Eckhart Tolle has struck-It-Oprah.
After being selected for Oprah's Book Club in January, Tolle's A New Earth (Plume/Penguin $15.50) zoomed to number one on the New York Times Bestseller list in the paperbacks advice category, prompting his 1998 bestseller The Power of Now to resurface at number two.

Both titles simultaneously rose above Martha Stewart's Cookies and a vegan diet book called Skinny Bitch. All 61 previous selections for Oprah's Book Club became bestsellers but, according to the bookselling chain Barnes & Noble, A New Earth was the fastest-selling pick of them all.

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Born in Germany, Eckhart Tolle reportedly underwent a major spiritual rebirth in 1977—finding inescapable bliss to replace suicidal despair—while studying at Cambridge University in England.

Tolle, aged 60, provides an advice column for Joseph Roberts' Vancouver-based Common Ground magazine. To mark the 25th anniversary of that publication, Tolle lectured at the Vancouver Convention Centre on November 30, 2007 to a sold-out audience. Common Ground was the first publication to review Tolle's breakthrough book, A New Earth.

Also in November, Oprah and Tolle recorded three programs for Oprah's Soul Series, a weekly radio program on Oprah's own channel, Oprah & Friends, on XM Satellite Radio.

By the beginning of March, Tolle's publisher said more than 3.5 million copies of A New Earth, had been shipped. It was first self-published in 2005.

Debbie Palmer's memoir is dedicated to her own eight children’s “unspeakable horrors before I brought them out.” Among many others who contributed to her extensive research, Bramham clearly credits Palmer as well as B.C. author Jancis Andrews in her foreword.

"Except for an angry email from Jancis Andrews in April, " writes Bramham, “I would never have written about Bountiful at all. Jancis was responding to a series of columns I’d written for the Vancouver Sun on the illegal trafficking of Asian women and children into Canada. ‘Why didn’t I write about Canadian girls being trafficked to become concubines to polygamist men?’, she angrily demanded.”

Accordingly, Bramham, an award-winning columnist for the Vancouver Sun, delves into the private lives of Mormon leaders Winston Blackmore—the Bountiful, B.C.-based self-appointed prophet who has had more than 25 wives and sired more than 100 children, Warren Jeffs—who accumulated more than 70 wives in Salt Lake City in the 1990s prior to his recent arrest and convictions; and his father Rulon Jeffs—the patriarch who named the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

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SOMEONE’S GOTTA SAY IT. THE LAUDATORY sophistication level of the BC Book Prizes’ organization is being consistently sabotaged by lame acceptance speeches.

One of the worst speeches in 24 years was made by Egoff Prize winner Polly Horvath who spent less than a minute on stage, making a trite joke about successfully bribing the judges, before walking off with her cheque.

Livesay Poetry Prize winner Rita Wong went the esoteric route, advising everyone, “The spirit of water is what makes everything possible.” High-minded Robert Bringhurst didn’t deign to show up to receive his Evans Non-Fiction Prize, we were told, because he “hates” such ceremonies. This hatred didn’t stop him from accepting the second Lieutenant Governor’s Award for Literary Excellence from the Book Prizes in 2005.

A book about the trend towards “eating locally” was judged the best book about British Columbia, but its authors J.B. MacKinnon and Alisa Smith didn’t show. No explanation was given when a representative from Ontario’s Random House spoke for 20 seconds to accept their Haig-Brown Prize. Perhaps the champions of localism were away.

By contrast, Ian McAllister and his wife Karen arrived from their home on Denny Island, flying down from Bella Bella, leaving the kids overnight in Campbell River, just on the chance he might receive the Bookskulls’ Choice Award for The Last Wild Wolves. He did—along with its publisher Rob Sanders. “I hope this book gives a little back to the coast that we are trying to preserve,” said McAllister.

This year’s Lieutenant Governor’s Award winner Gary Geddes did his best by quoting a Chilean activist who told him that in his country, “Your book may survive [in Chile] but you may not,” followed by Margaret Atwood’s quip, “You can say what you want [in Canada] because nobody is listening.” Alone among the recipients, Geddes had the good manners to conclude, “I am deeply moved by this gesture of belief in my work.”

When the literary tribe gathers annually to break bread, you’d think more than one person would overtly express appreciation—or acknowledges collectivity.

The evening’s only animated speech was delivered by kidlit writer Robert Heidbreder who delivered a stand-up comedy routine about his mother while accepting the Harris Prize for best illustrated book. His illustrator Kady MacDonald Denton was home in Peterborough.

Meanwhile the hard-working organizers, Liesl Jauk and Bryan Pike, have done a terrific job spreading the Book Prizes beyond a ballroom. Their company Rebus Creative coordinated 17 finalists on tours and sponsored 64 events in 27 communities in two weeks. In addition, $12,000 worth of nominated titles was donated to 24 B.C. schools.

For a complete list of winners and nominees, visit www.bcbookprizes.ca

LORDY, LORDY, DON’T TELL GORDY
The ascendancy of the Lieutenant Governor at the annual Book Prizes bun toss can be problematic for any British Columbian who don’t believe in kings and queens and hereditary power, but Rt. Hon. Steven Point was the only person with the gumption to use the podium to make a political statement. Pleased to hear Book Prize Society president Sally Harding acknowledge that downtown Vancouver is in Coast Salish territory, the First Nations L.G. joked, “We are just having difficulties collecting the taxes.” Then he paused. “Don’t tell the premier I said that.”
Winner
GEORGE WOODCOCK LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
for an outstanding literary career in British Columbia

JOY KOGAWA

Since 1995, BC BookWorld and the Vancouver Public Library have proudly sponsored the Woodcock Award and the Writers Walk at 350 West Georgia St, Vancouver.

Janice Douglas of the Vancouver Public Library presented the Woodcock Award to Joy Kogawa at the newly preserved Joy Kogawa House, now owned by The Land Conservancy of British Columbia, on April 25th. Surrounding Kogawa with her Writers Walk plaque are members of the committee that spearheaded the campaign to make Kogawa's childhood home into a heritage site.

PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS:
 Eric Nicol (1995)
 Jane Rule (1996)
 Barry Broadfoot (1997)
 Christie Harris (1998)
 Phyllis Webb (1999)
 Robert Harlow (2001)
 Peter Trower (2002)
 Audrey Thomas (2003)
 Alice Munro (2005)
 Jack Hodgins (2006)
 bill bissett (2007)

For more info see www.abcbookworld.com
A is for Alderson

Sue Ann Alderson’s book about the Camous Bog, The Eco-Diary of Kiran Singer (Tradewind $18.95), has received an ASPCA Henry Bergh Children’s Book Award for Best Young Adult Book.

Each year in June the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals recognizes books that feature an exemplary handling of subject matter pertaining to animals and the environment.

978-1-55105-591-6

B is for Baird

Irene Baird: 1939 novel Waste Heritage (University of Ottawa $35) has been touted as the classic novel of the Depression in Canada.

When Globe reviewer William French read it in 1973, he wrote, “Why it [has] suffered such obscurity for almost 35 years is hard to explain.”

Newly reissued and edited by Colin Hill, Waste Heritage describes the volatile aftermath of the famous 1938 occupation of the main Vancouver Post Office by unemployed ‘sit-downers’ who were evicted by police with tear gas.

C is for Cohen

Hey, is that Al Pacino or is it Leonard Cohen?

It’s Cohen, photographed on the seawall at English Bay in 1978 by cartoonist and photographer David Boswell. One of Boswell’s photos was used for a Georgia Straight cover story at the time.

Ten of Boswell’s photos, including an image of the singer-songwriter wearing a maple leaf over his crotch in Stanley Park, are now being offered for sale as prints via www.davidboswell.ca

D is for Douglas

Janice Douglas has arranged more than 3,000 author readings and events—probably more than anyone else in the country—during her 41 years at the Vancouver Public Library. She has also been an ardent advocate for childhood literacy.

A gathering was held in her honour on May 2nd to coincide with her retirement, but she’ll likely remain active as a literary catalyst and organizer in the Lower Mainland.

