

There were 302 entries for this year's B.C. Book Prizes, capably hosted by **Bill Richardson**. For only the second time in 22 years, neither Douglas & McIntyre nor Harbour Publishing had a winning title.

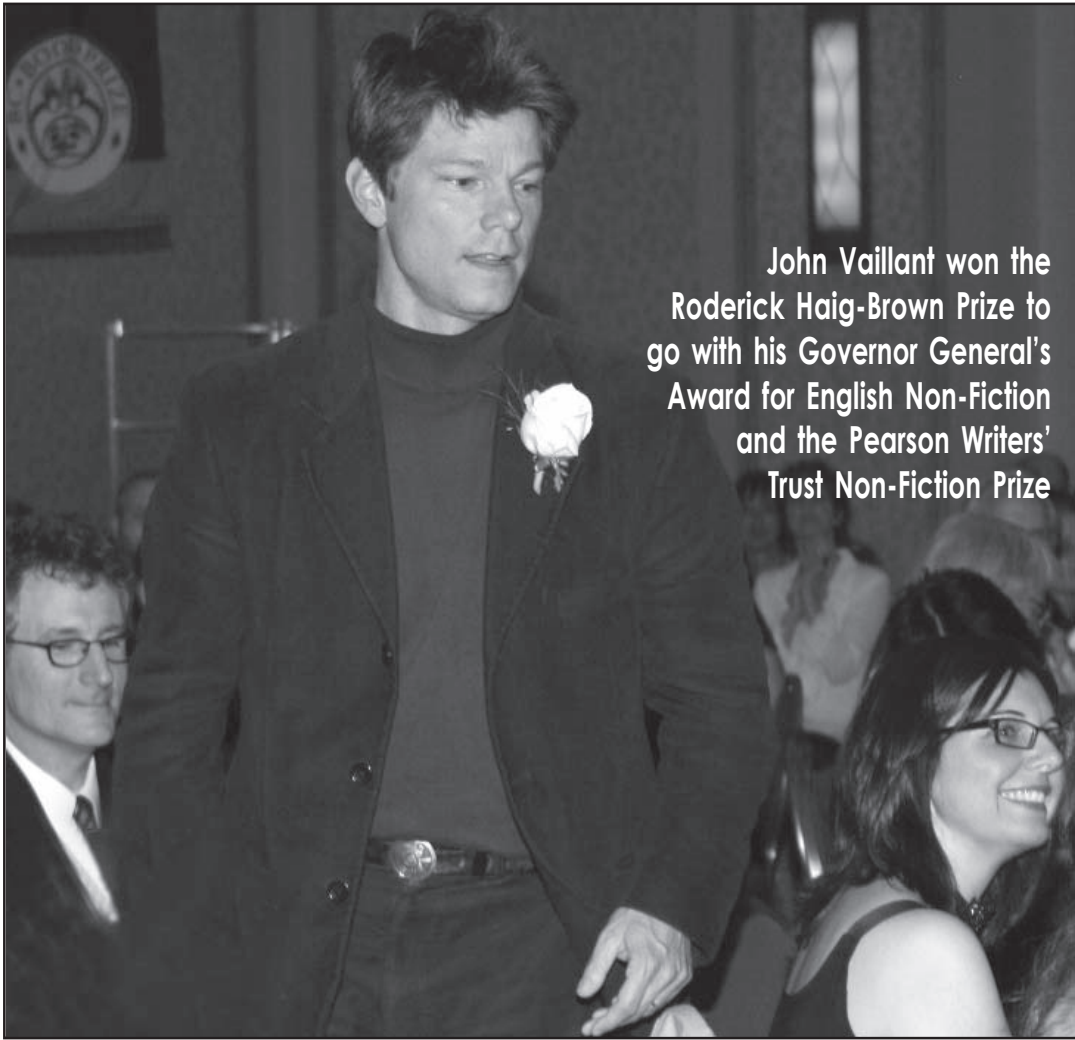
In the six categories for which books published outside of the province were eligible, the only homemade winner was **Stan Persky** for *The Short Version: An ABC Book* (New Star). Accepting the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize on behalf of Persky, who was in Berlin, his usually talkative publisher **Rolf Maurer** told an audience of nearly 400 people at the Marriott Pinnacle Hotel in Vancouver, “Gosh. I’m non-plussed.”

The best-crafted Book Prize acceptance speeches came from **John Vaillant** and **James Delgado**.

Delgado, co-recipient of the BC Booksellers’ Choice Award in Honour of Bill Duthie, for *Waterfront: The Illustrated Maritime Story of Greater Vancouver* (Stanton, Atkins & Dosil), recently announced his plans to resign as the Director of the Vancouver Maritime Museum, a position he has held since 1991. “In many ways *Waterfront* is the Maritime Museum I [had] hoped to build in this community,” he said, regretfully.

Vaillant picked up his third major prize of the year for *The Golden Spruce: A True Story of Myth, Madness and Greed* (Knopf), winner of the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize. “To be associated in any way with Roderick Haig-Brown is a great honour,” said Vaillant, “To have it recognized and received locally is the greatest honour I could receive.”

The smoothly-run affair included



BC BOOK PRIZES/SARAH MARTIN PHOTOS

John Vaillant won the Roderick Haig-Brown Prize to go with his Governor General's Award for English Non-Fiction and the Pearson Writers' Trust Non-Fiction Prize

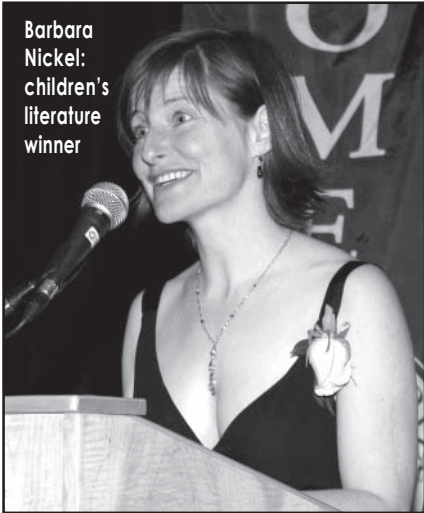


Charlotte Gill: fiction prize winner

more than its usual share of surprised winners.

“This is quite a shocking honour,” said **Tanya Lloyd Kyi**, winner of the Christie Harris Illustrated Children’s Literature Prize for *The Blue Jean Book: The Story Behind the Seams* (Annick Press). Her history of blue jeans for young readers was a project suggested to her by **Colleen MacMillan** of Annick Press.

“I’m quite humbled,” said



Barbara Nickel: children's literature winner

Barbara Nickel, accepting the Sheila A. Egoff Children’s Literature Prize for *Hannah Waters and the Daughter of Johann Sebastian Bach* (Penguin). Nickel acknowledged the influence of the UBC Creative Writing program and fellow writer **Rhea Tregabov**.

“Wow,” said **Charlotte Gill**, accepting the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize for *Ladykiller*, a short story collection that doubled as her thesis at the UBC Creative Writing program. “It’s amazing

how nervous one can be when they haven’t prepared anything.”

The shortest speech [non speech] came from **Meredith Quartermain**, winner of the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize for *Vancouver Walking* (NeWest Press). “I have nothing, even jotted down, to say,” she said.

Some of the best lines of the evening came from new Book Prizes president **Michael Hayward** who noted publishing “is a relatively slow way to make a fortune.”

Jack Hodgins ended the night on a high note, accepting the third Lieutenant Governor’s Award for Literary Excellence with a typically self-effacing view of his writing career, including a tribute to his wife of 45 years, Diane, “who, when I told her what I wanted to do with my life, she married me anyway.”

[Jack Hodgins’ speech is posted at www.abcbookworld.com under Hodgins].



COMING NEXT ISSUE...

Pearl Luke’s second novel, *Madame Zee* (HarperCollins \$32.95), invents a sympathetic character for the little-known mistress of Canada’s most remarkable cult leader, Edward Arthur Wilson, a.k.a. the Brother, XII, the shyster who charmed and terrorized his followers near Nanaimo



Pearl Luke

in the late 1920s and early 1930s. **John Oliphant** is re-publishing his definitive biography of the Brother, XII, and Luke’s novel will be reviewed by **Sheila Munro** in our next issue.

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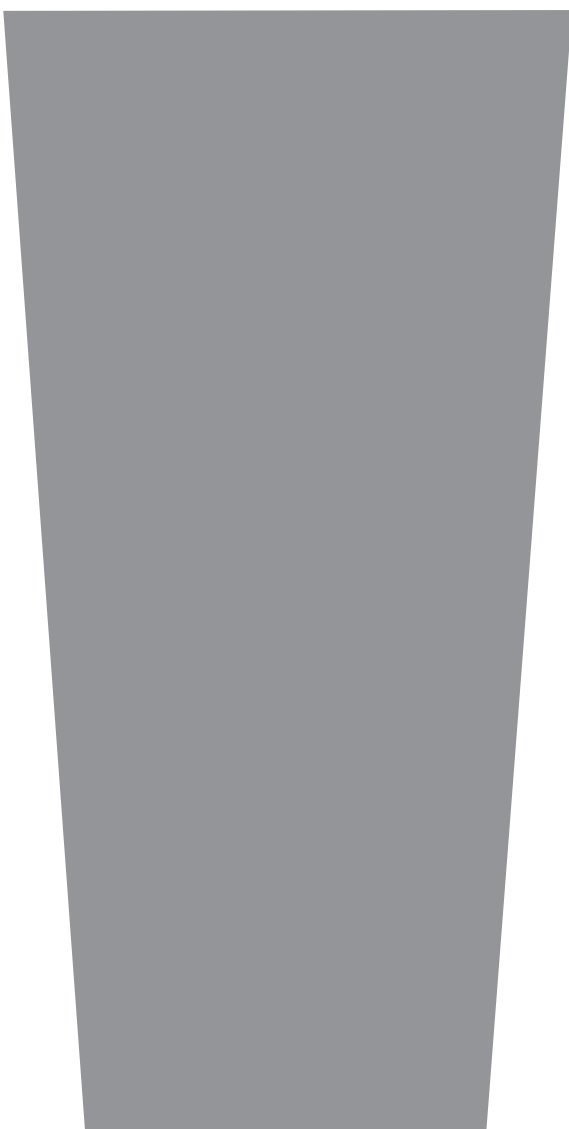
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PHOTOGRAPHY



Royal City

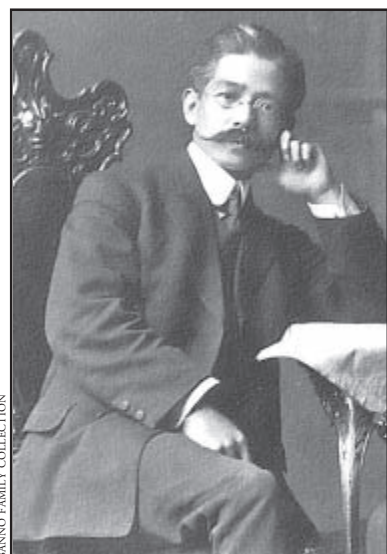
"Wait for me, Daddy." Best Picture of the Week in North America, 1940.

DOUBLE EXPOSED

JIM WOLF'S ROYAL CITY: A Photographic History of New Westminster (Heritage \$39.95) concentrates on resident professional photographers from 1858 to 1960, whereas **A New Westminster Album** (Dundurn \$29.99) by Gavin Hainsworth and Katherine Freund-Hainsworth has a broader, folksy mandate.

BOTH BOOKS INCLUDE THE FAMOUS "Wait For Me, Daddy" photograph taken on Eighth Street by *Daily Province* photographer Claude Dettloff—the one with five-year-old Warren Bernard reaching for his father's hand, running alongside a long column of soldiers, as his father, in uniform, reaches back. **SELECTED BY LIFE MAGAZINE AS "PICTURE OF THE WEEK"** in 1940, this iconic image ranks with the explosion of Ripple Rock, Malcolm Lowry with his gin bottle and Bannister/Landy's Miracle Mile as one the most-seen photos from B.C.

For *Royal City*, archivist Jim Wolf reproduces the hitherto unheralded works of pioneers **Frances George Claudet** (son of eminent photographer **Antoine Claudet**), as well as **F. Dally**, filmmaker **Hugh Norman Lidster, P.L.** **Okamura**, **Stephen Joseph Thompson**, **David Roby Judkins** and others. Works by **John Vanderpant** and **Horace G. Cox**, both subjects of previous books, are also included.



Paul Louis Okamura

Of these men, **Paul Louis Okamura**, originally named Tsunenjo Oyama, has perhaps the most remarkable storyline. Born in Tokyo in 1865, he was the second son of the last samurai in the Emperor's court. To avoid conscription, he was adopted into the Okamura family.

At age 26 he came to New Westminster and met Oblate Augustine Dontenwill who employed him as a Professor of Drawing for his St. Louis College and also St. Ann's Academy. Oyama converted to Catholicism and supplemented his income by drawing oil and crayon portraits based on photographs. He opened his first photography studio from his home on Royal Avenue in 1902 and remained working as a photographer until his death at age 72 in New Westminster.

Wolf's appendix provides a comprehensive list of New Westminster Photography Studios from 1858 to 1960 derived from the camera workers website of David Mattison, who is credited for his assist-

Ralph Richards "The Wizard" who gave him his first out-of-town work in 1927: a six-month tour that ended in Winnipeg.

Mandrake was twice married to his on-stage assistants; first Narda Mandrake from 1939 to 1946, then Velvet Mandrake or "Miss Velvet." The latter couple honed a two-hour magic show for nightclubs during the 1940s and 1950s.

Called 'the best-loved magician who ever sawed a woman in half,' the tuxedoed illusionist and ventriloquist was the inspiration for an unaffiliated comic strip, *Mandrake*, that ran for decades. Drawn by cartoonist Phil Davis and written by Lee Falk, this strip was created in 1934, in St. Louis, without Mandrake's prior consent or knowledge.

According to Mandrake's son Lon Mandrake, a science teacher in Delta, B.C. who also performs magic tricks, Falk claimed he had invented the name Mandrake the Magician coincidentally. When fact met fiction, Phil Davis drew



Mandrake the Magician takes a "Blindfold Drive" in 1958, courtesy of Trapp Motor's Buick & Pontiac.

ance, along with former New Westminster chief librarian Alan Woodland and reference librarian Joss Halverson.



A New Westminster Album is a grab-bag of populist history with sidebars that introduce the likes of the province's most famous magician, Mandrake.

Born "on the road" on April 11, 1911, in a small town in Washington State, Leon Mandrake was the son of two vaudeville entertainers. When his parents divorced two years later, his mother brought him to New Westminster to live with his aunt, Mildred Wagner, who worked at the post office and lived nearby at 307 Carnarvon Street in a house designed by Samuel Maclure in 1887 (and still one of the oldest heritage homes in New Westminster).

After his aunt gave him the Mysto Magic Kit, Mandrake practiced in a backyard shed, borrowed books from the library, watched magicians at the local Edison Theatre and attended circus shows at the Pacific National Exhibition. One year he was given the props and costumes of a magician who had left the show. He first performed on stage at the Edison Theatre at age eleven in 1922.

For the next five years the young illusionist appeared at the PNE as Mandrake the Magician. His mentors included Howard Thurston, Claude Alexander, Doc Verge, Bannister and

their character to resemble the real Mandrake. Both parties verbally agreed to cross-promote each other with the result that Mandrake the Magician became recognized throughout North America.

During his long career Mandrake entertained royalty and was compared to Houdini. Other Mandrake spin-offs included a television show, a movie and a novel. The ventriloquist Edgar Bergen made Mandrake three dummies for his stage shows.

Mandrake's publicity stunts were as notorious as his act. He was known for driving a car while blindfolded, hypnotizing a girl in a department store window, making great escapes from boxes and mind reading on the street. Leon and Velvet Mandrake retired to White Rock, B.C. after they quit performing in 1984, ending a 62-year showbiz career.

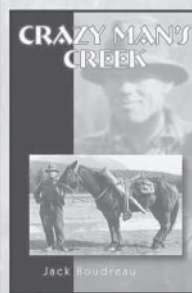
Mandrake Incomparable (Hades \$27.50) by Sheldon O'Connell is a wandering but appreciative biography that culminates in Leon Mandrake's death at Surrey Hospital on January 27, 1993. A wake was held at the old Edison Theatre in New Westminster, now the Paramount Theatre, the first place Mandrake worked his magic.

Album 1-55002-548-1; Royal City 1-894384-84-9

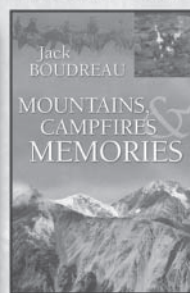
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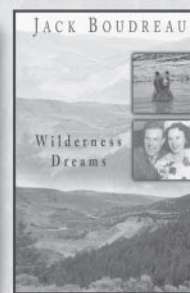
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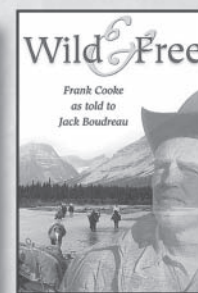
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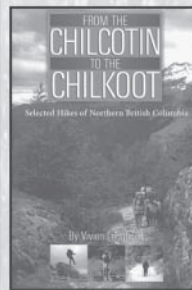


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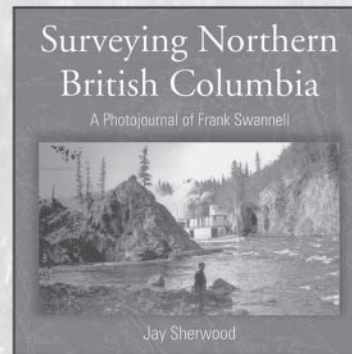


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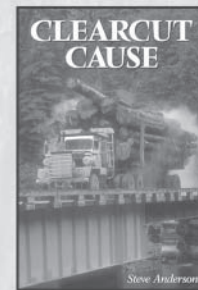
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DEFT PALETTE

Birds-I views from Harold Rhenisch

ostensibly about the avian behaviour of blackbirds, eagles, robins, martins, swallows, loons and the like, **Harold Rhenisch's** essays in **Winging Home: a palette of birds** (Brindle & Glass \$24.95), illustrated by **Tom Godin**, are also about the Cariboo and Rhenisch's poetic responses to it.

