



Gardeners Eliza Gooderham and Peter Slevin in the Slocan Valley.

Mark Forsythe looks at home gardeners in

# THE WILD GREEN YONDER

see page 4

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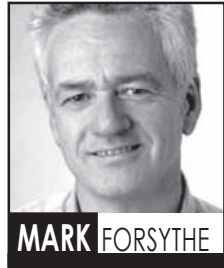
VOL. 22 • NO. 1  
SPRING 2008

**HOCKEY MANIFESTO** P. 11 • **BILL DEVERELL** P. 29

**A**ccording 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.



MARK FORSYTHE

"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 *Grist*, "and managed to annul 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 is 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."

Aboriginal people thrived in this 100-km-long valley for thousands of years; Europeans arrived in the 1890s with dreams of striking it rich in veins of silver at places like New Denver, Slocan City and Sandon (now a ghost town).

Next came the masters of self-sufficiency, Russian Doukhobors fleeing persecution; then came the British invasion.

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"Naïve young pioneers from England and Scotland were lured to the valley by enticing advertisements: 'Grow apples and grow rich!' They found uncleared land thick with towering trees and mosquitoes," Gordon writes.

Fruit trees abandoned so long ago still bloom. Some Japanese families interned in Slocan camps during WW II stayed after the war. A wave of American Vietnam War resisters and Canadian back-to-the-landers (some of whom formed communes) added another layer of history. Or is that another layer of compost?

"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."

The eight gardeners featured in *The Garden That You Are* all come from somewhere else. **Edda West** is an immigrant from Estonia, by way of Toronto, whose grandmother "imbued her with passion for the earth." She gardens on ten riverside acres and plucks plants from the wild, some for medicinal teas, tinc-

tures, salves and creams. She "feels sorry for children who never get to experience working with the earth."

And if she 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 Mounter** 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 *Harrowsmith* gardening contest in 1985. After buying property in 1990, 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 Mounter, "it's about people, about everyone they know and love."

*The Garden That You Are* includes sidebars on herbal medicinals, 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 swallow boxes (think mosquitoes).

Gordon also offers tips on tools, building up the soil and composting; a garden 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 to their elbows in compost.

1-55039-160-7

Mark Forsythe is the well-read & well-travelled host of CBC Almanac.



Eliza Gooderham and Peter Slevin are profiled by Katherine Gordon

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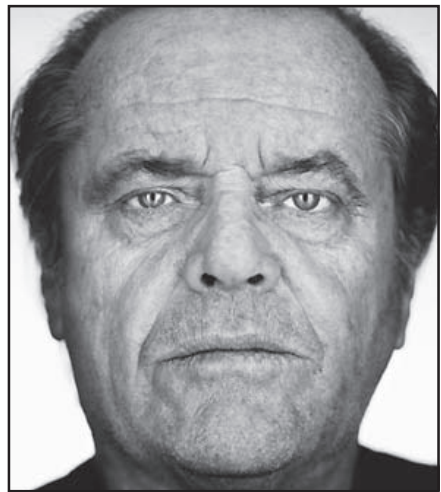
SPOT THE **IMPOSTER**: which is real?



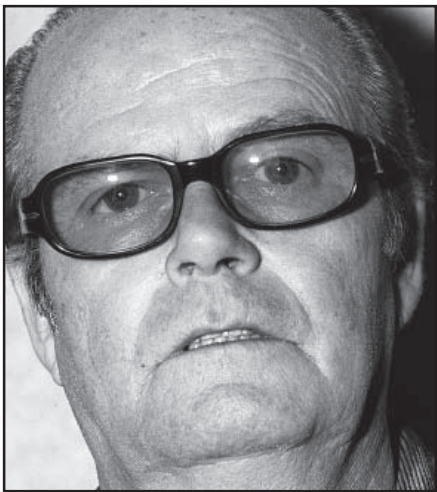
Madonna (1)



Madonna (2)



Jack Nicholson (3)



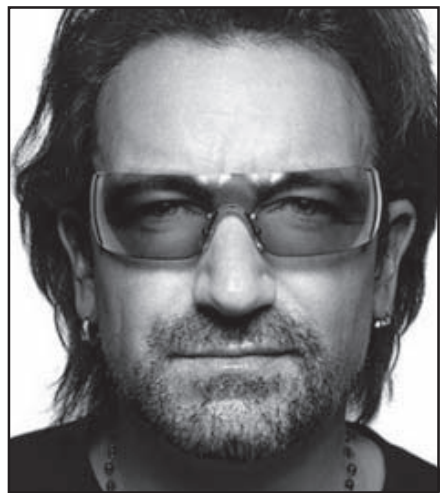
Jack Nicholson (4)



Hillary Clinton (5)



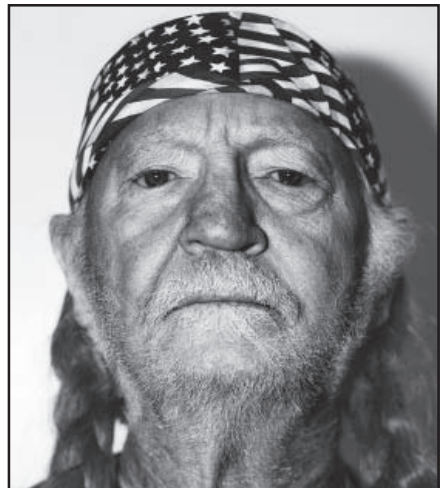
Hillary Clinton (6)



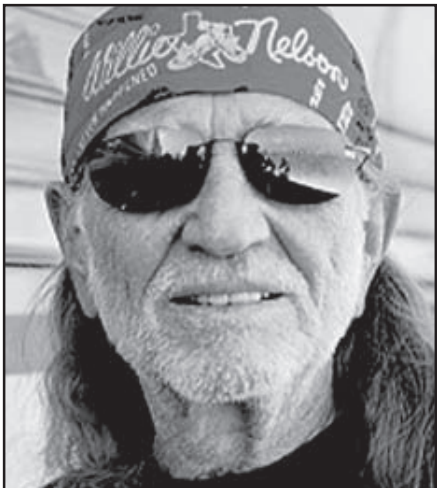
Bono (7)



Bono (8)



Willie Nelson (9)



Willie Nelson (10)

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

# ELVIS

## NEVER LEAVES THE BUILDING

Photographer to the would-be stars, **Brian Howell** explores the ethos of pathos in *Fame Us*

**F**or 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.

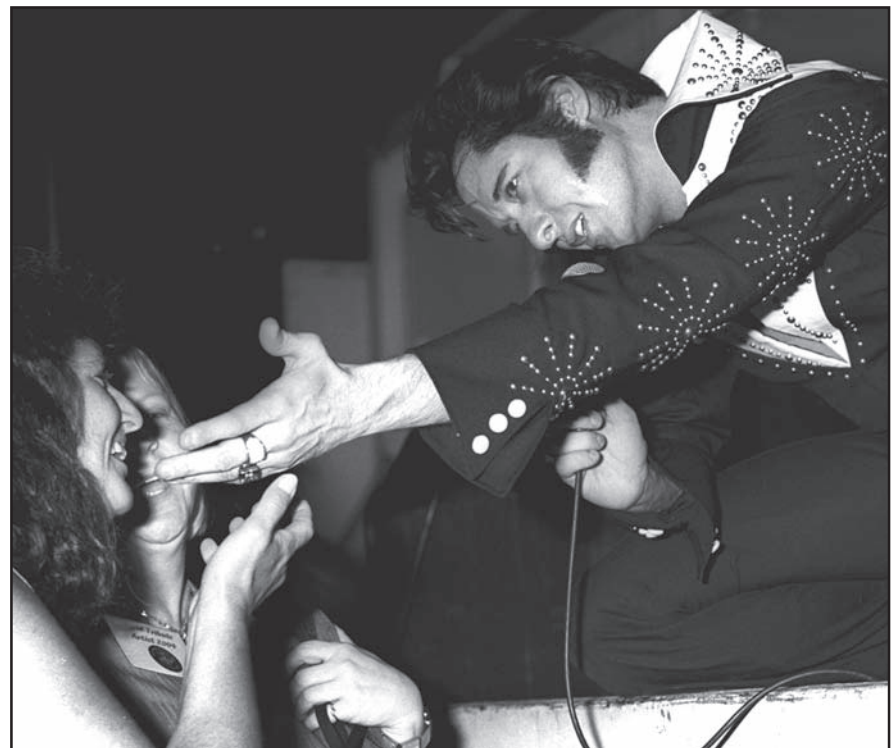
Technically, there's little that is noteworthy about Howell's pictures. It's his non-judgemental approach to the subcultures of pro wrestling and showbiz impersonators that makes his work both appealing and beguiling.

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.

978-155152-228-9



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."

# PICASSO OF THE WOODS

The great **Norval Morrisseau** received his name *Ahneesheenhpay*, meaning Copper Thunderbird, after his mother took him to a medicine woman for treatment of a fever in 1950. Some elders argued he was not yet worthy of such a powerful name, but he recovered and was introduced to Ojibwa shamanism by his grandfather. Issues of identity resonated within Morrisseau ever since.

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-levelled 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 embattled 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.



Marie Clements

## Cry Freedom in Lesotho

"I taught," says **Paul Sunga**, "I got in trouble, chaired a conference on migrant labour and apartheid, got in trouble, did some journalism during the press blackout, worked for the Ministry of Health briefly, got in trouble and left."

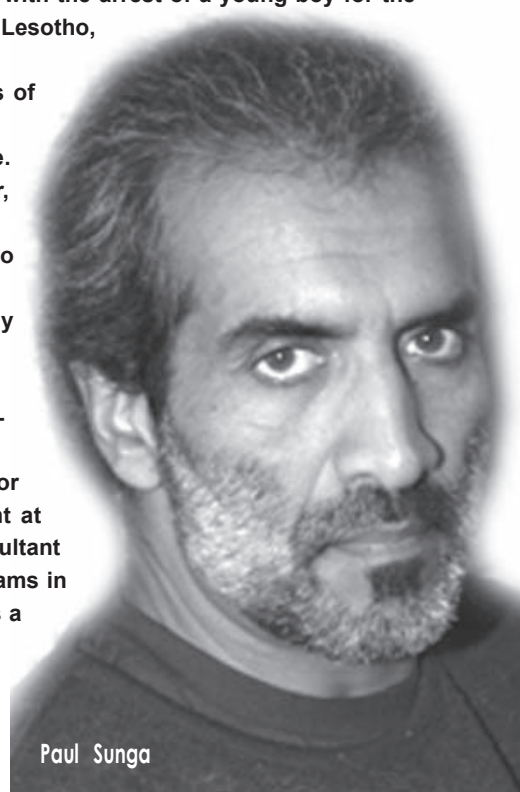
That's how biomedical researcher Paul Sunga describes his experiences in Lesotho, a small landlocked kingdom within South Africa, during the tense and dangerous period when apartheid was coming to an end.

Sunga blanches at the suggestion that his second novel about the Indian diaspora, *Red Dust, Red Sky* (Coteau \$21), might qualify as The Great Lesotho Novel. "The idea of the Great Lesotho Novel is funny," he says, "but I would leave that to someone from there."

*Red Dust, Red Sky* begins with the arrest of a young boy for the murder of a security man in Lesotho, then recalls the death of a student activist at the hands of the South African police in Johannesburg, years before.

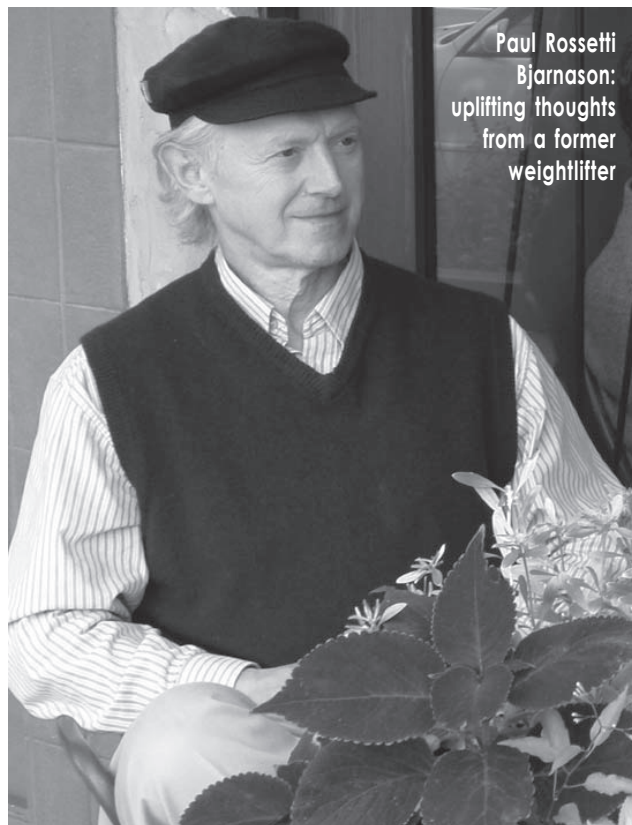
Sunga's central character, Kokoanyana, is a young girl of Indian origin who hopes to discover the identity and fate of her father. Just as tiny Lesotho is stifled by South Africa, Kokoanyana's life is constricted by lies and delusions.

Sunga is currently Director of International Development at Langara College and a consultant with CIDA for bilateral programs in Bangladesh and Ethiopia. As a biomedical researcher with a doctorate in experimental medicine, he continues to work in developing countries. 978-1-55050-370-8



Paul Sunga

## TEACHING PHILOSOPHICAL FITNESS



Paul Rossetti Bjarnason: uplifting thoughts from a former weightlifter

**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 agrees, so when his daughter asked him, "What is philosophy," he felt determined to answer her question fully.