E is for Elmirst

Raised on a southern Ontario dairy farm, Janice Elmirst headed the BC Provincial Pest Diagnostic Laboratory for four years before starting her own company in 2002 to provide consulting services to the ornamental nursery industry. With entomology instructor Ken Fry and agroforester Douglas Macaulay, she has co-authored Garden Bugs of British Columbia: Gardening to Attract, Repel and Control (Lone Pine $21.95) featuring 126 species of insect most commonly encountered in B.C. gardens.

978-1-55105-594-7

F is for Friesen

After four well-received juvenile novels, Gayle Friesen’s first novel for adults, The Valley (Key Porter $29.95) concerns a prodigal daughter named Gloria who returns to a Mennonite community in the Fraser Valley after a twenty-year absence. While living on her parents’ farm, she learns to confront the tragedy that has haunted her for years. Friesen lives in Delta.

See www.abcbookworld.com 077660649-1

G is for Galbraith

Ron Chudley

DAVID BOSWELL PHOTO

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H is for Hill

Janice Douglas

Waste Heritage cover art: Solitaire (1939) painted by Bertram Brooker

The police violence sparked a protest trek to Victoria in which the two main characters participate. They are the aptly named Matt Striker, a 23-year-old from Saskatchewan, and his simple-minded companion Eddy who is obsessed with the idea of one day getting a new pair of shoes.

Vancouver is fictionalized as Ascelon and Victoria is Garth—both Biblical references. Baird said of the work, “I wasn’t a journalist, just a writer, but the theme gripped me and it seemed as though journalists and writers both could share a rare opportunity with a story like this, and at the same time do a little something for Canada.”

978-1-55470-001-1

continued on next page

Gayle Friesen: adult entertainment
As a series of poems arising from her research for a crime novel, Zoe Landale’s Once A Murderer (Wolsak & Wynn $17) explores love, criminal behavior and poetry. Five years earlier her submission called ‘Once a Murderer: Poems for Three Voices’ won the $6,000 first prize in the CBC Literary Awards. Landale currently teaches at Kwantlen College.

GARY CODY PHOTO

After learning her great-grandfather was a magician named Dante Magnus, Rachel Dunstan Miller, heroine in her first children’s book, When the Curtain Rises (Orca $8.95), uncovers a mysterious rosewood box which has remained hidden for almost one hundred years.

When the Curtain Rises will be followed by a second book called Ten Thumb Sam.

Venturing from his boyhood experiences in Vancouver to his adulthood in Australia, singer-songwriter-actor Andy Quan eschews gay erotica in his second poetry collection, Bowling Pin Fire (Signature $14.95). His playful and mystical content, directly drawn from the Biblical record, attempts to address believers as well as agnostics, regardless of their religious orientation or lack thereof.

Including a hockey team of Aussie misfits called the Didgeridoo All-Stars, Kevin Roberts’ novel She’ll Be Right (Pilot Hill Press $20) is a comic mystery that revisits Kitsilano when it was still a Yuppie-free zone. Those were the days, my friend, we thought they’d never end. Robert's second novel doubles as the second release from William Gough and his partner Caren Moon’s new literary press on Saltspring Island.

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Comrade Li TELLS ALL

Li Qunying met her husband-to-be Han Wende in 1950 when they were 25 years old.

Born in Inner Mongolia in 1926, Dr. Li Qunying offers a rare first-hand account of medical, military and Maoist atrocities, as well as U.S. biological warfare, in The Doctor who was Followed by Ghosts: The Family Saga of a Chinese Woman Doctor (ECW $28.95).

Quining suggests the United States dropped more napalm in Korea than they did in Vietnam. During one such bombing, when her husband-to-be Han Wende caught on fire, she was able to extinguish the flames.

"The soldiers lived life like a bunch of rats. They stayed in their holes during the daytime and came out at night."

But she stops short of validating Chinese claims that the Americans used germ warfare. More likely that was a bogus accusation that he embezzled two thousand yuan during the Korean War, followed by trumped-up accusations that he was an historical counter-revolutionary.

Through a matchmaker she had met her handsome and "harmless" husband Han Wende when he was employed as an accountant. "I couldn't find much wrong with him except that he was a noisy eater, which I assumed was a bad habit that he would break after we got married. But he never did." They were married in 1954.

The Doctor Who Was Followed By Ghosts is as much a family saga and a love story as it's a political expose. To escape unwarranted (and ridiculous) political persecution under Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution in 1970, she and her husband escaped to the countryside where she aided peasants as a barefoot doctor.

Quining had lost all his limbs and had only his torso remaining, he became hysterical, refusing to eat or accept treatment. "Get the hell out of here," he yelled when I approached him.

When I attempted to feed him, he tried to bite me. He missed, lost his balance and couldn't turn over by himself. He struggled and swore with the most obscene words he could come up with in his Shanxi dialect. A month later, the patient was sent back to his hometown. An official accompanied him home. "What happened to him?" I asked the official when he came back a week later.

"His mother refused to accept her own son. She said that it wasn't her son because he hadn't looked like that when he had left home. 'What have you done to my son?' she said. I didn't know how to calm her down. I told her that revolution came with a cost. On the other hand, the wife vowed to take care of him for the rest of his life."

What is he going to do?" he asked when he came back. "What is he going to do?"

Comrade Li also describes the Great Famine, forced abortions, infanticide, disease epidemics, foot-binding and opium production by the Communist army. Having joined the army in 1945 and gained membership to the Communist Party in 1953, she repeatedly reveals the cruel and catastrophic policies of Mao from the perspective of a hard-working humanitarian who steadfastly provided medical treatment in a society that was sick to its political core.

Although literary flair is absent, The Doctor Who Was Followed By Ghosts merits comparison with the work of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. That is, after reading it, one can never forget that Mao was a monster on par with Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler.

Dr. Li Qunying officially retired from medicine in 1986. She has twice visited Canada, once staying in Vancouver for five months. She now lives in Jinan, Shandong Province. Her youngest son and co-author, Louis Luping Han, came to Canada in 1991. He lives in Vancouver with his wife, Patry.
T
HE LEGAL RUCKUS OVER CHUCK CAdMAN’s story has arisen largely because of the late Surrey MP Dona Cadman—bizarrely, herself a candidate-to-be for the governing Conservatives—has verified biographer Tom Zytaruk’s report that a bribe was offered to her dying husband by two representatives of Stephen Harper’s Conservative party in May of 2005.

Donna Cadman reportedly told Zytaruk, “There was a few other things thrown in there, too, but it was the million-dollar policy that just pissed him right off.” As the lone independent MP elected in the 2004 election, Cadman had the power to bring down the then-Government’s initiative in 2005 (due to his support for the national policy that just pissed him right off.”

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Only a few weeks later, at age 57, Cadman died of skin cancer in his Surrey home, revered as a local hero, and nationally admired for his unwavering dedication to revamping the Young Offenders Act and for his refusal to act outside the bounds of his conscience. More than 1,500 people attended his funeral at Johnston Heights Church on July 16, 2005.

Did Harper know about the offer of a financial incentive in 2005? Former leader Stéphane Dion has suggested he did—but Harper denies it.

In tandem with the release of his thorough biography, Zytaruk, an award-winning reporter for the New regional newspaper chain, has been circulating a tape recording of a somewhat ambiguous telephone conversation between himself and Harper that has fuelled the debate.

It all adds up to a story worthy of a movie, a movie that has already been made—twice.

In 1939, the Frank Capra drama Mr. Smith Goes to Washington starred James Stewart as an earnest political neophyte who turned the nation’s capital on its head. In 2007, the CTY movie Elijah recalled how the Cree M.L.A. Elijah Harper rose in the Manitoba legislature, holding an eagle feather and rejected the Meech Lake Accord, thereby scuttling Prime Minister Jean Chretien’s quest for a constitutional amendment to the 1982 Meech Lake Accord.

