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MITCHINSON
GETS LOST IN
PANAMA**

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SPECIAL FEATURE

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GEORGE RYGA
AWARD WINNER

Leilah Nadir

GEORGE RYGA

AWARD

For Social Awareness in
British Columbia Literature

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 *Ofa Fire Beyond the Hills* (New Orphic) an account of his political struggle to honour war-resisters in Nelson.

See www.abcbookworld.com for more info on Nadir and the Ryga Prize.



Leilah Nadir with her son Sami in Tatlow Park, and with her Ryga Award sculpture

LAURA SAWCHUK PHOTOS

Sponsored by the George Ryga Centre (Summerland), BC BookWorld **cbradiONE** (Kelowna) and Okanagan College.

Information: jlent@junction.net



CARMEN AGUIRRE

**theatrically pulls
The Trigger on the
paper bag rapist**

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...."

"In the immediate aftermath she suffers pain, shock, shame, guilt, unsympathetic cops, and a father who insists she never talk about it again. But her intelligence and adolescent resilience enable her to make some sense of her experience and bounce back."

"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."

"Horrible is when you're tortured by [Augusto] Pinochet's fascists, or when someone you love is murdered or disappeared. She can't feel sorry for herself. It would be bourgeois."

"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 one 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 in a titillating, shocking, gratuitous way on screen or stage. Rapists were evil and the victims were only that: victims."

"But, how would I stage it? How

would I tell the story? Why would I tell this story? After a decade of chewing 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 from 2000 to 2002, 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.

Bizarrely, he is registered in National Library records as the author of a self-published memoir: *Mountain thoughts: an inmate's journey towards self-knowledge* by John Horace Oughton—Vancouver: J.H. Oughton, 1999.

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

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BOAS, BUGS, GUERRILLAS & A BROKEN HEART



“I want to hide in the rainforest. I want to lose myself in a world of strangers and live with no one who needs me, or cares for me, or counts on me for love.... I have no history and no companion, and no one is waiting for me at home.”

—MARTIN MITCHINSON

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, guerrillas 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 travelling 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

continued from page 9

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 naïve 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 advisers,” he writes, making a New Year’s entry in his journal, “we’ll never get out



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.

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 upriver 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.

978-1-55017-421-2

BOTFLIES & YOU:

A little advice from **Martin Mitchinson** for anyone travelling in the Darien Gap

THE PAINFUL LUMPS ON THEIR LEGS AND ARMS THAT THE MEN CALLED gusanos del monte—mountain worms—were larva-stage botflies.

A mature botfly is a large, stocky, hairy insect that resembles a bumblebee with orange legs, brown wings and a metallic abdomen. It grows to a half-inch or longer in length and lives a very short life. Once it pupates, it never feeds again. Its only aim is to propagate, which is accomplished by capturing another insect, such as a mosquito, and holding its wings while attaching fifteen to thirty eggs onto the abdomen of the insect.

If the mosquito lands on you to feed, it acts as a vector. The warmth of your body stimulates the eggs to hatch, and the first stage larvae emerge from the eggs and burrow through your skin at the bite, or at a hair follicle or a wound. The burrowing lasts five to sixty minutes, but usually you won’t notice a thing.

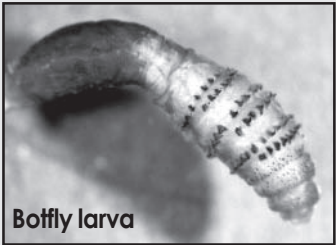
As it grows, the larva faces headfirst into your body with two oral hooks pointing into the meat to tear at tissues while it feeds. The curved spines along the side of the body anchor it to your flesh, and a small breathing spiracle from the posterior end protrudes through a pinhole in your skin.

If you find a botfly larva growing under your skin, you can deal with it in three ways:

1. You can smother it by spreading petroleum jelly over the breathing hole. Then place a large circular patch of tape over that, and seal it with superglue. In the morning you’ll still have to put pressure all around the lump and squeeze the body out through the hole. Remember to keep your head back because sometimes the larvae will shoot five or six feet in the air.

2. Alternatively you can restrict the breathing by placing a thick slab of meat over the hole and hope that the larva will be lured to crawl through your skin and into the fresh steak.

