwashed clothing, steaming greatcoats, old socks, boot polish, coal smoke, body odours, stale bedding, and even staler tobacco, was overpowering.”

Authors Hugh Rayment and Patrick Sherlock are both retired veterans in Vernon.

Contact: (888-986-2266) 0-9687917-1-9

Camp Vernon, 1986

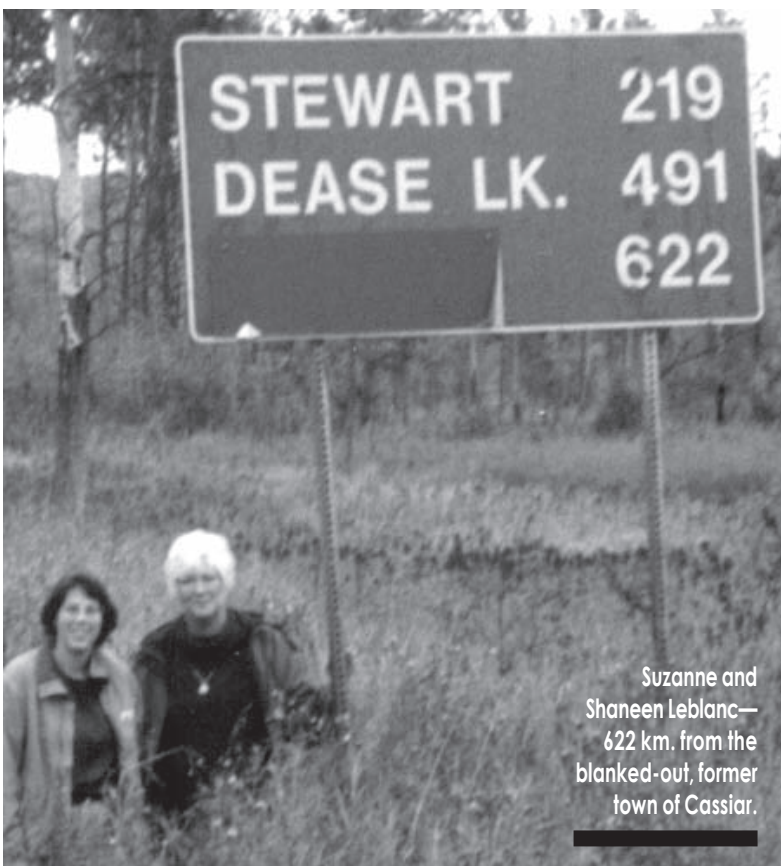
RACING OUTHOUSES

CASSIAR: After conducting nearly 100 interviews and sifting through 2,500 boxes

of archives, **Suzanne LeBlanc** has compiled **Cassiar: A Jewel in the Wilderness** (Caitlin \$19.95), a comprehensive study of the town built in 1952 to house the workers of Cassiar Asbestos Corporation. Prosperity was short-lived. Between 1974 and 1991, 6,500 people—mine workers and members of the public alike—filed law suits against Cassiar for health damage caused by asbestos. The resulting legal costs were upwards of ten million dollars and led to the town’s decline in 1992. LeBlanc includes charts on annual rainfall and average temperatures, and less sober information about social history. The annual *Schmoo Daze* festival in March, for instance, was meant to relieve cabin fever. The town’s favourite event was the outhouse race, in which contestants designed and raced functional outhouses—with one team member sitting at the throne. NHL players Rob and Scott Niedermayer are from

Cassiar. You’ll also learn that Egyptians first used asbestos to preserve their pharaohs, Greeks wove asbestos into wicks for lamps, and Charles the Great is reported to have had a tablecloth made of asbestos—which he cleaned by throwing into the fire. LeBlanc lives in Prince George and teaches at the University of Northern British Columbia.

0-920576-99-0



Suzanne and Shaneen LeBlanc—622 km. from the blanked-out, former town of Cassiar.

PRINCE RUPERT:

After living on the North Coast for 40 years, Dr. **W.B.M. Hick** became absorbed in Prince Rupert’s history and its frustrated ambition to be a major Canadian port. He’s published **Hay’s Orphan: The Story of the Port of Prince Rupert** (Prince Rupert Port Authority \$24.99), an in-depth history that arises from the ambitions of **Charles Hayes**—aka Hays—president of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in the early 1900s. Dr. Hick was once the only physician in the isolated vil-

lage of Stewart and he was on the BC Ferries’ first board of directors. He uses charts and photographs to explain the political, economic and industrial development of railways, grain and coal export and marine transportation. 0-9733894-0-0

BROUGHTON ARCHIPELAGO:

Fisherman, trapper, logger and all-round West Coast guru **Bill Proctor** is the authority on the Broughton Archipelago—the area between northern Vancouver Island and the mainland that’s named after Captain **William Broughton** who accompanied Captain **Vancouver** in the 1790s. Proctor’s colourful **Full Moon, Flood Tide** (Harbour \$24.95) describes the archipelago’s his-

tory, wildlife, harbours, moorings, peculiar local terms and customs, and its most memorable characters such as **Fritz Salem**, renowned for making the best ‘corn likker’. Proctor’s co-author is illustrator **Yvonne Maximchuk**. Does this mean Proctor is now also an archipelagologist?

1-55017-291-3

PRINCESS LOUISA INLET:

Charles Johnstone, who settled in

Princess Louisa Inlet with his wife and eight kids in 1910, lived off the land. “To hone their hunting skills,” says **Charles William Hitz** in **Through the Rapids** (Sitka 2 Publishing, \$28.95), “Charles would sometimes have his sons go on ‘wild man’ hunts high in the mountains.

“He blew a hole in the floor of the shack while trying to kill a rat with a shotgun.” They would go out for a week with nothing but some ammunition, salt, matches, a blanket and the clothes they wore.”

The Johnstones moved away after WWI, but their son Steve stayed. “It was noticed that Steve was a little peculiar. He would go barefoot for most of the winter and on one instance he blew a hole in the floor of the shack while trying to kill a rat with a shotgun.” From the ice age to the present, self-publisher Hitz (888-346-4218) of Kirland, Washington provides a geographic and human history of Princess Louisa Inlet, named after the mother of Queen Victoria and located at the head of Jervis Inlet.

0-9720255-0-2

Maquinna's hostage

"My heart leapt for joy at the thought of getting my liberty."—**John Jewitt**, captured by Chief Maquinna two centuries ago in 1803

The most notorious account of the early relations between Europeans and Indians on the West Coast is John Jewitt's memoir of his two years as Nuu-chah-nulth Chief Maquinna's slave at Nootka Sound on the east coast of Vancouver Island. **The Adventures and Suffering of John Jewitt** has never been out of print.

Chief Maquinna was the most powerful chief known to the Europeans in the late 18th century. He met Captain Cook in 1778 and later hosted the negotiations between Captains Vancouver and Quadra who represented the interests of England and Spain in 1792.

Born on May 21, 1783, John Jewitt was the son of a Lincolnshire blacksmith who wanted his son to become a surgeon. In the seaport of Hull,

John Jewitt heard tales of the sea and signed on as the armourer, or blacksmith, on the *Boston*, a sailing ship that arrived at Friendly Cove in Nootka Sound on March 12, 1803.

Trading was undertaken amicably until Captain Salter of the *Boston* insulted Chief Maquinna on March 21. Salter had given Maquinna a gift of a double-barrelled rifle. When its lock jammed, Maquinna announced it was bad and needed repair. Salter, not realizing the extent to which Maquinna understood English, cursed Maquinna and gave the rifle to Jewitt for repairs.

Jewitt later recorded the incident. "I observed him, while the captain was speaking, repeatedly put his hand to his throat and rub it upon his bosom, which he afterwards told me was to keep down his heart, which was rising into his throat and choking him."

The following day the local Nuu-chah-nulth Indians took revenge. After coming aboard the *Boston* for a feast, they suddenly attacked and killed 25 crewmembers. John Thompson, a sailmaker, hid during the attack and was found the following day. Jewitt was struck unconscious early in the struggle and was accidentally spared.

Maquinna had observed Jewitt at his forge and recognized his value. When Jewitt revived, he had to promise to be a good slave and to make Maquinna weapons and tools. Jewitt negotiated for the life of the other survivor, Thompson, who was 20 years his senior, by telling Maquinna that Thompson was his father.

Jewitt was asked to identify the severed heads of his 25 former shipmates. The two captives were not treated harshly. Thompson, from Philadelphia, remained bitter and violent, but Jewitt set about to endear himself and learn the language.

Jewitt forged the first axes and ironworks made on the North Pacific coast. He also kept a daily journal that provided mainly favourable impressions of his captor, Maquinna. "He was dressed in a large mantle or cloak of the black sea-otter skin, which reached to his knees, and was fastened around his middle by a broad belt of the cloth of the country, wrought or painted with figures of several colours; this dress was by no means unbecoming, but, on the contrary, had an air of savage magnificence."

