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Daughter of an English mother and a Christian Iraqi father who left Baghdad in the 1960s, Leilah Nadir of Vancouver has investigated her family background in sympathy with the 4 million people who currently comprise the Iraqi diaspora. Her memoir *The Orange Trees of Baghdad: In Search of My Lost Family* (Key Porter $32.95) has now received the 5th Annual George Ryga Award for Social Awareness in B.C. Literature. “This is a book about what loss really means,” says Naomi Klein, “the theft of history and homeland.”

At a ceremony in Vernon this summer, Nadir received The Censor’s Golden Rope, a unique piece of sculpture recreated annually by Armstrong sculptor Reg Kienast. Runners-up for the Ryga award this year are Gary Geddes for *Falsework* (Goose Lane), a poetic recollection of the tragic collapse of the Second Narrows Bridge, and novelist Ernest Hekkanen for *Of a Fire Beyond the Hills* (New Orphic) an account of his political struggle to honour war-resisters in Nelson.

See [www.abcbookworld.com](http://www.abcbookworld.com) for more info on Nadir and the Ryga Prize.
On behalf of my mother, Dr. Li Qunying, thank you very much for the great cover story [BCBW Summer] about her book, The Doctor Who Was Followed By Ghost. Millions of people died of injustice during Mao’s era, but even today, the ghosts of his victims still can’t be consloled because the communist government forbids people from talking about it.

Even though Mao committed such hideous crimes against humanity, the present regime still regards him as a great leader. He is still widely worshipped by many in China. His picture and body are still in Tiananmen Square.

As China becomes the focus of the world as it hosts the Olympics, it is important for people outside of China to realize the country was plagued by wars, widespread famine and political movements not long ago. Under Mao’s tyrannity, people were completely silenced and lived in fear. Witness to it all was my mother Dr. Li Qunying.

My mother’s book is banned from being published in China. If a society is unwilling to face up to its past, history is bound to repeat itself.

Louis Han
Vancouver

stem of linnet wings, but eagles circle above the cedars and woodpeckers tap at my back door.

Deer tread lightly across my backyard as if a baby slept on my deck, and spiders weave the most wonderful webs. And my wife (Yvonne left the woman) bakes fresh bread every other day. And so it goes, with ‘realms of gold’ at the heart’s core.

Vivike Jansen
Cortes Island

In the article about the mortuary pole [BCBW Spring] that was returned to the Haíla People of Kitimat from the Etnografiska Museum in Stockholm, the museum is referred to in the review as the Folkens Museum Etnografiska—a mishmash of words which make no sense at all, not even in Swedish. Wherever did that come from? I hope the book that was reviewed, Surveying Central British Columbia, A Photographic Study of Frank Swannell, 1920-1928, has the correct name. If not please forward this to the publisher.

Vivike Jansen
Victoria

[For the record: In 2006, Sweden returned the original totem pole to the Haíla People of Kitimat from the Etnografiska Museum in Stockholm.]

In praise of Deer and Bats’ Wings

Many thanks for the lovely piece in BC BookWorld [BCBW Summer] about my book, Between the Mountains and the Gazebos. I am truly delighted with it. Many friends have accosted me, “Have you seen the latest BC BookWorld?” I picked up my copy on the Horsehoe Bay/Nanaimo ferry—on my way to the Folken Museum Etnografiska—an incoherence of words which make no sense at all, not even in Swedish. Wherever did that come from? I hope the book that was reviewed, Surveying Central British Columbia, A Photographic Study of Frank Swannell, 1920-1928, has the correct name. If not please forward this to the publisher.

Vivike Jansen
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How Swede It Is

In response to your review of this year’s BC Book Prizes gala [BCBW Summer], thanks for saying it: The BC Book Prize speeches need some writers! In recent weeks, from other stages, I’ve heard passionate, articulate farmers, singers, and loggers. Surely writers, at a celebration of their own work, must have something to say for themselves, their work, or the world.

We’re writers. Write a speech. Stick it in your pocket. If you don’t win, quit sweating and jump up to cheer the winner.

Rita Moir
Vallican

FIGURES OF SPEECH

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We’re writers. Write a speech. Stick it in your pocket. If you don’t win, quit sweating and jump up to cheer the winner.

Rita Moir
Vallican

“I’m not that cute. She’s writing her memoirs.”

Rex Weyer
Vancouver

Letters or emails contact:
BC BookWorld, 3516 W. 13th Ave., Vancouver, BC V6R 2S3
email: bookworld@telus.net
Letters may be edited for clarity & length.

ORBITS

MICHAEL BULLOCK (1918-2008)
Poet, painter, translator, and UBC Professor, Michael Bullock died in London, England on July 18.

JURGEN HESSE (1924-2008)
Journalist and author Jurgen Hesse died in Vancouver on July 30 of complications related to renal failure.

MARY MACAREE (1922-2008), co-author of 109 Walks and 103 Hikes, both BC classics, died on July 31 due to a stroke. See abcbookworld.com for details.
Between 1977 and 1985, John Oughton conducted an horrendous series of sexual attacks in the Greater Vancouver area. This predator known as the paper bag rapist often used “finding a lost puppy” as a ruse to lure children into wooded areas of parks.

Serial killer Ted Bundy used a similar trick, asking for assistance while wearing a fake arm or leg cast in order to gain the sympathy or trust of his potential victims.

John Horace Oughton was dubbed the paper bag rapist because he would place a bag over the head of victims prior to sexually assaulting them, or else wear a mask himself, thereby denying most of his victims any chance of identifying their assailant. Many of the girls he attacked only saw his face for the first time when he was finally brought to trial.

After he was identified as a possible subject, an undercover policewoman gained entry to his apartment where she saw a pin map on his wall locating his crimes over an area of 1873 square kilometers. Oughton had intentionally operated over a wide radius in the hopes that he would not reveal any geographic patterns to his crimes. Suspected of committing far more than 100 attacks, Oughton was convicted of 14 counts of sex-related crimes in 1987.

Ever since, as a dangerous offender, the paper bag rapist has had the right to apply for parole every two years. At his appearances in court, Oughton has behaved in a reckless and unrepentant manner, spewing abuse and contempt.

Oughton's next public hearing will be held in July of 2009. Bi-annual hearings for possible parole have become rallying points for the women and their families whose lives have been irrevocably altered by his heinous crimes.

Among the women who maintained this vigil, and remarkably caused it to gain strength in numbers and solidarity over the years, is Chilean-born playwright, Carmen Aguirre, who grew up in Argentina prior to moving to Vancouver’s eastside as a child.

This fall Aguirre will publish The Trigger (Talonbooks $16.95), a play variously described by Jerry Wasserman as "a knockout, intelligent, powerful, funny, horrific, theatrically stunning" and "utterly free of victimology."

"The Trigger is for the 170 victims of the paper bag rapist, their families, the communities affected by this predator, and every human being who has ever been sexually violated."

—CARMEN AGUIRRE
Wasserman, Vancouver’s foremost theatre critic, reviewed the original Touchstone Theatre production of The Trigger in 2005.

“In 1981,” he wrote, “she’s a normal 13-year-old whose adolescent curiosity about sex is expressed through the deep crush she has for Scott Baio on Happy Days.

“Then one unhappy day she and her 12-year-old cousin go into the woods near their school where she’s raped at gunpoint by a man whose face she doesn’t see....