As a result, Bjarnason has written *Stargazers: 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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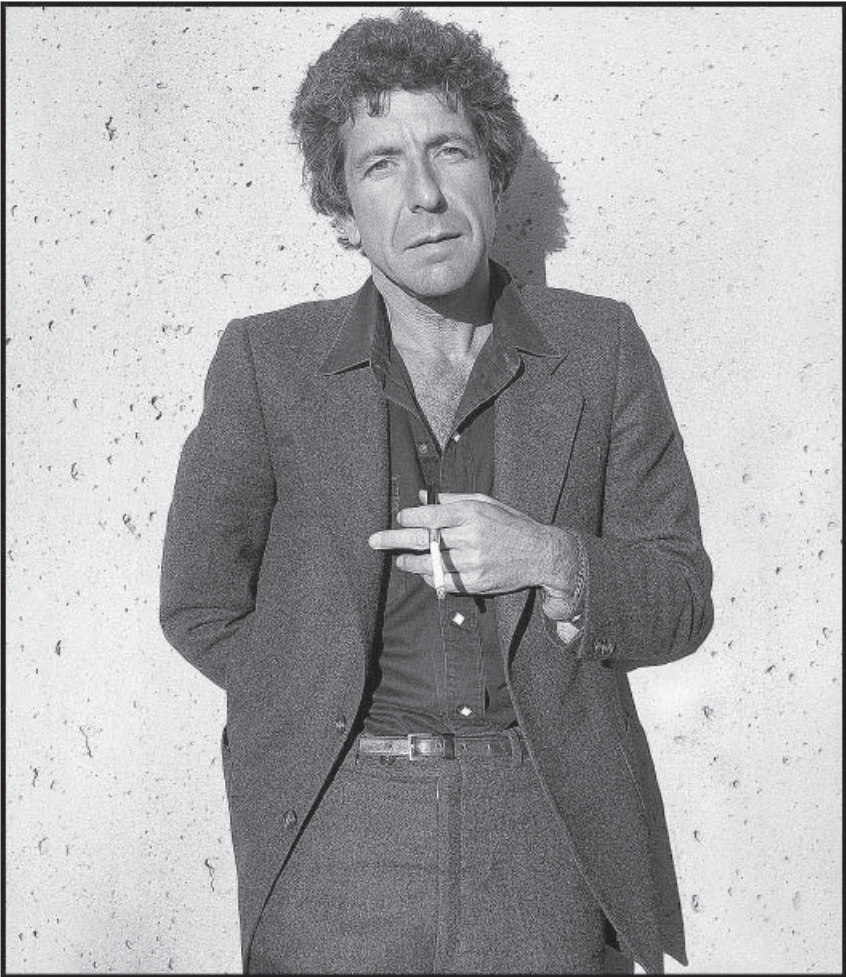
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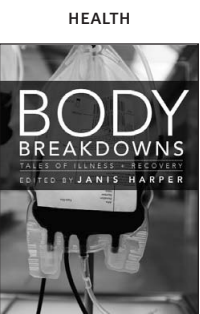
Edited by Daniel Francis

Some of Canada's best-known writers, all members of the Federation of BC Writers, are featured in this anthology, including Pauline Holdstock, Harold Rhenisch, George Fetherling, Howie White, Katherine Gordon, and, M.A.C. Farrant. The book features an introduction by editor and historian Daniel Francis.

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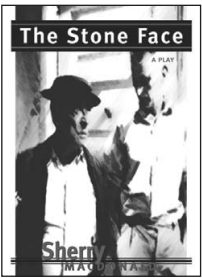
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## HOCKEY NIGHT IN B.C.

*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 an athletic cup that's level with her chest.

The title of Jackson's book is useful as it uses the word cock which is integral to understanding NHL hockey and part of what attracts-distracts Jackson's push-pull relationship with the players. Jackson slips into many

hypnotic and beautifully written fantasies of making it with Markus Naslund or other favourite Canucks. (She has a definite thing for Trevor Linden, which makes her a true Canucks fan.)

Cold-Cocked is a manifesto of what Jackson imagines hockey writing should be. “I like research that pokes 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, women

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 Labbat's blue in the other.”

Then one autumn afternoon in 1968, Jackson's



**GRANT SHILLING**

father doesn't come home from work. A suicide note left in his car under the Burrard Street Bridge *appears* to confirm the worst. Jackson was 12 at the time of his disappearance. Two years

later 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 will never have the whole story of her father's time away—so she reconstructs. Jackson follows the dictum of her former teacher, BC novelist Jack 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 she researches 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 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:

“Vancouver in 2003 was a great place to

come back to hockey, where players gradually became the tragically flawed definitions of complex, heroic, unpredictable. And every night the narrative grew more surprising and exhilarating. It was also a time and place to come back to parts of myself I'd looked away from staring back when I thought my father was a killer and sporting events had become, in George Orwell's terms, “orgies of hatred.”



Over the course of two seasons Jackson travels to Canucks games from her home on Vancouver Island in Metchosin with her teenage daughter Lily. Jackson also writes of place and the west's role in a nation's hockey psyche. As she notes, “I take a boat to watch hockey.”

The hockey narrative is given 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!

189723130X

*Grant Shilling is the author of The Cedar Surf: An Informal History of Surfing in British Columbia (www.cedarsurf.com). His sport commentaries can be read at his blog https://sportscrap.wordpress.com/*

*Lorna Jackson admits she has a thing for Trevor Linden. Her next book will be Flirt: The Interviews (Biblioasis \$16.95). A collection of comic short fictions where each story takes the form of a bogus interview with celebrities.* 1897231385

# A HUNK, A HUNK OF BURNS LOVE

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

**Forty Years in Canada by Jack Whyte**  
(Heritage \$29.95)

In his foreword to a recent biography of Robert Service, the successful and prolific novelist and former actor **Jack Whyte** described the magical 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, often trivial reminiscences” to showcase his prolific talent for versifying. This is not a compelling tell-all confessional work; Jack Whyte’s *Forty Years in Canada* is much lighter fare to give rein to his life-long passion for popular ballads, folk-songs and story poems with their satisfying rhyme schemes, repetitions and refrains that are easy to memorize and fun to perform. “If a song strikes me immediately as being wonderful,” he writes, “I can learn it within minutes—the lyrics and melody practically burn themselves into my mind.”

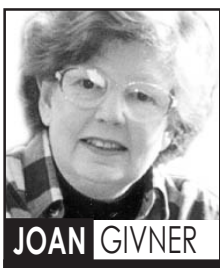


We learn that when Whyte immigrated to Canada in 1967, his luggage contained a multi-volume set of Child’s ballads, and he eventually launched a one-man crusade “to rescue narrative verse from postmodern oblivion.” In fact, some of the few lapses in his

unshakable good humour occur when he is reminded that “literary pretentiousness” has consigned his favourite verse form “to the garbage can of history” and caused it to be excommunicated from the literary canon.

Whyte’s own exercises in the genre include pieces for public performance before large crowds, and for private occasions among friends. One of his most popular works resulted from a 1973 invitation to propose the toast To the Immortal Memory at the annual Robbie Burns Supper of the Royal Canadian Legion in Lethbridge. It was a daunting assignment because the year before Tommy Douglas had proposed the toast. 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 heid,  
So great would be your bardic need*



**JOAN GIVNER**

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

A friend who witnessed the enthusiastic response of the audience created an illuminated scroll of the poem, and 20,000 copies of it were eventually sold. Whyte was called on to recite the piece on many occasions. The most memorable of

these was at the Canadian National Exhibition’s Scottish World Festival, where he stood alone on a field before thousands of people.

The forty-five narrative poems, which form the core of this memoir, are linked by sections of prose that describe their genesis and place them in the context of Whyte’s career in Canada. For a wedding anniversary party he wrote *Thank God for John and Betty Stein*,  
*Most men today, they will snidely say,  
On a scale of one to ten,  
Are as prone to cheat as to eat red meat  
And reduce their wives to tears...  
So thank God for John and Betty Stein  
And their forty years...*

For his stepson’s coming of age, he wrote, *For Mitch, at Twenty-One. Congratulations, Mitch, your first lap’s run;  
You’ve left boyhood behind,  
you’re twenty one;  
A formal, legal adult, fully grown  
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 learn and grew  
To love Saskatchewan and knew  
The beauties of her face;  
For, when she smiles, her countenance  
Is open, loving, and her glance  
Will melt your heart and brace your stance  
With pride, and strength, and grace.*



Along the way, Whyte describes his arrival at the Edmonton airport to take up a teaching post in the town of Athabasca, ninety miles north of the city. His disillusionment with the educational system is specific to Alberta where the response to his Universite de Poitiers diploma was “we don’t talk French in cattle-country.” Nevertheless it will resonate with every teacher who immigrated to North America from Britain, Europe, and Australia only to find their qualifications from major universities called into question and found wanting. Some made up the perceived deficiencies with courses from departments of Education; many simply found other work.

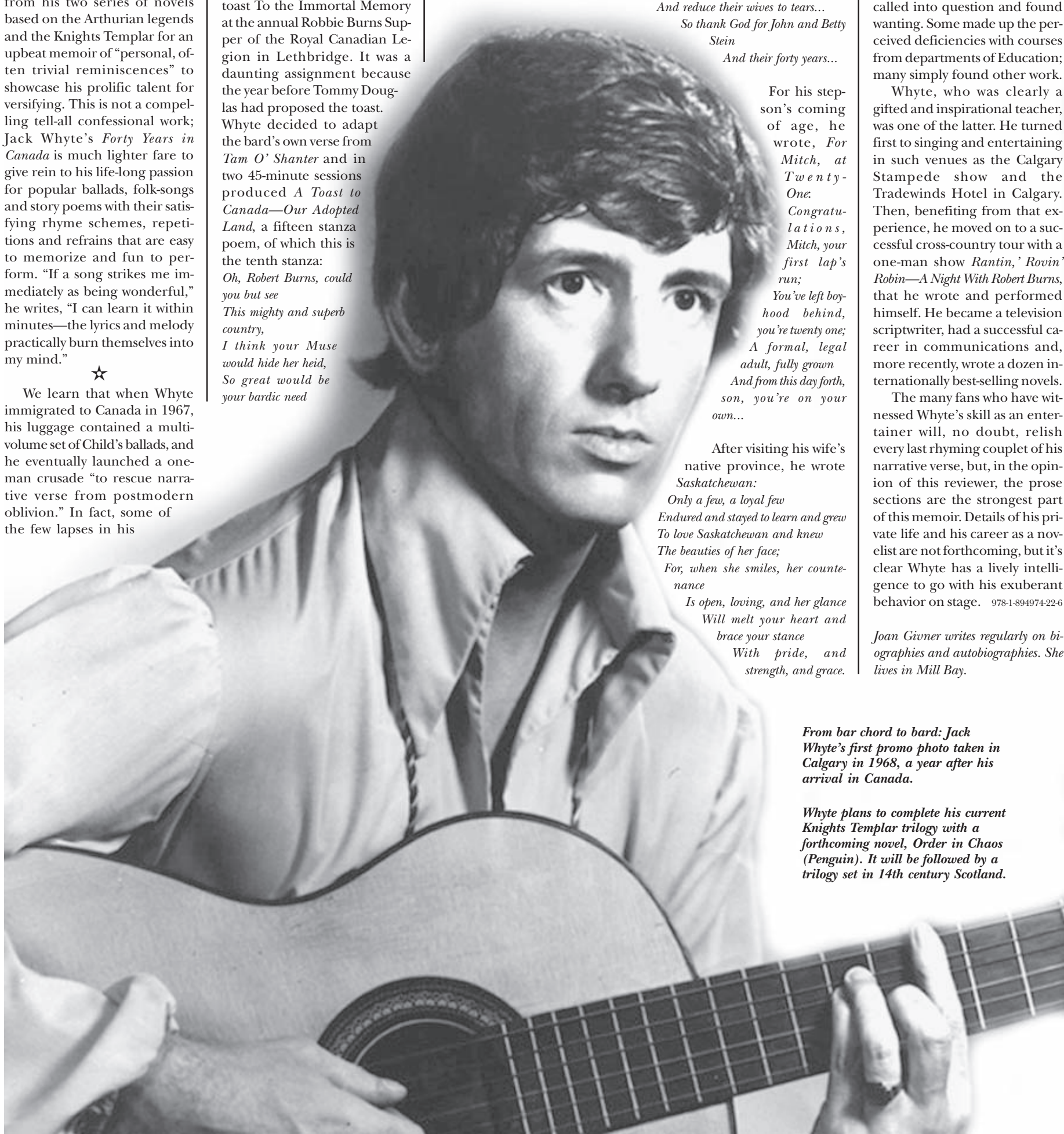
Whyte, who was clearly a gifted and inspirational teacher, was one of the latter. He turned first to singing and entertaining in such venues as the Calgary Stampede show and the Tradewinds Hotel in Calgary. Then, benefiting from that experience, he moved on to a successful cross-country tour with a one-man show *Rantin,’ Rovin’ Robin—A Night With Robert Burns*, that he wrote and performed himself. He became a television scriptwriter, had a successful career in communications and, more recently, wrote a dozen internationally best-selling novels.

The many fans who have witnessed Whyte’s skill as an entertainer will, no doubt, relish every last rhyming couplet of his narrative verse, but, in the opinion of this reviewer, the prose sections are the strongest part of this memoir. Details of his private life and his career as a novelist are not forthcoming, but it’s clear Whyte has a lively intelligence to go with his exuberant behavior on stage. 978-1-894974-22-6

*Joan Givner writes regularly on biographies and autobiographies. She lives in Mill Bay.*

**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.**



by Shane McCune

**Legendary U.S. reporter and newspaper critic A.J. Liebling once called the press “the weak slat under the bed of democracy.” In 21st-century Canada, it’s more like the quicksand under the house.**

**I**f 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 Goldbloom** has put it, “but what you don’t see.”

By some estimates CanWest Global dispenses 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 *Province* (presumably because identical editorials in both Vancouver dailies would make the cookie-cutter nature

## DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU’RE

# NOT READING?

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

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 newspapers) 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. Southam head office had historically taken pains to allow its newspapers to reflect the temper of their communities, even if that meant disagreeing with ownership.”