3. And finally, the simplest option is to just leave it alone and watch it develop. From a tiny egg, the larva will grow and feed on your tissue. After six weeks, a fully developed maggot will squirm free of your body and drop voluntarily to the forest floor.

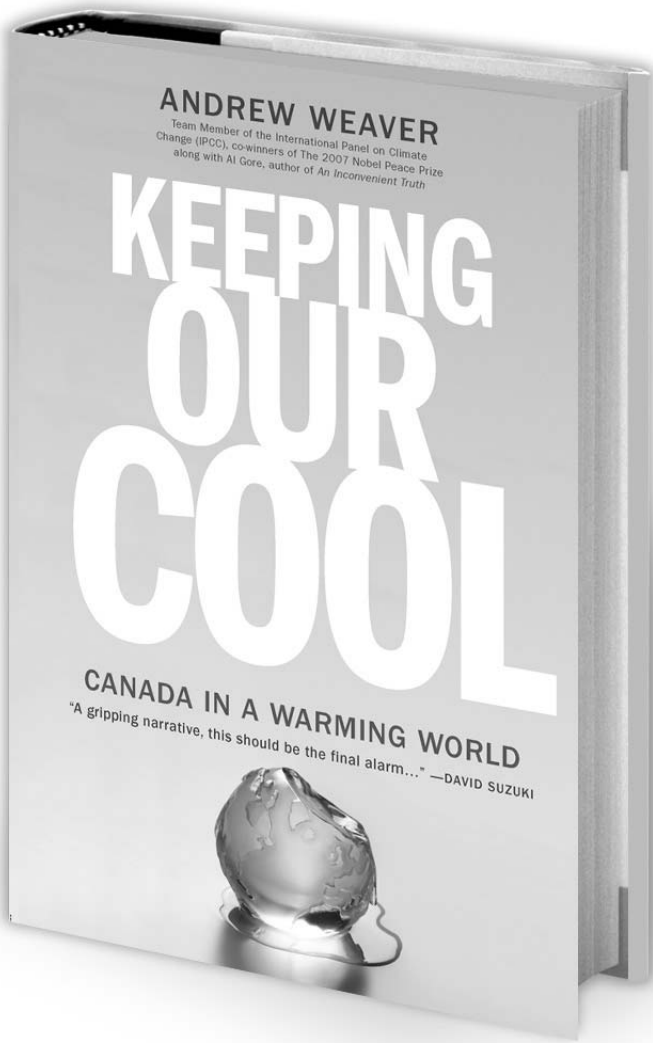


Botfly larva

FROM ONE OF THE WORLD’S LEADING CLIMATE SCIENTISTS

“For Canadians, this is the best single book on our climate crisis and what we should do about it.”

— Thomas Homer-Dixon, author of *The Ingenuity Gap*



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

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PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR

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1 JEANOLOGY

Since her arrival from the U.S. in the early 1970s with her husband **Roderick Barman** (an historian who specializes in the history of Brazil), **Jean Barman** has been on a mission to come to a deeper understanding of how and why B.C. is unique. Here **Mark Forsythe** responds to her latest book.

When the provincial government commissioned its sesquicentennial book, **British Columbia: Spirit of the People** (Harbour Publishing \$49.95), publisher **Howard White** wasn't sure if **Jean Barman** would accept the job of writing the text, worrying it might be beneath her.



"I approached her timidly," he recalls, "but Jean surprised me. She loved the idea of a coffee-table book instead of a dense tome."

And so the task of cramming 150 years of history into only 25,000 words fell to the UBC-based author of *The West Beyond the West*, the province's most widely-read history of itself.

"I couldn't resist," she says, "This was an opportunity to take my understanding of British Columbia, pick out the main threads, and try to make them understandable for someone who might know next-to-nothing about our province."

The 150th anniversary also gave Barman another chance to reflect on how much the year 1858 was "the defining moment" in the creation of B.C.

"It was the pivotal year," she says. "It was not only when the mainland became a colony, not only the year of the gold rush, but in many ways it's the year when British Columbia—with some certainty—did not end up sliding into American orbit, becoming another American state."

Writing *British Columbia: Spirit of the People* also turned into a highly unusual experience for Barman for an unforeseen reason: Premier **Gordon Campbell** vetted the work.

