Mark Forsythe looks at home gardeners in THE WILD GREEN YONDER see page 4
According to the Grocery Manufacturers of America, some 70% of U.S. food already contained genetically modified traits by 2000.

Approximately 60% of the main U.S. crop—corn—is now genetically modified, and it’s mainly derived from patented genes owned by one company, Monsanto.

Approximately 90% of the second-biggest crop in the United States these days—soy—is genetically modified to be herbicide-resistant. Some 90% of that GM soy contains traits owned by Monsanto.

“Somehow, a single corporation has managed to use patent law to gain de facto control of the nation’s two biggest crops,” writes North Carolina farmer/researcher Tom Philpott in Grift, “and managed to annull the age-old right of seed-saving over a broad swath of farm country.

“Since the U.S. doesn’t require companies to label GM ingredients, it’s impossible to know how much of the U.S. diet contains genes owned by Monsanto.”

The situation is not quite so drastic in Canada, not yet, but each time someone piddles in their garden and grows an organic potato or carrot, it’s like the little Dutch boy sticking his finger in the dike.

The home garden isn’t merely a quaint diversion, or a laudable hobby, or a spiritual oasis. The home garden is a battleground for healthy living and independence—and that’s one of the reasons Katherine Gordon has written The Garden That You Are (Sono Nis $28.95).

The title tumbled out of a conversation she had with her Slocan Valley neighbour Brenda Elder who has been working the soil and coaxing plants along for 30 years.

“You know, you work with your garden, your land, and what it makes the garden and who you are,” she said.

The Slocan Valley in eastern B.C. is a fertile trough with a moderate climate and long, warm summers. Gordon describes it as “The garden hard by heaven.”

“The eight gardeners featured in The Garden That You Are all come from somewhere other than the Slocan. Edda West is an immigrant from Estonia, by way of Toronto, whose grandmother “imbued her with a passion for the earth.” She gardens on ten riverside acres and plucks plants from the wild, some for medicinal teas, tinctures, salves and creams. She “feels sorry for children who never get to experience working with the earth.”

And if the could grow only one flower, it would be Calendula. “It is edible, medicinal, and incredibly hardy, and is the last flower to keep blooming in the late fall.”

Brenda Elder and her husband Gail, were transplants from Surrey drawn to the Slocan in search of self-sufficiency in 1972. This proved more daunting than imagined, and Gail was forced to return to teaching. Brenda grew organic food for their family, and later developed a business around organic bedding plants.

Now retired from teaching, Gail is back in the fields every day, tending 13 varieties of organic potatoes.

The Elders consider their land part of a larger ecosystem and, as a result, large tracts remain wild for birds, turtles, deer and bears.

Victoria Carleton and Steve Monteur landed in the Slocan from Ohio and Oregon respectively. She spent almost five years homesteading in the Nass Valley in northwestern B.C., displaying a gardening prowess that won her a Harrison Smith gardening contest in 1985. After buying property in 1999, they got to work creating their own gardens on forty acres.

Wilda’s Columbine is from her grandmother’s seeds; and a rose bush from a neighbour honours that neighbour’s deceased daughter. “It’s not just about a patch of dirt,” says Monteur, “it’s about people, about everyone they know and love.”

The Garden That You Are includes sidebars on herbal medicines, Japanese gardening, permaculture, the humble potato (a food that kept the Irish alive for centuries and became a campaign nightmare for Dan Quayle), biodynamics (the land as a living whole) and even the benefits of yellow boxes (think mosquitoes).

Gordon also offers tips on tools, building up the soil and composting; a gardening reading list; and a smattering of recipes.

With its mixture of practical advice and inspirational personalities, The Garden That You Are just might kick a few non-gardeners out the back door to get a start on some local food production of their own, or else make more people want to move to the Slocan Valley.

The photographs by Rod Currie and Quinton Gordon capture the Slocan in the sweetest light. All that time spent outdoors serves these gardeners well: they’re all sun-baked, remarkably fit, and vibrant, content to be up in their elbows in compost.

Eliza Gooderham and Peter Slevin are profiled by Katherine Gordon

“Those social structures, if one is a gardener, are inextricably intertwined with why, what, where and how we garden,” says Gordon, “... that piece of land that we have chosen to work with (or which, in some cases, has chosen us) will in some way influence who we are, our relationships, and the events in our lives, each and every day.”

Now each home garden can serve as an outport for safeguarding your health.
For a while it looked as if the Niftiest Title of the Year Award was going to go to Eau Canada, a book from UBC Press about Canada’s water supply. Then along came Brian Howell’s cleverly titled Fame Us (Arsenal $21.95), a photo study of celebrity impersonators.

Brian Howell’s quest to create a photo gallery of look-a-like “tribute artists” was sparked by his unplanned encounter with an Elvis impersonator at a Sunday gospel meeting in the Fraser Valley Bible Belt in 2002.

Having previously published One Ring Circus, a photo study of the small-time pro wrestling circuit in the Pacific Northwest, Howell instinctively moved from one fantasy world to the next.

By the time he attended a real-life wedding between a Shania Twain impersonator and an Arnold Schwarzenegger wannabe in 2004, Howell was hooked.

Technically, there’s little that is noteworthy about Howell’s pictures. It’s his non-judgemental approach to the subcultures of pro wrestling and showbiz impersonators that makes his work both appealing and beguiling.

In his introduction to Fame Us: Celebrity Impersonators and the Cult(ure) of Fame, Stephen Osborne suggests Elvis was the catalyst for the burgeoning of the look-a-like subculture. “Until the death of Elvis,” he writes, “an impersonator was a deceiver, a con-man or fraud artist (as the newspapers like to say), or a character in a drama; but now impersonators are legitimate entertainers in their own right.”

Many of the images in Fame Us are derived from Howell’s attendance at the Celebrity Impersonators Convention at the Imperial Palace in Las Vegas—where the dealers are celebrity impersonators—as well as a reciprocal annual convention in Florida.

At left are ten photos; five are taken by Howell. See how quickly you can spot them.

According to Fame Us, “There are now at least 70,000 Elvis impersonators around the world. When Elvis died in 1977, there were between thirty-seven and 150. At this rate of growth, The Times of London speculates that by 2020, roughly one-tenth of the world’s population will be impersonating Elvis.”

SOLUTION:1, 4, 5, 8, 9 are the imposters.

978-155152-228-9

Photographer to the would-be stars, Brian Howell explores the ethos of pathos in Fame Us.
The remarkable, tormented life of Morrisseau, the man generally regarded as the Father of Contemporary First Nations art, is worthy of an opera, so Métis playwright Marie Clements of Galiano Island has fashioned a multi-leveled stage play, Copper Thunderbird (Talonbooks $15.95) to explore his complexity.

Copper Thunderbird relates a Faustian tale of the world-revered artist who became a Grand Shaman within the realm of Ojibwa cosmology while succumbing to the effects of family abuse, alcoholism and extreme poverty—including wanderings on the streets of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside.

The result is a composite vision of a fractured life that ranges from the Fort William Sanitarium in 1956 (where he was treated for TB) to the Sandy Lake Reserve near Lake Nipigon in 1965 to the Kenora Jail in 1973 to the Ste. Rose Catholic Detoxification Centre in 1975 and to Los Angeles in 1987.

Halfway through the play, when the voice of the young Morrisseau regrets selling his paintings, a Gallery Room Chorus echoes the opinions of white supporters and a Flooding Room Chorus represents the conflicting views of his Ojibwa community.

Clements depicts Morrisseau as an internally embittered visionary unable to come to grips with his overall character. Three Morrisseau characters—boy, young man and old man—hold lively debates over each development of his life, alternately defending and antagonizing one another and giving the impression that Morrisseau is passing his own judgments on himself.

In one rare moment, the Three Norvals speak as one, “I am Norval Morrisseau. I am an artist, a storyteller. I am a mystic. I am a very religious person. I am a free man, a force. I am humble. I am Jesus Christ. I am the Creator. I am an Indian and I will save myself.”

Born in 1962, Marie Clements founded urban ink productions, a Vancouver-based Aboriginal and multi-cultural production company that creates and produces Aboriginal works of theatre, music, film and video.

Recently Clements adapted her surrealistic play The Unnatural and Accidental Women into a screenplay called Unnatural and Accidental, the film version of which was screened at the Vancouver International Film Festival in 2006. It concerns a 30-year-old murder case involving female victims of violence in Vancouver’s Skid Row.

Plato called philosophy “the greatest good that ever was or will be given by the gods to mortal man.”

Olympic weightlifting silver medalist Paul Rossetti Bjarnason wholeheartedly agreed, so when his daughter asked him, “What is philosophy,” he felt determined to answer her question fully.

As a result, Bjarnason has written Stargazer: Stories of the First Philosophers (John Hunt Publishing, O Books, UK $19.95), an attempt to popularize philosophy by depicting ancient philosophers in the act of being philosophers.

“The ancient philosophers remain supreme exemplars,” he says, “They are an inexhaustible source not only of wonder and delight, but also of a practical wisdom.”

“The question How should one live? was of fundamental importance to all of them. I believe their ideas are capable of leading us toward flourishing lives, to a kind of living that is consistent with our very survival as a species.”