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

The HQ editorials provoked outrage, especially at the *Montreal Gazette*, where reporters retaliated by withholding 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.”

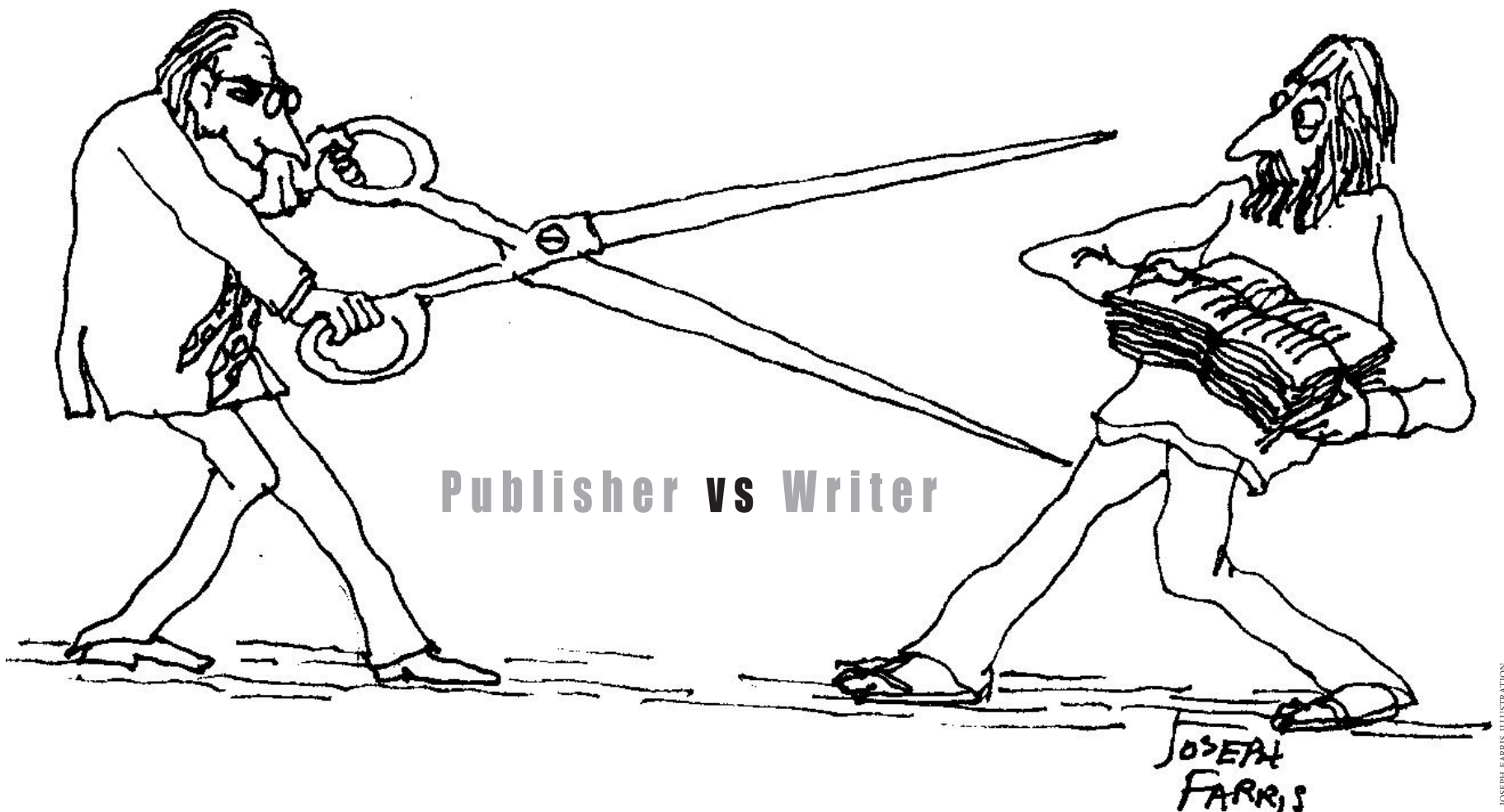
In *Asper Nation*, Edge recounts a less-publicized part of that speech that spoke eloquently of the younger Aspers’ mindset: “If those people in Montreal are so committed, why don’t they just quit and have the courage of their convictions? Maybe they should go out and, for the first time in their lives, 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*



continued from page 15

will wake up, write a story for the web, write a column, take their cameras, cover an event and do a report for TV and file a video clip for the web.”

Really? And what will they do after lunch?

**EDGE MAKES IT CLEAR** THE brothers inherited their belligerence from their father, a tax lawyer, politician, entrepreneur and jazz dabbler who died in 2003. As Edge tells it, Asper *père* sued 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** — dovetailed neatly with those of Conrad 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 danger would be that you have one very powerful editor who is making all of the decisions and you have fewer people making the decisions, fewer people making the choices of the stories that get covered.”

By the next year, the *Sing Tao* newspaper had withdrawn its funding of the school and Logan had a much cheerier attitude about convergence. Testifying at CRTC hearings into CanWest’s licence renewal she said: “Converged journalism offers an opportunity to ... [free] up reporters to do stories that are not being done and are vital to democratic discourse.”

Two months later CanWest donated \$500,000 to the school. (And here Edge can’t resist a cheap shot at Logan’s successor, who criticized his last book, *Pacific Press*.)

More depressing still is the litany of feckless 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 regulator approved CanWest’s takeover — with U.S. money — of Alliance Atlantis Communications, which holds Canadian rights to 13 cable channels including BBC Canada, History Television and Showcase.

Yet Edge concludes that the best hope for undoing the “Asper disaster” would be CRTC regulations limiting media owners to a 50-per-cent audience/readership share in any market.

I’m not so sanguine about the regulator’s grasp of the problem. In 2001 it allowed CanWest and BCE Enterprises (owner of CTV and the *Globe and Mail*) to merge their print and broadcast news operations, using one reporter to cover stories for both ... provided each medium kept a separate editor. Which is a little like saying a town can get by with only one wholesale bakery so long as there are two retail bread shops. No matter how each of them slices it, it’s still the same bread.

CanWest quietly abandoned the centralized editorials in 2003, but they have been accelerating centralized 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 overtaking his research, and not for the better.

Still, *Asper Nation* is the best guide available to the machinations and missteps that brought Canadian me-

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 concise 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 metaphor (“... 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 disgust, Edge has little to say about online news beyond noting that CanWest wants to monopolize that, too.

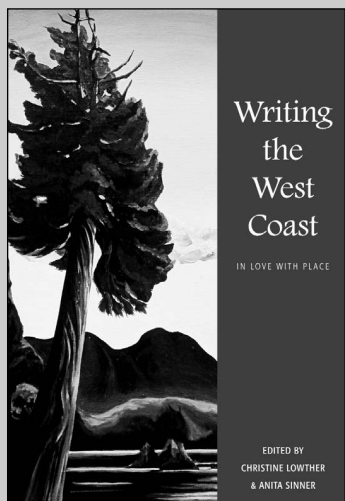
It’s true that so far there’s little to recommend the “citizen journalists” touted by net geeks as the replacement for dead-tree technology and hierarchi-

cal news organizations. If you find an actual news story among the ill-informed bloviating online, chances are it originally came from one of those dinosaurs of “old media.” Newsgathering 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 *Tjee* (theyee.ca) and e-book technology is improving 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, independent news groups might rise again.

978-1-55420-032-0

**Shane McCune** “took the buyout” from *The Province*. He now lives in Comox as an independent journalist.



## Writing the West Coast

In Love with Place

Edited by  
Christine Lowther  
& Anita Sinner

This collection of over thirty essays by both well-known and emerging writers explores what it means to “be at home” on Canada’s western edge: in Clayoquot Sound, Haida Gwaii and other west coast areas. The writers describe falling in love with the rainforest, the ongoing struggles to preserve its integrity, its beauty, in the face of clearcuts and tourism. The question asked is why live in the “wild,” cut off from amenities, living on floathouses, or at the end of a road or an inlet. The answers are various but they include an understanding that one finds “home” and oneself in the midst of unspoiled nature.

The authors include Susan Musgrave, Betty Krawczyk, Brian Brett, Alexandra Morton, Kate Braid and many others. Includes 30 colour photos.

ISBN: 978-1-55380-055-2 6 x 9 240 pp \$24.95 pb



## 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 in 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 978-1-55380-056-9 5-1/4 x 7-5/8 184 pp \$10.95 pb

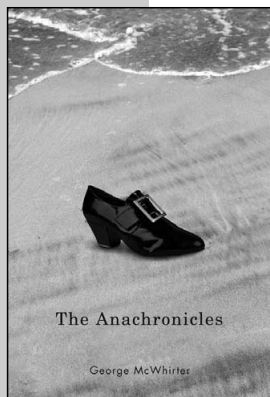


## The Old Brown Suitcase

■ 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.

ISBN 978-1-55380-057-6 5 1/4 x 7 5/8 202 pp \$10.95 pb



## 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.

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

# MY BODY, MY ENEMY

Harper's bazaar is an oddly uplifting medley of medical memoirs

After overcoming her own 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.

978-1895636-86-4

## 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 for too many late nights? My knees and elbows ached; I could barely pick up my feet when walking; the icy tingling in my fingers and toes I presumed to be "pinched nerves" or some form of arthritis. I began dropping things: coins, keys, pens flew from my fingers. Most dismaying of all was the growing anger that accompanied me everywhere: This was the most disconcerting of symptoms, perhaps because anger doesn't feel like a symptom at all. I was continuously in a near-rage, and began to frighten people who had known me for years. I couldn't laugh at a joke; I couldn't make

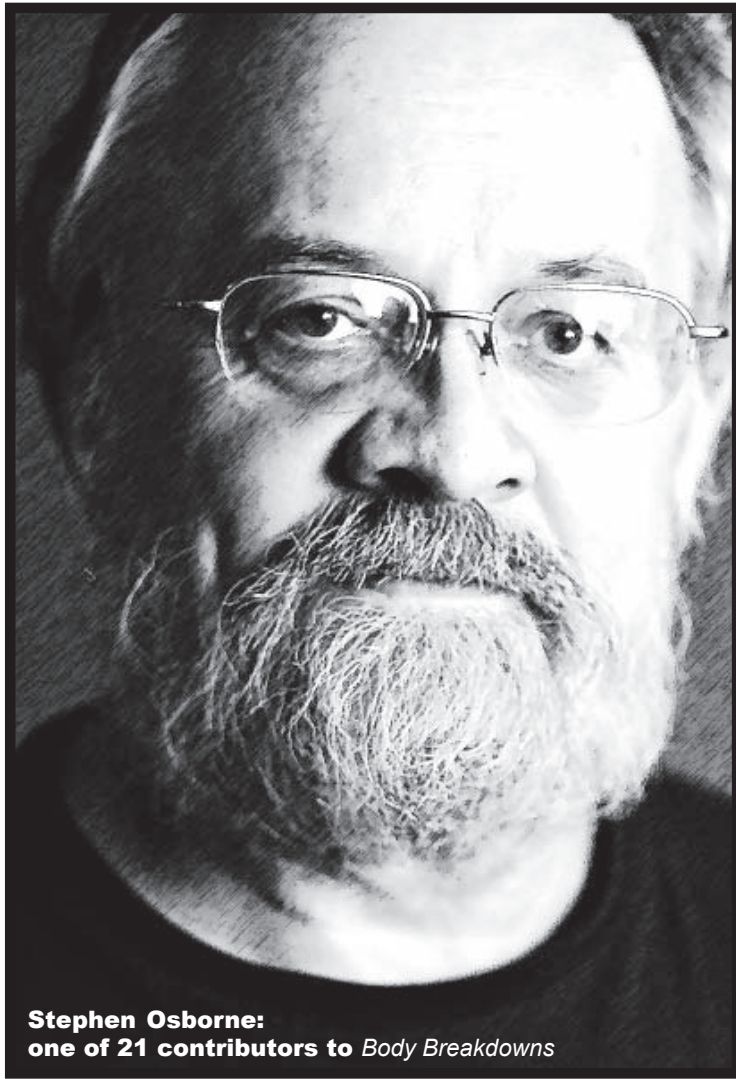
a joke. At night I could feel anger washing over me in waves. I became even angrier because I knew that there was no reason for the anger, and that made me angry too.

I was depressed and in a fog, and seemed to be constantly hungover. I couldn't sleep more than two hours at a time. I became afraid of meeting people. I couldn't bear to make an appointment: The world became heavy and there seemed to be too many things to do. I was losing weight as well, for no reason that I could see. I presumed that an unspecified "wasting disease" was overtaking me. One day in the supermarket, when I could hardly walk because my feet were hurting so badly, and my ears were ringing, a friend I hadn't seen for some time came up to me 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 diabetes." 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 learned that indeed I was 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

pituitary gland.)

The doctor prescribed pills and I stopped eating sugar—for months I had been drinking root beer in cans, thinking that caffeine and sugar might get my energy up—and within a week I could feel the symptoms begin to leave my body. The fog in my head lifted, the



**Stephen Osborne:**  
one of 21 contributors to *Body Breakdowns*

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 awash in normality: My eyesight improved, and I had to get out an old pair of glasses because the new ones no longer worked.

