Homegrown heroes such as weightlifter Doug Hepburn, swimmer Elaine Tannor, skater Karen Magnusson and sprinter Harry Jerome — the first Canadian to officially hold a world track record — all learned the hard way that society only loves a winner.

Doctors predicted Jerome would never walk again after he suffered a severe injury at the Perth Commonwealth Games in 1962 but he set seven world records, becoming the first human to run 100 metres in ten seconds flat.

Now film and television producer Fil Fraser has written the first full-length biography of one of Canada’s greatest athletes. Running Uphill: The Short, Fast Life of Harry Jerome (Dragon Hill $18.95, distributed by Lone Pine).

In the words of the World and Olympic champion swimmer Dono-van Bailey, “Harry Jerome is Canada’s Jessie Owens. He faced the same battles in his time as Jessie did. Frankly, Harry Jerome’s face should be on a dollar bill. He should be a national hero for what he went through.”

Jerome won gold medals for Canada at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in 1966, and at the 1967 Pan American Games, but he “only” had one bronze medal to show for his appearances at three Olympic games, resulting in some unsympathetic press coverage.

Just as Cassius Clay tossed his Olympic boxing medal off a bridge in disgust, Harry Jerome learned to distrust media and the whimsical nature of public notoriety.

Upon his retirement from competition in 1969, Jerome accepted an invitation from Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau to work within Canada’s new Ministry of Sport, but he resigned when a sponsorship deal he had helped to arrange with Kellog’s to support amateur athletics was kiboshed by the government.

The grandsons of John Armstrong Howard, a railway porter who had competed for Canada in the 1912 and 1920 Olympics, Harry Jerome died of a brain tumour in 1982 and was buried in Mountainview Cemetery in North Vancouver.

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan — where Jerome was born in 1940 — named the Harry Jerome Track Complex in his honour and the Harry Jerome Sports Centre opened in Burnaby in 1997.

The Harry Jerome Awards annually recognize outstanding achievements by members of Canada’s black community and there is a nine-foot-high bronze statue of Harry Jerome on the Stanley Park seawall.
Andrew Podnieks in A Canadian Saturday Night (Greystone $26.95) states, “It is quintessentially Canadian that the more successful our hockey players are, the more humble they are about their accomplishments.”

Highlighting Sidney Crosby as an example, Podnieks suggests hockey greats invariably store their trophies downstairs “on the basement wall or cheap metal shelving, far out of sight.”

Like Douglas Coupland’s books that have collected iconic imagery pertaining to Terry Fox, Vancouver and Canada, Podnieks’ A Canadian Saturday Night provides some surprising background information.

• The selection of three stars at the end of each Hockey Night In Canada broadcast was generated as an adjunct to Imperial Oil commercials (folks older than fifty will recall Murray Westgate and the Happy Motoring song—“always look to Imperial for the best”). Back in the 1950s, the main HNIC sponsor, Esso, had a gasoline called “Three Stars” so the tradition of picking the three outstanding players began as a marketing scheme. Hockey cards were invented by the St. Lawrence Starch Company in order to promote Bee Hive Corn Syrup. The company would mail one hockey card at a time—for free—in exchange for every three box tops from St. Lawrence products that were sent to them. In the days before television, this was the only way fans across Canada could see what the 120 players in the NHL looked like.

• Podnieks has included Shania Twain’s hosting the 2003 Juno Awards. Does include road hockey, backyard rinks, hockey cards, the Sutter brothers, the Niedermayer brothers, the Hanson brothers from the Paul Newman movie Slapshot, the Lucky Loonie and the Montreal riot at the Forum in 1955 after Clarence Campbell suspended Rocket Richard.

One can easily excuse Podnieks for not including any Vancouver Canucks, but no Trail Smoke Eaters? B.C.’s most remarkable amateur team won the 1939 world championship by outscoring their opposition 42-1. They also won the 1961 world championship, beating Russia 5-1, winning Canada’s last international title for 35 years.

As Silas White recalls in the Encyclopedia of B.C., “The name came during the 1928-29 season when a fan in Vancouver threw a pipe onto the ice to protest a referee’s call in favour of the visiting Trail Senior Hockey Club. Trail playing coach Craig Kendall picked it up and smoked it on his way to the bench, and next morning The Province newspaper christened the team.” We await A Canadian Saturday Night II, surely in the works.

The players back then always looked much older than their age,” writes Podnieks. “They had stern expressions, even when they were smiling. They seemed suspicious of what they were being asked to do—pose—as if by doing so they revealed something about themselves that they didn’t want to, like tribesmen from the Brazilian rain forest who feared their souls would be stolen if they were photographed.”

Looking for other iconic images that capture the spirit of the game, Podnieks has included Shania Twain singing the national anthem dressed in a skimpy and sparkling Sheepshanks’ discovery

A high school annual approach to history won’t gain much critical reception, but Craig H. Bowlsby’s self-published, illustrated, 381-page reference work on ice hockey in British Columbia, from 1895 to 1911, certainly merits some recognition.

The Knights of Winter ($90 includes shipping) unearths lists of all players, all teams, records of games, etc., but are about as bewildering as Egyptian hieroglyphics. What does it all add up to? No matter. He got the excavation job done for others.

Bowlsby cites the diary of Reverend John Shephshanks in January of 1862 to swan’s.Today’s entry and —of course—Paul Henderson’s goal against the Russians. No sign of Punch Imlach’s fedora, octopus on the ice in Detroit or Bobby Orr, but Podnieks

does include road hockey, backyard rinks, hockey cards, the Sutter brothers, the Niedermayer brothers, the Hanson brothers from the Paul Newman movie Slapshot, the Lucky Loonie and the Montreal riot at the Forum in 1955 after Clarence Campbell suspended Rocket Richard.

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Our Emily

I
n February, Edmonton-based sculptor Barbara Paterson unveiled a 60-pound bronze maquette at Emily Carr House depicting Emily Carr with one of her dogs and her pet monkey Woo on her shoulder. Paterson hopes she will be contracted to produce a bronze statue approximately 1.5 times the original size of B.C.’s best-known artist.

“I really think Victoria is missing the boat,” she told the Victoria News, “if they don’t [get it made]. You’ve got the big-name icon in the world with Emily Carr—she’s world famous and a character. So don’t [get it made].” Paterson hopes she will be contracted to produce a bronze statue approximately 1.5 times the original size of B.C.’s best-known artist.

Meanwhile Ann-Lee Switzer has taken over the role played by Carr’s long-time friend and editor Ira Dilworth, preparing 61 of Carr’s short stories for This and That: The Lost Stories of Emily Carr (Touchwood $17.95), touted by publisher Gordon Switzer as the first collection of unpublished Carr stories to appear since 1953.

Profits from books sales will go towards the erection of Paterson’s statue of Emily Carr at Emily Carr House.

The Parks and Recreation Foundation in Victoria has created a fund to generate the $200,000 necessary to complete Barbara Paterson’s Emily Carr statue project. Cheques can be delivered to Victoria’s Parks and Recreation Foundation or sent to 633 Pandora Avenue, Victoria, BC V8W 1N8.
A few years back, much-nominated Patrick Lane was down on his luck, always the bridesmaid, never the bride—until he won the first $25,000 BC Award for Canadian Non-Fiction in 2005.

The former sawmill worker and drifter has now taken home the fourth annual Lieutenant Governor’s Award for Literary Excellence amid a shower of praise at the 23rd annual BC Book Prizes gala at Government House.

As she praised Patrick Lane and his partner Lorna Crozier for being, “British Columbia’s greatly admired and pre-eminent literary couple,” Honourable Iona Campagnolo told the audience that Lane’s words are “sharpened and ground and groomed to perfection.”

The Lieutenant Governor also telephoned poet P.K. Page who told her, “He has the greatest sensitivity to words of anyone writing today.”

For good measure, jury member Jack Hodgins noted, “It has been said of his prose that it can be savoured like the music of Mozart.”

After a few sentences of acceptance, Lane was overcome with emotion. Choking back tears, he was unable to finish his speech.