On July 19, 1805, another trading brig, *Lydia*, approached Friendly Cove, also known as Yuquot. Jewitt hastily wrote a note to its captain detailing the murders and his slavery, begging the captain to invite Maquinna aboard, capture him and demand the release of Thompson and himself. The Nootkas were advising Maquinna against going aboard the ship. Maquinna asked Jewitt for advice. Jewitt said it would be safe.

After the captain supplied Maquinna with an alcoholic drink, Maquinna was held at gunpoint. After much agitation ashore, Jewitt and Thompson were swapped for Maquinna. The captain also persuaded the Indians to return all items that had been taken from the *Boston* two years earlier.

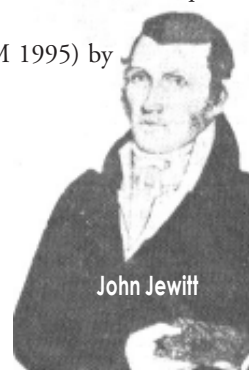
Jewitt sailed on the *Lydia* to New England. The release of his journal temporarily gained him celebrity status. He died in obscurity in Hartford, Connecticut in 1821.

In 2003, John R. Jewitt, a sixth-generation descendant of John Jewitt, traveled to Yuquot on the east side of Vancouver Island to meet with Mike Maquinna, a descendant of Maquinna, to mark the 200th anniversary of their forefathers' meeting. The two men had already met on October 29, 1987 at the Vancouver Maritime Museum, 184 years after the capture, at which time the museum made available a dagger that was made by Jewitt for Chief Maquinna during his captivity.

The Adventures and Suffering of John R. Jewitt (D&M 1995) by Hilary Stewart 155054408X



Chief Maquinna



John Jewitt

The trials of Ned

Born in 1813, American ne'er-do-well **Ned McGowan** was a bon vivant with a fearful temper and one of the most notorious characters in pre-colonial B.C. history.

“He was supposed to be a murderer, a pimp who ran a brothel in a San Francisco hospital,” writes **Donald Hauka** in *Ned McGowan’s War* (New Star \$24), “the inventor of the false-bottomed ballot box, a shoulder-striking bully-boy, corrupt politician and magistrate, a disgraced police superintendent who masterminded a bank robbery, and an all-round cad.”

But according to Hauka, McGowan has been given a bum rap by history. Yes, McGowan was involved in a knife fight in the Pennsylvania legislature. Yes, he did run a roulette wheel on the second floor of a whorehouse before he became a San Francisco County judge. And yes, in the mid-1850s, he did have to disguise himself as a Mexican in order to escape from the Vigilante Committee, using a corset to push in his substantial stomach.

But in those days California’s first legislature was known as ‘The Legislature of a Thousand Drinks’. When the little-remembered American Party, known as the ‘Know-Nothings’, rose to power in California, McGowan lost his patronage appointments and tried to salvage his reputation with a book called *The Narrative of Edward McGowan, Including a Full Account of the Author’s Adventures and Perils While Persecuted by the San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1856*.

Hauka makes a good case that McGowan was mostly the victim of a vicious and fraudulent era requiring extreme combativeness. A skilled and witty writer, McGowan published 25 issues of his scandal sheet, the *Phoenix*, followed by 18 editions of its follow-up, the *Ubiquitous*, in 1857 and 1858, but to no avail. He fled Sacramento and, after a failed murder attempt on his life outside a San Francisco courtroom, he made haste for the Fraser River gold rush.



McGowan unfortunately first arrived in Victoria in the company of some American mercenaries who had helped **William Walker** to assume the presidency in civil-war-torn Nicaragua. To celebrate their arrival on July the 4th, they fired a 100-gun salute, thereby earning the enmity of Governor **James Douglas**. It also didn’t help that McGowan’s bad press had preceded him.

When the influx of unruly Americans threatened the autocratic regime of Douglas, McGowan was eventually brought before pro-British judge **Matthew Baillie Begbie** in a log-cabin courtroom in Yale in 1859. Hauka provides an account of the battle of wits between Begbie and McGowan. In dramatic terms, Begbie lost the battle but won the war.

Ultimately the 30,000 American insurgents along the Fraser River failed to annex the British Columbia mainland to the United States and McGowan fled the Fraser Canyon gold rush for good in 1859, thereby missing the 1862 smallpox epidemic that claimed the lives of approximately one-third of the indigenous First Nations population.

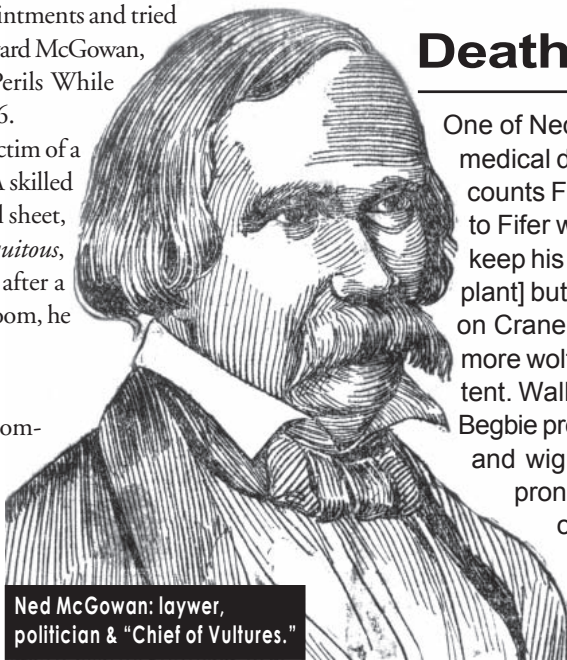
Back in the American mid-west, McGowan tried to resurrect his reputation, successfully suing the Californian historian **Hubert H. Bancroft**, but not gaining a penny. He dabbled in journalism but never advanced in society, having backed the losing side during the American Civil War. After McGowan died a poor man in San Francisco at age 84, on December 8, 1892, only two friends attended his funeral cortege.

At a time when full-fledged biographies from B.C. are few and far-between, screenwriter Donald J. Hauka has produced a lively account. Well researched, it’s the stuff of a prolonged historical mini-series, with sub-plots and bizarre characters aplenty.

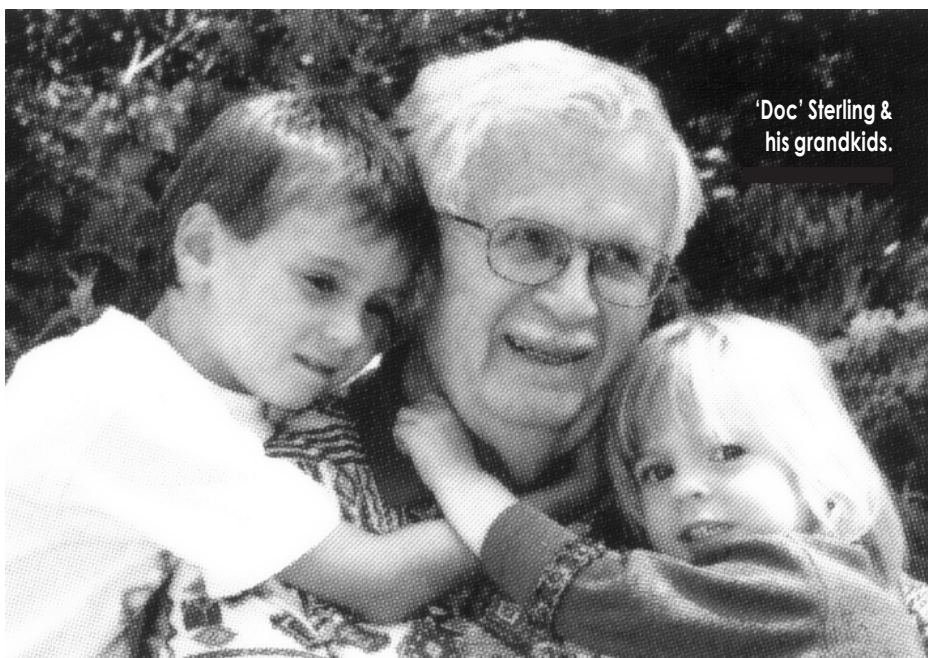
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Death by wolfsbane

One of Ned McGowan’s adversaries, Dr. Max Fife, was a scheming medical doctor who feuded with his rival Dr. Silas Crane. Hauka recounts Fifer’s demise. “In 1861, Robert Wall, a young miner, came to Fifer with a serious sexual problem. Basically, he was unable to keep his hands off himself. Fifer prescribed wolfsbane [a poisonous plant] but Wall didn’t have the money for another dose, so he called on Crane. The gin-soaked quack told Wall that he didn’t need any more wolfsbane, claiming Fifer’s treatment had rendered him impotent. Wall tracked Fifer down and shot him on July 5, 1861. [Judge] Begbie presided over Wall’s trial, wearing his customary judge’s robes and wig, and swiftly found him guilty. As was his custom when pronouncing the sentence of death, Begbie placed a black cap on his head as he condemned Wall to be hanged. In a macabre twist, the gallows were built on top of Fifer’s freshly dug grave, and when Wall dropped to his death, his feet dangled just over the dirt covering the doctor’s remains.”



