

Bob Hunter  
writing aboard  
the first  
Greenpeace  
protest vessel  
Phyllis  
Cormack, 1971.

# W • GEORGE RYGA AWARD winner



On behalf of her late husband, Roberta Hunter accepts "The Censors' Golden Rope" from sculptor Reg Kienast. The sculpture is given annually to George Ryga Award recipients.



AWARD SCULPTURE BY REG KIENAST.

## For Social Awareness in British Columbia Literature.

**Robert Hunter** (1941-2005) and photographer **Robert Keziere** collaborated on the first authoritative report on the Amchitka protests by Greenpeace in 1971, but Hunter's original manuscript was rejected by publisher Jack McClelland of Toronto in favour of a picture book. Recently Keziere's partner Karen Love retrieved the lone copy of Hunter's eyewitness report and took it to Brian Lam at Arsenal Pulp Press. Published last year as **The Greenpeace to Amchitka: An Environmental Odyssey**, the chronicle of idealism, bad weather, weird karma and personal tensions has been selected as the winner of the second annual George Ryga Award for outstanding social awareness.

The award was presented at the Vernon Performing Arts Centre on July 27 during a celebratory concert, hosted by CBC's Paul Grant, to mark the 73rd anniversary of George Ryga's birth. The shortlist included *Redress* (Raincoast) by Roy Miki and *A Stain Upon the Sea* (Harbour) by a collection of authors.

Sponsored by the George Ryga Centre (Summerland)



CBC  **radiONE** (Kelowna) and Okanagan College.

Information: [jlent@junction.net](mailto:jlent@junction.net)



This article is the fourth in a series celebrating enduring B.C. books.

**In 1898, hoping to raise enough money to return to England, Chilcotin rancher Norman Lee, son of an Oxford-educated vicar, decided to take 200 cattle on a 1500-mile trek to the Klondike gold fields.**

After five months, winter forced Lee to butcher the herd. He loaded the meat onto scows but the entire shipment was lost on Teslin Lake, 500 miles short of Dawson Creek, his destination.

Only one companion, his driver and scow captain **William 'Bill' Copeland**, remained with Lee for the duration of his doomed expedition. Copeland said his boss was “more like a brother” and always “honest about what he wanted and what he said.”

Copeland and Lee barely made it to Wrangel, Alaska, from which they took steamers south, to Victoria and Nanaimo respectively.

“As funds were getting short again; and as my clothes were in rags,” Lee wrote, “I did not care to look up any of my aristocratic friends in Victoria.” Lee made it to Vancouver with a roll of blankets, a dog and one dollar.

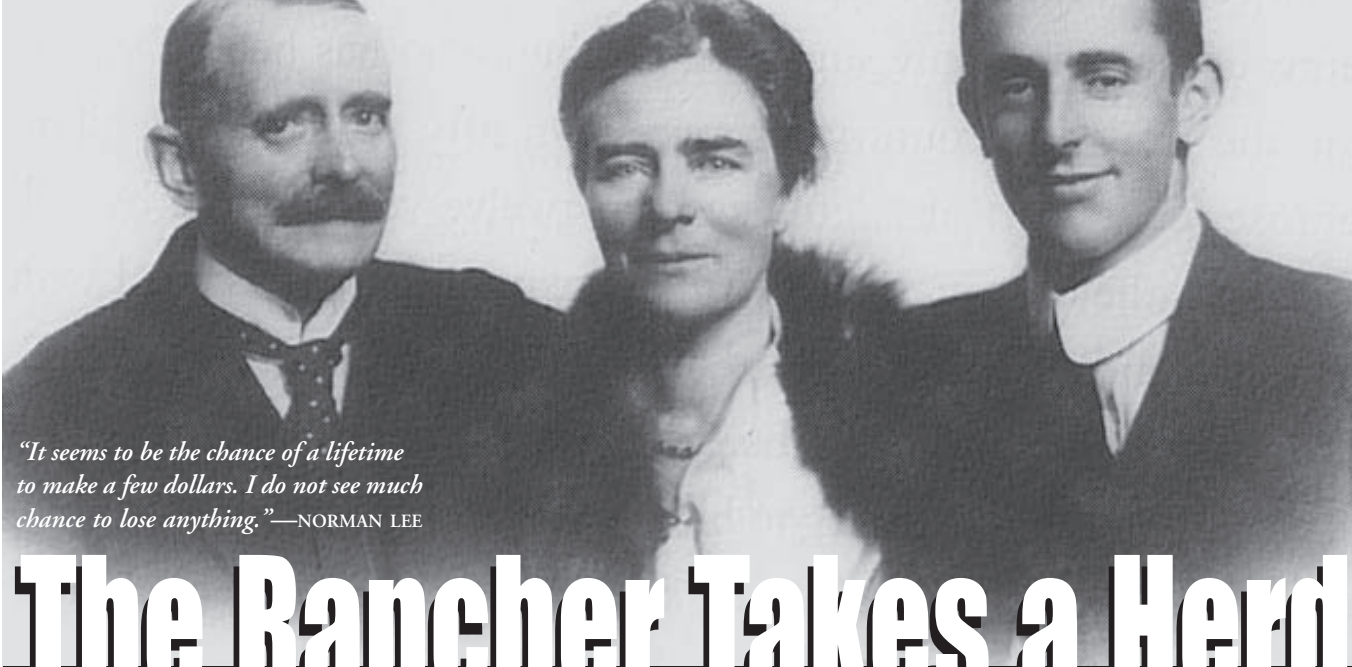
Undaunted, Norman Lee returned to his “Chicken Ranch” in the Chilcotin and became a successful cattle rancher known to the Chilcotin Indians as “Old Lee” because he was the first member of his family to arrive.

In 1902 he returned to England, witnessed the coronation of **Edward VII**, and married his second cousin **Agnes 'Nessie' Lee**, who had reluctantly ended a holiday in Ireland after receiving a telegram from her brother: “Please come and help entertain our cousin Norman Lee, from Canada.”

Agnes Lee became one of five white women residing in the Chilcotin upon her arrival. Affectionately known as “Gan-Gan” by the Chilcotins, she became fluent in Chilcotin and managed the local store for decades.

Norman Lee remained as a fixture in the Cariboo, living at Hanceville on the Chilcotin Plateau, until his death at age 77 on March 16, 1939.

Chilcotin pioneers Norman Lee, his wife Agnes and their son Daniel.



*“It seems to be the chance of a lifetime to make a few dollars. I do not see much chance to lose anything.”—NORMAN LEE*

# The Rancher Takes a Herd

## THE INCREDIBLE BOVINE JOURNEY OF NORMAN LEE



Norman Lee left behind a self-illustrated manuscript, completed around the turn of the century, based on journal notes he had made while undertaking his cattle drive in 1898.

Nine years after Lee's death, **Eileen Laurie** of CBC Radio in Vancouver arrived in Quesnel in June of 1948 to attend an art show—and began to hear stories about Lee's legendary cattle drive. She later interviewed Mrs. Agnes Lee of Hanceville, Norman Lee's widow, in 1954 in conjunction with a province-wide program from Vancouver that broadcast authentic stories by B.C. pioneers.

The following summer Laurie and her husband visited the Lee's log house and store in the Chilcotin and read Norman Lee's journal. She also came to know **Penrose Lee**, Norman Lee's brother, who had been a rancher in the

Chilcotin for more than 50 years, arriving two years after his brother. Laurie received permission from Lee's widow to read excerpts on her CBC program *Party Line* and agreed to serve as her agent.

Months after being presented to **Princess Margaret** in Williams Lake during the town's Centennial festivities, Agnes Lee died at age 87 in December of 1958, having never realized her ambition to have her husband's journal published.

Soon afterwards the wife of Vancouver book designer and publisher **Robert R. Reid** heard Eileen Laurie read excerpts of Lee's journal on the CBC, whereupon Reid approached **Howard Mitchell** of Mitchell Press with a proposal to co-publish *Klondike Cattle Drive* with an introduction by SFU English professor **Gordon R. Elliott**, who grew up in Williams Lake and had visited the Lee'sranch in the sum-

mers with other boys.

“I was also one of those kids,” Elliott recalled in 2005, “who happily read the books Mr. Lee pressed us to read and one of those kids to whom he talked so easily and grammatically that none of us have ever forgotten him.”

Elliott described Lee as a small, athletic man with a kind heart and a wry sense of humour, a thinker ahead of his times, unusual for his “racial tolerance.”

**Klondike Cattle Drive: The Journal of Norman Lee** (Mitchell Press, 1960), republished in 1991, and again in 2005, is the fourth title in TouchWood Editions' Classics West Collection, \$12.95.

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### FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

### COMING NEXT ISSUE...

Having served for five years as the referee for an annual contest that chooses the best Canadian first novel or fiction collection by a new writer, **W.P. Kinsella** answers our questions as to what heck goes on in the fiction judging game. Is it wise to be cynical? Is geography really your destiny? Should all storytellers move to Toronto?

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LE CONSEIL DES ARTS DU CANADA DEPUIS 1957

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## INDEX to Advertisers

Anvil Press...8  
Arsenal Pulp Press...26  
Banyen Books...40  
BC Book Prizes...35  
BC Civil Liberties...41  
Bolen Books...38  
Book Warehouse...7  
Caitlin Press...12  
Crown Publications...39  
Douglas & McIntyre...43  
Douglas College/EVENT...40  
Douglas College / Summer Institute in Historical Fiction...41  
Ekstasis Editions...36  
Ellis, David...41  
First Choice Books...42  
Friesens Printers...42  
Granville Island Publishing...42  
Hedgerow Press...30  
Harbour Publishing...44

HarperCollins...8  
Heritage House...14  
Hignell Printing...42  
Houghton Boston...41  
Julian, Terry...41  
Leamcom Press...41  
McClelland & Stewart...4  
Multicultural Books...41  
Morris Printing...42  
New Star Books...30, 40  
Northstone...12  
Oolichan Books...26  
Orca Books...24  
People's Co-op Books...41  
Playwrights Canada Press...30  
Printorium...41  
Propp, Dan...30  
Raincoast Books...3  
Random House...16  
Ripple Effect Press...19

Ronsdale Press...10  
Royal BC Museum...12  
Save-On Foods...38  
Self-Counsel...17  
SFU Writing & Publishing...36  
Sidney Booktown...30  
Sono Nis Press...18  
Talonbooks...11  
Temeron Books...30  
Terasen...2  
Thomas Allen Publishers...12  
Thomson, Ann...41  
Transcontinental Printing...42  
UBC Press...20  
University of Alberta Press...30  
Vancouver Desktop...41  
Woewoda, James C....41  
Yoka's Coffee...39

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Just as William Gibson became the darling of rock stars and Hollywood during the nineties, ex-Vancouverite **Sean Stewart** is positioned to be the flavour-of-the-decade in Hollywood's new fictional realm that merges science fiction and virtual storytelling.



# SEAN'S PEN

**B**orn in Lubbock, Texas (“the buckle of the Bible Belt”) on June 2, 1965, **Sean Stewart** moved to a fatherless home in Edmonton at age three. Introverted, without siblings, he says he had “an unremarkable childhood of roughly the usual length.”

Stewart graduated from reading *The Hobbit* at age seven to a broad appetite for serious fiction (**Jane Austen**, **James Joyce**, **William Faulkner**) and a passion for high school fencing. Then came girls and theatre.

“From my drama teacher I gained many valuable insights, such as the fact that if you salt the donuts at your concession stand, those who purchase between the first act and the second will be back for a pop between the second and third.”

Still not setting the world or his hair on fire, Stewart graduated from the English program at the University of Alberta, married his high school sweetheart “and put in the requisite years of writing very badly and getting rejected, followed by the requisite years of writing half-decently and continuing to be rejected.”

He worked at a variety of jobs (roofer, busboy, computer specialist), wrote interactive fantasy games and moved to Vancouver where he worked for the Vancouver Cultural Alliance.

Stewart eventually published the fifth novel he had written, *Passion Play* (Beach Holme/Tesseract, 1992), endorsed by **William Gibson**.

*Passion Play* received the 1992 Aurora Award for best Canadian SF novel

in English as well as an Arthur Ellis Crime Writers Award for debut fiction, but his big break came from White Dwarf Books. The owners of Vancouver's leading SF store urged the local sales representative for Ace Books to read *Passion Play*.

A copy reached Ace Books senior editor **Susan Allison** and soon *Passion Play* appeared from a major U.S. publishing outlet in 1994. It has been followed by a fantasy novel *Nobody's Son* (Maxwell Macmillan, 1993) in which a village commoner breaks the centuries-old Ghostwood's spell, wins the princess for his prize, and then his problems begin—plus six more novels.

That's the end of Act One in Sean Stewart's success story in progress.

Stewart has since moved to Monterey, California where he has become a rising star in the field of Internet

gaming mysteries, working with programmers from Microsoft's Entertainment Business Unit.

Born as a marketing campaign to hype the **Steven Spielberg** movie *A.I.* (Artificial Intelligence), Stewart's collaboratively-produced Alternate Reality Game was dubbed The Beast because the first draft of an ‘art asset’ list came to 666 items.

“The game was freaking pastiche Armageddon,” Stewart has written on his website. “It started from a Spielberg script inflected with **Kubrick** notions from a **Brian Aldiss** short story with echoes of *Dune* and *Clockwork Orange*, for God's sake. Political tracts. Corporate boasting. Sex-kitten catalogues. Mysterious Oriental Gentlemen. Wistful midlife crises. Suicide notes. Gibsonian cyberpunk.

“I stole or hot-wired or tweaked up

**Shakespeare** and **John Donne** and **Tim O'Brien**, **Ovid** and **Iain Banks** and **Puccini** and *Bladerunner*. I wrote every genre character ever invented, I think—bounty hunters and kept women and a bad guy made of nightmares, religious zealots and angry teenagers and streetwise hackers.”

Among the computer-geek set, the maze-like mystery of widespread clues supposedly became as popular as the movie *A.I.*

This Internet project was followed by a new quest game in July of 2004 called I Love Bees. Another Internet-dependent Alternate Reality Game (ARG), this time Stewart helped design I Love Bees as an adjunct promotion for a new video game called Halo 2.

The Beast and I Love Bees have apparently succeeded where other on-line games to promote other films (such as **Tim Burton's** *Planet of the Apes*, *Swordfish* and *X-Men*) have failed, generating scads of chat groups and would-be detectives picking up messages in designated phone booths around the world.



It's possible ARGs are the fiction of tomorrow—already happening today.

Meanwhile in Stewart's latest novel, **Perfect Circle** (San Francisco: Small Beer Press \$18), William “Dead” Kennedy has problems. He's haunted by family, by dead people with unfinished business, and by those perfect pop songs that you can't get out of your head. He's a 32-year-old Texan still in love with his ex-wife. He just lost his job at Pet-Co for eating cat food. His air-conditioning is broken, there's no good music on the radio, and he's been dreaming about ghost roads.

The novel was shortlisted for this year's Nebula Award. Perfect Circle 1931520119



# BUDDY, CAN YOU SPARE A TURNIP?

BY BEVERLY CRAMP

**P**ump down the volume, folks. *Relocalize Now!* suggests a completely new way for society to operate by ensuring our needs are met locally.

Its trio of authors, two of whom live in Vancouver, acknowledges change will require experimentation and time, and that mistakes will be made along the way, but revising our consumerist lifestyle in North America is inevitable:

“There are no perfect answers or solutions to these problems, only responses,” they write. “Finding what responses might work for each individual’s locale will require a fantastic experiment, a post carbon experiment... we are working to manifest dreams of an enjoyable and invigorating future that seems about as remote and different from our current existence as one could imagine—a future without cheap oil and natural gas, without limitless energy and growth and without huge corporations.”

In a world where corporations control many of our provisioning choices, employing large numbers of people, these can be seen as incendiary words. Yet the authors say they are not political; they just don’t see a reasonable vision for the future coming from the political right or the political left.

Regardless of one’s political orientation, *Relocalize Now!* calls for a radical makeover of society, including the butchering of some sacred cows. Take, for example, the so-called free market:

“It is important to note that these notions are human constructs: they are developed, rationalized, and promulgated by people. Operating systems are not divine truths cast in stone that can never be altered even though certain ideas become so embedded in common beliefs that they are regarded as undeniable reality. Such is the case with free market economics.”

In the authors’ brave new and environmentally sustainable world, the future will be in the hands of clusters of self-governing, self-provisioning communities that are not

**R**ising gas pump prices affect more than a car trip. The cost of oil is factored into our food, furniture, appliances, clothing and just about everything else that needs to be trucked, shipped or flown.

*Relocalize Now! Getting Ready for Climate Change and the End of Cheap Oil (New Society \$21.95) by Julian Darley, David Room and Celine Rich is a forthcoming “post-carbon guide” that will outline ways people can create local money, energy and food systems to obviate our reliance on oil.*

completely isolationist. Where economic projects require more resources than a community has, regional cooperation will be required. In opposition to “this global behemoth we have created,” there will be far less material wealth. It has become imperative to “reduce and produce 90 per cent less, then make the rest.”

Like any screed that promotes radical change, *Relocalize Now!* contains many new or not well-known terms:

- peak oil (the high production point after which all future oil production will begin decreasing and energy will get more expensive)
- parallel public infrastructure (a new provisioning infrastructure that uses the local model and new forms of ownership,

and is developed while the existing global system is still operating)

- community supported manufacturing (a partnership of mutual commitment between the makers of life’s tools and a community of supporters. Supporters cover the factory’s yearly operating budget by purchasing a share of the production. CSM members make a commitment to support the factory throughout the year and assume the costs, risks and bounty of manufacturing along with the factory workers).

Strange new concepts for most people to be sure, but such ideas will give people something to think about when watching the price numbers tick over while refueling their cars at the gas sta-

tion. The alternative—simply pondering the status quo—is a great deal less inspiring.

“Oil and other forms of big energy, such as natural gas, nuclear, large hydro-electricity dams and coal, have enabled humans to strip mine the earth,” write Darley & Co. “We have managed to scrape the ocean bottom of fish, mow down trees from the mountains and poison the biosphere with pollutants while increasing our numbers to six billion (and counting). Our massive use of fossil fuels cause the Earth’s temperatures to rise and the beginning of climate change like nothing we’ve known before.”

And in the process, some executives in Canada’s oil and gas capital, Calgary, will still tell you that petroleum use does not cause global warming. It wasn’t so long ago that tobacco companies denied smoking causes cancer, either.



Julian Darley has a MSc in environment and sociology from University of Surrey, UK, which led to a published thesis examining the coverage of complex environmental issues in current affairs programmes at the BBC. He also has a MA in journalism and communications from the University of Texas.

Celine Rich has a MA in design for the environment from the Chelsea College of Art and Design, England; a BA in fine arts from the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, and a Certificate of Marketing from Kwantlen College.

Darley and Rich are a Vancouver couple who have recently co-founded the Post Carbon Institute, an educational think tank that explores the theory and practice how cultures, governance and economies will function without (non-renewable) hydrocarbons as energy and chemical feed-stocks.

David Room has a MA in engineering economic systems and a BSc in electrical engineering from Stanford University.

0-86571-545-9

*Beverly Cramp is a freelance writer who edits the Musqueam Newsletter.*

Julian Darley, Celine Rich and Dave Room have linked more than 50 “post carbon outposts” around the globe.





# A FATHER'S HEROICS

## INSPIRE HORRORMEISTER SLADE

**A**n attorney in more than 100 murder cases, **Jay Clarke** has also co-written eleven 'psycho-thrillers' under the pseudonym **Michael Slade**. In *Swastika* (Penguin \$24), he hunts through the annals—and factories—of World War II history to expose a Pentagon cover-up with links to rocket scientist **Wernher von Braun**.

Clarke's new thriller is directly inspired by the WWII archives of his father, **Jack "Johnny" Clarke**, an artist who volunteered for the RAF in September of 1940.

He flew 47 combat missions against the Third Reich and participated in the Battle of El Alamein.

Clarke links his father's war record (which he says he found behind a false wall in his mother's linen closet in 2003) to a delusional killer named The Aryan who arrives on the West Coast and heads to Barkerville in search of Hitler's gold.

"What is it about the Cariboo that appeals to the Germanic mind?" Slade writes. "Are the mountains evocative of



Jay Clarke

the Bavarian Alps? Are the thickets reminiscent of how the Black Forest used to feel? Is it the sense of Lebensraum in its wide-open spaces, the yearning for elbow room that drove the Nazis to invade Russia?

Whatever it is, German accents are everywhere in the Cariboo today, and that made the Aryan just one among

many."

As for using *Swastika* to link the German-born 'American' scientist Wernher von Braun to Hitler's war crimes involving slave labour, Jay Clarke claims, "Von Braun's war record was 'inconvenient' for the Pentagon's post-war missile plans. So, to subvert the Nazi restrictions in Project Paperclip, he was slapped with more whitewash than Tom Sawyer and his dupes put on that fence.

"By the time I was a kid in the mid-1950s, you could sit on the floor wearing your Davy Crockett coonskin cap and see von Braun on Disney's TV show.

"His design for the rocket ship in Tomorrowland was based on his V-2. By the time he died an American 'hero' in



Flight Lieutenant Jack "Johnny" Clarke disappeared in an airplane crash during Jay Clarke's youth

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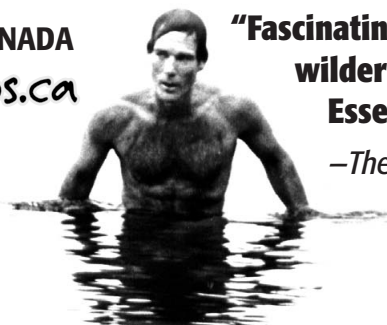
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## JOHN VAILLANT

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—The Georgia Straight

## A TRUE STORY OF MYTH, MADNESS AND GREED





*Swastika* is an unusual Michael Slade novel because it alleges a Pentagon cover-up of SS Major Werner von Braun's links to the deaths of 20,000 prisoner-of-war slaves who died while the Nazis built V-2 rockets for Hitler. Von Braun is pictured on the cover of Time Magazine in 1958.

1977, he'd been given a medal by President Ford...

"During the Red Scare years after the war, von Braun became essential to America winning the arms race. So the Pentagon brought its own iron curtain down between Nordhausen—the overflow camp—and the Dora Mittelbau V-2 factory tunnels, less than five miles to the north. Dora was written out of history, and the cover-up persists today."