"The Cariboo is not a place, but a state of mind," he writes. "In the fall the rusted tangles of junk in the ranch yards among the jackpine and the alkali lakes are covered with the heart-shaped sulphur-yellow leaves of the trembling aspens."

The birds in *Winging Home* are clearly part of a master plan that Rhenisch figures out on a daily basis. "We are the new kids on the block," he says. "With our mammalian squeak and roar we are just learning the ropes."

Asked by a new neighbour where the heck the Cariboo begins, Rhenisch suggests it doesn't really start at Cache Creek. He suggests the Cariboo starts at the auto-wrecking yard just north of Hat Creek, with the collapsing fence, across from the cedar house that advertises worms and fishing information. There is no thought given to where it ends because it's endless. A sequel about wolves will appear in the fall.

1-897142-12-7



Harold Rhenisch

Harold Rhenisch

Not getting busted

Smuggling hashish in order to earn enough money to paint.

Elizabeth Woods'

first novel, *The Yellow Volkswagen*, published back in 1971 by Simon & Schuster, is hard to find. It's a lively, comic narrative by a woman named Tippy Peterson who mentions at the outset of her cross-Canada memoir that her outstanding features are forty inches of bust and a yellow Volkswagen.

Very much "of its time," it's an unusually non-prudish, zesty tale that culminates in marriage for the heroine after her amorous but not entirely satisfying adventures. Despite its tacky cover, this first novel remains noteworthy because it reflects some of the "on the road" experimentalism of the so-called Free Love generation from a woman's perspective.

Published 35 years later, Woods' new novel **Beyond the Pale** (Ekstasis \$21.95) concerns a middle-aged woman, Emily Quinn, who becomes involved in smuggling hashish in order to earn enough money to paint. Once again the struggle for self-expression puts the heroine in conflict with society.



Woods explains: "I lived for a year in Rochdale College [a Toronto haven for runaways and drug dealers in the early '70s], not too long before it was closed down. Other inmates of the place who were into dealing drugs on a fairly large scale used to tell me their stories—and the rest I made up.

"*Beyond the Pale* is not about drug smuggling per se; that's just the setting, just as Vancouver and California are settings. The book is about a person's relationship to the law, and to other people, and to oneself."

Born in Prince George in 1940, Elizabeth Rhett's Woods received her B.A. from UBC in 1961, followed by post-graduate work in psychology at Queen's University (1961-1962) and UBC (1964-1965). She has worked on copyright and freedom of expression issues and recently attempted to launch a literary periodical, the *Victoria Literary Times*.

1-894800-86-9



Elizabeth Woods

The tithe that binds

James Taylor's holy communion with the Red Cross

According to **James Taylor**, many Christians only expect to find God in a book or in a church. They put their faith in a straitjacket by looking backwards, no longer expecting God to surprise them.

"We treat God as a heavenly jukebox," he claims, "that can only repeat forever the same selection of pre-recorded tunes."

Taylor wants to download new tunes. He wants to encourage people to discover God outside of religious ceremonies. He wants people to notice God when they look at the stars, diaper a baby, play touch football or take out the garbage.

To expand the concept of theology—thinking about God—Taylor has collected a series of insights drawn from his day-to-day experiences for **An Everyday God** (Wood Lake \$19.95).

For instance, in *Blood Sacrifice* he writes:



James Taylor: God is everywhere

"When I look at it objectively, giving blood to the Red Cross ought to offer little pleasure. How many people enjoy being stabbed in a sensitive fingertip to get a drop of blood for testing? Or having a big needle stuck into a vein? Or watching their blood run into a plastic bag?

"And yet I have always found that after giving blood, my day is a little brighter. Giving blood makes me feel good.

"I suspect it has something to do with my ideals. It's a way to share my abundance with someone else.

"In one sense it's the ultimate gift. My blood, after all, is far more valuable to me than any gifts of time or money I can make. Time or money I can survive without—but not blood.

"My pint of blood comes close to the traditional 'tithe'—it's a fraction less than one-tenth of all the blood I have.

"But unlike money, I get nothing back for giving it, except a glass of juice or a cup of coffee. No receipts. No income-tax refunds.

"I know I'm giving it to someone who really needs my help. A beggar may use a phoney sob-story to cheat me out of money. But the person on the operating table, the victim of a traffic accident, the leukemia patient, is in no position to cheat anyone or anything—except death.

"I know too that my gift goes only to the person who needs it. Unlike money, none of it can be siphoned off by any intermediary for administrative or publicity expenses.

"And it's completely anonymous. I don't even have to cope with embarrassing 'Thank yous.' Or the even more embarrassing lack of them.

"I guess the biggest value for me is a kind of religious symbolism. At the last supper with the disciples, before being betrayed and nailed to the cross, Jesus said, 'This is my blood which is shed for you.' Church members hear those words each time and they share the sacrament of the last supper, whether they call it communion, Eucharist or Mass.

"So as I lie here on my back, donating to the Red Cross, I can't help feeling that giving blood is like a sacrament. It makes His words a lot more real than sipping wine or grape juice."



A former broadcaster, James Taylor became managing editor for the *United Church Observer* for 13 years, then co-founded Wood Lake Books with **Ralph Milton** in 1980. He lives in the Okanagan Valley, having published more than 15 books. He holds an honorary Doctor of Divinity from United College (McGill University).

1-55145-519-6

The outspoken geneticist-turned-broadcaster-turned environmentalist **David Suzuki** recently came in 5th in CBC's Greatest Canadian contest—the highest among living nominees. Born in Vancouver in 1936, David Suzuki grew up in Ontario after his family was interned in Slocan, B.C. during World War II.

Like many Japanese Canadians whose families had some or all of their holdings confiscated or sold, David Takayoshi Suzuki was embittered and emboldened by his unfair incarceration, seemingly intent on proving his worth to society beyond any doubt.

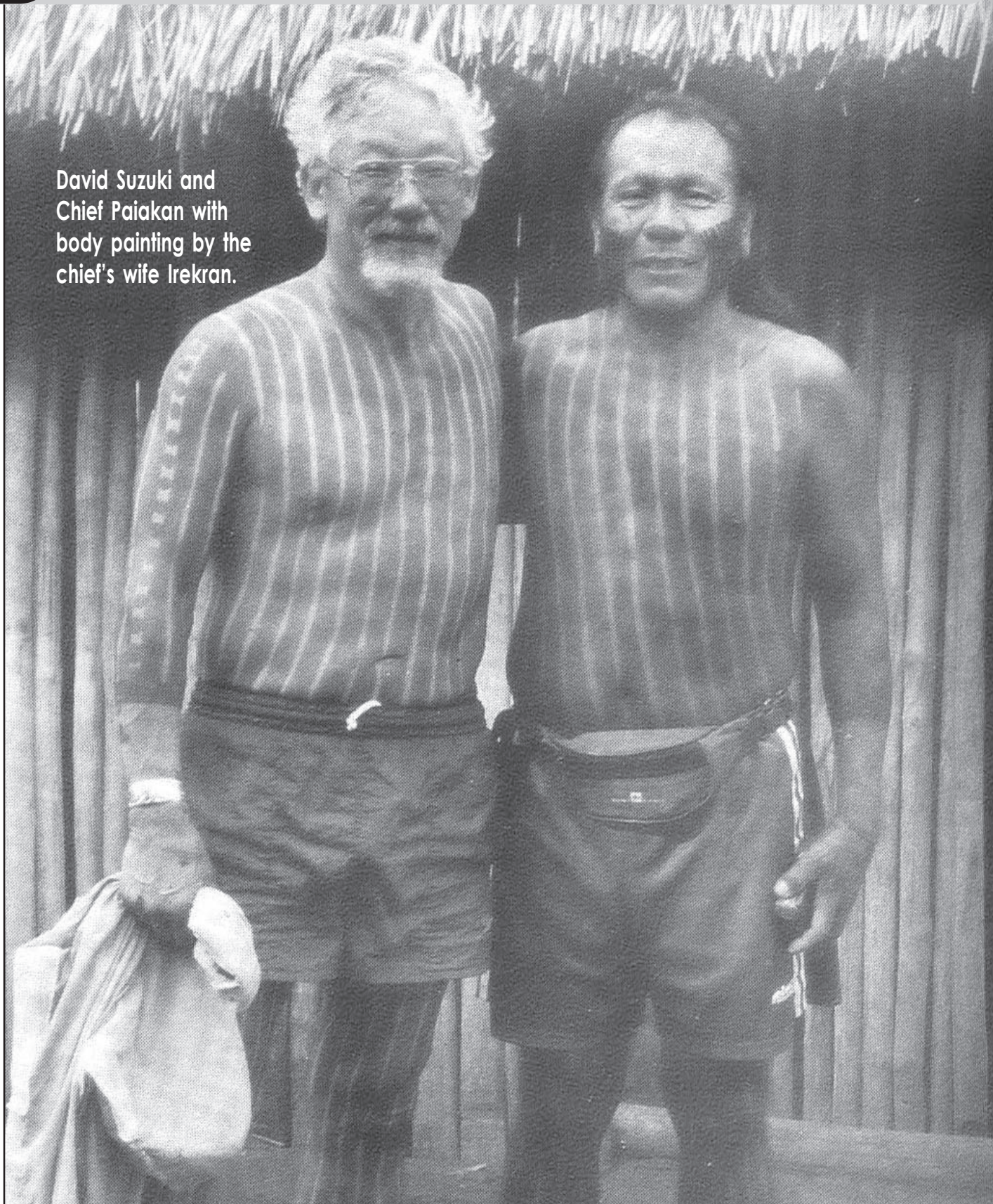
David Suzuki studied at Amherst College and the University of Chicago, then taught at the University of Alberta. In 1963 he joined the UBC zoology department and won the award for outstanding Canadian research scientist under the age of 35 three years in a row. His educational television programs started with *Suzuki on Science* in 1971, leading to his long association with *The Nature of Things* on CBC, as of 1979.

"When I began to work in television in 1962," he wrote, "I never dreamed that it would ultimately occupy most of my life and make me a celebrity in Canada." As well, Suzuki hosted *Science Magazine* on CBC TV and served as the first host of CBC Radio's *Quirks and Quarks* from 1975 to 1979. With his wife **Tara Cullis**, he has since co-founded the David Suzuki Foundation and received countless honours including the Order of Canada in 1977 and the Order of B.C. in 1995.

In his second volume of memoirs, Suzuki recalls how he proposed to his second wife, Tara, on Hollyburn Mountain in December of 1972. They have two daughters, Severn and Sarika. Suzuki also has three children, Tamiko, Troy and Laura, from a marriage that ended in 1964. "My children have been my pride and joy," he writes, "but getting Tara to marry me was the greatest achievement of my life."

Suzuki titled his first autobiography *Metamorphosis: Stages in a Life* (Stoddart) to echo his ground-breaking studies of mutations in fruit flies. **David Suzuki: The Autobiography** (Greystone \$34.95) is an updated second instalment, expanding on material

David Suzuki and Chief Paiakan with body painting by the chief's wife Irekran.



THE MAN WHO MADE SCIENCE SEXY

(SORT OF)

from *Metamorphosis* and covering his accomplishments after age fifty.

This breezy re-run doubles as a family photo album as Suzuki rubs shoulders with close friends **Myles Richardson** and artist **Guujaaw** of the Haida; entertainers **Bruno Gerussi**, **John Denver**, **Sting**, **Graham Greene** and **Gordon Lightfoot**; and he travels extensively to meet world leaders who have included **Nelson Mandela**, **Dalai Lama** and the Kaiapo chief **Paiakan** of the Amazon rainforest.

When Paiakan and his family paid a reciprocal visit to the Suzuki home in 1989, they refused to wear any western clothes that were not new, and they required new sheets, fearing diseases. The six-week visit was fraught with misunderstandings, including the misguided notion that an airplane would be purchased for their use in Brazil.

Remarkably, Suzuki contacted **Anita Roddick**, creator of the Body Shop empire, and she wrote a cheque for \$100,000. He then found a pilot named **Al "Jet" Johnson**, a friend

of Sea Shepherd Conservation Society founder **Paul Watson**, who checked out a used Cessna Utility 206 in Texas—then flew it to Brazil in hurricane season to ensure Suzuki kept a promise that he had never made in the first place.

Not without a sense of humour—or vanity—Suzuki includes the naked 'fig leaf' photo of himself for the "Phallacies" show for *The Nature of Things* and wryly recalls his meetings with heavyweight thinkers **Noam Chomsky** and **Ralph Nader**. Suzuki speaks fondly of Chomsky ("He is a superstar, and it was flattering to be acknowledged so generously") and re-tells a curious anecdote about Nader ("Ralph is a very serious and intense person").

When taken to a Lebanese restaurant in Vancouver, the puritanical Nader refused to acknowledge the gyrations of a belly dancer who approached his table, entreating him to stuff some bills into her bra. Nader kept talking, as if she didn't exist, until the dancer left the table, unable to engage his attention in any way.

"At the end of the meal," Suzuki writes, "as we got up to leave, Ralph made no mention of the belly dancer but simply said: 'That was a very nice meal. And no one over ate.'"

1-55365-156-1

Wilderness neophyte
SUNNY WRIGHT
describes how she
built a home near
Vanderhoof,
outwitted the RCMP
& fended off a gang
of drunken men in
her memoir,
To Touch A Dream.



Far from being a hippie, Sunny Wright yearned to get out of the rat race ever since she ran away from an orphanage at age 17.

In 1969, with no clear destination in mind, and six thousand dollars in the bank, Wright and her shy best friend Betty, a fellow millworker, quit their jobs, sold their possessions and drove north in two small import pickup trucks, accompanied by a dog and Sunny's five-year-old daughter, Lisa.

Intending to build their own cabin, they bought rifles, axes, saws, lanterns, hammers, canned goods and sleeping bags. Only trouble was, they had never even tried camping.

On the road almost a week, driving as far north as Dawson Creek, they gravitated back to Vanderhoof, exactly in the centre of the province. There, by a fluke, they stumbled upon a quarter-section of selectively logged land, sixteen miles northwest of Vanderhoof, which they bought for \$4,850.

Their new home became a two-room repair shed with hibernating flies—and not much else. “We managed to keep from freezing,” Wright recalls, “but just barely.”

They melted snow to get water. “Getting the wash took the entire day and, depending on the weather, could take up to a week to dry.”

To get Lisa to school in the mornings, Sunny had to thaw the truck engine and transmission by using two cake pans full of sand saturated with motor oil. One burning pan was placed under the engine with the other under the transmission.

✍️

Whereas the helpless and overtly feminine Blanche du Bois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* always relied on the kindness of strangers, decidedly non-girly Sunny & Betty relied on the kindness of neighbours.

Crotchety and reclusive Roy Walker, who lived four miles up the hill, turned out to be an angel of mercy in disguise, educating them on the realities of log cabin building and encouraging Sunny to shoot her first moose.

Jim Moon, at the building supply store, voluntarily bought all the lumber they needed, then delivered it to them in his truck, for a mere \$430.

A neighbour and his two sons helped with construction. Another friend helped Sunny operate a lucrative still, supplying bootlegged whisky to remote

logging camps, until Sunny could no longer tolerate the unsuccessful RCMP raids on her property. “I lay awake with the thoughts of going to jail and even losing custody of my daughter,” she writes.

The cops were not their worst nightmare. Late one night a truckload of drunken men arrived and threatened to rape them.

“There were twelve or fourteen of them, and they had us terrified as they circled the cabin, banging on the windows and the door while yelling at us. We three stood clinging to each other in the centre of the cabin, not knowing if the men would come at us through the only door or one of the windows. It was pitch dark outside but the moonlight made it possible for us to see their silhouettes as they passed by the windows.

“We had been silent in our shared

fear for what seemed like an awfully long time when Lisa, who had been holding onto my leg, in a soft trembling voice asked, ‘Mommy, what is going to happen? Are they going to hurt us?’ The fear I heard in my child’s question instantly changed my frame of mind from helpless victim to protective mother. Kneeling down to hug her, I whispered, ‘Don’t you worry, Lisa. They are not going to touch any of us.’

“I told Betty to lie down on the floor with Lisa and stay there. I crawled back across the room in the direction of the back window where our guns were stored in a cabinet. Feeling my way in the dark, I found the cabinet and searched the drawer under the guns until I felt the boxes of shells. As I was doing this, I could hear the men attacking our one and only door....

“Kneeling on the floor in the dark, I felt my whole body tremble as I care-

fully loaded fifteen shells into the .22 calibre semi-automatic rifle. When I stood up, I used the butt of the rifle to smash the window. I could see the outline of the white pickup truck and the shadowy outline of a few men, but nothing in detail.

“It was not my intention to kill anyone, so I shot into the air, letting go seven rounds in rapid fire. When I stopped shooting, everything was dead quiet for a moment. Then a loud voice from the direction of the truck shouted, ‘That was seven shots. Let’s go get ‘em!’ Obviously, they had assumed that I had fired all of my ammunition. They had no way of knowing that we had the latest model semi-automatic which held fifteen rounds.

“Bullet number eight was aimed directly at the voice, and now I was angry, rather than scared, and did not care if I killed one of them or not. All of us heard the shell hit the truck, and once again, there was complete silence. Into that silence, I yelled, ‘I am going to count to three, and then someone out there is going to die!’

“For the next few minutes there was a mad scramble as the men ran to get into the truck. We heard someone shout in a frightened voice for the driver to, ‘Hurry up and get the hell out of here.’ Once the truck started, it still had to be turned around, during which time I emptied the seven remaining shots in their general direction. A few hit the truck as it raced past the cabin and down the driveway

in a cloud of dust.

“We learned a very important lesson that night. A gun has absolutely no value unless it is loaded.”