Ned McGowan: lawyer, politician & “Chief of Vultures.”



'Doc' Sterling & his grandkids.

The hatchet & the scalpel

When he first arrived at Williams Lake, **Sterling Haynes** practiced medicine with a 40-watt bulb, no heat, no running water and a leaking roof above the emergency room. "The separation of the memorial altar from the post mortem metal table was by a greasy, bloody fingerprinted piece of canvas with draw strings that didn't work."

Haynes' recollections in **Bloody Practice** (Caitlin \$18.95) meander from rough Cariboo beginnings to Nigeria, Alabama, Central America and Cuba. His first story occurs during Stampede Week at three a.m. when a drunk named Joe bangs open the screen door, blood and sweat dripping

down his face, and makes his unsteady way to the emergency room. "It was then I noticed the hatchet buried in his skull," says Haynes.

The patient cheerfully explained. "Two guys from the reserve jumped me and threw me onto the woodpile. There was this little hatchet for makin' kindling. They was going to scalp me with it but they didn't know how, so they stuck it in my head and fell over laughing. They're my buddies. Friends just get like this!"

Now retired, Haynes has published in the *Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine*, *The Medical Post*, *Family Practice* and the *Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin*.

0-920576-97-4

NO GIRL'S LAND

"I often find myself writing about the in-between place where First Nations and non-First Nations come together", says **Sylvia Olsen**, who married into the Tsartlip Nation 31 years ago.

Olsen, who counsels teen parents from the Saanich First Nations, has tracked that middle ground between cultures in her young adult novel **The Girl with a Baby** (Sono Nis \$9.95). Jane Williams lives with her Native family on a predominantly white cul-de-sac, where she's never felt welcome. To make matters worse, at age 14 she's pregnant.

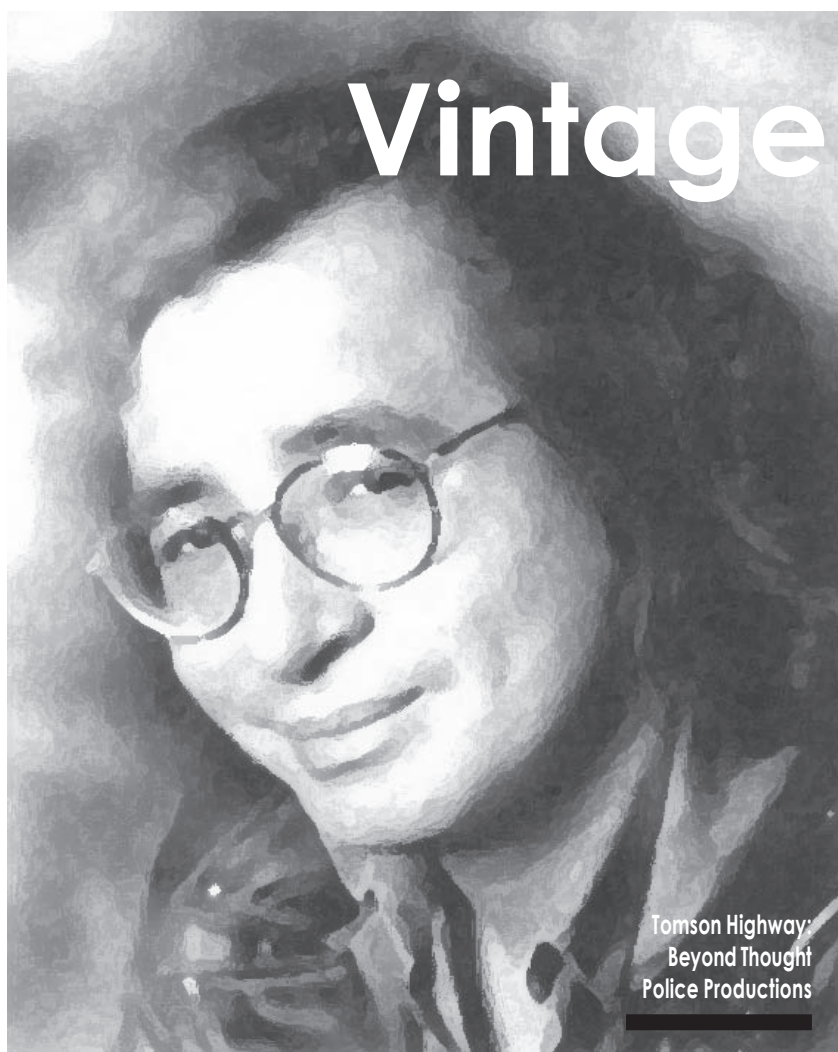
At first she tried to conceal her pregnancy. "I wore big sweatshirts. And no one would suspect anything of me. I'm the good Williams. I the *only* good Williams. I get good grades, I volunteer at the animal shelter, I'm in the drama club at school."

Sylvia Olsen's first book, *No Time to Say Goodbye* was adopted by the B.C. Teachers' Federation and has been nominated for a Saskatchewan Young Readers' Snow Willow Award. She lives near Victoria, B.C., having raised four children on the Tsartlip Reserve.

1-55039-142-9



Sylvia Olsen & grand-daughter Yetsa



Tomson Highway:
Beyond Thought
Police Productions

Vintage Highway

Tomson Highway's plays have been described by critic and film director **Tom Shandel** as being "at once light-hearted burlesque and angry agitprop. It is not kitchen sink. It is not reality television."

Rose (Talonbooks \$16.95), is the third instalment of the playwright's acclaimed 'rez' cycle, is more vintage Highway. There are three Roses in this musical set on the Wasaychigan Hill Reserve, the same venue for *The Rez Sisters* and its sequel *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*. One Rose didn't get born; a second died on a Harley and a third has become chief of the reserve. Ontario Premier **Bob Rae** and Chief **Big Rose** are signing an historic treaty while the Sudbury Mafia plan to transform the women's community hall into a huge bingo palace. It's 1992 all over again. Characters re-appear from the previous two plays, plus Emily Dictionary and her female biker pals. This cabaret-style musical for 17 actors is a challenge to perform and produce, but Highway's production notes give encouragement.

"Think of the exercise as just a bunch of kids, the kind you were when you were five years old, playing in and with a chest filled with old clothes and objects... And last, the old—and very tiresome—question: "Should Only Native Actors Have the Right to Play Native Roles? (Which to me has always sounded a lot like: "Should only Italian actors have the right to play Italian roles? Or: "Thought Police Productions presents an All-German-Cast in *Mother Courage* by Bertolt Brecht. Only Germans need apply."). To make clear his feelings on the issue, Highway has included an essay on this subject as an appendix to the script. He pleads "in my Cree heart of hearts" for an end

to political correctness, if, for no other reason, than it will enable him to have his plays produced more often. "Trust me," he writes. "I waited ten years for *Rose* to happen, more for others which will NEVER get done." Rose was first performed by the University of Toronto's University-College Drama Program with a mostly non-Native cast.

0-88922-490-0

Cop killer:
Joe Gordon

Hanging Joe

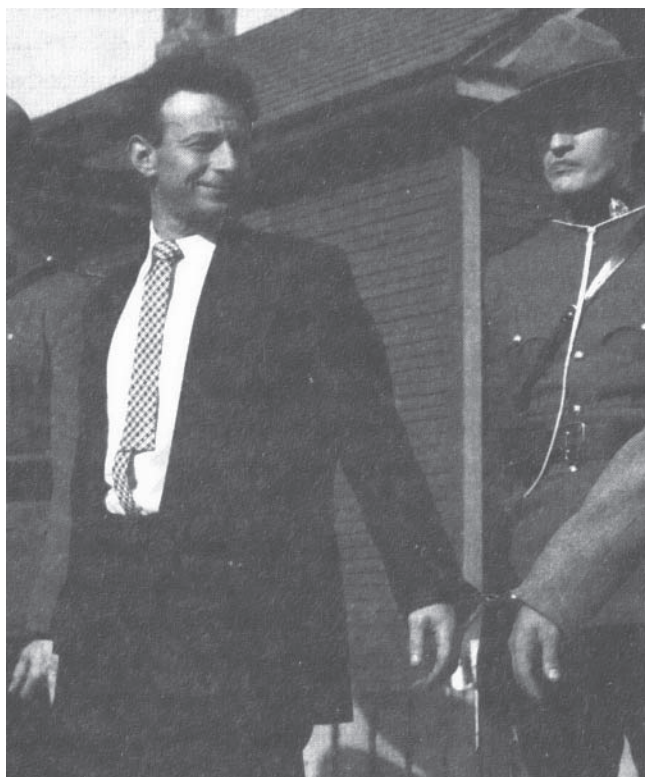
Having produced books on corrupt Vancouver police chief **Walter Mulligan** and disgraced Soecred cabinet minister **Richard Sommers**, the diligent duo of **Ian Macdonald** and **Betty O'Keefe** have revived the cautionary tale of the handsome, likeable, Sophocles-quoting crook **Joe Gordon** who was hanged at Oakalla Prison Farm in 1957 for shooting a policeman during a botched robbery.