Jay Clarke, aka Michael Slade, can trace his origins as a writer to his fascination with EC Comics in the mid-1950s—and the encouragement of bookseller Bill Duthie.

"I was fascinated by the criminal mind," he says. "First I drew comics, and then I wrote a book, *13 Tombs*, when I was thirteen."

I typed it out in signatures and stitched them together like the guts of a book. From age ten I had haunted Duthie Books, so I showed my work to **Bill Duthie** and left it with him to read.

Imagine how wowed I was when he gave it back to me a week later, bound in hardcover, with the title and my name in gilt on the spine. 'Now you're published in a limited edition of one,' he said. 'One day, I want to see your books sold in my store.'



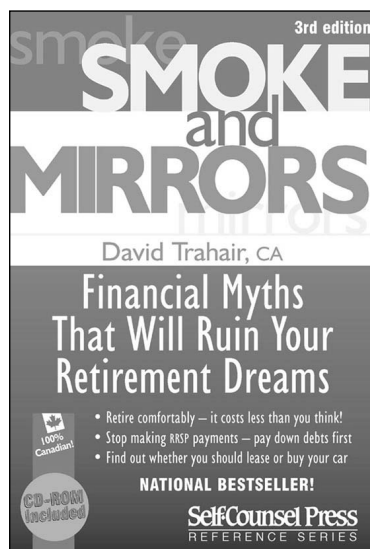
Born in Lethbridge in 1947, Jay Clarke specializes as a lawyer in cases for the criminally insane. Most of his recent novels are co-written with his daughter **Rebecca Clarke**, who studied literature and history at UBC. Their collaboration for *Bed of Nails* (Penguin

2003) marks a return to the landscape of Slade's second novel, *Ghoul*, selected by the Horror Writers' Association as one of the 40 top horror novels of all time and named one of the best novels by the *A to Z Encyclopedia of Serial Killers* (Simon & Schuster, 1997) along with *Silence of the Lambs* and *Psycho*. In *Bed of Nails*, a local crazy called The Ripper—who believes he's Jack the Ripper—plots revenge on Inspector Zinc Chandler. A car chase with guns blazing in Vancouver and a World Horror Convention in Seattle lead the Mountie to a cannibal island climax in the South Pacific, where *Survivor* is the game, and Chandler is an unwilling contestant.

Clarke is willing to consider his fascination with horror could be somewhat linked with the disappearance of his father, a Trans-Canada Airlines pilot, whose flight from Vancouver to Calgary in 1956 crashed into a mountain near Chilliwack during a storm, killing all 62 people aboard. The plane went missing on December 9, 1956 and wasn't found until May. "What you do is you plumb your life," he told the *Georgia Straight's Steve Newton* in 2003, "and you come up with whatever the scariest things are. Now, I don't know, maybe your parents lost you in the woods. Maybe Uncle Charlie took you out and sexually assaulted you behind the woodpile. Maybe you drowned and had a near-death experience. It will be different for every single person, but there'll be something in your life which you have to carry with you, and you'll carry [it] with you 'til the grave."

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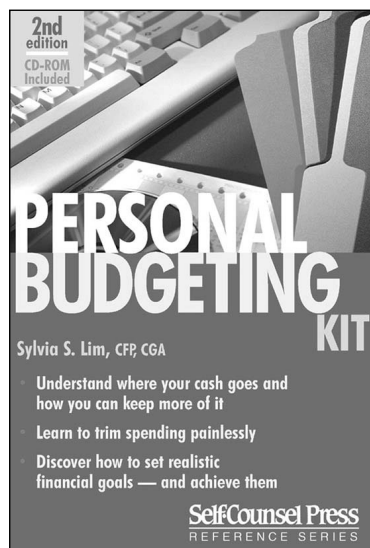
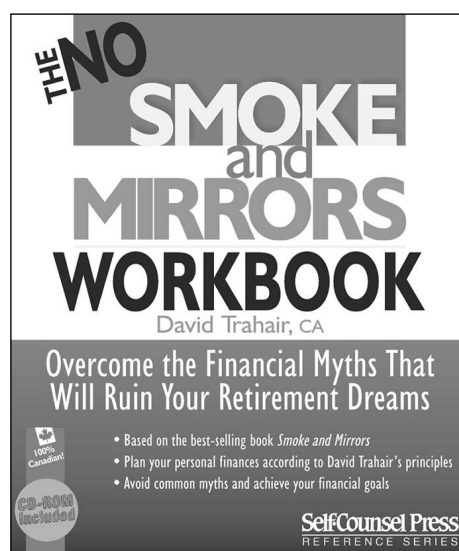
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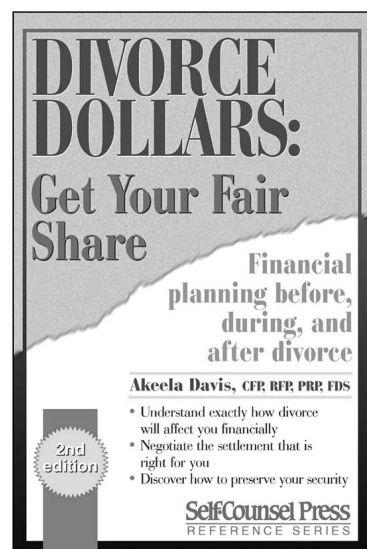
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Yesterday & today: St. Mary's residential school and November, 2005 newspaper headline.

# Unlucky 713

**A** boriginals constitute less than four percent of the population in B.C., and yet Aboriginal children constitute 40 percent or more of the children in state care in western and northern Canada according to **Christopher Walmsley** in *Protecting Aboriginal Children* (UBC Press \$85).

Hence the recent furore over the unexamined deaths of more than 700 children in British Columbia—including 19-month-old **Sherry Charlie** of Port Alberni who was placed in a home where her uncle, who was known to be violent, beat her to death in 2002—has particular relevance to First Nations communities.

Based on his interviews with nineteen B.C. child protection workers, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, conducted in 1998-1999, Walmsley has examined the Aboriginal child protection system in B.C., from residential schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to foster homes in the 1990s.

"Throughout its history, the residential school system was chronically under-funded and provided substandard education, housing, health care and child care," he writes. Despite widespread physical and sexual abuses, only one public inquiry into residential school conditions in B.C. was undertaken prior to the 1980s—a coroner's inquest after eight-year-old **Duncan Sticks** ran away from the Williams Lake Residential School in 1902 and was found dead the next day.

Allegations of state negligence since 2002 therefore have a

disturbing backdrop of systemic abuse and irresponsibility.

Walmsley, who joined the staff of the School of Social Work and Human Service at Thompson Rivers University in 1996, emphasizes that considerable progress was made in the 1990s after public attention was focussed on the death of five-year-old **Matthew Vaudreuil**, a ward of the Ministry of Social Services throughout his short life.

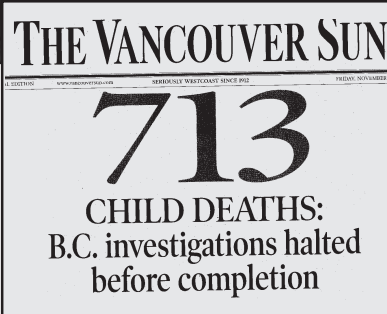
The resultant Gove Report, issued in November of 1995 during the tenure of **Joy MacPhail** as NDP provincial Minister of Social Services, led to new legislation such as the Child, Youth and Family Advocacy Act to ensure an independent system of advocacy for children.

With Aboriginals constituting 35 percent of the children in B.C. government care in 1997, plans were made to generate a special advocate for Aboriginal services, but the advocacy office was eliminated and its legislation repealed with the election of a Liberal government in 2001.

In conducting his panoramic examination of contemporary social work in the field of Aboriginal child protection, Walmsley was not able to find a male Aboriginal child protection practitioner with a social work degree.

"The road to hell is paved with good intentions," said **Samuel Johnson**. As an education faculty member at York University, **Celia Haig-Brown** has co-edited *With Good Intentions: Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal Relations in Colonial Canada* (UBC Press \$85), an examination of whites such as **James Teit** who recognized colonial injustice and responded in constructive ways during the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century.

**Christopher Walmsley** reprints a chronological list of 16 residential schools in B.C. and their years of operation: **St. Mary's Mission** 1863-1984; **Coqualeetza** (Sardis) 1888-1941; **Kamloops** 1890-1978; **Kuper Island** (1890-1975); **Kootenay** (1890-1970); **Port Simpson** (1890-1948); **Cariboo** (1891-1981); **Alberni** (1891-1972); **Kitamaat** (1893-1941); **Christie** (1900-1983); **St. George's** (1901-1978); **Squamish** (1902-1960); **Ahousaht** (1904-1939); **Sechelt** (1905-1975); **Lejac** (1910-1976); **Alert Bay** (1929-1975).

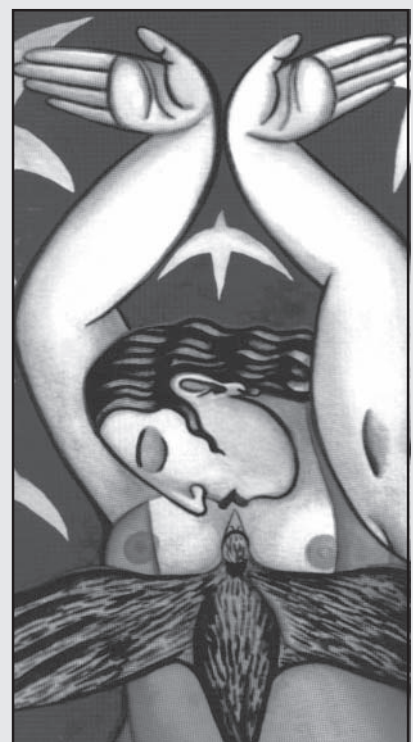


## ALSO NEW

Nuu-chah-nulth ethnographer **Ron Hamilton** contributed the introduction and 14 drawings to the first, cooperatively written product of the Barkley Sound Language Development Project, the **Nuu-chah-nulth Phrase Book & Dictionary: Barkley Sound Dialect** (Bamfield: Barkley Sound Dialect Working Group, \$15.95), designed and typeset by **Maggie Paquet** of Port Alberni. The Language Development Team of **Hilda Nookemis, Deborah Cook** and **Denny Durocher** worked for 18 months with representatives from the Huu-ay-aht, Ucluelet, Toquaht and Uchucklesaht First Nations to produce the 192-page, pocket-sized book in an effort to revive a rarely spoken language. 0-9735641-0-5



Long active in the indigenous peoples' rights movement, **Jeannette Armstrong** participated in the Opening Plenary of the Third World Water Forum at the Kyoto Conference organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in March of 2003. First published on UNESCO Canada's website, her water poem for that conference, 'Water is Siwkw,' has been republished at the outset of **Sky Woman: Indigenous Women Who Have Shaped, Moved or Inspired Us** (Theytus \$24.95), an anthology of writing and art edited by **Sandra Laronde**. 1-894778-19-7



Cover art for *Sky Woman* by Maya Christina Gonzalez

## Wordscapes:

*British Columbia Youth Writing Anthology 2006*

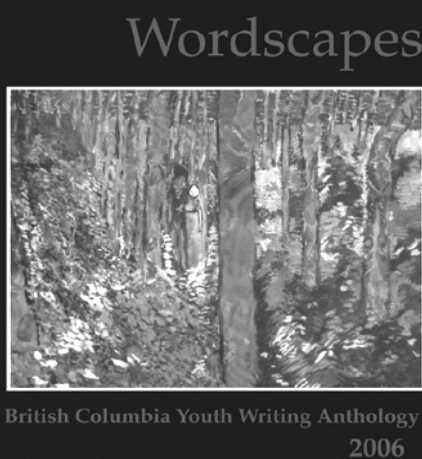
*Wordscapes* features a diverse mix of poetry, short stories, essays and artwork by some of British Columbia's best youth authors and artists.

Young Adult, ISBN: 1-894735-10-2  
192 pages, trade paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4"  
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*Wordscapes* includes all the winners from Ripple Effect's annual **B.C. Provincial High School Writing and Design Contest**. 48 students from across B.C. share \$8000 and publication in the annual *Wordscapes* anthology. This year's contest deadline is **May 31st, 2006**.

For contest guidelines and how to order *Wordscapes* past and present, visit:

[www.rippleeffect.ca](http://www.rippleeffect.ca)



**Ripple Effect Arts and Literature Society**  
and **BOOKtopia**

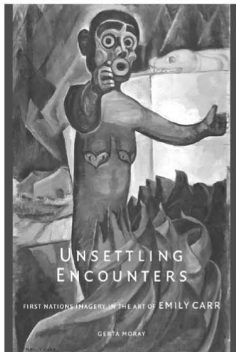
present the **Wordscapes 2006 Launch Party**

Featuring readings by *Wordscapes* 2006 authors, youth art gallery, dee-jay, and free refreshments.

**7:00 pm, Friday, April 28th, 2006.**  
**West Vancouver Memorial Library**  
1950 Marine Drive, West Vancouver  
Free admission.

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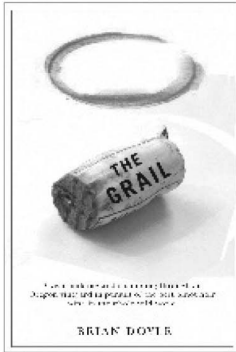
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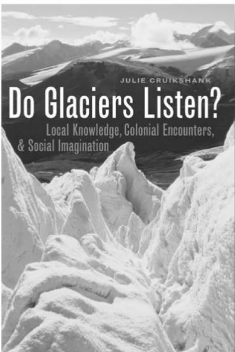
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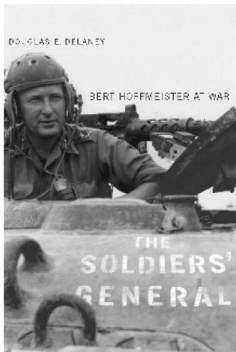
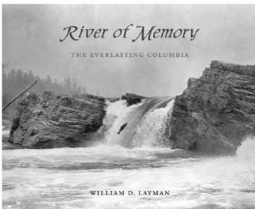
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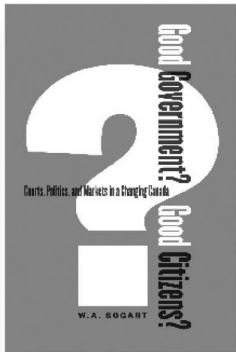
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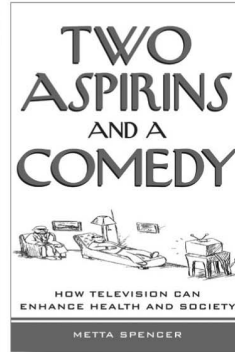
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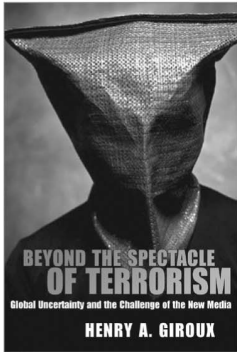
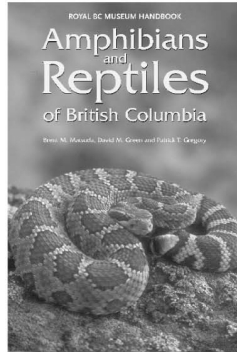
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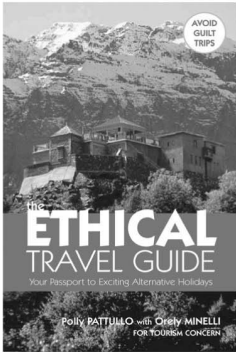
**H.L. Goodall, Jr.**

An intriguing memoir about a professor’s investigation into the chilling secrets of the CIA family he grew up in.

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## Bible thumping

My hobby is picking up old books at garage sales and library book sales. *B.C. BookWorld* has been my Bible for 18 years. I really like the BC Classics section. M. Wylie Blanchet’s *Curve of Time* was number three [BCBW Winter 2005] and Andrew Roddan’s *God in the Jungle* was number two. But what was number one?

**Bud Macleod**

Sunshine Coast

[First in the series was *Simon Peter Gunanoot: Trap-Line Outlaw* by David Ricardo Williams. That article is stored at [www.abcbookworld.com](http://www.abcbookworld.com). Just enter: David Williams.]

## Breakfast of champions

Thank you for Sara Cassidy’s insightful and sensitive interview about Peter Such’s novel *Earth baby* [BCBW Autumn 2005].

Just one tiny correction: Not only is our B&B, Earle Clarke House, not closed, we have just been voted #3 “Best Breakfast in Canada” by *Arrington’s Inn Traveler*, the Bible of the B&B industry.

**Joyce Kline**

Victoria



## Straight talk on Curve

Greetings from history-phobic Richmond where in Steveston many First Nation sites have allegedly been destroyed in the last few years (i.e. development of the packers’ site and a chief’s home site near Garry Point Park).

*Curve of Time* by M. Wylie Blanchet [BCBW Winter 2005] describes plundering First Nations sites as they sail for 15 summers, dreamingly collecting artifacts. There is an inference that this was okay because it was a different, innocent time. But how would they [the Blanchet family] react if their ancestors’ grave sites were plundered?

Many people and government policies are still oblivious to other cultures, past and present. Artifact hunting is destroying human history, sometimes while making money. Modern plunder has not changed much since the ‘50s. There are many examples: Local building codes have allowed a new home to be built on or next to an old midden at the end of Lyall Harbour on Saturna Island as millions are being spent by the federal government to create park land for new occupiers.

**Paul Bruhn**

Richmond

## Chomsky at the bit

That article on the Allen Bell/Noam Chomsky book [BCBW Autumn 2005] is truly amazing and I just see people all over the place reading it. It has been a fantastic way to get Chomsky’s words out into the public sphere much more so than the book itself.

**Lynda Gammon**

Victoria

**Letters or emails contact:**

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# Red light district novelist hits green lights

*By writing nightmarish tales of Bombay, Anosh Irani is living the Canadian dream*

In October of 2003, the Arts Club of Vancouver produced **Anosh Irani's** first full-length play, *The Matka King*, a darkly comic tale about a witty eunuch who operates a Bombay brothel and keeps his severed penis in a jar.

Five months later, in Irani's debut novel, *The Cripple and His Talismans* (Raincoast \$29.95), a detestable and unnamed narrator went searching for his severed limb after waking in a Bombay hospital to discover his left arm was inexplicably missing.

He proceeds to carry a leper's finger through a dizzying, absurdist and deeply commercial world of lepers and cockroaches, peacocks and prostitution, rainbows inside whiskey bottles and chickens that practice black magic.

"The novel's restless vision of Bombay," commented one dazed but impressed reviewer, "occasionally feels like a motorcycle tour of the Louvre."

Having had another play, *Bombay Black*, open in Toronto at Cahoots Theatre in January, Anosh Irani has now released his second novel about a nightmarish quest, *The Song of Kahunsha* (Doubleday \$29.95), in which a ten-year-old boy runs away from an orphanage, hoping to find his father.

While dreaming of an idyllic paradise he calls Kahunsha, "the city of no sadness," this young seeker named Chamdi befriends a brother and sister who are beggars.

Amid Bombay's 1993 religious riots, in which 2,000 people were killed, their plan to rob a Hindi temple literally explodes in their faces.

"One day, all sadness will die," Chamdi whispers to Guddi, "and Kahunsha will be born."

Before that can happen, Guddi's brother will die in street violence, Chamdi will have to outwit a deadly crime boss to save Guddi's life, and the crime boss will order Chamdi to cut out his own tongue.

As Irani once told *Georgia Straight* theatre critic **Colin Thomas**, "If we are lucky enough to live in a place like Vancouver, we sometimes forget that there are people who are living in hell."

Irani has once more invented a spiritually wounded protagonist who carries a talisman—only this time it's the blood-stained cloth that swaddled him as a baby.

*The Song of Kahunsha* is another literally fabulous tale about finding God; a fable about self-completion that evokes the precious need for love in a labyrinth of sorrow and cruelty.

Far from bleak, this *Oliver Twist Goes To India* culminates in tenderness and hope. About the only things to criticize are the huge margins and overall layout that have inflated a 200-page book to 300 pages.



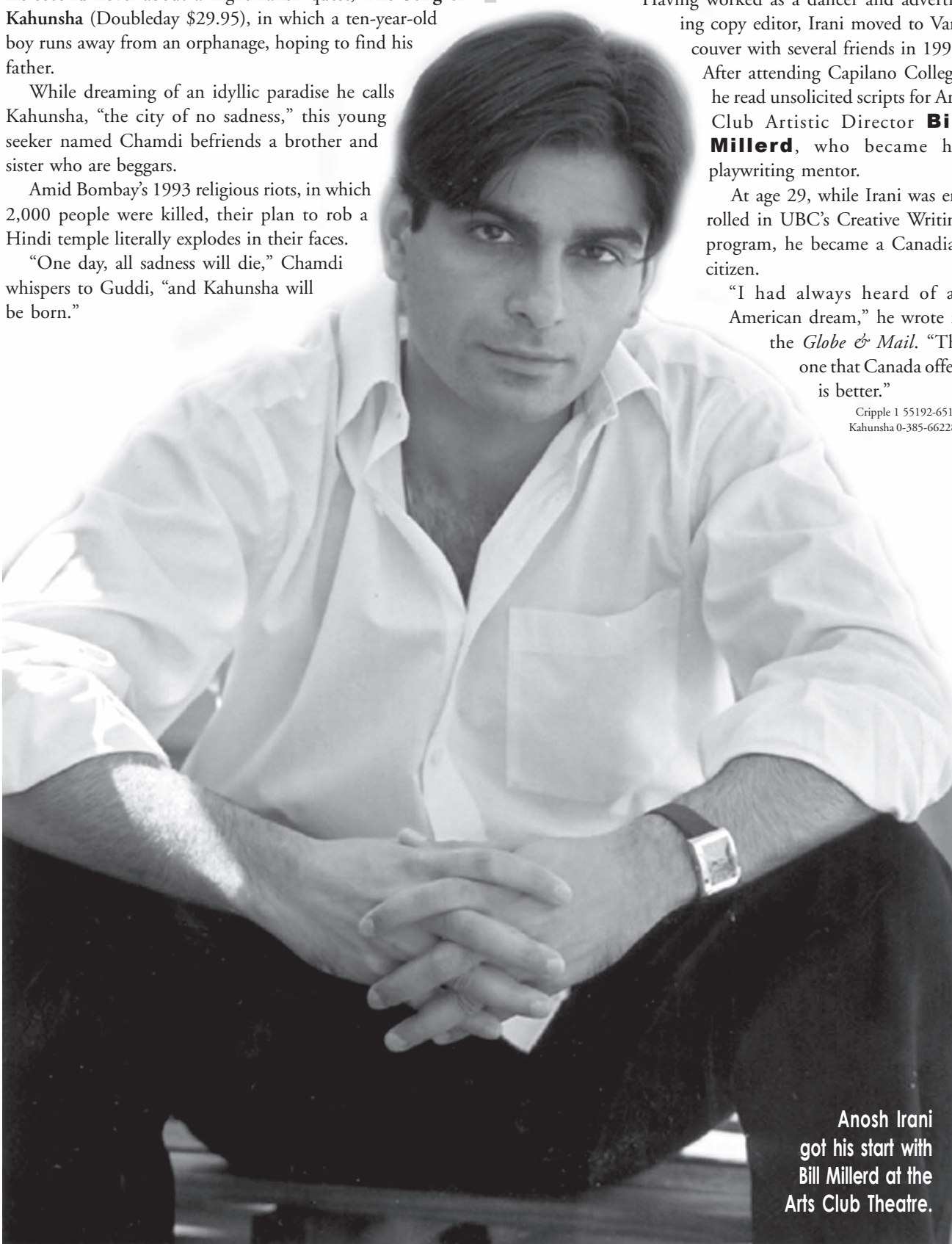
Born in Bombay, Anosh Irani was raised as a Zoroastrian near Bombay's red light district. As an only child in a Parsi colony, separated from both Hindus and Muslims, he used to tell stories to his pet cockatoo, Polly.