✍️

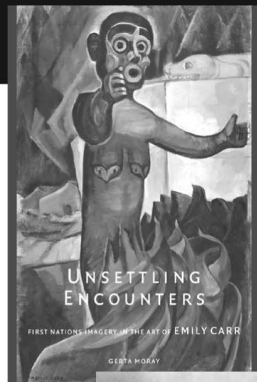
Wright confronted bears, skunks and pigs; rode skidoos, paddled canoes, ran a dog kennel, built a log home, learned dogsledding, faced breast and lymph cancer in her late 30s, and had a remarkable recovery after a radical mastectomy in Prince George.

Sunny Wright’s unfettered style isn’t going to get her confused with Bunny Wright, the late novelist, but it gets the job done.

A postscript: Sunny and Betty continued to raise Lisa together until Betty fell in love with a man from Fraser Lake and married him in 1979. After Lisa left to take a government forestry job, Sunny sold her dream home and moved to Sardis.

1-55380-035-4

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE PROVINCE



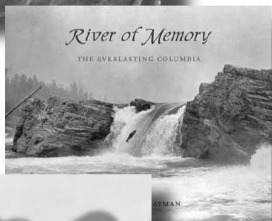
Unsettling Encounters

First Nations Imagery in the Art of Emily Carr

Gerta Moray

This beautifully illustrated book re-examines Carr's relationship with the First Nations of the Northwest.

June • 392 pp • 8.5 x 12"
200 b/w & 85 colour illustrations
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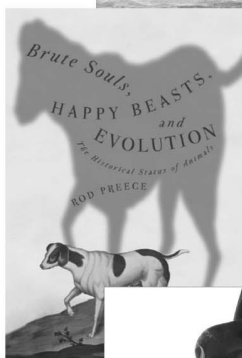
River of Memory

The Everlasting Columbia

William D. Layman

A richly illustrated photographic and literary tour of the Columbia River from its mouth to its source.

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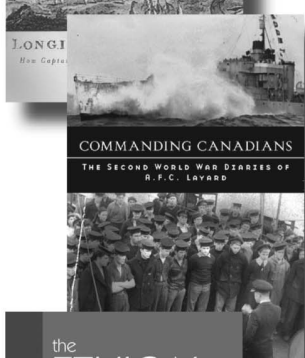
Every Inch a Woman

Phallic Possession, Femininity, and the Text

Carellin Brooks

A penetrating examination of phallic femininity in contemporary culture.

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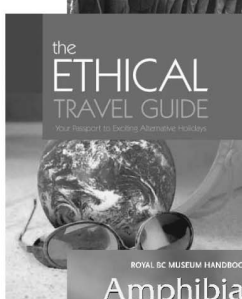
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How Captain Cook's Voyages Changed the World

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Commanding Canadians

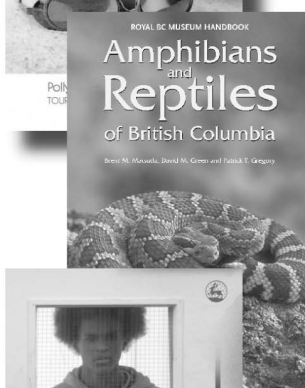
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Michael Whitby

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STUDIES IN CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY



Prisoners of the Home Front

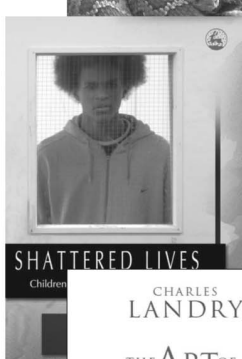
German POWs and "Enemy Aliens" in Southern Quebec, 1940-46

Martin Auger

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STUDIES IN CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY



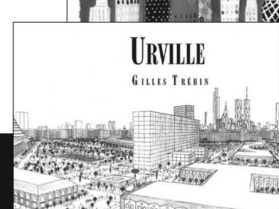
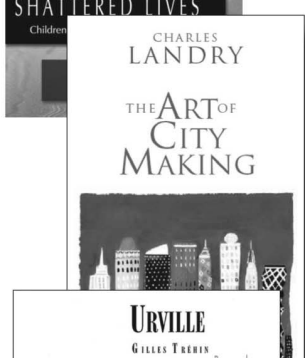
Journey to the Ice Age

Discovering an Ancient World

Peter L. Storck

This multiple award-winning book is now in paper.

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0-7748-1029-7 • pb \$29.95



The Ethical Travel Guide

Your Passport to Exciting Alternative Holidays

Polly Patullo for Tourism Concern

The essential resource for the socially responsible traveller lists destinations in over 60 countries.

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1-84407-321-1 • pb 24.95
EARTHSCAN PUBLISHERS

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Emily Carr

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ROYAL BRITISH COLUMBIA MUSEUM

Amphibians and Reptiles of British Columbia

Royal BC Museum Handbook

Brent M. Matsuda, David M. Green and Patrick T. Gregory

This handbook describes 22 species of amphibians and 17 species of reptiles known to live in BC.

Available • 272 pages • 5.5 x 8.5"
b/w illustrations, colour photos
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ROYAL BRITISH COLUMBIA MUSEUM

Sleeping Around

The Bed from Antiquity to Now

Annie Carlano and Bobbie Sumberg

An informative, entertaining, and richly illustrated look at the history of beds and sleeping.

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140 colour illustrations
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UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS

Fables of La Fontaine

Illustrated

Edited by Koren G. Christofides

Sixty-five fables by Jean de la Fontaine, with beautiful illustrations commissioned from artists from around the globe.

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UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS

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Charles Landry

Examines urban life in an age of complexity, showing how cultural imagination and creativity can be used to make cities more successful.

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EARTHSCAN PUBLISHERS

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Gilles Tréhin

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JESSICA KINGSLEY PUBLISHERS

Shattered Lives

Children Who Live With Courage and Dignity

Camilla Batmanghelidjh

Shattered Lives bears witness to the lives of children who have experienced abuse and neglect, and highlights the effects of these traumatic episodes.

July • 176 pp • 6 x 9"
1-84310-434-2 • pb 24.95
JESSICA KINGSLEY PUBLISHERS

Google-me up

It seems that no matter what I am researching on Google, your website [abcbookworld] inevitably seems to crop up in connection with some subject related to B.C. Now this morning I came across a link to a very gracious bio of myself and a list of my books.

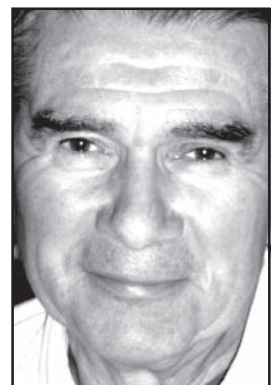
Although I already had many novels to my credit in South Africa, I could never have made it as an unknown author, in country new to me, without your encouragement for my first non-fiction book about a strange disease, hitherto unknown to most people. Now I have my twentieth book in print. Thank you.

Marie Warder

Richmond

Retro grade

A friend has forwarded Michael M'Gonigle's review of Hugh Johnston's *Radical Campus* [BCBW Spring]. She thought I'd be interested in the photo of me holding a megaphone speaking to a SFU student rally. I'd be more satisfied to have been interviewed for Johnston's book.



Jim Harding

M'Gonigle comments that *Radical Campus* is more a biography of SFU than an analysis of the larger context. Without the context, the institutional record will inevitably remain superficial.

Johnston arguing that support for the pursuit of everyday democracy in the university was undermined by our bottom-up militancy, as M'Gonigle reports, simply doesn't adequately grapple with the roots of the unfolding crisis and conflict.

Those interested in some unedited words from the evolution of SFU's activism and the larger context might be interested in my *Student Radicalism and National Liberation: Essays on the "New Left" Revolt in Canada - 1964-74* (2006). These essays show the role of the anti-war and community organizing movements as precursors to the student movement, and how our activism opposing the continentalist "higher education industry" (M'Gonigle's good phrase) helped spawn the Canadian nationalist consciousness.

I believe that M'Gonigle may be right that the war on Iraq is setting the stage for a renewed student movement which again makes the "radical connections."

Jim Harding

Fort Qu'Appelle

[Jim Harding's other books are *After Iraq: War, Imperialism and Democracy* (Fernwood, 2004) and *Social Justice and Social Policy* (Wilfrid Laurier, 1995)—Ed.]

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Growing up around the pocket deserts near Oliver, B.C. George Bowering figures the warm weather in spring helps to explain his very Canadian passion for baseball.

"I never thought that baseball was a U.S. game," he writes in *Baseball Love* (Talonbooks \$17.95). "It was a birth-right. In the Okanagan sun you got your baseball stuff out as soon as the ground got softer in, say, March, and you played the summer game till apple season was over in October."

In Oliver, Bowering worked as a baseball scorekeeper and covered baseball for the local newspaper—he didn't play much baseball though. "I was afraid to try out," writes Bowering. "I had an inferiority complex, and I had developed a superiority complex to protect it."

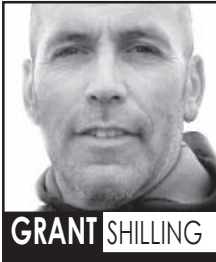
It wasn't until he reached his thirties that Bowering began to play baseball in Montreal where he was a teacher "of sorts" at George Williams University and attended Parc Jarry to watch Le Grand Orange and les Expos. Bowering's baseball teammates included novelists Clark Blaise and Hugh Hood whom he enjoyed swapping sports trivia with.

Fortunately drug testing was not around in those days. "As an *avant-garde* poet, I felt it my duty to experiment with the available resources... One Saturday I played shortstop for the York Street Tigers shortly after consuming something called "speed." ...You never saw such a hyper shortstop. I was all over the field diving for balls I had no hope of reaching, backing up the play at every position you can think of."

In the early '70s Bowering moved to Vancouver and became involved in his grand passion, the Kosmic Baseball League. The league was loaded with artists and writers and true to form they managed to get a grant during the swinging era of Trudeau's Liberals for softball equipment and playing time on baseball diamonds. "That, I thought, was wonderful—some civil servants in Ottawa thought a bunch of softball players were contributing as much to the local and national culture as any childcare builders or folk-music-facilitators."

The league included teams with names such as the Afghani Oil Kings, Flying Dildos, and the Napoleons, an activist group who represented the Mental Patients Association and dressed in uniforms complete with an image of a hand tucked inside at waist level. Bowering played for the Granville Grange Zephyrs, a collection of poets and painters from the west side of Vancouver.

Eventually the Kosmic League would evolve into the Twilight League where Bowering "grew old." At "Needle Park" in Woodland chasing balls between dog kaka, discarded condoms, high heel pumps and undies, outfielders had to keep their eye on the ball *and* the grass. At the age of sixty Bowering stopped



GRANT SHILLING

playing in shorts after his daughter, playing at second base asked: "Are those your legs, or are you riding a chicken?"

In July of 2003, riding in a Volvo, Bowering went on a baseball road trip with his new love Jean Baird to plunk himself down on planks in the hot sun, to cheer on the efforts of Latino-American infielders a half century younger than he. As "a retiree in shorts and ball cap," Bowering recalls his passion for a game he has rarely written about but "thought about every day of my life." The

new book *Baseball Love* alternates between chapters recalling that 2003 road trip and Bowering's life in baseball and its related ephemera.

Bowering and Baird travel through Canada and the United States with a distinct preference for the minor leagues. As Bowering notes: "In the twenty-first century the minor leagues are becoming more interesting to everyone. The main reason for that is marketing: the major league teams are marketing them-

selves out of business, and the minor league teams are marketing themselves in."

The baseball road trip also provides the reader with Bowering's own Air-Conditioned Nightmare. "We did not know that Riggins, Idaho, would be our first and last site of any idiosyncratic colour, our last old cabin in the wild, or last non-chain accommodation. From now on it would be Comfort Inn or Red Roof or Holiday Inn Express at some highway exit cluster, where the eateries, too, would be signaled by tall poles with billboards on the top: Aries, Red Robin, McDonalds. Not an apostrophe in sight."

Baseball, and writers have had a long relationship, William Carlos Williams, Walt Whitman, Philip Roth, Ring Lardner and Bernard Malamud, have all taken swings at the bat and Bowering's chapter on the subject is a neat job of baseball crit lit. Bowering provides one theory as to why baseball occupies the mind of the writer: "When I was a kid growing up in the Interior of British Columbia there was no television, so Mel

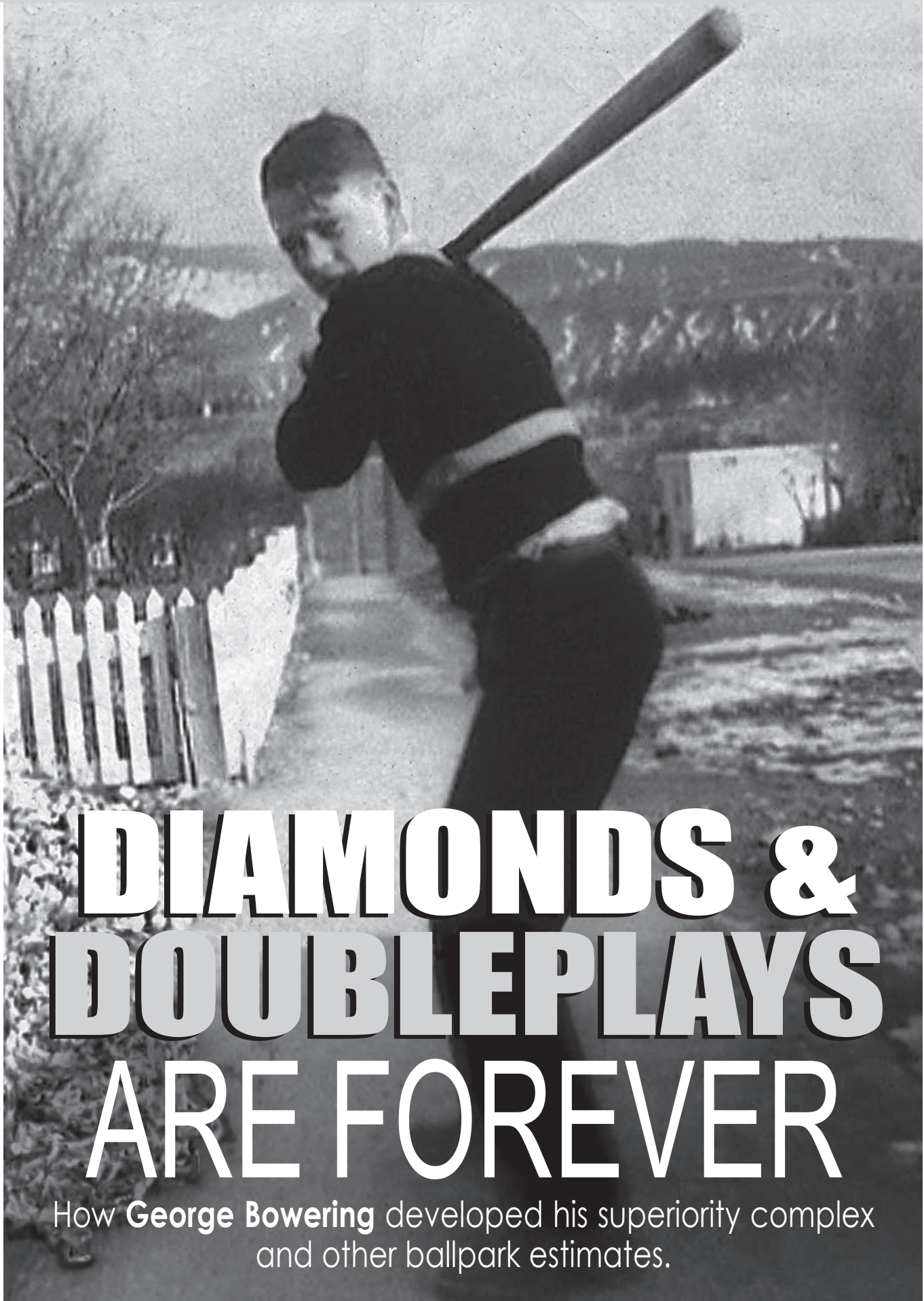
Parnell and the guys at Fenway Park were fiction to me."

This is a charming book about one man's love of baseball, and exhibits the same even and humorous tone that Bowering employed in his memoir *Magpie Life*. Bowering displays all the hallmarks of a baseball fanatic's love of ball caps, statistics, names of players, minor league parks and where to find the perfect hot dog (which he claims he had at a ball game in Switzerland of all places).

What makes this book *hummm, baby*—to remember a phrase from Roger Craig, the manager of the San Francisco Giants, pronouncing on the forkball—is its rootedness in place as real as apple picking season and as sweet as the imagination.

0-88922-529-X

*Many innings ago Grant Shilling published the zine **Baseball Complete with Spelling Errors** and covered the Vancouver Canadians for the **Georgia Straight** and **Vancouver Magazine**.*



WOMEN OF ICE

For three decades the glaciers of the St. Elias Mountains—the world's largest non-polar icefields—kept creeping into the stories **Julie Cruikshank** was hearing from elderly Aboriginal women in the southern Yukon and northern B.C.



"It was a big puzzle to me," she says, "The women kept talking about glaciers as being part of their social world."

According to Tlingit and Tagish storytellers, not only do glaciers have names and take on human characteristics, they can be quick to respond to human indiscretions or be placated by quick-witted responses.

In *Do Glaciers Listen?* (UBC Press \$29.95), Cruikshank chronicles the entanglement of natural and cultural histories pertaining to icy remnants of the last Ice Age.

Subtitled *Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters and Social Imagination*, Cruikshank's sixth book investigates encounters with glaciers, weaving indigenous oral traditions, early explorers' tales and the work of modern scientists and environmentalists.

Whereas Aboriginals have long 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.

As she gathered more stories from her three main informants—**Angela Sidney**, **Kitty Smith** and **Annie Ned**—Cruikshank began to better understand how a landscape can be sentient and responsive.

"You have to be aware and pay attention," she says, "because the landscape is in turn paying attention to the people who are living there."

Cruikshank first came to the Yukon from Ontario in the late 1960s, arriving in Whitehorse to document the impact of the Gold Rush and the Alaska Highway on the lives of Yukon women.