Beaten by his father as a child, Gordon distinguished himself on death row with a haunting plea for parents of the 1950s to love their kids so they wouldn't end up facing the noose like him. "Prison taught me what I know and is teaching others," he wrote. "The only friends in life I have are criminals. Due process of law brought me into contact with them in the first instance."

Macdonald & O'Keefe's **Born to Die: A Cop Killer's Final Message** (Heritage \$16.95) recalls the sensational murder trial of Joe Gordon and his accomplice **Jimmy Carey**—who didn't hang—and the unreliable nature of criminal justice during the period. Jimmy Carey, a stool pigeon, was reprieved. Earlier, before he could be charged, police chief Mulligan fled to California where he became a bus driver.

Former newspaper reporters, Macdonald & O'Keefe have their ninth title due this spring, **Dr. Fred and the Spanish Lady** (Heritage \$18.95) about the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918.

Born to Die 1-894384-69-5; Spanish Lady 1-894384-71-7

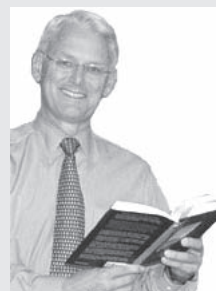


Let them read books

Nope, gardening expert **William Vander Zalm** isn't the only B.C. premier to have published a book.

Both **Michael Harcourt** and **Dave Barrett** have published their memoirs.

And way back when, B.C.'s second premier, **Amor de Cosmos**, was a crusading newspa-



perman and prolific journalist.

But none have been as enthusiastic about books and reading as

Gordon Campbell who, as mayor of Vancouver, spearheaded the building of the new Vancouver Public Library main branch on Georgia Street.

When Campbell tours the province, he often detours from politics to visit the local bookstores. Having taught with his wife Nancy in Yola, Nigeria for CUSO, Campbell has remained a staunch advocate of literacy programs.

In 2004 he has launched his own website at www.readonbc.ca to offer commentaries on books he has recently read and enjoyed.

In 1995 Gordon Campbell published a children's book, *Tuaq: The Only One*, about a baby beluga that was born in the Vancouver Aquarium. It was originally written for his own children.

A limited edition of one

Cosimo Geracitano has carved a book of jade—with bound pages that can be turned. To describe the two-year process, **Daniela Geracitano Vance** has described how her father set likenesses of **Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King** and **Mahatma Gandhi** into four pages of British Columbia nephrite, weighing 155 pounds, in **The Jade Book: A Stone of Hope** (Colossal Creations \$24.94).



Daniela Geracitano Vance

"As he carved, opera music often blared in the background so that it could be heard despite the earplugs and noise of the machines," she says.

The linked jade tablets feature a dove escaping from behind bars to signify the challenge of achieving harmony and creating a better global community.

Gandhi's message is, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Mother Teresa's quote is "Works of love are works of peace." Martin Luther King's message is, "Let freedom ring."

Geracitano, who lives in Coquitlam, was born in southern Italy in 1947 and immigrated to Canada at age 20 with no money or winter clothing, unable to speak English. The sculptor's first work was a Carrara marble bust of his daughter Daniela at age ten.

In *The Jade Book*, Vance has traced local traditions of jade carving to the Salish people who used water and sandstone to cut jade found in the Fraser, Bridge and Thompson Rivers.

0-9731390-1-3; www.colossalcreations.com



Cosimo Geracitano: the sculptor as author

Mary, Mary not contrary

Joan Skogan

has scoured Canadian towns and tomes for **Mary of Canada** (Banff Centre \$29.95), a non-religious celebration of the cult of Mary that is literally all over the map. "Mary lives in Canada. I know now," she says.

From obscure Virgin Mary references in Lynn Coady's latest novel to Leonard Cohen's ribald

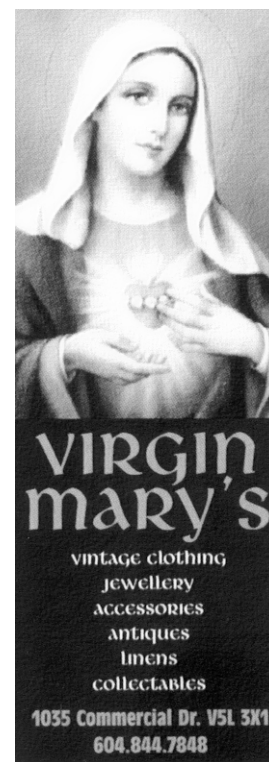
recreation of Blessed Kateri Takawitha, Lily of the Mohawk (1656-1680), in *Beautiful Losers*, to a Dashboard Mary on Canadian blues CD, Skogan shows hundreds of times how and where the appeal

of the Virgin Mary in Canada is consistent with her followings in more Catholic countries such as Mexico and France.

1-894773-03-9



Joan Skogan



Fasten your poetry belts

Wendy Morton plugs poetry—far and wide—and high. When she's not promoting verse with her Mocambopo Reading Series in Victoria, the Sooke-based private investigator is WestJet's 'Poet of the Skies', serving up sonnets.

During her promo tour for **Undercover** (Ekstasis \$14.95), Morton took the microphone and recited poetry between Montreal and Halifax. Attention passengers. You are about to join the simile mile high club.

But she didn't stop there. Morton convinced eastern Canada's Chrysler headquarters to lend her a PT Cruiser to drive around the Maritimes, reading poems to strangers and distributing free copies of her publisher's various titles. She didn't get arrested.

1-894800-21-4



Heritage trustee **Jean Barman** has spent so much time helping other people's projects, it's a wonder she has produced 13 books of her own since 1984—including the most widely used history of the province, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*. Now she's going from macro to micro with two new books about so-called ordinary people, two non-Anglo pioneers in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

BEYOND THE BRITS

The *Remarkable Adventures of Portuguese Joe Silvey* (Harbour \$17.95) recaptures the life and times of one of British Columbia's first businessmen, **Joe Silvey**, an illiterate fisherman and whaler who jumped ship to become a saloon keeper, fishing community patriarch and possibly Canada's first officially accepted Portuguese Canadian citizen.

Maria Mahoi of the Islands (New Star \$16) recalls **Maria Mahoi**, born outside of Victoria, probably in Esquimalt, around 1855, of a Hawaiian father and an unknown mother who is thought to have died in childbirth. Mahoi had 13 children by two 'new-comer men' while living mainly on Saltspring Island and nearby Russell Island.

The lives of Silvey and Mahoi intersected in the Gulf Islands in the late 1860s. For the Mahoi book, Barman began her research after a descendent asked to find out his heritage. She later attended a family reunion in August of 2002 when Mahoi's turn-of-the-



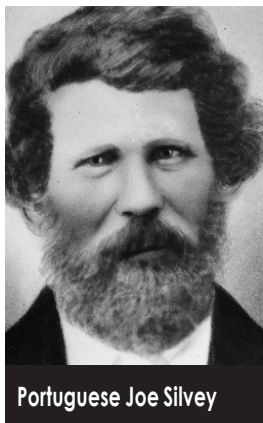
Around 1871, with oil prices dropping and two children to feed, Silvey followed the example of **Gassy Jack Deighton** in Gastown, operating the Hole-in-the-Wall saloon and buying property at the corner of Water and Abbott streets for \$100.

Recollections of this period in *The Remarkable Adventures* are mostly from Silvey's eldest daughter Elizabeth Silvey, who retained vivid memories of potlatch ceremonies and her Capilano relatives from her early childhood. These stories were gleaned by Vancouver archivist Major **J.S. Matthews** when he conducted interviews with Elizabeth between 1938 and 1943.

Devastated by the sudden death of his wife, Portuguese Joe took his two young daughters to live at Brockton Point, at Deadman's Island, then a remote area. [Barman's original interest in Silvey was sparked by her research for a forthcoming book to be called *Stanley Park Secrets: The Forgotten Families of Whoi Whoi, Kanaka Ranch, and Brockton Point*.] An Oblate priest married Silvey to **Kwahama Kwatileematt**, age 15, of the Sechelt band, in 1872. Known as Lucy, she could read and write—unusual skills for a young Native woman.