Having worked as a dancer and advertising copy editor, Irani moved to Vancouver with several friends in 1998. After attending Capilano College, he read unsolicited scripts for Arts Club Artistic Director **Bill Millerd**, who became his playwriting mentor.

At age 29, while Irani was enrolled in UBC's Creative Writing program, he became a Canadian citizen.

"I had always heard of an American dream," he wrote in the *Globe & Mail*. "The one that Canada offers is better."

Cripple 1 55192-651-2;  
Kahunsha 0-385-66228-9



Anosh Irani got his start with Bill Millerd at the Arts Club Theatre.

TUSINA SHROFF PHOTO



Janet Michael and Lisa Dahling await Prime Minister Laurier in the Belfry Theatre production of *Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout*, by Tomson Highway, 2005.

## Tomson Highway on the Thompson River

Commissioned by Western Canada Theatre and the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society,

**Tomson Highway's** play *Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout* (Talonbooks \$15.95)

is set in Kamloops during the visit of Prime Minister Sir **Wilfrid Laurier** to the Thompson River Valley in August of 1910. The central characters are four women, representing the four seasons, preparing a feast for Laurier's visit.

Highway came to Kamloops to help produce the cabaret-style play with an Aboriginal cast in 2004. It was also the subject of an hour-long Bravo! television documentary, *Tomson Highway Gets His Trout*, from Getaway Films, directed by **Tom Shandel**, who describes Highway's writing as "at once light-hearted burlesque and angry agitprop."

*Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout* was produced to mark the importance of a treatise written in 1910 by **James Teit**, on behalf of 14 chiefs of the Thompson River basin, to assert their collective rights to land and resources.

Written in the spirit of Shuswap, a "Trickster language,"

*Ernestine Shuswap* has production notes that advise, "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. . . ."

To make clear his feelings on the issue of "Aboriginals Only" theatre (ie. only Aboriginals should depict Aboriginal characters), Highway has pleaded "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.



The eleventh of twelve children, Tomson Highway was born in a tent near Maria Lake, near Brochet, Manitoba, in 1951. After six years in his nomadic Cree family, he attended a residential school in The Pas where his introduction to music escalated into ambitions to become a concert pianist.

Twice a recipient of the Dora Mavor Moore Award, Highway is Canada's best-known Aboriginal playwright and the first Aboriginal writer to receive the Order of Canada.

0-88922-525-7



Tomson Highway



# DON'T KILL THE UMP

When it comes to the game of picking winners and losers in the field of fiction, W.P. Kinsella has had his innings.



Retired novelist and full-time Scrabble whiz W.P. (Bill) Kinsella lives just above the Fraser River in Yale, B.C. with his partner Barbara Turner-Kinsella.

TWIGG PHOTO

**For five straight years, W.P. Kinsella, the outspoken author of *Shoeless Joe* (aka *Field of Dreams*, the movie) has adjudicated all rookie novelists from sea to sea to sea for the Amazon/Books In Canada First Novel Contest. "I haven't seen any *Fifth Businesses* or *Stone Angels*," he says, "but previous winner *Martin Sloane* by Michael Redhill is world class, as is this year's *Three Day Road* by Joseph Boyden which was passed over for both the Giller and the GGs."**

There are two main national awards for fiction in Canada—the venerable Governor General's Awards and the swanky, Toronto-centric Giller Prize. Kinsella—who never received either—views the Governor General's Awards as "a farce" but suggests, "until this year the Giller people have shown uncommon good judgment in picking winners."

Now that Bill Kinsella is opting out of his gatekeeper job for the First Novel Contest, we thought some questions might be in order about the state of fiction in Canada.

**BCBW:** On a provincial basis, where have most of the new novelists in English come from?

**KINSELLA:** Over five years Ontario writers produced 46% of the first novels submitted to the contest, followed by B.C. with 19%, Alberta with 10% and Newfoundland with 8%.

**BCBW:** What's the average age of first-time novelists in Canada?

**KINSELLA:** I'd say it's late 30s.

**BCBW:** Has the gender ratio for novelists changed since you published your first fiction book in 1977?

**KINSELLA:** The female-to-male ratio of published novelists has increased. The novels I've read in the past five years were equally divided 50/50.

**BCBW:** Does the old maxim 'Write about what you know' still apply?

**KINSELLA:** I don't think 'Write about what you know' has ever applied. The best novels are works of imagination, the worst are full of autobiography.



**BCBW:** Do you sometimes ask yourself if there are too many books?

**KINSELLA:** I think there have always been too many books. Unpublished writers may whine otherwise, but nothing, absolutely nothing even remotely good goes unpublished.

Literally hundreds of books both fiction and non-fiction are published each year that should never see the light of day, are read by virtually no one, and would never be missed had they not been published.

**BCBW:** The pop music industry has been ruined by the music video. Do you detect any corresponding trend towards publishing novelists who 'look good' rather than write well?

**KINSELLA:** I don't see any correlation. If looking good meant anything there would be far more well-designed covers. There are only two or three good covers a season, the rest often appear to be designed by artsy-craftsy incompetents who have no knowledge of lettering, and probably just got their first computer.

**BCBW:** Are the first novels from larger publishing houses any better, or different, than the first novels from smaller publishing houses?

**KINSELLA:** I'd say the novels I see from Knopf Canada, Random House and Doubleday are usually quality ones. They are more consistent in quality than [ones from] the smaller publishers, possibly because they have money for better editors and proofreaders.

**BCBW:** If you were writing a first novel today, what small press would you send it to?

**KINSELLA:** I would go with Great Plains Publications, a relatively new firm out of Winnipeg. Their books are all beautiful and they give the impression that they really care about their product.

**BCBW:** And what large press would you send it to?

**KINSELLA:** I'd first try Knopf Canada.

**BCBW:** Can you explain to me how anyone writing or talking in Canada can pronounce, with complete confidence, that the novel they have just read is somehow the 'best' novel of the year when that person has likely read less than 10% of the novels published?

**KINSELLA:** Something like that is a judgment call. What it means is that the novel compares favorably with many excellent novels of the recent past, therefore it must be one of the best of the current crop.

**BCBW:** You've already cited Susan Juby as a 'writer to watch.' What other emerging first novelists have impressed you?

**KINSELLA:** The first year I picked the short list I was very disappointed that Lydia Kwa's beautifully poetic yet tough-

as-nails story of lesbian love and sacrifice, *This Place Called Absence*, did not win. I felt it was the best novel of the year by a wide margin.

I very much like *Open Arms* by Marina Endicott, *Blue Becomes You* by Bettina von Kampen, *The Beautiful Dead End* by Clint Hutuzlak, and *Stay* by Aislin Hunter. These people are very talented and could become major players in Can-Lit.

However, my favorite first novel of all time was a runner-up in 1976 to something long forgotten, *The True Story of Ida Johnson* by Sharon Riis. It was summed up by Margaret Atwood as "... a flatfooted waitress caught in the eerie light of the Last Judgment." It is a novel I re-read several times a year, always finding something new.



**BCBW:** Do you sometimes think we should place a moratorium on publishing novelists under age 35?

**KINSELLA:** Definitely. It got so bad that for a couple of years I added my own Bottom Drawer Award for novels whose manuscripts should have remained in the bottom drawer with orange peels, cracker crumbs and condom wrappers.

The worst offenders are the publishers trying to qualify for future grants by publishing a certain number of books each year. They end up publishing anything with a pulse.

**BCBW:** So should everyone attending Creative Writing courses be encouraged to get jobs delivering pizzas instead?

**KINSELLA:** No. I'm a graduate of the University of Victoria Writing Department and the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

When I went to UVic I was like a baseball pitcher with a wonderful fastball who threw every third pitch into the stands. Bill Valgardson, Robin Skelton, Lawrence Russell and Derk Wynand coached me until I was publishing regularly by the time I graduated.

Iowa gave me two years of freedom to write, and I was beginning *Shoeless Joe* when I received my MFA. Only one or two bad novels came from graduates of writing programs, while several very good ones emerged, especially from the UBC Writing program, which has a phenomenal rate of published novelists.

It has always been that in a class of 15 writing students, on average only one will ever achieve any success. I do think Writing Departments should be more diligent in weeding out the obvious non-performers, but the problem is age-old; the departments get paid by the student, so anyone with diligence and a smattering of ability can get a degree, which ultimately cheapens the degrees of the talented writers.

That was my chief complaint with Iowa where I saw students use the same 60-page, unrevised manuscript they used to gain entry to the workshop as their Graduate Thesis Project.



# PARIS IN BURNABY

## Looking back at an angry campus

**T**he scene is unimaginable today—900 students gathered in the Simon Fraser University mall with revolution on their minds. And willing to do something about it.

But as recounted in **Hugh Johnston's** period history, *Radical Campus: Making Simon Fraser University* (D&M \$45), that was part of normal life in 1968. It was the age of protest and, in June of that year, SFU's counter-culturalism culminated with a mass demonstration of students to demand the resignations of the university's president and board.

The goal of these students is equally unimaginable today as were their tactics—a university led by its faculty and students.

Three weeks earlier, students in Paris had launched their now famous May uprising that brought the city and the government of **Charles de Gaulle** to a standstill. Around the world and atop Burnaby Mountain, there was real excitement about what was possible.

As Johnston tells it, an older student, “a mother of five,” incited the SFU crowd with a loaded question: did they want “another Paris?”

The roar came back: “Yes!”

Right from its title, *Radical Campus* is both disapproving of this history, and proud of it. Johnston's conflicted stance is not surprising. This lengthy and detailed tome is really an unofficial biography of Simon Fraser University. And it is a fitting tribute, even in its ambivalence.

Along the way Johnston has an eye for the telling vignette. He recalls, for instance, the graduation ceremony for doctoral candidate and student activist, **Jim Harding**. As he received his diploma, Harding, a co-founder of the SDU (Students for a Democratic University), surprised the crusty SFU chancellor **Gordon Shrum** by kissing Shrum's shoe.

This was no act of gratitude: Harding later explained he had learned at university to kiss the boots of the authorities.



Setting up an “instant university” was the whim of Premier **W.A.C. (Wacky) Bennett** in 1963. B.C.'s long-serving province-builder, Bennett had a penchant for mega-projects, from dams to highways to universities. And he liked to get his way. His designate for the SFU job was the equally colourful, and determined, Gordon Shrum, a UBC physics professor turned politician.

It started with a big architectural competition that led to the classical mountaintop design of architects

**Arthur Erickson** and **Geoff Massey**. But this vision of a whole university hewn out of the forest had to be delivered in short order. Despite the visionary design, no one had a plan—just an impossible schedule. Between the conception and the execution, the decade quickly awoke from the lingering

somnambulance of the 50s into the raucous marches of the mid and late 60s. Vietnam and anti-war demos. **Ken Kesey** and the cross-continental acid trip. **Janis Joplin** and the **Beatles**. Peace and love, riot police and tear gas.

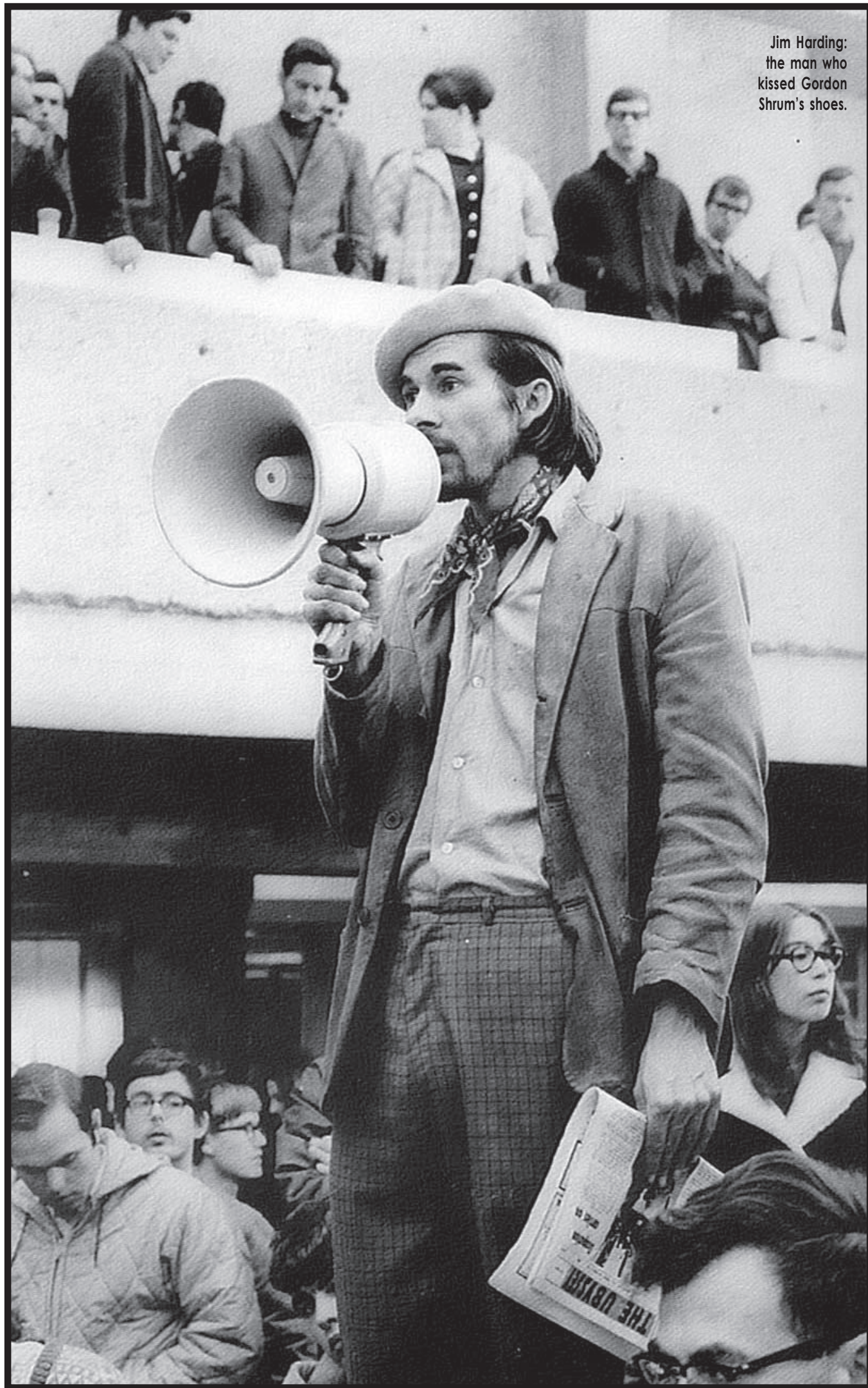
Although Johnston does not much

explore the larger context, SFU was part of the biggest building boom in the history of universities. Across North America and Europe, new suburban universities drove an expansion in higher education.

York and Trent, Calgary and the University of Victoria—all were founded in the same era. What happened in those years laid the foundation for what became today's knowledge economy. Though it still escapes notice today, the result was the creation of a “higher education industry” on a grand scale.

What that new industry would look like was really what was at stake during SFU's infancy.

*continued on page 10*



Jim Harding:  
the man who  
kissed Gordon  
Shrum's shoes.



# WHOI WHOI & HOI POLOI

Next time you stroll or cycle near the totem poles at Brockton Point, keep an eye out for a lone lilac beside the Stanley Park shoreline. Spare a thought for **Martha Smith**, the young bride just out of residential school who planted the shrub at her new home more than 100 years ago.

**Jean Barman recalls shameful evictions of pioneer families**

Martha Smith's home has been long-forgotten until the release of **Jean Barman's** *Stanley Park's Secret: The Forgotten Families of Whoi Whoi, Kanaka Ranch and Brockton Point* (Harbour \$36.95), a "pre-history" of one of North America's most famous parks.

The area now known as Stanley Park was inhabited for thousands of years, and logged extensively, before the Dominion government created Stanley Park with the stroke of a pen in 1888. Barman has skillfully retrieved the collective history of the First Nations and hybrid families who were evicted from their homes by government officialdom.

It took until 1958 for the last member of these many families to be forced out. It took another 46 years for their collective story to be told.



Two years ago I invited Jean Barman to be a guest on *Almanac* to learn more about the pioneer **Joe Silvey**, central character in her book, *The Remarkable Adventures of Portuguese Joe Silvey*. Among other subjects, we discussed how Silvey and his Aboriginal wife **Kwahama Kwatleematt** had lived with the Squamish people in Stanley Park.

"People remember **Gassy Jack Dayton**," Barman told me, "in part, because he was British and English and more like us, whereas Portuguese Joe was a fisherman. He was from Portugal and lived on the edge of the water in the peninsula that would become Stanley Park."

Afterwards, Barman received a telephone call from a listener whose family had also lived in the park. This led to a meeting between Barman and the caller's mother, **Olive O'Connor**, a resident of the Fraser Valley.

"She worked very hard during a wonderful afternoon," Barman says, "to persuade me to write about the families in Stanley Park. She was descended from the families that lived at Kanaka Ranch, just outside today's park at the foot of Denman Street, and also from the Brockton Point families."



Of the Brockton Point families, only the Gonsalves children Matilda, age 16 and Elizabeth, age 14 escaped the residential school system.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LLEWELYN DUNCAN

Drawing on family stories, numerous photographs, notes from Vancouver's first archivist Major **J.S. Matthews**, and various court documents, Barman proceeded to cast light on the communities that disappeared into the park's shadows.



Both Squamish and Musqueam lived on the site for thousands of years, but their middens were dug up and hauled away to build the first road around the park. At least eight First Nations settle-

ments existed on the peninsula, the most recent at Whoi Whoi (near present-day Lumberman's Arch) and nearby Chaytoos. They didn't stand a chance against the colonial imperative.

"Even before the park is created," Barman says, "there was a Reserve Commission that went around laying out reserves, and for reasons I think are very inappropriate, the families at Whoi Whoi and Chaytoos were denied reserves at that point, and thereafter they were treated as squatters."

Kanaka Ranch was perched near the water on present day Denman Street, occupied by Hawaiians who mostly had Squamish wives. Brockton Point was home to a mixed population, mostly men from the Azores (like Silvey) and Scotland who'd

come to mine gold. They returned to fishing and took Squamish wives, raising their families in the park.

"They were very much working men, contributing to the economy," says Barman. "Three generations later, they were living very enterprising, worthwhile lives. But they were inter-racial, between societies, and so people didn't know quite what to make of them."

The courts eventually pushed everyone out. It was a drawn-out process. In 1923, for example, the City of Vancouver launched a suit against **Mariah Kulkalem** and eight heads of remaining families at Brockton Point, demanding they prove they had title to the land. This step was taken to enable the government to evict the families without providing any compensation for the loss of their homes.

The trial of 1923 was well-covered in the newspapers. **Thomas Abraham** gave his testimony in "a Squamish dialect" and reportedly stamped his umbrella stick on the floor of the witness box to make his point. His picture appeared under a headline, "So Old He Forgets When He Was Born." But the decision against the alleged "squatters" was a foregone conclusion.

Barman has gained a firm grasp of the prejudices that were entailed, and she has documented the injustices, but her book concentrates on celebrating individuals such as **August Jack Khatsahlano**, **William Nahanee** (who shared his family history with Major Matthews), the Gonsalves family, **Tim Cummings** (the final resident of Stanley Park) and their descendants such as **Rose Cole Yelton**.

Martha Smith's Brockton Point lilac will still push out blossoms this spring.

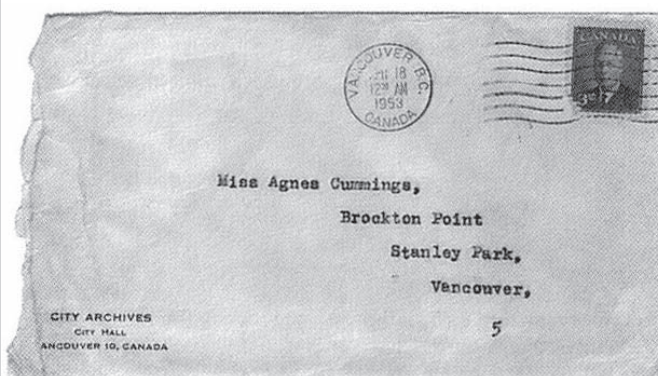
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*Mark Forsythe is the host of Almanac on CBC radio.*



Martha Smith in front of her Stanley Park home around the time of the 1923 trial.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HERBERT SMITH



Residents of Stanley Park always got mail despite their controversial status.