After winning a silver medal for Canada at the Mexico Olympics in 1967, Bjarnason taught secondary school in Vancouver for twenty-two years, published educational handbooks with his wife Valerie, completed a philosophy degree—and started writing about philosophers. While completing his thesis on Epicurean ethics, Bjarnason was particularly inspired by the works of the French scholar Pierre Hadot, whose philosophical views accentuate an existential dimension.
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HOCKEY NIGHT IN B.C.

Lorna Jackson on her love of hockey and the search for the ghost of her father

Cold-Cocked by Lorna Jackson
(Biblioasis $19.95)

There is more pain in this book than a Gordie Howe elbow to the chops. In Cold-Cocked Lorna Jackson writes of hockey and loss and reconciliation. She writes with anger, wit and insightfulness. The book is one part memoir, one part a fan’s notes. But not any fan – as Jackson writes “Players don’t make meaning; spectators do.”

Taking trips to interview Canucks players in the locker room, Jackson must balance the notion that fiction writers are trained to look, with the reality of her father resurfaces, his hair dyed, with a new name and driver’s licence. After a brief time in a psychiatric unit her father returns home to his family.

Jackson writes that “Players don’t make meaning; spectators do.”

Cold-Cocked is a manifesto of what Jackson imagines hockey writing should be. “I like research that pores at hockey through the bars of cinema and television studies in which getting off on a game is more properly called spectating pleasure. The NHL machine ignores people like me, w o m e n who abhor the easy cliché, the hyper-masculine rhetoric.”

Lorna Jackson grew up in Vancouver watching hockey with her father, “sprawled on the living room carpet while my dad colonized the recliner with a big hunk of cheddar cheese in one hand and a Labhit’s blue in the other.”

In 1968, Jackson notes, “History is huge and vague when you are looking for a person in it.”

Jackson followed the dictum of her former teacher, BC novelist Mark Hodgins, who implored: write what matters, what mystifies us, what needs telling and sorting out.

Her father was a World War II bomber pilot and shereams that era in hopes of learning more about him but as Jackson notes, “History is huge and vague when you are looking for a person in it.”

With Jackson’s father’s disappearance, her love for the game goes missing as well. Jackson moved on to other passions including music, when she toured as a country musician and had a few lost years. She became a born again fan during the 2002 Winter Olympics watching Canada win its first Olympic Gold Hockey medal in fifty years. Her rationale is a great boost with the Todd Bertuzzi-Steve Moore Orwellian orgy. The publisher’s notes suggest that Cold-Cocked is a way of describing the Todd Bertuzzi “incident” (with a focus on Todd, not his victim Steve Moore). But the title could easily have referred to the shock of Jackson’s husband (writer Tom Henry) leaving her toward the end of the book. Call it Husbandless in Metchosin.

To reclaim herself and her body she turns to fitness (the book is one part insightful gym diary). Self-conscious in the gym she is painfully reminded by a friend that she is off the radar of the young exercisers in the gym.

Ultimately Jackson encourages us to create our own narratives from the game and create our own meaning. Her take on Hockey Night in Canada’s colour commentator Don Cherry is spot on, “he sticks to a simplistic narrative that invites only one, over-determined reading of the game.”

Jackson’s mix of the puck and the personal create a dense and rewarding read with precision detail sentences. She shoots – she scores!

Cold Shuffling is the author of Cedar Surf: An Informal History of Surfing in British Columbia (www.cedarsurf.com). His sport commentaries can be read at his blog http://sportscrap.wordpress.com/
A HUNK, A HUNK OF BURNS LOVE

Jack Whyte, author of books on the Knights Templar shares his passion for ballads

Fourty Years in Canada by Jack Whyte (Heritage $29.95)

In his foreword to a recent biography of Robert Servi
cs, the successful and pro
dic novelist and former actor
Jack Whyte described the magi
dal day in his childhood when he
heard a recitation of
The Shooting of Dan McGrew. From
that moment on his literary taste
was set, and his heroes were
Robert Service, Rudyard Kipling, and later his fellow
countryman, Robert Burns.

Now Whyte has detoured from his two series of novels
based on the Arthurian legends and the Knights Templar for an
upbeat memoir of “personal, of
ten trivial reminiscences” to
showcase his prolific talent for
versifying. This is not a compel
ing tell-all confessional work.

Jack Whyte’s Forty Years in
Canada is much lighter fare to
give rein to his life-long passion
for Robert Burns, Rudyard
Kipling, and later his fellow
countryman, Robert Burns.

Whyte decided to adapt
the bard’s own verse from
Tam O’Shanter and in two
45-minute sessions
produced A Toast to
Canada—Our Adopted
Land, a fifteen stanza
poem, of which this is
the tenth stanza:
Oh, Robert Burns, could
you but see
This mighty and superb
country,
I think your Muse
would hide her
heart,
So great would be your
bards’ need

To capture, with an
image terse,
A different scene in
every verse,
For here’s a country
that demands
Fair play, Bob, at the
poet’s hands.

A friend who wit
nessed the enthusiastic response
of the audience created an illu
minated scroll of the poem, and
20,000 copies of it were eventu
ally sold. Whyte was called on to
recite the piece on many occa
sions. The most memorable of
these was at the Canadian Na
tional Exhbition’s Scottish
Festival, where he stood
alone on a field before thou
sands of people.

The forty-five narrative po
ems, which form the core of this
memoir, are linked by sections of
prose that describe their gen
res and place them in the con
text of Whyte’s career in
Canada. For a wedding anniver
sary party he wrote Thank God
for John and Betty Stein,
Most won today, they will snidely say,
On a scale of one to ten,
An as prone to cheat as to eat red meat
And reduce then wits to tears.
So thank God for John and Betty Stein
And then forty years...

For his step
son’s coming of age, he wrote,
Fox Mitch, at Twenty
One:
Congratu
lations,
Mitch, your first
lie, run;
You’ve left boy
hood behind,
you’re twenty one;
A formal, legal
adult, fully gen
eral
And from this day forth,
son, you’re on your own...

After visiting his wife’s
native province, he wrote
Saskatchewan:
Only a few, a loyal few
Endured and stayed to born and grew
To love Saskatchewan and know
The beauties of her face,
For, when she smiles, her coun
triance
Is open, loving, and her glance
Will melt your heart and
brine your stature
With pride, and
strength, and grace.

Along the way, Whyte de
scribes his arrival at the Edmon
ton airport to take up a teaching
post in the town of Athabasca,
niney miles north of the city.
His disillusionment with the Cal
tional Exhibition’s Scottish
Festival, which was “we don’t talk French in cat
tle-country.” Nevertheless it will
resonate with every teacher who
immigrated to North America
from Britain, Europe, and Aus
tralia only to find their qualifi
cations from major universities
called into question and found
wanting. Some made up the per
ceived deficiencies with courses
departments of Education;
many simply found other work.

Whyte, who was clearly a
gifted and inspirational teacher,
was one of the latter. He turned
first to singing and entertaining
in such venues as the Calgary
Stampede show and the Tradewinds Hotel in Calgary.

The many fans who have wit
nessed Whyte’s skill as an enter
tainer will, no doubt, relish
every last rhyming couplet of his

From bar chord to bard; Jack
Whyte’s first promo photo taken
in Calgary in 1968, a year after his
arrival in Canada.

Whyte plans to complete his current
Knights Templar trilogy with a
forthcoming novel, Order in Chaos
(Penguin). It will be followed by a
trilogy set in 14th century Scotland.

✫
If you disagree with that view, just try finding any mention of Marc Edge’s Asper Nation: Canada’s Most Dangerous Media Company (New Star $21) in any of the news outlets controlled by CanWest Global Communications.

Like Conrad Black before them, CanWest chiefs Leonard and David Asper are fond of saying they can’t control what Canadians think. But they do like to control what we think about — or what we don’t think about.

“It’s not just what you see in the paper,” as former Montreal Gazette publisher Michael Goldblloom has put it, “but what you don’t see.”

By some estimates CanWest Global disperses up to 70 per cent of the news consumed on the West Coast on any given day.

The Winnipeg-based Aspers own both of metro Vancouver’s dailies, most of its “community” papers and the province’s top-rated TV channel, along with dailies in Victoria and Nanaimo, several more small papers on Vancouver Island and Victoria’s “CH” television.

From Victoria to Montreal it owns 11 major dailies (including five of the top 10 in circulation) and boasts that its TV broadcasts reach 94 per cent of the nation.

Lack of coverage for Asper Nation within the Asper Nation is to be expected — and it likely does not emanate from a diktat from head office.

As Edge makes clear, the worst part of the censorship within CanWest is that most of it is now self-inflicted.

“I began to censor myself,” said Stephen Kimber, a fellow journalism professor and long-time columnist for the Halifax Daily News. He told the Washington Post, “I would remember, ‘No, I’m not supposed to write about that.'”

Kimber quit after writing a column he knew would be spiked. It criticized the Asper’s brief, clumsy 2001 experiment with “national” editorials written in Winnipeg and reprinted in all chain papers except the Vancouver’s dailies would make the cookie-cutter nature of the enterprise too blatant). Once the Aspers’ head office had taken a stand, no paper was allowed to run an editorial opposing it.

This seemed to contradict CanWest’s position as set out in its brief to the government’s Heritage Committee on Dec. 10, 2001: “Each (of our newspaper) is relentlessly local in its coverage and fiercely independent in its editorial policy.”

A month later CanWest founder Israel “Izzy” Asper was singing a different tune: “As publisher-in-chief, we are responsible for every single word which appears in the papers we own, and therefore on national and international key issues, we should have one, not 14 official editorial positions.”