“The cops eventually become helpful, too. But most important to Carmen is the legacy of her Chilean family’s radical politics. Something bad happened to her, yes, but it wasn’t so horrible.

“That strength takes her, and the audience, to a very healthy place in the end. The women celebrate their victory and I celebrate this marvelous show.”

Carmen Aguirre has provided her own version of how and why the play had to be written.

“When I was thirteen I was raped by the paper bag rapist. I was with my younger cousin at the time, and neither of us ever saw him—he used a paper bag to cover his own head or those of his victims.

“Not that we would have seen him anyway; a gun was held to the backs of our heads and if we turned around he’d kill us.

“He only had one bullet left, he said, so he’d have to chop up my cousin while I watched, then shoot me. By the time the attack was over and we were left lying in the mud, we were both different people.

“I had wanted to write a play about this experience for years; propelled by my anger at how often rape was portrayed on screen or stage. Rapists were evil and the victims were only that: victims.

“Now, how would I stage it? How would I tell the story? Why would I tell this story? After a decade of churning over these questions, the image of a young tree lying on its side came to me. A man was chopping an axe through its centre. A girl in a harness spun out of control above him. The sound of their breathing filled the space. The seed for The Trigger was planted.

“The Trigger is for the 170 victims of the paper bag rapist, their families, the communities affected by this predator, and every human being who has ever been sexually violated and lives with that experience in their core, which comes to the surface in intimate relationships, because, let’s face it, when one is raped, there is physical intimacy with the attacker.

“The Trigger deals with the ripples of this kind of violation.”

At age 40, now a single mom with a two-year-old son, still living in Vancouver’s eastside, Carmen Aguirre is doing just fine as a very successful theatre and television actor and writer.

Among her 30 credits for stage and screen, Aguirre had a lead role in the independent feature Quinceañera, winner of the Grand Jury Prize and the Audience Award at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival, an Independent Spirit award, GLAAD awards and various People’s Choice awards at festivals around the world.

A founder and director of The Latino Theatre Group, Aguirre was playwright-in-residence at The Vancouver Playhouse, playwright-in-residence at Touchstone Theatre in 2004, and facilitates Theatre of the Oppressed workshops around the province.

Aguirre is currently writing a memoir, to be called Something Fierce, about her militancy within the Chilean resistance during the U.S.-supported dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

As for the paper bag rapist, he will likely spend the rest of life in jail. Psychiatric assessments have repeatedly concluded he remains a high risk for re-offending.


There is no evidence of his purported manuscript ever being made commercially available.

“utterly free of victimology”

Carmen Aguirre photographed by Laura Sawchuk on Commercial Drive
The Darien Gap in Panama is the closest equivalent to an on-land Bermuda Triangle in the Americas.

Martin Mitchinson thought he would stay there for just three weeks. But literature happens. By venturing inland on a river in his 36-foot ketch Ishmael, Mitchinson hoped to write a short article for a sailing magazine—then pull up anchor and cross the Pacific Ocean. But, like Gilligan’s three-hour cruise, it didn’t turn out to be smooth sailing.

Mitchinson, an experienced traveller, was soon enthralled by the Darien Gap’s road-less and almost lawless jungle inhabited by three native tribes, narco-traffickers, vampire bats, guerillas and boa constrictors. Wary of pirates and thieves, Mitchinson happily sold his boat, then unhappily parted company with his long-time partner, Kathy, taking refuge with a native family. He spent a total of eighteen months traveling by foot or by dugout canoe, mostly alone, getting his geographic and emotional bearings—cut off from his past.

The end result is one of the most courageous, memorable and candid travel books ever published from British Columbia, The Darien Gap: Travels in the Rainforest of Panama (Harbour $26.95).

Mitchinson—who now lives north of Powell River with a new partner—had thought about driving to the Darien Gap from Canada for twenty years. With surfboards atop his Volkswagen beetle, he was variously stymied by car breakdowns, a stolen wallet and one detour to join a Honduran circus. Despite decades as a prudent sailor, Mitchinson never fully believed the guidebooks’ warnings that the Darien Gap interrupts the Pan American Highway, forcing anyone with a vehicle to transport it via a container ship to Colombia.

“I don’t think I fully believed the guidebooks’ warning that the road stopped short of Colombia,” he writes. “It must be a misprint, I thought. This is an old book, and the last few miles are probably built by now.”

At the end of his Darien Gap survival test, Mitchinson retraced the path of Balboa from the Caribbean to the Pacific, not without great duress and danger, but The Darien Gap is most remarkable as a psychic adventure. The self-effacing bravado with which Mitchinson recounts getting lost and found within himself, gaining confidence as a writer along the perilous way, illuminates an interior journey that is no less riveting than his tales of illness, danger, estrangement and despair.

“I won’t write at all,” he vows, “I’ll just listen and learn. I’ll work with my hands and back, and I’ll come away knowing something that will stay with me…. I am aware how little I have to offer. I travel wanting to see and listen and learn. But what good is that to my hosts?”

Lower Panama’s mangrove-ridden forests are rife with ants, crocodiles, FARC guerrillas, strange bugs and nasty local police. Stomach...
parasites and dysentery come with the territory, too. And bouts of self-loathing, “I am so f---ing tired of being afraid,” he writes, sweating and soaked inside his nylon tent. This is National Geographic boot camp without the boots and without the camp.

Ninety-six percent of Panama’s indigenous people live below the poverty line, so Mitchinson, as a westerner, is automatically a target for either kidnapping or charity. Mild-mannered to a fault, and prone to generosity by nature, he spends more than a year trying to gain compensation for an outboard engine that he has supplied to a friend. At times the reader is appalled that he doesn’t seem to know how to get angry—until we realize it must have been Mitchinson’s abnormally adaptive and non-aggressive manner that preserved his skin.

Mitchinson’s harrowing asceticism is mixed with smatterings of Panamanian history throughout. Of the intrepid and naive explorers who plunged across the isthmus of Panama in previous centuries, we learn those who accepted native guides usually survived; those who stubbornly insisted their valiant resolve and strength would suffice were far more likely to perish.

Either way, the adventurer is guaranteed to discover transformation. “If we listen to our friends and advisors, he writes, making a New Year’s entry in his journal, ‘we’ll never get out the door. We won’t hitchhike, or travel alone or sail single-handed. We’ll start a family of our own and shoulder an enormous debt to buy a house. It will be obvious how ridiculous it is to paddle上游 in a dugout canoe with only a basket of food, a machete and a mosquito net for sleeping.’

This is one of the best B.C. books of the year, even if you don’t get to hear about it anywhere else. The writing is frequently sublime. And the blend of confession, travelogue, history and original subject matter resonates with integrity, not ambition.

Mitchinson is not a VISA-card-carrying wannabe, posing as a hero. He’s just interested in telling the truth.

Now available in fine bookstores everywhere

“Andrew Weaver is a distinguished scientist who has been a major contributor to the Nobel Prize-winning work of the IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change]. Beset by naysayers and skeptics, pressures from corporations and laggard politicians, Weaver keeps us focused on the science and the urgent need to act.

A gripping narrative, this should be the final alarm.”