The other members of the selection committee were Vancouver Public Library’s Paul Whitney and former director of the Festival of the Written Arts, Gail Bull.

The most eloquent remarks to the capacity audience were made by presenters Peter Such, Carla Funk and Ted Harrison, proving again that nervous, prize-winning authors don’t necessarily make ideal public speakers.

The other winners were: Carol Windley, Home Schooling (Cormorant Books), Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize sponsored by Friesens, Webcom and Transcontinental.

Don McKay, Strike / Slip (McClelland & Stewart), Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize sponsored by Friesens, Webcom and Transcontinental.

Heather Pringle, The Master Plan: Himmler’s Scholars and the Holocaust (Viking), Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize sponsored by Abebooks.

Lorna Crozier, Measure: A History of Land Surveying in British Columbia (Sono Nis Press), Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize sponsored by Sandhill Book Marketing.

Sarah Ellis, Odd Man Out (Groundwood Books), Sheila A. Egoff Children’s Literature Prize sponsored by the BC Teachers’ Federation.

Heather Pringle, The Master Plan: Himmler’s Scholars and the Holocaust (Viking), Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize sponsored by Abebooks.

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P.K. Page, Plan: Himmler’s Scholars and the Holocaust (McClelland & Stewart), Dorothy Wilson Fiction Prize sponsored by the BC Teachers’ Federation.

B.C. Historical Federation Winners

The B.C. Historical Federation also announced its winners in the 2006 Historical Writing Competition.

The winner of the Lieutenant Governor’s Medal for Historical Writing is K. Jane Watt for High Water: Living with the Fraser Floods (Dairy Historical Society of British Columbia).


In addition honourable mention citations went to Jan Hare and Jean Barman for Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast (UBC Press), Judith Williams for Clam Gardens: Aboriginal Mariculture on Canada’s West Coast (New Star Books) and Peter Grauer for Interred with their Bones: Bill Miner in Canada 1903-1970 (Partners in Publishing).
Born in Northampton, England in 1903, tall and lean Eric Collier was the son of a successful iron foundry owner. At age 14 he joined the navy and served for two years as a signalman prior to being sent to Canada to work as a "mud pup" on his uncle's property near Clinton, B.C. in 1920. That uncle was Harry Marriott, author of Cariboo Cowboy. Collier also worked at Riske Creek store for Fred Becher, at the Gang Ranch, and at Cotton Ranch. He married Lillian Ross in 1928 at Riske Creek. He sold his 38-mile trapline to Orville Stowell and Val Coulthard on March 26, 1964 for $2,500. He died at Riske Creek on March 15, 1966.

In January, The New York Times declared 2007 to be The Year of the Penguin. We agree.
NUKES

Using recently de-classified documents, Clearwater recalls 1970s testing of the U.S. artillery shell that was designed to carry the neutron bomb, as well as military exercises involving the B-2 stealth bomber. Of particular interest to British Columbians, he examines the kowtowing of federal Liberals to American interests in the wake of Premier Glen Clark’s efforts to prevent U.S. nuclear submarines from using the waters of Nanoose Bay, north of Nanaimo. Clark’s stance was in response to the Americans’ refusal to negotiate salmon fishing quotas at the time. The stakes were high. If Clark succeeded in cancelling the U.S. Navy’s Nanoose Bay lease, the Jean Chrétien government feared the White House would exact penalties on Canada similar to those that crippled New Zealand’s economy after New Zealand’s decision to prevent U.S. nuclear vessels from having access to its harbours in the 1980s.

Clearwater recalls how and why the ban on nuclear testing was introduced to the high Arctic in 1978—to fully disclose details of military operations within Canadian territory by United States personnel in Just Dummies: Cruise Missile Testing in Canada (University of Calgary Press $34.95).

Defence and Foreign Affairs Departments of Canada convinced Chrétien to expropriate the Nanoose Bay waters for federal jurisdiction. In response, Clark made international headlines by describing the actions of the federal government as treasonous. Having dared to confront the military might of the world’s most powerful country, and embarrass Ottawa at the same time, B.C.’s daredevil leader was submarined by a smear campaign that began with a BCTV camera crew accompanying an RCMP raid on his home. His political career was scuttled by allegations that he had favoured a gambling casino bid in exchange for a beneficial construction rate for his back porch. “We never say No to any testing,” Clearwater has concluded, “sometimes we try to hold it off for as long as we can. I think the trend here is, no matter what the U.S. asks for, eventually we say Yes.”

It’s the climate, stupid

In his self-published South of Sixty: Life on an Antarctic Base (Antarctic Memories $24.95), Michael Warr of Prince George recalls his return visit to Antarctica in 2005 during which he learned husky dogs were no longer welcomed as an alien species. Since then tourism has increased to 32,000 humans per year. Warr agrees with ex-Vice President Al Gore’s assertion that when it comes to global warming, Antarctica is a proverbial canary in the coalmine. Trouble is, you need to be a scientist to see the problem. “In a few places along the Antarctic Peninsula there is a bit more rock showing, but mostly one has to rely on scientific information,” he says. “For example, 87% of the Antarctic Peninsula glaciers are receding and the only two flowering Antarctic plants are spreading southwards. Al Gore in An Inconvenient Truth showed Antarctic ice cores that indicated that the temperature and CO2 levels had risen most strongly in the last 200 years out of the last 600,000. More recent ice cores now can go back 900,000 years, and still the only exceptional rise in temperature and CO2 is in the industrial age of the last 200 years.” A member of the British Antarctic Club, the American Polar Society and the New Zealand Antarctic Society, Warr first worked in the Antarctic for two years as a meteorologist in the early 1960s—for one year at Deception Island and one year at Adelaide Island. Having returned to Antarctica as a cruise ship historian in 2006, Warr is currently preparing a touring slide show exhibit.
S

olitude can lead to madness or God. For mountain climber Paul Hawker, it was God. But others aren’t so blessed.

Prolonged and enforced solitude for José Padilla, the only American citizen to be openly tried as an “enemy combatant,” for instance, has resulted in insanity. After he was arrested at Chicago’s O’Hare airport in 2002, Padilla was kept in a tiny cell at a navy prison in Charleston, South Carolina, shackled for 1,307 consecutive days, without natural light or a clock or a calendar, wearing heavy goggles and headphones. In the process of defending their client, who now has a personality “like a piece of furniture,” in a Miami courtroom, Padilla’s attorneys are forcing mainstream American media to consider how and why the CIA has routinely approved sensory deprivation, sensory overload and isolation techniques in prisons at Guantánamo Bay, Iraq and Afghanistan to induce extreme anxiety, hallucinations and “significant psychological distress.”

The case of Sydney-based Paul Hawker, a New Zealand-born television writer and producer, is radically different. In his memoir Soul Quest: A Spiritual Odyssey through 40 Days and 40 Nights of Mountain Solitude (Northstone $22.95), Hawker describes 37 days in the proverbial wilderness, ascending Mount Arête in New Zealand, surviving frostbite after climbing closer to God.

“I welcomed my first night in the wilderness totally alone,” he writes. “I felt no apprehension and had no fears for my safety. Away from all other humans, there was no one who could do me any harm.”

Although Hawker began his adventure unfit and overweight, struggling to carry his 40-kilo pack, his self-induced isolation from society in the centre of the Tararua range, near the country’s capital of Wellington, ultimately allowed him to hear the voice of God, overcoming what is typically referred to as a mid-life crisis.

Forty climbers had died in that wind-swept Tararua range. Hawker recalls how he almost became fatality number forty-one.

On Day 35, with the snow-capped mountains stretching for dozens of kilometres in both directions, with only a rat named Rattles for a companion in his mountain-top hut, Hawker felt his inner voice beseeching him like a lover—so he sang.

“A deluge of song lines tumbled out as I clumsily tried to express my total awe and appreciation,” he writes, “… After dinner, I danced outside the hut, stamping my feet as I sang Moondance, Blue Moon and any other song with moon in it, including Silent Night and other snowy Christmas carols. I was intoxicated. I was in love with life, God, the universe, everything.”