Next, Portuguee Joe pioneered seine boat fishing in B.C., teaching Native women to knit nets at Brockton Point and pre-empting 160 acres on Reid Island, northwest of Galiano Island in 1881.

Eleven of his children survived. With both aboriginal and Portuguese values, the Silvey family was routinely multilingual, speaking English, Portuguese, the local Cowichan language and the Chinook trading lingo.



JEAN BARMAN: FROM MACRO MICRO

century home on Russell Island became a focal point for a new Gulf Islands National Park. For the Silvey book, Barman's interest was also sparked by descendants. Two of his great-great-great-grandsons contacted her after she was heard discussing Portuguese Joe on CBC's *Afternoon Show* with host Mark Forsythe.

"The Portuguese Joes of the past are not easy to know," she says. "Most of us remember our grandparents, or at least something about them; we can picture them in our minds and we may have tucked away some letters they wrote. We are far less likely to know much about our grandparents' grandparents. They may have been illiterate...or found reading and writing uncomfortable."

Without Anglo connections, entrepreneurs such as Joe Silvey were proudly different from the dominant Brits of British Columbia. They intermarried with First Nations women to create separate worlds from the dominant British sensibilities.

Born in the 1830s, Silvey was raised on Pico, one of nine Azores Islands controlled by Portugal off the coast of Africa. The Azoreans were mostly sailors, fishermen and Catholics. Family lore has it that Silvey had blue eyes, a legacy from a Scottish grandfather who was possibly involved in whaling from the Eastern U.S.

At age 12, Joe Silvey left the Azores on a whaling expedition, never to return, because the island's main food crop had been decimated by potato blight and a grape disease reduced wine production.

Around the time the whaling industry went into decline, he and several other Portuguese crew members jumped ship, in San Francisco or Fort Victoria. Silvey and his companions were likely among the goldseekers who headed up the Fraser River in 1858, just as British Columbia was becoming a separate British colony from Vancouver Island.

At Point Roberts, Silvey and some frightened colleagues received friendly treatment from a meeting of Musqueam and Capilano Indians. Not long afterwards, Silvey formally married Khaltinaht, the granddaughter of **Chief Kiapilano** (Capilano) and his wife Homulchesun from the Musqueam, and they briefly operated a store at Point Roberts.

Silvey turned his hand to fishing, living on Galiano Island and on Burrard Inlet, before he opted for local whaling, primarily for the extraction of oil. To do so, Silvey hooked up with **Abel Douglas**, a Scot from Maine, who was married to a beautiful half-Hawaiian—Maria Mahoi.



Silvey's enclave at Reid Island attracted sealing schooners and wintering fishermen until his death in 1902, at approximately 66 years of age. The daughters of his first wife, Khaltinaht, splintered off, whereas Lucy Silvey remained on the island until her death in 1934. Barman traces Silvey's many descendants to the present day.

Maria (pronounced Mariah) Mahoi died in the late 1930s. The title *Maria of the Islands* refers to her roots in both the Hawaiian and Gulf Islands. As a prominent matriarch on Saltspring, Mahoi could trace her roots to the 'Kanakas', Hawaiian-born labourers brought to B.C. by the Hudson's Bay Company prior to Confederation.

Sawmill workers in North Vancouver lived at Moodyville's Kanaka Row, the second-largest Hawaiian settlement in B.C. after Saltspring Island where the town of Ganges has a Kanaka Road.

Hawaiian families once lived at the "Kanaka Ranch" at the foot of Denman Street in Vancouver, where the Bayshore Inn now stands, and the Empress Hotel in Victoria is situated on the ruins of a shantytown called Kanaka Row.

Saltspring Islander **Tom Koppel** has published **Kanaka: The Untold Story of Hawaiian Pioneers in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest** (Whitecap, 1995) and **Susan Dobbie's** first novel **When Eagles Call** (Ronsdale, 2003) is about a young Hawaiian native named Kimo who signs up for duty with the Hudson's Bay Company in the 19th century, eventually marrying a half-Kwantlen and half-French-Canadian woman.

A UBC historian in the Department of Educational Studies, Barman was born in Stephen, Minnesota. In addition to her biographies and history titles, she collaborated with **Linda Hale** for a 1991 bibliography of B.C. local histories, updated recently by **Brenda Peterson**. Barman was inducted as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2002. She is married to historian **Roderick Barman**, an authority on Brazil, and they live in Vancouver.

Silvey 1-55017-326-X
Mahoi 1-55420-007-5

Avalanches don't play favourites. **Michel Trudeau**, son of the former Prime Minister, was caught in a backcountry avalanche in B.C. in 1998; his body was swept into an alpine lake and never recovered. His family's mourning before the nation's cameras brought home the pain of such a sudden loss.



MARK FORSYTHE

B.C. who had travelled by helicopter to a remote camp. Included in the death toll was champion snowboarder **Craig Kelly**.

The following month seven high school students from Strathcona-Tweedsmuir school in Alberta were killed on Mount Cheops near the Rogers Pass summit.

On February 3, 2004, a 51-year-old snowmobiler was killed 15 kilometres north of Castlegar in the Ladybird Creek area. Meanwhile a search was continuing near Nelson for a missing 36-year-old snowboarder and Pemberton RCMP identified a 29-year-old man who died in an avalanche on Cayoosh Mountain.

As a backcountry skier, award-winning author **Vivien Bowers** of Nelson knows the pull of fresh powder, blue skies and the 'human factor.' That's why she wrote **In the Path of an Avalanche** (Greystone \$22.95), a chronicle of the devastating 1998 avalanche that took the lives of six backcountry veterans in the Selkirk Mountains near Nelson.

"It was important being a backcountry skier doing this book," she told me, "because a lot of people feel burned by some other people who've written, who don't understand why people go into the backcountry. For me it's the serenity, the beauty of it, the powder snow."

WHITE THUNDER

"The entire bowl swept down the mountain like a freight train."



Plaque erected by Lise Nicola's father in the wake of another deadly B.C. avalanche

Four locals and two skiers from the coast were killed. How could experienced skiers get into such trouble? Bowers deftly handles the technical information about avalanche conditions, illustrating the tricky science of avalanche prediction through the knowledge of experts at the Canadian Avalanche Centre.

Bowers shapes her narrative around a young woman named **Lise Nicola**; a free spirit, emblematic of those drawn to Nelson's extraordinary outdoors scene. She lived for the outdoors, but wasn't a risk taker and was highly regarded by her peers. She was hut keeper at Silver Spray cabin in Kokanee Glacier Park where the group landed via helicopter during Christmas break.

Written in the Silver Spray cabin log are the words: *"How fine the line between excitement and fear, between life and death."*

The Silver Spray skiers in 1998 were well aware of snow conditions, closely observing weather patterns, probing the snow pack with shear tests and performing mock rescues. After enduring a week of stormy weather in the cabin, they were presented with a gift on January 2nd: fresh powder framed by clear blue skies. They set out for

an area they knew was safe for skiing—not too steep and protected by trees, but to get there they decided to cross the exposed Clover Basin.

This was the fatal mistake.

"The first indication of trouble may have been a *whumph* as the snowpack beneath the travelers' skis settled a few centimetres. That would have been the sound of the upper slab collapsing onto loose crystals below, shooting air out of the snowpack. The skiers may have actually seen the snow drop beneath their feet."

The entire bowl swept down the mountain like a freight train. "It was all over in thirty seconds or so. Nobody could outrun something like that." One member of the party, had remained back at the cabin. **Carrie Fitzsimmons** waited through an agonizing day and night for friends who would never return—including her partner **Rob Driscoll**.

The following morning, a rescue helicopter surveyed the scene: "A massive avalanche had taken out most of the bowl, sending tonnes of snow to the bottom of the slope. The passengers in the helicopter could see the basin only in bits and pieces, but those pieces started fitting together to

form a worst case scenario. At the toe of the slide, on the surface of an enormous jumble of avalanche debris, they caught sight of what might have been a pack or a jacket. Evidence of a disaster that nobody wanted to contemplate."

Having interviewed many people associated with this story, Bowers skilfully recreates rescue and recovery efforts, the ensuing big city media circus, and the reaction of family and community to it all.

"I'm always weary of 20-20 hindsight," she says, "because, sure they were on a slope that avalanched. There are years when the conditions are so difficult you have to take that extra level of precaution, the normal rules don't seem to apply."

"The other thing is understanding the human factors—like people remaining silent. They don't want to be a wet blanket to say let's turn around, and I've experienced that on groups I've been out with. They behave in ways they might not otherwise."

Since the 24 deaths in 2003 there have been efforts to issue more frequent avalanche bulletins, and better co-ordinate efforts, possibly through a new national body.

Lise Nicola's father Vince carried a metal plaque to the site where his daughter and five others perished at Clover Basin in the summer of 2001. He bolted it to a rock high in the alpine. He tells Bowers thinking of his daughter's life and love of the outdoors has prompted him to become more involved in the outdoors. "Lise would have wanted that; she would have demanded that."