I could lift things, and the house keys no longer slipped from my fingers. I began walking long distances. My bowel movements became pleasant (I hadn't even noticed how wretched they had become), and my mind became clear again, which was perhaps the greatest gift of all. I could feel myself returning to intellectual life.

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 out health wherever I could find it.

I turned to the "literature," a great sinkhole of medical bafflegab 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*



LINCOLN CLARKS PHOTO

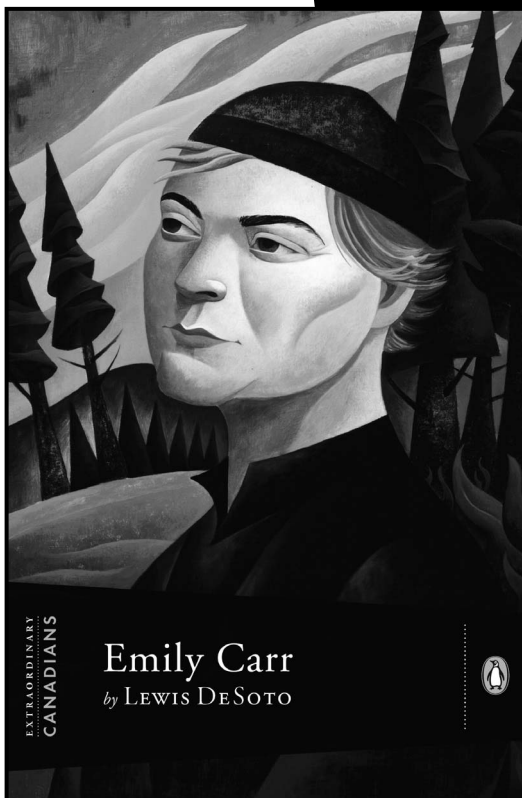
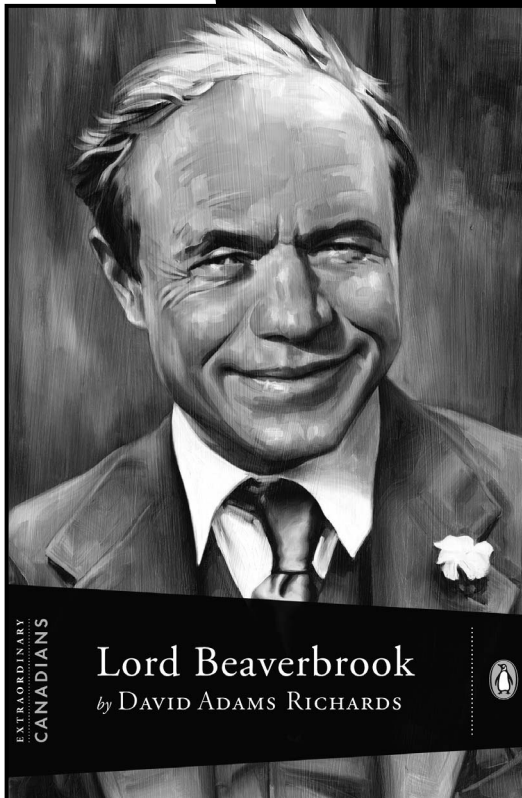
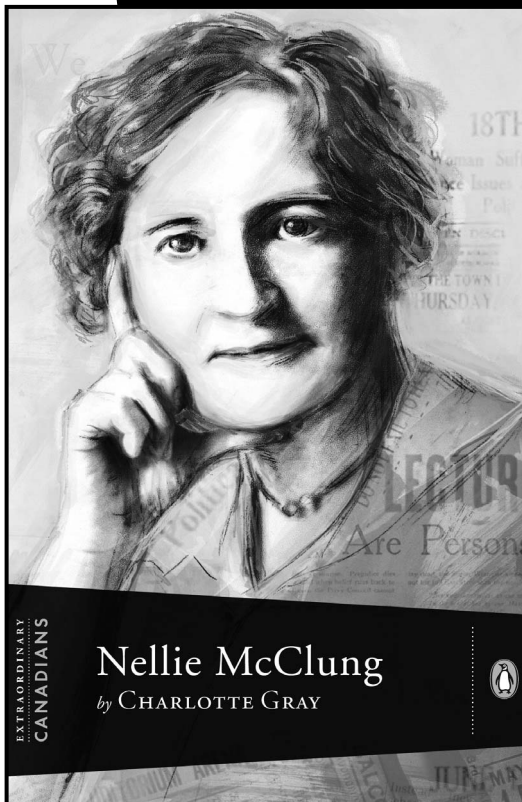
"Our bodies are amazing things and will continue to surprise us with either their resiliency or their betrayals. The only thing we can count on is that with age comes change and only for the worse. You can fight it all the way to the grave in stubborn denial, or you can accept that once things start 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**

# EXTRAORDINARY CANADIANS

## A rediscovery of the great figures of Canada's past



penguin.ca



# HISTORY

## A NORTH POLE RECLAIMED

*How photos by surveyor Frank Swannell helped repatriate a 19th century Haisla mortuary pole from Stockholm*

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.



Frank Swannell, Kootenay River, 1902

978-0-7726-5742-8; Distribution by UBC Press.

a forum for &amp; about writers:

## LOOKOUT

## Jane Rule

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.



Cartoon by  
Rand Holmes, 1978.  
Reprinted by  
permission of  
Holmes estate.

# ISLAND OF THE HEART

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.

Jane Rule  
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**Detained at Customs: Jane Rule Testifies at the Little Sister's Trial** (Lazara Press, 1995)

**NEW:**  
Jane Rule's essay collection, **Loving the Difficult** (Hedgerow Press \$21.95) will be launched at Heritage Hall in Vancouver on April 26 and on May 3 at the community hall on Galiano Island. 978-0-9736882-6-9



Jane Rule with Alan Twigg at Montague Harbour, Galiano Island, 1978

learned to swim in her backyard pool where she and her partner **Helen Sonthoff** were dotting lifeguards with a great supply of pop-up books.

Jane Rule was also one of the first writers I ever interviewed. I first met her thirty years ago when Talonbooks publishers **David Robinson** and **Karl Siegler** reprinted her non-erotic love story, *Desert of the Heart*. She was the funniest and sanest person I had ever met.

Nine years later, after we started *BC BookWorld*, Rule agreed to be one of three writers on the board of directors for Pacific BookWorld News Society. [The others were **Howard White** and **George Woodcock**.]

Jane Rule received the second Terasen Lifetime Achievement Award for an Outstanding Literary Career in British Columbia in 1996. She was awarded the Order of British Columbia in 1998 and the Order of Canada in 2006.

Her reputation continues to grow.

Born in New Jersey on March 28, 1931, Jane Rule was the middle child and oldest daughter of **Carlotta Jane (Hink)** and **Arthur Richards Rule**, a free-thinker who graduated from the naval academy at Annapolis and rose to the rank of lieutenant-commander during World War II. His favourite expression was, “I’d rather be right than president.”

She passed her first four years at Wynchwood,

a family farm in New Jersey where her paternal grandfather built a replica of **Robbie Burns’** cottage and filled it with children’s books. After the family moved to California, she spent summers on a remote, 240-acre ranch among the redwoods that belonged to her mother’s parents. In California, her best friends were Chinese and Japanese American children, and she was baffled by the concept of racism.

From a tender age, Jane Rule was notoriously rebellious against authority figures, particularly teachers. She and her beloved older brother Art changed schools constantly, as much as three times per year. In one class of 14 girls, there were five Janes so she willingly adopted her nickname Jinx and it stuck ever after. At age ten, her myopia was corrected by glasses but her family moved frequently and she was hampered by dyslexia. Six-foot tall at age 12 and unaccomplished at schoolwork, Rule was strongly supported by her parents who accepted her non-conformist tendencies. If her teacher complained that she had fallen asleep in German class again, her mother would calmly reply, “Well, you’re boring her again.” By age 15 Jane Rule decided she ought to be a writer. “I felt that most of the books I was reading were lies,” she later recalled. “I was morally superior and quite obnoxious. That set me against the monstrous patriotic stupidity that was everywhere, the lack of trust, the sense of hatred and the false discipline.”

That same year she was expelled, five months short of graduation, for an article she wrote in her school paper protesting the allocation of school funds for ‘charm school’ classes. In particular, Rule took objection to being shown how to walk.

When the instructor told the class to imitate her, Rule did—cheekily—and was tossed from the class. Consequently she wrote an article expressing her opinion that girls should be taught how to walk to the nearest college. The principal expelled her for insubordination. Her reputation as a ‘moral hazard’ would make it difficult for her to gain acceptance to college.

Also at age 15, Jane Rule’s outsiderism increased when she read **Radclyffe Hall’s** *The Well of Loneliness*. Although she began to recognize her own lesbian nature, her enthusiasm for the once-banned novel was hesitant, at best. “It was a polemic by a famous English lesbian pleading for an understanding of homosexuals and lesbians, whom it described as men trapped in women’s bodies!” Rule recalled. “It was a very brave book but also a very bad book. The main character was six feet tall and had a deep voice. I thought, ‘That can’t be who I am! Will I have to live in some ghetto in Paris and be a freak?’ It was such a scary thing.” Rule later described Radclyffe as “about the biggest male chauvinist pig you could find. Gradually Rule developed a theory that one chiefly makes progress by learning from the bad examples of others. “I was five before I discovered that being a girl had serious drawbacks, six before I discovered being left-handed was unacceptable and nineteen and travelling in Europe for the first time before I had to apologize for being an American,” she later wrote. In the

1960s she became “proud and relieved to claim the label Canadian.”

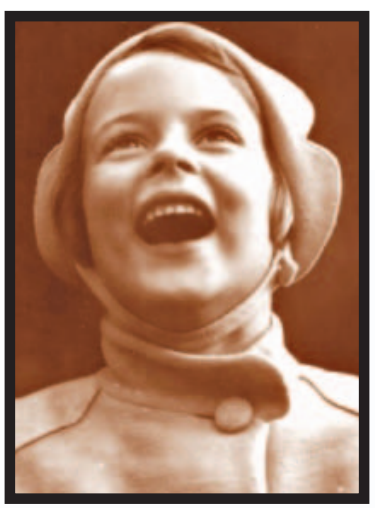
At 16, her first sexual experience was a lesbian relationship, but given her moralistic upbringing and the forbidding climate for homosexuality in the early 1950s, she says she remained celibate during her attendance at Mills College, a posh women’s school in Oakland. She had wanted to study English at Stanford but she was repeatedly rejected by numerous schools until a trustee at Mills College enabled her to be enrolled on a probationary basis. Because her test results were higher in science and math, she was initially not allowed to major in English. Eventually she got her way, but the head of the English department warned her about pursuing a literary career, telling her she could either become a first-rate scholar or a third-rate writer. Rule replied that she much preferred the latter. Rule subsequently sent that discouraging professor every book she published and dedicated a book to her. “I guess I’m still not a very nice person,” she once noted.

After she received a bachelor’s degree in English from Mills in 1952, Rule began working on her first novel when she was living in England and taking some classes at University College, London. Having gone to England to pursue a relationship with a female lover, she nonetheless became friends with **John Hulcoop**, a doctoral candidate at UC who later accepted a teaching job with the English faculty at the University of British Columbia. Returning to the United

States, Jane Rule was soon disenchanted with the competitive and demeaning atmosphere of writing classes at Stanford University. When she opted for a teaching job with a private school for girls in Massachusetts, Concord Academy, she fell in love with Helen Sonthoff, a creative writing instructor who was married to **Herbert Sonthoff**, a German who had fled the Nazi regime during World War II.

McCarthyism was rampant in the United States and extramarital lesbian relationships were simply not to be tolerated, so Jane Rule moved to Vancouver in the fall of 1956, taking refuge in a four-room flat rented by John Hulcoop. According to **Sandra Martin’s** obituary of Rule for *The Globe & Mail*, Hulcoop and Rule briefly became lovers. At age 40, Helen Sonthoff came to Vancouver to visit Rule, at age 25, and they resumed their intimate relationship. They would remain living as a couple until Helen Sonthoff died in 2000, at age 83. Rule was deeply disheartened by her partner’s death, as she had been when her father died at age 88 in 1994.

While Helen Sonthoff gained a foothold in the UBC English department as a teaching assistant, Rule pursued her fledgling writing career, read scripts and became the assistant director at the university’s new International House for foreign students. Even though Rule had only a bachelor’s degree, she also intermittently taught lower-level English courses at UBC until 1976 when she and Sonthoff relocated to Galiano Island on a permanent basis. “I arranged my life so that I taught every other year at UBC,” Rule said. “It took 25 years to get there as a full-time writer.” She stopped teaching at age 43. She sometimes said she came out as a lesbian long before she came out as a writer.



Jane Rule

continued on next page



“I am not a writer who sits down to discover what I think.”  
— JANE RULE, 2004

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In 1964, Macmillan in England published *Desert of the Heart* after it was rejected 22 times in the United States. Jane Rule immediately became “Canada’s only visible lesbian” and risked losing her job at the university. She often noted that one argument made in her defence at the time was that not every author of a murder mystery novel is necessarily a murderer. Canada’s laws were changed to no longer prohibit homosexual acts between consenting adults that same year but prior to the appearance of *Desert of the Heart*, in her words, “we were jailable.”

The novel had been completed by 1961, just prior to Rule’s 30th birthday. Although Macmillan was concerned about the possibility of an adverse reaction by Nevada casino employees, very little substantive editing was done on the manuscript. Rule never resided in Reno, Nevada, but her parents did, enabling her to get to know the city during several visits during which her younger sister took her to various sites. Rule only worked in a casino for six nights as a change girl, from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m., and she had little interest in gambling.