Hawker felt he was experiencing a perfect day with a perfect God in a perfect place. Trouble was, Hawker remained outside too long. He could stick a needle into his big toes and feel nothing. Having made a film about two men who had their frostbitten feet amputated just below the knee, the ecstatic seeker found himself derailed by frostbite, fear and panic.

So worried he couldn’t eat or sleep for two days, Hawker used his emergency radio to get some medical advice. With winds gusting at 150 kilometres-per-hour, he half-walked, half-slid down the rocky mountainside. On what would have been the 40th night of his journey, New Zealand was deluged by its worst storm of the year.

“So, were my frostnipped toes good luck or bad luck? Who knows? We are sensible to leave such conclusions to God… On the mountain I found my true home. It is with The Creator, The Source, who wants nothing more than to spoil me with blessings galore.”

Hawker’s reward for survival was learning not to shut the Divine out of his life. Upon his return to his family, he was so full of love for everyone it was almost embarrassing for them. “It was as if a long-lost love button deep within me was now on an external console ready to be triggered by any passing word, scene, or thought.”

978-1-55145-44-0

Moondancing to bliss & frostbite

Paul Hawker: began his adventure unfit and overweight, struggling to carry his 40-kilo pack.
Ishmael Beah’s memoir of his horrendous experiences in Sierra Leone have made him—bizarrely—the first author published from B.C. to appear on The Daily Show with comedian Jon Stewart.

Initially A Long Way Gone seems like a movie, a living nightmare transferred to the screen of our imagination. We collect information, scene by scene, but the narrator isn’t particularly likeable or even particularly engaging. He’s mainly a 12-year-old kid who likes rap music. We learn precious little about his family background. Even more problematic, we are given little information to discern whether or not Ishmael Beah developed a moral compass before he got lost, figuratively and literally.

Our hero gets separated from his village by a surprise attack by deadly rebels. Most readers won’t even be able to find Sierra Leone on a map, and we’re not sure about the politics of Sierra Leone—in fact, the differences between government soldiers and the rebels remain vague—so the overall lack of orientation provided, either from the narrator or the packaging, is perhaps a literary conceit, a way of encouraging us to appreciate the senselessness of the violence.

Reading Ishmael Beah’s edited tale is like staring at the stars and trying to imagine the rest of the universe. Ration-


**A powerful work that will change how many people think about nature.**

—Sebastian Junger

For 300 years, a mythical golden spruce on the Queen Charlotte Islands was sacred to the Haida, respected by loggers, protected by environmentalists, and loved by all who saw it.

Then one man deliberately killed it and mysteriously disappeared.

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**International**

JOIN A CAMP OF GOVERNMENT FORCES WHERE THE MAIN ENTERTAINMENT IS WATCHING RAMBO MOVIES. AT FIRST BEAH DON'T NEED TO FIGHT, BUT HIS REPRIEVE FROM BUTCHERY IS SHORT-LIVED.

"SOMETIMES WE WERE ASKED TO FIGHT FOR WAR IN THE MIDDLE OF A MOVIE," HE WRITES. "WE WOULD CONTINUE TO RUN LATER AFTER KILLING MANY PEOPLE AND CONTINUE THE MOVIE AS IF WE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM INTERMISSION. WE WERE ALWAYS EITHER AT THE FRONT LINES, WATCHING A WAR MOVIE, OR DOING DRUGS."

BEAH AVOIDS ALL DESCRIPTIONS OF HIS OWN ACTS IN THE KILLING FIELDS EXCEPT FOR A BI-ZARRE CEREMONIAL GAME IN WHICH THEIR COMMANDER ASKS FIVE BOYS TO EXECUTE FIVE HELPLESS PRISONERS. THIS IS A CONTEST TO SEE WHO CAN GET THE JOB DONE FASTEST WITH A SHARP KNIFE. THEIR NARRATOR WINS THE THRUST CUTTING COMPEITION.

THE STORY THEN SKIPS OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS UNTIL BEAH AND OTHER BOY SOLDIERS ARE REMOVED FROM THE GOVERNMENT KILLING SQUADS BY A UNICEF INITIATIVE.

THEY DRIVE FOR FOUR HOURS, HELD AT GUNPOINT BY WELL-MEANING GUARDS—who Beah despises and wants to kill—UNTIL THEY REACH THE CAPITAL. A LONG PROCESS OF REHABILITATION BEGINS. AND THAT'S THE SECOND HALF OF THE BOOK.

ISHMAEL BEAH MOVED TO THE U.S. WHEN HE WAS SEVENTEEN, GRADUATED FROM OBERLIN COLLEGE IN 2004 AND NOW SERVES AS A MEMBER OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH CHILDREN'S RIGHTS DIVISION ADVISORY COMMITTEE. HE CAME TO VANCOUVER EARLIER THIS YEAR TO TALK ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES.

EVIDENTLY THE HUMAN CAPACITY FOR CRUELTY IS BOUNDLESS. THE UNITED NATIONS HAS ESTIMATED THERE ARE SOME 300,000 CHILD SOLDIERS CURRENTLY ROAMING THE PLANET IN MORE THAN FIFTY VIOLENT CONFLICTS, BUT NOBODY CAN VERIFY THE EXTENT OF THE ATROCITIES, AND NOBODY KNOWS FOR CERTAIN HOW MUCH INNOCENCE HAS BEEN TORN ASUNDER.

WITH THAT NOTEWORTHY EXCEPTION, BEAH HAS AVOIDED DEScribing HIS OWN EXPERIENCE TO KILL SO A LONG WAY GONE IS A DISTURBING BUT SOMEWHAT PUZZLING WORK, PROBABLY RELEASED TO PUBLICIZE A GLOBAL PROBLEM RATHER THAN EXPIATE THE MONSTERS THAT MUST STILL RESIDE IN BEAH'S MIND.

THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT BOOK. BUT IT DOESN'T TELL THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.

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ISHMAEL BEAH'S MEMOIR IS A BENCHMARK OF REVELATION FROM A HEART ONCE FILLED WITH DARKNESS. IT HAS TOPPED THE BC BESTSELLER LIST AND VALIDATED THE THRILLER BLOOD DIAMOND, STARRING LEONARDO DI CAPRIO.

ANYONE SEEING THAT MOVIE WITHOUT HAVING READ BEAH'S BOOK CAN BE EXCUSED FOR PRESUMING THE "BOY SOLDIER" SEGMENTS OF BLOOD DIAMOND ARE OVER-BLUSHERS. THEY ARE ALL TOO REAL.

SEE THE FILM. BUY THE BOOK. ASK YOURSELF WHY PEOPLE BUY DIAMONDS.
Prine George fantasies

Lynda Williams likes to claim heredity explains her imagination and flair for drama.

Williams’ father read her epic poetry before she could read and her mother’s grandmother was a Welsh bard who wrote a book of sermons.

By day, as a Prince George librarian, Williams is an “educational technologist.”

By night she explores gender roles and rules in a futuristic fantasy world that is dependent on bio-engineering.

In her novel The Courtesan Prince (2005), the first installment of her planned ten-novel Okal Rel Universe series, Williams invented two ideologically opposed planetary societies, both colonizing space by cloning.

Connections to planet earth have long been severed and 200 years have passed since the Killing Reach War. High-tech and egalitarian Reetions remain averse to the feudal and barbaric Gelacks.

In her follow-up, Righteous Anger (Calgary: Edge $22.95), MacPherson continues to explore the two warring cultures.

The Reetions are socially transparent and regulated by the computer, the Gelacks are genetically enhanced, highly religious and regulated by the Okal Rel Sword law.

In particular, Righteous Anger focuses on the fortunes, awkward fate and fighting skills of Horth Nersal, a half-breed who was conceived as the result of a treaty marriage to bring peace between two disparate factions.

In Andrea MacPherson’s second novel, Beyond the Blue (Random House $29.95), four women in the Scottish mill town of Dundee struggle to survive in 1918.