1-55054-518-3

Regular contributor Mark Forsythe is the host of CBC Radio's Afternoon Show.



B.C. avalanches continue to make the news.

THE PHOTO FINISH OF RACHEL WYATT

Rachel Wyatt recently said in an interview that she felt compelled to write **Time's Reach** (Oolichan \$22.95) after finding an old photograph of her father. This photo—showing her father surrounded by dead bodies in an internment camp—becomes the mystery at the heart of a new novel about the pitfalls of unraveling the past.



CARLA
LUCCHETTA

Seeking refuge from her complicated life in Toronto, the principle character, Maggie Parkes, visits her elderly parents in England. At the outset, Maggie longs to retreat to her room and get back to reading her book, **Iris Murdoch's** *An Accidental Man*. It's a foreshadowing of the suspenseful and darkly comedic mood that will ensue.

The story gets underway as Robert Parkes' life is ending. His failing health leads him to confess a long-held secret to his daughter Maggie. Unbeknownst to his family, he had engaged in some clandestine work for the British government concerning the Second World War. They had always believed he was merely traveling across Europe selling wool. Maggie's father reveals just enough prior to his death for

the family to believe he's led a romantically duplicitous life. His wife Frieda is crushed; Maggie and her brother David are curious but disinclined to uncover the truth.



Rachel Wyatt:
wool over her
characters' eyes

After the funeral, Maggie returns to Canada with an envelope of photos and postcards her father has left for her. She becomes haunted by one particular photo, that image of a man in an internment camp surrounded by dead bodies. They wonder

if he was a spy and conclude, at the very least, he must have been a civilian witness to the horrific aftermath of Nazi murders.

In Maggie's family there is a longing in every one of them to break out of their lives and become something more, something unexpected and surprising to the rest, something of a legacy. Frieda longs to escape her mundane old-age and live in the Swiss Alps, but shortly after her husband's

death she dies while mountain climbing. David, an unemployed stock broker, takes up marathon running and then vanishes while following his father's trail to Germany. Be careful, as the Chinese say, you might get what you wish for.

Years later, Maggie's teenage daughter Bertie becomes obsessed with paying homage to her grandfather, encouraging the entire family to embark on a journey to Germany to find the truth. Maggie had pretty much given up on her life-long intention to return to Europe, but Bertie, named for her possibly courageous grandfather, wants to wake the rest of them out of the torpor their lives have become. She also hopes to acknowledge Robert was something of a hero.

Their collective trip to Germany is wrought with folly. No more should be said.

As a result of years as a prolific playwright, Wyatt has created characters that are well-sketched and perfectly true to life—quirky, vulnerable, and fallible. A former director at the Banff Centre for the Arts, she has written seven previous novels, short fiction, stage plays and over 100 radio dramas featured on CBC and BBC. In 2002, Wyatt, who lives in Victoria, was honoured for her contribution to the development of Canadian Literature when she was inducted into the Order of Canada. It should come as no surprise that her latest novel, *Time's Reach*, is a wonderfully crafted, engaging story; a joy to read.

0-88982-205-0

Carla Lucchetta is a Vancouver freelance writer and television producer.

The agonies & ecstasies of

DOUG Hepburn

World champion lifter **Doug Hepburn's** early liabilities were a club-foot, shyness, a cross-eyed condition and an alcoholic father.

Tom Thurston, a former business manager of **Doug Hepburn**, made several unsuccessful attempts at record his friend's remarkable life story for **Strongman, The Doug Hepburn Story** (Ronsdale \$19.95). He discovered that formal interviews conducted across a table, or using a tape-recorder, inhibited his subject.



notes until writer's cramp forced him to stop.

When Thurston read the first three chapters back to his subject, Hepburn asked, "Think anyone will care?"

Thurston assured him that his story would appeal to "anyone interested in the heights that human beings can attain through character and good athletic training." But to suggest the book's appeal is limited to weightlifting aficionados and sports enthusiasts is to underrate it.

Strongman is the story of a largely unsung hero and "prophet without honour in his own country." Born in Vancouver in 1927, Doug Hepburn was a self-taught body-builder and weightlifter who won the U.S. weightlifting championship in Los Angeles in 1949. He proceeded to win the 1953 world weightlifting championship in Stockholm and the gold medal in the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Vancouver. For that latter competition, the mayor of Vancouver hired him as a bodyguard so that he would have time to train.

Tom Thurston attempts to restore Hepburn to his rightful place in the annals of B.C. history. To this end he provides, besides the account of Hepburn's life, ten appendices containing his weight-lifting results, his awards, his training programs, and drug-free training secrets.

Ernest Hemingway long ago conditioned us to seeing the metaphorical connection between the athlete and the artist. We often read the stories of human and non-human athletes (like Seabiscuit) as if they are *kunstlerromans*. Accordingly, Hepburn's story has the wider appeal of any artist's struggle against apparently insurmountable obstacles and personal demons.

Among Hepburn's early liabilities were a club-foot, a cross-eyed condition, an alcoholic father, and an inherited tendency to alcohol abuse. The physical disabilities were corrected surgically, but too late to spare him a childhood made miserable by schoolyard bullies. These humiliations he endured as a child propelled him into the compensatory activity of weight-lifting—a la **Charles Atlas**.

As a teenager, having dropped out of school, he began to train and build up his weight with a single-mindedness that

The mentoring relationship was cemented after Hepburn visited Smith, and it lasted until Smith's death in 1991. The enthusiastic welcome that Hepburn received in New York, the ultimate meritocracy, tempted him to stay. However, he resolved to remain Canadian, and returned to Vancouver.

It was not long before various obstacles presented themselves, among them the temptation to surrender the integrity of his art for easy commercial profit, or to take the performance-enhancing drugs that were being used increasingly by his competitors. Hepburn steadfastly

resisted the latter temptation, and it was a source of pride that his achievements were reached without drugs. Unfortunately, his resistance to alcohol as a solace for declining strength, public indifference, and the lack of financial rewards was less successful. Hepburn conducted a courageous battle to overcome that addiction and he succeeded.

Ultimately the athlete/aesthete analogy breaks down, for athletes must come to terms with their declining powers much earlier than writers or other performers, many of whom can continue indefinitely. When Hepburn cast about for other outlets for his talents, he was tempted into wrestling but, disliking violence, he quickly abandoned that course. He became moderately successful as a night-club singer, and even more successful inventing various training devices, such as the *Hepburn Exerciser*, the *Dynatron*, and the *Powermaster 3*.

Although Hepburn was granted a U.S. patent, his machines brought little financial reward. An advocate of vitamins, he once claimed to be the first of the hippies. He tried his hand at writing, but he seemed happiest in the gym, advising others, mentoring young athletes, and training so that he continued to establish records for weight-lifting in his own age group. If he could no longer lay claim to the title of "strongest man in the world," he could at least boast he was "the strongest 68-year-old man in the world."

The 2003 World Weightlifting Championships were awarded to Vancouver to honour the 50th anniversary of Hepburn's Stockholm triumph. This honor was somewhat hollow, for Hepburn had died three years earlier, in 2000, without being accorded the recognition he deserved in Canada. Doug Hepburn—the West Coast's answer to central Canada's most famous strongman, **Louis Cyr**—spent his final years in obscurity. Like the troubled North Vancouver-raised sprinter **Harry Jerome**, Hepburn was a homegrown world-class athlete who couldn't, or wouldn't, fit the mediable mold.

Novelist and critic *Joan Givner* of *Mill Bay* regularly reviews biographies.



Doug Hepburn lifts six Vancouver Canucks players at the Kerrisdale Arena, 1953

ROY LEBLANC/VANCOUVER SUN PHOTO

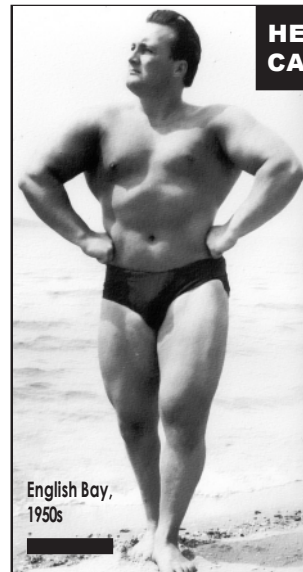
amounted to an obsession. His 10,000 calorie-a-day menu is one of the marvels of this book. Hepburn's determination resulted in his breaking all existing records in competitions in the Vancouver area. Having done so, he encountered a huge obstacle—the Canadian Amateur Athletics Union, based in Montreal. It steadily rejected his results.

This national organization refused to allow him to represent Canada in the 1952 Olympic Games. Then when their nominee failed to win a medal, they blamed Hepburn, alleging that his difficult personality had kept him from the competition. Their rejection of Hepburn meant, among other things, that Hepburn mostly had to raise his own funds when he traveled to compete abroad.