— DAVID SUZUKI

Martin Mitchinson took this photo of a Embera woman who, before being photographed, applied makeup, borrowed a bra and adorned herself and her child with necklaces made from old silver coins.
There’s no question Gordon Campbell is a very fine British Columbia historian.”

—JEAN BARMAN

WHO WE ARE. WHERE WE ARE.
It sounds like a school essay topic for social studies but studying your own country can be fascinating.

Here are ten new books that provide deeper understanding of where we live and how we live as British Columbia marks its 150th birthday.

10 BOOKS TO CELEBRATE 150 YEARS
JOUSSAYE
CAN YOU SEE?

In British Columbia especially, the natural landscape is the reference point many of us use when we reflect on what is sacred," writes Star Weiss in Havens in a Hectic World: Finding Sacred Places (TouchWood $29.95).

Weiss's world changed drastically when she moved to British Columbia from New York State in 1972. "Once displaced, I, like the early white settlers to B.C., felt free to start over, discard old notions and come up with a new way of seeing the world and the big questions that come with it," she writes.

Having lived on Quadra Island and at Maple Bay in the Cowichan Valley for 36 years, Weiss has identified 44 sites where peace, serenity and renewal have been experienced on the West Coast—each recommended by a different British Columbian.

Most of the sites are on Vancouver Island, but three are on Haida Gwaii, and Alice Walker biographer

Evelyn White cites the grave of black pioneer Sylvia Stark who lived to be 105 on Saltspring Island.

The movement from slavery to liberation is right here," says Evelyn White. "She [Stark] came here to be free. I came here free. I can choose how to shape my years [on Saltspring]."

Including a chapter about white slaves, prostitutes and delinquents, Working Girl is a lively academic study of Western Canadian female wage earners prior to World War I. Helena Gutteridge and Helen Armstrong are the heroines of a chapter devoted to Girls on Strike. "With the arrival of Helena Gutteridge in 1911, Vancouver's women workers gained a remarkable leader," writes McMaster in Working Girls in the West: Representations of Wage-Earning Women (UBC Press $32.95).

"And as is the case of Helen Armstrong in Winnipeg, this kind of female leadership seems to have made a major difference for women's participation in unions and labour activism."

In terms of Western Canadian literature, particular attention is paid to Bertrand Sinclair's novel North of Fifty-Three and Isabel Ecclestone Mackay: The House of Windows.

McMaster has introduced an obscure pioneer of Canadian women's writing, Marie Joussaye, who moved west in the late 1890s to live in Kamloops, Dawson City and Vancouver.

According to McMaster, Marie Joussaye published "the only work of Canadian literature written by a working girl and addressed to her peers," The Songs that Quinte Sang (1895).

SEU professor Carole Gerson has traced Joussaye's life story as the youngest of five children in a working-class Catholic home in Belleville, Quebec.

Joussaye worked essentially as a servant, and later as a coordinator of other servant girls in Toronto, but yearned for a job as a journalist.

"If I spoke to an editor or haunted a newspaper office, there was an evil construction put upon it...

"Young men pushed themselves forward by sheer persistence and a little talent, but what was permitted to them was resented in my case."

Joussaye married in 1903 and was involved in various legal disputes, and once served two months of hard labour. She published a second collection of work-related poems, Selections from Anglo-Saxon Songs (1918).

One of her poems called Only A Working Girl, published in 1886, became something of a rallying cry within the Canadian labour movement. It culminates in this advice to her fellow women:

Evelyn White at the gravestone of Sylvia Stark on Saltspring Island.

When you meet with scornful sneers, Just lift your heads in pride; The shield of honest womanhood Can turn such sneers aside, And some day they will realize That the purest, fairest pearls Mid the gems of noble womankind are "only working girls."

McMaster cites Carolyn Strange's Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930 as the key influence on her approach. "It is not a history of the working girl in the West," says McMaster, "but a study of how she was imagined, represented, and constructed as a figure within the cultural narratives of Canada, the West, and the empire."

Vancouver Sun cartoon mocking Helena Gutteridge, the first woman elected to Vancouver city council, 1937.
Whether you admire David Watmough's stories or not, his outlook is significant because he has written fiction in British Columbia continuously for five decades. Unfortunately Watmough does not reveal much of himself through others in Myself Through Others, Memoirs (Dundurn $24.99). As the first homosexual writer out of the closet in British Columbia in the late 1950s, David Watmough will disappoint anyone looking for a raunchy-tell-all a la Frank Harris' My Life and Love. Not an autobiography, this is a tell-some, with only occasional lapses into pique.

Although David Watmough briefly describes W.H. Auden's penis and refers to the "hammock-ubiquity" of sexual-ly aroused sailors in the aftermath of World War II, the recollections in Myself Through Others, err on the side of discretion.

Watmough even spares Stephen Spender, "the most mendacious predator it has been my misfortune to meet," by ultimately thanking Spender for enabling him to meet Raymond Chandler. We learn he and his partner Floyd St. Clair once met a paranoid Tennessee Williams during a dinner party at Max Wyman's house and he recalls having a park bench conversation with Eleanor Roosevelt liked by being mistaken for Dylan Thomas sometimes, Watmough chooses to accord Thomas only one paragraph, rather than a chapter, but he does describe watching Pierre Trudeau cut up his children's food in an Ottawa restaurant, while Margaret charted with her parents. The list of his contacts includes T.S. Eliot, Carol Shields, Margaret Laurence, Wallace Stegner, actress Jean Arthur and politician Clement Atlee. But this amounts to a slim book with a wide range—an exercise in literary cruising. In a recent review, George Fetherling criticized Watmough's florishes of "faux Victorian" prose, but Watmough's life matters—because Watmough even spares Stephen Spender, "the most mendacious predator it has been my misfortune to meet," by ultimately thanking Spender for enabling him to meet Raymond Chandler. We learn he and his partner Floyd St. Clair once met a paranoid Tennessee Williams during a dinner party at Max Wyman's house and he recalls having a park bench conversation with Eleanor Roosevelt liked by being mistaken for Dylan Thomas sometimes, Watmough chooses to accord Thomas only one paragraph, rather than a chapter, but he does describe watching Pierre Trudeau cut up his children's food in an Ottawa restaurant, while Margaret charted with her parents. The list of his contacts includes T.S. Eliot, Carol Shields, Margaret Laurence, Wallace Stegner, actress Jean Arthur and politician Clement Atlee. But this amounts to a slim book with a wide range—an exercise in literary cruising. In a recent review, George Fetherling criticized Watmough's florishes of "faux Victorian" prose, but Watmough's life matters—because Watmough is the senior-senior citizen in the BC writing game, more so than others such as P.K. Page or Phyllis Webb who have gone and come back again.

**3 IMAGINE ALL THE PEOPLE**

When Knowledge Network broadcast a documentary on the life of coastal pioneer Jim Spilsbury, it drew the highest weekday audience the network ever had. So, as Howard White maintains in his guest foreword to Imagining British Columbia: Land, Memory & Place (Anvil $18), "Culture is not the symphony, any more than transportation is a Lear Jet."

Editor Daniel Francis obviously concurs in his selection of 19 far-reaching creative non-fiction works from federation of BC Writers members such as George Fetherling, Jan Drabek, Deanna Kawatski, Trevor Carolan, Harold Rhenisch and Pauline Holdstock.