LETTER COURTESY OF KEAMO FAMILY



# CHIWID'S WILDERNESS

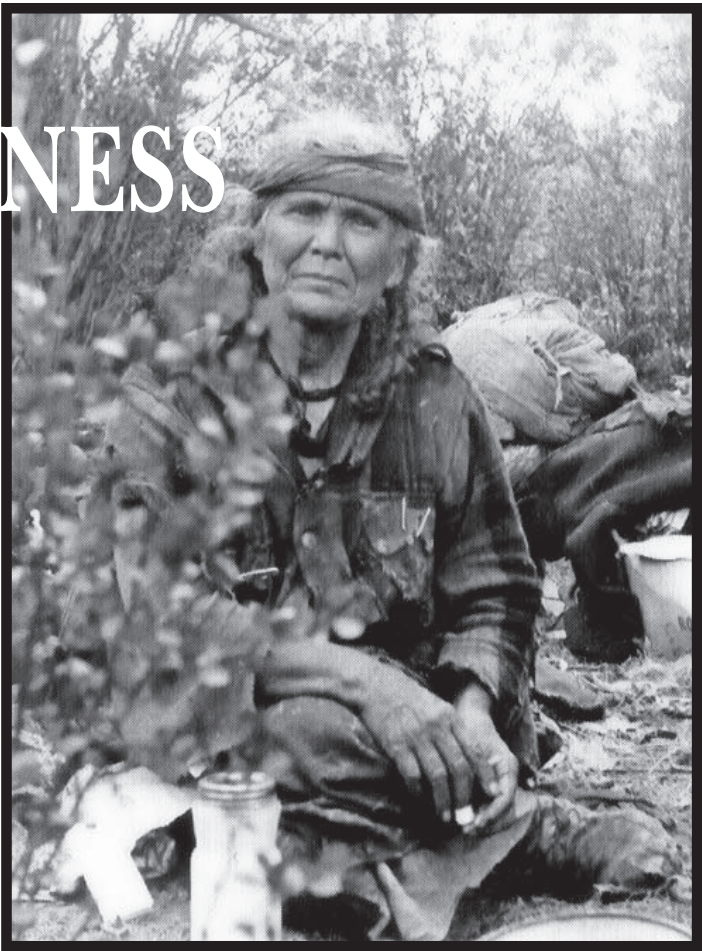
Chilcotin: Preserving Pioneer Memories  
by The Witte Sisters (Heritage \$39.95)

Never mind Arthur Erickson's SFU, the Marine Building or the BowMac sign. The top engineering feat of B.C. is either Mungo Martin's 39-metre totem in Beacon Hill Park or Rudy Johnson's bridge, erected without government support in 1968.

Rudy Johnson purchased the 200-ton, 300-ft.-long steel bridge in Alaska and re-assembled it across the Fraser River, with the help of engineer Howard Elder, in six months for only \$200,000. It allowed him to cut 30 miles off his trips between his Buckskin Ranch and Williams Lake.

Johnson is one of countless do-it-yourselfers featured in *Chilcotin: Preserving Pioneer Memories*, a 432-page *Who Was Who* that was assembled, as much as written, by the three Chilcotin-born Witte sisters—**Veera, Irene** and **Hazel**—all raised at Big Creek.

Eric Collier, author of the backwoods classic, *Three Against the Wilderness*, is one of the few characters in *Preserving Pioneer Memories* who might be recogniz-



Chiwid: rumoured to have spiritual powers & lived life mostly outdoors

able to urbanites, but unfortunately his entry remains slight. The Witte sisters' research for their original 1995 collection of profiles has yet to be updated or revised.

The Witte sisters recall the first white woman in the Chilcotin, Nellie Hance, who

rode side-saddle for 400 miles to get there in 1887, and the more remarkable loner Chiwid, a Chilcotin Aboriginal woman who lived outdoors for much of her adult life. Rumoured to have spiritual powers, Chiwid (also Chee-Wit, or "Chickadee,") was a crack shot

who moved her solitary camp according to the seasons, protected only by a tarp.

Born as Lily Skinner, she was the daughter of Luzep, a Chilcotin deaf mute from Redstone, and Charley Skinner, a white settler in the Tatlayoko-Eagle Lake area. Chiwid married Alex Jack and they had three daughters, but her life changed irrevocably when he beat her mercilessly with a heavy chain.

Remorseful, Chiwid's husband drove several head of cattle to Chezacut and sold them to Charlie Mulvahill to raise money to send his beautiful wife to Vancouver for treatment, but thereafter Chiwid left her husband in order to roam the Chilcotin, from Anahim Lake to Riske Creek, sometimes with an old horse and a dog. Many people in the Chilcotin tried to assist her, offering firewood, food or clothes, but Chiwid maintained her independence, fearing she would become sick if she remained too long indoors.

Ill, aged and blind, Chiwid spent her final years in the Stone Creek Reserve home of Katie Quilt, where she died in 1986, and became the subject for a book published by Sage Birchwater in 1995. 1-895811-34-1

# MEMORY AND PREJUDICE

Killing Time by Hank Schachte  
(New Star \$18)

In **Hank Schachte's** short novel *Killing Time* the main character loses his memory and his ability to form new memories in the aftermath of a car accident.

What follows is an unusual story which slips backward, chapter by chapter, eventually revealing the complicated relationships between Richard and his brother and his brother's lover, Cindy.

As the plot unravels and Richard's short-term memory slowly returns, the reader remains one step ahead of the character in realizing his past identity as well as what the future holds in store.



Hank Schachte

Schachte's background in film is evident—using long, loose sentences, often with minimal punctuation, the author attempts to mimic the free-flowing nature of visual memory.

Part of the impetus for this literary mystery was Schachte's interest in examining the constructs of time and memory. "I have always been interested in the particularly human perception of time," he says. "The story explores this idea of memory as a form of prejudice—how memory and experience influence our perceptions of the present moment and our construct of personal reality."

Schachte, a screenwriter, is also the author of a non-fiction book, *Vagabond Fitness: A Field Manual for Travelers*, published by Orca in 1995. His feature film, *Silence*, screened at the Sundance Festival in 1999 and a new novella is the subject of a screenplay under development. Schachte, who became a licensed pilot in 1958, flies his own Cessna and lives on Saturna Island, where he is an aficionado of vintage Saabs. 1-55420-019-9

# JEWISH ROOTS UNVEILED

All BC BookWorld reviews are posted online at  
www.abcbookworld.com

Pioneer Jews of British Columbia by Cyril Leonoff, Geoffrey Castle, Sarah H. Tobe, Christopher J.P. Hanna, Leopold Levy (Jewish Historical Society \$20)

According to **Cyril Leonoff** in *Pioneer Jews of British Columbia*, the first Jews known to have reached Vancouver Island were adventurers of Polish, Prussian and Germanic origin, stirred by gold fever in 1858.

The earliest Jewish organization in Western Canada, the First Hebrew Victoria Benevolent Society, was formed in 1859; and the first Jewish burial ground (still in use today) was consecrated in 1860.

By the time Moldavian-born Israel Joseph Benjamin passed through Victoria in February of 1861, Victoria boasted 2,500 white inhabitants, 5,000 Indians and one synagogue. The wandering scholar and historian observed, "The beginnings of the city of Victoria are really due to the Jews. For, no matter how many persons streamed to the island at the outbreak of the gold-fever, they scattered again, for the most part, to all corners of the world when their disillusion followed only too quickly.

"The Jews, however, held their ground, set up tents for residence and booths for shops; for they soon realized that this place had a great commercial future. This was to be deduced, easily enough, from the situation of the island, which lies between the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands, California and China."

Having studied Jews around the globe, including Africa, the worldly-wise Benjamin judged gold fever to be pernicious, and warned against rampant materialism. Two years later there were 119 Jewish families in Victoria, totalling 242 people.

## Pioneer Jews records:

- The first meeting of the nascent Jewish community occurred in the drygoods store of Kady Gambitz in

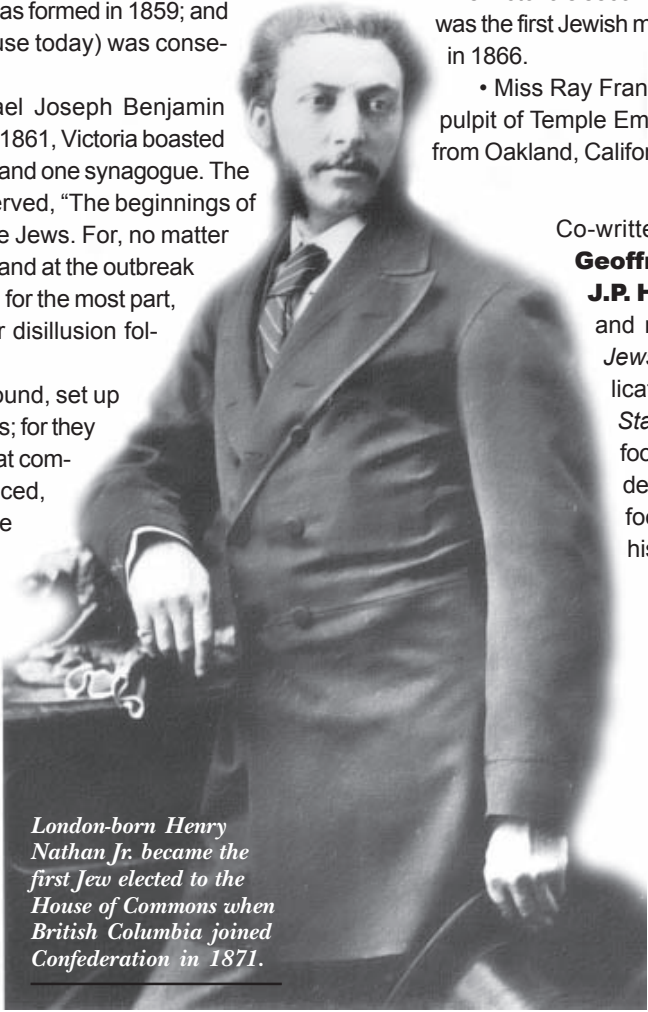
August of 1858 in order to plan observances of the Jewish New Year and Day of Atonement.

- Wholesale liquor merchant Simon Reinhart paid a record price of \$3925 for a choice lot in June of 1859.
- The first Jew to serve in a Canadian legislature was also British Columbia's first government auctioneer, Selim Franklin, elected to the Legislative Assembly of Vancouver Island in 1860.
- As Victoria's second mayor, Selim's brother Lumley Franklin was the first Jewish mayor elected within British North America, in 1866.
- Miss Ray Frank became the first woman to mount the pulpit of Temple Emanu-El of Victoria as a lay cantor, hired from Oakland, California, in 1895.



Co-written by Cyril Leonoff, retired archivist; **Geoffrey Castle**, researcher; **Christopher J.P. Hanna**; the late **Leopold Levy** of Trail; and researcher **Sarah H. Tobe**, *Pioneer Jews* was printed in California as a joint publication of two Jewish periodicals, *Western States Jewish History* and *The Scribe*. With footnotes and illustrations, but lacking an index, it appears as plans for a 1,500 square-foot permanent exhibition of B.C. Jewish history are reaching fruition.

[No ISBN; JHSBC 604-257-5199]



London-born Henry Nathan Jr. became the first Jew elected to the House of Commons when British Columbia joined Confederation in 1871.

As a project of the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia, a new museum facility is slated to open in the spring of 2006 on the third floor of the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver. It will house more than 100,000 photographic images from the archives of the Jewish Western Bulletin newspaper, the Jewish Federation of B.C. and photographers Leonard Frank, Otto Landauer and Fred Schiffer.



### CEEPEECEEE HAD NO CBC

Raincoast Chronicles Fourth Five edited by Howard White (Harbour \$39.95)

If there's a typical entry in the 400-page *Raincoast Chronicles Fourth Five*, edited by **Howard White**, it might be Alder Bloom's memoir that begins, "It was late August in 1937 when I first sighted Ceepeecee, or should I say when I first smelled it."

Ceepeecee, or CPC, was an abbreviation of California Packing Corporation, an American company that built a processing plant for pilchards (sardines) on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, southwest of Tahsis, 'behind' Nootka Island, in 1926. Eight years later this plant was sold to Nelson Brothers Fisheries who added a salmon cannery.

"It was very smelly," recalls Bloom, "but so are most industrial towns, each in its own way. To someone looking for work, the smell meant money."

After stints as a carpenter at McBride Bay, Nootka and Port Albion, as well as working at Gibson brothers' logging camps, Bloom returned to the cluster of wood-framed buildings known as Ceepeecee in 1941, to work for Del Lutes, the virtual king of the town, who kept 'dry laws' in place.

"Lutes ran a very strict camp but he had to relent a little during the war years," Bloom recalls. "Esperanza Hotel, just 15 minutes away by boat, was a modern building with a good-sized beer parlour."

Zeballos, two hours away by boat, had cafes, hotels, a doctor and a bawdy house, described by Bloom as a frontier necessity, but cannery hours made the trip prohibitive.



Prior to refrigeration, most canning had to occur near the fishery. Therefore the denizens of Ceepeecee were isolated at the head of Tahsis Inlet, dependent

on the bi-monthly arrivals of the *Maquinna* and a radio wireless that used only Morse code.

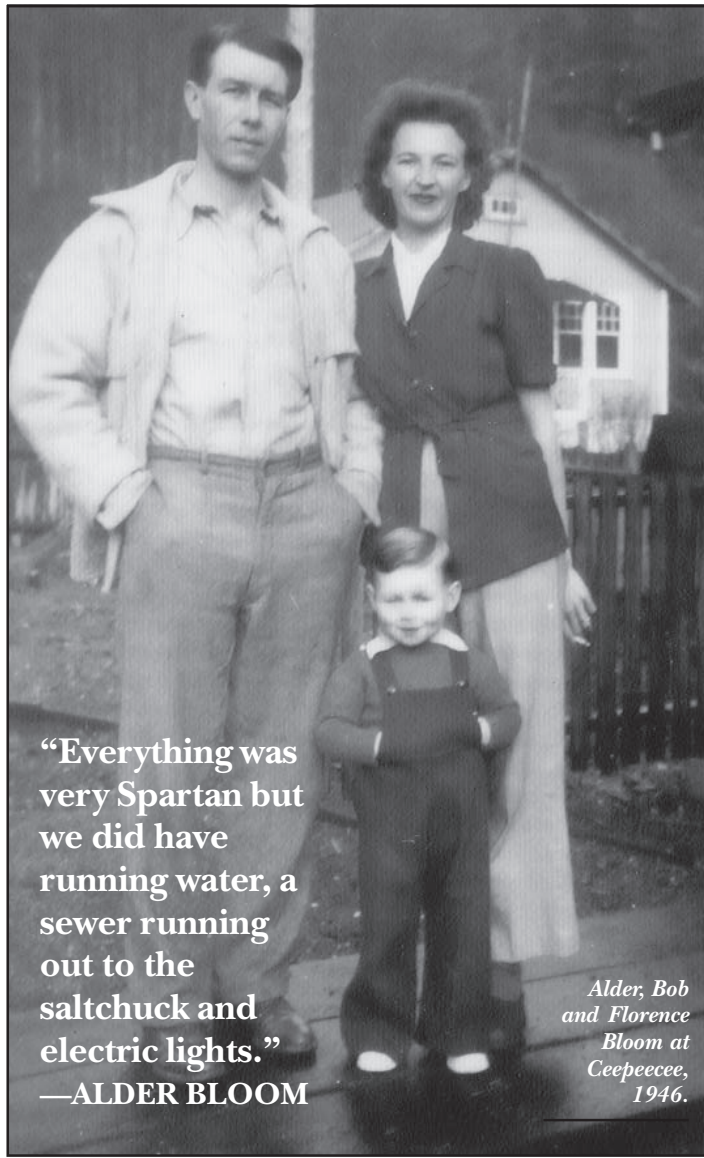
"Mr. Lee, the Chinese cook, and his helper served tasty and abundant meals for the crew," Boom writes. But the most essential citizen turned out to be a little Scotsman who could squeeze out tunes on his little accordion.

Bloom fondly recalls how Scotty went to the hotel on weekends so the few girls in town could do their fast steps with any of the boys who could keep up—and Bloom wasn't one of them.

"One Sunday morning, Scotty didn't check in for his reduction plant shift so a search was started. Scotty travelled in his own little skiff and tied it up at the unloading dock. He had to climb a ladder to get to the dock and somehow he fell.

"We found him at low tide resting on the bottom below the ladder. Scotty was everybody's friend and he gave more pleasure to the crew than anyone in camp. In a place where radio reception was very poor, his little accordion was a godsend."

Another godsend was Florence French. One day when Bloom was picking up supplies from Ceepeecee in the fall of 1940, she noticed him and



"Everything was very Spartan but we did have running water, a sewer running out to the saltchuck and electric lights."  
—ALDER BLOOM

Alder, Bob and Florence Bloom at Ceepeecee, 1946.

smiled. A few minutes later Bloom was in the company store, she glided in, smiled again, bought her cigarettes, and left.

Two years later they became the first of several Ceepeecee couples to tie the knot. Their first son Bob was born in Port Alberni in 1943.

The Blooms left Ceepeecee in 1946. With the sudden disappearance of the pilchards in the late 1940s, shore workers like Florence could no longer be sure to work four-month stints of 12-hour days at 35 cents an hour.

Ceepeecee closed in 1951, along with other wooden cannery communities along the coast.

Some were left to rot; Ceepeecee's buildings were destroyed by fire in 1954.



White's fourth compilation of *Raincoast Chronicles*—begun in 1972—also features Pat Wastell Norris' reminiscences of Alert Bay along with her book-length history of Telegraph Cove (released as *Raincoast Chronicles 16*).

Among the longer entries *Fourth Five* also reprints Stephen Hume's *Lillies & Fireweed* (*Raincoast Chronicles 20*), a panorama of some noteworthy B.C. women.

Douglas Hamilton recalls the worst fire aboard ship in B.C. history when the steamer *Grappler* sank in Seymour Narrows in 1883, with more than 100 lives lost. Conversely, Doreen Armitage recalls rescues by tug-

boat skippers in the days before search and rescue.

Classic West Coast raconteurs Dick Hammond, Arthur Mayse, Bus Griffiths and White himself add some levity.



Howard White

Other subjects include shipyards, squatters, log barging, fishing superstitions, the *Pisces* sub, West Coast patriarch Claus Carl Daniel Botel, pioneer photographer Hannah Maynard and the 'mega-village' of Kalpalin on the shores of Pender Harbour.

Margaret McKirdy recalls how her mother placed *The People's Home Medical Book* alongside the Eaton's catalogue and the Bible—and its influence was greater than either. More fundamental than even the *Joy of Cooking*, this 1919 treatise, known in many households as simply 'the Doctor Book,' advised that most means of contraception were injurious to a woman's health.



One of several contributions by Douglas Hamilton, 'Who Shot Estevan Light? A Traditionalist Returns Fire' returns to the controversial subject of why the Estevan Point Lighthouse was shelled on June 20, 1942.

Hamilton refutes claims made on *Fifth Estate* by lightkeeper Donald Graham that the attack on "the boldest, most beautiful lighthouse in British Columbia" was instigated by the Canadian government in order to incite public alarm.

Citing Bert Webber's *Retaliation: Japanese Attacks and Allied Countermeasures on the Pacific Coast in World War II*, Hamilton states, "A number of daring raids on the west coast of North America were carried out by Japanese submarines in 1942."

1-55017-372-3

### MAPPING THE SALISH SEA

All BC BookWorld reviews are posted online at [www.abcbookworld.com](http://www.abcbookworld.com)

Islands in the Salish Sea: A Community Atlas (Touchwood Editions \$44.95)

"Map it and save it," says **Briony Penn**, a proponent of community mapping. "Mapping is a great excuse to talk to the neighbours, old-timers and local kids, and listen to tree frogs and barred owls, even in the city." Having gained her Ph.D in Geography from Edinburgh University, Penn has provided the foreword, and some of the inspiration, for **Islands in the Salish Sea: A Community Atlas**, edited by Salt Spring Islanders **Sheila Harrington** and **Judi Stevenson**, in order to generate protective awareness for 17 of the largest islands in the Strait of Georgia, 12 of which already have their own land trust or conservancy organizations. Approximately 28,000 people live on these 17 islands from Quadra in the north to Saturna in the south.

The Salish Sea Community Mapping Project, which arose from Salt Spring Island, extends the concepts raised by Van-



couver-based regional planner Doug Aberley in *Boundaries of Home, Mapping for Local Empowerment* (New Society, 1993). Community mapping is obviously a laudable concept but the format of this book is too small to represent the detailed work. The type is tiny on many of the maps, rendering them mostly decorative. *Islands in the Salish Sea* is a lovely advertisement for an idea that has been spread too thin, like one of those pizzas called De Woiks, with sprinklings of everything adding up to a forgettable taste.

1-894898-32-X

**TOILET INSTALLATION EXPLAINED:** "What I hoped to do with this installation was create a bold symbol of the threats that urbanization poses to the sensitive ecosystems of the Salish Sea—a toilet. The indoor toilet is also a symbol of our separation from our waste and other impacts on the environment. Waste can be flushed down a drain and simply disappear from view and from thought. The idea was inspired by a 15<sup>th</sup> century Flemish masterpiece by Hans Memling called *The Voyage of Saint Ursula's Relics*."—BRIONY PENN



# TENDER IS THE PLIGHT

*A ballerina tumbles into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—and we read about it to feel less alone*

BY DIANE ATKINSON

**Sympathy** by Dede Crane  
(Raincoast Books \$15.95)

Critic Anatole Broyard once suggested that the one fundamental question to be asked about a new novel is, “Is it necessary?”

This remark is famous, I think, because of its tendency to stick in the mind. I’ve toyed with it over the years, as if turning a hard candy over and over in my mouth with my tongue. What makes a book necessary? And, necessary to whom?



*Sympathy*, by **Dede Crane**, is a tender, luminous novel of sympathy for those among us who are most emotionally wounded.

Set in the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder wing of the Rosewood Clinic, it’s the story of a ballerina grieving her husband and son, both of whom died in a car accident.

It’s also the story of the three or four other patients of handsome Dr. Michael Myatt, an idealistic empath with some unresolved identity issues of his own.

Partly set in the Pacific Northwest and dealing, as it does, with shock and grief, *Sympathy* may remind some readers of Marilynne Robinson’s *Housekeeping*, this reviewer’s favourite novel.