At the time of the furor CanWest was still using the Southam family name for the chain, its stylized torch logo appeared on each editorial. Edge notes: “The Southam ‘brand,’ which had been bought by CanWest from Conrad Black, stood for quality journalism. Just as importantly, it stood for local independence for publishers.

As ONE WHO WORKED
for the chain under three owners, I’d say that’s an overly rosy depiction of that stodgy operation. [Full disclosure clause: I have known Edge for 30 years; we both worked for Southam papers in Calgary and Vancouver.] Then again, each owner that followed made the one before look better.

In retrospect the Southam’s paternalism seemed generous compared with Black’s condescension. Now the hacks gather at bars and say, “At least Black spent money on newrooms instead of starving them like this bunch.” (In fact, Black did spend on the National Post, but other newrooms were squeezed to help pay for it.)

The HQ editorial provoked outrage, especially at the Montreal Gazette, where reporters retaliated by threatening their bylines. That may sound like a harmless gesture, but it infuriated the Aspers, who retaliated by threatening suspensions. The staff escalated the battle through leaks to other media and a website called, provocatively enough, the “Gazette Intifada.”

Digging in his heels, David Asper famously borrowed a lyric from R.E.M. in a December 2001 speech: “I can say to our critics, and especially to the bleeding hearts of the journalist community, that it’s the end of the world as they know it, and I feel fine.”

In Asper Nation, Edge recounts a less-publicized part of that speech that spoke eloquently of the younger Aspers’ mindset: “If those people in Montreal are so committed, why don’t they just quit and have the courage of their convictions? Maybe they should go out and, for the first time in their lives, take a risk, put their money where their mouth is, and start their own newspaper.”

A sneering rich kid who inherited his newspapers challenging wage-earners to start their own . . . well, that’s one way to inspire your employees, I guess. But he could hardly challenge them to quit CanWest and work elsewhere, because there’s not much elsewhere left.

According to Marc Edge, that was the whole point of the Aspers’buying spree: Eliminating competition. Controlling editorial pages is all well and good, but it’s the ad revenues that count. Leonard Asper, Edge writes, was passionate about “convergence” — using the newspapers and TV network to promote each other and the web to promote both.

Convergence was a buzzword in media circles for a few years, but it has yet to live up to the hype. Maybe that’s because the Aspers, who made their millions in broadcasting, didn’t know much about the newspaper business they spent $3.2 billion to acquire. Here’s Leonard in a 2001 speech: “In the future, journalists

continued on page 16

Publisher vs Writer

From Southam to Black to Asper, Marc Edge exposes the emergence of convergence

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continued on page 16
EDGE MAKES IT CLEAR THE brothers inherited their belligerence from their father, a tax lawyer, politician, entrepreneur and jazz dabbler who died in 2003. AsEdge tells it, Asper père saw pretty much every partner he ever had and was still pursuing a libel action against a critic at the time of his death. Though once leader of the Manitoba Liberal party, he was a fiscal conservative whose views on most things — except his buddy Jean Chrétien — dwindled nearly with the turn of Contad Black.

A couple of early chapters in Asper Nation are devoted to Black. Much of this is necessary to set the Asper empire in context, but Edge dwells on him perhaps a little too much. Do we really need to know about his lordship’s connection with the shadowy Bilderberg group? Some of the most dispiriting passages in the book are those showing how funding from CanWest and other big media has compromised journalism schools. In 2000, when CanWest bought Southam, Donna Logan, the founding director of UBC’s Sing Tao School of Journalism, said of convergence: “The dan-

More depressing still is the litany of feeble government efforts to rein in media concentration, from the Davey Commission of 1970 to the CRTC’s September 2007 hearings on convergence. How effective were the latter? In December the regu-

lars in 2003, but they have been accelerating central-

ized news handling. More news articles and entertainment reviews are boilerplate generated in one newsroom and printed chain-wide. Entire pages of western papers are being laid out at the Hamilton Spectator. Meanwhile layoffs and buyouts proceed apace; some newspapers have half the editorial staff they had 15 or 20 years ago. Not surprisingly, readership is headed that way, too. As Edge readily concedes, events keep over-

taking his research, and not for the better. As Edge readily concedes, events keep over-

rangement, with only one wholesale bakery so long as there are two fee every day? With no need for expensive presses, in-

the “Asper disaster” would be CRTC regulations limit-


dia to its banana-republic condition. It contains little in the way of original research — no new studies and few if any fresh interviews — but is a thorough and concisely compendium of relevant information and quotation, as the voluminous notes attest. (Note to New Star: that welter of information deserves a better index.)

EDGE’S PROSE HAS A' tabloid momentum to it. He’s at his best cutting to the chase but a little wobbly when he wanders into meta-

phrase (“..., the proverbial straw that would catapult the CanWest controversy onto the national stage.”)

Like many of us baby-

boomers who have left the newspaper business in dis-

gust, Edge has little to say about online news beyond noting that CanWest wants to monopolize that, too.

It’s true that so far there’s little to recommend the “citizen journalists” touted by net geeks as the replacement for dead-tree technology and hierarchi-

cal news organizations. If you find an actual news story among the ill-informed bliving online, chances are it is originally came from one of those dinosaurs of “old media.” Newspapersharing takes skill and money, and so far no one has found a way to make news websites pay.

But there are worthwhile online news sources such as the Tyee (thetyee.ca) and e-book technology is im-

proving all the time. If you can download a digital book for a fee every month, why not a digital newspaper for a fee every day? With no need for expensive presses, in-

dependent news groups might rise again.

The Girl in the Backseat

Norma Charles

This young adult novel tells the story of a young girl who escapes from an authoritarian religious commune to the Kootenays by stowing away in a Mini — a trip that will take her across Canada with adventure and danger at every step of the way.

The Old Brown Suitcase

Lillian Boraks-Nemetz

A new edition of the award-winning novel that tells the true story of a young girl who escapes the Warsaw Ghetto during WWII, hides under an assumed name and then later takes up the challenge of making a new life for herself in Canada.

The Anachronicles

George McWhirter

These unusually rich poems are both proto- and post-colonial. McWhirter enacts the discovery of the new world, looking both back at the Spanish and the British in their first landings and forward to what becomes of that new world, with all its present-day pop culture.

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These unusually rich poems are both proto- and post-colonial. McWhirter enacts the discovery of the new world, looking both back at the Spanish and the British in their first landings and forward to what becomes of that new world, with all its present-day pop culture.

The Girl in the Backseat

Norma Charles

This young adult novel tells the story of a young girl who escapes from an authoritarian religious commune to the Kootenays by stowing away in a Mini — a trip that will take her across Canada with adventure and danger at every step of the way.

ISBN 978-1-55380-054-5 6 x 9 100 pp $15.95 pb


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The Islets of Langerhans

A bout of severe illness, Janis Harper, co-founder and editor of The Republic of East Vancouver newspaper, has gathered memoirs of close calls with death and/or demeaning debilitation for Body Breakdowns: Tales of Illness & Recovery (Anvil $18).

Given the subject matter, you'd think the collection would be grim—but it's frequently comedic and invariably enlightening. The stories of mostly middle-age perseverance remind us that bodies are like cars; they can't run forever without encountering serious maintenance issues. How and where you try to get them fixed is a maze of possibilities and choices.

The following excerpt by Stephen Osborne is about coping with diabetes. 978-1-895636-86-4

The Islets of Langerhans

For most of a year my health had been deteriorating rapidly. Symptoms appeared and never went away: I presumed that I had begun to age too quickly and that I should prepare myself for death.

I was urinating every hour, and my vision was often blurry: symptoms perhaps of a collapsing prostate and advancing blindness. I hadn't been to a doctor since 1966: Was I now paying the price of a collapsing prostate and advancing blindness?

When I woke up in the morning and said how well I looked (so lithe, so svelte!)—I could barely form words in my mouth. A short time after that I woke up in the morning and heard a voice say: "Osborne, you have diabet..." A simple declarative sentence.

"Diabetes" was merely a word to me then; I knew nothing more about it. But the directive seemed clear enough, and I went down the hill to the clinic where I had been unable to remember it during my bladder. I realized that I had been suffering from a condition of the blood brought on by a defect in my pancreas, in the "islets of Langerhans," to be precise, and that the name of the disease was "diabetes," a condition described (as I would later read) by a Greek physician in 150 BC as "a melting of the flesh into urine." So it must have been my pancreas—or perhaps the islets of Langerhans—talking to me early that morning, and now I try to include my organs in my thoughts whenever I can. (An interesting exercise: try acknowledging your spleen sometime, or your liver, or your pressure in my eyes disappeared. Slowly my body began to work as it had so long ago when I had been healthy. The tingling in my fingers went away, and I could go for half a day without emptying my bladder. I realized that I had never known what health was. Certainly I had been unable to remember it during the time of my sickness, which, as health came to me, I understood to have been about four years. Soon I was aware in normality: My eyesight improved, and I had to get out an old pair of glasses because the new ones no longer worked.

The diagnosis was a gift of knowledge, as well as health. Now I knew something of healing, and how ill health makes the world invisible. For a while the doctor who made my diagnosis seemed to me to be touched with genius, and it took months for the projection to wear off and for me to realize why I had stayed away from doctors for thirty-four years, for he knew almost nothing of diabetes and was unable to treat the side effects when they returned, or to regulate my fluctuating sugar levels. I had to tear myself away from him and seek our health wherever I could find it.