In 1992, and his wife received a phone call from their 16-year-old son Jesse, asking for a ride home. He was advised to take the bus. Not long after that, while walking along the Fraser Highway, Jesse was senselessly stabbed to death by a chronic young offender, 16-year-old Isaac Deas, during an unprovoked attack. Deas and several other youths had stolen a pick-up that night, and Deas was wielding an 18-centimetre Japanese Tanto fighting knife he had stolen during a break-in. “The blade ran between the seventh and eighth ribs,” Zytaruk writes, “cutting through Jesse’s left lung and into his heart.”

After the funeral service that opened with a video about Jesse’s life, set to the music of Led Zeppelin’s “Stairway to Heaven,” a song Cadman had been teaching Jesse on the guitar—Cadman grew his trade mark ponytail in honour of his son.

Some family friends have speculated that Chuck Cadman’s resultant zeal to assert victims’ rights and bring changes to the Young Offenders Act was born of guilt as much as grief, but he publicly maintained otherwise.

Cadman, his wife and their friends formed CVY, a lobbying group dedicated to addressing problems arising from Crime, Responsibility and Youth. CVY and similar groups called for amendments to the Young Offenders Act that was introduced by Prime Minister Trudeau in 1983. “It was called the Juvenile Delinquents Act of 1908. Also riled by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Cadman gathered thousands of signatures for petitions and spoke out in public. “The average Canadian,” he said, “is not afraid to challenge, criticize or voice his opinion about anything for fear of being accused of racism, sexism, elitism, red-neckism or any other number of isms.”

CVY sent 600,000 letters to Ottawa. “Like a BC salmon fighting upstream against unrelenting currents and confounded by obstacles along the way,” Zytaruk writes, “Chuck struggled to make distant Ottawa listen, only to be beaten back by disappointment.”

After Cadman’s rising public profile caught the attention of Reform House Leader Randy White, “the original victim rights guy in the House of Commons,” Cadman was elected as a Reform MP for Surrey North in 1997, then re-elected for the Canadian Alliance Party in 2000, becoming their Justice Critic.

Cadman lost the Conservative Party nomination in his riding to Jasbir Singh Cheema, a news anchor at Channel M in Vancouver, in 2004, but won the seat anyway, as an independent. His plainspoken appeal was hard-won, not a gimmick.

“I have been criticized for the length of my hair,” he once said, “but I believe that it is what is in one’s head that counts, not what is on it. As for my jeans, sneakers and sweatshirt, well, three-piece suits have governed this country for decades and I’m not overly impressed with the result.”

MR.CADMAN GOES TO OTTAWA—STILL FEW B.C. BOOKS, IF ANY, HAVE EVER GENERATED SUCH A NATIONAL stir prior to publication as much as Tom Zytaruk’s Like A Rock: The Chuck Cadman Story (Harbour $26.95). The Prime Minister of Canada launched a lawsuit against the Leader of the Opposition—the first time any PM has ever done so in office—due to accusations arising from the book.

Brian Mulroney’s hopes for ratification.

Victim rights campaigner Chuck Cadman was the British Columbia version of that unsullied Everyman who ventures reluctantly into politics—staunchly independent—a venerable tradition that dates back to Cincinnatus, the honest man who twice rejected his role as the appointed dictator of the Roman Empire in order to return to his family farm.

Born in Ontario in 1948, Chuck Cadman spent several years as an aspiring rock musician before the realities of family life led him to Surrey, commuting to an ICBC job in North Vancouver.

Then one night in 1992 he and his wife received a phone call from their 16-year-old son Jesse, asking for a ride home. He was advised to take the bus. Not long after that, while walking along the Fraser Highway, Jesse was senselessly stabbed to death by a chronic young offender, 16-year-old Isaac Deas, during an unprovoked attack. Deas and several other youths had stolen a pick-up that night, and Deas was wielding an 18-centimetre Japanese Tanto fighting knife he had stolen during a break-in. “The blade ran between the seventh and eighth ribs,” Zytaruk writes, “cutting through Jesse’s left lung and into his heart.”

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INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD

T

he poet Dorothy Livesay once immortalized the freedom fighters in Spain by writing a rebuke to Canadians who failed to appreciate their noble struggle in the name of international brotherhood:

“You who live quietly in unlit space
Reading The Herald after morning grace
Can count peace dear, when it has driven
Your sons to struggle for this grim, new heaven.”

Grim was the right word. Most Canadians who supported the fledgling republican movement in Spain went there as idealists, fueled by naïve views of Stalinism—only to confront death, internal political feuding or their own disintegrated dreams.

Of the 1700 Canadians who volunteered to join International Brigades to fight fascist forces during the Spanish Civil War—and of the 400 who died—some 80% were recent immigrants to Canada. That’s just one of the reasons why Canada’s government—along with France, Britain and the United States—failed to rally behind the Spanish Republic. Only about 250 Canadian volunteers had previous military service. The numbers of volunteers from British Co-

Alex Forbes and Walter Hellund were two of many Canadians who returned from Spain wounded in the 1930s.

The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion’s soccer team in Spain in 1938.

lumbia (350) were disproportionately high due to the strength of the labour movement and the Communist Party on the West Coast. The RCMP maintained files on most of the surviving Canadian veterans of the Spanish War until at least 1984.

These details can be found in Michael Petrou’s Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War (UBC $24.95), the fourth major book on its subject, following Victor Hoar’s The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in 1969, William Beeching’s Canadian Volunteers: Spain 1936-1939, and Mark Zuehlke’s The Gallianze Cause in 1996.

When Petrou began Renegades in 2002, fewer than ten Canadian veterans of the Spanish Civil War were known to be living, including Jules Paivio, who had faced a firing squad. He was one of the very few who lived long enough to see the erection of a new statue in Ottawa to commemorate the Canadian idealists who went to Spain.

No book on Canadians fighting Generalissimo Franco could be complete without a chapter on the eccentric and frequently drunk Montreal doctor Norman Bethune. His affair with the tall Swede Kajsa Helin Rothmann (who died 30 years later in Mexico) contributed to his expulsion after only six months with the republican forces, but not before he had pioneered mobile blood transfusion units.

If western governments had been swift to confront fascism in the mid-1930s, it’s possible much of the carnage of World War II could have been avoided. The Spanish Civil War is viewed by many historians as the first battle of World War II. “The democracies avoided war until it was forced on them,” writes Petrou. World War II started only months after most of the Canadian volunteers returned from Spain.

Not likely to be confused with the author of Gone With the Wind, our Margaret Mitchell has penned an autobiography, No Laughing Matter: Adventure, Activism & Politics (Granville Island $24.95), so-named because male colleagues in the House of Commons openly ridiculed her when she first raised domestic violence as a social issue.

Ontario-raised, Mitchell came to Vancouver with her husband in 1955, having served overseas for the Red Cross during the Korean War. It was her tireless advocacy work for low-income housing that led to her election four times, from 1979 to 1992, as the NDP Member for Vancouver-East. After Mitchell became one of the first Canadian women to visit the People’s Republic of China in 1973, she pioneered efforts to demand redress for Chinese-Canadians who had been forced to pay the head tax to enter Canada. Mitchell also helped to create the Strathcona Property Owner and Tenant Association which led to the rehabilitation of older housing, new homes, and other community improvements.

In 1980, after she voted against a pension increase for MPs, Mitchell began diverting her pay increase to an account to help the poorest in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. She donated these funds in 1997 to establish the Margaret Mitchell Fund for Women.

Frankly, she gave a damn
After cult members threatened to blow themselves up with gas canisters if police evicted them with force, a priest specialising in apocalyptic literature was able to coax some of the sect members out of the cave before it collapsed.

Such apocalypse-minded nutters are increasing common in Russia since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, but they are far from abnormal on the planet.

In his fourth book, Have a Nice Doomsday (Harper $16.50), SFU history professor Nicholas Guyatt has examined the “apocalyptic obsession” in the United States where, reportedly, some 50 millions citizens are expecting the apocalypse to occur in their lifetime.

Is the Antichrist a homosexual? Will the Tribulation finally occur if Russia attacks Israel? God only knows and He’s not giving interviews to Larry King yet, so Guyatt travelled around the U.S. to discover what the apocalypse-minded in the United States are thinking and doing when they are not voting for George Bush.