Set during a period when many men are absent due to World War One, the story chiefly concerns Morag, who works in the jute mill, her two daughters, Caro and Wallis, as well as Morag’s orphaned niece Imogen.

While Wallis works with her mother at the mill and painstakingly saves her money in order to escape from Dundee, her beautiful sister Caro hopes to free herself via a calculated love affair.

Beyond the Blue incorporates the suffragette movement, an influence epimorphic and historical events such as the Tay Bridge disaster and the Easter Uprising. MacPherson’s grandmother grew up in Dundee across the street from the Bowbridge Works jute mill, where MacPherson’s great-grandmother worked.

The long list of B.C. authors who have worked in bookstores includes mystery writer Laurence Gough, who worked at Dutches, as did Mark Vennegru, son of Kurt. On the other side of the Strait, Robert Wiensema works at Bolen’s, and Sheila Munro worked at Munro’s. Books, as did Valerie Stetson who received the Bronwen Wallace Award for the first story she ever completed, “The Year I Got Impatient” in 2001.

Stetson’s debut story has become the title piece for her first fiction collection, The Year I Got Impatient (Oolichan $18.95). Stetson lived in Victoria for thirteen years prior to moving to Kelowna in 1999.

Having written humour and television columns for the Times Colonist, she’s now turning her story entitled “Graham Gerry’s Last Swim” into a novel.

Touched by the kindness of a Cowichan Valley settler named Dora Hume in the 1860s, lone- some trapper Boston Jim decides to search for her capricious husband in the gold rush town of Barkerville in The Reckoning of Boston Jim (Brindle & Glass $24.95). a first novel by Claire Mulligan who graduated from UBC and moved to Pennsylvania.

Dana Copithorne has provided the cover art and illustrations for The Steam Magnate (Charleston, South Carolina: Aio Publishing $22), her fantasy novel “of the Broken Glass City.” The protagonist Eson, who “inherited the steam-power legacy of his family lineage,” recovers from a disastrous relationship with a woman of his own kind, only to become embroiled in an intriguing romance with a young woman who is not who she claims to be.

Copithorne has studied Shamanic religions in Siberia, Japanese culture, Zen aesthetics, Czech literature, and Japanese and Buddhist architectural traditions.

Claire Mulligan

Fiction Factoid: After her first novel, The Sad Truth About Happiness (HarperCollins), was shortlisted for the Books in Canada First Novel Award, lawyer Anne Giardini has been promoted to vice-president and general counsel for Canada for Weyerhaeuser Company.

continued on page 32
Smoke From the Branding Fire by H.G. Pallister
This book tells the stories of Alberta’s brands and the cowboys who used them. The anecdotes cover our most famous brands and the cowboys who used them. ISBN: 978-1-55059-332-7, $25.95, pb

Wolves in Russia
by Will N. Graves
Wolves in Russia compiles over 50 years of research on the history of Russian wolves to challenge North American notions about the nature of these controversial animals. ISBN: 978-1-55059-336-5, $25.95, pb

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Rhoxas Books
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Published by New Star Books

Continued from page 31

Shaena Lambert’s first novel, Radiance (Random House $32.95) concerns the relationship between an 18-year-old survivor of the Hiroshima atomic bomb blast, Keiko Kitigawa, who is brought to the United States in 1952 for charitable reconstructive surgery, and her suburban hostess, Daisy Lawrence, who has been assigned the task to pry the girl’s traumatic story from her to serve the propaganda needs of the committee that has sponsored her visit.

With McCarthyism on the rise and experiments to develop the hydrogen bomb underway in the United States, the complex intimacy that arises between the “Hiroshima maiden” and her host mother has its own frisson born of whispered confessions and wrenching betrayals.

Having attended UBC’s Booming Ground Summer Writing Program, food writer and poet Jen Sookfong Lee has published her debut novel, The End of East (Knopf $29.95), an other family saga about three generations of Chinese Canadians within Vancouver’s Chinatown.

In this New Face of Fiction title, Sammy Chan returns to Vancouver to care for her aging mother due to her sister’s upcoming marriage. While managing a dangerous love affair and coping with her difficult mother, she begins to record family stories dating back to the Canadian arrival of her grandfather, Seid Quan, at age 18 in 1913.

History repeats itself as personal ambitions are sacrificed in favour of family goals. Jennifer Lee was born and raised on Vancouver’s East side, where she lives with her husband.

As a manager of a large corporation becomes more oppressed by the bureaucratic nature of her work, Frances, the protagonist in Arleen Paré’s first novel Paper Trail (NeWest $18.95), regularly has conversations with the ghost of Franz Kafka, from whom she learns that she appears as a character in a manuscript he is writing. She also inexplicably hears Leider music and starts to lose small body parts.

Born and raised in Montreal, Paré received sociology, history and social work degrees from McGill University, then moved to Vancouver where she worked in bureaucratic office situations for two decades.

Having received a Master’s degree in Adult Education from UBC, Paré has since pursued her Bachelor’s degree in Fine Arts from University of Victoria.

All’s not well that ends Raphael

Having received her M.A. from UBC in 1998, Gina Buonaguro has co-written The Sidewalk Artist (St. Martin’s Press $27.95), about a New York writer named Tula Rose who overcomes writer’s block after she accidently meets a sidewalk artist on a Paris street who draws angels like those drawn by Raphael.

Tula falls in love with the artist and she begins to write a novel about Raphael. They travel to Italy where her abilities to distinguish between past and present, reality and fiction, start to falter, until she begins to believe her meeting with the sidewalk artist was not accidental.

SHERRI KOOP PHOTO

Jen Sookfong Lee

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Although the first collection of stories by Burnaby-based folk blues artist Fred Booker recalls growing up black in Canada, Adventures in Debt Collection (Commodore $10) mainly recounts Booker’s day job as a repossession agent confronting debtors and repossessing vehicles with tow truck hook-ups.

Booker’s short fiction has appeared in various literary magazines and Blueprints: Black British Columbian Literature and Oration, a landmark anthology edited by Wayne Compton, one of the founders of Commodore Books. Touted as the first and only black literary press in Western Canada, Commodore Press derives its name from the paddle steamer Comodore which transported thirty-five black immigrants from San Francisco to Victoria 147 years ago.

That same steamer is also the source for the title story of F.B. André’s second fiction collection, BC Gold (Ronsdale $21.95), concerning cross-racial and cross-cultural relationships.

André, a former cafe owner in Victoria, depicts a contemporary researcher interviewing a descendant of one of the boatload of African-Americans brought to Fort Victoria in 1858 by half-black Governor James Douglas.

Douglas wanted an influx of pro-British immigrants to counter-act the encroachment of too many white, pro-American miners during the Cariboo gold rush. Born in San Fernando, Trinidad, in 1955, F.B. André immigrated to Canada in 1971. Born in 1955, André is a graduate of the UBC Creative Writing program.

New Star Books editor Carellin Brooks encouraged Brett Josef Grubisic to write his debut novel, The Age of Cities (Arsenal $19.95), a complex coming-of-age story about a male librarian from a small town in the 1950s who goes to the big city in 1959. His accidental discovery of a gay subculture is framed by a contemporary analysis by a modern editor named A.X. Palos.

This experimental novel involves the discovery of a manuscript inside a hollowed-out home economics textbook. “I was skeptical about historical fiction and its usual posture of representing historical actuality in good faith,” Grubisic has commented. Hence he has “déstabilized” that aspect of the narration. An English professor at UBC, Grubisic has also won a National Newspaper Award for Column Writing.

Born in British Columbia to French-Canadian and American parents, D.Y. Bechard of Montreal has published Vandal Love (Doubleday $29.95) about a French-Canadian family that is divided by a genetic curse that makes the Hervé children either runts or giants.

Born and raised in Regina, Devon Kruhoff of Victoria won the 2005 McClelland & Stewart Journey Prize for his story “The Last Spark.” His debut novel Compensation (Thistledown Press $18.95) is about high school and family pressures in a prairie town.