Eventually Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith, and Annie Ned—all born before

Folly such as cooking with grease near a glacier, or making careless remarks could cause unforgiving glaciers to react.



Angela Sidney and Julie Cruikshank in 1992

"There is a difference," said Annie Ned (photographed near her home in 1987), "between listening to and listening for stories."

the turn of the 20th century—asked Cruikshank to record the chronicles of their ancestors, as recorded in *Life Lived Like A Story*.

"There is no doubting the authenticity of the voices," wrote reviewer **Barry Broadfoot**. "As women, they had power and they used it wisely, and through their words and Cruikshank's skills, you will change your mind if you think the anthropological approach to oral history can only be dull.

"As Angela Sidney says, 'I have no money to leave to my grandchildren. My stories are my wealth.'"

As Cruikshank produced her books over a 30-year period, the trio of elders kept returning to glaciers in their storytelling. When she asked them why this was so, even though they no longer lived near the icy mountain ranges, they suggested the reasons were self-evident.

Intrigued, Cruikshank decided she must visit the icebergs herself. She

learned that in Kitty Smith's grandparents' lifetime, the Lowell Glacier, (locally called Nalüdi or "fish stop") surged until a 200-metre ice wall blocked the river. When the dam broke, the water burst forth with such force that villages were washed away and the landscape was scoured.

Massive icefields surrounding the Alsek River, near the area where Mrs. Smith was born, surged as much as a kilometre at a time.

Although scientists can measure these phenomena and can tell us how many times a particular glacier has surged over a 2800-year period, the women Cruikshank interviewed speculated on human reasons for the upheavals.

In *Do Glaciers Listen?* Cruikshank speculates as to whether or not the stories that are the most difficult to understand

are the ones being left out of the mainstream discourse.

"We need to understand the range of stories associated with a particular place," she says. "It may help us think more broadly about these places we classify as wilderness or park."

In particular, Cruikshank explores the period when Aboriginal people were forced to move out of what is now Kluane National Park.

In 1943, after the building of the Alaska Highway, the area was protected because over-hunting had impacted the wildlife in the area. A UNESCO World Heritage site now encompasses the Canadian and American national, provincial and state parks in the area.

New discoveries are being made in melting ice patches, which are helping bring together the stories and timelines around human use of the area.

Aboriginals now organize culture camps on their territory, inviting scientists and archaeologists to come and discuss the work they do, but Julie Cruikshank suggests that although environmentalists and others may be genuinely

interested in Aboriginal points of view, the importance of Aboriginal stories tends to get set aside.

She hopes her book will become an argument for the importance of connecting the different stories from different cultures.

0774811870

Heather Ramsay writes from Queen Charlotte City.

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

UVic law professor Michael M'Gonigle holds the EcoResearch Chair at the University of Victoria and directs the POLIS Project on Ecological Governance. Justine Starke is a POLIS research associate studying for her MA in planning.

IS THE UNIVERSITY UNFOLDING AS IT SHOULD?

People get ready, there's a "sustainable campuses movement" coming.

According to **Planet U: Sustaining the World, Reinventing the University** (New Society \$23.95), a sustainable campuses movement could soon transform the modern university from an ecologically destructive, corporate patsy into an innovative leader in environmental and social stewardship.

To make their point, co-authors **Michael M'Gonigle** and **Justine Starke** have compiled a boldly idealistic vision of the university, outlining its evolution as an institution and delving into the tenets of bioregionalism (ie. local food production, alternative transportation, democratic governing structures).

Of the ninety oldest institutions in the world, seventy-five are universities.

But while the university's lineage reaches back over 900 years, "its role is still not well understood, its functions usually just taken for granted, its social role and potential unappreciated."

Universities have been booming since World War II, and their impact on industry and the economy is substantial. Last year, over a million students were registered in Canadian universities.

University research sustained a million jobs and contributed more to Canada's GDP than the pulp and paper or

automotive industries. The University of Victoria, with a relatively small student population of 18,000, employs over four thousand people, and its economic impact on Victoria, a city of just 300,000, is \$1.7 billion.

UBC is the province's largest employer and has an economic impact of \$4.6 billion. The University of Toronto is said to have an economic impact in its region larger than the GDP of Prince Edward Island.

Far removed from its religious origins, the university is stuck in what **Jane Jacobs** calls "credentialism"—the process of producing employees rather than reflective citizens. Two-thirds of new jobs created by 2008 will require post-secondary education and already over half of the population between 25 and 54 have post-secondary degrees. Their training shapes the way we live.

In 1996, more than half of the US

\$100 billion gross domestic product of the Silicon Valley economy came from companies started by Stanford graduates and faculty.



Drawing on **James Kunstler's** ideas in *The Geography of Nowhere*, the authors of *Planet U* note that "at the university, *nowhere* is evident in the spiraling acres of parking lots filled with mass-produced cars, the cafeteria food delivered via an exclusive servicing contract with a nameless multinational, and the standard-issue buildings heated and lit by energy from the void."

Students engage superficially with the built and natural environments and their "community" has no historical context or collective power.

By greening infrastructure, as well as uncovering local history, the campus becomes "re-embedded": the university settles in to its place and this place has value; travelling the globe for conferences no longer signals importance. Paradoxically, the dream university becomes "planetary"—connected with the planet's health and with other universities—by becoming highly localized.

In *Planet U*, the authors trace the history of the land beneath UVic, con-

cluding that, like many other North American universities, it arose from colonial displacement of First Nations and the sacrifice of farmland to "suburbanism."

Planet U introduces a host of sustainability thinkers. One is biologist and environmentalist **Briony Penn**: "In biology, there is increasing emphasis on microbiology and genetics; I get fourth-year biology students who can't tell the difference between a red cedar and a Douglas fir."

The magic of re-embedding is that it opens the "pedagogy of place." Penn continues: "If place becomes an actual place, then everything is pedagogy. Every decision made on that landscape affects a particular commitment to sustainability, and this will change how people learn because it's going to affect everything they do... That value system now affects how they see the world."

Planet U ranges between the theoretical and the pragmatic, between Derrida to the U-Pass (the bus pass students automatically receive at upward of fifty universities, whether they drive a car or not).

The planetary university of the future draws on its internal expertise and is vigorously "transdisciplinary." Already at UVic, faculty and students collaborate with Facilities Management to identify and map exotic plants for removal from the campus's native Garry oak meadow.

Rich with photographs, cartoons, and pithy quotes, *Planet U* would make an excellent textbook to promote discussion—but don't keep your fingers crossed.

Planet U identifies the biggest stumbling blocks to change are the university's own hierarchical structure and bureaucratic inertia.

Universities, as an industry, have a lot to answer to, according to *Planet U*, starting with our battered environment.

"We cannot have a sustainable world where universities promote unsustainability," write Starke and M'Gonigle, chair of Greenpeace Canada. 0-86571-557-2

Sara Cassidy writes—and attends university in—Victoria.

The times they are a-getting cost-effective.

- The University of California has mandated a zero increase in fossil fuel consumption and all new buildings must exceed the state's energy efficiency standard by 20 per cent.
- The University of Victoria recycles water, has installed permeable paving for groundwater recharge, and composts food waste from campus cafeterias.
- SFU has designed UniverCity with traffic-calmed streets and a network of bike paths.
- Installing energy efficient toilets and light and water fixtures saved Columbia University nearly \$3 million annually.
- The University of Colorado-Boulder provides 35 to 40 percent of the energy consumed by three of its buildings with wind power.
- UBC's Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability has been developed to produce more energy than it uses.
- Some universities are serving local food in the cafeteria. Others have adopted "sprawl containment" policies and communal "blue bicycle" programs. Dozens have "sustainability officers" and one has a "no species loss" policy.



SARA CASSIDY

END PAPER S

A is for Abebooks

Abebooks is marking its tenth anniversary as one of the world’s most successful search engines for book sales, competing for most sales with Amazon. Founded by Rick and Vivian Pura, and Keith and Cathy Waters, the Victoria-based company provides a virtual inventory of 80 million volumes from 13,000 independent booksellers in 53 countries. ABE employs 90 people and has branch operations in Spain, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

B is for Bolan

Having received a Courage in Journalism award in 1999 for her coverage of the Air-India terrorism story, *Vancouver Sun* reporter **Kim Bolan** was commissioned to write *Loss of Faith: How The Air-India Bombers Got Away With Murder* (M&S \$36.99) following the acquittal of Sikh leaders Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajaib Singh Bagri in 2005. The trial of the two chief suspects in Vancouver revealed that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service had destroyed taped telephone calls between the suspects in connection with the detonation of two bombs, on opposite sides of the globe, within an hour of each other, on two flights emanating from Vancouver on June 23, 1985, killing 329 men, women and children overall.

C is for Cutler

Kamloops-born **Laura L. Cutler** examines the emotional lives of female characters, including a lounge singer, a divorcee and an aging stripper, to reveal how much each woman has risked being viewed as maladjusted in *This Side of Bonkers* (Turnstone \$17.95), her third story collection.

D is for Dawe

Fringe Festival theatre performer **TJ Dawe** has followed the texts for his humorous one-man shows, *Labrador* and *The Slip-Knot* with *The Power of Ignorance* (Brindle & Glass \$19.95), a send-up of the self-help genre featuring Vaguen, Master Ignoramus, co-written with Chris Gibbs of Toronto.

E is for Egoff

The B.C. Book Prizes paid a final tribute to the late **Sheila A. Egoff**, the children’s librarian and critic whose motto was, “the right book, for the right child, at the right time.” A mentor of Bill Richardson and her protégé Judith Saltman, Egoff once told Saltman, “Writing is the only thing that lasts.”



Sheila Egoff



Kim Bolan visited the Punjab five times during the 20 years she investigated the Air India bombers, despite receiving several death threats. She will appear at this year’s Festival of the Written Arts in Sechelt. Bolan’s book has been nominated for the \$15,000 Writers’ Trust of Canada’s Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing.

F is for Fischer

Eastern Canadian photographer **George Fischer** offers a pictorial book called *Haïda Gwaii / Queen Charlotte Islands: Land of Mountains, Mist and Myth* (Nimbus \$29.95) with text by Andrew Merilees.

G is for Goldfarb

Set in Manchester during the Victorian era, **Sheldon Goldfarb**’s first novel *Remember, Remember* (UKA Press \$18.50) has been shortlisted for an Arthur Ellis award for best Canadian juvenile mystery. With a doctorate in Victorian literature, Goldfarb, a former UBC English professor is now archivist for the UBC Alma Mater Society.

H is for Hayes

This year’s deserving winner of the province’s most venerable book prize, the Lieutenant Governor’s Medal for Historical Writing, presented since 1983, is the indefatigable map enthusiast **Derek Hayes** for his *Historical Atlas of Vancouver and the Lower Fraser Valley* (D&M \$49.95).

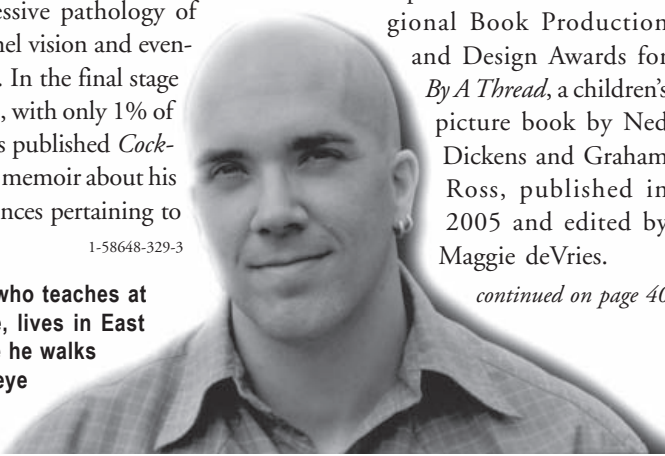
J is for Jaccard

A former chair of the BC Utilities Commission, SFU’s **Mark Jaccard** has received the \$35,000 Donner Prize for *Sustainable Fossil Fuels: The Unusual Suspect in the Quest for Clean and Enduring Energy* (Cambridge Press \$33.95). He argues that fossil fuels can continue as a key energy source because the technological capability exists to use them without emitting pollutants.

K is for Knighton

On his eighteenth birthday, **Ryan Knighton** was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa (RP), a congenital disease marked by a progressive pathology of night-blindness, tunnel vision and eventually total blindness. In the final stage before total blindness, with only 1% of his visual field, he has published *Cock-eyed* (Penguin \$25), a memoir about his thoughts and experiences pertaining to his loss of sight.

Ryan Knighton, who teaches at Capilano College, lives in East Vancouver where he walks with his seeing-eye pug, Cairo.



L is for Lander



Tim Lander

A penny whistle-playing street poet, **Tim Lander** has published numerous chapbooks and a volume of poetry with Ekstasis Editions prior to his new release, *Inappropriate Behaviour* (Broken Jaw Press \$19). Gentle, thoughtful and articulate, he has remained an important presence on the West Coast poetry scene for several decades, mostly based in Nanaimo.

M is for Marlatt

Born in Melbourne in 1941, **Daphne Marlatt** grew up in Malaysia and immigrated to Canada in 1951. After writing prose narratives about Steveston and her Strathcona neighbourhood, and numerous collections of poetry, most recently *This Tremor Love Is* (Talonbooks 2001), and a novel that has been widely adopted for university curriculae, *Ana Historic*, she has been appointed to the Order of Canada.

N is for Needham



Chris F. Needham

Having worked as a bouncer, bartender, forklift driver, computer technician and magazine editor, Vancouver’s **Chris F. Needham** has self-published a first novel about an ex-hockey enforcer, Billy Purdy, whose violent on-ice career was “prolonged by steroids and numbed by liquor.” *An Inverted Sort of Prayer* (Now or Never Publishing \$21.95) is Needham’s attempt to represent “the alienation, frustration, and ultimate futility behind this quintessential Canadian dream.”

0-9739558-0-5. [See abcbookworld.com for info.]

O is for O’Rourke

Lynn O’Rourke, art director at Victoria-based Orca Book Publishers, has won first place in the Western Regional Book Production and Design Awards for *By A Thread*, a children’s picture book by Ned Dickens and Graham Ross, published in 2005 and edited by Maggie deVries.

continued on page 40

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Tariq Malik Rainsongs of Kotli Stories

ISBN 1-894770-15-3

Rainsongs of Kotli

By Tariq Malik

Set in the romantic Himalayan valleys, amidst the breathtaking mountain snowmelts and the monsoon rainstorms, these beautifully told and haunting stories explore the lives and the longings and memories of the Lohar people of Kotli.

"This is a memorable, deeply felt and frequently amusing debut, full of lively conversation and sure-handed narratives. Lovely stuff."
Alan Twigg, BC BookWorld

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Author website: www.tariqmalik.net
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PUBLISHED BY NEW STAR BOOKS

The Short Version
an ABC book
Stan Persky

ENDPAPERS

P is for Plecas

Based on interviews with former Premier Bill Bennett and others in his Social Credit administration, **Bob Plecas' Bill Bennett: A Mandarin's View** (D&M \$22.95) provides an insider's view of the enigmatic son of W.A.C. Bennett, focusing upon Bennett the Younger's ten years in power. A civil servant under 25 cabinet ministers and six premiers, Plecas later represented the B.C. forest industry in softwood lumber negotiations with the United States.

1-55365-177-4

R is for Robson

Having worked on the *Encyclopedia of B.C.* and provided a history of tugboating, affable outdoorsman and *Pacific Yachting* editor **Peter Robson** has gathered evidence for a positive view of aquaculture in *Salmon Farming: The Whole Story* (Heritage \$19.95).

1-894974-07-7

S is for Stanley

The Shelley Memorial Award of more than \$3,500, established by the will of the late Mary P. Sears, is given to a living American poet selected with reference to genius and need. It has been awarded to **George Stanley** of Vancouver. Born in San Francisco in 1934,



George Stanley

Stanley grew up in San Francisco where he became associated with the writing circle of Jack Spicer. Stanley came to Canada in 1971 and taught for many years in Terrace.



Orca Books' founder Bob Tyrrell (centre) with Andrew Wooldridge and Susan Adamson.

T is for Tyrrell

On behalf of his Orca Books imprint and its new co-owner Andrew Wooldridge, and employees such as former editor Susan Adamson, publisher **Bob Tyrrell** accepted the Jim Douglas Publisher of the Year Award from the Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia for their series of titles for reluctant readers, Orca Soundings. Presenting the award, Jim Douglas cited his late great Toronto peers when he said, "If Jack McClelland and John Gray could see the list of Orca Books they would be gobsmacked!"

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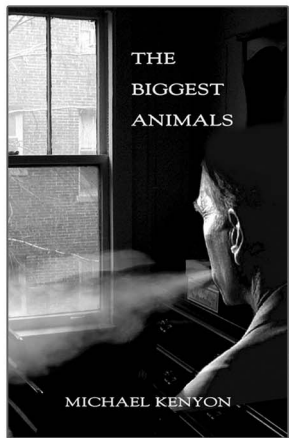
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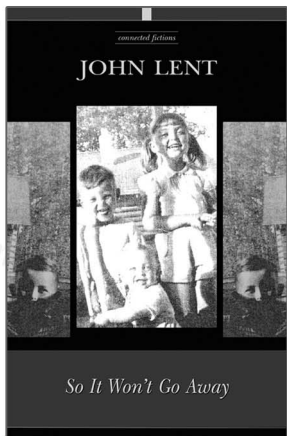


THE BIGGEST ANIMALS
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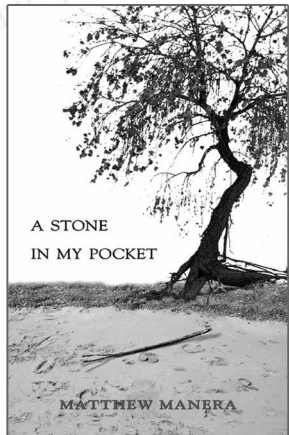
— *Globe & Mail*



SO IT WON'T GO AWAY
John Lent
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A STONE IN MY POCKET
Matthew Manera
ISBN 1-897235-03-8 \$19.95

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U is for You

You. Who just might want to know that there are more than 8,000 B.C.-related authors included at www.abcbookworld.com, but only 20 have surnames beginning with the letter U.