Working on seines in Barkley Sound. Recalling Shuswap family history and a shell-shocked father’s suicide. Encounters with grizzlies. Mostly these attempts to locate our identity with a sense of geological time.

Thompson suggests that contemporary B.C. life can often lack “the weight of history.” In Europe, she was always reassured by the presence of the past, that sense of being with a continuum of human existence.

**6 IMAGINE SOME OF THE PEOPLE**

In the anthology Writing the West Coast: In Love with Place (Ronsdale $24.95), educator Bronwy Penn notes her students have "a better understanding of sex toys in New York City than liverworts in Clayoquot Sound." Kevin Drews recalls surviving cancer to make a triumphant return to surf at Chesterman Beach. Searching for a western shore owl, Carolyn Redi recalls how a Good Samaritan helped her revive a dead battery near the Kennedy Lake Bridge. With its collective, eco-consciousness coupled with contributions from First Nations writers, Writing the West Coast is a coherent anthology that reverberates with a sense of history and pride. It amounts to a regrouping of the spirits that enabled the inhabitants of Clayoquot Sound to join with thousands of protestors in 1993 to stall logging operations during the largest civil disobedience action in Canadian history. Edited by Christine Lowther of Tofino and Anita Sinner of Sooke, Writing the West Coast could have been called Writing Clayoquot. More than half of the memoirs and essays emanate from the Long Beach area; most of the rest are from Vancouver Island. Off-Islanders include Susan Musgrave, writing about Haida Gwaii, and Alexandra Morton, writing about Orcas in the Broughton Archipelago.
Once upon a time, most fishermen hated Orcas or “killer” whales, considering them rivals for the precious salmon on which they also depended for a living. Whereas a few decades ago it was official government policy to shoot killer whales on sight, nowadays hundreds of people can be mobilized to rescue a single mammal.

That transformation of our perception of whales from vicious predators to gentle mammals was symptomatic of the reasons why the killer whale was so respected by the Kwakwaka’wakw. The whale, breathing air yet living under the water—was one of the things that fascinated and endeared that creature to us.

When Springer was returned to Klawakwa’wak waters her people were there to greet her—as well as her family. The whale’s ability to live in two worlds—breathing air yet living under the water—was one of the reasons why the killer whale was so respected by the Klawakwa’wak people in the Johnstone Strait area. The return of the killer whales each summer signified the return of the salmon and the renewal of the life cycle. In mythic terms, they were returning to the people that they had created.

Springer remains with her pod today. In the world of whale rescue, how they are treated is an indicator of the status of the animal.

Springer’s epic journey and the eclectic skills and backgrounds of the workers who came to her rescue. The logistics of transporting a whale was daunting. Rescuers also didn’t know how the whale would be received by her pod upon her return—as an intruder or as a prodigal child!

In the words of whale rescuer Barrett-Leonard, “We’d repatriated a whale, a First Nations icon as well as an icon of a different kind to people around the globe....”

While Springer was making her historic journey, another lone Orca dubbed Luna showed up in Nootka Sound. Concerns were raised due to a conflict between local First Nations government and various levels of government.

As widely reported on the evening news, a large tugboat, the General Jackson, killed Luna in 2006. “Many people who had been involved in the attempts to rescue Luna were angry at his death,” write Francis and Hewlett, “For them, the failure to ‘save’ this one whale was symptomatic of a larger failure of community and humanity. They thought that Luna died because the interested parties had not been able to put aside their personal agendas to work for the good of the animal.”

But the glass is half full, not half empty. In the summer of 2007, some of the people involved in the Springer operation held a reunion in Johnstone Strait, and who should show up but the guest of honour herself, Springer, accompanied by her Orca aunt Yakat.

“Springer’s relocation,” write Francis and Hewlett, “represented the first time that a wild whale had ever been captured, transported back to its home range and successfully released. It was the most ambitious animal rescue effort ever mounted on the Pacific Coast.”

Grant Shilling is a regular contributor from Cumberland.

In 1967, Murray Newman, after much debate with the board of directors for the Vancouver Aquarium, bought that facility’s first resident whale, eventually dubbed Skana, for $22,000. The presence of Skana created new possibilities for scientific research. By 1973, more than a dozen aquariums had purchased killer whales from the coastal waters of BC and Washington State. Researchers and members of the public began to wonder how many killer whales were on the coast. A whale census in 1971 produced shocking results: there were only between 200 and 350 Orca whales on sight, nowadays hundreds of people have been mobilized to rescue a single mammal.

Moby Doll died of a lung infection three months after its capture, but the ‘gold rush’ for Orcas was on. Major aquariums began to pay handsomely for ‘whales on sight, nowadays hundreds of people have been mobilized to rescue a single mammal.

T his was the accidental capture in 1964 of a whale dubbed Moby Doll that began to change our attitudes about whales. After Moby Doll was towed “like a dog on a leash” from Saturna Island, where it had been harpooned, it was given haven in a drydock at Burrard Inlet. When the doors of Burrard Drydock were opened to the public, twenty thousand people showed up to view the whale. Instead of a fearsome man-eating predator, they discovered an amiable creature that was endearing and apparently smart.

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Grant Shilling is a regular contributor from Cumberland.

In 1967, Murray Newman, after much debate with the board of directors for the Vancouver Aquarium, bought that facility’s first resident whale, eventually dubbed Skana, for $22,000. The presence of Skana created new possibilities for scientific research. By 1973, more than a dozen aquariums had purchased killer whales from the coastal waters of BC and Washington State. Researchers and members of the public began to wonder how many killer whales were on the coast. A whale census in 1971 produced shocking results: there were only between 200 and 350 Orca whales on site, nowadays hundreds of people have been mobilized to rescue a single mammal.

Moby Doll died of a lung infection three months after its capture, but the ‘gold rush’ for Orcas was on. Major aquariums began to pay handsomely for ‘whales on sight, nowadays hundreds of people have been mobilized to rescue a single mammal.

In the words of whale rescuer Barrett-Leonard, “We’d repatriated a whale, a First Nations icon as well as an icon of a different kind to people around the globe....”

While Springer was making her historic journey, another lone Orca dubbed Luna showed up in Nootka Sound. Concerns were raised due to a conflict between local First Nations government and various levels of government.

As widely reported on the evening news, a large tugboat, the General Jackson, killed Luna in 2006. “Many people who had been involved in the attempts to rescue Luna were angry at his death,” write Francis and Hewlett, “For them, the failure to ‘save’ this one whale was symptomatic of a larger failure of community and humanity. They thought that Luna died because the interested parties had not been able to put aside their personal agendas to work for the good of the animal.”

But the glass is half full, not half empty. In the summer of 2007, some of the people involved in the Springer operation held a reunion in Johnstone Strait, and who should show up but the guest of honour herself, Springer, accompanied by her Orca aunt Yakat.

“Springer’s relocation,” write Francis and Hewlett, “represented the first time that a wild whale had ever been captured, transported back to its home range and successfully released. It was the most ambitious animal rescue effort ever mounted on the Pacific Coast.”

Grant Shilling is a regular contributor from Cumberland.
ESSENCE OF BC
CAR TRIPS & TARTAN

The so-called average reader—who does not exist—is not going to care very much that somehow the provincial government has managed to sponsor two rival coffee-table books at once about B.C.