McLeod, a musician and spoken word artist, was one of 535 writers who participated in the 127-hour writing contest on the 2006 Labour Day weekend. Some 389 entrants managed to complete and submit a short novel for the competition. It was the first time in eight years that the entrants managed to complete and submit a short novel for the competition. It was the first time in eight years.
As a follow-up to Only A Beginning, An Anarchist Anthology, Alan Antliff’s new collection of essays, Anarchy and Art: From the Paris Commune to the Fall of the Berlin Wall (Arsenal $24.95) is about how art has been used to promulgate and augment political change and awareness during the past 140 years. Antliff is currently the Canada Research Chair in Modern Art at the University of Victoria.

Before the died, Dorothy Burnett, the first independent craft binder to set up shop in Vancouver, passed along examples of her book bindings to Anne Yandle at UBC Special Collections. And just before Yandle died last year, the Acanin Society was able to show her an advance version of their 80-page book, Dorothy Burnett Bookbinder, designed and printed by Robert R. Reid, with text by Norman Amor. If you are interested in the history of limited edition publishing in B.C. contact Jim Rainer at jrainer@shaw.ca for details on this book made in fond memory of Anne Yandle.

For the second consecutive year, Ivan E. Coyote has been short-listed for the Ferro-Grumley Award in the category of Women’s Fiction, this time for her acclaimed novel Bow Grip (Arsenal 2006). The award is part of the Triangle Awards presented by the Publishing Triangle. Coyote was featured on the cover of BC BookWorld’s Winter issue.

Isaac Newton once theorized that Greek chronology was about 300 years out of whack. In The Lost Millennium: History’s Timetables Under Siege (Knopf $35), Florin Diacu incorporates the research of Russian mathematician and chronological revisionist Anatoli Fomenko who believes our dating system is approximately one millennium askew.

“Up to 500-600 years in the past,” says Diacu, “the dates we have are fine. There is enough evidence to trust that they are correct. Everything beyond that becomes more uncertain the more we distance ourselves from the present.”

Far East chronologies cannot clarify the issue partly because a Chinese emperor in the 2nd century BC destroyed most Chinese documents that provided any links with the past. The reliability of radiocarbon dating is also discussed.

A former Director of the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences at the University of Victoria, Diacu is also the author of Celestial Encounters, a history of ideas in the field of chaos theory. 0-676-97657-3

It’s common knowledge that Cannuck Place in Shaughnessy was previously a mansion that served as the headquarters for a Vancouver chapter of the Ku Klux Klan, but there are many other addresses in the Lower Mainland with skeletons in their closets. Australian-born journalist and freelance writer Eve Lazarus of North Vancouver has examined the social histories of heritage houses in Greater Vancouver for At Home with History: The Untold Secrets of Heritage Homes (Anvil $20). 1-895636-80-2

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In a similar vein, from a different era, John Harris’s creative non-fiction work *Above the Falls* (Touchwood $18.95) recalls the life and times of “The Flying T rapper,” George Dalziel, and the unsolved RCMP case arising from the disappearance of two trappers employed by Dalziel near a remote Nahanni River trapline in 1936. When authorities found the trappers’ cabin burned to the ground, they suspected Dalziel of foul play.

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COordinating more than 100 contributors in two languages over a six-year period, SFU English professor Carole Gerson has co-edited *The History of the Book in Canada, Volume III* (U of T Press/les Presses de l’Universite de Montreal $85) with the University of Sherbrooke’s Jacques Michon. It covers writings from 1918 to 1980. The overall three-volume project was made possible with a $2.3-million grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRCC).

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Hip-to-sip wine buffs James Nevison and Kenji Hodgson (above right), known collectively as “Halfaglass,” first endured tasting copious amounts of wine to create *Have a Glass* (Whitecap $19.95), a guide for the young-at-palate. Steering clear of complicated terminology, the duo explored wine history and helped young connoisseurs choose the perfect vintage, sample the latest trend and order with confidence in a restaurant. Success with that book has led to a follow-up, *Had a Glass: Top 100 Wines for 2007 Under $20* (Whitecap $19.95).

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Born in Germany in 1953, Wolfgang Winteroff first came to Canada in 1983, visited the Bowron Lakes in 1986 and canoed the entire chain of Bowron Lakes with two friends in 1992. He first completed the 75-km-long West Coast Trail hike in 1994. He has since organized tours from Germany for Europeans interested in exploring the wilderness of B.C. and the Yukon. Winteroff’s German books *Kanada: Bowron Lakes* and *Kanada: West Coast Trail* have been translated and re-released as pocket-sized guidebooks, *Bowron Lakes* (Positive Connections $18.95) and *West Coast Trail* (Positive Connections $14.95).

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WHO'S WHO

L
is for Leggo

Having grown up in Newfoundland, UBC Language and Literacy professor Carl Leggo has repeatedly returned to live in the Canadian West; when he moved to British Columbia about seven years ago. His third collection of remi-
niscences and Newfie lyrical longing is Come-By- Chance (Breakwater Books $14.95), a volume of poetry.

M
is for Munro

K. Douglas Munro, Victoria-
based editor of Fur Trade Letters of Willie Traill 1864-1893 (University of Alberta Press $34.95), is the great-grandson of William Edward Traill, the son of Catharine Parr Traill, author of The Backwoods of Canada (1836) and nephew of Susanna Moodie, author of Rough-
ning it in the Bush (1853).

An employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, Willie Traill worked as a fur trader in the Canadian West for thirty years, marrying Harriet McKay, eldest daughter of Chief Factor William McKay, and fathering twelve children. He ended his career as Chief Trader at Fort St. James in charge of the New Caledonia district.

Traill's letters home between 1864 and 1893 were gathered and organized by his grandson, T.R. (Pat) McCloy, who encouraged Munro to prepare them for publication.

N
is for Nanaimo

Formerly a reporter for the Alberni Valley Times and a winner of a Jack Wasserman Award for investigative jour-
nalism on social and environmental affa-
irs, Jan Peterson has written six books about Van-
couver Island, including her latest release, Harbour City: Nanaimo in Transition, 1886-
1920 (Heritage $19.95). It com-
pletes her trilogy that began with Black Diamond City: Nanaimo-The Vic-
torian Era and Hub City: Nanaimo.

Peterson received Certificates of Hon-
our from the B.C. Historical Federation in 1997 and 1999.

O
is for Onley

The good denizens of Wells, B.C., near Barkerville have honoured Tony Onley’s penchant for drawing inspira-
tion from remote areas and his savvy for the business side of being an artist by renaming their Wells Artists’ Project af-
fer the artist who died in a crash of his own plane in 2004.

The renaming is the first step in a long-
term vision to develop an eight-
month artist development program in

Wells called the Toni Onley School.

Artists will be invited to the school to “live and work in the remote hamlet of historic Wells’” to create a body of work for exhibition.

Onley wrote an autobiography, co-
authored a book based on his travels in India with George Woodcock, and published a coffee table book.

When George McWhirter re-
tired from the University of British Co-
lumbia’s Creative Writing department in 2004, he was feted by former students and colleagues at a luncheon that included the launching of a limited edi-
tion book of appreciative essays in his honour dubbed The BOG (The Book of George). Three years later he has been named the City of Vancouver’s inaugu-
ral poet laureate. Victoria already has a poet laureate, Carla Funk.

Q
is for Questionable

Josh Wapp’s earliest comic strip book account of his struggles to over-
come the conventional medical system when coping with schizophrenia, Jump-
ing the Fence: A True Story of Break-

in Tree From the Psychiatric Industry (Self-published, unpriced, 2006) ques-
tions the validity of psychotropic medi-
cations. “It’s important to remember that there’s nothing ‘wrong’ with peo-
ple like me,” he writes. “In fact, statistics show that schizophrenics comprise 1% of the population in Canada. Sometimes I think I should wear a t-shirt that says ‘Paranoid Schizophrenic’ in public places. Some people might realize that I’m a regular person.” Wapp studies visual arts at the Emily Carr Institute and lives in Nelson, B.C.