V is for Vassilopoulos or Vipond

Peter Vassilopoulos' *Gulf Islands Cruising Guide* (Pacific Marine Publishing \$46.95) includes marinas and anchorages from Sooke (west of Victoria) to Comox and the southern and northern Gulf Islands in between. **Anne Vipond's** column 'Anne's Gunkholes' premiered in *Pacific Yachting* in 1992 and ran for 13 years. Co-authored with her husband Bill Kelly, their *Best Anchorages of the Inside Passage* (Ocean Cruise Guides \$44.95) highlights more than 200 anchorages with more than 120 maps and 450 colour photographs.

Vassil. 0-919317-38-3; Vipond 0-9697991-7-9 See abcbookworld.com for details.

W is for Walker



Kate Walker

Picking up her Gray Campbell Distinguished Service Award for contributions to the B.C. book community, book sales rep **Kate Walker**, of Kate Walker & Co., stressed the cooperative nature of the industry. "It's just amazing how many people it takes to get a book into someone's hands," she said.

X marks the Spot

According to **Robert C. Belyk** in *Ghosts: True Tales of Eerie Encounters* (Heritage \$17.95) there was a ghost at 98 East Pender Street in the Mandarin Gardens restaurant since the 1930s. Belyk cites dozens of alleged ghost visitations throughout B.C. in his fourth book on the subject.

1-894898-45-1

Y is for Yorath

For those of us who don't know our graptolite from a jokulhlaup, **Chris Yorath** introduces the geology of Banff and Yoho National Parks in *How Old is That Mountain?* (Harbour \$24.95), his fourth book.

1-55017-390-1



Tsawwassen's Bill Kelly and Anne Vipond moor their Spencer 35 sloop Sway on the Fraser River.

Z is for Zoltan, twice

Both born in Hungary, **Zoltan S. Kiss**, a prominent architect who designed SFU's Academic Quadrangle (not Arthur Erickson), and **Zoltan J. Kokai-Kunn**, a prominent Vancouver engineer, have separately self-published *Without A Blueprint* and *The Divine Spark* respectively. The former recalls Kiss' forced exodus to southeast Germany in the winter of 1944-1945, and his eventual arrival in Denmark in 1945 and Vancouver in 1950. The latter records Kokai-Kunn's thoughts on major religions and their leading prophets. See abcbookworld.com for details.

Blueprint 0-9738361-0-5; Spark 0-533-15140-6

OBIT

Rudy Vrba made history after he escaped from Auschwitz in 1942 and provided estimates of how many Jews were being murdered in his 32-page Vrba-Wexler Report. His memoirs were published 21 years later as *I Cannot Forgive*. Of



Rudy Vrba, B.C.'s most heroic author, addressed the BC Book Prizes gala in 2001. For a full obituary: www.abcbookworld.com

the five people who succeeded in escaping from Auschwitz, he was the most prominent. For the rest of his days he was obliged to defend himself against all manner of nutbars and cranks who wanted to deny the Holocaust.

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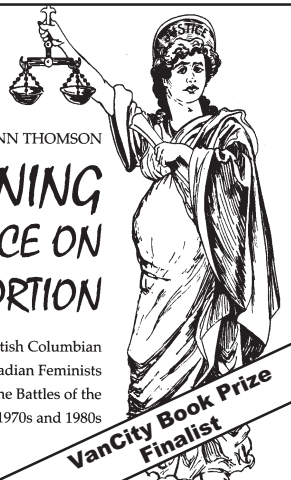
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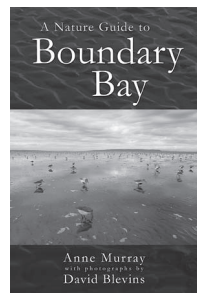
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MONET'S TRIO

Jazz singer
John Lent
recites
the foibles of a
voracious god

John Lent of Vernon has also released a new jazz trio CD, *Shadow Moon*, with guitarists Neil Fraser and Shelby Wall.

BY CHERIE THIESSEN

So It Won't Go Away by John Lent
(ThistleDown \$16.95)

The gluttonous, jazz-loving character of Neil Connelly in **John Lent's** *So It Won't Go Away* can never get enough out of life, no matter how much he over-indulges his desires:

"Drinking, smoking, sex: a man's hands twittering, eyes bugged out in a desperate longing to be held, fondled, stuffed, stroked. Guzzling and inhaling things in a big grab against death."

At the same time, John Lent can't get enough of Neil Connelly and his two siblings, Jane and Rick. Nine years ago he introduced this trio in *Monet's Garden*.

Time has not been kind to the Connellys. In Lent's seventh book, the middle-aged and childless Connellys are all ex-alcoholics struggling with feelings of inadequacy and depression.

They have survived their alcoholic father but it's not clear if they will survive themselves—and their disturbing similarities to one another.

All three find it hard to be intimate. All have addictive personalities. All have a keen interest in modern art and literature.

All three are writers who teach about writing.

Neil Connelly loves jazz and Lent is himself a singer/songwriter for an Okanagan jazz trio. Neil and Rick teach at the same university where John Lent teaches much the same courses.

If that last paragraph sets off an amber light of caution, well, you're only human. Philip Roth aside, most fiction writers who can only write about writers (ie., themselves) are sorely lacking imagination.

But in John Lent's defence, he's had time to refine his style and hone in on what's important to him.

The short stories in *So It Won't Go Away* are not plot-driven narratives. Instead they flip around in time, place and point of view, incorporating first, second and third-person perspectives.

Lent's dozen stories get as close to three-dimensional writing as is possi-

ble. Sometimes the reader is taken into a character's mind as a child, sometimes she/he is addressed directly. Other times Lent interjects directly, positioning his characters like a conductor.

Frequently the act of creation itself is explored, be it music, art or literature.



Cumulatively, this collection is more than a series of literary experiments and musings. It's like John Lent is circling his narrative, studying it from all angles.

Each story connects to others. Along the way we learn about Jane's inability to find a permanent partner. We learn about Rick's long-term marriage to a woman battling lupus. We learn about Neil's break-up with his wife and his own subsequent breakdown.

It's not cut-and-dried. Instead it's all jumbled together, like a family that messily combines past and present and future at the dinner table.

Along the way, Colette, the 71-year-old mother of the three Connellys, maintains her own balancing act:

"...it was a matter of two landscapes: the one they were driving through, and another one, of words and names and instructions, that became a second version of the

one they were driving through—a landscape of language and facts and details which she would store away and pull out whenever she needed it—one that was, in some ways, the most important landscape, the most real."

Her three children come together in an idyllic village in France at the end, and their deep affection for one another could well be the remedy they need to help resolve their problems.

The narrator muses, hopefully: "Was there another way of seeing it so you could fall into it, embrace it...gobbled up by an equally voracious God?"

Meanwhile, there's nothing wrong with filling your lungs with spring air, devouring a tarte flambé, slurping down a good scotch, jamming jazz into your ear or fitting your body to another's in an act of love.

If the shoe fits, write it. 1-894345-86-X

Cherie Thiessen reviews fiction from Pender Island.

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(Harbour, 1982)

Frieze

(ThistleDown, 1984)

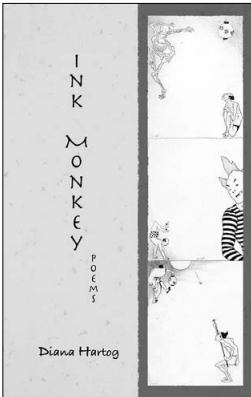
The Face in the Garden
(ThistleDown, 1990)

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(ThistleDown, 1996)

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(Greenboathouse, 2000)

So It Won't Go Away
(ThistleDown, 2005)

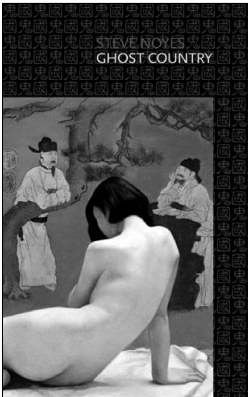
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Ink Monkey
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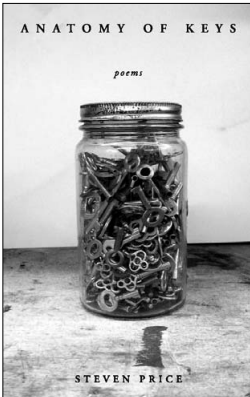


Ghost Country
by Steve Noyes

"*Ghost Country* is not so much a book of poetry as the range-finder of an exquisite camera, in which two worlds merge to form a single, rich vision. To read this book is to walk into this vision, to breathe its air, to speak its language."

— Terence Young

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Anatomy of Keys
by Steven Price

"Steven Price... draws us into the intricacy of Harry Houdini's character, as the Master himself entered trunks, chains, a web of knots. In poem after poem, there is the miraculous surprise of release. These are moving, brilliant poems, a remarkable debut." — Tim Lilburn

1-894078-51-9 • \$18

DEM BONES, DEM BONES

Ron Chudley's pick-up lines lead from crime to reconciliation.

BY CHERIE THIESSEN

Old Bones by Ron Chudley
(TouchWood Editions \$12.95)

Old Bones begins when a teenager finds the ruins of a very old pick-up truck in Christina Lake.

After half-a-century, water levels of the lake have dropped to reveal the wreck. Curious and excited, the boy named Rudy swims out to investigate.

Inside the vehicle he finds old bones.

Old Bones is called a mystery on its front cover, but New Zealand-born scriptwriter and first-time novelist **Ron Chudley** says he doesn't really write mysteries.

"It appears that the publishing business always needs to categorize," he says. "All I wanted to do was write a tale about a group of people interacting with each other."

The local police officer, Jack, investigates the bones. He can't find any record of a missing person in the area from fifty years ago but Jack's partner, Margie, has a childhood memory of an old farm...

Jack plays a hunch and checks with an elderly couple who have lived in the town for most of their lives.

They, in turn, recall a school girl from long ago. Jack and Margie track her down and she reveals the identity of the skeleton, but not the full story behind why it's there.

Jack becomes further enmeshed in a mystery when a gardener named Emily discovers more bones on her own property.

Jack's own origins as an adopted child enter the picture. Plus there's a gay couple, Joseph and Ray, who become integral to the plot.

So Old Bones is what might be described as fusion fiction. There's murder, morality, coincidences, love and redemption. It's as much about reconciliation as it is about crime.



There aren't any 'bad guys' in this story. Much of the narration is philosophical, or romantic, but Old Bones is fueled by Gothic elements.

The 'skeleton' angle arose from a newspaper article that Chudley read years ago, very similar to the one that starts the book.

Chudley admits he's "constitutionally incapable" of not trying for some mystery and suspense.



Ron Chudley

Chudley's world is a moral one, where family is important, resolutions are available and answers can be found.

Readers who love the "deus ex machina" devices of Greek plays and the mistaken identity intrigues of Elizabethan comedy, will find it easy to fall between these covers.

Others will have difficulty accepting the deliberately colossal coincidences.

"In the end, telling stories is what it's all about," says Chudley. "I just want to tell them about folks and situations that interest me."

"As to classifying it as a mystery—if that is an inducement to have my work read, then so be it."

1-894898-33-8

Cherie Thiessen reviews fiction from Pender Island.

EX MARKS THE SPOT

The Next Ex: A Madeline Carter Mystery by Linda L. Richards (MIRA \$8.50)

In Linda L. Richards' second paperback crime novel, **The Next Ex: A Madeline Carter Mystery**, former stockbroker-turned-day-trader Madeline Carter agrees to teach the indulged wife of an A-list movie producer about the stock market.

When the first wife turns up dead, Madeline finds herself in the middle of a series of murders while inadvertently opening up a 40-year-old cold case.

While the first two books in Richards' series take place mainly in Los Angeles, the third book, *Calculated Loss*, will be set in Vancouver.

0-7783-2240-8

ALSO RECEIVED



Chris Bullock & Kay Stewart

A Deadly Little List by Kay Stewart & Chris Bullock (NeWest Press \$11.95) 1-896300-95-2

White Stone Day: A Victorian Thriller by John MacLachlan Gray (Random House \$34.95) 0-679-31174-2

Crooked Lake by Nelson Brunanski (Caronol Publishing \$19.95) 0-9739121-0-3

Luck: A Bill Shmata Mystery by Dave Carpenter (Great Plains \$19.95) 1-894283-62-7

Seaweed on the Street by Stanley Evans (Touchwood Editions \$12.95) 1-894898-34-6



Linda L. Richards

DAVID MIDDLETON PHOTO

Advance Praise for Chris F. Needham's

An Inverted Sort of Prayer

"Intriguing . . . A **hard-driving** plot." *Vancouver Sun*
"Brilliant . . . Chuck Palahniuk without the minimalist style.
 A book that is **uniquely Canadian.**" *OnceWritten.com*
 "A satisfying and **thought-provoking** read. If you want to
see the literary envelope pushed,
 I definitely recommend it." *Allbooks Reviews*

"... the best debut by a novelist this year."

Cut loose at the end of a long and violent hockey career prolonged by steroids and numbed by liquor, ex-enforcer Billy Purdy discovers that the soon-to-be-published novel of a celebrated politician's son is in fact Billy's father's own, taken word for word from the original published, and promptly forgotten, some forty years before. Allowing the ruse to continue, and in an effort to distance himself from his violent past, Purdy embarks upon an exotic, oftentimes absurd adventure in an attempt to reinvent himself in what he envisions to be a more cerebral and civilized image, in a world he has never fully been a part of, or developed the necessary tools to properly inhabit. Yearning for connection of any kind, yet seemingly unable to sustain it for any length of time, Billy Purdy comes to symbolize the alienation, frustration, and ultimate futility behind this quintessential Canadian dream.

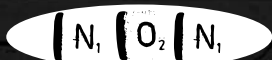
An inverted Sort of prayer

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Theatre in British Columbia

edited by
Ginny Ratsoy



Theatre in British Columbia edited by Ginny Ratsoy

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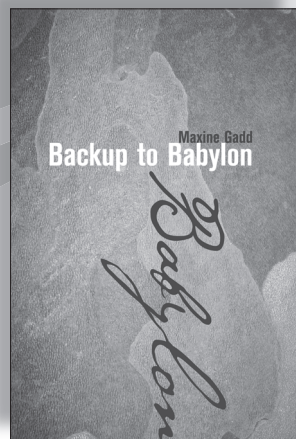
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DOMINICAN DOMINOES

J.B. MacKinnon meets generals who remember how to smile—and little else.

BY SHANE MCCUNE
Dead Man in Paradise by J.B. MacKinnon (D&M \$22.95)

In June 1965, after U.S. Marines helped to quash a popular revolt against a military junta in the Dominican Republic, **J.B. MacKinnon's** uncle Arthur MacKinnon, a Catholic missionary known as "Padre Arturo," was found shot to death in the village of Monte Plata along with the bodies of two policemen.

Those who inspected the Canadian priest's body described an arc of bullet wounds, probably from a machine-gun, below his thorax, and what appeared to be a single pistol shot at the rear of his jaw. A young soldier claimed to have shot all three in the course of a gun battle.

Some 40 years later, as a young journalist from Vancouver, J.B. MacKinnon went to the Dominican Republic to investigate his uncle's death. The result, *Dead Man in Paradise*, has earned the 2006 Charles Taylor Prize for literary non-fiction.



Dead Man in Paradise has been described as murder mystery, political thriller, and travelogue—qualities it shares with the best fiction of Graham Greene who once said of a doomed protagonist that he "entered the territory of lies without a passport for return."

Although Greene's novel about Caribbean corruption and brutality, *The Comedians*, was set in the other half of Hispaniola, in Haiti, it's fair to say both MacKinnons entered much the same territory when they reached the Dominican Republic.

Of course we know which of the MacKinnons returned, but there is palpable tension in his dual narratives as he shifts back and forth between a first-person account of his quest for truth and a reconstruction of his uncle's final days.

At the outset, MacKinnon has trouble explaining exactly why he felt compelled to trace the final steps of a relative who died before he was born. His insistence at the conclusion that "I am too late for his church, but I have, at

least, come closer to his faith" is not entirely convincing.

No matter; it's not about MacKinnon. Though he is necessarily omnipresent in the contemporary side of the story, he is an unassuming narrator, observant and generous in attention to the Dominicans, friend and foe alike.

As one would expect from an award-winning travel writer, MacKinnon also offers sharply drawn impressions of the land itself, from city to swamp to mountain to beach. Early on there are a few clunky, overwrought passages, such as one in which he steps from a bus into "the fire that consumes heaven and earth from the moment the sun shoulders over the horizon."

But he finds his footing:

"From the churning belly of the old city I climb the hill to the lawns of the National Palace, the pink dome washed with sunlight like a shell thrown into the sky. Within a few blocks



Missionary Arthur MacKinnon was killed 41 years ago.

the city slumps back toward decay, its sidewalks jumbled and broken, the gutters piled with plastic and paper, funerary mounds of lime heaped over the road-killed dogs. At the edge of a plaza of dying trees, encoiled in an inner-city freeway, I stand once again in front of the offices recommended to me by General Brea Garó. Somewhere inside, someone knows exactly where and how to find José Ernesto Cruz Brea, but the building is a monument to hopelessness."



Inside he meets yet another unhelpful bureaucrat who "has forgotten how to smile." The generals he meets, on the other hand, remember how to smile—and little else.

"I do not remember the unfortunate things. I prefer to remember the good," General Cruz Brea tells MacKinnon, as he tinkers with a model of Sir Francis Drake's ship, the *Golden Hind*, and rhapsodizes over his favourite novel, *Les Misérables*. This from a man widely believed to have orchestrated army purges, assassinations and cover-ups.

It's a tribute to MacKinnon's storytelling skills that his part of the story, largely a litany of stonewalling, evasions and missed connections, moves as briskly as his flashbacks to Padre Arturo's murder.