Working out at the gym this morning, I thought of the protagonist, Kerry, doing her physical repatterning exercises as devised and supervised by Dr. Myatt. It took me a few minutes to recall she’s a fictional character! I felt I shared her experience.

(To a point. The novel could be criticized for a certain romantic—i.e. unlikely—gloss: she’s a world-famous ballerina; her parents are well-off and still together. At thirty-four, she was a happily married homeowner with a child. She had more in place before she lost it than many people ever get. But then, pain can’t really be comparatively evaluated.)

Margaret Atwood has said that it is unrealistic for a writer to strive for resolution at the end of a novel. “Insight alone is sufficient.” She adds, “Insight alone is an achievement.”

*Sympathy* succeeds in engaging the reader in the troubled emotional worlds of its characters. We try on their traumas (“How would I cope if this happened to me?”) and we root for them to unfurl, to forgive themselves and reach out, at the very least toward life’s small pleasures.

Unlikely alliances occur: a stout, black nurse dotes on a gangly, pimpled, white teenager. She leaves him oranges, which he loves, on his bedside table. In the grey hospital room, the

small gift shines warmly, like a small sun.

In that none pass through life unscathed, and some us are more scathed than others, and given that grief, shock, and PTSD more often than not go inadequately acknowledged, let alone treated, in our society, this novel could be balm for the wounded. (T.S. Eliot: “I read to feel less alone.”)

Although the would-be healer, Dr. Myatt, has some problems himself, the care with which he watches over his flock, making minute notes on their progress, must in itself be healing, no matter the specific content of his theories.

We should all be so lucky, in our hour of need, to be booked into the plushy, caring, private Rosewood Clinic!

Simply written in short, easy to pick up and put down

bursts, *Sympathy*’s prose is cinematographically transparent. Crane writes simply, so you are unaware of the story as writing—rather, you experience it directly.

(Do you know who wrote, “One shouldn’t be aware of the writer turning pirouettes on the page?” John Updike, of all people! The greatest pirouetter of them all.)

In *Housekeeping*, the church ladies who come to visit and offer their condolences murmur a plainsong that rings in my head. “The world is full of sorrow.” The rejoinder: “Yes, it is.” And because it is, *Sympathy* is necessary.

As readers, we can be thankful this author has made us a gift of her careful observations, honouring the small details of life—institutional life, in particular—and thankful for the goodness in her heart, from which this finely-wrought work clearly springs.

1-55192-781-0

*Novelist Diane Atkinson has recently returned to live in British Columbia.*

**Dede Crane**

## HOOKED ON LETTERS

All BC BookWorld reviews are posted online at [www.abcbookworld.com](http://www.abcbookworld.com)

*Portrait of a felon clinging to the life raft of the alphabet*

BY CHERIE THIESSEN

**Alphabet** (McArthur & Co. \$14.95)

While packing for a move from London, England, **Kathy Page** discovered a novel she had abandoned almost ten years earlier and decided to resurrect it. “Time had performed its magic—a kind of alchemy—and it was suddenly easy to see what to jettison and what to keep,” she says.

Happily ensconced in her new, solar-panelled writing space on Salt Spring Island, complete with a view, Page proceeded to finish her grim novel, *Alphabet*, about a fictional felon, Simon Austen, who is serving a life sentence in Britain for murdering his girlfriend.

“When a character like this arrives,” Page says, “you can’t throw him out. Just as in a real relationship, you have to keep going until whatever you came together for is complete.”

A young, illiterate carpet layer, Simon Austen likes to command his girlfriend to do things, then he watches. In spite of her entreaties, they have not yet had sex. He strangles her when she takes off her clothes but refuses to put on her glasses.

As Austen later comes to realize in therapy, he liked to turn her on and off like she was a television screen and he had the remote. Brutal, manipulative, damaged, intelligent and occasionally charming, Austen was abandoned by his mother and abused as a child in foster care.

A widower with time on his hands volunteers to teach Austen how to read in prison. “He’s got all the time in the world and it isn’t



like school at all... He gets into education, big time. Eighteen months later he’s functional and hooked on the alphabet.”

Austen forges tentative relationships with women; first writing to the alcoholic academic, Vivienne, under a false and carefully crafted artistic identity. When his deception is discovered, he tries a second time with Tasmin. This time he tells her who he really is and she doesn’t mind. Even better, she gives him the gift he most needs for his new obsession—a typewriter.

Trouble is, Tasmin has lied to him. She is way underage and he is way in trouble.

Along comes Bernadette, the new prison shrink. She calls him courageous. The increasingly devoted Austen has that word courageous painfully tattooed on his chest to join the numerous other words that wrap around his body. It’s the first word that’s positive in a world that has branded him otherwise: waste of space, a threat to women, stupid, callous, bastard and murderer.

Bernadette gets Simon Austen admittance to a gentler prison facility with a therapeutic focus, but the love-stricken killer at first doesn’t want to go. At the new facility he begins to make some headway in self-recognition but eventually his aggressive behaviour with a superior does him in. After a year in the new prison, he’s spirited away in the middle of the night. Imprisoned for ten years, he must readjust to a seamier and a more dangerous environment.

This convincing portrait of a felon clinging to the life raft of the alphabet arose from Page’s experiences as a writer-in-residence at a men’s prison, three days per week, for about a year, where her job mostly consisted of encouraging the inmates to write and supporting other creative projects.

“The prison was both fascinating and dreadful,” she says. “It was a place of frighteningly intense feelings, and, at the same time, given there was no outlet for them, one of utter stultification. It was about as hard a reality as you could get, yet nowhere else could fantasies and delusions grow so thick and fast.”

Having also undergone lengthy training as a counselor and psychotherapist, Page—also a qualified carpenter and joiner, with an M.A. in Creative Writing—found she was well-positioned to revisit her abandoned manuscript in the relative tranquility of the Gulf Islands. Her seventh novel since 1986, and Page’s first as a new Canadian, *Alphabet* was nominated for the Governor General’s Award for Fiction.

0 75381 861 2

Cherie Thiessen writes from Pender Island.



Czech mated:  
John Koerner  
and Lisa Birnie

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING JOHN

BEVERLY CRAMP PHOTO

There are three reasons why **John Koerner** has yet to emerge as a big name in Canadian art circles.

First, from **Picasso** to **Shadbolt**, from **Madonna** to **David Beckham**, artists and celebrities of the 20th century increasingly recognized the need to reinvent themselves, like actors taking on new roles, in order to continually provide or serve as 'new' products.

John Koerner's nuanced landscapes have remained, in his own words, "totally different from anything that could remotely be described as 'cutting edge.'" His modest nature has prompted him to observe, "As I look back on my sixty years of work, I can see some slight changes, but they are mostly of a technical nature."

Reading between the lines in his new memoir, **A Brush With Life**, it's easy to see how the perception of a lack of dramatic transformation in his work has been a professional drawback—even though Koerner's art has evolved through clearly discernible stages of varying content for anyone who cares to look closely.

It also hasn't helped Koerner that he has a surname that reminds some British Columbians of a wealthy family.

Koerner's uncles **Leon**, **Otto** and **Walter Koerner** were brothers who fled Czechoslovakia in 1939 and started Alaska Pine Company in Vancouver, selling out to Rayonier Inc. of New York in 1954.

**Leon** and **Thea Koerner** subsequently established the Koerner Foundation to support charities and the arts; Walter Koerner, in particular, was an extremely generous and important patron of arts and culture, playing a fundamental role in the preservation and rejuvenation of First Nations work.

Thirdly, Koerner has maintained a steadfast resolve to represent the spiritual truths he has absorbed from the little-known writings of **Bo Yin Ra**, pseudonym for German mystic **Joseph Anton Schneiderfranken** (1876–1943), whose prose Koerner first encountered in his late teens. That makes it possible to dismiss Koerner as a bit of a kook—which would be a very superficial assessment of him.

"The direction that Bo Yin Ra indicates is not an easy path," he writes, "but after all these years I still believe in his advice. His books are guides to a perception of reality that neither philosophic speculation nor dogmatic faith can attain. I have attempted to produce work that would be in complete accord with this reality; a task that hasn't been too difficult as I have lived fully wrapped up in it."

The three-syllable name Bo Yin Ra has no literal meaning, nor any connection with eastern religion or philosophy. Like the word Kodak, the pen name Bo Yin Ra was created for its tonal qualities alone. Divorced from rationalism, Koerner's paintings are likewise evocations of "tonal qualities."

*In the art game, modesty is not always the best policy*

**A Brush with Life** by John Koerner (Ronsdale \$39.95)

**A** *Brush with Life* avoids the pretentious gobbledygook of contemporary artspeak but **John Koerner** does court posterity by baring his pride:

"If I had a dime for every person who has asked me, 'Are you still painting?'—as if I really should be doing something less self-indulgent and more responsible—I'd be doing well."

Born in Prague in 1913, John (Jan) Koerner was raised among well-to-do Jewish free-thinkers and sent to Paris for two months, at age 15, in order to learn French. There he spent much of his time in the Louvre, thrilled by Cubism and Surrealism, and he made several visits to the Montparnasse studio of Paul Colin.

Aware of their son's budding passion for art, his parents didn't object to sending him to Italy the following summer. There Koerner developed his lifelong admiration for the colours and luminosity of Giorgione.

After studying law in Prague and Geneva to please his father, he moved back to Paris in 1937, intrigued by Socrates' awareness of the human soul. "I intuitively felt that these [Socrates'] ideas were related to my love of painting, but I didn't know how," he recalls.

Returning to Geneva, Koerner met the Swiss publisher of Bo Yin Ra in Basel and bought each of his 30 titles, works that he still reads seventy years later.

"Instead of questioning the meaning of life," he writes, "I came to ask what meaning I could give to life."

In 1939, John Koerner returned from the Prague university library to find nobody was at home. Responding to instructions left for him, he hurriedly made his way to the Prague airport to meet his uncles Walter and Leon. They boarded a DC-3 that his uncle Otto had chartered, having evacuated most Koerner family members to Paris the day before.

Walter Koerner and his wife Marianne relocated the family business in London, but Leon Koerner and his wife Thea went to western North America to scout opportunities in the timber business. Upon their purchase of a sawmill in New Westminster, John Koerner was requested to put aside his Bohemian existence in Paris as a painter in order to temporarily assist the family firm in B.C.

When war broke out, Koerner volunteered with the Canadian militia but was rejected on medical grounds. Koerner worked in the family's Marine Building offices in downtown Vancouver for twelve years, during which

time Leon Koerner changed the name of Western hemlock lumber to Alaska pine in order to make it more attractive to European markets.

Alaska Pine and Cellulose Ltd. was sold to Rayonier Inc. of New York in 1954, three years after John Koerner had left the family firm to paint. In the 1950s, Koerner began teaching at the Vancouver School of Art where his friendship with the principal teacher, Jack Shadbolt, blossomed until 1980. Koerner began to feel estranged from what he calls Shadbolt's "critical expectations, and quite materialistic values. He also had a flamboyant temperament and was the strongest atheist I had ever met."

Throughout the 1950s, Koerner had mixed with colleagues such as Molly and Bruno Bobak, Don Jarvis and Orville Fisher, as well as Abe Rogatnik and Alvin Balkin who opened the New Design Gallery, "but I always had an uncomfortable feeling I was not a very welcome newcomer," he writes.

After teaching at UBC from 1958 to 1962, Koerner maintained the greatest affinity and respect for Bert Binning, noting that Binning should have been accorded better treatment by Ian M. Thom in *Masterworks from British Columbia*. "It was a savage blow to me when Bertie died suddenly in 1978," he writes.

Although Koerner has had a large mural permanently displayed in the Queen Elizabeth Theatre since 1986, and one of his works was installed in the classical record store The Magic Flute by its original owner David Lemon in 1993, he has received more support from writers than painters.

Although he formed collegial relationships with the West Coast pantheon that includes Jack Shadbolt, Bill Reid, Gordon Smith, Joe Plaskett and Tak Tanabe, Koerner has noted—with an exclamation mark—that only Plaskett ever purchased one of his paintings.

"With the exception of Doris and Jack Shadbolt and later Bert and Jessie Binning and Lawren Harris," Koerner writes, recalling his formative years on the West Coast, "my overtures of hospitality to fellow artists were not returned."

Admired by Jane Rule, David Watmough, Max Wyman, Linda Rogers and Vaclav Havel (who bought one of his paintings in Prague), John Koerner's Japanese-style brushstrokes rarely convey their sensitivity if reproduced in black & white. Nonetheless Koerner did allow his coastal miniatures to decorate the colourless covers of *BC Studies* from 1985 to 1993, something he doesn't mention in the book.

*continued on page 28*



## GROUP OF ONE

**A Journey with E.J. Hughes** by Jacques Barbeau (Barbeau Foundation / D&M, \$50)

Jacques Barbeau first saw a reproduction of an E.J. Hughes painting on the cover of the Vancouver telephone directory in 1958. While working as a lawyer, Barbeau spent the next 35 years amassing the world's most comprehensive collection of Hughes' art. "Hughes," he predicted, "will become the Canadian artist of the century. He will eclipse both the Group of Seven and Emily Carr... To have that discipline and to still be able to emote—that's magic." Not to be confused with a coffee table book that was produced in conjunction with a Vancouver Art Gallery retrospective in 2002, Barbeau has re-released **A Journey with E.J. Hughes**. For more on Hughes, see [www.abcbookworld.com](http://www.abcbookworld.com) 1-55365-153-7

## JOHN KOERNER

*continued from page 27*

John Koerner met his first wife Eileen Newby on a blind date in 1943. When she died more than fifty years later, Koerner's artistic nature became stalled in the spring of 2000. "Throughout her illness," he recalls, "I was totally unable to work and after she was gone I fell into a desperate state of grief." Ultimately Koerner found solace in the advice of Bo Yin Ra ("All suffering is evil, but it must be surmounted") and a letter from his long-time friend Jane Rule ("It was your last gift to her, to outlive her").

Then John Koerner was introduced to retired journalist and author Lisa Birnie who had lost her husband around the same time Koerner had lost his wife. "Lisa changed my life, and invigorated my mind, soul and body," he says.

Koerner and Birnie married four months after they met. Trips to Vietnam and Australia followed. And Koerner's work has had a resurgence.

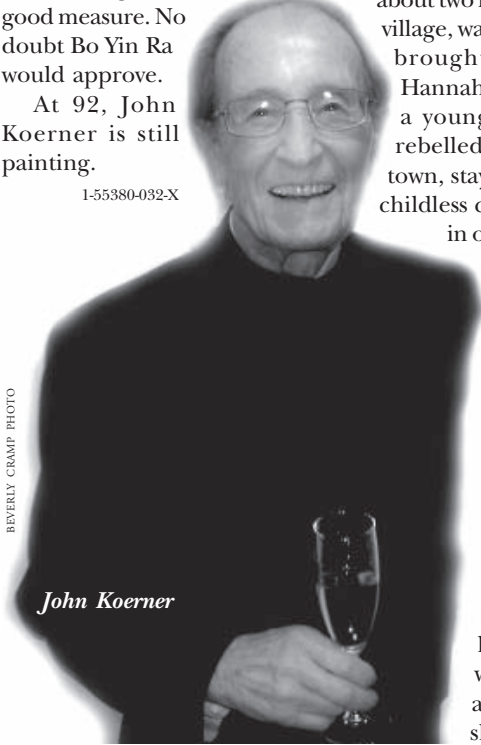
*A Brush with Life*, a coffee table book containing 65 full-page colour prints, and 50 b&w prints, published in association with Paula Gustafson and Artichoke Publishing, is edited by Birnie.

John Koerner has outlived nearly all of his peers, and fallen in love again for

good measure. No doubt Bo Yin Ra would approve.

At 92, John Koerner is still painting.

1-55380-032-X



John Koerner

BEVERLY CRAMP PHOTO

## UP THE INLET WITHOUT A FATHER

*A Tofino kayaker takes us for a bi-cultural spin in a brooding climate*

BY CHERIE THIESSEN

**Silent Inlet** by Joanna Streetly (Oolichan \$22.95)

Five years ago, Hannah escaped from Hansen Sound, a storm-wrapped, isolated sliver of a village on Vancouver Island's west coast. She fled north to train and work as a nurse, perhaps desperate for the reliable rays of a Yukon sun.

In the sopping bi-cultural home of her birth, the sun is a rare occurrence, especially at the darkest time of the year, the winter solstice, the time when she returns. This time Hannah is escaping from an abusive relationship in Whitehorse, carrying bruises and bumps, one of which is not going to go away anytime soon.

While the story of a prodigal daughter returning home humbled and pregnant is not new, there is nothing clichéd about Hannah or the home to which she returns. **Joanna Streetly's *Silent Inlet*** unfolds slowly and believably through the thoughts and actions of four people: Hannah and her mother, Harry, (short for Harriet); and two Aborigines, Big Mack Stanley and his nephew, Lonny.

Writing from a male viewpoint with a different cultural outlook would be challenging for most, but Streetly knows what she's doing, having had a seven-year marriage to a Tla-o-qui-aht carver. She obviously learned more than just a new language. Having lived in Clayoquot Sound for 16 years, she has had time to absorb the tang and bluster of a sodden Tofino winter.



Having arrived in Canada in 1990 as an immigrant from Trinidad and England, Streetly also knows what it's like to be connected to two cultures, never fully belonging to either—just like some of her characters.

"Harry," a self-reliant loner who lives on her own small island about two hours by boat from the village, was a single mother who brought up her daughter, Hannah, to be like she was. As a young teenager, Hannah rebelled and went to live in town, staying with a loving but childless couple, Jack and Ada, in order to attend school.

Ada is dead, but Jack's home is still Hannah's and he remains her surrogate father. Hannah never knew or wanted to know anything about her birth father who left without even knowing he had planted a seed, but now, contemplating single motherhood herself, Hannah wants to know more about her past. What she learns will slightly



Joanna Streetly:  
*Drawing on the left side of the country*

alter the way she sees the world.

Big Mack has no idea what happened to his mother when she disappeared when he was a young boy. His father went on a binge and before they knew it, the children were dispersed. Now in his late 30s he is again living in his father's home, trying in turn to be father to two boys, one of whom, Lonny, is as good as orphaned.

Lonny is the son of one of Big Mack's brothers, in jail for murdering Lonny's mother. Ten-year-old Lonny is on the brink—so which way will he teeter? On the side of love, openness and the optimism of childhood or toward the cynical, despairing ennui of those who have gone before?

A frightening accident suddenly puts pressure on all these fragile relationships.

A fifth character is the setting itself—the rain, the storms, the quality of light and smell of the sea, the remoteness. The Sound blankets the inhabitants, warming, chilling, imprisoning and freeing them.



Streetly's approach to writing a first novel was literally picturesque. "When I began this book, I didn't write," she says. "I drew. I drew people, houses, floor plans, maps, maps and more maps. I named every street in town and every river in the Sound. Hansen Sound came alive for me, even though it is completely fictional."

The sudden revelations that appear in a world where everything must happen in its own time, and where ways of thinking will only alter over generations, can sometimes run a bit thick. For example: "Hannah is suddenly overcome by the way sadness can be everywhere and nowhere; present, yet invisible.... It makes her feel connected on a different level, as if this thread of sadness binds them together.... For someone who has always been a loner, the feeling is strange, but she welcomes it."

Or for Big Mack: "From a faraway corner of his brain, he feels his mother's smile creeping out at him again. It beams at him for a few seconds and then vanishes. Mack feels his own mouth lift at

the corners, returning the smile. He smiles harder as a sense of joy and love run into him."

But Joanna Streetly's unerring sense of place is one of the strengths of the novel, along with her sensitive exploration of the ambivalent feelings between mother and daughter. Guilt and love and fear and pity and anger meld into one inescapable bond.



In addition to being an artist, Streetly is also a kayak guide, the author of *Paddling Through Time* and the editor of the west coast anthology *Salt in Our Blood*.

A kayaker moves slowly and knows the land in a way that others never will. And that's Streetly's approach to narrative. She has used her experiences on the water to provide depth to the brooding setting of the novel.

For someone reading in Europe or South America or Toronto, *Silent Inlet* would no doubt be an exotic story; for those of us on the west coast, Streetly has made an earnest attempt to tell it like it is.

0-88982-207-7

Cherie Thiessen reviews books from Pender Island.



## THE ACCESSIBILITY OF DREAMS

*Surrealistic sleepwalking with Jen Currin*

**The Sleep of Four Cities by Jen Currin**  
(Anvil Press \$15)

Sometimes a traveler, exploring a foreign city, experiences a disorientation that no map or guide can shake.

The choice then is to assiduously pursue an understanding of the layout and ambience of the place or to abandon attempts at orienting oneself and just keep walking and noticing, without a route, just taking it all in.

Reading **Jen Currin's** poems, one is faced with a similar choice: the first leads to drudgery and dead-ends. The second, the only viable option, is to keep reading, abandoning any expectation of linear sense.

In *The Sleep of Four Cities*, you can let Currin's language take you down alleys, over bridges and through gates, without a destination, and you are overtaken by surprise and variety. You may not be able to say where the poems took you but you were certainly taken.

*I traded my spirit for a handful of nails. / Bliss pinched my elbows. / The stars climbed back upon the roof/ and the sky said, "hurt me."*

Currin's poems have the accessibility of dreams which require relinquishing paraphrase. In this debut collection there isn't a single predictable line or image. One can detect certain obsessions:

*Clouds / moon / light / wind / water and fish / ponds / rivers / wells.*

There is a stubborn disconnect between the titles and the individual poems and no congruity between poems within each of the four sections. If connection is to be located in this elusive writing it has to be personally constellated by the

reader. That's true for all art but in these kinds of poems it's imperative and also the reason why many readers say they don't "get" contemporary poetry.

The plethora of striking images, many surreal, is anchored somewhat by Currin's use of conventional punctuation and format. After all that dissonance, a puzzled reader is grateful to come upon a recognizable landmark.

Some poems, different ones for different readers, will remain behind locked gates. Some will give up secrets reluctantly while others will open wide vistas in memory and desire. Call these inaccessible or, alternately, toss out the nostalgia for interpretive closure and just go for the adventure.