R
is for Rimmer

Variously described as “the master of all things letterpress” and “one of Cana-
dia’s most remarkable typographic fig-
ures,” Jim Rimmer started working as an apprentice typesetter at his grand-
father’s Vancouver print shop, J W Boyd Printers & Publishers, in the 1950s, earning $15 per week, becoming type director at the Lanston Monotype Corporation in the 1970s.

As a creator of 190 digital and seven metal typefaces, he is revered by the West Coast letterpress community. Or-
organized by Eric Swanick of SFU’s Special Collections, “Rimmerfest” was held at Simon Fraser University’s down-
town campus in November to mark Rimmer’s achievements as a typogra-
pher, illustrator, designer, printer, pub-
lisher and mentor.

The gathering also marked the pub-
lication of Rimmer’s third title from his New Westminster-based Pie Tree Press & Tip Foundry imprint, Leaves from the Pie Tree. Rimmer’s press is named after “an ancient snagly old tree in our backyard, from which a couple of lovely

continues on next page
With a passion for reconciling science and religion, United Church minister Bruce Sanguin suggests knowledge of an evolving or evolutionary universe requires a new cosmology that “simply cannot be contained by old models and images of God, or by old ways of being the church.”

Sanguin urges readers to rediscover awe by examining the 14-billion-year history of the cosmos in Darwin, Divinity, and the Dance of the Cosmos (Wood Lake $24.95). His preceding book was Smashing the Whirlwind: Unconventional Sermons for a Relevant Christian Faith. Sanguin is a minister at the Canadian Memorial Church and Centre for Peace in Vancouver.

T is for Turner

The intense competition between the CPR, Great Northern and Kettle River Valley Railways in BC’s southern mountains during the copper mining boom of the late 1890s and early 1900s is the focus of Steam Along the Boundary (Sono Nis $49.95) by Robert Turner and the late David Wilkie. Turner’s 15th book, Mines and miners at Grand Forks, Greenwood, Phoenix, Castlegar, Keremeos, Hedley and Republic were connected by a network of railways that extended into Washington State to Spokane.

U is for UNESCO

Much-honoured for conceiving the Vancouver Writers Festival with Lorenz von Fersen back in 1987, Alma Lee, who left her job as festival head honcho in 2005, is now spearheading her own initiative to have Vancouver accorded a UNESCO World City of Literature designation. Other cities in the running include Alexandria, Krakow and Amsterdam. Lee has been informed that Vancouver has a favourable position as a progressive “New World City.” The only other city to have gained this distinction from UNESCO is Edinburgh. Lee was also one of many BC literati who participated in the Writers Union of Canada Annual General Meeting at UBC, May 31-June 3.

V is for Van der Flier-Keller

Passionate about rocks and beaches and the stories to be told about them, earth sciences professor and geologist Eileen Van der Flier-Keller has used 80 photos to identify 28 different types of rocks and minerals for A Field Guide to the Identification of Pebbles (Harbour $7.95). Her laminated, accordion-folded guide for young rock hounds was preceded by her South Vancouver Island Earth Science Fun Guide.

Wis is for Watts

As an independent researcher in the Department of Sociology and Women’s Studies at Okanagan College, Xiaoping Li has examined Asian Canadian political and cultural activism in the late 20th century in her interdisciplinary inquiry, Voices Rising: Asian Canadian Cultural Activism (UBC Press $29.95).

X is for Xiaoping

Having sailed together across the Atlantic Ocean from Southampton, England in 1895, Anne and Laurence Yeadon-Jones have produced a summer cruising chronicle in the mode of Curve of Time called Voyage of the Dreampeaker as well as five coastal cruising guides, most recently The Broughtons; Vancouver Island, Kelsey Bay to Port Hardy (Harbour $44.95).

Y is for Yeadon-Jones

Ellen Fremedon: JOURNALIST

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When Canadian poet Dorothy Livesay returned to Prague in 1981 and proclaimed its virtues in a Vancouver Sun article, it was too much for Jan Drabek, a novelist who had fled Czechoslovakia in 1948, lived in Germany, France, and the United States, then settled in Vancouver in 1965. Drabek wrote a rejoinder that appeared under the heading: “Poet’s Article Shows Her To Be Dupe of Moscow.” Livesay replied scathingly, complaining to the Writers’ Union of Canada that its B.C. representative had maligned her. Livesay also mounted a campaign that unsuccessfully opposed Drabek’s election as president of the Federation of BC Writers—a position that he recently resumed.

At External Affairs, Drabek campaigned tirelessly for human rights in Eastern Europe, and criticized against official visits by writers to Communist countries, on the grounds that such visits legitimized the regimes. He also took on Madeleine Albright, the King and Queen of Spain, the Queen and former British Prime Minister’s John Major and Margaret Thatcher.

As the Chief of Protocol, Drabek was puzzled by the vague unresponsive smiles of Margaret Thatcher until another diplomat explained to him that she was deaf. Her flamboyant hairdo concealed a hearing aid that worked well in a quiet room, but not in a noisy environment.

Jan Drabek wrote a rejoinder to Livesay’s article, “I know, I know,” Prince Philip told him, when they were shaking hands for the fifth time. “Never have so few shaken the hand of so few so many times to whom they owe nothing. But in this business you have to expect it.”

Drabek had a special interest in Madeleine Albright because they had Washington, D.C. connections through their fathers. Drabek’s father had been active in the Czech underground and was one of the few non-Jews sent to Auschwitz with “Return Unwanted” stamped on his papers. He was a longtime friend of Joseph Korbel, Albright’s father. When President Carter insisted on appointing some non-Jews to the Holocaust Council, Albright suggested the elder Drabek.

Drabek first welcomed Albright to Prague when she was US Ambassador to the United Nations. He expresses surprise at Albright’s claim that she knew nothing of her family’s Jewish background, since everyone else did.

According to Drabek, Hillary Clinton prevailed upon her husband to appoint Madeleine Albright as the first female Secretary of State after the two women befriended one another during their visit to the Czech Republic under his auspices.

His Doubtful Excellency culminates in a disastrous episode that led to Drabek’s estrangement from the Czech regime. With his novelist’s eye for human foibles and a fine ironic style, Drabek describes his having departed for the United Nations. He expresses the unreserved allowances of his con- sort, Prince Philip, “I know, I know,” when Prince Philip told him, when they were shaking hands for the fifth time. “Never have so few shaken the hand of so few so many times to whom they owe nothing. But in this business you have to expect it.”

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Having summited more than 450 peaks in the Rockies, often by difficult new routes, artist and photographer Glen Boles pays tribute to his closely-knit group of friends known as the “Grizzly Group” in *My Mountain Album: Art & Photography of the Canadian Rockies and Columbia Mountains* (Rocky Mountain Books $64.95).

The Grizzly Group didn’t derive its name from our defunct basketball franchise; it arose from an incident in 1973 when four tired and hungry climbers arrived in Lyell meadows in the Rockies.

“Look at that big pile of dung, it’s still steaming,” said Mike Simpson. As everyone else dropped their packs and knelt to swill some cold creek water, Don Forest proceeded towards a small spruce tree a short distance up the meadow, located in a level spot, as he looked for a good place to camp.

“We were very surprised to hear Don making a sound like a dog barking, ‘Woof! Woof!’ as he slowly started coming back towards us,” recalls Glen Boles. “Then we noticed the grizzly.”

Still saying, ‘Woof! Woof!’ to warn the group, Don Forest had to carefully go back towards the bear to retrieve his pack. By this time the bear was standing, swaying. “Spellbound, we watched as the bear looked us over,” writes Boles, “then took off up the hill, stopping once more to have another look at these strange beings.”

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Having moved from Vancouver to Hong Kong in 1987, Nottinghamshire-raised sailor Adrian Sparham rejected an airline industry promotion for a posting in New Zealand and chose instead to sail to Europe from Hong Kong via the Suez Canal with his Dutch-born wife, Lot, and their dog, Fluke, in a 37-foot steel ketch, Moonshiner.