MacKinnon also conveys the air of intrigue and paranoia that still pervades even sleepy villages, where one doesn't know who might be a leftist,

who might be an agent of landowners, who might be the son or daughter of someone who killed one's father or mother.

One quibble: Given the recent fuss over fictive "memoirs" by James Frey and others, it's hard not to raise an eyebrow at the high dose of direct quotation in *Dead Man*. In his notes and acknowledgments MacKinnon says the reconstructions of his uncle's last days are all based on "documentation or recollections." Fair enough, but what of his own conversations? MacKinnon admits his Spanish is less than fluent, but insists *all* interviews were recorded and vetted by native Spanish-speakers. Perhaps he used a hidden microphone; it's hard to imagine that some of the generals who dodged interviews for weeks would open up in the presence of a tape recorder.



There is some comic relief in *Dead Man* in the form of dubious characters such as "Charlie," a seemingly helpful character MacKinnon meets at police headquarters. He arranges a rendezvous at a computer centre to hack information about a police officer who investigated the killings—only to announce that he doesn't have the password. Charlie might be a fool, a spy or, as one of MacKinnon's friends warns, both.

On more than one occasion MacKinnon is tripped up by names. Is it General Fernandez-Hernandez or General Hernandez-Fernandez? Searching for anyone related to the soldier who supposedly confessed to the killings, he is directed to three towns called La Cuaba. There is a map at the front of the book and a chronology at the back, but with so many characters, so many names and places, an index would have been helpful.

Without giving away too much, it's fair to say MacKinnon doesn't tie up every loose end of his uncle's death, but he learns more about the priest's calling and his own beliefs (or non-belief). Along the way there are insights into vengeance and forgiveness, the passions and patience of the poor and the ease with which some men can lie to themselves.

MacKinnon also delivers a potted history of the Dominican Republic, its three decades in the grip of Rafael Trujillo, the turmoil that followed his assassination and the invasion ordered by U.S. President Lyndon Johnson, down to Johnson's dismissal of the Organization of American States as an entity that "couldn't pour piss out of a boot if the instructions were written on the heel."

A generation earlier, Franklin Roosevelt, the most liberal U.S. president of the 20th century, had supposedly defended his support for Trujillo by remarking, "He's an SOB, but he's *our* SOB." 1-55365-138-3

Shane McCune is a freelance journalist on the Sunshine Coast.

James MacKinnon has won the \$25,000 Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction for his memoir about searching for clues to a relative's death in the Dominican Republic.

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

DEMOCRACY AT THE GRASSROOTS

Local yokels versus the provincial yoke—a century of haggling in British Columbia

Union of British Columbia Municipalities:
The First Century (UBCM / Granville
Island Publishing \$49.95)

According to *Union of British Columbia Municipalities: The First Century*, municipal governments were initially listed somewhere “between asylums and saloons” in the 1867 Constitution Act.

Although they had responsibilities beyond their means—such as providing road, water and sewer services, managing



MARK FORSYTHE

schools and hospitals, and helping the poor—local governments in British Columbia had little say over how services and social programs functioned, or were funded.

The combined voice of the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) has done much over the last hundred years to alter this paternalistic relationship with “senior governments.” It has lobbied hard to earn a little respect, and the cash to go along with it.

That’s the gist of *The First Century*, a history co-written by Wendy Bancroft, Harmony Folz, Richard Taylor and Marie Crawford.



Born out of frustration at the 1905 Dominion Fair in New Westminster, the UBCM was largely the brainchild of Kamloops Mayor Charles Stevens who spearheaded a group that launched the UBCM with 22 member municipalities. Eventually a Royal Commission was able to pry a few concessions from the province with a revised Municipal Act in 1914.

The First Century overflows with arcana sure to please students of governance, such as the 1913 resolution on Family Support that demanded Canada and the province provide a “sat-



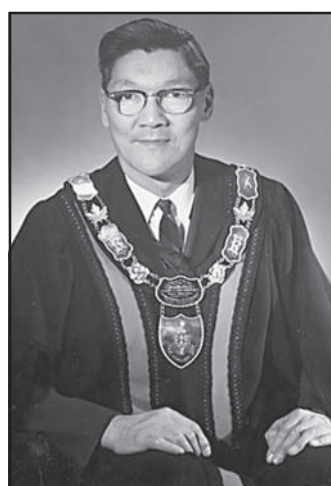
Municipalities couldn't easily enforce Prohibition as these Silverton locals demonstrate by posing with liquor bottles.

isfactory way of maintaining the wives and children of persons who desert their families.” It also slammed those “who drank their money away.”

In 1920 there was a resolution to enable fire trucks to go faster than 15 mph, but only when responding to a fire. In 1969, when land was rapidly being scooped up for urban development, Richmond put forth a resolution to create an Agricultural Land Commission. When the provincial government of Dave Barrett’s NDP delivered a variation of that resolution to create the Agricultural Land Reserve, it was not fully endorsed by the UBCM.

There is an account of the birth of the Municipal Finance and Assessments Authorities, lists of UBCM conventions, presidents and, yes, a 1959 banquet menu. But *The First Century* also provides a fascinating account of an important journey through B.C.’s shifting political and social landscape.

There are ample archival photographs—including Silverton locals posing with liquor bottles on the first day of Prohibition—press clippings and biographical profiles that flesh out how we got here. Interesting sidebars in *The First Century* include a profile of Peter Wing of Kamloops, the first mayor of Chinese descent in North America; and an account



First Chinese mayor Peter Wing

of UBCM support for the unpopular Socred restraint program of the early 1980s. Newspaper headlines from 50 years ago (about gas tax sharing) could have been written yesterday.



The Great War of 1914 drained communities of almost 56,000 men who left to fight for the empire (more than 10% of the total B.C. population). Property taxes were soon in arrears, the economy stagnated, unemployment soared.

When the province and municipalities ran out of money, public works came to a standstill. This was amplified on a larger scale during the Depression. Municipalities felt helpless, some went broke (including Burnaby, Merritt, North Vancouver). All were trying to help the desperate and unemployed with varying degrees of success (Port Alberni’s cheques to the unemployed bounced).

The UBCM was in a constant struggle with the province, demanding more assistance for its citizens, and was eventually successful getting provincial and federal governments to help pay for B.C.’s 237 relief camps. They could house up to 18,000 men, one-third of the Canadian total, and were a step up from starving on the street.

By the end of the Depression there was a better working relationship between the province and its communities, with B.C. promising to take on more cost-sharing for welfare, hospitals and education. Although it took another decade, the province did come through

when the economy rallied.

Then came the Bennett era. Former UBCM president Ross Marks remarked, “...there was no question that W.A.C. ran the show and Gaglardi was not far behind.” As former mayors of Vancouver, provincial premiers Mike Harcourt and Gordon Campbell have both played significant roles on both sides of the power struggle.

The tug of war between the UBCM and its masters continues. Although the UBCM can claim some significant victories, the province can still call the shots. The recent Significant Projects Streamlining Act, for instance, has enabled the provincial government to override local bylaws on matters “where the provincial interest was paramount.”

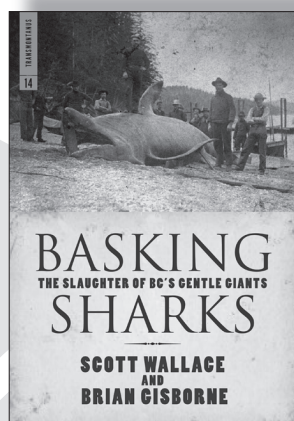
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Mark Forsythe, host of Almanac on CBC Radio, has co-written The BC Almanac Book of Greatest British Columbians, with Greg Dixon.

TRANSMONTANUS 14

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JOAN GIVNER

ELLEN IS BACK, THIS TIME WITH LITERARY AMBITIONS IN...

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GO FIGURE

Douglas Coupland exploits Subway sandwiches, television & matronly murder.

jPod by Douglas Coupland
(Random House \$34.95)

If Douglas Coupland writes serious stuff, with characters we care about, talking about nature and God, some readers will be put off, as if he's being pretentious, so perhaps he has consciously opted to go glib this time 'round for *jPod*.

For Douglas Coupland's 18th book since 1991, six young employees at a Vancouver computer game design company, all with surnames that start with J, share a work station. Hence the title, *jPod*. The six co-workers are quirky in their own way, but Coupland gives them a hasty writing style that blends them into puppets for his own humour.

jPod comes complete with gag lines and preposterous events. From the outset, when the protagonist's mother, a West Vancouver matron, accidentally electrocutes a biker named Tim who has tried to extort her into giving him fifty percent of her marijuana crop and then the mother and son have to bury Tim in a nearby construction site atop the British Properties filled with "jumbo houses that resembled microwave ovens covered with cedar shake roofing," we know Coupland is not giving Leo Tolstoy a run for his roubles.

When the people-smuggling brother of the protagonist Ethan asks him to look after his shipment of twenty, stick-thin, starving and unclean refugees from Fujian Province, Ethan forces his uncaring brother to at least get some Chinese take-out food while he orchestrates

a "hygiene pageant" for the unwanted guests. As the narrator Ethan, Coupland writes:

"I got a conga line going in and out of the shower, and I put their dirty clothing in the washer and gave them my own clothes to wear. The hot water ran out quickly, but nobody seemed to mind. I felt like Elliott from *E.T.* handing out Reese's Pieces."

If *jPod* strikes Coupland aficionados as suspiciously like the stewpot for *Microserfs*, Coupland's novel about employees at the Microsoft headquarters in Seattle, well, hey, give the guy a break. That was, like, ten years ago. Three years later Coupland wrote *Girl-friend in a Coma*, in which characters were working together on Vancouver-based TV shows like *The X-Files* and *Millennium*. Perhaps *jPod* ought to be considered as the third work in a trilogy.

Somehow we are making a leap from episodic television to episodic fiction, minus the laugh track. Some of Coupland's characters discuss how the author of *Generation X*, Douglas Coupland, really ought to sue the pants off of Aaron Spelling for making the characters on *Melrose Place*, a TV show, so similar to the characters in Coupland's breakthrough novel *Generation X*.

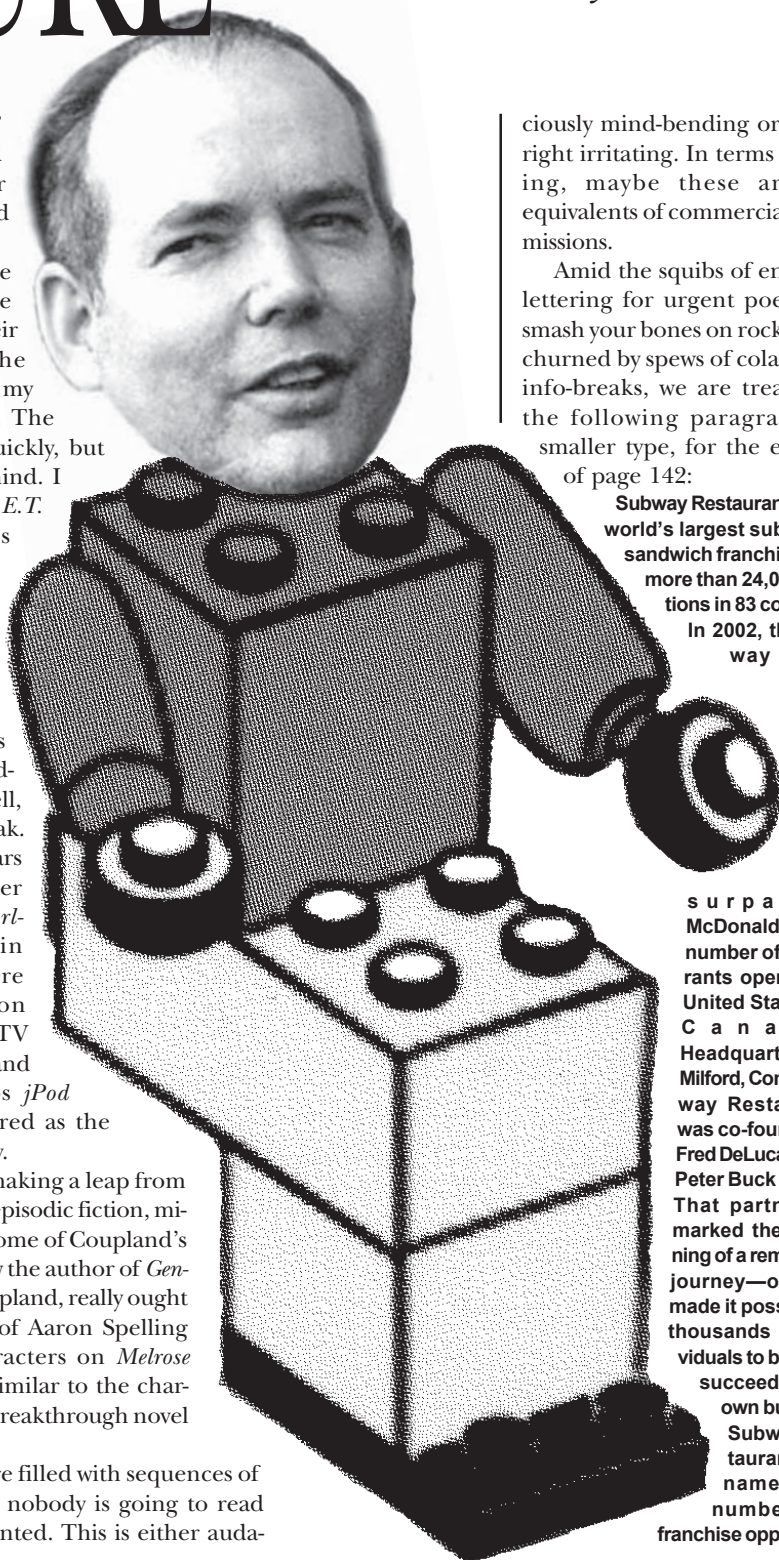
Dozens of pages are filled with sequences of numbers or lists that nobody is going to read unless they are demented. This is either auda-

ciously mind-bending or downright irritating. In terms of pacing, maybe these are the equivalents of commercial intermissions.

Amid the squibs of enlarged lettering for urgent poetry ("I smash your bones on rocks of ice churned by spews of cola.") and info-breaks, we are treated to the following paragraph, in smaller type, for the entirety of page 142:

Subway Restaurants is the world's largest submarine sandwich franchise, with more than 24,000 locations in 83 countries. In 2002, the Subway chain

surpassed McDonald's in the number of restaurants open in the United States and Canada. Headquartered in Milford, Conn., Subway Restaurants was co-founded by Fred DeLuca and Dr. Peter Buck in 1965. That partnership marked the beginning of a remarkable journey—one that made it possible for thousands of individuals to build and succeed in their own business. Subway Restaurants was named the number one franchise opportunity



in all categories by *Entrepreneur* magazine—for the 13th time in 17 years! For more information about Subway restaurant chain, visit <http://www.subway.com/>. Subway is a registered trademark of Doctor's Associates Inc. (DAI).



Go figure.

"Sleep is overrated," says closet math whiz Bree, "Everyone thinks that just because you have a nap, your life is fixed." Anyone in this novel could have said that line, or about half the characters on TV, but even when Coupland is not at the top of his game, when it seems like he's dashing something off, or replicating himself, he is taking risks and generating something original.

After Ethan retrieves his mother, who has disappeared to explore her femininity with lesbians during Uterus Week on the Sunshine Coast, Coupland inserts himself as a calculating capitalist who wants to hire the jPodders for his get-rich-quick scheme. The final page reads: Play again? Y/N.

"I know it's only rock 'n' roll," Mick Jagger sang, "but I like it."

If Douglas Coupland wants to reinvent his own brand of situation comedy, more power to him. At least he never commits the sin of being dull. *jPod* is unabashedly forgettable and often funny fiction for people who watch television a lot and use computers a lot. It's experimental, cutesy, 'edgy,' impressively clever in spots, padded in others, but ultimately charming in a disposable *Friends* sort of way.

0-679-31424-5

OF BUGS & MEN

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

Spiritual capitalism for the bi-curious—a meditation on desire by George K. Ilsley

ManBug by George K. Ilsley (Arsenal Pulp \$19.95)

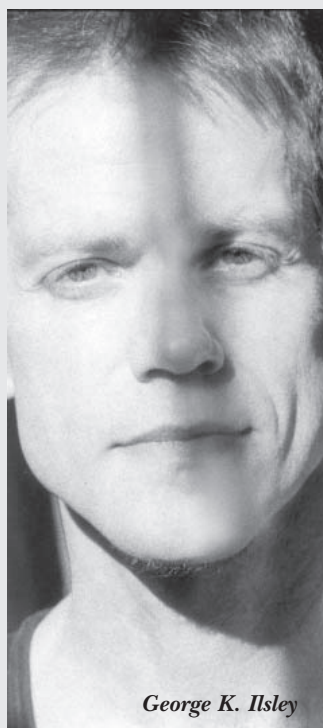
George K. Ilsley's first novel *ManBug* is a fragmented and tragicomic exploration of a gay relationship between a former entomologist, Sebastian, who has researched the development of pesticides, and Tom, a left-handed, dyslexic "spiritual bisexual," who may or may not be recruiting Sebastian for a cult led by the "Kardapa Lampa."

Sebastian suspects Tom is "wasting his spiritual capital on that tantric mind control prosperity cult." Tom suspects Sebastian is not fully advancing his sexual nature.

The relationship between the two men is complicated by the fact that Sebastian suffers from Asperger's Syndrome (similar to autism). Ilsley explains: "A thread that runs through *ManBug* is who lives and who dies and who makes the decision. Many of us, for example, do not think twice before we kill an insect. Maybe we'll throw a lobster in the pot. But what else will we kill? Where do we draw the line?"

The novel is mostly about sexuality.

"Tom does not date the kind of gay boys who are determined, silly, aggressive bottoms, overfed and undernourished, maturing into fruition



George K. Ilsley

as streaked, puffy, too-tanned, frantic clichés of the sort one is not allowed to mention, it's so embarrassing and so true.