Jane Rule moved to Galiano Island in 1976, coincidental with her first attack of chronic and crippling arthritis in her spine. As a senior member of a closely-knit community, she soon became an integral, supportive figure, lending money, providing guidance, etc., and gaining the nickname “the bank of Galiano.”

A resolve to forge community and group connections was reflected in her fiction, dating back to *This Is Not For You*, a novel about college friendships. *Memory Board* and *After the Fire* are primarily concerned with divergent personalities who accept community bonds, incorporating the elderly as central characters. *The Young In One Another’s Arms* and *Contract with the World* are similarly concerned with mutual compassion and love born of strength, not weakness. The latter concerns the difficulties faced by a variety of artists as they approach middle age without having gained much outward success.

Admired and befriended by the likes of **Kate Millet** and **Margaret Atwood**, Rule became known throughout the world as one of Canada’s most articulate spokeswomen on issues pertaining to personal freedom and social responsibility, but she never clamoured for the limelight.

“Politics really are to clean up the house,” she says. “You have to do it every week. I don’t find it interesting, just as I don’t find sweeping the floor every week interesting. I do it. I vote... I prefer to work wherever there’s a possibility of changing things... I really believe through the counter-movements in society change can be made. We’re living witnesses of it.”

As someone who views marriage as problematic because individuals should not require permission from the state in order to cohabit, Rule looked askance at the eagerness of gay colleagues to gain the legal right to marry. “A lot of us old guard feel very dubious about it,” she said.



Jane Rule with David Robinson and Audrey Thomas



Helen Sonthoff and Jane Rule

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 Bealy**, July, 14, 2006.

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* (Lazara 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 version of *Desert of the Heart*—a 1985 feature film directed by **Donna Deitch** and starring **Helen Shaver**, **Patricia Charbonneau** and **Audra Lindley**.

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 honour 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 *So’s 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 **Aerlyn 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 Sonthoff 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, alleviating others of 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 malarkey about life after death. “Don’t say I ‘passed away’ or ‘passed on,’” she joked, “or 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.” **Svend 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:

- “Jinx 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 me 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 had quite 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 their own answers.” **Ken Bebout**, *Body Politic editor*
- “There’s dinosaurs. There’s the Romans. And there’s Jane and Helen. The times we shared are priceless.”—**Eli**, *Jane Rule’s nephew*
- “Jane’s gift was her enormous human curiosity. Jane loved 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.”

# THEM THAR HILLS *of* 1858

The Trail of 1858: British Columbia's Gold Rush Past by Mark Forsythe and Greg Dickson (Harbour \$26.95)

**Mark Forsythe** and **Greg Dickson** of CBC Radio's *BC Almanac* build books like folks in Saskatchewan used to raise their barns. It's a community affair and everyone is invited to pitch in.

To recognize the province's 150th anniversary as a modern political state, former Lieutenant Governor **Iona Campagnolo**, herself a history enthusiast, has provided the foreword for their latest illustrated omnibus, *The Trail of 1858: British Columbia's Gold Rush Past*, with contributions from dozens of experts and so-called ordinary citizens.

There were indeed strange things done in the midnight sun, and in the Cariboo gold rush. Even though **John "Cariboo" Cameron** had helped establish the first cemetery for Barkerville, he offered \$12 per day and a bonus of \$2,000 (approximately \$33,000 today) to any man who would help carry his deceased wife Sophia's coffin from Williams Creek to Victoria.

The blizzard-ridden, 36-day ordeal enabled Cameron to temporarily bury his beloved in Victoria. After amassing his fortune at Cameronton in the Cariboo, he returned to Victoria with \$300,000 worth of gold (\$7.5 million today) and took Sophia's body by ship, around South America, to be buried in her hometown of Glengarry, Ontario, thereby honouring her dying request.



Hurdy-Gurdy Girls. The Old Douglas Trail. The arrival of the Commodore, bringing Black residents from California. The Chilcotin War. Cataline, the

Cariboo's best-known packer. Judge **Matthew Baillie Begbie**. Those infamous camels, imported but never used. The paternalistic autocrat **James Douglas**. Stagecoach driver **Stephen Tingley**. **Joseph Trutch**, who constructed the first Alexandra suspension bridge in 1863. **Herman Otto Bowe** and the Alkali Lake ranch.

It's all packed into one motherlode. Some of the history nuggets uncovered include a photo of **Nam Sing**, the first Chinese miner in the Cariboo, the peacemaking **Chief Spintlum** of

the Nlaka'pamux (Thompson), the 'miner's angel,' Irish woman **Nellie Cashman**, a lifelong prospector and spinster who travelled by dogsled north of the Arctic Circle, as well as **Richard Wright's** introduction to the 'poet/scout' **Jack Crawford**.

*After Jack Crawford's Wild West show toured Barkerville and Victoria in the early 1870s, his descendants settled in the Kootenays.*



*Petticoat conjunction: Miss Brown and Miss Irving were the only two unmarried non-Aboriginal women of New Westminster in 1866.*

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**.

After 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 confined,  
Her raven tresses flowed free as wind;  
Whilst her waist, her neck and her ankles small  
Were encircled by bandlets, beadwrought all.  
Her head as the wild deer's, erect and proud,  
To superior beauty never owed;  
Like the diamond sparkling in the night,  
Her glistening black eyes beamed with light...*

Net proceeds from the sale of *The Trail of 1858* are being directed to the British Columbia Historical Federation.

1-55017-424-X

## ETHNOGRAPHER & LINGUIST

# TEIT & THE TAHLTAN

Recording Their History: James Teit and the Tahltan by Judy Thompson (D&M \$55)

**Known** primarily as an ethnographer and linguist among the Nlaka'pamux and other Interior Salish peoples, Scottish-born **James Teit** also twice conducted research in the Cassiar district of northern British Columbia, for seven weeks in 1912 and for twelve-and-a-half weeks in 1915, undertaking fieldwork among the Tahltan people at the instigation of **Edward Sapir** who had invited him to join the staff of the new Anthropology Division of the Geological Survey of

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** *Recording Their History: James Teit and the Tahltan*, from the annals of the Canadian Museum of Civilization where she has been Curator of Western Subarctic Ethnology since 1990.

978-1-55365-232-8



*Teit captioned this photo: "Matilda Quok or Reid, tci tca, 'berries', aged abt 40. Raven phratry. Tlapan clan."*



*As shown in this above photo, taken by Marius Barbeau, of Frank Bolton (Tralahaet) 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.*

## SHORTIES

**Spook Country** by William Gibson  
(Penguin \$32.50)

**William Gibson's** follow-up to his last novel *Pattern Recognition* (2003) is **Spook Country**, which takes place in the present day and primarily involves a journalist, a junkie and a trouble-shooter for manufacturers of military navigation equipment. 9780399154300

**Conceit** by Mary Novik  
(Doubleday \$29.95)

**Mary Novik's** first published novel **Conceit** is about Pegge Donne, the daughter of the poet John Donne, who audaciously rebels against her father's plans for her arranged marriage. The novel's backdrop is London in the 17th century. 978-0-385-66205-5

**The Book of Beasts** by Bernice Friesen  
(Coteau \$21)

**The Book of Beasts** by **Bernice Friesen** of Hornby Island is the coming of age story of Seamus (James) Wilberforce Young, a half-English and half-Irish boy who is taken to his mother's Irish village in 1965 after her mother's lengthy alienation from his family. Recently Seamus' sister was killed in a car accident and his mother soon decides to leave her husband. At his grandmother's bidding, James pursues the priesthood only to undergo a loss of faith. 978-1-55050-387-1



Bernice Friesen

**The Silent Raga** by Ameen Merchant  
(D&M \$32.95)

**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 Muslim Bollywood star. Merchant now lives in Vancouver. 1-55365-309-2

**Radiance** by Shaena Lambert  
(Random House \$19.95)

**Shaena Lambert's** first novel **Radiance** 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 U.S., the complex intimacy that arises between the "Hiroshima maiden" and her host mother has its own frission born of whispered confessions and wrenching betrayals. 978-0-769-31150-8



Shaena Lambert

# MORE KILL FROM BILL

William Deverell

*Crusty attorney makes another comeback*

**BY JAMES TYLER IRVINE**  
**Kill All The Judges** by William Deverell  
(M&S \$34.99)

Having won the 2006 Arthur Ellis Award for his novel *April Fool*, **William Deverell** has again brought his lawyer protagonist Arthur Beauchamp out of retirement for *Kill All The Judges*, a title that harkens back to Deverell's *Kill All The Lawyers*, published in 2001.

Deverell's 15th book opens with a deranged court clerk who fires a pistol at a presiding judge but the intended bullet is taken in the heart by a police officer who heroically jumps in its way.

This incident is creative non-fiction, a story within the novel, 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 l'orange, 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 resistance on his part) to act 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. Felicity, who desperately wants to be a poet, speaks in nearly perfect verse tones. "Just like a greeting card!" Beauchamp says.

Some butter ends up on the fly of a man's pants as result of a little under the table accident, and poor Arthur discovers in-

criminating evidence in his grandson's possessions. Other hot evidence is found in the local community centre.



The novel has its tense moments, too, particularly during the trial of the accused. A near-sighted retired theatre diva is asked to identify a suspect from the witness box. She is not able to see past the end of her nose and must make her way slowly around the silent room. Every character who has raised suspicions throughout the novel is sitting in the courtroom following or avoiding her gaze.

Many of the memorable characters that joined Beauchamp in *April Fool* return here and Deverell presents his characters

as if they were old acquaintances or new friends. Beauchamp fans will remember lawyer Brian Pomeroy, Margaret Blake (the love of Arthur's life), crabby centenarian Winnie Gillicuddy and Nelson Forbish, the ever-prying-for-details editor of *The Bleat*, to name just a few.

Margaret has moved from saving eagles to wanting to stretch her political aspirations nationwide. Poor Brian Pomeroy has become tired of his profession and the trials of his everyday life and sets off on a different path.

Wentworth Chance, who works with Arthur, is a new character to Beauchamp mysteries— young, green and keen. He adores the legal profession and aspires to follow in

Beauchamp's footsteps. Chance plays a big part in this novel, and this reviewer hopes to read more stories about him again.

Arthur remains crusty but compassionate. 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.



Figuring prominently in the story is the intersection of Main and Keefer in Vancouver's Chinatown and a posh condominium in what appears to be False Creek. Glimpses of Gastown, Maple Leaf Square and Garibaldi

Island, where much of the novel occurs (or is it really North Pender Island where Deverell makes his home?) also form part of the landscape of the novel.

*Kill All the Judges* provides a delightful, witty and satisfying read. And the culprit...well sorry, that's a secret that must be kept.



Deverell was born in Regina in 1937 and by 1964 he was practicing law in British Columbia and continues to do so. The television series *Street Legal* which ran for eight seasons on CBC-TV was co-created by Deverell, who also wrote its pilot episode. 0-7710-2721-4

*James Tyler Irvine is a bookseller in Vancouver.*

## COUPLAND'S BOX STORE BLUES

**The Gum Thief** by Douglas Coupland  
(Random House \$32)

Sometimes you just can't improve upon the hype. The jacket for **Douglas Coupland's** new novel about the angst-ridden lives of employees in a Staples outlet, *The Gum Thief* (Random House \$32), offers an excerpt that neatly captures the interplay between pathos and humour in Coupland's ongoing critiques of modern North American society. Once again, Coupland and his characters have melded into one narrative voice: "I work in a Staples. I'm in charge of restocking aisles 2-North and 2-South: Sheet Protectors, Indexes & Dividers, Notebooks, Post-it Products, Paper Pads, Specialty Papers and 'Social Stationery.' Do I hate this job? Are you nuts? Of course I hate it. How could you not hate it? Everyone who works with me is either already damaged or else they're embryos waiting to be damaged, fresh out of school and slow as a 1999 mo-



Douglas Coupland

dem. Just because you've been born and made it through high school doesn't mean society still can't abort you. Wake up. Let me try to say something positive here. For balance. Staples allows me to wear black lipstick to work.—Bethany" 978-0-307-35628-4

**Incidental Music** by Carol Matthews (Oolican \$18.95)

**Carol Matthews' debut collection of fiction, *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 has to be give and take in a marriage. You'll find the lasting value of a marriage appears not at the beginning but later, towards the end. It is a journey, not a destination." The couple go on to cope with aging and abandonment, buoyed by the consolations of maturity and a lasting union. Music also connects the lives of Matthews' characters.**

Born in Vancouver, Carol Matthews was an instructor and dean at Malaspina University-College, where she has continued as an Honorary Research Associate. Her first book, *The First Three Years of a Grandmother's Life* (Ryerson, 2006), is a collection of her quarterly columns from *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice*, written from her perspective as a grandmother, and self-illustrated. She lives on Protection Island, along with her husband, Mike, and Victor, their "poet dog." 978-088982-234-4

# THUMPING JACKS

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

BY **CHERIE THIESSEN**  
*Falling from Heights* by Chris F. Needham  
 (Now or Never 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 lasting 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 he 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 partying 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 plastered, and he doesn't say no to a good toke. Jeremy, the drunk, is the best of the three, although he's a failure at work, relationships and life.

Both university-educated brothers, Robert and Jeremy, are "temporarily" doing menial jobs in a smelly Delta fish feed plant. Unfortunately, Robert can no longer teach school, not because of Sukhvinder—nobody knows about that yet—but because he punched out the principal in front of his students. One wonders why this pugilistic charmer would have ever chosen teaching children in the first place.

Jeremy has reluctantly returned to Vancouver from eastern Canada where he has had one largely unread, misogynist book published. His return is prompted by a phone call from his father, with whom he has had a dicey relationship, telling him

that Robert, who is an army reservist, has been killed in a jump while on a weekend training mission.