It’s a literary as well as a religious movement. Evangelicals have thus far snatched up more than 60 million copies of the Left Behind series of novels from two of the most popular Second Coming salesmen, Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, since 1995.

According to Guyatt, these so-called True Believers in Jesus’ Second Coming are mostly cheerful about the impending end of the world.

Have a Nice Doomsday also looks at how these believers impact the culture and politics of the world’s most powerful nation, and what their influence might mean for the rest of the godforsaken world.

“The creation of the Jewish State in 1948,” Guyatt writes, “provided the missing piece in the puzzle, generating the upsurge in apocalyptic belief that has propelled today’s most famous Bible prophecy interpreters into the mainstream.”

Nanaimo self-publisher William Bergsma concurs in We Have Also A More Sure Word of Prophecy (Xulon Press $13.99), surely one of the least-catchy titles in recent memory. With extensive Biblical quotations, Bergsma matches prophecies to current events.

“I chose as a front cover for my book the map of Iran,” he writes, “showing a nuclear explosion, because according to Bible prophecy Iran will attack Israel with nuclear weapons in ‘the latter days’ together with Russia….

“The latter years in the bible means the time period, when for the first time in 2432 years since Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 605 BC and took the Jews to Babylon, the Jews have again a country called Israel, followed by the return of Jerusalem during the Six Day War in 1967.”

Now retired, Dutch-born Bergsma is a devout member of the Christian Reformed Church. He immigrated to Canada at age 25.

“Jesus, figure of speech”

The proliferation of doomsday believers, and the reinvigoration of the time-honoured antipathy between Muslims and Christians since 9-11, has given rise to the spread of increasingly vocal anti-religionists such as Christopher Hitchens—but that doesn’t upset Greenpeace activist Rex Weyler.

Weyler has explored his Quakerism by writing a new book about what Jesus really said—as opposed to what others have fictionalized as his words.

Weyler in his The Jesus Sayings: The Quest for the Authentic Teachings of Jesus (Anansi $29.95), surveys more than 200 ancient documents in his search for the authentic voice of Jesus.

Along the way Weyler discounts many contemporary beliefs, making clear that Jesus never claimed to be the son of God.

While referencing the investigative Biblical scholarship of Margaret Starbuck, Nicholas Wright, Robert W. Funk and others, Weyler attempts to answer down-to-earth questions raised by the German linguist Hermann Reimarus in 1760.
What events reported in the Gospels actually happened? And, what ideas and teachings from the surviving record can be traced to the historical Jesus?

In other words, Weyler asks, “What can we reasonably say about the historical Jesus, and what did this person teach?” Weyler’s intentions are not to debunk Christianity so much as to refocus on the essence of Jesus’s radical message: serve God by serving others. In doing so, Weyler is willing to acknowledge the validity of “secular and agnostic reactions to violence among fundamentalist Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Hindus.” He sees books such as The God Delusion by Richard Dawkins, God Is Not Great by Christopher Hitchens and The Battle for God by Karen Armstrong as healthy rather than destructive.

“A vast and glorious landscape exists between the extremes of religious fundamentalism and absolute rationalism,” he writes.

United Church minister Bruce Sanguin would agree. With his passion for reconciling science and religions, Sanguin strongly believes that knowledge of an evolutionary universe requires a new cosmology that “simply cannot be contained by old models and images of God, or by old ways of being the church.”

Having urged readers to rediscover awe by considering their place within the 14-billion-year history of the cosmos with Darwin, Divinity, and the Dance of the Cosmos, Sanguin has written a follow-up volume, The Emerging Church: A Model for Change & a Map for Renewal (Wood Lake $24.95) to provide practical tips for congregations to revitalize their churches and reflect on what an “emergent” culture within a congregation might look like.
Five Ring Circus
Myths and Realities of the Olympic Games
Christopher A. Shaw

An expose of the greatest sham on earth! How back room deals benefit the few while trampling civil liberties of Vancouver's tax payers, poor and homeless.
US/Can $19.95

"What really goes down when the Olympics come to town — in Vancouver and beyond...the best sporting expos I've read in years.”
Dave Zirin, author, A People's History of Sports in the United States

Wider Boundaries of Daring
The Modernist Impulse in Canadian Women's Poetry
Di Brandt and Barbara Godard, editors

$30.00 Paper • 978-1-55458-039-2 • Laurier Poetry series

For this bold volume, Di Brandt and Barbara Godard, editors of The Poetry of Louis Dudek and Canadian Nature Poems, have assembled a stellar roster of 39 emerging and established poets to offer the reader a bold revision of the genealogy of Canadian literary modernism. By foregrounding the contribution of women poets, critics, cultural activists, and experimental prose writers Dorothy Livesay, P.K. Page, Miriam Waddington, Phyllis Webb, Elizabeth Brewster, Jay MacPherson, Anne Wilkinson, Anne Marriott, and Elizabeth Smart, these new poets of the modernist impulse will astound and astound any reader who assumes their work is simply a repetition of the work of the “ equivalents or mere feminized versions of their male peers. These are writers who do not fear to extend in any direction, who have no commitment to the status quo, and who are not afraid of the future. Their writing is most often innovative and ground-breaking, and the editors have included them in this volume to show the vibrant diversity of the modernist impulse in Canadian women's poetry.

Open Wide a Wilderness
Canadian Nature Poems
Nancy Holmes, editor

$30.00 Paper • 978-1-55458-033-0 • December 2008

Open Wide a Wilderness surveys Canada's various regions, poetries, histories, and peoples as these relate to the natural world. The poems range from late-eighteenth-century colonial pioneer epics to the work of contemporary writers who are creating a new ecoptic aesthetic.

Asian Canadian Writing beyond Autoethnography
Eleanor Ty and Christil Verdun, editors

$30.00 Paper • 978-1-55458-032-3 • November 2008

The contributors to this collection explore how Asian Canadian writing has become less ethnographically autobiographic and/or superfluous material was also remarkable, and I never saw him fall for the allure of an image even though he clearly loved it.”

Despite the plethora of films since 1894, only three books on drugs and cinema have been published prior to Susan Boyd's Hooked: Drug War Films in Britain, Canada, and the United States (Routledge $95), a survey that includes Canadian "drug" films, as well as British and U.S. productions, from 1912 to the present.

Boyds keenly aware that widespread drug prohibition emerged at the same time as the discovery of film. "Their histories intersect in interesting ways," says Boyd, who focuses on war-on-drugs narratives and how cinematic representations of illegal drug use and trafficking (regardless of drug type) are linked to discussions about fear of the other, nation building, law and order, and punishment.

"I also write about alternative films and stoner flicks," she says, "and I include a chapter on women and maternal drug use." According to Boyd, some of the most significant Canadian drug films are: High (1967) directed by L. Kent; The Barbarian Invasions (2003) directed by D. Arcand; On the Corner (2003) directed by N. Geary; and Trailer Park Boys (2006) directed by M. Clattenburg. Her favorites are The Barbarian Invasions and Trailer Park Boys (and their Showcase episode titled Trailer Park Boys Xmas Special (2004). Some of the films included in her book are from Broken Blossoms (1919); Narcotic (1933); Reefer Madness (1936); Valley of the Dolls (1967); Drugstore Cowboy (1989); Postcards from the Edge (1990) and Twin Peaks (1996).
A Salmon on the Doorknob

How one couple has happily worked “forty years in the margin” on behalf of First Nations’ languages

Crows and seagulls are squabbling in the road. From her computer Vickie Jensen can just see the surf crashing on the shore, but the fog has totally obscured James Island at the mouth of the Quileute River.

She and her husband Jay Powell are once again in LaPush, a small native village on the northwest coast of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington, helping the Quileute [pronounced Kwil-LAY-yute] revive their language and culture.

While Powell is off at the tribal school, cajoling a class of teenagers into trying words like xistedole (Go home) or Hinta nuita (Gimme food), Jensen recalls her first visit 36 years ago. In those days, 50 Quileute could speak their indigenous language; 600 could not. Very quickly Quileute could speak their indigenous language to Powell, the young anthropologist, had the patience to teach his language to Powell, the young anthropologist, developed and printed photo- ready copy.