"The type Tom goes for is sensitive and in transition (in the classical sense, meaning a lifestyle and/or self-concept metamorphosis, but not a gender reassignment). What attracts Tom beyond all reason is a manboy exploring the boundaries of a gentle, proud, fierce, but uncertain masculinity. Young and naive enough to believe in his essential spiritual nature."

Particularly focussed on the state of being bi-curious, Ilsley quotes from a biographer of Alfred Kinsey: "For Kinsey, then, labels such as 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual' did not make sense. People engaged in homosexual acts; they were not homosexuals. Therefore, the only proper use for the word 'homosexual' was as an adjective, not as a noun. Pressing this point vigorously, he declared, 'It would encourage clearer thinking on these matters if persons were not characterized as heterosexual or homosexual, but as individuals who have had certain experience and certain amounts of homosexual experience.'"

Like Kinsey, it would appear Ilsley's design is to encourage clearer thinking about sexuality. His title *ManBug* is derived from a common occurrence in entomology studies when a student, upon viewing ladybugs in a slightly sexualized context, invariably wants to ask, "Male ladybug? Shouldn't that be manbug?" Clearly the labels we ascribe to both other creatures and ourselves do not always satisfactorily explain behaviour.

1-55152-203-9

EQUATORIAL AMBIGUITIES

Touching Ecuador by Bill New
(Oolichan \$16.95)

For those who have been to South America and the Galapagos, and also for those who dream of going, **Bill New's** *Touching Ecuador* is almost as good as the journey but not quite Quito! As a poet and inveterate traveler, New proves himself an old hand at making new connections.

Whereas in his preceding collection, New travelled the world to celebrate trees, this time he climbs the active volcano Cotopaxi, rummages in the rug market at Otavalo, ruminates on the ancient Andean civilizations and savours Quecha words and names.

Myths and events about and on the Equator/Ecuador clearly fascinate New. "You do not touch Ecuador until you find room in the garden for children to play, until you tend the distance within yourself."

Touching Ecuador contains an account of the hallucination that is the Galapagos, "black upon black, the gargoyles/horned, marine—" and the book's last section has a dense, challenging duality; a lapsed believer/preacher is looking for a new life in the mountains and an Everyman is travelling the

world to discover "reading north depends on south, and south north: the idea of here discovers there."

The Tourist arrives in the high mountain capital and begins his transformation into Traveler. "I come from a country of zero degrees/ every winter a measure of minuses, windchill and toque," New writes.

"The Tourist snaps pictures, moves on. The Traveler/ steps lightly on the line, plants feet across it, listens to the voices in the mountain air."

The fecundity of the land bewilders him, and much is un-

clear. Mists, language, ancient religion; the traveler cannot touch, hold or define the Line except through "glimpses of connection/ leaving intact the ambiguities of liberty."

0-88982-223-9

SWEET WILLIAM

Radiant Danse Uv Being
(Nightwood \$23.95)

ware wurr u wen
blewointment furst up eared?

If you were anywhere in the geographical and/or poetic vicinity of Kitsilano, *Radiant Danse Uv Being*, the new compendium/tribute to **bill bissett**, creator of blewointmentpress during the Sixties, will be hugely enjoyable. Expect to meet old friends as well as your own tears, sighs, giggles and inspired nostalgia.

The eighty-five poets who have contributed poems and anecdotes include **Margaret Avison, Sharon Thesen**, both the **Patricks—Lane and Friesen—Leonard Cohen, Jamie Reid, P.K. Page** and **Margaret Atwood** (who has referred to bissett as her astral twin). Clearly bissett, who raised alternate spelling to high art and subversive eloquence, and whose life and work are already the stuff of legend, is still charming after all these years.

Edited by **Jeff Pew** and **Stephen Roxborough**, the poems in this collection are as varied as the contributors; high on memory, and a little uneven as poetry. The anecdotes about bissett are remarkable. If one didn't know these poems are describing someone

who is a poet/friend, one would assume their subject is a guru, shaman, spiritual teacher, therapist, prophet or healer. The descriptive words are the elevated praise reserved for the likes of a Mandela, Ghandi, Thomas Merton and John Lennon.

Stephen Roxborough writes, "bill's friends are among the fortunate few shown how to play inside and out, and eventually through the strings of our universe."

Someone please advise Nightwood Editions: anyone who wrote or spoke or heard a poem in Kitsilano in the late Sixties should qualify for a free copy. Me please.

0-88971-210-7

Hannah Main-van der Kamp regularly reviews poetry from Victoria.



Jane Munro

THE POINT

Point No Point by Jane Munro
(M&S \$17.99)

Having lived for 13 years in a house tucked in the woods near Victoria's Point No Point resort, **Jane Munro** salutes her neighbourhood, its nearby writer's cabin

and her forebears in *Point No Point*. The final poem "Moving to a Colder Climate" describes how her father Raymond Southwell, a builder, came to visit the new home site and died the weekend Munro moved in. *Point No Point* also pays tribute to Munro's grandfather, George Southwell, who painted controversial semi-nudes in the rotunda of the B.C. Legislature.

Point No Point is derived from the geographical survey of the former timberlands where Munro, 62, lives. Point no point is a technical term referring to a secondary point of land that is apparent, but doesn't extend farther than two primary points on either side. "It's a ten-minute walk—down the gravel drive with its mossy centre strip, across the highway, into a maze of trails winding through tall salal and wind-stunted alder to the beach. This is my headland. On a map, it's a promontory that's a point from one side, not the other. Point No Point."

0-7710-6678-3

WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND

Many years ago, when **bill bissett** was a poetry pioneer on Fourth Avenue in Kitsilano during the so-called hippie days, he generously published many of the poets he met under an imprint he called blewointmentpress. When money problems forced him to reluctantly transfer ownership of the press decades later, it was moved to Ontario as Nightwood Editions. There it specialized in jazz-related books.

In the late 1990s, under the direction of **Silas White**, the imprint was reinvigorated as a poetry press in Toronto, then brought back to the West Coast. It has since rekindled the original press' reputation for publishing yet-to-be-known writers.

As an appreciation of bissett's enduring importance in Canadian literature, **Jeff Pew** of Kimberley, co-founder of "Poetry on the Rocks," and **Stephen Roxborough** of Anacortes, Washington, have edited a broad sampling of writing that celebrates bissett, published by the press he originated. Here's a sample:

Xcellent Birds

by Kay McCracken

half our clothes off
bill, Helen, and i follow Ronn
under Enderby Bridge
into Shuswap River

bill says he and i are
easygoing gradualists
because of the way
we approach the river

we have become river gods and
goddesses, now transformed
by river smell and penetrating sun
that drives us into cool water

bill and i swim into an island
where everything is different
a wolf print lingers among wild
strawberry plants

when we leave the river
soggy clothes heavy
with sand
we come across four si-
lent
grounded birds

they stand poised on a
cliff
while we cluck and coo
over them
wondering our human
questions

but these silent birds are a
mystery

they may be doves, i say
there are 4 of us and 4 doves,
offers Helen
doves are love, says Ronn
xcellent beautiful xcellent, says bill

we all agree but later when i
search
my bird books, unable to identify
them,
i'm mystified maybe it was a
group
hallucination, says bill, or maybe

it was the way we approached
the river.



Anthology contributor
Kay McCracken

—from
Radiant Danse Uv Being: A Poetic Portrait of bill bissett
(Nightwood Editions / A blewointment book \$23.95). Edited by Jeff Pew and Stephen Roxborough.
0-88971-210-7

A young
bill bissett

HOUSE OF HORRORS

Timothy Taylor looks underneath a facelift

Story House by Timothy Taylor
(Knopf \$34.95)

In the way that his acclaimed debut novel, *Stanley Park*, could be said to be about food, **Timothy Taylor**’s ambitious and intricate second novel, *Story House*, can be said to be about architecture. That is to say, architecture is the central scaffolding on which Taylor hangs his ideas.

Specifically we are talking about the designs of the elusive Packer Gordon, an icon in the architectural world, whose buildings are marvels of glass and steel, planes and layers, appearing to float in the air, to enter into a dialogue with the landscape surrounding them. In their simplicity and purity of form they harken back to the Haida longhouses of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Story House begins, somewhat jarringly, with a brutal boxing match between Packer Gordon’s two teenaged sons, orchestrated and filmed by their famous father. Born only six months apart, Graham is the son of Packer and his wife; Elliot is the product of a mysterious affair Packer conducted in Korea. Far from resolving anything between the two brothers, the fight deepens the enmity between them.

Some twenty years on, long after the death of their father, the estranged brothers are both struggling. Outwardly successful, Graham has become an architect like his father. But in contrast to his uncompromising artist father who built only what he wanted to build, Graham’s less-than-satisfying career is about fixing rather than making things.

Graham makes his living remodelling and “rebranding” the décor of hotel chains, replacing one empty fashion statement with another. He and his business partner, who is also his part-time mistress, rip out all the mahogany panelling, the striped upholstery, hardwood floors and club chairs from ten years ago and replace everything with neo-modern surfaces of chrome and steel and glass, the new “core brand of sex” where there’s a vibrator in the night table drawer rather than a Gideon’s Bible.

Meanwhile Elliot has been flirting on the edge of the criminal scene, hanging out with bikers, punkers and assorted unsavory types, much to the chagrin of his wife Dierdre, a former architect herself, and the mother of twin boys. For years he’s been in the business of selling fakes, knock-offs of watches, sunglasses and T-shirts. Recently he has turned to making fakes of fakes. He can’t seem to get

out of the game. Drawn to what is fake, Elliot is happiest tripping around Korea visiting places like Cult Fashion Mall, which boasts anything you bring to it can be made in seven days.

“Four floors of sunglasses and watches, mobile phones and cameras, handbags and designer T-shirts. Everything fake or fake-able. Everything for sale. Everything vibrating with the tension, the excited blood cells, the nervous synapse firings of monied desire.”

The brothers come together again when the producer of the reality TV show, *Unexpected Architecture*, decides to make a series about a recently rediscovered Packer Gordon design, Story House. It will be a little like *Extreme Makeover, Home Edition*. He wants to film the two brothers discussing, arguing, hammering out what to do about restoring and remodelling the deteriorating structure.

Possibly Packer’s first building, Story House is an architectural conundrum tucked away in Vancouver’s downtown eastside. With its double-helix staircase, odd angles, empty hallways, and lack of a kitchen, it isn’t really a house at all, but a riddle to be solved, a question to be answered. The brothers



Timothy Taylor

have to unlock its mysteries, to find out what it’s for. This they do, coming up with an ingenious idea that has spectacular and devastating results, both for the building and themselves.



With all its embellishment and detail, its eccentric characters, strange locales, and discourses on architecture, Taylor’s construction is more like a baroque cathedral than one of Packer Gordon’s spare, modern designs.

aren’t given a reason to care about them either.

There are constant shifts in time and place within a convoluted plot, making for a sometimes confusing narrative. Descriptions of food and fashion fads, though brilliant on their own, can be distracting, gratuitous, and take away from the context of the story.

It’s to his credit though, that Taylor has pulled off a novel where most of the conversations revolve around the intricacies of architectural design. Only a writer of great narrative and descriptive gifts could pull it off. Though the action is somewhat contrived, and the characters are driven by the plot rather than the other way around, the suspense and drama around what happens to the Story House carry us through to the novel’s riveting and tragic ending.

Like the house it is named for, this novel asks difficult questions and provides no easy answers. How can we rediscover the simplicity and purity of art in a post-modern world where everything is about image and branding and consuming something that isn’t real, that has no organic roots in anything? How can we reconnect with the natural landscape without going to the extreme of camping alone on the beaches of the Queen Charlotte Islands the way Graham’s wife Esther does?

Timothy Taylor poses the questions and it’s for us to find the answers.

0-676-97764-2

Sheila Munro is the author of Lives of Mothers and Daughters.

MIDDLESEX MAGNET

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

Mallory by Margaret Gunning
(Turnstone \$19.95)

Margaret Gunning’s *Mallory* is a coming-of-age novel about intense and gifted 14-year-old Mallory Mardling, “a magnet for other people’s bad intentions,” who can quote William Butler Yeats in her essays but is often belittled for her masculine tendencies and facial hair.

Set amid bullying in a fictional northern Ontario town in 1968, *Mallory* describes how an estranged, would-be novelist is kidnapped and sexually abused as a captive at the hands of a charismatic church minister named Reverend Randolph Fletcher and a maladjusted juvenile named Chris Cooper.

Mallory’s behavior during her ordeal confirms her strength of character and ultimately brings some social acceptance after her assailants are incarcerated.

0-88801-311-6

Cover photo from Mallory



ALSO RECEIVED

Zed by Elizabeth McClung
(Arsenal Pulp Press \$22.95)
1-55152-197-0

Tales of Two Cities
by George Fetherling
(Subway \$20) 0-9736675-1-6

Indigenous Beasts
by Nathan Sallyn
(Raincoast \$22.95) 1-55192-927-9

Elliot & Me by Keith Harrison
(Oolichan \$22.95) 0-88982-219-0

Morgantown by Keith Maillard
(Brindle & Glass \$22.95)
1-897142-07-02

Lyndon Johnson and the Majorettes by Keith Maillard
(Brindle & Glass \$14.95)

Beyond This Point
by Holley Rubinsky
(M&S \$24.99) 0-7710-7854-4

13 Ways of Listening to a Stranger
by Keath Fraser (Thomas Allen Publishers \$26.95) 0-88762-193-7

Bright Objects of Desire
by Michele Adams
(Biblioasis \$23.95) 0-9738184-1-7

The Work of Mercy
by Stephen Guppy (Thomas Allen \$24.95) 0-88762-223-2

Smoke Show by Clint Burnham
(Arsenal Pulp Press \$18.95)
1-551525-196-2

Cease to Blush by Billie Livingston
(Random House \$34.95)
0-679-31322-2

TEENAGE CONFUSION

“She holds onto my hand...maybe it’s a Brooklyn thing.”

Crush by Carrie Mac (Orca \$9.95)

When her hippie parents head for Thailand to celebrate their 30th “non-wedding anniversary” by helping to build a school, 17-year-old Hope is banished to Brooklyn.

The plan had been for her to remain at the Larchberry commune by herself. But getting caught naked in the hayloft with Orion, the tanned, hash-smoking, too-old, too-married Woofer (Workers on Organic Farms) changed all that.

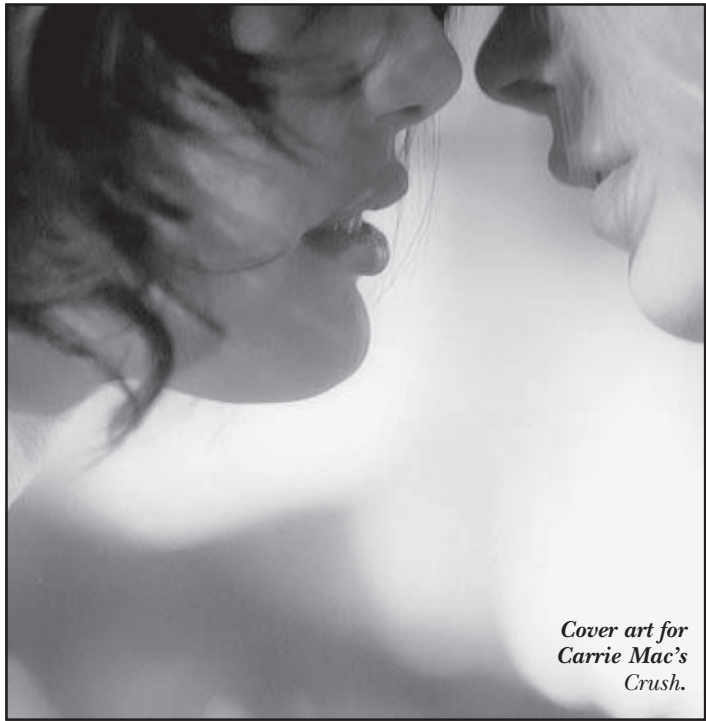
Now she’ll have to endure an entire summer living with her flaky older sister.

But then Hope meets Nat, a lanky bicycle mechanic with blond dreadlocks and a firm, lingering handshake. “She holds onto my hand...maybe it’s a Brooklyn thing. She’s kind of gazing at me, in a weird way. Another weird thing—is that I don’t want her to let go.”

Yup. Nat’s a girl. And Hope is hit with a sudden, bewildering crush. “Would kissing a girl be different from kissing boys? If all I did was kiss her, would that make me queer?”

With motherly advice from a lesbian couple, a timely phone call from her parents and guidance from her “gaydar” Hope ultimately arrives at her own answers to her troubling questions.

Crush is part of the Orca Soundings series for reluctant teen readers. Vancouver writer **Carrie Mac**’s first contribution to the series was *Charmed*, a story of teen prostitution. She is also winner of an Arthur Ellis Award for her gritty teen novel *The Beckoners*. “I’m equally fascinated by disaster and grace,” she says. “Car wrecks, hurricanes, plagues, genocides on one hand. Small and stunning everyday miracles on the other.” 1-55143-526-8



Cover art for
Carrie Mac’s
Crush.

Trouble On Tarragon Island by Niki Tate (Sono Nis \$9.95)

The third volume in **Niki Tate**’s series featuring teenage writer Heather Blake, begins innocently enough. In *Trouble On Tarragon Island*, Heather’s grandmother, along with the other embarrassingly saggy and liver-spotted members of Ladies of the Forest, poses nude for a fund-raiser calendar.

The Ladies of the Forest (a fictional take on the BC-based direct action group Women in the Woods) are determined to stop logging of old-growth forest and soon the “wrinkle brigade’s” weekly meetings and the painting of banners turns to confrontation with angry loggers. Then her grandmother is arrested and Heather, voicing author Tate’s conviction that kids are “perfectly capable of making up their own minds about tough issues,” must decide for herself whether breaking the law is a criminal act.