I turned to the "literature," a great sinkhole of medical bafflebag and self-help nonsense (a book in the public library warns diabetics not to smoke marijuana because it is "an illegal substance"), and began monitoring my own blood sugar. The pain in my legs subsided slowly, and eventually I started wearing tights under my trousers to soothe the nerve endings in my skin.

Now I was walking without pain. Complications made me angry only in a mild way, because I was no longer lost in a rage: Instead I began to make my way into the world (later I discovered the therapeutic power of cinnamon and alpha-lipoic acid). I pulled on my tights in the mornings and felt like a secret Elizabethan courtier. I was learning to pick up things left undone for years, and to begin them again.

Stephen Osborne is the publisher of Geist magazine, home of the Beer Map of Canada.

“My bodies are amazing things and will continue to surprise us with either their resiliency or their betrayals. The only thing we can count on is that with age comes change and only for the worse. You can fight it all the way to the grave in stubborn denial, or you can accept that once things start backfiring, you’re starting down a slippery slope and the ride ain’t gonna be pretty. Unfortunately, for better or worse, we don’t all get the bodies we deserve.” —Bonnie Bowman, contributor
There are more than 5,000 Frank Swannell photos in the Provincial Archives, and researcher Jay Sherwood has sifted through more than half of them for Surveying Central British Columbia, A Photojournal of Frank Swannell, 1920-1928 (Royal BC Museum/UBC Press $39.95), his second book about the remarkable surveyor.

Having spent three summers visiting the locales that Swannell surveyed, Sherwood has compiled a superb record of Swannell’s vast contribution to the province during the 1920s when he was camping with his crew in an area stretching from Prince Rupert to the west, Smithers to the north, Prince George to the east, and Bella Coola and Williams Lake to the south.

Swannell followed Alexander Mackenzie’s route to the Pacific, mapping the explorer’s path in accordance with Mackenzie’s journal, and photographing many of the landmarks that Mackenzie described. More importantly, his camera and journals have provided a lasting record of the cultures and people that he met, including some characters described in Theodora Stanwell-Fletcher’s classic wilderness memoir Driftwood Valley.

Swannell’s photograph of a nine-metre-high G’psgolox mortuary totem pole, carved in 1872, is one example of his unpaid sociological fieldwork. This historic G’psgolox pole, first erected on the banks of the Kitlope River near the foot of Gardner Canal, was commissioned by Chief G’psgolox of the eagle clan to give thanks for the fact that relatively few of his Haisla people died during the smallpox epidemics of the 1860s.

This pole remained in place as a geographic marker and cultural symbol for decades until the Swedish consul in Prince Rupert, with the aid of a local Indian agent, decided the Misk’usa village on the Kitlope River was abandoned.

At the time, Sweden was one of the few countries in Europe that did not already have at least one major totem from the Pacific Northwest, so they had the pole cut down in 1929 and sent it to the Folken Museum Etnografiske in Stockholm.

The Haisla instigated negotiations to have the pole repatriated in the 1990s. They carved two replicas of the pole. One was sent to the museum in Stockholm. The other replica was erected at the original site in Misk’usa.

Frank Swannell’s three photographs of the pole were essential to the process of reclamation. In 2006, Sweden returned the original totem pole to the Haisla in Kitimat. It is, according to Sherwood, “the first totem pole repatriated from Europe to a First Nations community.”

Swannell’s surveying work and photos prior to World War One are also featured in Sherwood’s first book, Surveying Northern British Columbia (Caitlin 2004). “His photos appear in most books that cover the BC Interior in the early 20th century,” says Sherwood, now a teacher-librarian in Vancouver, “yet he is seldom given more than passing credit.”

While maintaining his primary residence in Victoria, Swannell worked throughout most of British Columbia for at least 40 years, taking time to fight in World War One and join an anti-Bolshevik force in Siberia in 1919 where he was wounded in the shoulder. “To be an explorer was my great aim in life,” he told the Daily Colonist in 1963. He died in Victoria in 1969.

Swannell’s many summers in north-central B.C. are commemorated by the Swannell Ranges, Swannell River and Mount Swannell.
When Hunter S. Thompson died, Rolling Stone publisher Jann Wenner devoted an entire issue to the gonzo journalist, recognizing his importance to the publication. We feel much the same way about Jane Rule, so we’ve prepared this 4-page supplement as a pull-out section.
Although she is admired for her groundbreaking 1964 novel *Desert of the Heart*, in which a woman fell in love with a man, Jane Rule was long concerned with issues of truth and freedom beyond the realms of sexuality. Filmmaker seated by monitoring her six-film frame and her husky voice, but she was much more than a human lighthouse signalling the way for increased tolerance and respectability. A recent controversy about who loved in laugh, drink and smoke, she was revered in the Gulf Islands as ‘the Bank of Galilea’ because she provided free financial assistance. Equally important, literary deans of young women she was a close friend to this publication.

For six decades, Jane Vance ‘Jinx’ Rule was one of the most mature, humourous and responsible voices in Canadian letters, and for twenty years she was a close friend to this publication.

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REMEMBERING JANE RULE

Jane Rule’s testimony in the Supreme Court of B.C. on behalf of Little Sister’s Book and Art Emporium on October 24, 1994, during a constitutional challenge to Canada Customs’ practice of seizing materials destined specifically for a gay and lesbian bookstore, was published as Detained at Customs: Jane Rule Testifies at the Little Sister’s Trial (Lazarsa Press, 1995). Specifically, Rule was responding to the seizure by Canada Customs officials of her novels The Young In One Another’s Arms and Contract With the World, as well as the movie versions of Desert of the Heart—a 1985 feature film directed by Deanna Deitch and starring Helen Shaver, Patricia Charbonneau and Audra Lindsey. Interviewed by Xtra West magazine, Little Sister’s co-owner Jim Deva recalled the importance of Rule’s galvanizing testimony that day: “She was in a wheelchair at that time and I got the honor of wheeling her up to the stand. As I was rolling her up and looking at the judge it was like, ‘You know this is a very important person. You listen to this person.’ That’s what I was trying to project. This is the best we have. If you cannot understand our community, listen to this woman and she’ll explain our community to you.” She spoke very quietly, very eloquently. I think her testimony really did help make that judge realize that we really were talking about our community and how censorship is so offensive, so deeply offensive. Before that, I don’t think he really understood it.”

Having written for mainstream magazines such as Chatelaine and Redbook, as well as the lesbian journal The Ladder back in the 1960s, Rule began writing a column called Sex Your Grandmother for the Toronto-based gay newspaper The Body Politic after its offices were raided in December of 1977 by Operation P, an anti-pornography unit that charged the publication for its series on intergenerational relationships, specifically a piece called Men Loving Boys Loving Men. During her ten years of contributing to the paper, she maintained a lively correspondence with editor Rick Bebout.

Still widely known for her groundbreaking novel Desert of the Heart, Rule is the subject of a Genie-awarding winning documentary, Fiction and Other Truths; A Film about Jane Rule, made by Aeryn Weissman and Lynne Ferney in 1995. She has also received the Canadian Authors Association best novel and best short story awards, the American Gay Academic Literature Award, the U.S. Fund for Human Dignity Award of Merit, the CNIB’s Talking Book of the Year Award and an honorary doctorate from U.B.C.

Rule consistently encouraged and supported other artists and would-be artists, including students from the nearby Galiano Island Film and Television School. During her illness, Rule offered her final collection of short essays, Loving the Difficult, to Hedgerow Press, the imprint of neophyte publisher Joan Coldwell.

A heavy smoker and avid drinker, Jane Rule died, with strength and dignity, of liver cancer complications on November 27, 2007, in the same room in which she and Helen Sontloff had first slept when they came to Galiano in the mid-1970s. Initially she had wanted to leave the island for palliative care in Vancouver, allying herself with the task of caring for her, but she was persuaded to remain on Galiano where local physician Dr. David Beaver oversaw the round-the-clock care that was provided by Rule’s niece and her gay partner—both named Allison—who inherited the house.

“I have no ambition to live to a great age,” she told Douglas Todd in 1994. “I think old age is for the pits. I’ve seen it. To outlive your usefulness is not to me a great thing.”

Many of her comments during her final illness were typically funny. She staunchly avoided all malarky about life after death. “Don’t say I ‘passed away’ or ‘passed on,’” she joked, “I’ll come back and haunt you.”

A jam-packed memorial gathering was held at the Galiano Community Hall on Sunday, December 9, 2007, during which friends, relatives and admirers recalled her personality. Her literary executor and close friend Shelagh Day praised her “enormous social appetite.”

Robinson sent condolences from France; former Lieutenant Governor Iona Campagnolo, whose grandfather had helped build the hall, sent a message praising Rule as “a remarkably courageous role model.” Other comments included:

• “Jim was the most generous, wise, quick-witted and loving person I’ve ever met.” —Libby Walker, Jane Rule’s younger sister
• “What a wonderful, wonderful woman. Wow.” —The Reverend Margaret Edgar
• “Jane made an excellent boss. She made you feel important and respected. To clean the pool, she paid $10 an hour for 15 minutes of work at age 11.” —Zack Morrison, local youth
• “She taught me how to live a life that mattered. Jane Rule is the tallest tree on Galiano Island.” —Judy Baca, artist
• “What she most believed in was freedom—freedom of speech and freedom to love who you liked. Jane is a beacon in dark times. She was generous. She gave me such an insight into human nature. I would like to thank you, Jane, for all the laughter.” —Margaret Griffiths
• “She asked the important questions and let people hear her own answers.” —Ken Stein, magazine editor
• “There’s dinosaurs. There’s the Romans. And there’s Jane and Helen. The times we shared are priceless.” —Ellie Jane Rule’s nephew
• “Jane’s gift was her enormous human curiosity, and she shared it with many people. She loved each of us freely and uniquely.” —Shelagh Day

Above the stage for the memorial gathering, Rule’s own words were posted for all to see: “I hope I’m remembered for being lusty and feisty and full of life.”