The father tells him Robert's parachute must have become entangled with that of a fellow jumper, one Corporal Sidhu, but when Jeremy returns and accompanies his ailing father to the airport, expecting to pick up a very small coffin, his brother limps off the plane. Turns out that Robert has miraculously sustained only minor injuries, as Sidhu cushioned his fall.

Unlike Sukhvinder, Robert has survived his fall from heights.

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 as 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 stylis-

tic choice of intruding into the story and because of his use of convoluted and lengthy paragraph-long sentences. Here's an example:

*Together Jeremy and his father tried to get limping Robert into his now vacant, incessantly leaky condo—as mentioned, Robert's wife had taken a recent leave of absence from their relationship, taking with her their three year-old daughter—but with his various minor injuries, together with everything else presently falling apart in his life, they thought better of it and decided to install him in his old room at his father's house,*

*the very house Robert and Jeremy had grown up in.*

Later the author's intrusiveness largely disappears, especially once the story ricochets to the most overtly deviant son, Jonathan. But only about half of this novel is about this scary family of four.

★

Right from the beginning, interspersed with the Jacks family, we have another intriguing storyline: A mysterious but fascinating young woman, Birdie, is writing letters and diary entries from a voluntary "prison," part of a well-paid controlled experiment on the effects of marijuana usage, a trial that took place in the early 1970s.

It's this half of *Falling from Heights* that was evidently inspired by real letters and events that occurred at a government-

sanctioned drug experiment in Toronto in 1972.

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 want to know who Birdie is, and what she has got to do with the chaos and carnage in the lives of the Jacks twins.

Needham's combination 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 long as the author leaves us crumbs to find our way out of the maze, but there's a great deal about *Falling from Heights* that is perplexing. Why has Needham gone to so much trouble to caricature Jeremy's drinking buddy, a well-known alcoholic actor who played in a long-running television series? And why is he including real events and people from Greenpeace?

And what about those environmental conflicts he introduces? Whoever would have guessed that Jon Jacks, the one time alcoholic and aimless father we meet at the beginning, would also have been involved in Greenpeace and environmental activism?

And, of course, who really is the mother of these twins and where the heck is she?

Flashes of a Lexus, a missing girl, and her no-good boyfriend, 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 began writing as a poet before he wrote *An Inverted Sort of Prayer*, his other novel about an ex-hockey enforcer, that was published shortly before this one.

978-0-9739558-1-1

*Cherie Thiessen regularly reviews fiction from Pender Island.*



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

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## SHORT LIST

AGES 8+  
**Dangerous Crossings** by **Antonia Banyard** (Annick \$9.95)

Born in South Africa, **Antonia Banyard** emigrated from Zambia when she was four. She grew up mainly in Nelson and now lives in Vancouver. *Dangerous Crossings* is her collection of ten true stories of harrowing journeys and escapes from an 18th century upper-class Peruvian woman who gets stranded on the Amazon River to a teenager who crosses war-torn Germany in search of his family. 978-1-554510863

AGES 10+  
**Rebel's Tag** by **In K.L. Denman** (Orca \$9.95)

In **K.L. Denman's** *Rebel's Tag*, the story revolves around Sam, an angry youth who expresses his feelings by spray painting the sign of Aquarius, his tag, while climbing on rooftops. Sam is disturbed 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's distress bubbles to the surface and he is nabbed for spray painting. Sam must make the leap from rebellion to forgiveness. 978-1-55143-740-8

AGES 9-12  
**Becca at Sea** by **Deidre Baker** (Groundwood \$18.95)

Children's book reviewer **Deidre Baker**, a teacher of English at University of Toronto, has used her summers at Hornby Island as the basis for *Becca at Sea* (Groundwood \$18.95), a YA novel about a girl named Becca who visits her grandmother's rustic cabin on the Gulf Island during her mother's pregnancy and comes to enjoy her outdoor adventures. Baker is also the co-author of *A Guide to Canadian Children's Books* with **Ken Setington**. 978-0-88899-737-1

## ALSO NOTED



**Diane Tullson**, *Lockdown* (Orca \$9.95) 978-1-55143-676-0

**Robin Stevenson**, *Dead in the Water* (Orca \$9.95) 978-1-55143-962-4

**Polly Horvath**, *The Corps of the Bare-Boned Plane* (Groundwood \$9.95) 978-0-88899-851-4

**Julie White**, *High Fences* (Sono Nis \$9.95) 978-1-55039-063-3

**Duane Lawrence**, *Sammy Squirrel & Rodney Raccoon* (Granville Island \$12.95) 978-1-894694-54-4

**Nan Gregory**, *Pink* (Groundwood \$17.95) 978-0-88899-781-4

**Sylvia Olsen & Ron Martin**, *Which Way Should I Go?* (Sono Nis \$19.95) 978-1-55039-161-9

**Pam Adams**, *From Blossom to Blondie* (Self-published \$15.75) 978-0-9684415-6-5

**Penny Draper**, *Peril at Pier Nine* (Coteau \$8.95) 978-1-55050-376-0

**Iain Lawrence**, *Gemini Summer* (Random House \$21) 978-0385-73089-1

# A DANISH IN WARTIME

*Chocolate éclairs, the Resistance & fleeing the Nazis in 1943*

AGES 8 TO 10  
**Honey Cake** by **Joan Betty Stuchner** (Tradewind \$16.95)

**D**avid Nathan lives above the family bakery, right next door to his best friend Elsa and her family's toy store. David's Papa still does 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 defiantly 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 sits with Papa in the synagogue. Soon, though, Rabbi Melchior 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 storyteller and librarian's assistant **Joan Betty Stuchner**. Stuchner, who also wrote *The Kugel 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." 978-1-896580-371

AGES 4 TO 8  
**I, Bruno** by **Caroline Adderson** (Orca \$6.95)

**C**aroline Adderson, known for her much-lauded adult fiction including *A History of Forgetting*

which addressed the malignant legacy of Hitler's madness through a gay hairdresser and his female apprentice and *Sitting Practice* which delved into the sexual life of a wheelchair-bound woman with spinal cord injury, has written her first book for young children. In six short tales *I, Bruno* relates the adventures of Adderson's son Patrick, the "boy inspiration." Energetic illustrations by **Helen Flook** reveal a stalwart defender of dragons-disguised-as-fire-hydrants, the Queen in all his white-glove and red-velvet-cape glory and a reluctant primary-grade printer who cleverly comes up with a one-letter moniker for himself. 978-1-55143-501-5

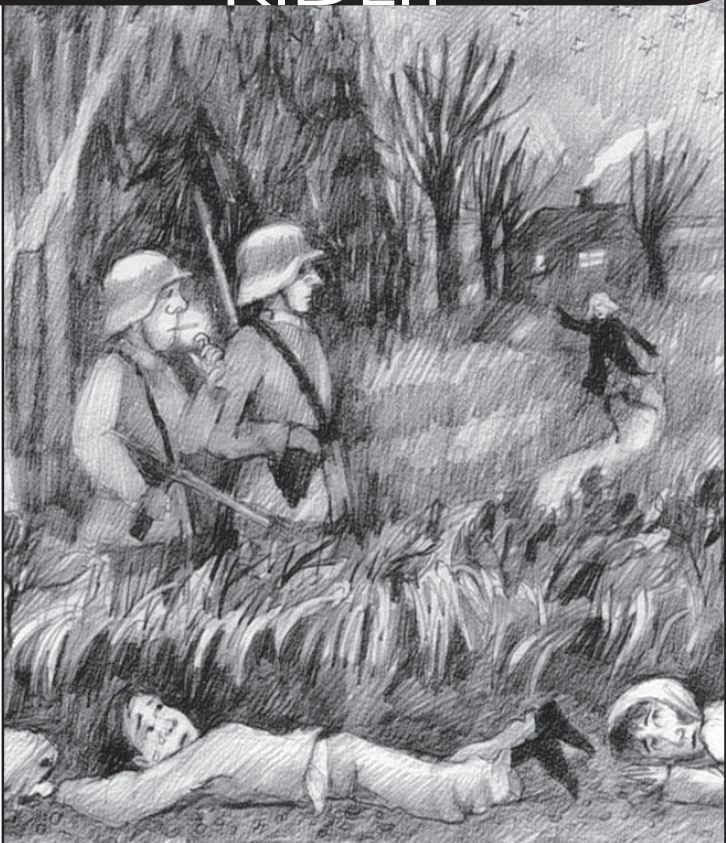
AGES 12+  
**In Pain & Wastings** by **Carrie Mac** (Orca \$9.95)

**I**n *Pain & Wastings*, **Carrie Mac**, a paramedic who's worked Vancouver's darker side, continues the trademark grit and grind of *Charmed*, *Crush*, and *The Beckoners*. 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 drag on and Holly, the paramedic, lets on she knew his mother, the demons descend. 978-1-55143-904-4

AGES 4 TO 8  
**Mush and the Big Blue Flower** by **Laurie Payne** (Oolichan \$21.95)

**B**orn and raised in England, **Laurie Payne** settled in the Shuswap Valley in the 1960s. A widely exhibited artist, sculptor and painter, he has written his first children's book, *Mush and the Big Blue Flower*, 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. 978-088982-242-5

*Louise Donnelly writes from Vernon.*



Cynthia Nugent illustration from Joan Betty Stuchner's Honey Cake



Helen Flook illustration from I, Bruno by Caroline Adderson



Cover art for Carrie Mac's Pain & Wastings

# IT SHOULD BE CHEWASSEN

**Chewassen, Tsawwassen or Chiltinm: The Land Facing the Sea by Gwen Szychter** ( tel:604-946-4890; \$35 )

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

Szychter explains her odd choice of title: “I would have much preferred to be using the older and more pleasing ‘Chewassen’ to refer to this area. However, it has been known verbally and popularly since 1946 by the spelling ‘Tsawwassen,’ 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 final variation, Chiltinm, is what the Corboulds perceived as the Indian name for the area. For your own personal enjoyment, I’d like you to know that the working title of this book was *Tsawwassen: From Picnics to Potatoes to Palm Trees*.’ I am not sure why I chose to go with a more formal title in the end, but I certainly acknowledge that I’ve chosen to convey a Euro-Canadian view of the land.”

978-0-9680951-4-0

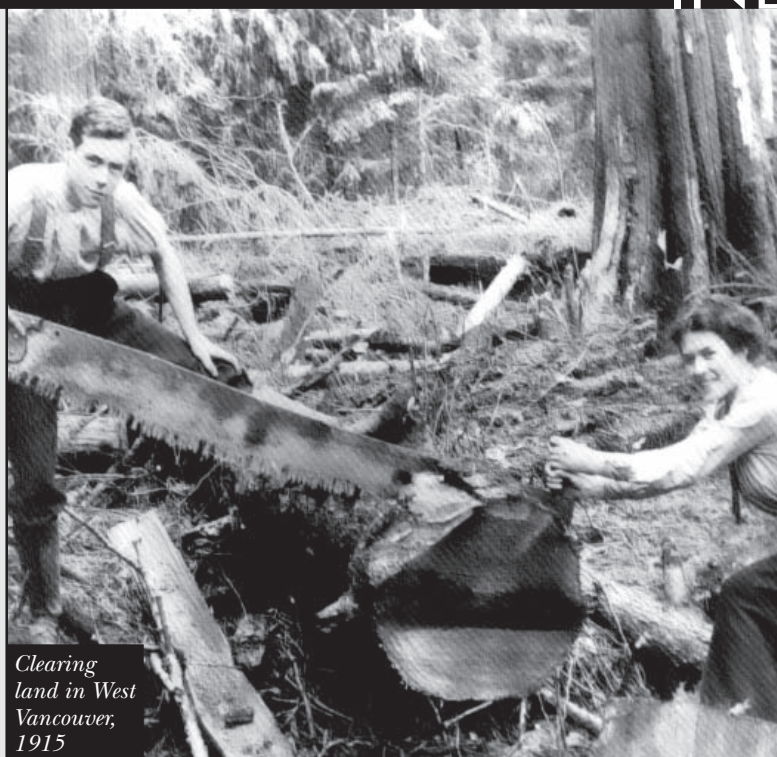
## FREE REIN TO FREE SPEECH

**The Host and the Parasite: How Israel's Fifth Column Consumed America by Greg Felton** (Dandelion/The Author \$40)

Dedicated to the World Wide Web, “the last hope for a free press,” **Greg Felton's** *The Host and the Parasite: How Israel's Fifth Column Consumed America* is ostensibly an attempt to provide the impartial reader—folks who remain perplexed by petropolitics and

ongoing hatreds within the so-called Holy Land—with a lively primer on how the world has gone to hell in a handbasket in the Middle East. About halfway through his vituperative but compelling barrage of pro-Palestinian historical analysis—in which he pummels the alleged collusion between the Bush/Cheney “oilocracy” and the state of Israel—Felton sets out to debunk the “demonized” image of Osama bin Laden. For that reason alone, some Jews, and many non-Jews, will prefer to dismiss Felton’s prolonged screed as hate literature, as unforgivable anti-Semitism. But it should be noted that Felton’s disdain for so-called mainstream media is equally intense. The vast sweep of Felton’s overview is not dissimilar to Naomi Klein’s one-size-fits-all analytic approach to debunking neo-liberalism and its collusion with the World Bank. If you can scrape together enough facts to suit your argument, you can hold the courtroom of public opinion spell-bound with your zeal. To give both sides of an argument, on the other hand, runs the risk of being dismissed as wishy-washy.