“Jay and I didn’t know it at the time,” she says, “but that was the beginning of our life together.”

After Fred ‘Woody’ Woodruff, one of the last remaining Quileute speakers, had the patience to teach his language to Powell, the young anthropologist began his lifelong career as one of the most essential linguists in the Pacific Northwest.

Since then Vickie Jensen has shot more than 50,000 photographs and the couple has helped produce more than 40 language and culture books for the Quileutes, the Kwak’wala, the Halkomelem, the Eastern and Western Giksan, the Shuswap, and the Num-a-nush.

“A language is like a species of bird,” Powell has said, “that has evolved across thousands of generations. How hard would we work to save such a bird from becoming extinct?”

Jay Powell first came to LaPush in 1968 to research his Ph.D dissertation as a University of Hawaii graduate student. When Jensen joined him in 1972, she was already teaching students who she was already teaching students who had grown up in potlatches or feast ceremonies, so Jensen learned to work with very slow shutter speeds. “I also developed the negs and printed the images myself,” she says, “Because we were always on a meager budget, we were limited to b&w images and illustrations as part of our photo ready copy.”

Long before computers were an option, theirs was a thriving desktop operation. They tape-recorded the elders and used a typewriter with a special IBM Selectric ball in order to produce the necessary diacritic markings. They used Letraset to transfer titles, hired an illustrator, developed and printed photographs, planned the layout, stuck everything in place with tape or wax, and then found a printer who could print and bind within affordable budgets.

Powell and Jensen invaluable on the rez, often with a family, and returned year after year. Publications were usually celebrated with a community feast. “This body of work sort of sneaked up on us,” Jensen says. “We’ve been so busy writing and publishing in the margins that we’ve never been a significant part of the mainstream publishing picture.

“But we have no regrets. Recently someone left a salmon hanging on our doorknob. It’s the kind of anonymous thank you that really means something here.”

The books they produced are copyright-ed for the native band. This approach proved problematic for Powell’s teaching career at UBC.

“The anthropology department might have thought our work was interesting and even important,” says Jensen, “but the books certainly didn’t count for promotion or tenure since they hadn’t been produced by a juried press. Academics were uncomfortable with language and culture books that seemed too much like pragmatic self-publishing, which in those days was categorized with vanity press works that nobody but the author would publish.

“But the process of “real” publishing took two to three years to accept a manuscript, have it reviewed, seek subventions, edit and re-edit, proofread and print.”

So, instead we did it ourselves, sometimes producing a book in six weeks. The native communities wanted their language lessons, dictionaries, cultural readers and kids’ picture books now!”

While Powell continued to teach at university and write “respectable” academic papers, Jensen accepted an invitation from Alan Haig-Brown to try editing Westcoast Mariner Magazine. It turned into a four-year stint. She has also written books on native art and maritime life, eventually setting up her own company, Westcoast Words, for her narrow-niche books on underwater robots and a guide to local totem poles.

After they produced their first Quileute school books in 1975, the phone in Vancouver started ringing. “In 1980-81, when we lived in Alert Bay, we wrote 13 books, helped with opening Umita Cultural Centre, taught a photography class, and had a second baby.”

Their commitment to the work didn’t change, but technology did, as did their methodology. “In the beginning, we thought good-looking, respectable school books would be enough. Then we realized that with the elder he might be fluent in the language, none had any experience in classroom dynamics. So we added teacher’s manuals to our repertoire.

“When that didn’t prove as effective as we’d hoped, we set up a three-year Kwak’wala Teacher Training Project, where teachers would not only learn about NASL (Native as a Second Language) techniques but could share ideas, produce group materials, and get post secondary credit, first through North Island Community College and later SFU.

“Eventually we did our first immersion CD-ROM for young kids. Back in 1980 there were only old men ‘at the log,’ singing the ancient Kwak’wala songs at potlatches. Today, there’s a whole generation of powerful young singers (and dancers) making their own CDs.”

Forty years. Forty books. 50,000 photos. Plus thousands of hours on reserves and in classrooms.

It adds up to two of the most valuable authors of British Columbia.

Jay Powell’s forty years of anthropological work in the Pacific Northwest and Vickie Jensen’s 50,000 First Nations photos will be donated to UBC Museum of Anthropology in 2009.
The Montreal Fringe Festival.

In this screwball comedy-turned-nightmare, Oswald's seeming rash act of kindness leads to a reversal of fortunes. After a street person named Terence gives a hundred dollar bill to a seemingly irrational impulse, some bizarre encounters with Terence in a porn theatre, Morris Panych as the dancer Apsara, Bombay Black charts the seduction of Apsara by a mysterious blind man named Kamal. Bombay Black and The Maids' King have been jointly published in The Bombay Plays (Trent University Canada $19.95). “I think he's one of Canada's most promising writers,” says Art Club-Artistic Director Bill Millerd.

As an adult and a seventh-generation Black like her, Addena Sumter-Frietag frequently experienced frustration as a member of a visible minority within the country's theatre community, and his darkly comic comedy about childhood, innocence and fish—received five nominations for Outstanding New Play of 2006. Bombay Black is a harrowing tale of love, revenge, myth and magic evolved from an image he had of a young woman performing an erotic dance in an apartment by the sea in Bombay, while a blind man licks in the shadows. “Why the blind man watching the woman dance,” he asked himself.

Featuring Anita Majumdar as the dancer Apsara, Bombay Black combines the frisson between Western imperialism and its counterpart in the Arab world: religious fundamentalism and its Arab equivalent. Originally titled Final Decisions [War], Verdecchia's first play, Another Country, was his response to the horror country Argentina's Dirty War in the '70s. He cites the complicity of the U.S. in the junta's war against subversives via the auspices of the public relations firm of Barson-Mamnelli. His most recent play called Adam is a replica with images from T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land. He critically examines the American government's so-called War on Terrorism.

Bomandir profiled

While serving as president, Academy 1, of the Royal Society of Canada, UBC's Sherrill Grace is a publishing at Once in a Lifetime (Alfreda $16.95) in 2006, her biography of the groundbreaking, New Brunswick-named playwright who has overcome an abusive marriage to raise six children and win two Governor General's Awards for Drama (for Blood Relations, and Dot). As a playwright, director, actor and artistic director, Pollock has been at the forefront of Canadian theatre for four decades.

As the co-artist producer of theatreworks, Marcus Youssef published his revised version of Ashraf's (Talkbooks $16.95) inspired by the novel Ashraf on the Nile, by Egyptian Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz. Set amongst hip partypersons on a Cairo houseboat during the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the play begins as a comedy as a party butaneurnamed Ashraf falls in love with a high-powered journalist named Samara, but tragedy arises from the friction between Western imperialism and its counterpart in the Arab world: religious fundamentalism. An earlier draft of the play was commissioned by the Magnetic North Theatre Festival and produced by theatreworks in 2006 in St. John's, Newfoundland, co-written with Camyar Chai, in director. The revised version, also directed by Chai, premiered at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre in February of 2007. It received the 2007 Aiken Performing Arts Award.

Black humour

Morris Panych's abundant comic has long attracted critical praise, as well as perpendular responses. In his latest publication, Brunswick (Talkbooks $16.95), which premiered at the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto in September of 2007, a lose salvation, and would be a wrennamed Oswald, on a seemingly irrational impulse, gives a hundred dollar bill to a street person named Terence. The book Terence has continually worn a handwritten cardboard sign around his neck saying “hungry” for two years.

In 2003, Panych's Girl in the Goldfish Bowl—a poignant comedy about childhood, innocence and faith—received five Foster Mozart Award nominations, including Outstanding New Play and Outstanding Direction of a Play. It also earned Panych his second Governor General's Award in 2004. Panych won his first G.G. for The Ends of the Earth in 1994 and his darkly comic What Lies Below was nominated for the same award last year.