1-55039-154-2

Sea Dog by Dayle Campbell Gaetz (Orca, \$6.95)

Dayle Campbell Gaetz’s inspiration for *Sea Dog* came from the story of a dying dog found on the beach after a storm who, once healthy, would often insist on swimming far out to sea. Young Kyle, whose father doesn’t live with him and his mom anymore, befriends a similarly determined dog.

But one day the dog spots a pipe-smoking sailor with a big gray beard and it’s quickly apparent what—or who—Treasure has been searching for.

Is Kyle going to lose his only friend? Illustrations in this early reader chapter book are by **Amy Meissner**, who works in an Anchorage studio with two “bad orange cats.”

1-55143-406-7

The Freedom of Jenny by Julie Burtinshaw (Raincoast \$12.95)

The Freedom of Jenny, based on the true story of the immigration of black settlers to western Canada, follows young Jenny Estes as her family, their freedom paid for by the father’s wages from a grueling cattle drive, make their way to California. But the Dred Scott Decision of 1857 when the US Supreme Court ruled people of African origin—free or enslaved—could never be citizens made California no safer than the Missouri they’d escaped.

So when James Douglas, fearful his fledgling colony of New Caledonia was vulnerable to southern aggression, offers protection and equality under the British flag, Jenny’s family and dozens of other black families push on once again.

In her research author **Julie Burtinshaw**, inspired by the life story of Sylvia Stark, who settled on Salt Spring Island in 1860, discovered fully one-third of the cowboys who tamed the American West were black, as were many in the sixty-man staff of BC’s first police force. 1-55192-839-6



Julie Burtinshaw

My Librarian is a Camel by Margriet Ruurs (Boyd’s Mills Press \$19.95)
Animal Alphabet by Margriet Ruurs (Boyd’s Mills Press \$21.50)
Emma at the Fair by Margriet Ruurs (Fitzhenry and Whiteside \$19.95)
Me and Martha Black by Margriet Ruurs (Penumbra Press \$14.95)

While researching a children’s book on mobile libraries around the world, **Margriet Ruurs** discovered Basarat Kazim who runs an inner city library and a mobile library based in Lahore, Pakistan.

Ruurs has since arranged for used books and teddy bears to be sent to the youngest victims of the Pakistani earthquake. After two weeks in Lahore this spring, Ruurs has also initiated a book mark exchange to promote international understanding and friendship.

Along with *My Librarian is a Camel*, the cover of which features children and book-toting camels in Mongolia’s Gobi Desert, Ruur’s has three other new titles.

Illustrated by **Jenny Emery**, *Animal Alphabet* is a nighttime fantasy and alphabet mystery in which a girl discovers one of her 26 stuffed animals is missing.

Emma at the Fair chronicles the fourth adventure of the plucky, yet addle-brained hen, this time in the boisterous atmosphere, captured by artist **Barbara Spurll**, of harvest time at an agricultural fair.

Me and Martha Black, with cover art by well-known artist **Ted Harrison**, introduces the exploits of naturalist **Martha Louise Munger** who gave up a well-heeled life in Chicago for the lure of the Canadian north.

Eventually married to George Black, who was later made commissioner of the Yukon, Martha went on to receive an OBE for her work with Yukon servicemen during WW1 and, at age 70, to become the second woman elected to Parliament.

Librarian 1-59078-093-0; Animal 059078-200-3; Emma 1-55005-126-1; Me and Martha 1-89413-187-8

Louise Donnelly writes from Vernon.



Margriet
Ruurs

RAGING BOOKS



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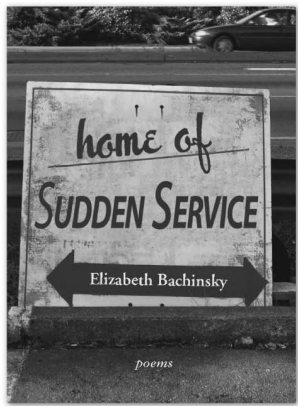
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LONDON CALLING

Jack London
 spent eleven months prospecting for gold in the Yukon and Alaska. In his autobiography, he wrote, “I brought nothing back from the Klondike but my scurvy.”

Sailor on Snowshoes: Jack London’s Klondike Caper
 by **Dick North** (Harbour \$19.95)

The story of **Dick North**’s efforts to find and preserve a piece of literary London—as in Jack—begins one afternoon in California when he walked into Jack London’s old hangout, the First and Last Chance Saloon in Oakland.

As North explains in *Sailor on Snowshoes: Jack London’s Klondike Caper*, he listened to the bartender’s tales and wondered if the shack that sheltered Jack London and his party during their Klondike winter of 1897-1898 could still exist.

From reading Jack London’s works based on his Yukon adventure—*The Call of the Wild* (1903), *The White Fang* (1906) and the popular anthology piece “To Build a Fire,” about a man who freezes to death on the Yukon trail—Dick North decided that London’s Yukon cabin, a recurring image in his stories, seemed to embody the spirit of the writer:

It was his refuge, his sanctuary, the place where he could obtain a maximum of warmth with a minimum of fuel. And it played a focal part in many of his stories. It is a symbol of a more simplistic era but not so far removed from us that we can ignore the fact that some day we may be forced to return to the same kind of humble dwelling in order to survive.

North was unconvinced by Irving Stone’s assertion in his popular biography *Sailor on Horseback* that London and a friend dismantled the cabin and made a raft out of it on which they floated downriver to Dawson City.



Dick North got himself hired by the *Daily Alaska Empire* in Juneau in the early Sixties, but his editor didn’t believe a quest for the cabin would make good copy.

When North rustled up some financial support from the White Pass and Yukon Railroad, the editor refused to give him time off.

North promptly quit his job, and set off on the first of many journeys by bus, snowshoe and dog-sled.

Not only did North establish the cabin’s location on Henderson Creek, 75 miles south of Dawson City, but he made the triumphant discovery that remnants still existed not far from Stewart Island. It then became necessary to prove that this was, in fact, the cabin that London and his companions had built.

Establishing the authenticity of the cabin was complicated; it involved arranging for tree-ring experts to cut cones from the cabin’s logs and those of nearby trees in order to date it

exactly. Then North had to trace the owner of a slab bearing Jack London’s signature that had been cut from the cabin wall leaving a slash. Once that was done, handwriting experts had to confirm that the handwritten inscription that read “Jack London, miner, author, Jan 27, 1898” was actually London’s.

Fortunately, the Port Authority of Oakland California, on whose premises the Jack London Square Merchant’s Association was housed, became enthusiastic. They contributed \$17,000 to the project, of which \$500 went to purchase the crucial slab. In 1969, when the slab was ready to be matched with the slash on the wall, they scheduled an expedition that included the actor Eddie Albert to bring it to the cabin.

The California group flew to Stewart Island and traveled 18 miles in three dogsleds to Henderson Creek. There they witnessed the exact match between the slab and the slash, and relished the atmosphere of the cabin and the creek described in London’s stories. Since a journey by dogsled was not easy in the melting snow of April, they also experienced on their return journey hazards similar to those experienced by London’s characters.

The project did not end there. That would have meant leaving the cabin to molder away in a spot inaccessible by most means of transportation. A unique solution was devised, whereby the Canadian and American elements in London’s legacy could be honoured.

By using logs from the original cabin and adding others, duplicate structures were created to the same scale as the original. One of these was transported to Oakland, and its twin was rebuilt in Dawson City.

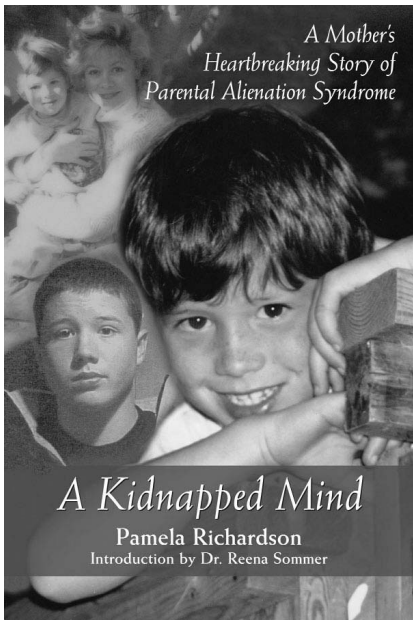
Having already written about two mysteries of the Canadian North, *The Mad Trapper of Rat River* (1972) and *The Lost Patrol* (1978), North proves himself an old hand at creating a suspenseful narrative. But the richest part of the present book—which is an innovative blend of quest-motif, mystery and travelogue—is his evocation of the Gold Rush era, the characters, animals and the landscape that provide the stuff of Jack London’s fiction.

Unraveling the life and times of Jack London, (who died of a morphine overdose at the age of forty) is complicated by the fact that London was plagued throughout his short life by frauds and imposters. One of these, claiming to have traveled with him across North America, wrote a book on the putative journey.

Another man impersonating London journeyed throughout Alaska, giving birth to the enduring belief that London lived in Nome when he never actually visited that city.

1-55017-384-7

Joan Givner is a novelist, critic and biographer who lives in Mill Bay.



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 — *Dr. Reena Sommer*

LOOKOUT

DON'T KILL BILL

When it comes to picking winners and losers in the field of fiction, story ump **W.P. Kinsella**, mastermind of *Field of Dreams*, calls 'em like he sees 'em. For five straight years Kinsella has adjudicated all rookie novelists for the Amazon/Books In Canada First Novel Contest. Now that he's retiring from that job, we thought some questions might be in order about the state of fiction in Canada.

W.P. (Bill) Kinsella lives just above the Fraser River at Yale with Barbara Turner-Kinsella.

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: On a provincial basis, where have most of the new novelists in Eng-

lish 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: 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.

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 Kw'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 that 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.

HIMMLER HUNTER

As depicted in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Adolf Hitler's SS (Security Squad) was not only infamous for running the concentration camps and gas chambers, and for serving as the Fuhrer's bodyguards: the world's most notorious police force also played a key role in unearthing antiquities to ostensibly prove Aryan links to ancestral greatness.

In 1935, Hitler sanctioned an obscure but powerful research arm of the SS, the Ahnenerbe—a word meaning “something inherited from the forefathers”—to uncover ancestral treasures, to reconnect with past glories, and to present the Third Reich as a model for fairness and middle-class decency.

This ‘Nazi think tank’ recruited scholars to invent crackpot theories and to undertake archaeological digs around the world in order to authenticate Hitler's view of Aryans as a master race (tall, blonde and blue-eyed men and women who were the geniuses of civilization).

With extensive documentation, **Heather Pringle's** *The Master Plan: Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust* (Viking \$35) unravels the little-known story of the Ahnenerbe, a ridiculous but lethal construct that used bogus science to corroborate racism and justify the murder of six millions Jews, intellectuals, gypsies (Roma) and homosexuals.

The dreamer and mover behind the Ahnenerbe was **Heinrich Himmler**. A thin, pale man who headed the SS, Himmler never exercised and his head was too big for his body. He was nonetheless obsessed with Aryan perfection.

It was Himmler who decided his SS men ought to look elegant in newly designed black uniforms from Hugo Boss, set off nicely by a silver death's-head on their hats. This look, according to Himmler, would engender fear in men and “success with the girls.”

Also an avid reader, Himmler maintained a list of his favourite books to recommend to others. If television had existed back in the 1930s, the exceedingly vain Himmler would likely have had his own interview program to showcase his favourite authors—the Nazi equivalent of the Oprah Book Club.

Himmler originally wanted Ahnenerbe-sponsored research to stimulate his SS men to learn more about Germanic folklore, religion and farming techniques, encouraging them to emulate the values of the Aryan race.

- In 1930s, Ahnenerbe resurrected the debunked notion that measuring cranial features could effectively indicate intelligence and superiority. Nazi scholars hoped to discover racial data that might be useful in justifying the removal of all “mixed-races” from the Reich.

- In order to channel ancient knowledge, one of Himmler's scholars, **Karl-Maria Wiligut**, would go into trances. A violent alcoholic and exmental patient, Wiligut changed his name to Wise Thor.

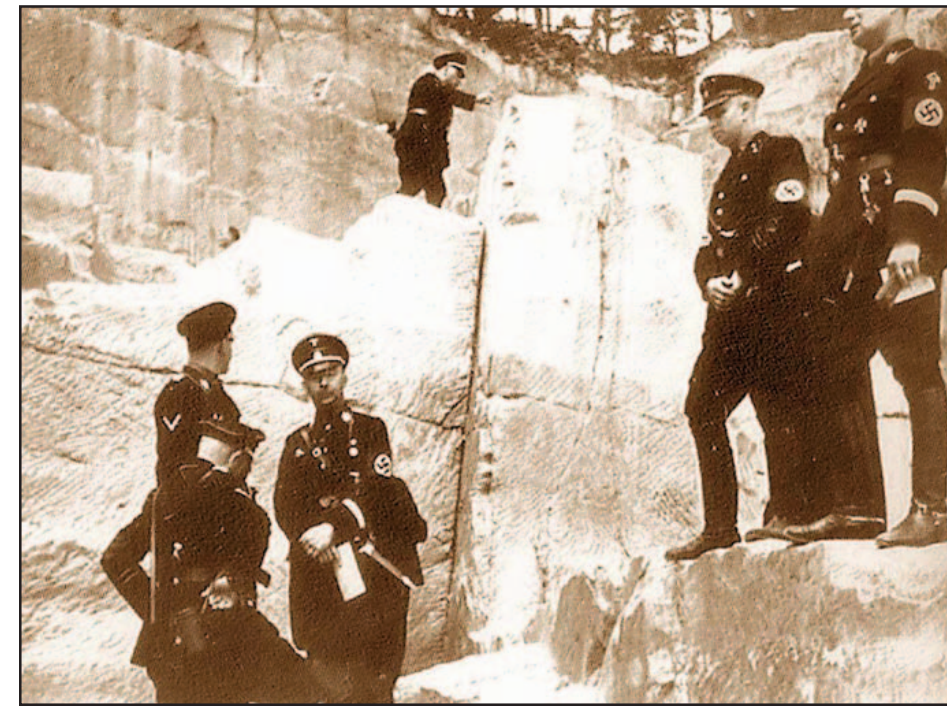
- Equally bogus, the prehistorian **Herman Wirth** claimed to have unearthed an ancient holy script that would help Germany resurrect its former greatness. Other notables were the classical scholar **Franz Altheim** and his lover, the rock art researcher **Erika Trautmann**, who had turned down a proposal of marriage from **Hermann Goring**.

- To explain the origins of the universe, Himmler and Hitler were particularly excited about the Ahnenerbe-sponsored “World Ice

HEATHER PRINGLE reveals how the Nazis made a science of delusion



Heinrich Himmler, deadly bookworm



In 1935, Heinrich Himmler (with moustache) founded an SS research institute, the Ahnenerbe, to search for antiquities (as above) and to recreate the lost world of Germany's ancestors.

Theory.” Its chief proponent, **Hans Horbiger**, prided himself on never performing calculations and thought mathematics was “deceptive.”

The Ahnenerbe's researchers plundered foreign museums, art galleries, churches and private homes carting off valuable relics and masterworks of art. But with the onset of World War II, the activities of the Ahnenerbe became far more sinister.

- The Ahnenerbe began using prisoners as guinea pigs to measure the effects of mustard gas and typhus.

- When some SS members complained about the stress of shooting large numbers of women, children and babies in the Crimean, Himmler's henchmen in the Ahnenerbe ranks introduced mobile gassing wagons that could kill 80 people at once. With three mobile wagons in the Crimea, the SS was able to kill nearly 40,000 people, mainly Jews.

- Human endurance at extremely high altitudes was tested using concentration camp prisoners in a vacuum chamber, resulting in extreme suffering and many deaths. Painful sterilization experiments were also conducted on humans.

- Himmler's “scientists” were also keen to know how long parachuting aviators could survive in freezing waters and still be revived. Male prisoners were placed in ice cold tanks for hours and then laid on beds where naked female prisoners were instructed to warm them up and engage in sex.

Originally reliant on grants from a scientific and agricultural agency, Ahnenerbe also received financial help from corporate donors that included BMW.

One of the organization's key sources of loot was Adolf Hitler's chauffeur. In 1936, when Nazi party member **Anton Loibl** wasn't driving the Fuhrer to and from

work, he was moonlighting as an inventor. One of his inventions was the shiny piece of glass now commonly mounted on bicycles to make them more visible at night.

When Himmler learned of Loibl's “bicycle reflector” innovation, he inked a deal to produce the new product. As head of the German police, Himmler was able to insure the passing of a new traffic law that required all new German bicycles to have a reflector.

By 1942, Himmler was trapped in a frustrating marriage to a 50-year-old. Wanting more children, he took his blond secretary, twelve years younger, as his mistress. She became ensconced in a mansion where he called her Little Bunny.

When **Gerda Bormann** and her children dropped by for a visit, Little Bunny showed them a special room where a chair was made of human legs and feet. There was also a copy of *Mein Kampf* with a cover made from human skin.

According to Pringle, even the children of **Martin Bormann**, a man known as the “zealous executor,” were creeped out.

In 1945, Hitler and **Eva Braun** committed suicide in their bunker beneath Berlin, and Heinrich Himmler fled using an identification card he stole from a police officer.

After only a few weeks on the run as a member of the Nazi guerrilla movement called Werwolf, Himmler devised a scheme to gain his freedom: He would offer his services to the occupying British and American forces, organizing Werwolf to fight against Communism. When this offer was rejected, Himmler swallowed a cyanide capsule during a medical examination and strip search.

Some of the Ahnenerbe scholars were arrested, tried, disgraced, executed or killed themselves, but others enjoyed highly-respected careers.

In the last chapter, Heather Pringle tracks down 90-year-old Ahnenerbe member **Bruno Berger** in a quiet German town. Berger, a so-called expert in racial studies, only displayed emotion when discussing the war crime trial he had endured, muttering about “how the law is biased.” During several hours of conversation, he was unrepentant, believing that Jews should be regarded as a mongrel race.

The Master Plan is a restrained work of reportage, without proselytizing or exploitation, but, on page 316, Pringle cites a 1971 survey that once revealed fifty per cent of the German population believed “National Socialism [Nazism] was fundamentally a good idea which was merely badly carried out.”