In addition to British Columbia: Spirit of the People (see page 13), Gerry Truscott, the manager of the Royal BC Museum’s publishing program since 1989, has assembled an impressive array of photos and artwork to accompany historical vignettes for Free Spirit: Stories of You, Me and BC (BC Historical Federation $5.50) is a 24-page booklet that features 117 unpublished photographs, postcards and images from around British Columbia.

Truscott has also incorporated dozens of selections from the People’s History Project, a collection of personal and family stories, and some amusing ephemera, such as the plaid, provincial tartan jackets worn by all BC liquor store employees in the late 1970s.

Didja know the BC tartan—now seldom seen due to its Britishness—has five colours? Blue for the ocean, white for the dogwood flower, green for the forests, red for the maple leaf and gold for the crown and the sun on the provincial flag.

Douglas Todd says the Pacific Northwest is home to the least institutionally religious people on the continent.

We agree there’s something special going on in Cascadia (a name virtually synonymous with the Pacific Northwest). It has to do with the lack of institutional history, dearth of clear codes to live by and soaring potential—as well as an emerging nature-rooted spirituality.

Cascadians are, in many ways, at the forefront of figuring out what it means to make sense of “life after God.” It is not well known that Cascadia is home to the least institutionally religious people on the continent; orthodox understandings of “God” face constant challenges here. Despite this, the contributors to Cascadia: The Elusive Utopia maintain most of the region’s 14 million residents feel “spiritual.” Their approach to sacred often includes an unusually strong devotion to personal freedom, do-it-yourself optimism, physical health, “secular-but-spiritual” nature reverence and a vision of a brand new future: an elusive utopia.

Even though I feel privileged to have been raised here, I also lived in Los Angeles and Toronto and recognize the Pacific Northwest has a way to go to become great. One of the purposes of Cascadia: The Elusive Utopia is to help us reach our potential.

That’s why I asked 15 original thinkers to contribute essays that explore how the Pacific Northwest may be nurturing a unique “spirituality of place,” which, despite possible pitfalls, could become a model for the planet.

Perhaps the final reason to put together Cascadia: The Elusive Utopia was simply to build stronger connections among leading thinkers and visionaries throughout the region.

Due to the often-annoying international border, most Canadians and Americans in Cascadia remain largely ignorant of what they offer each other. And this strikes me as a waste of our collective potential as a region.

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Douglas Todd is an award-winning spirituality and ethics writer for The Vancouver Sun and Canwest News, as well as the author of Brave Souls: Writers and Artists Wrestle with God, Love, Death and the Things That Matter.

In 2006, Todd served as Simon Fraser University’s first Jack and Doris Shadbolt Fellow in the Humanities, an adventure that gave rise to his new book on Cascadia.

Todd has cited “gratitude and curiosity about coming into existence in this remarkable corner of the continent” as the main reason for gathering some of the thinkers he most admires from B.C., Washington and Oregon to create the book, Cascadia: The Elusive Utopia—Exploring the Spirit of the Pacific Northwest (Ronald $21.95).

He also wanted to explore the relationship between spirituality and our impossible-to-ignore shared geography of mountains, ocean and evergreens.

We asked Doug Todd to comment on the origins of his project.

Windows to our Past: A Pictorial History of British Columbia (BC Historical Federation $5.50) is a 24 page booklet that features 117 unpublished photographs, postcards and images from around British Columbia 1900-1930s. It is a collection of rarely seen buildings and subjects—many from private collections.

Stay tuned for Todd’s latest contribution to the Cascadia series, coming this May.

Douglas Coupland, author of Life After God, and I once decided we liked each other because we had both played as teenagers in North Vancouver’s jagged canyons. We were also raised in thoroughly non-religious families, which is much more common in the Pacific Northwest than elsewhere.
WE’VE ALL READ THOSE HORROR stories about South American towns that have had their water supplies privatized, and thereafter poor people are ruthlessly gouged for their access to resources that were previously free. We think that sort of thing can’t happen here.

But according to John Calvert, the privatization trend is underway big-time in B.C.’s backyard.

“The government has mandated that new electricity generation will be private, not public,” says Calvert in Liquid Gold: Energy Privatization in British Columbia (Fernwood $24.95).

“BC Hydro now has to acquire virtually all its new energy through long-term contracts with private power developers at extremely high prices.

“Nor will this approach provide adequate protection from future energy price increases. And there is no guarantee that this privately owned energy will not be exported in the future.”

SFU Health Sciences professor Calvert was interviewed by freelance environmental journalist Martin Twigg—46 years after Premier W.A.C. Bennett established BC Hydro to control the production, transmission and distribution of energy for the people of B.C. See interview on the next page.
John Calvert argues that BC Hydro has become a cash cow for private developers.

"As for as little as $5,000 you can buy private rights to generate power with a B.C. river."

BC Hydro has been touted as the "green" aspect of its energy policies, whereas you argue that such claims are merely "smoke and mirrors." Why?  

**CALVERT:** The first point is that we don’t need nuclear power plants in B.C. We've been in that debate since the 1970s. I was there to promote the Energy Plan as ‘green.’ It also was assisted by aggressive campaign by the best efficiencies of its policies—by BC, which promoted its projects at both environmental costs and financial costs.
Despite having pledged to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions by 6 percent below 1990 levels under the Kyoto Protocol, our emissions have since gone up by nearly 30 percent, making Canada the worst performing of all Kyoto signatories.

We are not only failing to move forward on one of the most pressing issues of our time, we are actually going backwards.

The proof is available from Hot Air: Meeting Canada’s Climate Change Challenge, co-written by Globe & Mail columnist Jeffrey Simpson, economist Mark Jaccard and SFU researcher Nic Rivers. This power trio has detailed the poor planning, ill-advised policies and political posturing that have plagued Canada's climate change policies since the Mulroney years—the Kyoto Protocol on climate change only being the most visible manifestation of such failings.

From Hot Air, we learn Canada's negotiations at the Kyoto conference were never quite grounded in reality. When Jean Chrétien first sent delegates to Japan, his instructions were to stay slightly ahead of whatever commitment the Americans might make. Whether that target was actually attainable was immaterial, Canada's image within the international community—and, by association, the legacy of Jean Chrétien—were foremost.

At Kyoto, it was imperative that Canada appear more virtuous than the United States.

At first, everything went as planned. Having previously spoken with US President Bill Clinton, Chrétien anticipated a modest American commitment somewhere between zero and two percent—promising Canada to announce a slightly higher target of three percent.

But the entire negotiating process was turned on its head when Vice-President Al Gore arrived and stunned delegates by announcing the US would commit to a seven percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Canadian negotiators were sent scrambling. In an attempt to save face, Canada's target was arbitrarily upped to six percent. No serious studies regarding the economic impacts of the commitment or even how such reductions could possibly be achieved were ever considered.

When the United States later withdrew from the Kyoto talks under George W. Bush, Canada was left out to dry with a highly ambitious target, and no roadmap to get there.

According to the authors of Hot Air, the reasons for Canada's failure to meet its overly ambitious Kyoto target, or make any progress on the climate change front, are varied. Our population and economy are growing much faster than most of Europe, we have more urban sprawl, a greater reliance on cars, a cold climate, and, perhaps most significantly, a booming oil and gas sector.

Even with the best of intentions, fully realizing a six percent reduction would have been an enormous feat.