Jane Rule with David Robinson and Audrey Thomas

Jane Rule: “I also think that a relationship based on sexual fidelity is silly. I don’t have anything against sexual fidelity, but…. making sexuality the one commitment that you give to the other person seems archaic and goes back to men owning women and wanting to know that their children are their own.” —from an interview conducted by Joanne Sealy, July 14, 2006.
Canada in 1911.
Teit named more than seventy Tahltan adults (about one-third of the population at that time) and managed to amass 191 artifacts, 196 song recordings, 167 photographs and 130 mythological tales. This enduring legacy for the appreciation of the Tahltan culture is the subject for Judy Thompson’s recent book, Teit & the Tahltan (2004).

As shown in this above photo, taken by Marius Barbeau, of Frank Bolton (Tralahae) and Sarah Wilson recording a Nisga’a song along the Nass River in 1927, ethnologists such as Barbeau and James Teit made wax cylinder recordings. Teit used a device similar to Barbeau’s hand-cranked Edison Fireside Phonograph.

It turns out that Scotsman James Anderson, often described as the Robert Service of the Cariboo Gold Rush, had some competition from another stage performer, Jack Crawford, a long-haired U.S. army scout who was a theatrical partner of Buffalo Bill Cody and Wild Bill Hickok.

If Buffalo Bill drunkenly shot Crawford during one of their shows, Crawford took his own Wild West show north to Barkerville and Victoria. In 2004, Richard Wright and Amy Newman revived Crawford’s reputation with a stage show called Campfire Tales of Captain Jack Crawford at Barkerville’s Theatre Royal.

Statistically, it was easier to find gold than a non-Aboriginal wife. The two ‘brides’ ships’ sent from England in 1862-63 did little to adjust the gender imbalance. Jean Barman’s contributions include a short essay on the shortage of European-born women in the Cariboo gold fields.

“I never saw diggers so desirous of marrying as those of British Columbia,” commented one observer.

Given that few miners could afford to send money to bring over an English girl or a Scotch lassie, they invariably appraised potential Aboriginal partners in terms of White notions of beauty and dress. Barman has retrieved some stanzas from “The Maid of Lillooet,” written in 1862, to make her point.

Her elastic bust no stays confounded,
Her voce tresses flourished free as wind;
Wist her waist, her neck and her ankles small
Were encircled by bandlets, bowerbrought all.
Her head as the wild deer’s, erect and proud,
To superior beauty never bowed.
Like the diamond sparkling in the night,
Her ghastly black eyes beamed with light...”

Net proceeds from the sale of The Trial of 1858 are being directed to the British Columbia Historical Federation.
Having won the 2006 Arthur Ellis Award for his novel April Fool, William Deverell has again brought his lawyer protagonist Arthur Beauchamp to the fore. Based on Kill All The Judges, a title that harkens back to Arthur Beauchamp out of retirement, Deverell presents his characters, written by one of its main characters. As the title suggests, there are several judges who meet their demise in the story. One succumbs to food poisoning from eating a portion of tainted duck a Lorraine, another vanishes off a wharf, and a third’s curiosity mysteriously ends his life.

Arthur Beauchamp is asked to step into the main trial in the novel at the last moment (after much much work and court hearings) for the accused in the murder case of a judge who may have suspicious ties to the federal government in Ottawa.

In typical Deverell fashion there is plenty of humour that threads its way through this novel, and the novel is humorous, as one may expect. Many of the memorable characters, shared by Beauchamp mysteries—of faith.

The Silent Raga by Ameen Merchant
The Silent Raga, the first novel from Bombay-born Ameen Merchant is about a Brahmin musical prodigy who flees an arranged marriage to be with a Western girl who is a fellow student of music.

Bernice Friesen
The Book of Beasts by Bernice Friesen
Bernice Friesen has a gift for historical fiction in the Canadian prairies. Her new novel is about the life of an 18-year-old survivor of the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic.

Shanen Lambert
Shanen Lambert's new novel, Figuring prominence in the story, the reader realizes that William Deverell, who heroically jumps in its way.

Some butter ends up on the lipstick to work.—Bethany

Music also connects the lives of Matthews' characters. Matthews' first novel, Incidental Music, consists of seven linked stories about several couples, mainly Tannis and her husband Stephen. Before she wed, Tannis's father had told her "there is a bond and a pothole to follow in Beauchamp's footsteps. Change plays a big part in this novel, and this reviewer hopes to read more stories about him again.

Arthur remains cruxy but compassion-at. Like many of us, he does not know how to say "No" and frequently wishes he had. He would rather be relaxing, fishing, spending time with his grandson or reading from Virgil's Aeneid. Is he really William Deverell in disguise? The question is part of the appeal for this series.

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THUMPING JACKS

Chris F. Needham plays Lucy with the truth to unravel congenital violence

BY CHERIE THIESSEN

Falling from Heights by Chris F. Needham (House of Havoc Publishing, $21.95)

You don't want to mess with the three Jacks boys, Jonathan, Robert and Jeremy. In Falling from Heights, none of them can sustain last- ing relationships.

Jonathan, the elder by sixteen years, is a sexual predator. Jailed earlier for his attacks on young girls, he has done his time and now lives in a heritage home in a respectable Langley community; closely monitored 24/7 by four full-time employees.

Robert has left his second wife, and a three-year-old daughter who has no interest in, in favour of impregnating one of his high school students, whom he subsequently may have assisted off the Knight Street Bridge. The parting student Sukhvinder, and her unborn child, unsurprisingly didn't survive the plunge—or fall.

Although he doesn’t drink, Robert loves to beat the hell out of guys in bars, he loves to watch his twin brother, Jeremy, get drunk, is the best of the three, and the plot is engaging, the author leaves us crumbs to find our way out of the maze, as the author leaves us crumbs to find our way out of the maze, but there’s a great deal about this one.                         978-0-9739558-1-1

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Both younger brothers, now close to 30, return to the family home with their Dad, a home that is constantly losing ground to a rapacious ravine. There has never been a mother in the picture. Jon Sr. has told his boys she died while on a honeymoon with her second husband.

The present-day story of the Jacks family is posted on blog entries on the Internet by someone with the pen name of Lucy. Given that the only Lucy we meet in the story is a cat at the eldest son’s guarded residence, we are intrigued to learn more.

The twins and their relationship feel very credible, and the plot is engaging, so with all of this excitement going on, you would think it would be easy to get yanked quickly into this novel. In fact, it’s a struggle at first, mostly because of the author’s style.

Chris F. Needham: Delving into violence in the suburbs of Vancouver

Chris F. Needham, author of An Inverted Sort of Prayer, has been writing as a professional writer by day, and a freelancer by night, for over twenty years. He is the author of three previous novels: Sort of Prayer, Afternoon Delights and An Inverted Sort of Prayer. His third novel, Falling from Heights, is a welcome juxtaposition.

The letters from Birdie, some of which Jeremy finds in the family home, are 30 years old. Articulate, funny and insightful, Birdie’s writing pulls us in right from the start and fortifies us for the frequent ‘trips’ back and forth to the Jacks brothers. We won’t miss who Birdie is, and what she has got to do with the chaos and carnage in the lives of the Jacks twins.

Needham’s levitation of “Lucy’s” modern communication method of blogging with the somewhat passé action of letter writing by Birdie makes for a welcome juxtaposition.

Plots can sometimes benefit from being convoluted, as it is the author leaves us crumbs to find our way out of the maze, but there’s a great deal about this one. The letters from Birdie, some of which Jeremy finds in the family home, are 30 years old. Articulate, funny and insightful, Birdie’s writing pulls us in right from the start and fortifies us for the frequent ‘trips’ back and forth to the Jacks brothers. We won’t miss who Birdie is, and what she has got to do with the chaos and carnage in the lives of the Jacks twins.

Adding to the intrigue is the mother of these twins and where the heck is she? Flashes of a Lexus, a missing person, and her no-good boyfriend, who is also keep flicking throughout the novel, piquing our curiosity and further knitting together this dark story.

Symbolism is everywhere, from the ravine’s encroachment on the family yard, to the cracking cement in the fishpond, to the unfinished treehouse for Robert’s daughter. Possibly Needham’s could be a po et’s story before he wrote An Inverted Sort of Prayer, his other novel, about an ex-hockey enforcer, that was published shortly before this one.

Cherie Thiesen regularly reviews fiction from Ponder Island.
A DANISH IN WARTIME

Chocolate éclairs, the Resistance & fleeing the Nazis in 1943

David Nathan lives above the family bakery, right next door to his best friend Eisa and her family’s toy store. David’s Papa does still the best baking in the city and Mama is making her special honey cake for Rosh Hashanah to welcome the Jewish New Year but very little is sweet or rosy in Copenhagen in 1943. Three years earlier, just before Passover, the Nazis had invaded Denmark.