*"Yesterday on the pier I saw a ship with five sails. I saw another with none. I turned back to my book. when I looked up, the sail-less ship had blossomed—two handsome triangles fluttered, white as nursery bed sheets. And as I sat there, the wind read the book rapidly, with no regard for rhyme."*

1-895636-70-1

**Visiting Hours by Shane Koyczan**  
(Mother Press Media \$16.95)

PERFORMANCE POETRY IS THE NEW KID on the poetry block, a kid with attitude. Fun, entertaining even, spoken word poets are winning new converts at a time when literary poets face diminished audiences. Spoken word poems are alive when performed but on the page, in comparison, they pale. Fortunately, the Mother Press Media, "an unconventional press for unconventional artists," includes a CD which reveals Koyczan's sly humour and great vocal timing. Listen to the CD first, then

re-imagine Koyczan's cadences as you read the poems. Mother Press Media plans to produce more artists who "breach the boundaries of genre." Perhaps this new publisher might consider a reversal: put out CDs of complete performances and attach a small sample of print. Either way, I look forward to more.

0-9738131-0-5

**Hongyun, New and Collected Shorter Poems, 1955-2005 by J. Michael Yates**  
(AuthorHouse \$18.45)

"AN IMAGE IS ONE OF AN INFINITE number of entrances to an arena where something ineffable has always been going on."

Or so says **J. Michael Yates**. In the sixties he was a black-leather-jacketed-motorcyclist-poet who taught Creative Writing. Since then he's constructed different personas and careers but J. Michael Yates has kept on writing.

This volume is a representative sampling of new and collected work of an original presence on the West Coast writing scene; and it proves his poetry is standing the test of time.



**J. Michael Yates: "to know for a certainty with the blood"**

*"Something is rising in the black throat of the sky. Something draws me into the earth by my eyes. Just beneath them the avalanches of flesh begin. The language of a man alone in the bush goes the colours of boulder-fields and lichen."*

Distinctly the poetry of contemplative fishing in northern places (Alaska, Queen Charlottes), *Hongyun* includes the stunning *Great Bear Lake Meditations* which remain as fresh now as they were groundbreaking four decades ago. Also included, his *Book of Interrogations* is both rambling and erudite, a series of aphorisms on the art of writing. Sometimes prophetic, sometimes irascible, this Ecclesiastes of Poetics is an

evocative summing up by a mature poet who hasn't compromised his aesthetic, though it metamorphosed constantly.

Yates, a former publisher and prison guard, has earned his place in the pantheon of influential B.C. poets and this is a welcome collection.

"Time and tide,

exhaling here, now, after the long breathing-in of being young. Here on the subsiding side of both time and tide, among the clear pools full of things waiting for water to return, the steel-coloured sea-blade carving far out and almost out of sight, falling and falling and almost at low-slack. Time now to say inside it is almost good to know for a certainty with the blood: I can die." 1-4208-2770-7

*Hannah Main-van der Kamp's most recent collection of poetry is According to Loon Bay (The St. Thomas Poetry Series).*



**Amanda Lamarche: "getaway on all fours"**

## DANGER PAYS

**The Clichéist by Amanda Lamarche**  
(Nightwood Editions \$15.95)

You know you are in for a wonderful set of poems when the first poem causes your heart to skip a beat and then you look again at the cover illustration and it's the visual translation of that poem. Now you know what a splint to keep the heart still looks like.

The poems in **Amanda Lamarche's** first book illustrate one of J. Michael Yates' aphorisms: "Art must summon a weather of danger." There are no clichés in *The Clichéist*. Anyone planning to fell a tree, please first read the fifteen-poem section, *A Tree Falls In The Woods*.

*"Here's my trick for staying alive. Don't think like a man when you plan your escape route. Think like what lives in the forest. Sniff things out. Make friends with the idea of a getaway on all fours."*

0-88971-20-5

## ALSO RECEIVED

Songs of the Spirit by **Verna Benjamin**  
(First Choice Books) 0-9739013-0-6

The Charlatans of Paradise by **Arthur Joyce** (New Orphic Publishers)  
1-894842-07-3

Lunar Drift by **Marlene Cookshaw**  
(Brick Books) 1-894078-46-2

Paradise City by **Daniel Rajala**

**Jen Currin: "the wind read the book rapidly with no regard for rhyme"**

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[www.abcbookworld.com](http://www.abcbookworld.com)





# LOOKOUT

**W**HEN I FIRST STARTED STUDYING ORANGUTANS IN THE great tropical rain forests of Indonesian Borneo (Kalimantan), all that science knew about these enigmatic red apes in the wild might have filled a page. That was almost 35 years ago. We now know much more about orangutans but, unfortunately, we also know that orangutan populations have declined precipitously over the last few decades and that 80 per cent of orangutan habitat has been decimated.

Along with the African chimpanzees and gorillas, the Asian orangutans are great apes, our closest living relatives in the animal kingdom. Chimpanzees are so closely related to humans that their genome differs by only 1.2 per cent in terms of single nucleotide changes and, once blood types are matched, chimpanzees can receive blood transfusions from us and vice versa. Gorillas, the greatest of the great apes in terms of size, are also very closely related to humans who, in some ways, are just another African ape.

All great apes share with humans high cognitive abilities, similar emotions, foresight, excellent memories, self-recognition and self-awareness, and are capable of symbolic communication, insight, imitation and innovation as well as generalization, abstract thought and problem solving. When we look into their eyes, we see something there that we recognize. Their eyes reflect our own.

Less known are the small apes, gibbons and the siamang. After the great apes, the small apes are our closest living relatives. Found only in Southeast Asia and China, small apes are territorial, monogamous, and the acrobats of the primate world, swinging from tree to tree like the “flying young man on the swinging trapeze” and then soaring mid-air as they let go of one branch and fly to reach another. Certainly, this soaring locomotion is their form of genius. Gibbons are also known for their soprano vocalizations. Gibbons don’t use tools and don’t perform well in laboratory tests, scoring below some monkeys on intelligence tests. But studies of their brain show cerebellums that fall on the great ape side of the divide. And I personally have seen one captive gibbon, to my amazement, use tools, twigs, to scratch himself. I think gibbons are underrated. They are as flighty, edgy, and fragile as the birds with which they share the treetops. But they are brighter, smarter and more adaptable than they have been given credit for in textbooks.

Unfortunately, all apes, great and small, are in dire straits. All face extinction as their habitats are destroyed. When I first arrived in Borneo over 90 per cent of the island consisted of primary tropical rain forest, the world’s second-largest continuous expanse of forest after the Amazon Basin. But now Borneo’s forest is in retreat, like the forests of equatorial Africa, under relentless pressure from the forces of the global economy. Like a high-speed locomotive with no one at the controls, the global economy hurtles recklessly into the future, overwhelming everything in its path, de-

## APE POPULATIONS IN DECLINE WORLDWIDE

BY BIRUTÉ MARY GALDIKAS

**T**he foremost protector of orangutans on the planet, **Biruté Marija (Mary) Filomena Galdikas**, is invariably described as the third woman sent by paleontologist Dr. **Louis B. Leakey** to study primates in their natural habitat, after **Dian Fossey** and **Jane Goodall**, and is known as one of “Leakey’s Angels.” Galdikas is an Officer of the Order of Canada and also the only foreign-born person ever to win the Kalpataru, Hero of the Environment Award, from the Indonesian government.

While studying orangutans for more than thirty-five years, Biruté Mary Galdikas has taught as a professor in the Dept. of Archaeology at Simon Fraser University.

stroying habitats and accelerating the extinction of plants and animals as well as the destruction of traditional human communities that co-existed with and sheltered the ecosystems in which the apes lived.

The prognosis for all ape populations in the wild is bleak. As habitat loss continues, ape populations decline and fragment, creating smaller

populations that are increasingly vulnerable to local extinction. Local extinctions are common. In the African nation of Togo, once 33 per cent forest, the forest is now almost gone. Not surprisingly, the western chimpanzee recently went extinct in Togo. In Nigeria and Cameroon, the Cross River Gorilla has the lowest population of any African great ape with only 150-200 left. In China, due to recent industrial development, the call of the Hainan gibbon can only be heard in captivity. On the island of Java the endemic gibbon is found in only two protected mountainous areas and numbers less than two thousand. In Sumatra the orangutan population is critically endangered; some populations number only in the dozens.



Jane Goodall has been on the road tirelessly since 1986 championing chimpanzee conservation and animal rights. Yet chimpanzee habitats are shrinking. In West and Central Africa, chimpanzees are just meat for the pot. Unless politicians, rock stars, and governments embrace the cause of great and small ape extinction in a major way, apes will go extinct within the next 50 years.

The one bright spot remains the mountain gorillas. Dian Fossey gave up her life in 1985 for the gorillas. The tourist industry that followed helped provide stability and money, allowing for a 17 per cent increase in gorilla numbers since the last census. It costs \$50 for a park ranger to guide you to the cabin where Dian lived and the grave where she lies buried. It costs \$350 per day for one hour with the gorillas. The mountain gorillas are as expensive as some lawyers. That has been their salvation.

I’m not saying we need more martyrs to ensure the survival of the great and small apes but the Hollywood movie, *Gorillas in the Mist*, sure helped. And International Orangutan Awareness Week also probably helps hold back the tide. It could be a lot worse. Orangutans could be extinct throughout their entire range and not just locally. We need a *Mission Impossible* like those led by Bono and Bill Gates in their fight against global poverty and disease. We need to pressure our governments to save the great and small apes. An occasional billionaire would help, too.

Why save the apes? I could give ecological and even economic answers but the truth is greater. The great and small apes represent who we once were and where we came from. They are not our ancestors but our siblings, brother and sister species, and our cousins. They led the way and we followed, eventually overtaking them as we became human, and then we left them behind. That separation should not be their death sentence. What consolation solitude if we remain the only species in our family left behind on a planet endlessly spinning with no close kin to call our own?

“The mountain gorillas are as expensive as some lawyers. That has been their salvation.”

—BIRUTÉ GALDIKAS

*Biruté Galdikas’ new book is Great Ape Odyssey (Harry N. Abrams \$65), with photographs by Karl Ammann. For more info [www.orangutan.org](http://www.orangutan.org) or [www.ioaw.org](http://www.ioaw.org). 081095575X*



DIANE LUCKOW PHOTO



YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN:

# EDEN ROBINSON

## HAISLA NOVELIST BY VICKIE JENSEN

**The gritty urban world of Eden Robinson's new novel *Blood Sports* (M&S \$34.95), set in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, is far removed from the Haisla village of Kitamaat (pop. 700), the setting for her first novel *Monkey Beach* (Knopf, 2000). But whether Robinson is depicting inner city grime or the eerie beauty of a remote inlet, her characters all find themselves drawn into a death-grip struggle for emotional and physical security. Vickie Jensen visited Eden Robinson in Kitamaat and she sends this report:**

**T**HREE YEARS AGO EDEN ROBINSON moved back to the Haisla reservation in order to live with her parents in their quiet home that looks out onto the upper reaches of the Douglas Channel. Framed photographs of Eden and her sister Carla, the first Aboriginal anchorwoman for CBC TV news, are prominently displayed everywhere. Her father **Johnny Robinson** suffers from Parkinson's and it looked like the disease was advancing rapidly. Fortunately most of his symptoms turned out to be side effects from medication.

After two months back on the rez, Robinson realized that she really didn't know her parents as adults and staying on in the village was an opportunity to remedy that. "My folks both have a lot of things they want to share," she says, "although I don't think they want to see them published!"

Coming home was the sixth move in the last three years for Robinson, who's still unpacking boxes and recovering from the success of her first two books. Published in five countries, her short story collection *Traplines* (Knopf, 1996) won the Winifred Holtby Prize for best first work of fiction in the Commonwealth and was featured as a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year. *Monkey Beach* won the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize and was nominated for the Giller Prize and the Governor General's Award.

After years of city living, travelling, touring, and working as writer in residence, Robinson says the transition to life on the rez was a huge culture shock. "I didn't realize how much of an urban Indian I was. I am so bad at bush living! People think I must be Lisa in *Monkey Beach*—they forget that I made her up. I'm completely incompetent at living off the land. The characters in *Monkey Beach* are modeled after a number of my cousins who are really into it. I'd starve!"

Robinson contends there are different types of intelligence. "Me, I'm smart with books, but I'm really dumb if I try to start a boat or set up a tent. The first time I went to the Kitlope as part of a Haisla Rediscovery Camp, I brought my hair dryer. Someone asked me where I thought I was going to plug it in and I told them I figured if I could bring my laptop, I could bring a hair dryer."

Robinson's laughter spills out as regular punctuation to her thoughts. "Of course, after three days, my laptop packed it in because the batteries

ran out but by then we were so busy going places, collecting food and scouting archaeological sites that by 6 p.m. I was in my tent snoring! I think that was the first time in my life that I didn't use conditioner. We bathed in a glacier-fed river, so I just rinsed the soap out of my hair as fast as I could!"

Around the village, the elders know Eden as Vicki Lena Robinson. "I was named after a cousin who choked to death in her crib on a bottle," she explains. "Unfortunately there were five other Vickis in the village at that time, and I got tagged with Big Vicki. Little Vicki didn't like her name much either," she laughs. "So, I always thought that someday I'd change my name to something like Rebecca or Anastasia. Anyway, my first year of college I was telling that to someone who said, 'Oh, you'll never change your name.' And I decided, 'Yes, I will. I'm... Eden Robinson.' I don't know where that name came from! That was 20 years ago now—it was part of a mental switch, of seeing myself differently. I wasn't 'Big Vicki' any more."

Asked how she learned so much about the world of pimps, prostitutes and drugs for her new novel, *Blood Sports*, she says, "I used to live in East Vancouver. I'm part of the arts community and we always need to seek out the cheapest rent possible!" More seriously, Robinson says she knows a lot of people who live in the downtown core or work in re-hab clinics. "It's a severely different mind set, an environment where addictions are the norm. In some parts of Vancouver, people regularly discuss stock portfolios—there people talk about treatments or fixes."

Robinson's education also spans two worlds. After wrestling with a no-talent assessment at the University of Victoria, she went on to complete a Masters in Creative Writing at UBC (where *Monkey Beach* served as her Masters thesis), but she also values her Beaver Clan heritage and the Haisla storytelling tradition. "I'm trying to learn Haisla," she says, "word by painful



Eden Robinson with Johnny Robinson and Winnie Robinson

word. But I have a tin ear. Dad's always amused by my attempts."

While Eden Robinson is the first Haisla novelist, her uncle **Gordon Robinson**, author of the non-fiction *Tales of the Kitamaat* in 1956, was the first Haisla writer to be published. "I think I'm the only full-time writer in the village now although others on the reserve are getting interested, especially when they hear tales of six-figure advances! But most don't really know what writing for a living is all about. There's no basis for understanding. They just think it's like what they see in the movies—you finish the book, you hand it in, it gets published and you get a big cheque. I try to explain about the long hours writing, the edits and the copy edits. Or that making money at writing is so sporadic. People do understand if I compare it to seasonal fishing. But they don't understand that writing is usually just me on my ass in the basement, glued to the computer for hours on end."

Recently a battery of tests confirmed Robinson suffers from celiac disease, an intolerance to gluten that has sapped her energy, left her prone to depression and caused constant gastrointestinal pain. "I didn't think it was celiac disease because all the people I know who have it are really skinny," she says, "but it doesn't work that way for me. It's hard to explain this level of constant fatigue to healthy people. Here my aunties aren't in the best of health so we can share colonoscopy stories. There's a real openness about medical conditions."

Once the diagnosis was confirmed, Robinson adopted a strict wheat and gluten-free diet. Sticking to the diet when she's on the road or when she attends any of the local feasts or parties is a challenge since most of the foods served are wheat-based, but now she packs her own snacks and reads labels. The discipline is paying off—much of the pain is gone and she can already feel her energy level shifting.

"This is a good time in my life to just be," she says, "to get my life, my finances and my own health in order. I have a low energy level because of my illness, but each day there's a certain time period when I can go to town on the writing; if I miss that, it's a shot day. So when I write, I hermit. People in the village are sometimes surprised to find that I'm here because they haven't seen me. For me, writing is a passion. It doesn't feel like I'm working 18 hours. I want to do it."

If writing is what makes Eden Robinson happiest, she's also the first to say that it's often a struggle. "Some people have tremendous control over their novels. I don't seem to be one of them." Robinson was working on a different novel when *Blood Sports* took over. It grew out of her novella "Contact Sports," a story in *Traplines* that took her ten years to complete, and 34 drafts. "It was my apprenticeship," she says. "Everything I needed to write *Monkey Beach* I learned in that novella—switching time periods, changing voice, structure of the story."

For *Blood Sports*, Robinson revisits her original cast of characters from "Contact Sports", five years later in their lives. The tangled web of addiction, revenge and human relationships in *Blood Sports* is stark and violent. Tom Bauer, now in his early 20s, has fathered baby Melody with fellow ex-junkie Paulina, but he comes home from work to find that Paulina and the baby have disappeared. At the same time his controlling, abusive cousin

Jeremy has come back to haunt his life.

"I expected *Blood Sports* to go in a very different direction. I had plots, plans, but the characters evolved in a way I hadn't outlined. Originally I was picturing something lighter, maybe superficial or glib," Robinson says, "so my characters were really safe in the first couple of drafts. Then I started torturing them. I really didn't have a choice. When my characters solidify themselves, they pretty well take over."

The main character in *Blood Sports* has an 11-month-old daughter. "I don't know where she came from!" she says, "And I never planned for the main character to have a mental breakdown." The brutal parts were hardest to write. "I'm really squeamish so the violence was really a surprise." Even so, the book is not as dark as some earlier versions of the manuscript. "I went back and cut the torture scenes to one or two and the deaths went from eleven to four."

The traditional storytellers from her village have advised Robinson to stick to the storyline but it hasn't been easy to follow their advice. "In *Monkey Beach* they wanted to know definitely, did Lisa's brother live or did he die? I tried to explain that I deliberately wandered off track with the story. We'll see what they say about *Blood Sports* since it really goes all over the map."

**"So when I write, I hermit. People in the village are sometimes surprised to find that I'm here because they haven't seen me. For me, writing is a passion. It doesn't feel like I'm working 18 hours. I want to do it."**

Robinson describes the new novel's structure as "a little haywire." Each of the different sections corresponds to the main character's different mental states. Robinson says the book will work best for people who like puzzles and piecing things together. "I wanted this new book to

be a straightforward mystery but it fell flat when I tried to make it a traditional narrative," she says.

Whereas she thinks *Monkey Beach* was fairly easy to market because readers were interested in northern life and native families, she feels she's taking a chance with *Blood Sports*. "This new book did a lot of things I didn't want it to do. It's certainly more extreme, and the form is not incredibly commercial. I think it's going to be a really tough sell. I'm just hoping it gets banned—that would be great for sales!"

Now with three notable books to her credit, Robinson is well aware that the business of writing demands two personalities from every author. "There's the personality you need to write and the personality you need to promote. Without the hermit side, I wouldn't get any book finished, but without the ham side, the book wouldn't get published. "It took a lot of effort for me to be able to function in public, but I was pretty damned determined so I took voice lessons, acting lessons, desensitization training, counselling—I worked my ass off to make it look like I was comfortable in front of an audience. Before, I was focused on how awkward I was, how shy. Once I could do small talk, it just opened up my world."

Robinson describes herself as "a bit of a control freak" so learning to trust her instincts rather than trying to rigidly control everything was a huge leap of faith for her. "It's a scary freedom," she says. "I fought it for about two years and finally just started writing. Once I gave in, the book started to flow."

Photojournalist Vickie Jensen's nine books most recently include *The Totem Poles of Stanley Park* (Vancouver: Westcoast Words and Subway Books, 2004). She and Jay Powell have co-authored 40 native language and culture texts.



# END PAPERS



Playwright Lucia Frangione leads the way for fellow cast members Donna-Lea Ford and Dirk VanStralen for Pacific Theatre's production of her play *Cariboo Magi*. (Talonbooks).

BRIAN CAMPBELL PHOTO

## A is for Argent

Having prepared booklets for genealogy research on a province-by-province basis, **Judith Argent** of the Cloverdale Library has compiled **Planning a Genealogy Trip to the Vancouver Area** (Surrey Public Library \$15), a handbook listing resources for family history records in the Lower Mainland. Genealogical authority **Angus Baxter** has declared the Surrey Public Library system "has the finest collection of genealogical material in the province."

0-9692197-5-X

## B is for Blair

Using locations that include Granville Island, Sea Village, Bridges Pub, Harbour Ferries Marina and the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club, **Michael Blair's** third mystery novel, **Overexposed** (Dundurn \$11.99) concerns a commercial photographer who wakes with a hangover to discover women's underwear in his dishwasher and a corpse on the roof of his floating home. Blair's preceding mysteries are *If Looks Could Kill* and *A Hard Winter Rain*.

1-550002-582-1

## C is for Cruikshank

Whereas Aborigines viewed glaciers as sentient and animate in their oral histories, Europeans have tended to see them as inanimate and subject to measurement and scientific investigation. **Julie**



**Julie Cruikshank:**  
ice escapades

Press \$29.95), an examination of a newly designated World Heritage Site that spans the borderlands of Yukon, north-west British Columbia and Alaska.

0774811870

## D is for Drabek

In 2005, **Jan Drabek** returned to the Czech Republic for the launch of his 15<sup>th</sup> title, *Hledani Stesti u Cizaku* [Searching for Happiness with Aliens], coincidental with the posthumous publication of his father's novel *Podzemi* [The Underground].



**Jan Drabek**

## E is for Egoff

Hosted by **Bill Richardson**, the annual BC Book Prizes gala on April 29 at the Marriott Pinnacle Hotel in Vancouver will be dedicated to the memory of the late **Sheila Agnes Egoff**, the pioneering critic and supporter of Canadian children's literature, after whom one of the prizes is named. An Officer of the Order of Canada, she died on May 22, 2005, in her 88th year, in Vancouver.