Socrates was one of the most ethical figures of the ancient world. At thirty-seven, he had begun his teaching career in Athens, where he spent the rest of his life. As the first recipient of the City of Vancouver's Cultural Harmony Award, David Diamond, co-founder of Headlines Theatre, has digested his 36 years as a theatrical activity for his Headlines productions, including My BDAY (One-Four-Play) and Out of the Silence, in the form of Headlines production: The Stone Face by Sherry MacDonald (Avail $15).

As the co-artistic producer of Headlines Theatre, David Diamond, has written and/or directed 400 community specific theatre projects on social issues. His Headlines productions include: My BDAY (One-Four-Play) and Out of the Silence, Sherry MacDonald.

Andrew Irvine (past president of the BC Cediatries Association, has written hotbeds: Bombay Black on the streets in Bombay's red light district. As an only child in a Patti colony, separated from all his family, and they face the disillusionment of his most recent play called Adam, which explores many young people, killing, and some of whom went on to marry their country in time of war. In the modernized interpretation of ancient Greek philosophical and historical significance of the ancient Greek theatre, we see how the audience gain an insight into their own lives.

Socrates as he critically examines the America government's so-called War on Terrorism.

The Stone Face by Sherry MacDonald (Avail $15) concerns a first-time film director named Alex who enters an almost innocent resembling the surreal world of a film by comedic tableau. On a world that is a walk-on, the play examines the way art is created and how a life is lived.

Andrew Irving, a past president of the BC Cediatries Association, has written hotbeds: Bombay Black on the streets in Bombay's red light district. As an only child in a Patti colony, separated from all his family, and they face the disillusionment of his most recent play called Adam, which explores many young people, killing, and some of whom went on to marry their country in time of war. In the modernized interpretation of ancient Greek philosophical and historical significance of the ancient Greek theatre, we see how the audience gain an insight into their own lives.
During her three decades of publicizing other artists and their work, Paula Gustafson avoided having photographs taken of herself for publicity purposes. That’s why Paula Gustafson’s third and final volume of essays, Craft Perception and Practice: A Canadian Discourse (Ronsdale $26.95), does not provide any image of the ever-industrious editor. Instead, in a dignified afterward, co-editor Nisse Gustafson offered a patchwork quilt of memories of her multi-talented mother.

“When I was about five years old, my mother began working with textiles,” she writes. “The scent of lanolin from newly sheared wool permeated the house, and my little hands were put to use carding it to take out the chaff.

“I also fondly remember foraging through the wilds to gather goldenrod, lichen, cattails and chestnuts, which my mother strewed in a crockpot to make natural dyes.

“When the wool was dyed and dried, she spun it by hand on an old-fashioned wooden spinning wheel that went ‘chunkety-chunkety-chunk’ as she worked the foot treadle.

“Later I would watch as the big balls of wool yarn were deftly transformed into sweaters, scarves and tapestries by my mother’s able hands....

“One glorious summer she took a bronze casting course in Red Deer. For weeks, the old crockpot was filled with warm beeswax, which she sculpted into seed pod-shaped vessels to be cast in bronze.

“Today, this day, I love the smell of beeswax, not only for its sweet aroma, but also for the memories it evokes of my mother sculpting wax forms on the picnic table in our back yard.... All of these sensory experiences have stayed with me, and in many ways have influenced who I am.”

Although Gustafson’s craftmanship extended to pottery, watercolour painting, textiles, spinning, bronze casting and paper-making, her first love was always paper-making, her first love was always paper-making, her first love was always paper-making. Although Gustafson’s craftmanship extended to pottery, watercolour painting, textiles, spinning, bronze casting and paper-making, her first love was always paper-making.

“The sound of her electric typewriter was a constant clickety-clack.” Nisse recalls. “In later years she replaced it with a succession of computers, the keyboards of which had to be replaced every second year because she wore down the plastic keys with so much typing.”

A recipient of the first Jean A. Chalmers Fund for the Crafts Award for critical writing on Canadian crafts, Paula Gustafson wrote more than 300 articles for arts magazines and served as the editor and co-designer of an illustrated biography by artist John Koerner.


Gustafson’s first monograph, Salish Weaving (Douglas & McIntyre, 1980), was based on her extensive research in museums in Europe and North America. She also produced a history of the Crafts Association of British Columbia called Mapping the Terrain.

Born in Abbotsford on Feb. 25, 1941, Paula Gustafson died on July 11, 2006 after a brief battle with cancer. She was widely respected for her breadth of appreciation for the arts, not mired within any particular discipline or camp.

To accompany more than 40 full-colour photos of works in various craft media, Craft Perception and Practice Vol. III contains 21 essays by artists such as Mackenzie Frère, Ruth Scheuing and Murray Gibson, theorists such as Paul Mathieu, Sandra Alfoidy, Arlene Oak and Kirsty Robertson.

Paula Gustafson’s own contribution records the creation of Stardale Women’s Group, a weaving cooperative that was established to foster healing and self-esteem amongst Cree women who live in and near Melfort, Saskatchewan.

Shannon Stratton’s provocative essay, Getting Things Done: On Needlecraft & Free Time suggests that knitting is a radically subversive activity in an era that emphasizes materialism and speed.

Inadvertently akin to the “slow food” movement, public knitters are steadfastly non-efficient reminders that meditative and constructive activities can serve as antidotes to the established socio-economic order.

“It important to realize,” Stratton writes, “that knitters are, by and large, NOT professional activists or political artists; nor should they have to be....

“Perhaps what makes knitting important is its stubborness. It refuses to be pinned down. It is neither an economically efficient way to clothe people, nor are knitters overtly challenging oppression and stopping war with fuzzy scarves. But what it does undo, one stitch at a time, is the idea that efficiency is a cultural value.”

Craft Perception and Practice was co-edited with Amy Gogarty (Craft Perception, Vol. I).
The Man Who Saved Vancouver by Daphne Sleigh:

The remarkable and often amusing story of how a blustery amateur historian named Major James Skitt Matthews single-handedly created an archival record for the early years of Vancouver's history. Matthews was an unstoppable juggernaut who vanquished or outlasted so many opponents that the will to oppose him often simply evaporated. Matthews' apoplectic rages were legendary. One visitor recounted that he once became so enraged in railing against the maple leaf flag that he tumbled from his chair to the floor. It took two people to haul him back. A "restorative" had to be administered by an experienced assistant to help him regain his equanimity. A heart attack, personal in for sure, one would have thought, but he lived to the age of ninety-one.

Matthews' final triumph was his refusal to leave the civic stage after the Library Council gave up all its efforts to unseat him. "I have no intention of retiring," he said in 1969. The next year he died and was given a hero's funeral. His coffin, in one last defiant gesture, was draped with the Union Jack. Everything must be kept, including the archivist.

For Matthews, the middle of three sons, was born in New Zealand when Matthews was nine. He remained there after their farming venture failed and his parents began another series of moves—New Zealand, a final settling in Wales—that would continue throughout their lives. Matthews himself left New Zealand for the United States when he was twenty and soon arrived in Vancouver. As a young man he conceived the plan for Stanley Park. He conceived and executed the plan for it in 1952, optimistically expecting 5,000 donors to cover the $4,500 cost. Luckily, in this instance, the funds eventually materialized.

Along with Matthews' tempestuous career as archivist, Sleigh provides another linked narrative, his inner personal story. It begins in Wales where Matthews, the middle of three sons, was born. The key figure of his childhood was the mother he idolized. Astrong, widowed woman of great beauty, seven years older than her husband, she was notable for her restless energy. She had already instigated moves from house to house in Wales when she decided that the family should emigrate. They moved to New Zealand when Matthews was nine. They remained there after their farming venture failed and his parents began another series of moves—Wales, South America, a return to Wales, back to New Zealand again—toward a new identity. Matthews was the archivist.
The troubles that beset the Olympic torch relay this year are but a foretaste of things to come. So how will mega-event organizers in B.C. deal with malcontents? CKNW open-line radio host Michael Campbell has stated during one of his broadcasts that he believes the validity of hosting the Games should no longer be debated. And even left-wing mayorality candidate Jim Green advised back in 2003, “Now is the time to support, now is the time to come on-side. It doesn’t do any good to run behind the parade and try to kick up dust.”