Now the grownups are always anxious and secretive, and even David’s older sister Rachel is evasive about her mysterious comings and goings. Then David is asked to make a delivery of chocolate éclairs—a rare treat with cream and butter so scarce—and learns his sister is in the Resistance, blowing up buildings and railway tracks. Rumours are circulating. Bad things are happening all over occupied Europe. People are disappearing, especially Jews. Every day King Christian X deftly rides his horse through Copenhagen’s streets but as Rachel says, “Things happen that even kings can’t stop.”

Yet Mama still bakes the honey cake and the morning before Rosh Hashanah David’s Uncle with Papa in the synagogue. Soon, though, Rabbi Melchor makes a terrifying announcement. “The Nazis plan to round up Denmark’s Jews tonight. We must go home and prepare for our escape.” David’s bundled in layers of clothing and Mama snatches up her cake—she’s not about to leave it behind for the Nazis—and the Nathan family hurries to the train station. If they head to the coast, if they escape detection on a fishing boat, if they make it to Sweden, they might just be safe. If…

Inspired by a friend’s story, Honey Cake is the fourth children’s book for Vancouver story-teller and librarian’s assistant Joan Betty Stuchner. Stuchner, who also wrote The Angel Valley Klezmer Band and teaches part time at a Jewish school, provides a recipe for the spicy, coffee-flavoured honey cake and an afterword relating an intriguing history of the Danish Jews.

Artist Cynthia Nugent, who taught herself to paint and draw from library books, traveled to Denmark during her mother’s pregnancy and came to enjoy her outdoor adventures. Nugent is also the co-author of A Guide to Canadian Children’s Books with Ken Setfington.

In Pain & Wastings, Carrie Mac, a paramedic who’s worked Vancouver’s darker side, continues the trademark grint and grid of Charmed, Crush, and The Beckhons. In this latest book for reluctant teen-readers fifteen-year-old Ethan is stunned to discover the ambulance station is right in the middle of the Downtown Eastside. He’d willingly agreed to the ride-along in the ambulance but suddenly the alternative to going to court for breaking into an amusement park isn’t looking so cushy. It’s not the area’s notoriety for “drugs and prostitutes and poverty and violence” that’s got him spooked. It’s that Main and Hastings, or Pain and Wastings as it’s more accurately called, is only a few blocks away. He doesn’t want to remember what happened there, all those years ago, but as the twelve-hour shifts struggle on and the paramedic, lets on her mother, the demons descend.

B orn and raised in England, Laurie Payne set based in the Shuswap Valley in the 1960s. A widely exhibited artist, sculptor and painter, he has written his first children’s book, Mud, and the Big Blue Flowers about a boy who is persuaded he has lost his voice. This allegorical fantasy, illustrated by Ruth Campbell, also features a magic flying teapot that transports him as he searches for his missing voice.

Carla Donnelly writes from Vernon, B.C.

KIDLIT

SHORT LIST

AGES 9 TO 10

Honey Cake by Joan Betty Stuchner (Tradewind $14.95)

In K.L. Demmelm’s Rebel’s Tag, the story revolves around Sam, an angry young boy who expresses his feelings by spray painting the sign of a squirrel, his totem animal. While climbing an old oak, Sam is startled by the disappearance of his grandfather soon after Sam’s father is buried. When this grandfather starts writing to Sam, and leads him on a frustrating scavenger hunt, Sam must make the leap from reverting to a younger, more creative, and even David’s older sister Rachel is evasive about her mysterious comings and goings. Then David is asked to make a delivery of chocolate éclairs—a rare treat with cream and butter so scarce—and learns his sister is in the Resistance, blowing up buildings and railway tracks. Rumours are circulating. Bad things are happening all over occupied Europe. People are disappearing, especially Jews. Every day King Christian X deftly rides his horse through Copenhagen’s streets but as Rachel says, “Things happen that even kings can’t stop.”

Yet Mama still bakes the honey cake and the morning before Rosh Hashanah David’s Uncle with Papa in the synagogue. Soon, though, Rabbi Melchor makes a terrifying announcement. “The Nazis plan to round up Denmark’s Jews tonight. We must go home and prepare for our escape.” David’s bundled in layers of clothing and Mama snatches up her cake—she’s not about to leave it behind for the Nazis—and the Nathan family hurries to the train station. If they head to the coast, if they escape detection on a fishing boat, if they make it to Sweden, they might just be safe. If…

Inspired by a friend’s story, Honey Cake is the fourth children’s book for Vancouver story-teller and librarian’s assistant Joan Betty Stuchner. Stuchner, who also wrote The Angel Valley Klezmer Band and teaches part time at a Jewish school, provides a recipe for the spicy, coffee-flavoured honey cake and an afterword relating an intriguing history of the Danish Jews.

Artist Cynthia Nugent, who taught herself to paint and draw from library books, traveled to Copenhagen to research and flavour her illustrations. Visiting the city, she says, “made history come alive.”

Cover art by Carrie Mac's Pain & Wastings

In Pain & Wastings, Carrie Mac, a paramedic who’s worked Vancouver’s darker side, continues the trademark grint and grid of Charmed, Crush, and The Beckhons. In this latest book for reluctant teen-readers fifteen-year-old Ethan is stunned to discover the ambulance station is right in the middle of the Downtown Eastside. He’d willingly agreed to the ride-along in the ambulance but suddenly the alternative to going to court for breaking into an amusement park isn’t looking so cushy. It’s not the area’s notoriety for “drugs and prostitutes and poverty and violence” that’s got him spooked. It’s that Main and Hastings, or Pain and Wastings as it’s more accurately called, is only a few blocks away. He doesn’t want to remember what happened there, all those years ago, but as the twelve-hour shifts struggle on and the paramedic, lets on her mother, the demons descend.

Born and raised in England, Laurie Payne set based in the Shuswap Valley in the 1960s. A widely exhibited artist, sculptor and painter, he has written his first children’s book, Mud, and the Big Blue Flowers about a boy who is persuaded he has lost his voice. This allegorical fantasy, illustrated by Ruth Campbell, also features a magic flying teapot that transports him as he searches for his missing voice.

Carla Donnelly writes from Vernon, B.C.


**INDIES**

Cheewasen, Tsaawwassen or Chilton: The Land Facing the Sea by Gwen Szychter

Having self-published two books on Ladner, Gwen Szychter is back with Cheewasen, Tsaawwassen or Chilton: The Land Facing the Sea, an illustrated guide to buildings and early settlers of Tsaawwassen, excluding Point Roberts.

Szychter explains her odd choice of title: "I would have much preferred to be using the older and more pleasing 'Cheewasen' to refer to this area. However, it has been known verbally and popularly since 1946 by the spelling 'Tsaawwassen,' with no standard pronunciation, a situation that was dumped on us by a nameless, faceless bureaucrat at the Geographic Board of Canada, to be applied to 'the beach near Point Roberts.' I have, therefore, opted for the name and spelling of modern usage, even though I like it not at all. The Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what

FREE REIN TO FREE SPEECH

The Host and the Parasite: How Israel's New West Bank Settlements Are Bypassing International Law by Greg Felton

Greg Felton's The Host and the Parasite: How Israel's New West Bank Settlements Are Bypassing International Law is an inveterate letter-to-the-editor guy, resulting in him selling his own book directly from his home.

"Real power does not lie with the White House or Congress," he pronounces, "it lies with the Jewish, Christian, and Strasserian pressure groups that tell the president and Congress what to do."

It's up to each reader to decide whether or not Felton's fib-buster of fury is useful commentary or a missile from a crackpot.

A ROUBLE FOR HIS THOUGHTS

Looking Through Glasnost by Gil Parker

Looking Through Glasnost describes a dozen personal visits by the former engineer and mountain climber, Gil Parker, to the Soviet Union in turmoil, the market economy failed to materialize and western money disappeared into the hands of the oligarchs. The expectations of the people were dashed, their personal savings erased by successive devaluations of the ruble.

Terry Julian, The Seduction of Surveys

Terry Julian, The Seduction of Surveys is an ex-musician, Bartlett's self-depiction of his memoir. He recalls having self-published his title. He acknowledges that his piercing Joan-of-Arc's vision had been nothing more than a post-Klik hallucination. Chastened and bally and popularly since 1946 by the spelling 'Tsaawwassen,' with no standard pronunciation, a situation that was dumped on us by a nameless, faceless bureaucrat at the Geographic Board of Canada, to be applied to 'the beach near Point Roberts.' I have, therefore, opted for the name and spelling of modern usage, even though I like it not at all. The Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what

Dedicated to the Wide Web, "the last hope for a free press," Greg Felton's The Host and the Parasite: How Israel's New West Bank Settlements Are Bypassing International Law is an ex-musician, Bartlett's self-depiction of his memoir. He recalls having self-published his title. He acknowledges that his piercing Joan-of-Arc's vision had been nothing more than a post-Klik hallucination. Chastened and bally and popularly since 1946 by the spelling 'Tsaawwassen,' with no standard pronunciation, a situation that was dumped on us by a nameless, faceless bureaucrat at the Geographic Board of Canada, to be applied to 'the beach near Point Roberts.' I have, therefore, opted for the name and spelling of modern usage, even though I like it not at all. The Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Indian name for the area. For the Corboulds perceived as the final variation, Chiltinm, is what

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Greg Felton

http://event.douglas.bc.ca
As an admirer of Anne Cameron, I was sorry to see in your last issue that she had somehow got the idea that Malaspina University-College is anything other than a major supporter of writers and writing in British Columbia. Even before the creation of the Department of Creative Writing and Journalism in 1990, Malaspina regularly hosted readings by myriad writers, including Earle Birney, Michael Ondaatje, bpNichol, Jack Hodgins, Gary Geddes, Alice Munro, and yes, Anne Cameron.