Making matters worse, genuine political will was, and continues to be, sorely lacking in Canada. The decision to ratify Kyoto was made almost unilaterally by Chrétien. In doing so, he not only infuriated provincial leadership and his federal opposition, but also alienated his own political cabinet. He committed Canada to an agreement that few politicians after him felt truly obliged to fulfill.

The most crucial problem, however, is described at the core of Hot Air: Every Canadian administration, from Mulroney through to Harper, has relied solely upon voluntary measures—opting for the carrot over the stick—an approach that consists of throwing lots of money around and politely asking businesses and individuals to stop polluting.

Who remembers the 1-tonne Challenge? At a cost of 17 million dollars, ads featuring Rick Mercer appeared on television across the country, urging Canadians to reduce their carbon footprint by driving less and turning off more lights.

Polls later revealed that the ads were almost wholly ineffective, yet the 1-tonne Challenge continued to remain in place.

For decades there has been much talk and billions of dollars spent through subsidies and similar public awareness programs, but Canada has very little to show for it.

The only solution, argue the authors of Hot Air, is to stop relying on the carrot and start wielding the stick. "Polluting behaviour must have a price, not in moral opprobrium but in financial terms."

Whether it is strict regulations, carbon taxes, a cap and trade system, or some combination of all three, the approach must be compulsory and it must contain penalties stringent enough to bring about changes in behaviour. We can either accept that fact or continue to do nothing—the choice is ours.

Martin Twigg is a freelance environmental journalist.

For information about BC’s Carbon Tax go to: www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca
Ann Alma and Jan de Groot pay tribute to family bravery

Brave Deeds: How One Family Saved many from the Nazis by Ann Alma (Sono Nis $13.95) AGES 11+

Ann Alma was born in the small town of Uithuizermeeden (which translates into English as out-houses in the meadows) in Holland, so she grew up knowing that during the last year of World War II, when the Nazis no longer allowed transportation of food and fuel in Holland, many people died of exposure and starvation.

He was a coddled seven-year-old, protected by a dotting older brother, until he was suddenly forbidden to play with his friends in the surrounding woods, off-limits due to barbwire and land mines.

Secrets grew. Motorcycles were confiscated but his father’s beloved Harley-Davidson was hidden in Jan’s bedroom. A downed English-speaking pilot was hidden in their house until he could be spirited away to Switzerland.

While the family’s second-floor apartment becomes a “safe house” for Jews and others hiding from the Nazis, the family must maintain a facade of normality. For his eighth birthday, Jan receives a gleaming, brightly varnished kano, a Dutch kayak-like boat, built at his grandfather’s northern shipyard.

His brother, twelve years older and a gifted artist, alters ration tickets that allow them a little extra food and his mother insists Jan continue with his piano lessons. Then suddenly his father is betrayed and arrested.

While the family waits for sporadic letters that let them know Jan’s father is still alive, Jan uses his birthday boat to steal German corn from the plowed-under soccer fields. He also rigs a dynamo and bicycle headlamp to the footboard of a treadle sewing machine and provides reading light when there’s no electricity.

Having had the Gestapo search their home more than once, the family waits for sporadic letters that let them know Jan’s father is still alive, Jan uses his birthday boat to steal German corn from the plowed-under soccer fields. He also rigs a dynamo and bicycle headlamp to the footboard of a treadle sewing machine and provides reading light when there’s no electricity.

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In Gina McMurchy-Barber’s first young adult novel, Reading the Bones, 12-year-old Peggy Henderson discovers a human skull while helping her uncle dig a pond in his Crescent Beach backyard. As she becomes increasingly unhappy being away from her parents, she becomes increasingly intrigued by her growing awareness that she is living atop the site of a 5000-year-old Coast Salish fishing village.

An elderly female archaeologist named Eddy helps her to ‘read the bones’ of an ancient storyteller buried in the yard, transporting Peggy into pre-historic imaginings. Prior to winning the Governor General’s Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History in 2004, McMurchy-Barber studied backpacking tours in Asia and orangutans in Borneo with Dr. Gina McMurchy-Barber. She was the first juvenile novel’s first author to win the Governor General’s Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History.

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Faced with the task of painting Aunt Polly’s fence in Mark Twain’s The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Tom convinces his friends to do the job for him. Recalling Mark Twain’s own childhood in a small Missouri town, Tom’s shenanigans are set in St. Petersburg, Missouri. Also born in Missouri, J. Michael Yates came to British Columbia in 1966 and has succeeded in getting folks to be involved in publishing.

Founded in 1968, Sono Nis Press was largely the brainchild of Yates, who provided the unusual name and much of the editorial direction, until Morris Printing of Victoria took over ownership when bills couldn’t be paid. Now a venerable imprint, Sono Nis Press is operated from Winlaw, B.C. by Diane Morris.

Next, Yates was involved in Margaret Kreader’s Burnaby-based Cacanadada Press, naming it and acting as its editorial director. When this experiment fizzled, its owner sold the company to UBC English professor Ronald Hatch who changed its name to Ronsdale Press. By 2005, Yates was getting his own stuff into print, releasingHong Kong: New and Collected Short Poems 1955-2003 (Author House, 2005).

Last year Yates resurfaced as Senior Editor of Libros Libertad, owned by Manolis Aligizakis of White Rock. Press material described Yates as “a much commended SWAT-team member,” “a logger and a demolitions man in the Charleston” and “a broadcast executive both for CBC and private media in the United States.” It wasn’t mentioned that he had long been employed as a prison guard or that his prison memoir, Line Sco, resulted in severely strained relations with its publisher, M&S.

The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix once compared Yates’ plays to those of Beckett, Pinter and Albee. J. Michael Yates’ book title is a 548-page collection of his stage, radio and television plays from the White Rock imprint entitled The Passage of Sono Nis: Collected Plays by J. Michael Yates (Liberis Libertad $34.95).

Concurrently, Yates provided the jacket blurbs for El Greco—Domenikos Theotokopoulos (Liberis $14.95), a poetry book by his publisher. He wrote, “I think Manolis Aligizakis is the best émigré Greek writer in Canada and I welcome his return to publishing.”

This year, after publicity materials stated Yates was part of “an international team to reinvint book publishing and promotion,” the pair has literally parted company. A former Vancouver stockbroker, Aligizakis says he’s now quite happy to be free of Yates—who he still admires as a writer. — BILL TIELEMAN, columnist and political commentator
GETTING OUT FROM DOWN UNDER

The remarkable Australian odyssey of convict Mary Bryant—brutal and true

BY CHERIE THIESSEN

From Botany Bay by Rosa Jordan

Dundurn Books, $22.95

The escape is by far the most gripping part of the book, but most of us (read women) will avidly read on, wanting a happy ending for this feisty young woman, who was shipped off to purgatory at 21, raped repeatedly before and during the voyage, and finally married to a drunken lout she didn’t love, in age, and finally married to a man, with her 2 babes in arms, as they rowed and sailed a 20’ boat. Her ultimate goal was to lead a successful escape. Six days and traveling five thousand kilometers, she led eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, to lead eight men, with her 2 babys
THE JOLTING JEREMIAH OF
RITA WONG

"Assume poison unless otherwise informed."