Their odyssey is recalled in *Slow Boat From China* (NY: Sheridan House, 2006). 1-57409-217-0 $29.95
Recently there has been a spate of in-depth, well-illustrated local histories, including K. Jane Watt’s High Water: Living with the Fraser Floods (Dairy Industry Historical Society of BC) which recently won the Lieutenant Governor's Medal for historical writing.

Mr. Rogers would undoubtedly approve.

This summer’s line-up of localized literary lore includes the heartening and somewhat homespun Lantzville: The First Hundred Years (Lantzville Historical Society, unpriced), spearheaded by Lynn Reeve, as well as four impressive works on North Vancouver, Desolation Sound, Mission and the Vancouver suburb of Dunbar.

For outsiders, the most accessible general history is Heather Harbord’s well-researched Desolation Sound: A History (Harbour $24.95), a project that emerged from Harbord’s earlier profiles of Sliammon chief Joe Mitchell and Sliammon elders Elsie Paul and Sue Pielie: “Soon I realized that Powell River, where I live, was full of people who had spent their childhoods on one of the many homesteads dotted around the Sound.” Located 150 kilometres from Vancouver, Desolation Sound was named by George Vancouver.

Harbord’s character-driven history provides a map of 34 homesteads in the area that has become one of the most popular cruising destinations on the West Coast.

To mark this year’s Centennial of the City of North Vancouver, geographer and cultural planning consultant Warren Sommer has compiled a wide-ranging social history of the North Shore that has evolved from Moodyville to accommodate more than 125,000 people today, The Ambitious City (Harbour $44.95). The City of North Vancouver has 45,000 residents but Sommer’s survey includes the District of North Van, as well.

Cooperatively produced and edited by the late Peggy Schofield, a community activist, The Story of Dunbar (Ronsdale $39.95) is a 441-page volume that arose from interviews with more than 300 local residents. Celebrating people rather than Chamber of Commerce accomplishments, this feel-good summary of “voices of a Vancouver neighbourhood” contains many photos not previously published. Both playful and respectful, it owes its origins to teamwork from contributing writers that include Pam Chambers, Vivien Clarke, Shelagh Lindsay, Beryl March, Angus McIntyre, Larry Moore, Margaret Moore, Helen Spiegelman and Joan Tyldesley.

Last but not least, Graham Dowden’s exemplary photo tribute Around Mission (Gyre & Gimble $39.95) offers a superb collection of original, contemporary photos from within a 20-mile radius of the Fraser Valley community where he has lived for 32 years.

Dowden has few illusions about possibly becoming the flavour of the week. “I do realize that the distance from Vancouver to Mission,” he says, “is approximately three times the distance from Mission to Vancouver.” He began taking photos in the 1950s with a Kodak Baby Brownie and two pieces of advice from his father: always put people in the shot, and get as close to the subject as you can. After retiring from teaching at the University College of the Fraser Valley, he has mostly ignored his father’s words of wisdom with an abundance of winter scenes, including abandoned items, rural mailboxes and Stave Lake. For more info, visit abookworld.com.
Tiffany Stone’s collection of “silly” poems about animals, Floyd the Flamingo and His Flock of Friends (Tradewind 2004), illustrated by Kathryn Shoemaker, has been followed by Baaaad Animals (Tradewind $9.95), illustrated by Christina Leist. Born in St.-Jean, Quebec, Stone graduated with a BFA from UBC’s Creative Writing Program in 1991 and has worked at Tradewind Books. She writes for the child within herself—and for her children Emory, Jewell and Kaslo.

BC BOOKWORLD: Have you always enjoyed “nonsense” verse?

Tiffany Stone: Yes. My mum was British (and a teacher) so she read me the original Mother Goose poems. Dennis Lee’s Allegator Pie came out when I was in elementary school and I absolutely loved it. When my teacher asked the class to make up our own verses to the title poem, I absolutely loved it. When my teacher asked the class to make up our own verses to the title poem, I

BCBW: Have you always written kids’ poems?

Tiffany Stone: “I guess all my poems are written for my kids. They have to pass the Emory Test before anyone else gets to see them. My daughter Jewell is almost four, my poems will have to meet her approval soon, too—and she’s a tough critic! Luckily, I still have a few years before Kaslo, age one, will be throwing in his two cents worth—although if he gets hold of a pen, he’s already more than happy to ‘edit’ my manuscripts."

BCBW: Do you pick an animal and go from there? Or do the poems come to you unbidden?

Tiffany Stone: “Sometimes they just show up in my life. We’ve always had a lot of cats around so I have to do at least one cat poem. And several of the poems for Baaaad Animals were written during a very long drive to the Yukon in our ancient RV so I was musing about the ancient RV so I was musing about the cats and a pet rat gives me lots of inspiration! Sometimes poems arrive all wrapped up in shiny paper and tied with a bow. These poems are usually short. Most of the time, I have to work on them a LOT. Since my poems are meant to be read aloud, I read them aloud as I’m working on them. In fact, by the time my poems are ready for publication, Emory has heard most of them so many times, he knows them by heart.”

Tiffany Stone can’t stop making nonsense

BC BW: What’s Baaaad?

WHO’S BAAAAD?

Tiffany Stone can’t stop making nonsense

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WHO’S BAAAAD?
Having majored in history at university, Lynn Manuel has twice incorporated author Lucy Maud Montgomery into her books. The Summer of the Marco Polo is partially based on juvenile journal entries made by Lucy Maud Montgomery that recall Cavendish, Prince Edward Island.

Specifically, the story recalls the summer when a famous clipper ship ran aground in 1883. The fastest sailing ship in the world. It sprang a leak on its way to England with a cargo of timber. The girl who would grow up to become a provincial politician’s daughter was once a child on the remote logging road. Rather than walk out of the wilderness for several days on a forestry road, Tej convinces Liam to try taking an overland shortcut. Without any food except granola bars, Tej, the brash high achiever, jokingly tells Liam after nightfall, “Looks like you’re going to win the Darwin Award—you’re dying young and stupid before you can pass along your genes. Our species is better for it.”

When they know they are being tracked by a grizzly, their friendship unravels. Liam breaks his leg as they desperately escape from the bear, forcing Tej to go for help on his own.

Jay, who falls in love with the leader of a rival band from a different school. Her second Orca Currents novel Mirror Image is a character-driven story about two outwardly different teenage girls, Sable and Lacey, who are forced to work together on a project by a sadistic grade nine art teacher, Mr. Ripley.

Lacey looks like a brainless ditz in pink, whereas Sable is super-serious and has decided to dress only in black since age thirteen. At first Sable is dismissive of Lacey, believing she treats her boyfriend as some kind of fashion accessory, but Sable, who doesn’t wear make-up, gradually learns it can be foolish to judge people by their outward appearances.

The Darwin Expedition by Diane Tulsson has published another harrowing tale, this time set in the mountains beyond Whistler.

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Miranda Pearson’s *The Aviary* is a collection of sadnesses; not the fierce grief of injustice or bereavement but an endless grey coastal winter. “…everyone pretends, more or less touches life with gloves on.” All the love and/or lust affairs end badly, romance is a decoy, and longing cannot be repaired. “Desire. It’s always the same. Its folly. Its stubborn inability to live in contentment.” Any hope out there, a reprieve from wariness and weariness? Not much, not even in the series of six poems entitled “Yoga Retreat” written at St Peter’s Abbey. Toward the conclusion of this volume, one poem hints at a tentative happiness: a walk with a friend, yellow tulips. A dismayed middle-aged poet tries to make sense of it all. Irritable and nostalgic, the regrets would be disabling if it weren’t for their poignancy, “nothing is how I planned it.”

Readers who have traveled in the desert of middle age will recognize the territory. For those who have not, these poems about pervasive disappointment may entice a detour. As if. “Somebody told me It’s possible to mend the past through imagination, to breathe into it a different life.”