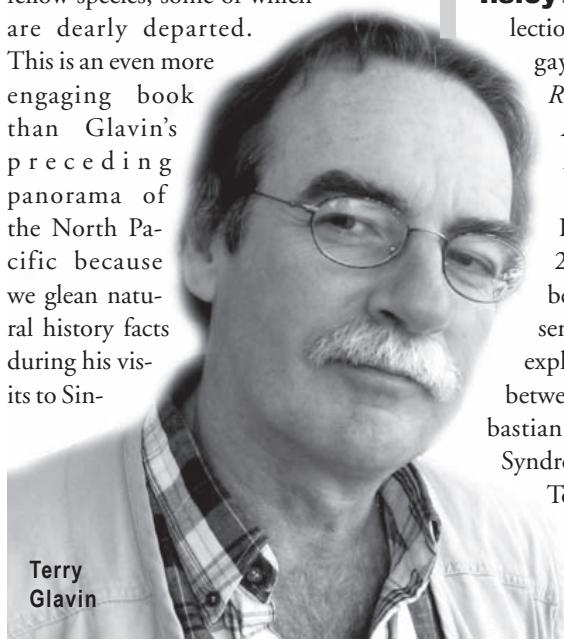
## F is for Frangione

First produced as a full-length play in 2001 by the Pacific Theatre, post-feminist actor and playwright **Lucia Frangione's** *Cariboo Magi* (Talonbooks \$15.95) follows a makeshift troupe of would-be theatricals who attempt to mount a Christmas Pageant for the Theatre Royal in Barkerville during the Cariboo gold rush. They consist of a very pregnant child star cast as the Virgin Mary, an inept and drunken Anglican preacher, a cunning Madame named Fanny and a mixed-blood poet who claims he's the last of the Mohicans. Frangione worked in Barkerville for four years.

0-88922-527-3

## G is for Glavin

Wildlife advocate **Terry Glavin** leads us hopefully into the Sixth Great Extinction epoch with **Waiting for the Macaws** (Penguin \$35), a superb survey of our fellow species, some of which are dearly departed. This is an even more engaging book than Glavin's preceding panorama of the North Pacific because we glean natural history facts during his visits to Sin-



**Terry Glavin**

gapore, County Clare, Costa Rica, the Eastern Himalayas, Siberia and the Lofoten Islands in the North Atlantic.

0-670-04422-9

## H is for Huey-Heck



**Lois Huey-Heck**

The **Spirituality of Art** (Northstone \$39) by **Lois Huey-Heck** is the fourth title in a series that has so far examined the spirituality inherent in enjoying wine, gardening and labyrinths. Her co-author and partner, **Jim Kalnin**, is an Okanagan artist who teaches Fine Arts at UBC Okanagan. They live in Oyama.

1-896836-78-X

## I is for Ilsley

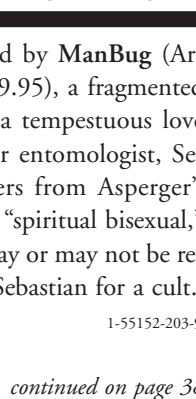
**George K. Ilsley's** first collection of edgy gay fiction, *Random Acts of Hatred* (Arsenal Pulp, 2003) has

been followed by **ManBug** (Arsenal Pulp \$19.95), a fragmented exploration of a tempestuous love between a former entomologist, Sebastian, who suffers from Asperger's Syndrome, and a "spiritual bisexual," Tom, who may or may not be recruiting Sebastian for a cult.

1-55152-203-9



**George K. Ilsley**



continued on page 38



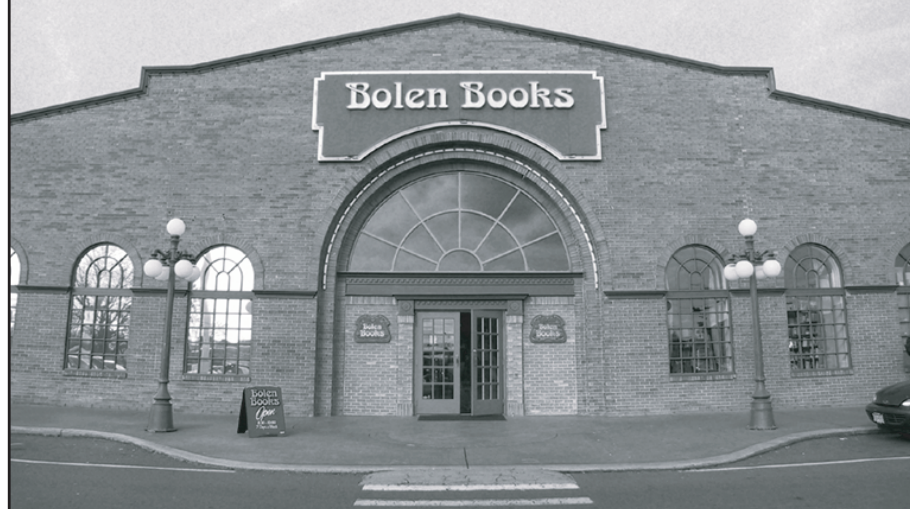
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## J is for Jiwa

For *Margin of Terror: A Reporter's Twenty-Year Odyssey Covering the Tragedies of the Air India Bombing* (Key Porter \$26.95), co-written with screenwriter **Donald J. Hauka**, *Province* reporter **Salim Jiwa** has updated his 1985 book about the two Air India bombings with new information on the 20-year Air India investigation and the 19-month trial that resulted in a verdict of not guilty for the accused in 2005.

1-55263-772-7

## K is for Kraulis

Born to Latvian parents in Stockholm in 1949, **J.A. Kraulis** is a Montreal-raised photographer whose bilingual, large format coffee table book *Grand Landscapes of Canada* (Firefly \$49.95) provides 200 images, many taken from the air.

1-55407-036-8

## L is for Livingston

In **Billie Livingston's** second novel, *Cease to Blush* (Random House \$34.95) a woman discovers her late mother, renowned as a crusading feminist, had an extensive and diverse sexual history in Las Vegas during the Sixties. Livingston, according to her publisher, now "drives the bumpy road from the burlesque stages of Rat Pack Vegas to the bedroom internet porn scenes of today, exploring just how far women have really come."

0-679-31322-2

## M is for Musgrave

**Susan Musgrave's** amusing and irresistibly thoughtful personal essays in *You're in Canada Now...* (ThistleDown \$18.95) are provocative in style and content: "In our culture, these days, there is no core, no authenticity to our lives; we have become dangerously preoccupied with safety; have dedicated ourselves to ease. We live without risk, hence without adventure, without discovery of our-

selves or others. The moral measure of man is: for what will he risk all, risk his life?"

1-894345-95-9

## N is for Neering

Having won the Vancity Book Prize for writing about courageous and unconventional women, **Rosemary Neering** has looked appreciatively at the contributions of courageous and conventional homemakers in *The Canadian Housewife: An Affectionate History* (Whitecap \$29.95), a cornucopia of coping with insects, recipes, canning, children, paternalism and Lysol for birth control.

1-55285-717-4

## O is for Onley

Photographer **Yukiko Onley** has collaborated with poet **E.D. Blodgett** in *Elegy* (U of Alberta Press \$24.95), a work inspired by Onley's husband, **Toni Onley**, a landscape watercolourist who died on February 29, 2004, when he crashed his plane into the Fraser River while apparently practicing landings and take-offs.

0-88864-450-7

## P is for Porter

**Pamela Porter's** second junior novel, *The Crazy Man* (Groundwood \$9.95), has won the Governor General's Award for Children's Literature (English text). Told in free verse, it's the story of twelve-year-old Emaline who is injured in an accident with a tractor driven by her father on the family farm in Saskatchewan in 1965. Grief-stricken and guilty, her father leaves Emaline and her mother to fend for themselves. Much to the disapproval of neighbours, Emaline's mother hires a friendly, red-haired giant from the local mental hospital, Angus, whom local kids teasingly call the gorilla. As the "crazy man" of the title, he helps Emaline overcome her despair. Pamela Porter lives in Sidney, B.C. Her husband's family has operated a family farm near Weyburn, Saskatchewan, for generations.

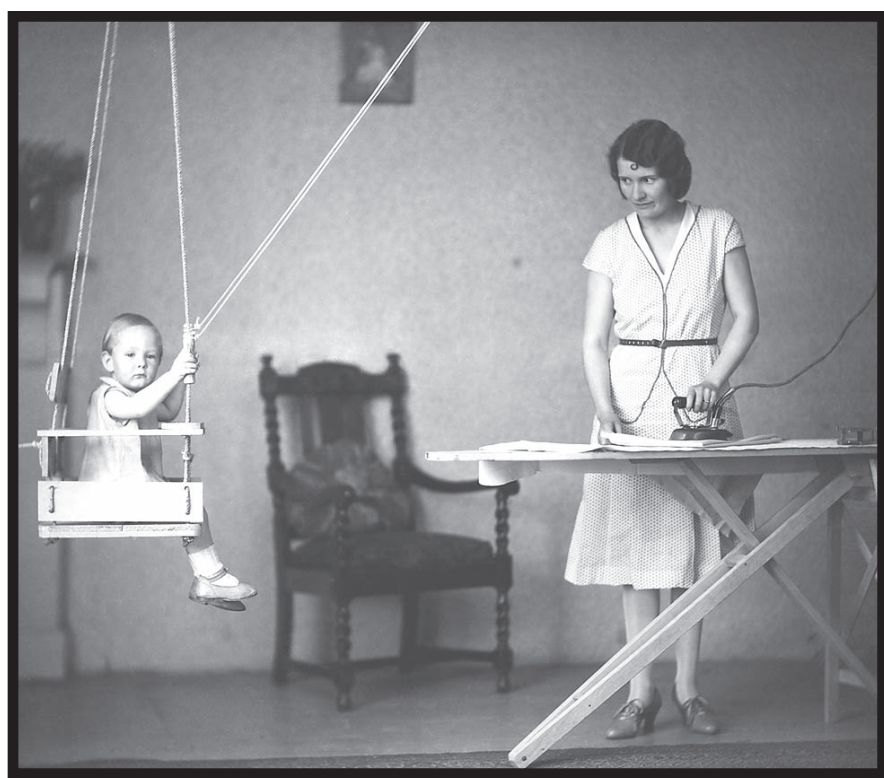
0-88899-695-4



Billie Livingston:  
recently shortlisted for  
the Pat Lowther Award  
for poetry.

PETER BATTISTON/VANCOUVER SUN PHOTO





In work we trust: from *The Canadian Housewife: An Affectionate History* (Whitecap)

## Q is for Quill & Quire

Okay, so Canada's venerable publishing trade periodical, *Quill & Quire*, doesn't have a new book out, but they do have a new format, having resurrected themselves as a magazine.

## R is for Reed

In the 69-year history of the Governor General's Awards, 12 Francophone authors have won three times each; nine Anglophone authors have won three times each—the latest being Montreal-based translator **Fred A. Reed** for *Truth or Death: The Quest for Immortality in the Western Narrative Tradition* (Talonbooks \$29.95) by **Thierry Hentsch**. Only five-time recipient **Hugh MacLennan** and four-time recipient **Michael Ondaatje** have won more often than Reed. In his acknowledgements for *Truth or Death*, Reed credits **Davinia Yip**, who works for Talonbooks in B.C.

0-88922-509-5

## S is for Suzuki

David Suzuki: *The Autobiography* (Greystone \$34.95) is the second instal-



David Suzuki

ment of **David Suzuki's** life story, expanding on earlier material in *Metamorphosis* and also covering his accomplishments after age fifty.

1-55365-156-1

## T is for Thompson

T is for Thompson, as in David. Easily the most admirable of the fur trading personnel who reached B.C. in the early 19th century, **David Thompson** is the subject of an important exhibition at the Spokane Museum as well as Jack Nisbet's *The Mapmaker's Eye: David Thompson on the Columbia Plateau* (WSU Press \$29.95 US).

0-87422-285-0

## U is for Underwood

**Jan Underwood** has won the 28<sup>th</sup> 3-Day Novel Writing Competition with *Day Shift Werewolf*, a story about an unproductive werewolf, Warren, who is demoted to an undesirable shift among other underdogs in the increasingly high-tech horror industry. It's forthcoming from Arsenal Pulp Press later this year.

1-55152-208-X

## V is for Vaillant

One night in January of 1997, former timber-scout **Grant Hadwin** plunged into the Queen Charlotte Islands' Yakoun River, towing a chainsaw behind him, and methodically cut down *K'iid K'iyaas*, a "Golden" Sitka Spruce



John Vaillant

that was more than 300 years old. Conserved by **MacMillan Bloedel**, the 50-metre-tall Golden Spruce represented to Hadwin the hypocrisy of the logging industry.

Before he disappeared under suspicious circumstances, avoiding being sentenced, Hadwin also dismissed the relevance of Vancouver Island's Cathedral Grove as merely a "circus side-show" and a "corporate set-aside." **John Vaillant** first wrote about Hadwin's extremism for *The New Yorker*, then he produced a larger pastiche about Hadwin, the Haida, the coastal fur trade and the West Coast logging industry, *The Golden Spruce* (Knopf \$35), to win the 2005 Governor General's Award for English Non-Fiction. At the awards ceremony in Montreal, Vaillant observed his was the first book about British Columbia, written by a British Columbia resident, to receive a Governor General's Award since **Emily Carr**. **George Bowering's** *Burning Water* and **Jack Hodgins' Spit Delaney's Island, both set in British Columbia, have also received Governor General's Awards.**

0-676-97645-X

continued on page 40

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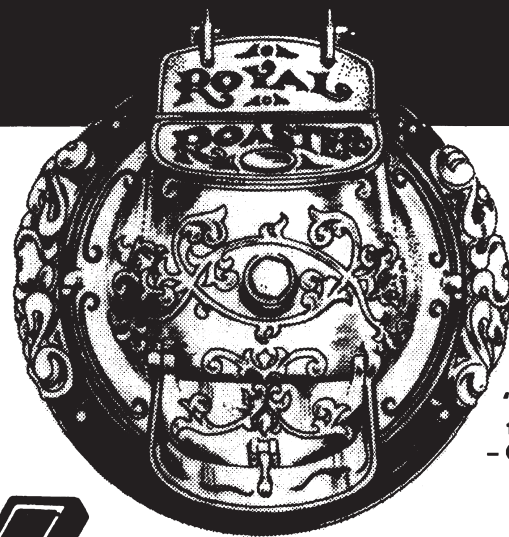
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## ENDPAPERS



R.G. Willems: Veterinary affairs

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**Note:** Previously published material cannot be considered. Maximum entry length is 5000 words, typed, double-spaced. Include a separate cover sheet with the writer's name, address, phone number/email, and the title(s) of the story (stories) enclosed. Include a SASE (Canadian Postage/IRCs only). Douglas College employees are not eligible to enter.

**Entry fee:** *Each* entry must include a \$29.95 entry fee (includes GST and a one-year subscription). Those already subscribing will receive a one-year extension. American and overseas entries please pay in US dollars.

**Deadline for entries:** Postmarked April 15, 2006.

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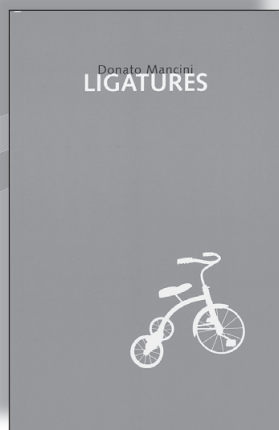


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## W is for Willems

*continued from page 39*

**Targets of Affection** (Cormorant \$21.95) by Abbotsford's **R.G. Willems** features a veterinary nurse named Shelby James who reluctantly explores links between animal abuse and child abuse. The more she gets to know Miranda Wall, a woman who maintains a menagerie of needy animals, the more Shelby is unnerved by Miranda's silent daughter and her stalking husband. It's the first instalment of Willems' projected series of mystery novels about veterinary medicine.

1-896951-98-8

## X is for Xiques

**Donez Xiques** has included a previously unpublished short story by **Margaret Laurence** in her new biography **Margaret Laurence: The Making of a Writer** (Dundurn \$40), a work that focuses on Laurence's apprenticeship years in Africa and Vancouver, a city she once described as a boring swamp. Coincidentally independent scholar **Paul Comeau's** **Margaret Laurence's Epic Imagination** (U of Alberta Press \$34.95) has been described as the first critical study of Laurence in

more than twenty years to look at her entire oeuvre. Comeau, head of English at Windermere Secondary in Vancouver, describes how Laurence turned to the epic mode to create her master narratives of loss, exile and redemption.

Xiques 1-55002-579-1, Comeau 0-88864-451-5

## Y is for You

For having stumbled all the way, possibly wondering whether or not we could find an author with a surname beginning with X or Z.

## Z is for Zuberi

Having conducted in-depth interviews with hotel workers, particularly room attendants employed by the same multinational hotel chains in downtown Vancouver and Seattle, UBC's **Dan Zuberi** has compared and contrasted American and Canadian social conditions in **Differences That Matter: Social Policy and the Working Poor in the United States and Canada** (Cornell University Press \$23.50). Daniyl Mohammad Zuberi received his Ph.D from Harvard in 2004.

0-8014-7312-8

## Also Noted:

The 2006 Biennial Conference of the Association of Italian Canadian Writers will be held at the University of British Columbia in May, 2006



**Anthony Dalton** has taken on the presidency of the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Authors Association. Dalton's most recent books are *Wayward Sailor: In Search of the Real Tristan Jones* and *J/Boats, Sailing to Success*.



Editor/writer **Fernanda Viveiros** is the executive director of the Federation of B.C. Writers; her predecessor **Merrill Fearon** is now an editor for Pacific Educational Press at UBC.



Margaret Laurence felt swamped in Vancouver.



## GRUFF GOAT-MAN

**O**stensibly a children's book, **Barbara Ann Lambert's** self-published *The Mystery of Billy-Goat Smith* (Trafford \$9.99) recalls the hermit who resided on a 160-acre homestead at Jim Brown Creek, at the head of Powell Lake.

Aka Billy-Goat Smith, Robert Bonner Smith came to Powell River in 1910 and died in 1958. A crude sign on his property read: "Powell River People and Dogs Please KEEP OFF."

Local residents suspected Smith was complicit in the much-publicized high society murder of architect Stanford White in the United States in 1906. There was speculation that millionaire Harvey Thaw had hired a hitman—the reclusive Smith, who had subsequently fled to Canada—as inferred by an article in *Colliers* magazine.

The sensational story became the basis of a movie, *The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing*, in the 1950s.

The *Powell River News* also speculated he was the unacknowledged partner in a 1932 robbery of the Patricia Theatre by notorious criminals William Bagley and Gordon Fawcett.

After Smith received more than \$6,000 in compensation for flooding of Powell Lake, he kept his money in glass jars hidden in the dirt floor of his root house.

Lambert was prompted to write *The Mystery of Billy-Goat Smith* after sifting through a family trunk and finding two letters signed Billy Goat. Both were written before Smith kept goats, indicating he had acquired his nickname for a different reason—probably because he was known to be a sharpshooter who could hit a goat from a half-a-mile away. 1-4120-7311-1

## CRABBY CRAB

**I**n her 80th year, **Ruth Howard** has self-published what one young reader has called "a real Grandma story."

It's **Crabby Crab** (Trafford \$9.99), a very simple tale about a shore crab that gets trapped in the red plastic sand bucket of two children digging on the beach, taken home for show 'n' tell, then replaced in the ocean.

Raised in Fredericton, Howard worked in fisheries research and later continued her appreciation of marine life from a cottage at Hopkins Landing. 1-4120-1432-8



Illustration by Helen Downing Hunter

Shelley Hrdlitschka and Diane Tullson have both received ALA honours.

## Blue ribbon for Red Sea

**Diane Tullson's** *Red Sea* (Orca 2005) has been named Best Book for Young Adults by the American Library Association. The ALA's annual lists for best books also include three Orca Soundings novels—*Something Girl* by **Beth Goobie**, *Charmed* by **Carrie Mac** and *Dead-End Job* by **Vickie Grant**—as Quick Picks for the Reluctant Young Adult Readers list. Six recent Orca titles have been named to the Popular Paperbacks list: two novels by **Shelley Hrdlitschka**—*Kat's Fall* and *Sun Signs*—and four Orca Soundings novels for teen reluctant readers—*Snitch* by **Norah McClintock**, *Truth* by **Tanya Lloyd Kyi**, *Hit Squad* by **James Heneghan** and *Home Invasion* by **Monique Polak**.

## The vampire ate my homework

**H**aving survived cancer at a very young age, **James McCann** became a children's book specialist who uses mapmaking in his creative writing workshops. In McCann's teen novel *Rancour* (Simply Read \$16.95), a werewolf named Rancour and a vampire named Shay enter the life of Alix, a high school student who had previously mostly worried about finding a date for the prom. Alix must cope with the thousand-year-old rivalry between the two violent combatants, while making sure she gets her homework done. 1-894965-31-0

## If you drink, don't mother

**U**nfortunately **Sara Graefe's** book has become a bestseller—because so many parents don't know where to find help for raising children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

There is currently no laboratory test that can confirm whether or not a child has FAS.

Institutions in British Columbia that respond specifically to children and families affected by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, such as Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children in Vancouver and the Asante Centre in Maple Ridge, can't possibly reach every family that needs assistance.

Therefore Sara Graefe first wrote *Parenting Children Affected by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: A Guide for Daily Living* in 1994.

A second bilingual edition in 1998, also sponsored and published by the Society of Special Needs Adoptive Parents (SNAP), sold more than 40,000 copies across Canada and abroad.

Graefe's updated third edition entitled *Living With FASD: A Guide for Parents* (Groundwork Press \$24.95) marks the 15th anniversary of a landmark Fetal Alcohol Syndrome conference that was held in Vancouver.

As well, *Living With FASD* is being reissued on the 30th anniversary of the first North American research article that made the connection between maternal drinking during pregnancy.

0-9735444-1-4

[Publisher info at [abcbookworld.com](http://abcbookworld.com)]

## Bird flew

**H**aving volunteered for the Wildlife Rescue Association of BC, **Diane Haynes** has combined mystery and suspense for *Flight or Fight* (Walrus/Whitecap \$8.95), first in her projected Jane Ray's Wildlife Rescue Series.

"I watched a scoter get smashed against the Stanley Park seawall because it couldn't lift its wings out of the water," says Haynes, after a canola oil spill in 2000. "When we got it to the shelter, there were volunteers working around the clock to save hundreds of oiled animals. It changed my life. I've been a volunteer ever since."

*Flight or Fight's* main character Jane Ray is a shy, reluctant heroine who takes an oiled bird to the (fictional) Urban Wildlife Rescue Centre after a 200,000-gallon spill. Thrust into the national media, she pits her will against the oil company at fault.