As Randy Fred noted at your recent Reckoning 07 conference, Malaspina faculty assisted with the creation of T ethus Books, the first aboriginal press in Canada. Malaspina has presented honorary doctorates to Jack Hodgins and Carol Shields, the Ralph Gustafson Distinguished Chair of Poetry, which in recent years has brought BC poets Patricia Young, Susan Musgrave, Gary Geddes, Patrick Lane, Robert Wiersema and Tom Wayman to our community, among others. Each year, at the launch of Portal, our annual literary magazine, we welcome a guest reader; these have included Christian Bök, Wayne Compton, Sherrill Wilson, and bill bisset. And then, of course, there’s the fact that Malaspina currently has 15 BC writers on its staff, delivering one of the most comprehensive, four-year undergraduate creative writing programs in Canada. In addition to the work they do with the most important writers we support — our students — Malaspina’s Creative Writing and Journalism faculty supervise the Poets on Campus reading series in Nanaimo, the Cowichan Campus Reading Series in Duncan, the New Waves Festival of new plays, the Institute for Coastal Research chapbook series, and Incline, an online magazine written by our journalism students, among other ongoing projects.

I’d like to invite Anne Cameron to attend the launch of the 2008 edition of Portal on April 8, at which Vancouve r poet and MC Baba Brinkman will perform his Rap Canterbury Tales. I expect that even alone might give her reason to reconsider her remarks.

Frank Mohr
Chair, Department of Creative Writing and Journalism, Malaspina University-College
A long-time resident of British Columbia, I happen to think that the name “British Columbia” is an excellent idea. We have a suggestion for a new name. We know from the Diary of the Golden Hinde that Vancouver, besides being a part of my identity, is an inseparable part of my identity that I’m not about to change.

British Columbia is also a part of my identity. I’m a fifth-generation British Columbian on my mother’s side. We’ve had this name for 150 years and it’s known around the world. When I travel abroad nearly everyone I encounter has either been to British Columbia or is a friend of a member who has. They associate the name “British Columbia” with the people, land and history we choose to present.

Nathaniel Christopher Burnaby

NEW ALBION?

Generating discussion about renaming British Columbia is an excellent idea. I happen to think that the name “British Columbia,” which Queen Victoria chose a century-and-a-half ago, has undergone a name-change upon itself. The name Christopher is no longer something that I inherited from him. It’s the name on my diplomas and degree. It’s my byline as a journalist. It’s a name I’ve made my own. It’s an inseparable part of my identity that I’m not about to change.

British Columbia is also a part of my identity. I’m a fifth-generation British Columbian on my mother’s side. We’ve had this name for 150 years and it’s known around the world. When I travel abroad nearly everyone I encounter has either been to British Columbia or is a friend of a member who has. They associate the name “British Columbia” with the people, land and history we choose to present.

Nathaniel Christopher Burnaby

Hinck’s chaplain, Francis Fletcher, that Drake chose the name New Albion for two reasons: “the one in respect of the white bancs and cliffs which lie towards the sea; the other, that it might have some affinity even in name also with or own country, which was sometimes so called.”

Drake’s men nailed a brass plate onto a wooden post with an inscription mentioning New Albion incised thereon and a round hole with an English sixpence showing through from the other side, to which it was soldered. (Albion, the eponymous name of a giant in ancient British mythology, comes from the Latin albus, meaning white.) Following two recent books—the second an augmentation of the first—by Sam Bawlf concerning Drake’s secret voyage, “I am one of those who choose to believe that New Albion was, in all probability, hereabouts. The Drake-Hondius map of New Albion, in my opinion, matches Boundary Bay better than anywhere else along the Northwest Coast, and (to cite a less well-known piece of evidence that has recently come my way) since the fort “at the foot of a hill” which Fletcher avers Drake and his men built upon their arrival would have to have been near freshwater, it was probably in the region of what is now Crescent Beach at the mouth of the Niscomel River.

The site might have impinged on native fishing rights, and nearby hilly Ocean Park has a street named Indian Fort Road to commemorate the location of a palisaded Indian fort, perhaps a structural descendant of Drake’s fort, and leaving ruins known to have been there within living memory.

Albion eventually became a poetical name for England found in the works of (among others) Spenser, Shakespeare and William Blake. There is an ancillary Scottish legend about a giant named Albyn which may go back to the Alba-nians, who seem to have shared with their Celtic counterparts a love of rugged mountains, kilts and bagpipes, if not of oatmeal. Myth tends to be timeless as well as inclusive, at least this one does, and in Blake’s illuminated epic poem “The Book of Thel,” Albion symbolized the fall and regeneration of mankind.

Of course my new name suggestion, if adopted, would entail other changes. BC BookWorld would have to become NA BookWorld. And ICBC would become ICNA—short for “I see New Albion,” another way of saying, “I see the Promised Land.”

Warren Stevenson
White Rock

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How the annals of Vancouver Island have been resurrected

Raised in the Shawnigan area of Vancouver Island, at Chemainus, by her very English parents Mr. and Mrs. Richmond Beauchamp Halhed, Beryl Mildred Halhed was born Beryl Mildred Halhed in Auckland, New Zealand in 1889.

Having arrived at Shawnigan Lake in 1892, she later maintained the area received its name from a hybrid word commemorating two early Anglo settlers, Shaw and Finnegan. She married local businessman William Claude Cryer and they had one child.

During the Depression, at the request of the managing editor of the Daily Colonist newspaper in Victoria, she collected Coast Salish stories from Hu'l'umi'nuw elders, mainly her next door neighbour Mary Rice from Kuper Island, as well as Joe and Jennie Wyse for a series of 60 articles that appeared in the Sunday Magazine supplement.

For instance, also co-wrote an article with Jennie Wyse (Tatsa-Aya) for the Daily Colonist about a battle between the Snuneymuxw of Gabriola Island and the Lekwiltok from a century before.

Although she was not trained as a journalist or anthropologist, Cryer was careful to keep track of the sources of the narratives, enabling ethnographers who came afterwards to trace their origins and better understand their meanings.


Cryer's contributions to coastal ethnology were subsequently edited by Chris Arnett for Two Houses Half-Buried in Sand: Oral Traditions of the Hu'l'umi'nuw Coast Salish of Kuper Island and Vancouver Island (Talonbooks $24.95).

In his memoir Alone Against the Arctic (Heritage $19.95), Anthony Dalton recalls making a near-fatal solo voyage by small open boat around the west and north coasts of Arctic Alaska in the summer of 1984.

The narrative records his attempt to make a solo transit of the Northwest Passage in order to appreciate the struggles of an arduous Arctic rescue mission undertaken by three U.S. officers from the cutter Bear in 1897-98. The threesome set off from below the Arctic Circle in an effort to drive a herd of 300 reindeer over 1,500 miles of frozen tundra and ice to Point Barrow, Alaska.

As he undergoes his own ordeal, Dalton recalls the heroic efforts of the three men who tried to bring the reindeer herd to the crews of eight whaling ships stranded in the ice, on the verge of starvation.

Richard Antoon's To Timbuktu for a Haircut (Dundurn $26.95) is an amusing memoir about his intrepid journey to Mali, via Senegal, to visit the fabled city, and his resulting determination to help preserve Timbuktu's approximately 700,000 endangered ancient manuscripts. The title is derived from a favoured expression of his father when-ever his two young sons pestered him as to where he was going. Antoon's father would reply, "I'm going to Timbuktu to get my haircut."

Some fifty years later, Antoon's long-imagined journey was undertaken in the wake of his participation in the successful bid to procure the 2010 Winter Olympics for Vancouver/Whistler. "We were stuck. Everyone in the Land Cruiser jumped to the ground to lighten the load. Two weeks earlier I had used my hands to scuff snow from under the wheels of a friend's Jeep that had got stuck in Canadian mountains. Now, I carved a few steps of sand from behind the Land Cruiser's wheels to achieve the same effect. We pushed and the vehicle lurched forward. We continued toward Eskikane. Our vehicle's shocks abdicated. It was an exhausting experience, and I loved it. These hours, as we bore north, were among my most memorable experiences of the land—vast, faraway, uncertain. It was what I'd long envisioned Timbuktu to be."
young son who has inexplicably disappeared during an overnight stop in the Fraser Canyon. After a coroner’s verdict determines death occurred by drowning, even though no body is recovered, John Quarry continues to search for his son, Nate, fuelled by a blind faith that his son is alive. The father is arrested and nearly murdered as he struggles to absolve his guilt and wrestle with his fears.

Think Harrison Ford in The Fugitive, set in the Fraser Canyon and the Alberta badlands.

Including images of the hockey riots of 1994 in downtown Vancouver and the occupation of the Post Office by the unemployed in the Depression, with text by Dieter Roelstraete and Russell Ferguson, Roy Arden, Against the Day (D&M $60) documents and celebrates Roy Arden’s contributions to the rise of “post-conceptual photography” from the West Coast in conjunction with a Vancouver Art Gallery exhibit.