There is a chronic low-grade chill in the inner atmosphere but a truly depressed poet would not have sparks enough to write as well as Pearson does about depression; it’s an exhilarating paradox. The writing is not disappointing, it’s skilled. Then there is the promise of homeopathic poetics; a little more of what ails you will cure you. Perhaps a reader who can read Aviary deeply enough will be flipped out into sunlight. 0-88982-230-1

Hannah Main-Van Der Kamp writes from Victoria.
The plot of Linda Rogers’ The Empress Letters has as many twists and turns as the tunnels beneath her heroine’s mansion.

BY CHERIE THIESSEN

The Empress Letters by Linda Rogers

(Cormorant $22.95)

The plot of writing fiction in the form of letters was crafted to escape the censor’s harsh judgments in the late 19th century. As this oldest form of the novel, the “epistolary novel” seems to be making a comeback of sorts. It has been utilized recently by the likes of Stephen King—and now Linda Rogers.

Utilizing some of her own family history for The Empress Letters, the first installment of a proposed trilogy, Rogers has revisited some of the clandestine shenanigans of the upper class on southern Vancouver Island. Many of us would not normally associate Victoria’s opulent waterfront properties with opium smuggling, murder, and intrigue, but such things happened in Victoria’s past neighborhoods.

“Victoria had a very thin skin of propriety,” says Linda Rogers. “There were lots of tunnels during the era of opium smuggling and prohibition. The more I researched the early days, the more excited I got.”

Rogers put her research to good use in The Empress Letters, an epistolary novel that bristles with intrigue. Poppy, Rogers’s fictional heroine, is in her late twenties and a likely rescuer. Her daughter, Precious, has gone missing in Peking, and it’s not exactly the best of times for an exotic, privileged young foreign girl to be without her mother in China. Chiang Kai Shek and his Kuomintang are battling Mao Zedong’s communists, and the Japanese are wreaking havoc.

Consumed with grief at having to abandon to her daughter’s entreaties to be allowed to accompany the enigmatic “servant” Soong Chou on his family visit to Hong Kong with the bones of his niece, Bougie, Poppy has boarded the first ship available in an effort to find her. But Poppy is an unlikely rescuer. Considerably weakened by two bouts of rheumatic fever, she may not survive this visit to Hong Kong with the family. She’s accompanied by a close friend, Tony, her husband’s lover. Yes, you read that right.

Rogers’s fictional heroine is in her late twenties and an outsider, having grown up at the end of it, having observed this world of privilege. “But the story is fan-tasy,” says Rogers. “Any ‘real’ characters could make them,” she says, “but the story is fantasy.” Any “real” characters are based on family anecdotes.

“Emily Carr taught painting to my aunt Elspeth (Rogers) Cherniavsky. My mother’s family and the Dunsmuirs were friends. My grandmother was friends with the Prince of Wales. My mother has a decanter with his crest on it,” says Rogers.

“I know this world as an insider/outsider, having grown up at the end of it, having observed this world of privilege.”

The plot of The Empress Letters has as many twists and turns as the tunnels beneath her heroine’s mansion. Almost as fascinating is how much of the interesting details are non-fiction.

“Casanora is an actual place on Beach Drive,” says Rogers. “My great-grandmother, an amazing gardener, inspired Nora. Her beautiful hand-scraping is still evident.

“The third book ends with a revelation that bonds the generations,” says Rogers.

Having spent most of her life in Victoria, Rogers comes by her subject matter honestly, but it’s not fact masquerading as fiction.

“The details in this novel are as true as I could make them,” she says, “but the story is fantasy.” Any “real” characters are based on family anecdotes.

The Specters of Poppy’s dead father, rumored to have been shot, and of her recently murdered mother, surround her as she writes. Her first love, Alec, killed while still a teenager in W.W.1, is also not far away, and the spirits of both her beloved childhood friend, Bougie, and her nanny, Duffie—both of whom died in the same fire from which Bougie managed to rescue Precious—continue to hover.

So much death. And so much need for rescue.

Cliffhangers abound in this raksi tale. Did Nora murder her first husband, Poppy’s father? What is happening in those mysterious tunnels under Casanova? Who is Soong Chou?

Will Poppy find Precious in China? And who is Precious’s father? Is it Alec or the inscrutable Soong Chou?

The third installment, The Cheddar Letter, will be Lily’s story. The third book ends with a revelation that bonds the generations,” says Rogers.

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Rogers believes that good families make for a good world. “The goal. Thence to Hong Kong with the family. Deception in working for peace in the family, in the community and in the world. It’s a sad fact, however, that good characters are seldom the stuff of riveting fiction. The reader can rest assured that Rogers’s characters in The Empress Letters fall far from that good fiction. In fact, they’re outrageously naughty.

We await the mini-series.

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Cherie Thiessen writes from the Pender Islands (painted).
Dispatches from Tahsis

Our unofficial foreign correspondent Anne Cameron, who lives far beyond the urban shenanigans of the Lower Mainland, sends us her first report.

R ain. Such a novelty. Pussy wil lows, crocus and primroses are starring, columbine is beginning to re-grow... and the Tahsis Legion is fully occupied with planting oriental poppies around the cenotaph.

Most poppy seeds don’t produce plants so I have patriotically offered to contribute my own poppy plant babies. In spite of Harpoon and his warbirds in Snottawa, one does feel the odd twinge of rah rah. Anyway I’m tired of having to weed grass out of the damned containers.

I would LOVE to come to Reckoning 07, that publishing conference in September, and talk about B.C. books. But not to worry, Gorderator has met them handle it for me after they come back from a holiday in the Bahamas. “Wendy” phoned to say, “Listen, Cam, you’ll be 69 in August, and you HAVE to do something about your vast fortune, it has to go to RRSP to...”

And I said HUH and she said, “Don’t worry, I’ll mail you the forms, all you’ll have to do is sign, I’ll do the rest for you.”

Meanwhile I am declaring war on General Motors. DO NOT BUY A BLAZER!!! You will wind up in the poor house because of buying new brakes. Three times in the past year-and-a-half I had to buy brakes. We have hills, we have gravel roads going up or down mountainsides, so, yes, by all means, let’s have brakes.

So the damned things started to screech again, which I’m told is how they warn you you’re running out of brake power, little cunningly placed pieces of metal to howl and wail when you stop the car.

This time Agatha, my daughter-in-law, drove the bitch of a little red hen out to Campbell River to see the GM people at their big shiny garage. Totally hopped. Going to be sixteen hundred for parts and at least four hundred for labour, take a full day, they said. F---. Last month it was the computer. Double F---. Have I, at some point in some previous life, accumulated sour karma with regard to things with moving parts? Did I chop down a gibbet or take a sledge hammer to things with moving parts? Did I merit to a guillotine? I repent! If, in another incarnation, I was wont to saw through wooden spokes on the wheels of wagons heading westward, I apologize.

Speaking of C.R., one entire area of the West Coast of Vancouver Island at C.R. is now mainly First Nations people. So many of my daughter-in-law’s reserve members have moved away, they now hold band meetings in Campbell River where they live marginalized lives in truly crappy apartment buildings. Sociologically, I think that is hugely significant but are even aware of it, let alone think it’s important. So I got Hard Times by Charles Dickens and I’m re-reading it. I am really stricken by how NOW it is!!! He had much to say about how entire populations were being forced into cities by industrialization.

But not to worry, Gorderator has met the Governor and they’ll fix it all up just fine ‘n’ dandy.

Thank God for my long-time acquaintances at the Powell River Credit Union. When I win the 6/49 I’m letting them handle it for me after they come back from a holiday in the Bahamas.

“I didn’t think I’d live to see thirty”
The Spanish conquest of the New World cast a stain on the lives of all the contemporary characters. The Spanish conquest of the world was a stain on the lives of all the contemporary characters. The Spanish conquest of the world was a stain on the lives of all the contemporary characters. The Spanish conquest of the world was a stain on the lives of all the contemporary characters. The Spanish conquest of the world was a stain on the lives of all the contemporary characters. The Spanish conquest of the world was a stain on the lives of all the contemporary characters.