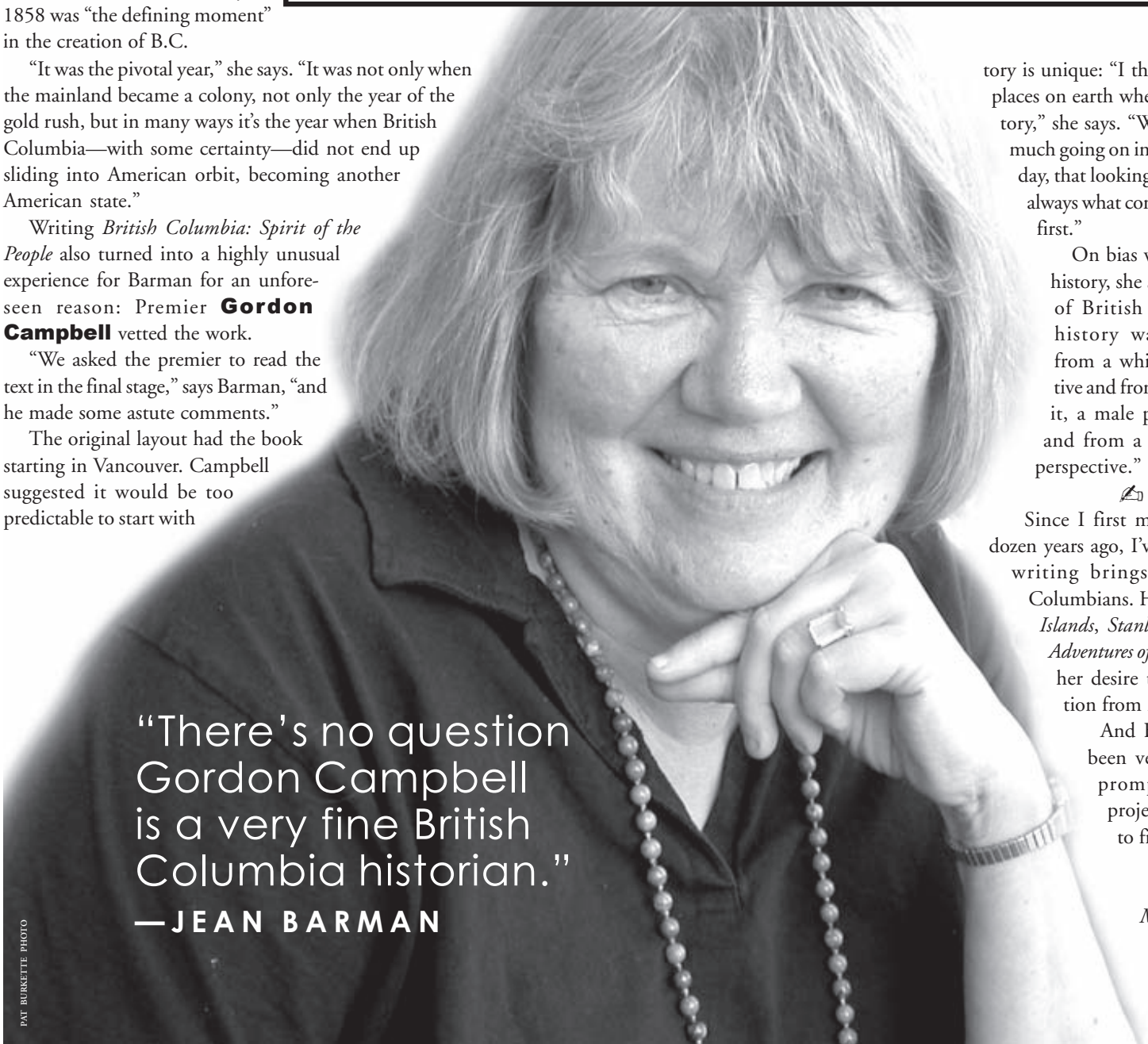
"We asked the premier to read the text in the final stage," says Barman, "and he made some astute comments."

The original layout had the book starting in Vancouver. Campbell suggested it would be too predictable to start with

WHO WE ARE. WHERE WE ARE. It sounds like a school essay topic for social studies but studying your own society 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



"There's no question Gordon Campbell is a very fine British Columbia historian."