Poetry by Rita Wong (Nightwood $16.95)

Having won this year’s Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize for Funge, Rita Wong has proven that a challenging and somewhat flawed book can win an important prize. Uninstructed poets take note: originality still counts.

One hesitates to open a book of poems if the back cover blurb announces “an important book for an important time,” but Funge comes close to justifying the hype.

Alongside a list of Monsanto patents on transgenic plants, Wong has endowed his growing emblem of rice on your own vegan poop in a Vancouver sewer.

Several pages of references indicate her main concerns: industrial toxins and human health, genetic engineering, deforestation, linguistics, globalization, biopiracy and civil disobedience. (Not to mention Chinese poetry both ancient and modern.)

For a mere 66 pages of poetry, that’s a staggering weight.

The commentary of outraged protest usually overtakes poetry, so how does Wong keep the full-out accusation and rage from sliding into a tirade? She eschews conventional poetics, slips into humour, comedy and rough texture of a boozier’s, “Profound mistrust of fashion is healthy.”

Given the language needed to describe the toxicity of circuit board recycling villages, benzene in aquifers or the disposability of Shenzhen’s factory girls, this is different from the language generally used to describe mountain mist or ocean’s drama. Rita Wong has emerged as a valuable counterpart to the nature poets so plentiful in B.C. and Rhonda’s, I’m glad this happiness; there were plenty of tears. Charles, after all, was a good man, a nexus of good happenings in the writing community. Glad to be there, I liked him and he was helpful to my work.

More sympathetically, Doyle offers a candid assessment of a wake for poet, critic and anthropologist Charles Red Lillard at the home of Robin Skelton in 1997. Again, it is the jotted down, fly-on-the-wall perception of Doyle’s perspective that appeals.

The large Victoria Avenue house [was] full,” he writes. “There were [many] readers and speakers, including George Payerle, Susan Musgrave, Theresa Kishkan and her husband John Pass, Marilyn Bowering, F.D. Reif, several of whom I like, though I am close to none. A moving occasion through some haiku poetry. A bit of dodo-by-play, celebrating John Barleycorn, spitting into the wind.”

“Not infrequently lofty, philosophical books, I was not a frequent reader of them; after all I haven’t lived in a vacuum, but somehow they have always seemed to fit in with my interests. I read a lot of poetry books, and I was really looking forward to this one.”

As a sketchy memoir, Doyle admits, “it does not avoid a certain amount of ego-tripping and name-dropping; after all I haven’t lived in a vacuum, but somehow they have always seemed to fit in with my interests.”
Okanaganites
Elizabeth Mann’s Last Ranch: The First Ten Years, 1972-1982 (Trafford $20.81) recalls her back-to-the-land oriented family of three moving from their first homesteading attempt in the Upper Squamish Valley to the hills above Oliver where they tried to re-developed an once-active ranch on the long-abandoned 800 acres they purchased.  102117X

To coincide with the re-opening of historic Kettle Valley railway trestles, after they were destroyed or damaged by the Okanagan Mountain fire of 2003, Maurice Williams has recalled the history of workers who originally constructed the railway in Myra’s Men: Building the Kettle Valley Railway, Myra Canyon to Penticton (Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society/Sandhill $20). Williams is an associate professor of history at UBC (Okanagan).

Bob Bossin

It might look like kid’s book at first glance, but Latkes (1986) is an illustrated work of adult fiction by folk music icon Bob Bossin, co-founder of Stringband.

With 10 colour plates by Sima Elizabeth Shefrin, the text weaves together a revisionist telling of a 16th century Jewish folk tale and a 20th century conflict between an “old country” father and his Canadian son. “Twenty-five years ago,” says Bossin, “I took a tape recorder around five years ago,” says Bossin, “I took a tape recorder around and interviewed a dozen of my old aunts and uncles. Latkes would not exist but for those recordings.”

Praised by Miriam Toews, Latkes received second prize in the Antigonish Review’s 2007 Sheldon Currie Fiction Contest. In addition to his many songs, Bossin has also written non-fiction, Settling Clayoquot (1981), and the play Bossin’s Home Remedy for Nuclear War (1986).

W

ith a graphic European style reminiscent of Tintin, Australia-born Glen Lovett of Sooke has self-published Lost In Skookum Valley (Lovett $18.95), aimed for girls aged 7 to 13. The hero is a Siberian Husky (because Lovett has four of them) and the action evolves from an avalanche in the B.C. mountains that separates Ruby from her pup named Jasper. Mushing her dogled team, Ruby must save Jasper from a major wildlife smuggling operation which she helps to courageously foil. Lovett worked for many years on animation storyboards for major film companies including Disney, Warner Brothers and Hanna Barbera.

A major decision was to coincide with the re-opening of historic Kettle Valley railway trestles, after they were destroyed or damaged by the Okanagan Mountain fire of 2003. Maurice Williams has recalled the history of workers who originally constructed the railway in Myra’s Men: Building the Kettle Valley Railway, Myra Canyon to Penticton (Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society/Sandhill $20). Williams is an associate professor of history at UBC (Okanagan).

Krawczyk’s crusade

In the wake of serving a year’s sentence inside the Burnaby Correctional Center for Women for participating in anti-logging blockades in the Elaho Valley, 80-years-young Betty Krawczyk has self-published a prison journal, Open Living Confidential (From Inside the Joint). “Many men at this point don’t really know what women want in a man,” she writes, after her incarceration among many First Nations women, as well as disgraced juror Gillian Guess. “We as women must know what we want, what we want our male partners to become, what we want our sons and grandchildren to become, what we want to become ourselves. Male structures try to convince us that because we are women we must vie for male approval, but in reality it is the other way around. Young women and elders women must stick together here if things are going to change. If we get up the gumption to demand that men stop creating the categories of a super rich few and many super poor, and stop making a dung heap of our beautiful planet in the process, then we need to present a united front.”

Birthways

As a primary care physician specializing in obstetrics and paediatrics, Dr. Darryl Ableman has delivered more than 2,500 babies in 20 years. He shares his knowledge with pregnant women in a Circle of Preg- nancy (Elba/Sandhill $19.95), covering everything from leg cramps and fetal movement to feeding difficulties, sleeping patterns, stretch marks and postpartum depression. Copies have been sent to every primary care physician in B.C.

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35 BC BOOKWORLD AUTUMN 2008
A is for April

Born on Haida Gwaii as the daughter of a British-American mother and a father within the Edenshaw family, April White is a self-taught painter and former geologist who has painted since the 1980s. Edited by Judi Tyabji Wilson, her coffee table book, Sgasana Jaad-April White: Killer Whale Woman (Powell River: Maradadi Pacific $49.99), has Haida Gwaii images in four sections: Landscapes, the Haida World, Haida Spirits Manifest, Haida Art and Legends.

H is for Baird

Hats off to Jean Baird who has successfully lobbied for the inclusion of Canadian literature in high school curricula within B.C. No, the earth is not flat. No, the moon is not made of cheese. Yes, English Language Arts courses for grades 8 to 12 will be revamped to include at least one "significant" work of Canadian literature thanks largely to ArtStams, a B.C.-based non-profit educational arts organization for youth. “What was amazing was how passionate people were about this,” Baird says. “It should be heartening to writers and people in the publishing industry that this is not a dead issue. It’s something people truly care about.”