If opposition to the Games will henceforth be deemed anti-social behaviour, Chris Shaw’s Five Ring Circus will surely be anathema to event organizers and those who stand to benefit from the Games. He is unequivocally opposed. But free speech is more precious than gold medals.

According to Shaw, of the 37 people who were part of the 2010 Vancouver-Whistler Bid Corporation, 22 are involved in either business or real estate development.

He predicts that security measures will become a huge expense and will serve to tarnish civil liberties during the games and for years after.

He concludes his book by predicting how each and every promise made in 2002 will eventually be revealed as a lie.

It’s an alarming one-sided attack on the credibility of the entire undertaking and a wakeup-call to anyone who is being hilled into a false sense of security that we can fully trust the powers-that-be.

For good measure, or rather bad, Shaw also provides some disturbing information about the workings of the Olympic Committee. This group, which flies around the world (almost always at prospective host cities’ expense) inspecting cities for their Olympics-worthiness, pays no taxes, is very secretive about its bank accounts and has diplomatic status.

Chris Shaw is a Los Angeles-born neuroscientist who became a Canadian citizen in 1990.

29 BC Bookworld Summer 2008
A recent essay by well-travelled B.C. novelist Jim Christy complains that many people nurtured by creative writing programs lack sufficient “real world” experience to produce believable fiction. Depicting the human condition within a war zone minus political context, The Cellist of Sarajevo by Steven Galloway could serve Christy as a case in point. No less than 2003 Nobel Prize winner J.M. Coetzee has recommended it “a gripping story of Sarajevo under siege,” but The Cellist can be dismissed as an exercise in imagination, lacking memorable characters. Kenan, a forty-something family man, lives his life every four days to retrieve fresh water for his family.

PLAY IT AGAIN, VEDRAN

After visiting Sarajevo, Steven Galloway has imagined the daily lives of three characters caught in the throes of civil strife in the early 1990s. Galloway has imagined the daily lives of three characters caught in the throes of civil strife in the early 1990s. Dragan, a 64-year-old bakery worker, survives as a loner. And a young female sniper protects the cellist whenever he plays Albimoni’s Adagio to honour the dead. Her name is revealed in the final sentence.

It makes for great jacket copy, but Galloway’s cellist—unnamed—is at best a supporting character.

.paths: 2003 Nobel Prize winner J.M. Coetzee has recommended, “a gripping story of Sarajevo under siege,” but The Cellist can be dismissed as an exercise in imagination, lacking memorable characters. Kenan, a forty-something family man, lives his life every four days to retrieve fresh water for his family.

The inexplicable Joan meets a medicine man named Dr. Rivers, who grew up in Prince George, is drawn to her early twenties, haunts the unmarried Adam in his dreams. When their home on Kaslo Street can no longer contain their needs, the trio travel inland—and forward—looking for psychic answers. “Sally was quiet. She wondered what lay ahead of them… it suddenly seemed strange to her that she had been to London, Paris, Frankfurt, Lausanne, Madrid, and Barcelona…. But she had never been to Prince George.”

The trio stay in the O’Dwyer Motel in Lytton, wrap it up at a rough dance at the Thilcumcheen Community Hall, attend a Christian revivalist meeting and de fort to the Fountain Valley Guest Ranch.

“Sally was quiet. She wondered what lay ahead of them… it suddenly seemed strange to her that she had been to London, Paris, Frankfurt, Lausanne, Madrid, and Barcelona…. But she had never been to Prince George.”

The Christinean revivalist meeting and de fort to the Fountain Valley Guest Ranch.

FOR ANYONE WANTING A NON-FICTIONALIZED VERSION OF EVENTS IN SARAJEVO, NATO PEACKEEPER Fred Doucette’s highly praised Empty Casing: A Soldier’s Memoir of Sarajevo Under Siege offers a Romeo Delaire-like memoir of regret. For anyone wanting a non-fictionalized version of events in Sarajevo, NATO peacemaker Fred Doucette’s highly praised Empty Casing: A Soldier’s Memoir of Sarajevo Under Siege offers a Romeo Delaire-like memoir of regret.

“Sally was quiet. She wondered what lay ahead of them… it suddenly seemed strange to her that she had been to London, Paris, Frankfurt, Lausanne, Madrid, and Barcelona…. But she had never been to Prince George.”

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Greece: Not the Musical

Dictatorship and ideals in the 1970s

by Cherie Thiessen

In the 1960s, as the only child of a hard-working farming couple on the hapless island of Crete, Petros is sent to university in Athens where he is the peer of his parents’ wildest dreams.

Graduating at the top of his class, the budding academic has no shortage of admiring friends, or consenting, beautiful young women.

Petros has been offered a position at the university, subject to attaining an M.A. abroad. His dotting uncle and aunt, with whom he is very close, assured him that his fine looks, are wealthy and childless, so they’re eager to contribute to his international studies.

But in literature, in life, it looks too good to be true, it probably is.

In Vancouver, where the Greek community welcomes him, Petros completes his graduate studies at the University of British Columbia. It is an Italian Canadian beauty, can’t get enough of him, and likely take even greater interest in her even stay in Canada and accept a university position.

But Greece beckons. Ignoring constant warnings from his Dean, from Samanta, and his friends, Petros is not only tempted to return home to see Madga, the beautiful daughter of wealthy Greek parents, is wealthy and childless, so they’re eager to contribute to his international studies.

It shines a light on a time in Greece’s history about which little is known and lesser written. Manolis was born on the island of Crete in 1947. Educated in Greece (BA in Political Science), he served in the armed forces for two years prior to his arrival in Canada. When Manolis—the pen name for Manolis Aligizakis—in 1976, one year before the junta disintegrated, he had been able to barely be read. Some of the textual errors are funny, seriously messing with the mood of the story. As a discerning editor could have helped the author to make these jokes more realistically represent the women in his story, and animate the central character.

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Hitch Hiking in France

A Lady’s Secret by Jo Beverley (Signet $7.99)

The age-old friction of sexual conquest and surrender, the quest of a selfish man to spill himself inside a beautiful woman, disregarding tears of pregnancy—the inescapability of romantic tension—that’s the focus of Jo Beverley’s latest fantasy, A Lady’s Secret. The book is written in a historical romance.

Although Beverley acquired an electronic library of books from the eighteenth century for research, A Lady’s Secret contains a few clues to the exact era in which the story is set, and not so much as to make the narrative unmistakable. The story is set in France, 1760, and plays with the politics of the time, particularly the politics of the French Revolution.

The story concerns a young woman named Elise, who is sent to the French court to act as a companion to the Queen. Elise is not a lowly woman, but a woman of high status, who has been brought up in the French court and is well-versed in the ways of the court.

When Elise arrives in the court, she is immediately drawn to a young man named Pierre, who is a member of the royal household. Pierre is attractive, handsome, and charming, and Elise is immediately drawn to him.

Pierre is a man of many talents, and he quickly becomes Elise’s confidant and friend. He helps Elise to navigate the often tricky world of the French court, and he helps her to understand the politics of the time.

As the story unfolds, Elise and Pierre grow closer, and they become more and more intimate. They share secrets, and they confide in each other, and they become more and more in love.

But the story is not all about love and romance. It is also a story about politics, and it is a story about power. The French Revolution is in full swing, and Elise and Pierre must navigate the tricky waters of politics and power.

In the end, Elise and Pierre must decide whether to stay in the French court, or to leave and start a new life elsewhere. It is a difficult decision, and it is one that they must make quickly.

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In the end, Elise and Pierre must decide whether to stay in the French court, or to leave and start a new life elsewhere. It is a difficult decision, and it is one that they must make quickly.
No sermonizing here and no abstractions. McWhirter is a master of grounded language: coots, dume, bud- ding, when, mongle, spud, fitches, are they Irisisms? What matters is that the ling- gua X be landis is perfect for this earthing poet’s pur- pose.