The pain of rejection at home was eased somewhat because Hepburn had done what many a struggling artist does—he

found a mentor. In February of 1950, he wrote a letter describing his plight to **Charles A. Smith**, a magazine editor, based in White Plains, New York, and a world authority on strength. After an agonizing wait of months, the reply came back:

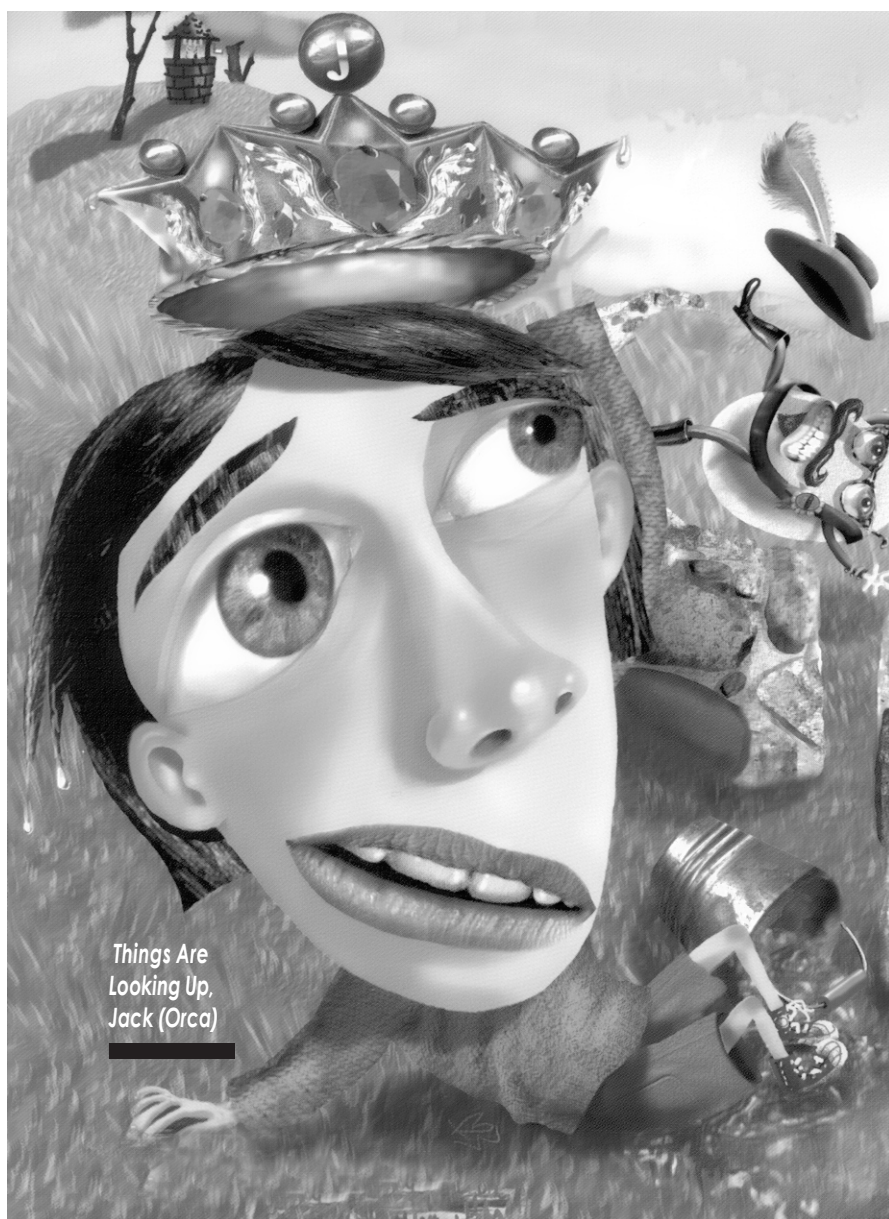
My Dear Mr. Hepburn, ...you have a tremendous future as a world-class weightlifter and strongman. If your fellow Canadians are reluctant to get fully behind you in this regard, rest assured that the fault lies with them and not with you. True and noble desire fortified by God-inspired faith and determination can have no fault. It can only be pure.



English Bay, 1950s

HEPBURN'S 10,000 CALORIE A DAY DIET

BREAKFAST: Quart of whole milk, large steak, 6 boiled eggs, 5 thick pieces of buttered toast, 4 more glasses of milk, bowl of soup, 2 bowls of pudding. **MID-MORNING SNACK:** 4 quarts of milk, 6 bananas. 6 oranges or peaches, 6 tins tomato juice. **LUNCH:** fish and chips (or another steak) with all the trimmings. **MID-AFTERNOON SNACK:** More milk and fruit. **DINNER:** Another steak or 2 large tins of spaghetti. **BED-TIME SNACK:** 2 large hamburgers and more milk.



Two Jacks

The Jack in **Dan Bar-el's** *Things Are Looking Up, Jack* (Orca \$7.95) is none other than King Jack, the egalitarian son of Mrs. Goose who insists on fetching his own pail of water.

Unfortunately, as his bossy sister Princess Jill is quick to point out, Jack is a klutz. But it's not only Jack and Jill who go a-tumbling. Humpty Dumpty takes a spill, too. A baby's cradle leaves the bough. The sky is falling and so, for that matter, is London bridge.

The cow can't quite clear the moon. Clearly something's amiss in the kingdom. It's up to klutzy Jack, his domineering sister and the fetching Miss Bo Beep to put things right and solve the mystery of why everything is falling down in the land of nursery rhymes.

Dan Bar-el is a Vancouver preschool teacher who once met a grizzly in Jasper National Park and saved his bacon with a little harmonica playing. Sounds like the makings for a King Jack sequel.

1-55143-278-1



Upon discovering his apprenticeship with Ledger & Ledger has nothing to do with the wonders of the printed word—and everything to do instead with columns and rows and misbehaving sums—12-year-old Otherjack wraps his dictionary in his second-best shirt and flee the Opportunities School for Orphans and Foundlings in **Sarah Ellis' *The Several Lives of Orphan Jack*** (Groundwood \$14.95).

“Boldness and bundles,” he says. “That’s the life of an ex-bookkeeper.”

The enterprising lad makes his escape

at sunrise, hidden in a fold of sheep, whereupon all his ‘otherness’, such as the school’s bells, rules and masters, drop away until he’s just himself. Jack.

“Views, vicissitudes and vastness,” he says. “That’s the life of a bird of passage.”

But where to sleep? What to eat? How can a penniless former scullery boy make his way? By selling whims and notions, of course, impressions and fancies, all the ideas that had come to Jack in the hours of scrubbing pots and sleepless nights lying in a cold, mean bed.

The line of customers never grows shorter and the supply of merchandise never dwindles. Not everyone, though, is ready for “fresh air for the brain,” especially the unimaginative, draconian mayor.

“Toffee and tyrants,” says Jack. “That’s the life of an ideas peddler.” Bolstered by his old

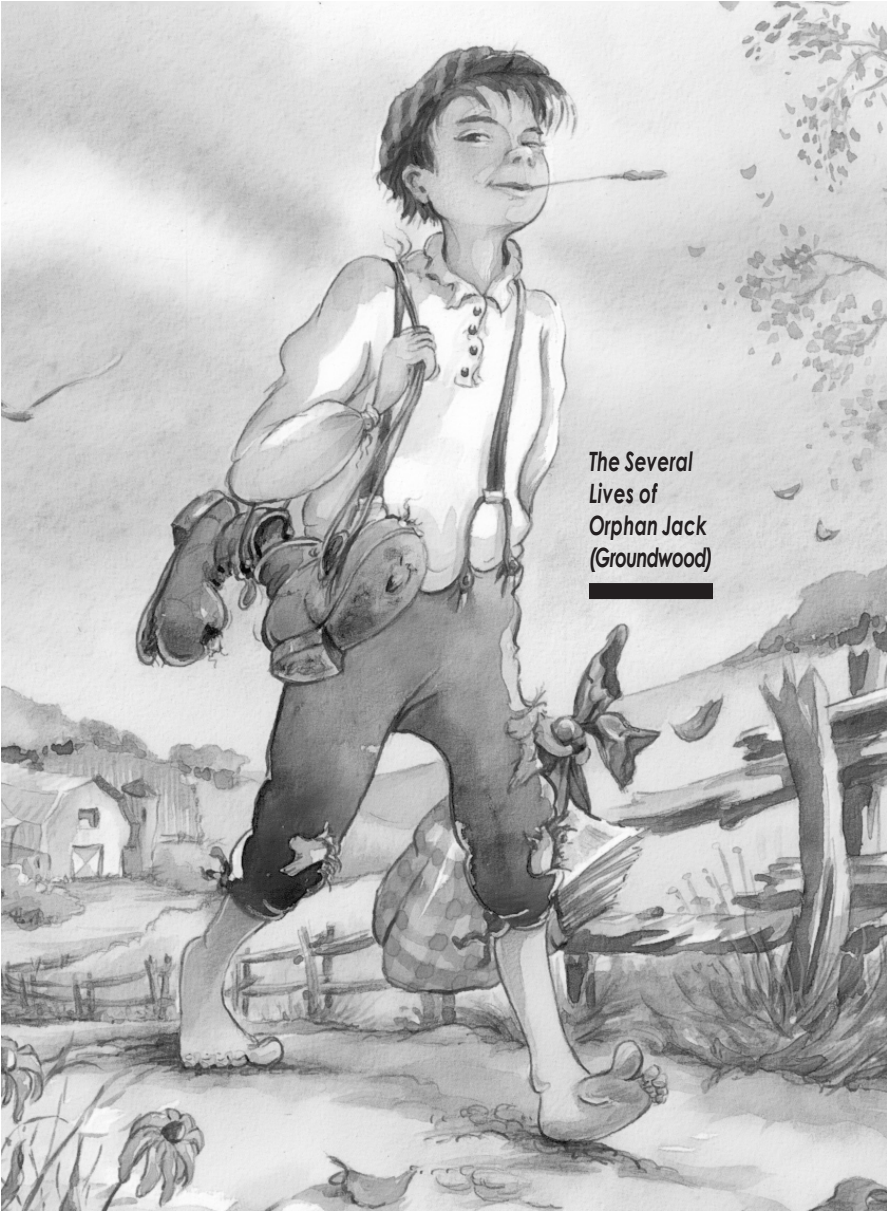
dictionary, he hoists his pack and stalwartly heads down the road to adventure.