C is for Culley

To be co-published with Presentation House Gallery in North Vancouver in October, Peter Culley’s To The Dogs (Arsenal $27.95) contains 150 full-page photos of dogs, both historical and contemporary, along with an essay by Culley about the international citizenry of canines and their connections to humans. Images include a dog hotel in Tokyo, a Moscow circus and a dogfight in Sarajevo.

D is for Drengson

Alan R. Drengson founded the journals The Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy and Ecoforestry, as well as the Environmental Studies program at University of Victoria where he is a professor emeritus of philosophy. With his colleague Duncan Taylor, founder of Earth Day Canada, he has co-written Wild Foresting: Practicing Nature’s Wisdom (New Society $24.95).
Stephen Hume’s well-illustrated tribute to the life and achievements of the blunt and tenacious Vermont-born explorer Simon Fraser, Simon Fraser: In Search of Modern British Columbia (Harbour $36.95), arose from his series of articles in The Vancouver Sun. This biography traces and reconstructs Fraser’s route down and back up the river that bears his name.

"When my first crime novel was finished," says Roy Innes, "it never entered my head to do a sequel." Among the spate of new murder mysteries emanating from the West Coast, Innes’ second thriller, West End Murders (NeWest $12.95), transports his lead characters from Bear Creek in Murder in the Monashees to Vancouver where they investigate a series of hate crimes. Inspector Coswell and Corporal Blakemore uncover an underground organization and a conspiracy against an American politician. Although social issues arise—gay rights, justice system and right-wing fanaticism—Innes says he writes solely to entertain, not to preach. 978-1-897126-27-1

Gillian Jerome has co-edited Hope and Shadows: Stories and Photographs of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (Arsenal $19.95) with Brad Cran. With a foreword by MP Libby Davies, the book arose from a Pivot Legal Society project that distributed 200 disposable cameras to residents of the Downtown Eastside. DTES residents took 20,000 images for the collection.

Twenty years ago, as an antidote to the university-dominated literary scene, founder and editor Brian Kaufman launched a 12-page issue of subTerrain from his apartment. "I wanted some-thing that had an edge, a bit of grit, a magazine that incorporated visuals as an integral part of its being . . . something that had a feel of being underground)—thus the play on that with the title.” Kaufman, who doubles as the publisher of Anvil Press, published the 50th issue of subTerrain earlier this year.

As a resident of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, Justin Lukyn has been described by his publisher as a “slightly cracked anthropologist of the everyday.” In Lukyn’s first collection of poems, Henry Pepper (New Star $19), he uses a fictional counterpart named Henry Pepper to take the pulse of Canada’s poorest neighborhood. Each poem is titled with the serial number of a local dumpster. Lukyn says the intended effect of his poems is “maybe just to hurt the world a little and not be caught.” 978-1-55420-034-4

Tickets on sale September 15 at Vancouvertix.com or call 604.629.8849
Info: 604.681.6330  www.writersfest.bc.ca
Sylvia Main is for Main

Born and raised in Vienna, Sylvia Main opened Fairholme Manor Inn in Victoria’s Rockland Estates in 1999. This bed 'n' breakfast facility she operates with her husband has resulted in Fabulous Fairholme: Breakfasts & Brunches (Whitecap $29.95), a collection of recipes that combine her flair for elegant hospitality and scrumptious morning meals.

Paull is Health Chair for the BC NGO Steering Committee on Human Rights in Human Trafficking, and partnered with the Canadian Red Cross in presenting a public education series called Look Beneath the Surface, addressing global migration and human trafficking.

In her poetry collection roughened in undercurrent (Leaf Press $15.95), she eschews titles, capital letters, page numbers and a table of contents to lead the reader towards a consideration of wholeness.

With Enderby biologist David Hatler and Alison M. Beal, David W. Nagorsen, a former Curator of Mammalogy at the Royal BC Museum, provides up-to-date information on the 21 species of wild terrestrial carnivores in the province with Carnivores of British Columbia (RBC $27.95).

Inaugural winner of subTerrain magazine's creative non-fiction award, Jim Oaten of East Vancouver has published a collection of memoirs and creative non-fiction pieces based on his travels, Accelerated Paces: Travels Across Borders and Other Imaginary Boundaries (Anvil $18).

An "earthgeist" named Geo helps poet Meredith Quartermain explore a city's human behaviour and architecture in Nightmarker (NeWest $14.95), a slim collection of prose-like observations. In 2006, Quartermain received the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize for a somewhat similar reflective work, Vancouver Walking. Simultaneously she has released another esoteric collection Matter (BookThug $20), "unearthing relations between humans, language and the planet."

Written as a narrative mystery, Alex Rose's Who Killed the Grand Banks? (Wiley $36.95) investigates the collapse of Canada's most famous fishery 16 years after Canada's Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced a moratorium on Northern cod stocks. Rose provides comprehensive answers and identifies culpable parties as a follow-up to his recent investigation of eco-tourism, North of Cape Caution (Raincoast).
Who's Who Continued from Page 39

David Leigh Stone is the editor of Historic Shipwrecks of the Lower Mainland of British Columbia (Underwater Archaeological Society of British Columbia $16.50). It provides the histories of innumerable wrecks and explains that Wreck Beach received its name due to the 1923 shipwreck of a small steamer called the Trader, built in Vancouver in 1901, and two big breakwater hulks, Bingamaño and Granco. Copies of the approximately ten books and publications from the society are available via the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

David Leigh Stone

Saeko Usukawa: “I just really like putting all the pieces together.”

After 25 years with the same company, Saeko Usukawa has received the 2007 Tom Fairley Award for Editorial Excellence and the Order of Canada by Roald Nasgaard (Douglas & McIntyre, having honed a 190,000-word manuscript to 155,000 words with 901 endnotes. She has edited 190,000-word manuscript (McIntyre), having honed a 190,000-word manuscript to 155,000 words with 901 endnotes. Copies of the approximately ten books and publications from the society are available via the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

Saeko Usukawa

Audrey Thomas: “We will raise a ton of money. I have put my mind to this and have some solid ideas about where to go without jeopardizing any of the funding to existing organizations’ events.”

Audrey Thomas

Robin Wheeler

It is often said that the worst thing in life is to lose a child. Manjit Virk, author of Reena: A Father’s Story (Heritage $29.95), has been through the worst. Now the soft-spoken immigrant from the Punjab has told the inside story of his family before and after his 14-year-old daughter Reena was swarmed and beaten by a group of teenagers on the night of November 14, 1997, in Victoria, resulting in her well-publicized death.

Manjit Virk

Alma Lee’s initiative to have Vancouver named a UNESCO City of Literature gained unanimous endorsement from Vancouver City Council in July. Lee has told her supporters, “we will need to raise a ton of money. I have put my mind to this and have some solid ideas about where to go without jeopardizing any of the funding to existing organizations’ events.”

Alma Lee

Robin Wheeler

Reena Virk and her father Manjit Virk

WITH her first collection of poetry in nearly a decade, Patricia Young is venturing into darker, more tragic territory, exploring both power and loss, sometimes with a surreal edge, in Here Come the Moonbathers (Biblioasis, $17.95). With eight books of poetry and one collection of short fiction, Airstream (Biblioasis, 2006), Young has twice been nominated for the Governor General’s Award in poetry.

Patricia Young

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Patricia Young


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