Why no index? This affecta- tion appears to be coming into vogue these days. A note to editors: how is the reader to relocate a poem, especially if the poet some- times chooses to leave off titles? McWhirter leaves the reader con- fused with his oc- casional stubborn refusal to title; one doesn’t know if the page is a new poem or a continu- ation of the poem that came just before. Provide an al- phabetical index of first lines at the least?

Small quibbles. He uses European names for B.C. birds (isonic!). At least he admits he’s embarrassed he cannot put the right name to the bird. If you are writing about Vancouver, not Bellingham, get a local bird field guide! Entertaining does not de- note trivial. There is somber material here on war, addic- tion and faith. Sport as reli- gion, water wastage, the destruction of the Amazon forest. McWhirter can turn any conceivable topic into a fresh poem.

The love poems to Angela, his wife of more than four dec- ades, are teasing appreciations. His wisecracking about her cooking, gardening and table manners is a tattered camou- flage through which tenderness is revealed. (Apologies from the reviewer but without an index, it’s hard to relocate these poems in order to quote from them.)

Besides being the first Poet Laureate of Vancouver, McWhirter also qualifies as the Poet Laureate of Asthmaics, “the constant cranking of my res- piration, somewhat antique.”

Sun’s self-pity, the state of the poet’s lungs is just one more ab- lusion in his encyclopedic ac- counts. Orange peels as dropped bloomers of the sun?” McWhirter is a slyly (read brilliantly) idiot! Eclectic and inven- tive, these are the most entertain- ing poems to come along in a long time. seriously. 978-0-88982-234-4

The place itself is La Audiencia Beach in Mexico. In- stead of portraying history only from the present looking back- wards, McWhirter also has the past looking forward to foresee and comment on what is to hap- pen, as a result of the early ex- ploitation. Here, Hernán Cortés and his Lieutenant-Conqueror of Colima, Sandoral, appraise the antics of Bo Derek and other stars as they make the movie 10 — on the same beach where four hundred years earlier their crew built three brigantines to explore what is now called the Sea of Cortez. The verse-logs then follow explorer Don Caamaño and his successors up the Pacific Coast to where John McKay (aka Sean McCoy), an Irishman, was left to recuperate from a sickness among the Nootka / Nuu-chah-nulth on Vancouver Island.

George McWhirter presently serves as Vancouver’s inaugural Poet Laureate.

1-55985-546-1

Hannah Mauín- Van Der Kemp writes from Victoria.
SOME SILENT POETRY IS LITE; OTHER SILENT POEMS, TOO EASILY DISMISSED AT A FIRST GLANCE, DESERVE RE-READING. GEORGE WHIPPLE’S FALL INTO THE LATTER CATEGORY. IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR A POEM TO BE LONG IN ORDER TO QUALIFY FOR A SECOND READING. NEITHER SHOULD RHYMED POETRY BE DISMISSED AS DATED DRIT. KITE IS DECEPTIVELY SIMPLE IN CONTENT AND FORM BUT THESE Snippets, OR “FEATHER WORDS,” ARE ESSENTIALLY MYSTIC UTTERANCES. NOT THE VIO NEGATIVA MYSTICISM AS IN TIM LILBURN BUT THE RAPTURE OF A ST FRANCIS.

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THE RAPTURE OF WHIPPLE

Kites by George Whipple
(Genius Editions $14.95)

George Whipple's fall into the latter category. It is not necessary for a poem to be long in order to qualify for a second reading. Neither should rhymed poetry be dismissed as dated drivel. Kites is deceptively simple in content and form but these snippets, or “feather words,” are essentially mystic utterances. Not the via negativa mysticism as in Tim Lilburn but the rapture of a St Francis.

The poet's own whimsical drawings illustrate each section. The humour, not the ho ha kind, is shy. In Hoekje, the glue and rot-eating pests are compared to the wildflowers in the sayings of Jesus, “They toil not neither do they reap.”

George Whipple could strengthen his pieces by crossing out some of the many abstractions such as, “life, love, death, hope, joy, faith.” Not because the Age of Faith is over, it is, but because these words have lost their impact through misuse and over-use. He might consider being more accurate about natural details. Salmon do not spawn under lily pads.

Who would have thought that contemporary mystic verse could be so accessible? An octogenarian Blake-ian child, Whipple rewards the seasoned reader as well as those who do not read poetry because they do not “get” it. In these pieces there is no guile; what you read is what you get: on the second reading if not the first.

As his publisher Richard Olafson puts it, “There is great erudition behind his simple verses. He has also never gotten his due even though he is up there with the best of them, a true poet mystic/seeker. But he lives alone, an elderly man in a high rise in Burnaby. He has never gone to literary parties, never shows his face at readings, never gives readings of his own work, just working on his poems and drawings in seclusion, with a kind of quiet integrity. He is a poet I am proud to have published (four books by him) and I am proud to be his friend.”

987-1-897430-09-5

Joe Rosenblatt: The Sound of Muse

Poetry, according to Joe Rosenblatt in The Lunatic Muse (Exile Editions $22.95), provides an environment for people to “share their feral fantasies, although very rarely do wild phantasms morph into poems.” In this new collection of essays about fellow poets and the craft of writing, the Qualicum Beach veteran of the Canadian poetry world amuses while he muses: “Poetry is a way of going out on a blind date to meet your soul, and you’ve promised to meet your true essence at a trendy nightclub in some dark alley of the inner city. You arrive there, sit down at an empty table, without realizing your date is sitting right next to you. It sees that you are invisible to each other. And finally this cadaverously lean waiter appears out of the shadows and says: You want to order something from the bar? Sure, you reply, what’s on tap? The waiter reads out the brand names of some local brews: ‘We have Eternal Life, a fuzzy dark cumulous of an ale, we have Deep Space, a sparkly bitter beer, somewhat heavy, like a burnt-out lodestone – an acquired taste. . . .’ Suddenly you see your waiter fading away, and then it occurs to you that your date is never going to show up, and further, that you are in the wrong bar, the wrong cul de sac and even worse, you are talking to a complete stranger, your navel. That’s poetry!” 978-1-55096-098-3
The outdoor guider books provide you with all the information you need to have a safe and enjoyable trip: when to go, how to get there, what to take and what you can expect once there.

The guides also include maps, tips on the route, wildlife and much more!

Available at your local bookstore or order through our website: www.outdoorguidesbooks.net
Will Morrison of Burnaby began working in the Belfast shipyards in 1947 at the age of 14. Recalling his five-year apprenticeship in the shipyard, he has published a collection of autobiographical short stories set in working-class Belfast from 1939-1951, Between the Mountains and the Ganters (Belfast: Appletree $27).

Morrison later gained entrance to university with the help of an 80-year-old tutor. “The Latin tag he pounded into my head was Festina lente—make haste slowly—and it fairly well sums up the trajectory of my life,” he says. After serving as a United Church minister upon his arrival in Canada, Morrison taught philosophy and literature for 22 years at College of the Rockies, Cranbrook.

Thomas W. Wilby, a middle-aged British journalist, and Jack Haney, a 23-year-old mechanic from Kootenay Lake, recalled the history of the land, the disintegration of a community and the sadness of a shattered family. “I stayed in Vancouver for seven years,” she writes, “living in a landscape of cars and buildings and noise and ex-hust fame. When I left, it seemed odd to me that I had lived somewhere for so long and still couldn’t find anything about it to love.”

With the U.S. economy accumulating record debt into the trillions, the subject of private debt will also become increasingly significant in Canada and the U.S. Retired from B.C.’s Attorney General’s Ministry, where he was Director of Debt Assistance, Douglas P. Welbanks has delved deeply into the ramifications of financial hardship, bankruptcy and insolvency with his self-published Julius Seizure: The Secret World of Bankruptcy, Debt Collection and Student Loans (Chateau Lane / Sandhill $19.95). Previously Welbanks wrote an equally cheerful guide, Finance After Separation (Chateau Lane / Sandhill, 2006).

Passionate about the rights of citizenship within democracy, Terry Julian has devoted his ninth independent title to examining the validity of polls within modern media. In The Seduction of Surveys