—JEAN BARMAN



Premier Campbell at the site of the future Squamish-Lil'wat Cultural Centre. From *Spirit of the People*.

Vancouver. He successfully argued the north of the province should not be placed at the tail end of the book—so that's where *Spirit of the People* begins.

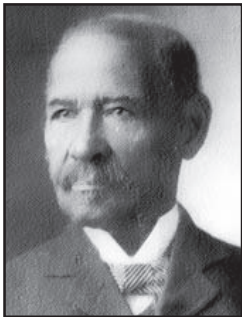
The premier also insisted more play be given to Surrey, now the province's second-largest city.

If White and Barman ever resented Campbell's micro-management, they're not saying, because they came to realize his instincts were good.

White will admit, however, that he found it easier to deal with the premier than some of the bureaucrats who advised on various themes.

When Barman visited CBC's *BC Almanac* during the launch of *British Columbia: Spirit of the People*, she responded to a variety of topics.

On blacks being invited by Governor **James Douglas** to B.C. during the gold rush, she said: "They were upright citizens... **Mifflin Gibbs** was a member of the Victoria city council in the 1860s. He later became a significant player in American life after the American Civil War... There are many descendants to the present day who can probably trace their origins back to this group that Douglas invited north." On why our history is unique: "I think British Columbia is one of those places on earth where we feel we don't need a lot of history," she says. "We have the environment, we have so much going on in the present day, that looking back is not always what comes to mind first."



In 1858, Mifflin Gibbs chose the British Lion over the U.S. Eagle.

On bias within B.C. history, she said: "A lot of British Columbia history was written from a white perspective and from, dare I say it, a male perspective, and from a class-based perspective."



Since I first met **Jean Barman** more than a dozen years ago, I've come to appreciate how much her writing brings us stories of forgotten British Columbians. Her books such as *Maria Mahoi of the Islands*, *Stanley Park Secrets* and *The Remarkable Adventures of Portuguese Joe Silvey* have all expressed her desire to understand our province's evolution from multiple points of view.

And Barman's powers of persuasion have been very influential for decades. She has prompted enough writing and history projects from others—myself included—to fill a book shelf.

We are in her debt. 978-1-55017-446-5

Mark Forsythe is the host of CBC's *BC Almanac*.

10 BOOKS TO CELEBRATE 150 YEARS



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

2 BEYOND STREET WEISS

“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 Gwai, and **Alice Walker** biographer



Star Weiss: Havens
can’t wait

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].”

978-1-894898-69-0

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

“The movement from slavery to liberation

3 JOUSSAYE CAN YOU SEE?

Including a chapter about white slaves, prostitutes and delinquents, **Lindsey McMaster**’s *Working Girls* 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**’s *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).

SFU 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:

*So 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.”

978-0-7748-1-456-0

Vancouver Sun
cartoon mocking
Helena Gutteridge,
the first woman elected
to Vancouver city
council, 1937.



10 BOOKS TO CELEBRATE 150 YEARS

4 LITERARY CRUISING

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 racy tell-all a la Frank Harris' *My Life and Loves*. 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 sexually 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**.

Irked 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** chatted 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 flourishes 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.

978-1-55002-799-0



David
Watmough

"On Canada's western edge nothing seems to carry the weight of ages."

—MARGARET THOMPSON

5 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 seiners 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 place veer towards the deeply personal.

The noteworthy exception is **Margaret Thompson**'s astute essay about how land can fortify us 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.



JEN PUKONEN PHOTO

Tofino snowman on surfboard.
From *Writing the West Coast*

"Over there," Thompson writes, "the past is everywhere present: Roman roads march across country, like their legions, ruler-straight and still used; their aqueducts still straddle the rivers and fields; traffic whirls about their theatres and coliseums; the fractured remains of ancient columns support pots of herbs in Greek gardens..."

And so the importance of land in B.C.—the ancient land—takes on deeper significance in British Columbia as a compensation for the relative newness of our buildings, of our man-made leavings.

978-1895636-90-1

6 IMAGINE SOME OF THE PEOPLE

In the anthology **Writing the West Coast: In Love with Place** (Ronsdale \$24.95), educator **Briony 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 screech owl, **Carolyn Redl** 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.