Felton, an inveterate letter-to-the-editor guy, does dish out a host of intriguing details that never seem to get aired on CBS or CNN and all those other news outlets that run the gamut of opinion from A to B. For instance, Felton points out that Condoleeza Rice, Bush’s Secretary of State, was a director of Chevron from 1991 to 2001. So who knew that Chevron, as a parting gesture, named a



Clearing land in West Vancouver, 1915

While serving on the West Vancouver Heritage Advisory Committee, **Elsbeth Bradbury** has produced a coffee table book on the forestry of that area as a fundraiser for the Lighthouse Park Preservation Society, **West Vancouver: A View Through the Trees** (District of West Vancouver \$40). The collaborative effort, that includes extensive historical information, was edited by **Valerie Frith**. Bradbury credits the help of publishing insiders **Don** and **Barbara Atkins**, **Jim Douglas**, **Rob Sanders**, **Mark Stanton**, historian **Doreen Armitage**, project coordinator **Hugh Johnston** and dozens of others.

978-0-9784147-0-2

136,000-ton tanker *Condoleeza Rice*? Upon her ascension to the White House, Chevron changed the name to the less noticeable *Altair Voyager*.

Felton traces how some Christians in the U.S. have come to view Israel’s ascendancy as the illumination of biblical prophecy—God’s will in action—to the continuing detriment of Palestinians.

Felton writes for the Arabic/English Canadian *Arab News*. A falling-out with his Arizona-based book publisher has resulted 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 Straussian pressure groups that tell the president and Congress what to do.”

It’s up to each reader to decide whether or not Felton’s filibuster of fury is useful commentary or a missile from a crackpot.

978-1-893302-97-6



Greg Felton

## A ROUBLE FOR HIS THOUGHTS

**Looking Through Glasnost by Gil Parker** (Victoria: Aware Publishing \$21.95)

After 1991, when the communist hierarchy of 74 years collapsed throwing the Soviet Union into 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 rouble.

**Gil Parker's** *Looking Through Glasnost* describes a dozen personal visits by the former engineer and mountain climber, prompted by a Rotary Club ‘sister-city’ initiative in 1988. Over a 15-year period, Parker explored Georgia, Lithuania, Uzbekistan, and Russia east to west, befriended many Soviet citizens, learned Russian and came to understand the crumbling Communist model and the faltering democracy that replaced it.

978-0-9736906-1-3

## REX & NAPOLEON

**Curious Little World: A Self-Imposed Exile on St. Helena Island by Rex Bartlett** (Gabriola Island: Toppermost Books \$21.95)

**Rex Bartlett's** *Curious Little World: A Self-Imposed Exile on St. Helena Island* mainly recounts how he and his partner **Cynthia Barefoot** went to live on the tiny island where Napoleon died, halfway between Africa and South America. They bought an abandoned house sight unseen, lacking plumbing, electricity and telephone.

As an ex-musician, Bartlett’s self-deprecating charm is as appealing as the exotic locale of his memoir. He recalls



Napoleon

being **Neil Young's** paperboy in Winnipeg and travelling to buy guitar strings in Hibbing, Minnesota, **Bob Dylan's** birthplace, hoping the strings would bring them luck in their new band.

“But just outside of Hibbing, we rounded a curve in the highway and approached a huge banner strung across the road. The sign didn’t say, ‘Welcome to Hibbing, Bob Dylan’s Hometown’ like it should. Instead it said, ‘Welcome to Hibbing, World’s Largest Open Pit Iron Mine.’ I knew right then that I had been wrong. The sign was a sign. Well, obviously the sign was a sign. Anyone could see that the sign was a sign, but I could see that the sign was an omen.

“The silver strings would not bring us fame. They would hold no magic. I stared at the vast obscene open pit iron mine and realized that my piercing Joan-of-Arc-sy vision had been nothing more than a post-Klik hallucination. Chastened and humiliated, we returned to the Winnie-The-Pooh Capital of the World.”

978-0-978-3927-0-3  
[P.O Box 319 Gabriola Island, BC V0R 1X0]

## ALSO RECEIVED

**Colleen O'Connor**, *Cry of the Phoenix* (Cat’s Eye Enterprises \$19.95) 978-0-9783988-0-4

**Terry Julian**, *The Seduction of Surveys In Canada's Federal Elections* (Signature Publishing \$14.95) 978-1-4251355-4-6

**Bruce Batchelor**, *Book Marketing Demystified* (Agio \$14.95) 978-1-897435-00-7

**Eleanor Millard**, *Journeys Outside and In* (Self-published \$24.95) 0-9782817-0-5

**Anne Brevig**, *Years on the 7 Seas* (Seven Seas Press, \$36.95) 0973758201

**Glen Lovett**, *The Adventures of Jasper: Lost in Skookum Valley* (Lovett Pictures \$18.95) 978-0-9783116-1-2

# EVENT

new & established writers

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**Final Judge:** Timothy Taylor is an award-winning journalist and bestselling author. He is a columnist with *The Globe and Mail* and the recipient of three National Magazine Awards. Writers are invited to submit manuscripts exploring the creative non-fiction form. Back issues of *Event* with previous winning entries and judges’ comments are available for \$7.35 (inc. GST and postage).

**Note:** Previously published material cannot be considered. Maximum entry length is 5000 words, typed, double-spaced. Include a separate cover sheet with the writer’s name, address, phone number / email, and the title(s) of the story (stories) enclosed. Enclose a SASE (Canadian postage / IRCs / US\$1). Douglas College employees are not eligible to enter.

**Entry Fee:** Each entry must be accompanied by a \$29.95 entry fee (includes GST and a one-year subscription or extension; make cheque or international money order payable to *Event*). American and overseas entrants please pay in US dollars.

**Deadline for Entries:** Postmarked by April 15, 2008.

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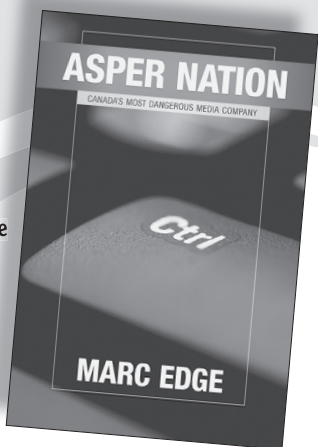
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## LETTERS

### THE PERFECT BOOK

We visited family in Victoria for the Christmas holidays. I picked up the Winter edition of your publication on the ferry from Vancouver. The article about Derek Evans, and the excerpt from his book, were so compelling that I purchased *Dispatches from the Global Village* at Munro's in Victoria on Christmas eve and read it from cover to cover that afternoon. It was the perfect book for the season, as Evans writes eloquently about the goals we espouse, but rarely achieve, even in a time when we proclaim peace and goodwill to others. By the way, I obtained the last copy that Munro's had in stock, so I hope the publisher replenishes the supply for 2008.

Philip E. Carr  
Calgary, AB



Derek Evans

As Randy Fred noted at your recent Reckoning 07 conference, Malaspina faculty assisted with the creation of Theytus Books, the first aboriginal press in Canada. Malaspina has presented honorary doctorates to Jack Hodgins and Carol Shields, and administers the Ralph Gustafson Distinguished Chair of

Poetry, which in recent years has brought BC poets Patricia Young, Susan Musgrave, Gary Geddes, Patrick Lane, Robert Bringhurst 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, Sheri-d Wilson, and Bill Bissett. 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 Vancouver poet and MC Baba Brinkman will perform his Rap Canterbury Tales. I expect that event alone might give her reason to reconsider her remarks.

Frank Moher

Chair, Department of Creative Writing and Journalism,  
Malaspina University-College

### WHITEHORSE CALLING

I always read your newspaper whenever I am on the ferries going to visit my grandchildren. I enjoy it so much that I know my friend Carol would like a gift subscription. We are both avid readers and book buyers but living in Whitehorse, Yukon, so we don't have many bookstores to choose from. A Coles has opened in the city and I fear it is undermining the only independent bookseller in town. Might I suggest you approach Mac's Fireweed Books on Main Street about carrying the paper? I think making your paper available to readers in Whitehorse would be good for authors and for sales at Mac's Firewood Books. Keep up the good work.

Spence Hill  
Whitehorse

### MALASPINA REPLIES

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, bp nichol, Jack Hodgins, Gary Geddes, Alice Munro, and, yes, Anne Cameron.

### IT'S A KEEPER

I loved your editorial about the name "British Columbia" so much that I am compelled to fire off a response!

I think we should keep the name. Like British Columbia my name also has dubious connotations. My late father was a career criminal from Alabama who went under several aliases, one of them being Jay Anthony Christopher.

This was the name he used when I was born; I inherited it by default. This was not always a good thing.

### Short stories

## A Heart in Port

by Emily Givner

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He went through 31 arrests and about nine marriages before dying in an Indiana prison. My mother's family frequently reminded me that I was "just like him," and refused to call me by my first name, Jay, opting instead for my middle name Nathaniel. "It's just like naming your kid after Clifford Olson," said one aunt.

I never knew him, he was in prison before I was born. I only met him once when I was 21. When I was a teenager I resented any connection to him and almost went through a legal name change.

At the age of 26 I don't feel any closer to my father but I do feel a deep affinity with the name he chose for himself. 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 has a family 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 served us well, all things considered, but agree that it now sounds 'veddy colonial' and old hat.

It's all very well for the provincial capital, Victoria, to have a newspaper quaintly called *The Colonist*, but let's remember that Vancouver, besides being the only Canadian city mentioned in James Joyce's still futuristic *Finnegan's Wake*, is also the westernmost metropolis in the Western Hemisphere, hence a pivotal point in the greater scheme of things.

With these thoughts in mind I do have a suggestion for a new name. We could do a lot worse than go back to the first recorded name possibly applied by a European to this territory (or, rather, its southwestern corner)—New Albion.

After spending some six weeks during the summer of 1579 careening his ship, the *Golden Hinde* (which had itself undergone a name-change upon entering the Pacific) preparatory to continuing on his epic voyage around the world, which, unlike his predecessor Magellan, he was able to complete in person, master-mariner Francis Drake bestowed the name New Albion on Pacific coastal territory.

Exactly where Drake applied the name remains open to dispute, but we know from the Diary of the *Golden*

*Hinde's* chaplain, Francis Fletcher, that Drake chose the name New Albion for two reasons: "the one in respect of the white banks and cliffs which lie towards the sea; the other, that it might have some affinity even in name also with our 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 Bound-

ary 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 Nicomekl 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 Albanians, 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 *Jerusalem*, 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

### Letters or emails contact:

BC BookWorld,  
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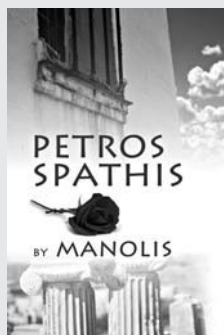
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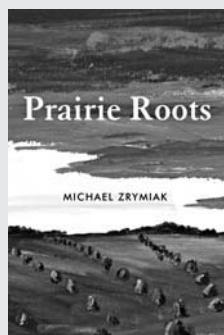
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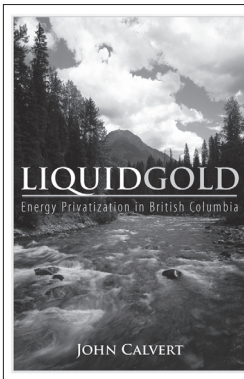
*Iliarjuk*  
An Inuit Memoir by Dracc Drequé

This first-hand account of contemporary life in a small Inuit community on Baffin Island paints a raw, painful, disturbing, hilarious, lyrical, provocative and eye-opening picture that is a testimony to the courage and sheer determination of its author.

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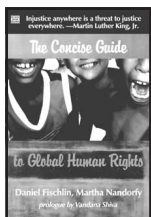


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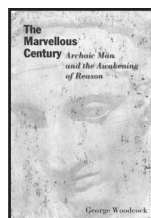


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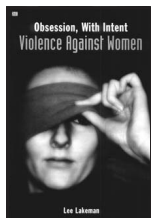
—Roger Clark, Amnesty International  
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Filled with characters, events, romance, and intrigue, here is a fascinating journey through the 6th century B.C. that allows us to experience the beauty, savagery and all-encompassing impact of a century characterized by a cluster of events that changed irrevocably the way humans looked upon the universe and even upon themselves.

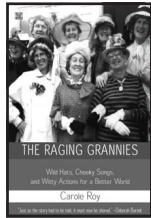
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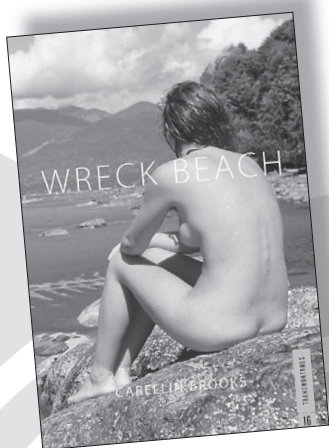
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# OUTSIDE THE BOX

## Proud Mary

How the annals of Mary Rice 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 Cryer 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 Hul'q'umi'num' 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 (Tstass-Aya) for the *Daily Colonist* about a battle between the Snunéymuxw 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.

Her associations with the Coast Salish led to the publication of her book slanted towards children called *The Flying Canoe: Legends of the Cowichans* (Victoria: J. Parker Buckle Printing, 1949). She died in Welland, Ontario, in 1980.

Cryer's contributions to coastal ethnology were subsequently edited by **Chris Arnett** for *Two Houses Half-Buried in Sand: Oral Traditions of the Hul'q'umi'num' 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



Hul'q'umi'num' storyteller Mary Rice

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.

978-1-894974-33-2



**Rick Antonson'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 whenever his two young sons pestered him as to where he was going. Antonson's father would reply, "I'm going to Timbuktu to get my haircut."

Some fifty years later, Antonson'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 armfuls of sand from behind the Land Cruiser's wheels to achieve the same effect. We

pushed and the vehicle lurched forward. We continued toward Essakane. Our vehicle's shocks abdicated. It was an atrocious 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."