Haynes has crossed Canada on a speaking tour for the book, talking to teenagers. "Animals aren't statistics to them," she says. "They're real, live, feeling creatures. Kids love them. They saw Wabamun Lake. They get it." 1-55285-658-5



Designed for younger readers **Sally Rogow's** compilation of true stories of rescue during World War II, *They Must Not Be Forgotten: Heroic Catholic Priests and Nuns Who Saved People From The Holocaust* (Holy Fire Publishing \$11.99 u.s.) documents heroism recognized and honoured by the Yad Vashem and the Catholic church. 0976721163



Born in Mexico, **Elisa Gutierrez** is the Vancouver-based author and designer of *Picturescape* (Simply Read \$19.95), the story of a boy who finds himself magically transported on a cross-Canada journey after he visits a local art gallery and admires works by Canadian artists. 1-894965-24-8



# The call of the game

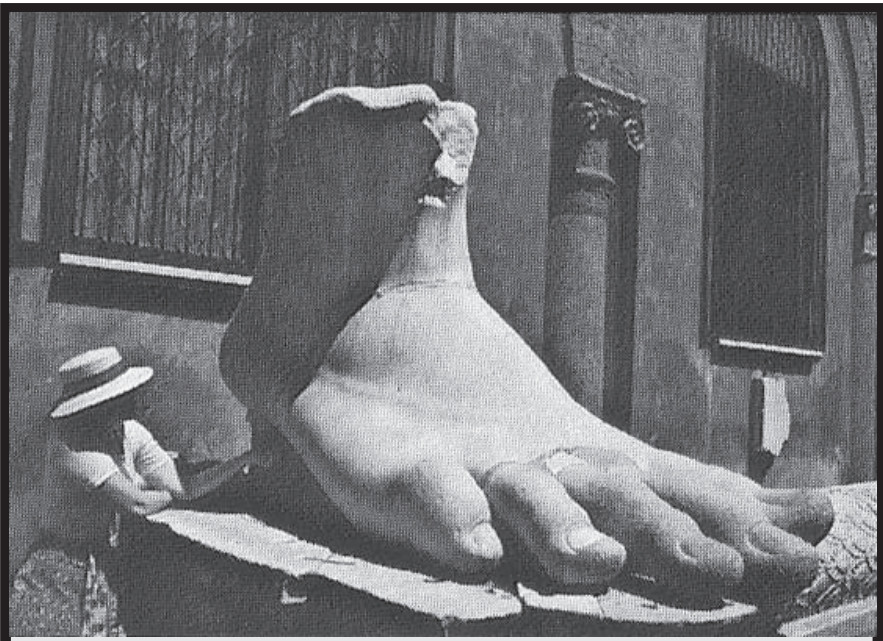
As the best announcer in the league for the worst team, veteran sports play-by-play broadcaster Jim Robson has been wooed for years to produce a book. At 69, finally agreed to allow Jason Farris, a 38-year-old software businessman, to compile Robson's memorabilia for **Hockey Play-by-Play: Around the NHL with Jim Robson** (Granville Island Publishing \$44.95), a scrapbook-styled coffee table book. The much-loved Robson, known for his "message to hospital patients and shut-ins" and other people who couldn't get out to the games, retired from radio in 1999 and last called a hockey game on CKNW radio when the Vancouver Canucks lost game seven to the New York Islanders in the 1994 Stanley Cup finals.

"The business has changed quite a bit," Robson told Iain MacIntyre of the *Vancouver Sun*. "It's entertainment now and I was never an entertainer... I think the kids today would find [my broadcasts] dull." Although Robson was the voice of the Vancouver Canucks for 25 years, long-time British Columbians remember Jim Robson just as fondly as the voice of the Vancouver Mounties baseball team in the Pacific Coast League.

That era of Robson's career has yet to be documented. 0-9739016-1-6



A young Jim Robson



Remnant of the statue of Constantine the Great

# The barmaid & Jesus

According to **Terry Julian** in his eighth non-fiction title, Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, the Christian ruler who brought prosperity and order to the Roman and Byzantine empires during his 21-year-reign, was possibly a Sicilian barmaid. She later became pious and revered as the alleged discoverer of Christ's cross in Jerusalem. It's just one of the details explored by Terry Julian in **Constantine, Christianity, and Constantinople** (Trafford \$19.95). Constantine was not baptized until he lay on his death bed because, according to Julian, "Baptism in those days was taken very seriously and it was common to defer it as late as possible so that there was less chance of committing mortal sin subsequently."

141207003-1



Gordon Fairclough

# Hong Kong hell

Although an editor could have improved **Gordon Fairclough's** text for **Brick Hill and Beyond** (\$13), his homespun autobiography is remarkable for its all-too-brief account of walking halfway across Asia as an escaped prisoner during World War II.

While defending an anti-aircraft gun site at Brick Hill Peninsula, on the island of Hong Kong in 1941, Gordon Fairclough was taken prisoner at age 22 and sent to the North Point Prison. The flies were so bad he was ordered to spend several hours a day swatting them. "A six-foot barrack table would appear to move," he recalls, "I remember counting the flies that I had killed with one swat, and the result was 49 flies." Sickness was taking its toll. Outrageous cruelty from the Japanese guards and a starvation diet prompted Fairclough to decide "it was a 50/50 chance of survival whether we stayed as prisoners or attempted to escape." He and several others managed to free themselves by trekking across China and into Burma, an astonishing feat he describes with remarkable restraint.

When Fairclough returned to England as a captain in 1945, after service in India, he was awarded the Military Cross from King George VI. Troubled by recurring nightmares until 1951, he immigrated to Canada in 1953 and now lives in Tsawwassen. 0-9736019-0-6

# The call of the road

A former medical doctor in Burns Lake and the Arctic, **John Dale** of Nelson has released **Notes from a Sidecar** (Daedalus \$24.95), a light-hearted yet detailed examination of 20th century philosophy. His account takes the reader on a motorcycle/sidecar trip on a Vulcan 1500 Kawasaki, with Hannigan sidecar, around the Selkirk Loop in B.C., Washington and Idaho. It simultaneously concerns the vagueness in philosophy in relation to everyday decisions and encourages being comfortable with inexactitude.



Motorcycles and the art of philosophy maintenance

Dale studied with Wittgensteinian philosophers. His book does not require a detailed prior knowledge of philosophy but the author suggests "it will tax your brain to read it."

1-4120-5910-0

# The call of the cattle



Andrew McCredie

"Land, my boy," **Mac Annable** once told his grandson **Andrew McCredie**, "land and livestock. It's all I've ever known."

Ranching the Kootenay District in the Rocky Mountains in 1899, Annable operated a 5,000-acre cattle ranch and lumber company between Trail and Rossland. Having served in the Assiniboia Assembly when Saskatchewan and Alberta joined Confederation in 1905, he finally retired to Valdes Island. McCredie, a North Vancouver-based newspaperman, has written **The Laugh That Shook The West! G.M. 'Mac' Annable, Rancher/Politician** (West Vancouver: Ancan Pub. \$19.50).

0-9738895-0-0

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A Langley resident since 1979, **Warren Sommer**, with a master's degree from UBC in historical geography, has written his third book about his hometown, **Frail Memorials: The Cemeteries of Langley** (Corporation of the Township of Langley, \$24.95). 0-9682654-1-3



A member of the second generation of "Vancouver School" photographers, **Evan Lee** premiered a retrospective of recent photographs at the Presentation House Gallery in January, curated by **Bill Jeffries**. The exhibit entitled **Captures: Selected Works 1988 to 2006** (Presentation House \$20) included a catalogue that has text by **Christopher Brayshaw, Peter Culley, Jeff Wall** and **William Wood**. 0-920293-68-9

**Bethan Davies & Ben Cole's** **Walking the Camino de Santiago** (Pili Pala Press \$25) provides a step-by-step guide to walking an ancient pilgrimage route that goes for 700 km. across northern Spain. The co-authors re-walked the camino in 2005 prior to releasing their lighter, second edition that includes some city maps and accommodation options. The Vancouver-based imprint was started in 1993 to publish walking guides to the Iberian Peninsula, including *Walking in Portugal*. Pila Palal is Welsh for butterfly. 0-9731698-2-6

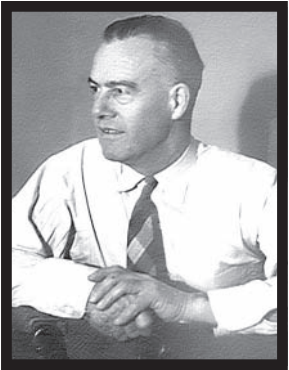
Memorial cross by the side of the road in the Pyrenees surrounded by crosses left by pilgrims is part of walking the Camino de Santiago in Spain.





The call of the lake

Arriving in the Okanagan from London at age eight, mainly because his mother was eager to try homesteading, **Roger John Sugars** commenced a series of diaries that he maintained from 1905 to 1919. Sight-unseen, his father bought 160 acres on the west side of Okanagan Lake for \$500, staying there until 1917. Raised near present-day Fintry in a lakeside wilderness, Sugars was educated by his father, a scholar and pianist.



Roger John Sugars in 1948

He worked in logging camps and on fruit ranches before shipping overseas to serve in France and England during WW I. John A. Sugars of Westbank has edited the diaries for publication as **An Okanagan History: The Diaries of Roger John Sugars** (Sandhill \$24.95).

0-9738153-0-2

The call of Kenya 1

As the second installment of **J. Gordon Mumford's** trilogy covering the east-African period from 1949 to 1958, **Drums of Rebellion: Kenya in Chaos** (Zebra House \$24.95) is set against the backdrop of the notorious Mau-Mau uprisings and Kikuyu rebellion.

Mumford visited many remote areas of east Africa as an Assistant Engineer for the East African Posts and Telecommunications Administration, working in the field on the radio repeater survey routes throughout Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda.

0-9736297-1-1

The call of Kenya 2

As a retired elementary school principal, overcoming the loss of her eldest son to leukemia, **Sandra Harper** volunteered to assist the Africa Canadian Continuing Education



WAYNE CROSSEN PHOTO

This teacher is one of 12 Kenyans featured in *Inside Kenya—Creating Tomorrow*

Society (A.C.C.E.S.), a British Columbia-based non-governmental organization that funds education scholarships and literacy centers in Kakamega, Kenya. After six months in Kakamega, a poor community with high unemployment in the Western Province of Kenya, where only forty-two percent of children attend primary school, Harper wrote **Inside Kenya—Creating Tomorrow** (Hawthorne \$19.95), twelve portraits of Kenyans she met and admired.

Specifically these twelve Kenyans, having been given the opportunity to attend post-secondary education in Canada, were back in Kenya, educating others. All proceeds from her independently published book go to an A.C.C.E.S. Scholarship Fund.

0-9734986-1-7

The call of the Kettle

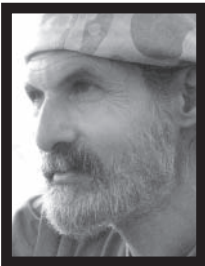
**J.F. Garden's** latest railroad book, **The Crow and the Kettle: The CPR in Southern British Columbia and Alberta, 1950-1989** (Footprint / Sandhill \$69.95), looks at the modern era of the famous rail line that ran from Medicine Hat to a switch on the CPR mainline at Odlum, then across the Fraser River from Hope. Built by way of the Crowsnest Pass, Kettle Valley and the Coquihalla Pass, this all-Canada route was designed to thwart American interests in southern B.C. It crossed three major rivers and seven mountain summits.

0-9691621-8-9

The call of Denman

Having examined the surrealist movement in the United States for *Surrealist Subversions* (Autonomedia), **Ron Sakolsky** has collected his various writings since the turn of the 21st century for **Creating Anarchy** (Fifth Estate \$15 US), "all bathed in the subversive light of anarchy and mad love."

With chapter headings such as *Refusing the Marketplace*, *Why Consent to*



Ron Sakolsky

In a piece entitled *Dancing Waves*, Sakolsky briefly looks at comparisons to be made between Denman Island and the Orkney islands off the northern tip of Scotland.

"Only after I'd left my old landlocked Illinois life behind and moved here lock, stock and barreled," he writes, "did I discover that Canada's most well-known anarchist philosopher **George Woodcock** was a frequenter of Denman on his way to neighboring Hornby Island to visit his good friend, the painter, **Jack Shadbolt**—a fact that appealed to my sense of anarchist synchronicity."

0-9772258-0-1

ALSO RECEIVED

**Robert G. Anstey's** umpteenth self-published title, **Beatles's Gigs** (Sardis: West Coast Paradise \$12.95) proceeds from the Fab Four's metamorphosis as the Quarry Men and the Silver Beetles to the end of their touring days in 1966—and beyond. "The Beatles were possibly the hardest-working band that ever was," says Anstey, songwriter



Robert Anstey

and poet, "as they not only performed for up to seven hours at a time, seven days a week in Hamburg, they often performed one, two and even three gigs a day from 1961 to 1963 in Great Britain." Also in 2005, Anstey released a personal celebration of life, **Poems from Tuscany**. (West Coast Paradise, \$14.95).

Gigs 1-897031-16-5; Tuscany 1-897031-23-8



With 30 archival photos, **Vernon Storey's Learning to Teach: Teacher Preparation in Victoria, BC: 1903-1963** (Faculty of Education, University of Victoria \$23) traces the development of formal teacher training in Victoria, from the Victoria Provincial Normal School years to 1963, to mark the 40th anniversary of the University of Victoria and the 100th year of post-secondary education in Victoria. Storey, a professor of Leadership Studies at UVic, was a teacher, principal and school superintendent. His other books include *The Home: From Orphan's Home to Family Centre, 1873 to 1998*.

What Goes Up Comes Out by **Ian Rudkin** (Brio Books)

From Top To Bottom...and Back by **Peter Hicks** (Peter Hicks \$14.95) 0-9737606-0-5

Without A Blueprint by **Zolten S. Kiss** (Sandor Press \$35) 0-9738361-0-5

A Year On The Garden Path by **Carolyn Herriot** (Earthfuture \$22.95) 0-9738058-0-3

Eyewitness by **Mark Johnstone** 0-9737945-0-X

Rough Justice by **Mark Johnstone** (Trafford) 1-41204440-5

Prisoners Under Glass by **R. Patrick** (Scroll Press) 0-9735422-2-5

Awake! A Spiritual Primer by **Elizabeth Blakely** (Isis Moon \$28.95) 0-9686765-3-7

In The Wilds of Western Canada by **Tyrone Danlock** (Trafford \$37) 141203447-7

Meditations on the Paintings of Carle Hessay by **Leonard A. Woods** (Trabarni/ Treeline) 1-895666-27-9

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**SYLVIA OLSEN** steps off the construction site looking like a million bucks.

At 51, the mother of four is the construction manager for the Tsartlip First Nation on southern Vancouver Island, but she's also constructive as a writer, working between four and seven in the mornings, for the past ten years, producing a series of impressive



SARA CASSIDY

books drawn from her First Nations milieu. Her first book, *No Time to Say Goodbye*, recalls the experiences of First Nations children who were sent to Kuper Island residential school. *Girl With A Baby* was inspired by her daughter's experience of becoming a mother at 14. *Catching Spring* and *Yellow Line* are juvenile novels about Aboriginal youths learning to cope with maturation and racial tensions.

*White Girl* is based on Olsen's own experience as a non-Aboriginal who moved to live on the Tsartlip reserve at age 17. "When I got married and started living on reserve," she says, "all my friends were

books drawn from her First Nations milieu.

Her first book, *No Time to Say Goodbye*, recalls

# ACROSS THE ROAD & OVER THE DITCH

## SYLVIA OLSEN confronts motherhood issues

traveling to the exotic places of the world to get cultural experiences. I walked across the road and over the ditch and then stayed for 33 years and got an immersion in cross-cultural life."

Upon learning that up to 70% of new families in some Coast Salish communities are being started by teen parents, Sylvia Olsen obtained support from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to learn more. With First Nations community worker Lola James, she organized thirteen young Coast Salish mothers for events, such as picnics and birthday parties, as well as conversations, giving rise to **Just Ask Us: A Conversation with First Nations Teenage Moms** (Sono Nis \$22.95).

*Just Ask Us* shares the experiences of teenage mothers facing a wide range of

issues that include sex, relationships, birth control, abortion, pornography, self-image, and parenting.

Currently building social housing for low income families, Sylvia Olsen was interviewed by **Sara Cassidy**.



**BCBW:** Are you Coast Salish by marriage?

**OLSEN:** I'm a status Indian by marriage. That's what the official thing is, but I'm from down the street, across the road, whatever it is.

**BCBW:** Is it a tension that confronts you daily, your cross-cultural existence?

**OLSEN:** Yes and no. I'm intellectually attached to it, not just experientially. I went to university and got a Masters

degree in the West Coast history of native-white relations. So now the burning questions in my mind are around that.

**BCBW:** In my experience, the separation between First Nations and non-First Nations is stark. It creates not just ignorance but allows for forgetfulness.

**OLSEN:** Yes, ignorance in the sense that we just don't know each other. That's the core of the problem. In Canada, we have set up two separate worlds, Them and Us. It serves political purposes for everyone, but in the big picture, as far as I'm concerned, it has not served either side well.

There are many, many mixed-blood children in this country. There are many more people with a mixed experience than this Us and Them separation would have us believe. I'm just a voice that says, if you want to talk stark separation—well, that's certainly part of the overall conversation. I, however, want to have the conversation that's happening in the middle. It's important in our country to have a look at where the coming-together happens.

**BCBW:** And you feel support for that viewpoint? Emphasizing exchange?

**OLSEN:** Oh, yeah. How do we learn about ourselves? By seeing ourselves in reference to others. That's the enrichment in life. As opposed to isolating ourselves and looking only from our own perspective. Some may disagree and I think disagreement is great! Let's just have a rich discussion instead of one that is afraid and making it up because we're not really being honest about ourselves.

**BCBW:** In my generation, there's some awareness of colonialism, but there's also



"There are many, many mixed-blood children in this country."

Sylvia Olsen with her daughter Heather and granddaughter Yetsa.



a reluctance to ask, to run the risk of re-violating. In a way, the title of your book, *Just Ask Us*, reflects that.

**OLSEN:** Yes. The young mothers said, *just ask us: if we want to know about each other, just ask us*.

**BCBW:** Why did you want *Just Ask Us* to be a community-based study and not scientific research?

**OLSEN:** Scientific method uses a lot of statistics and statistics are harsh. They haven't served us very well in this community. That is not the kind of discussion you want to have with young moms.

When you read statistics to young people around here, it's a very, very hard thing to hear. But another reason is because I really believe conversations are the best way for us to get to know ourselves and others. It's better than statistical analysis.

**BCBW:** But you do point out the context for their parenthood—poverty, experiences of abuse, high rates of drug and alcohol addiction, families deeply ruptured by residential schools.

**OLSEN:** For our community, we have all these plans and aspirations and yet re-building community is a very difficult chore when you have so many teenagers taken up with raising babies in a really difficult situation. The communities need the mothers so badly, because we're re-building broken-up communities.

**BCBW:** You quote Kim Anderson who notes that "when a people are under siege it is imperative to re-produce." But you also write of "a lag time" between the modern First Nations young mother and the cultural structure.

**OLSEN:** Yes. Like many of the Aboriginal women here, I didn't graduate from high school. I had my children, then went back to university. I am now working, like many of my peers, building community. Most of the strong women my age are out, they're doing health care, they're building houses, they're the community workers. And our children are having babies, and we aren't there, we're not there supporting. We're just not there. There are some empty spaces in our homes now. It's a difficult equation.

I would say, living in a First Nation community, there is more activity, more consciousness of making community, than there is anywhere else. There is huge thinking going into it, in every field. First Nations are working to capacity, they're maxing out. So young girls with their babies... it's out of season somehow. But there is a really, really strong feeling that we want every kid and

we have ambitions and plans for every child. That's really strong.

**BCBW:** How do you feel these days when you hear another teenager in your neighbourhood is pregnant?

**OLSEN:** Because I've been here a long time, I don't throw my hands up. I just know that that child can be fine if there is the support. It really is about the support the child and her mother get. But I do worry, because I know immediately that that girl is going to be in distress right away. And I want that child to have the same opportunities as other children.

When my daughter had her baby, I could see there were more things that could happen to set her back. In our family, the baby was able to be cared for very well, but a beautiful fourteen-year-old girl who is now a mother, who has to negotiate her way through the stigma and the stereotypes... well, the baby is going to depend so much on that mother, so it is im-

portant that the mother is supported and that she is on her feet. That baby's success depends on it. So we have to make sure the mother matures, that she doesn't get her maturation truncated.

**BCBW:** Are you generally a committed person by nature or does the community ask you to get involved?

**OLSEN:** It's the nature of me to attach to the burning social issues of where I am. I figured that out after a while. So when a person like me lives in a community that is so needy and where there are so many questions, there's no getting up and leaving. Because these are the burning questions of our country. These are Canada's questions. They aren't First Nations questions, they are questions that need to be addressed no matter who you are.

**BCBW:** Anything you'd like to add?

**OLSEN:** Yes. The answers to these problems are really, really simple. They're about communicating. Right from the start, if we communicate with our daughters and our sons and each other cross-culturally... if we have decent, mature, honest, tolerant conversations about the real subjects, rather than the extraneous junk, than we will either not have as many [babies born] or when we do we will cope with them. So, my big thing is, let's talk about things and talk about the stuff we don't like talking about... [laughter] I think that's my theory for everything!

*Sara Cassidy is a freelance writer and interviewer based in Victoria.*



## SYLVIA OLSEN BIBLIOGRAPHY

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**Catching Spring** (Orca, 2004) 1-55143-298-6

**White Girl** (Sono Nis, 2004) 1-55039-147-X

**Just Ask Us: A Conversation with First Nations Teenage Moms** (Sono Nis, 2005) 1-55039-152-6

**Murphy and the Mouse Trap** (Orca, 2005) 1-55143-344-3

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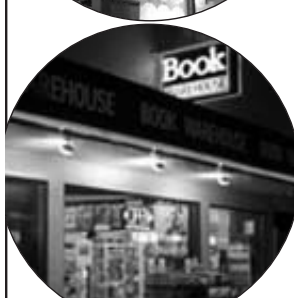
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