A former creative writing teacher at SFU and Kwantlen College, Marilyn Dumont, a descendant of the Red River freedom fighter Gabriel Dumont, continues to assert the legitimacy of her Cree/Métis ancestry. Dumont’s third poetry title, that tongued belonging (Kegedonce Press $21) in conjunction with the David Suzuki Foundation.

Written before an English couple made world headlines following the mysterious disappearance of their daughter in Portugal, Ron Chudley’s third novel Stolen (Touchwood $12.95) explores the frightening scenario of a father desperately hoping to find his

A former creative writing teacher at SFU and Kwantlen College, Marilyn Dumont, a descendant of the Red River freedom fighter Gabriel Dumont, continues to assert the legitimacy of her Cree/Métis ancestry. Dumont’s third poetry title, that tongued belonging (Kegedonce Press $15), has won Poetry Book of the Year and the McNally Robinson Aboriginal Book of the Year Award at the most recent Aboriginal Book Awards.

Stanley Evans’s three novels feature a Coast Salish detective named Silas Seaweed, formerly employed by Victoria’s Serious Crimes Unit. The first, Seaweed on the Street (2005), involved the disappearance of a billionaire’s daughter. In Seaweed on Ice (2006), Seaweed investigated the sale in Victoria of Nazi loot that was confiscated from Jews during World War II. Seaweed under Water (Touchwood $12.95) involves an underwater vision quest after party girl Jane Colby is found drowned, with strangulation marks on her neck.
Andrew Irvine
of UBC is the author of Socrates on Trial (UTP $17.95), a new stage play that combines views of Socrates for both theatrical and educational purposes. It’s one of his “lighter” works. Irvine, a former president of BC Civil Liberties, has also edited Bertrand Russell: Critical Assessments and Mistakes of Reason: Essays in Honour of John Woods.

For a community healing project, Agnes Jack of the Shuswap First Nation edited testimonials from 32 individuals about their experiences within the Kamloops Indian Residential School (1893 to 1979). A new edition of Behind Closed Doors: Stories from the Kamloops Indian Residential School (Theytus $26.95) has brought those memories of the school back into print.
Wistful reminiscences of romantic times in Ireland during her 20s, as well as a memoir of returning there 23 years later with her son, in 2001, are the highlights in Theresa Kishkan’s Phan-tom Limb (Thistledown $15.95), a collection of self-reflective essays and poetic narratives. It also includes a lovely piece about searching for Granite Creek, an interior community founded in 1885.

Born in 1864, English clergyman James Outram was a militia officer (in Afghanistan), zoologist and world traveller who made numerous mountain-ering ascents in the Rockies and Colombias in 1900, 1901 and 1902. In the Heart of the Rockies (Rocky Mountain $22.95) is a re-issued 1905 classic that records his adventures in B.C. and Alberta. He lived in Calgary prior to his death in Victoria on March 12, 1925.

P.K. Page has crafted an enticing children's tale about a baker who learns that money can’t buy happiness in Jake, The Baker, Makes A Cake (Olilchan $19.95). As he tries to marry the beautiful daughter of his cranky boss, Jake consents to literally sell his own happiness to Mr. Jeremiah, only to become miserable in the process. Illustrated by Ruth Campbell, this tale has plenty of plot twists, culminating in a very special wedding cake.

At long last, At the Far Reaches of Empire (UBC Press $85) by Free-man M. Tovell provides an in-depth career profile of the pre-eminent Span-ish sea captain who explored the Pacific Northwest prior to 1800, Peruvian born Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra. Quadra’s reputation suffers because there is no genuine portrait of him, a fate that has also befallen the remarkable pathfinder David Thompson. Tovell, a former diplomat who served in Peru, points out that his subject is more commonly known as Bodega or else Bodega y Quadra in Spain, United States, Mexico and Peru.

Despite the demise of Raincoast’s publishing program, Jesse Ross’ two latest titles, All-Star Sports Puzzles—Basketball (Raincoast $9.95) and All-Star Sports Puzzles—Hockey (Raincoast $9.95) will still be available from the Harry Potter folks.

Accounts of 81 fish species are provided for biologists, naturalists and conservationists in J.D. McPhail’s 696-page The Freshwater Fishes of Brit-ish Columbia (University of Alberta $90) which details the scientific and common names of each fish, distinguishing characteristics, origins, geographic distribution, life-history, habitat-use, taxonomic and conservation comments.

Ever prolific, recent Order of Canada inductee W.H. (Bill) New has added two more titles to his resume that includes some 46 titles. His latest collection of poetry is Along a Snake

Ever prolific, recent Order of Canada inductee W.H. (Bill) New has added two more titles to his resume that includes some 46 titles. His latest collection of poetry is Along a Snake
Chris Shaw's Five Ring Circus: Myths and Realities of the Olympic Games (New Society $19.95) promises to be a scathing indictment of the process of acquiring the Olympics and also the motives of guys in suits who, Drea-paul-like, have reassured everyone things can't go wrong, or over-budget. UBC professor Shaw is a spokesperson for the No Games 2010 Coalition and 2010 Watch.

Victoria Allan Hoover is one of five co-authors of Tsimshian Treasures: The Remarkable Journey of the Dundas Collection (D&M $55), about the 80 Tsimshian ceremonial objects bought from missionary William Duncan by Reverend Robert J. Dundas of Scotland in 1863. This so-called Dundas Collection was recently auctioned in New York for the Dundas family, reaping more than $7 million.

Anna Jean Mallinson: Terra Inifrmis: A Life Unbalanced (Windshift Press $17.95) provides a personal account of the author's experience with a toxic reaction to the antibiotic Gentamicin, which destroyed the hair follicles in her inner ear, eliminating her body's equilibrium. Mallinson lives in West Vancouver and contributes essays to the Vocabula Review.

Terry Watada: stories in Daruma Days (Ronsdale $14.95) recalled life in the internment camps of World War II in the B.C. interior, focusing on the Issei, the first generation of Japanese-Canadian immigrants. The Issei are again his subject in the novel Kurushishin (Arsenal $21.95). This time Watada follows the fate of a woman who is brought to Vancouver to marry a man she has never seen. Escaping from her loveless marriage and poverty, she becomes embroiled in the underground of a ruthless crime boss.

At Home With History: The Untold Secrets of Greater Vancouver's Heritage Homes by Eve Lazuras

This captivating book will appeal to people with a fascination for history and a love of heritage, those who live in heritage houses and want to find out more about their own home's past, as well as anyone interested in the preservation of heritage houses in Greater Vancouver.

Eve Lazuras is a freelance journalist whose articles on home histories have appeared in numerous magazines, including Style at Home, REM, The Globe and Mail, and Ave. She lives in North Vancouver.

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WHO'S WHO

continued from previous page

THE LUNATIC MUSE

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X is for Extraordinary

That's the decision of author Karen Tulchinsky, UBC English professor and bookseller Marc Fournier who have selected Michael Kuecken. His Vancouver Re-membered (Whitecap) for this year's City of Vancouver Book Award.

J. Michael Yates has resuraced as Senior Editor of Libros Libertad, an ambitious new literary imprint owned by Manolis Aligizakis of White Rock. The press has issued Yates' 548-page collection of his stage, radio and television plays, The Passage of Son Nis: Collected Plays by J. Michael Yates (Libros Libertad $34.95).

Y is for Yates

Z is for Zuehlke

Canada's liberation of western Holland and the crucial estuary was its bloodiest campaign in World War II but its blow-by-blow progress has been hid-den under-appreciated. Now Mark Zuehlke has extensively documented the 55-day, mud-soaked struggle of the First Canadian Army in 1944 to open the Antwerp coast for Allied shipping in Terrible Victory: First Canadian Army and the Scheldt Estuary Campaign (D&M $37.95).
DON’T CALL ME—I ISHMAEL

Truth of boy soldier story called into question

The authenticity of Ishmael Beah’s boy soldier memoir A Long Way Gone—which topped the BC Bestseller List for much of 2007 and was featured on the cover of BookWorld’s summer issue—has been found lacking by Australian media.

In January, The Australian reported Beah likely fought for only a few months in the Sierra Leone army, not two years as described in his book, and he seemingly has lied about being victimized at age 12. These revelations came to light after one of Ishmael Beah’s relatives read the book and tried to contact him via his New York publisher. Representatives of Beah have since rebuffed efforts to validate claims made in the book.

The Australian noted: “If confirmed, the revelations do not mean Beah’s tale isn’t truly terrible. They don’t mean that he hasn’t been through experiences that most of us in the developed world will never have to face even in our nightmares. But this does raise questions about the way Ishmael Beah’s book came about and how thoroughly his story was checked out.”

Coverage of Beah’s book in BC BookWorld expressed some scepticism about the impressive and worthwhile memoir: “Can we really trust him as our guide? Is he telling us everything that happened to him? We are being escorted through a nightmare by someone we still don’t really know…This is a very important book. But it doesn’t tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

A Long Way Gone debuted at #2 on The New York Times bestseller list and Time made it Number 3 on its Top Ten list of non-fiction books of 2007. Starbucks chose it for its book club and donates $2 to UNICEF for every book they sell. In November, Beah was appointed UNICEF Advocate for Children Affected by War. Life expectancy in Sierra Leone in the year 2000 was 59.5. It is now 41.

The world has changed, but we still have to grow up…

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