978-1-55002-805-8



Anthony Dalton

## A is for Arden

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.

978-1-55365-333-2

## B is for Benjamin



Michelle Benjamin

Formerly publisher of Polestar Books, **Michelle Benjamin** has been volunteering in a development project in

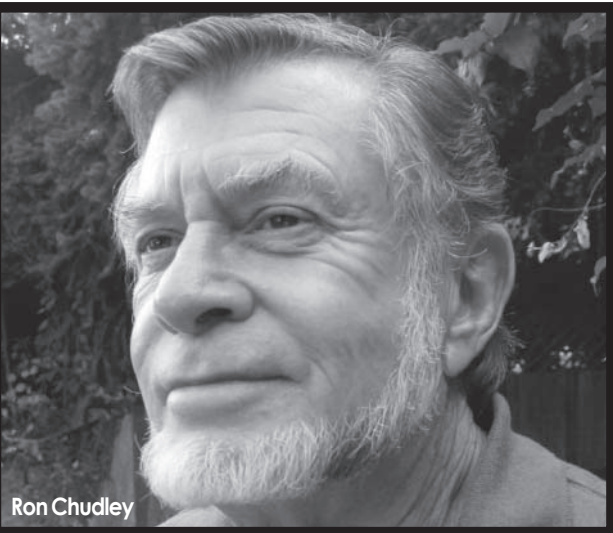
TWIGG PHOTO

Máncora, a small village on the north coast of Peru, accompanied by her partner **Maggie Mooney** and daughter **Caitlin Mooney-Fu**. Recently UBC Press contributed funds for a new water pump for the village. Benjamin has also edited a new collection of environmental essays by 20 writers, scientists and activists, **A Passion for the Earth** (Greystone \$21) in conjunction with the David Suzuki Foundation.

978-1-55365-375-2

## C is for Chudley

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



Ron Chudley

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.

978-1-894898-59-1



Roy Arden's Self-Portrait #1 (1981) from *Against the Day*

## D is for Dumont

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.

0-9731396-9-2



Marilyn Dumont

## E is for Evans

**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.

978-1-894898-57-7

continued on page 38

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## WHO'S WHO



Leonard Frank's photo "Roundup of Japanese Fishing Vessels at Annieville, 1942," from *Nikkei Fishermen on the BC Coast*

continued from page 37

### F is for Fukawa

**Masako Fukawa** served as the main writer and managing editor for *Nikkei Fishermen on the BC Coast: Their Biographies and Photographs* (Harbour \$39.95). To ensure the sacrifices and hardships endured by older fishermen are never forgotten, along with the confiscation of their boats and the forced dispersal of Japanese Canadians from the B.C. Coast in 1942, the Nikkei Fishermen Reunion Committee gathered and edited 3,524 names and 750 biographies and photographs for this memorial volume. 978-1-55017-436-6

### G is for Goldberg

Having explored Taoism and practiced a 66-move sequence of a martial art form called Liuhebafa, **Kim Goldberg** has written *Ride Backwards on Dragon: A Poet's Journey through Liuhebafa* (Leaf Press \$18.95).



Kim Goldberg

"I am naught but a beginner in all things and hope to stay that way—open," she writes. Liuhebafa arose from a philosopher and mathematician in north-central China, in approximately 900 A.D., whose ideas were developed by a scholar and martial artist named **Li Dongfeng** some 300 years later.

Kim Goldberg's frank narratives frequently detour towards humour. "Dear Ovaries, It was great seeing you guys last week! And that trans-vaginal ultrasound was quite the thrill ride. Thanks. But what were you thinking going all cysty like that on the right? You two are a real laugh riot. Have I not been good to you? Shown you respect? Attended every stitch-n-bitch session? Vowed to steer clear of Hormone Replacement Therapy no matter how sweaty I get? / You're not still mad about that no-kids thing are you? Like dudes, get over it already!"

978-0-9783879-1-4

### H is for Harrop

**Graham Harrop** of North Vancouver has contributed the "BackBench" panel cartoon for *The Globe and Mail* since 1988. Also an editorial cartoonist for *The Vancouver Sun* and a past winner of a British Columbia Newspaper Award for editorial cartooning, Harrop has gathered some of his best work for *The BackBench Collection* (Ronsdale \$14.95). 978-1-55380-053-8



From *The Backbench Collection*

### I is for Irvine

**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*.

978-0-8020-9538-1

### J is for Jack

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.

978-1-894778-41-1

## K is for Kishkan

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** *Phantom 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.

978-1-897235-31-7



## L is for Lorimer

This year's recipient of the Gray Campbell Award recognizing an outstanding contribution to the literary community is **Rowly Lorimer**, co-founder of the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing at SFU and mainstay of its Master in Publishing program. As well, the Heritage House consortium, led by **Rodger** and **Pat Touchie**, will receive the annual Jim Douglas Award to recognize outstanding publishing achievements. In recent years Heritage has added several imprints to become one of the major publishers of books specifically for and about B.C. The award is named for the founder of J.J. Douglas Ltd., the company that evolved into Douglas & McIntyre.



Rowland Lorimer

## M is for McPhail

Accounts of 81 fish species are provided for biologists, naturalists and conservationists in **J.D. McPhail's** 696-page *The Freshwater Fishes of British 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. 978-0-88864-467-1

## N is for New

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*

*Fence Riding* (Oolichan \$16.95) and he has co-edited *Tropes and Territories* (McGill-Queen's \$80) with **Marta Dvorak**, a collection of short fiction and postcolonial readings featuring essays on writers such as **Rohinton Mistry**, **David Malouf**, and **Witi Ihimaera**.

Fence 978-0-88982-236-8; Tropes 978-0-77353-289-2

## O is for Outram

Born in 1864, English clergyman **James Outram** was a militia officer (in Afghanistan), zoologist and world traveller who made numerous mountaineering ascents in the Rockies and Columbias 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.

978-1-894765-96-1

## P is for Page

**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* (Oolichan \$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.

978-088982-245-0

## Q is for Quadra

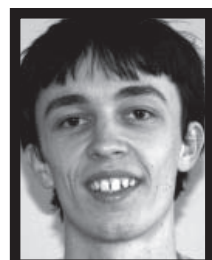
At long last, *At the Far Reaches of Empire* (UBC Press \$85) by **Freeman M. Tovell** provides an in-depth career profile of the pre-eminent Spanish sea captain who explored the Pacific Northwest prior to 1800, Peruvian-born **Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra**. Quadra's reputation suffers because 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.

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## R is for Ross

Despite the demise of Raincoast's publishing program, **Jesse Ross'** two latest titles, *All-Star Sports Puzzles—Basketball* (Raincoast \$9.95) and



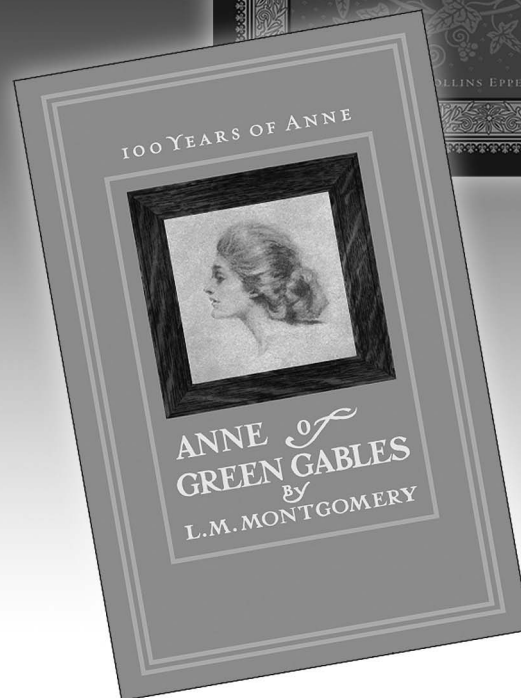
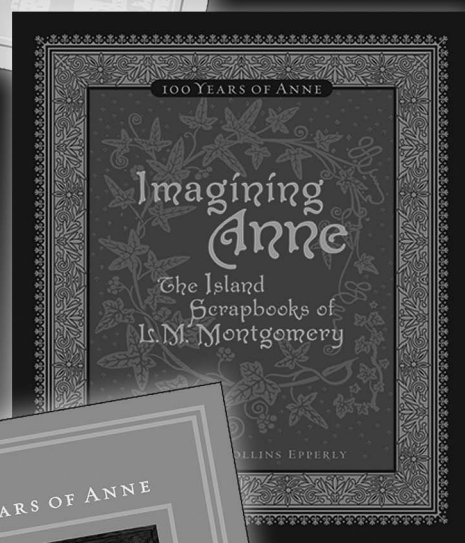
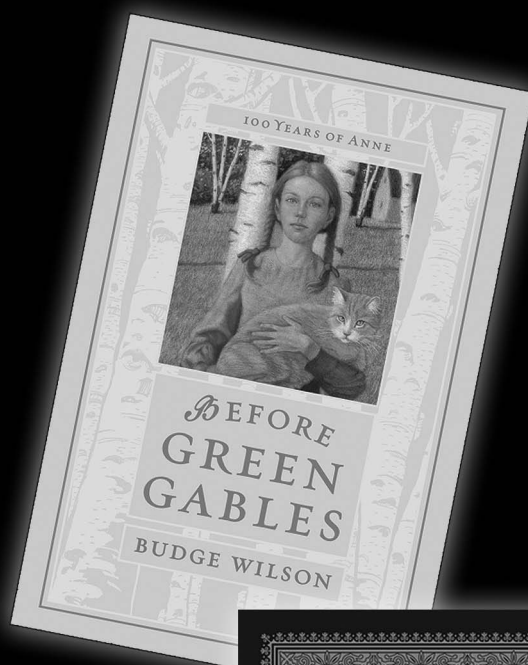
Jesse Ross

*All-Star Sports Puzzles—Hockey* (Raincoast \$9.95) will still be available from the Harry Potter folks.

Basketball 978-1-55192-822-7; Hockey 978-1-55192-810-4

continued on next page

# CELEBRATE 100 YEARS OF ANNE



*L. M. Montgomery*



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continued from previous page

## S is for Shaw

**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, Drapeau-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.

978-0-86571-592-9

## T is for Tsimshian

Victoria's **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.

978-1-55365-332-5

## U is for Unbalanced

**Anna Jean Mallinson's** *Terra Infirma: A Life Unbalanced* (Windshift Press \$17.95) provides a personal account of the author's experience with a



Cover art for  
*Five Ring Circus*

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*.

0-9736560-2-6

## V is for Vuong-Riddick

Born in Hanoi in 1940 and educated in Saigon and Paris, multi-lingual **Thuong Vuong-Riddick** shares her Vietnamese



Thuong Vuong-Riddick, age 4, Hanoi, 1944

roots, her girlhood experiences and her affinity for life in Canada in *The Evergreen Country: A Memoir of Vietnam* (Hagios \$19.95).

In this uplifting and articulate story of preserving dignity in the face of hardship, the retired French literature professor reveals how Vietnam is a blend of indigenous, Chinese, French and American influences.

978-0-9783440-0-9

## W is for Watada

Ten years ago **Terry Watada's** stories in *Daruma Days* (Ronsdale \$14.95) recalled life in the internment camps of World War II in the B.C. interior, focussing on the Issei, the first generation of Japanese-Canadian immigrants. The Issei are again his subject in the novel *Kuroshio* (Arsenal \$21.95), the name given to the tide that brought Japanese immigrants to North America.

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 gang of a ruthless crime boss.

978-1-155152-233-3

## X is for Xtraordinary

That's the decision of author **Karen X Tulchinsky**, UBC English professor **Glenn Deer** and bookseller **Marc Fournier** who have selected **Michael Kluckner's** *Vancouver Remembered* (Whitecap) for this year's City of Vancouver Book Award.

## Y is for Yates

**J. Michael Yates** has resurfaced 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 Sono Nis: Collected Plays* by J. Michael Yates (Libros Libertad \$34.95).

978-0-9781865-3-1

## 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 hitherto 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).

978-01-55365-227-4

### cheetah cubs and Beetle GRUBS

The Wacky Ways We Name Young Animals

by Diane Swanson  
illustrated by Mariko Ando Spencer

In a book that's sure to grab young animal enthusiasts and language lovers alike, B.C. author Diane Swanson describes 11 animals and the words we use for their young. "... a fun read ... also an excellent way to increase young children's vocabulary and to introduce them to the richness of language. Highly Recommended." —CM Reviews

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### At Home With History: The Untold Secrets of Greater Vancouver's Heritage Homes

by Eve Lazarus

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

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## DON'T CALL ME—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 *BC 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 night-

mares.... 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 25.9. It is now 41.



Ishmael Beah: Lost 'n' found 'n' lost again

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## OBITS

**Jeani Read** (1947-2007)

Daughter of author Elfrieda Read, Jeani Read was born in Shanghai and moved to Vancouver when she was very young. Read started writing for *The Province* newspaper in 1973 and became its first rock music critic. She later became a columnist for the newspaper, writing on contemporary manners and morality. These articles were collected and published as *Endless Summers and Other Shared Hallucinations* (Flight Press) in 1985. She also collaborated with her husband, the screenwriter and playwright Michael Mercer, on a number of short TV dramas, one of which was nominated for a Gemini award. She died from complications arising from esophageal cancer, on December 21, 2007.

**Leila Vennewitz** (1912-2007)

Born in Hampshire, England in 1912, Leila Vennewitz, the English language translator of Heinrich Boll, lived quietly and largely unheralded in Vancouver for more than 50 years, primarily in the West End, near Lost Lagoon. She pioneered the ability of translators to gain copyright for their own translations. Leila Vennewitz died on August 8, 2007.

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