With illustrations by Quebec artist **Bruno St-Aubin**, *The Several Lives of Orphan Jack* is the latest gem for master storyteller Sarah Ellis. A Governor General’s Award winner for *Pick-Up Sticks* and *Out of the Blue* (awarded a Mr. Christie and IODE Violet Downey as well), Ellis is a sought-after conference speaker and the first children’s author to be named Writer-in Residence at Massey College at the University of Toronto.

0-88899-529-6



LOUISE
DONNELLY



The Several
Lives of
Orphan Jack
(Groundwood)

Jacqueline Pearce of Burnaby explores the perilous landscape of adolescence in **Weeds and Other Stories** (This-tledown \$14.95). In the title story, Karen, an outsider at school, loans her algebra homework yet again to the shallow but popular, hipster-skirted Chelsey. An incident at the bus stop opens Karen’s eyes to the beauty in the mundane, and how kindness sometimes rewards the giver more than the receiver.

In *The Trickster*, Josh’s mother sends him to the university to fetch a dead coyote for her grade six class. He’ll have to use public transit, something he’s been avoiding since the night at the Skytrain stop when four guys mugged him. When Josh meets the four muggers again, the foul-smelling creature he’s carting home bequeaths him an otherworldly sense of power and elation.

In *Girls’ Night Out*, the final story, Julie—once so close to Caitlin and Tia that everyone called them the Three Musket-

eers—is adrift. Even though she’s broken up with jerky Rick, she wants him back. She’s lost touch with her friends and even herself. It takes a daring late-night skinny dip in the closed community centre pool for Julie to regain her bearings. 1-894345-64-9



Imagination is what saves Belinda, abducted and locked in an attic and watched over by hideous Nursemaid Gulch. But is it enough to reunite the twelve-year-old with her parents?

Described as a gothic-comic thriller, **Belinda and the Dustbunnys** (Hodgepog \$12.95) is by UBC writing teacher **Madeline Sonik** after the “profoundly affecting” disappearance of Victoria’s **Michael Dunahee**. All author royalties to be donated to Child Find. Illustrations are by **Grania Bridal**, a surfer living in Sooke. 0-9730831-4-X

Louise Donnelly writes from Vernon.

ALSO RECEIVED

Young Adult:

- Police Line: Do Not Cross** (Orca \$9.95) by Tanya Lloyd Kyi 1-55143-265-X
The Battle for Carnillo (Sono Nis \$10.95) by Nikki Tate 1-55039-127-5
The Runaway (Orca \$7.95) by Becky Citra 1-55143-276-5
Fox Winter (Hodgepog \$8.95) by Margaret Thompson 0-9730831-5-8
Robbie Packford: Alien Monster (Orca \$8.95) by Heather Sander 1-55143-259-5
Dance of the Stones (Orca \$9.95) by Andrea Spalding 1-55143-268-4
Lesia’s Dream (HarperCollins \$15.99) by Laura Langston 0-00-639283-0
Raging River (Whitecap \$8.95) by Pam Withers 1-55285-510-4
Realm of the Golden Feather (Moose Enterprise/Theatre Play) by Cory Ginter 1-894650-26-3
The Big Show (Orca \$8.95) by Don Trembath 1-55143-266-8
The Whale People (Harbour \$14.95) by Roderick Haig-Brown 1-55017-277-8
The Bone Collector’s Son (Tradewind \$12.95) by Paul Yee 1-896580-50-5

Educational:

- Ch’askin** (Harbour \$7.95) by Donna Joe, illos by Jamie Jeffries 0-88971-180-1
Bats (Kids Can \$5.95) by Adrienne Mason, illos by Nancy Gray Ogle 1-55337-525-4
Canadian Dinosaurs (Maple Tree \$19.95) by Elin Kelsey 1-894-379-56-X
Salmon Forest (Greystone \$18.95) by David Suzuki & Sarah Ellis, illos by Sheena Lott 1-55054-937-5
Achoo! (Kids Can \$6.95) by Trudee Romanek, illos by Rose Cowles 1-55337-451-7

Picture Books:

- Suki’s Kimono** (Kids Can \$17.95) by Chieri Uegaki, illos by Stephane Jorisch 1-55337-084-8
Three Royal Tales (Kids Can \$10.95) by Marilyn Helmer, illos by Dianna Bonder 1-55074-939-0
The Sea King (Tradewind \$22.95) by Jane Yolen & Shulamith Oppenheim, illos by Stefan Czernecki 1-896580-46-7



Chief David Latesse (1857-1936) dressed in costume for a media photo circa 1932. He passed on stories of warfare told by his Songhees father.

SEEING SONGHEES

With almost 200 archival images, **Grant Keddie**, a curator at the Royal BC Museum, has documented the history of the Songhees Reserve established across the harbour from Fort Victoria in the 1840s as the main gathering place for First Peoples who sought trade with Europeans.

Attitudes of 19th century Victorians to the Songhees and Esquimalt nations, according to Keddie, mostly "ranged from hateful bigotry to patronizing sup-

port." The museum's website offers supplements to *Songhees Pictorial: A History of the Songhees People as seen by Outsiders, 1790-1912* (Royal B.C. Museum \$39.95). "Most written accounts of First Peoples in early Victoria ignore the Songhees and Esquimalt nations," says Keddie, "because northern visitors attracted more attention, their actions dominating the local news reports."

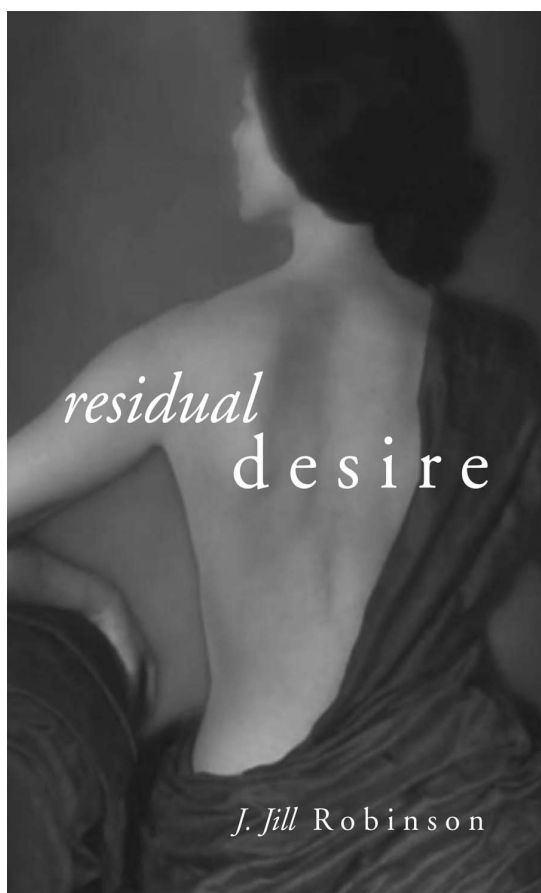
Condominiums now occupy the site of the old Songhees reserve, with Songhees Point at the centre.

0-7726-4964-2



Songhees boy, 1910-12

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