978-1-55380-055-2

10 BOOKS TO CELEBRATE 150 YEARS

7 A TALE OF TWO PITIES

Once upon a time, most fishermen hated Orca 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 emissaries of the marine environment is the subject for *Daniel Francis and Gil Hewlett’s Operation Orca* (Harbour \$34.95).

Francis and Hewlett have recalled the contrasting fates of Springer—a calf left on its own in Puget Sound off the Washington coast in 2002—and Luna—a lone Orca that recently showed up in Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

Here is coastal-phile *Grant Shilling’s* take on the two whales and the humans who tried to save them.

It 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.

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 them.

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 Orcas left.

This census led to the banning of the capture of killer whales in 1976. *Operation Orca* affirms that if live capture had not ceased, the southern resident populations likely would have been wiped out.

It is against this backdrop that we flash forward 25 years to the ‘rescue’ of **Springer**, a young female found in Puget Sound mysteriously on her own in 2002. After much debate among the public and scientific community, it was decided that Springer should rejoin her pod in the Johnstone Strait.

Francis and Hewlett engagingly de-

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.

tail Springer’s epic journey and the eclectic skills and backgrounds of the workers who came to her rescue. The logistics of transporting a whale were 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?

When Springer was returned to Kwakwaka’wakw 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 Kwakwaka’wakw 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 words of whale rescuer **Lance Barrett-Leonard**, “We’d repatriated a whale, a First Nations icon as well as an icon of a different kind of 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 Luna’s propensity for playing with boats. Amid concerns he would come to harm, another rescue was planned to return

him to his family, but the plan fell apart due to a conflict between local First Nations government and various levels of government.

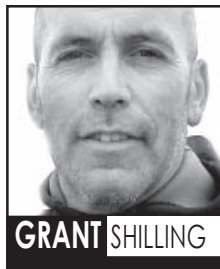
As widely reported on the evening news, a large tugboat, the *General Jackson*, killed Luna in 2006. “Many people who had been involved in the attempts to rescue Luna were angry at his death,” write Francis and Hewlett, “For them, the failure to ‘save’ this one whale was symptomatic of a larger failure 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.”

978-1-55017-426-7

Grant Shilling is a regular contributor from Cumberland.



GRANT SHILLING

Luna finds a friend, Henry the dog, at the Gold River dock

8 THE GLEANING OF NUGGETS

Often regarded as a classic of B.C. literature, **Edward Hoagland’s** journal of visiting British Columbia in 1966, *Notes from a Century Before* (1969), recalled his three-month excursion “into the wild country of British Columbia” by focusing on characters he met while travelling to Telegraph Creek via the Stikine River.

Loggers, ranchers and miners were exotic creatures to someone born in New York City in 1932, and by that time Hoagland already had the self-confidence of a man who had sold his first novel, *Cat Man*, before he graduated from Harvard in 1954, along with several years of experience in the U.S. Army.

“It was an exuberant, staccato summer,” he wrote. “Luck and events and kindnesses melded with one another. I rushed along eagerly, without any special introspection, just putting down what I found out.”

While living at Hazelton, Hoagland essentially went prospecting for stories, interviewing settlers and gleaning nuggets from written sources.

Hoagland’s second visit to British Columbia in 1968 served as the grist for his fourth novel, *Seven Rivers West*, published in 1986. The journal kept by Hoagland that second visit will now be published as *Early in the Season* (D&M \$24.95), edited by **Stephen Hume**.

Hoagland, who lives in Vermont, has contributed an epilogue. 978-1-55365-428-5

10 BOOKS TO CELEBRATE 150 YEARS

9 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** (RBCM \$39.95).

Like its competitor in the marketplace, *Free Spirit* is an effort to capture the essence of a province, but it also includes a bonus CD called *Evergreen Playground*, compiled and edited by **Dennis J. Duffy**, that highlights seven road trips from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. These filmic tracks with their dated, over-the-top period narration for tourism purposes re-create the long family car trips on two-lane highways that were *de rigueur* during the **W.A.C. Bennett** era.

Truscott has also incorporated dozens of selections from the *Peoples 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.

978-0-7726-5870-8

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.

978-0-9692119-1-4



Gerry Truscott of the Royal B.C. Museum in Victoria

10 MORE LIFE AFTER GOD

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 reasons 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* (Ronsdale \$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.



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 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 the 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.

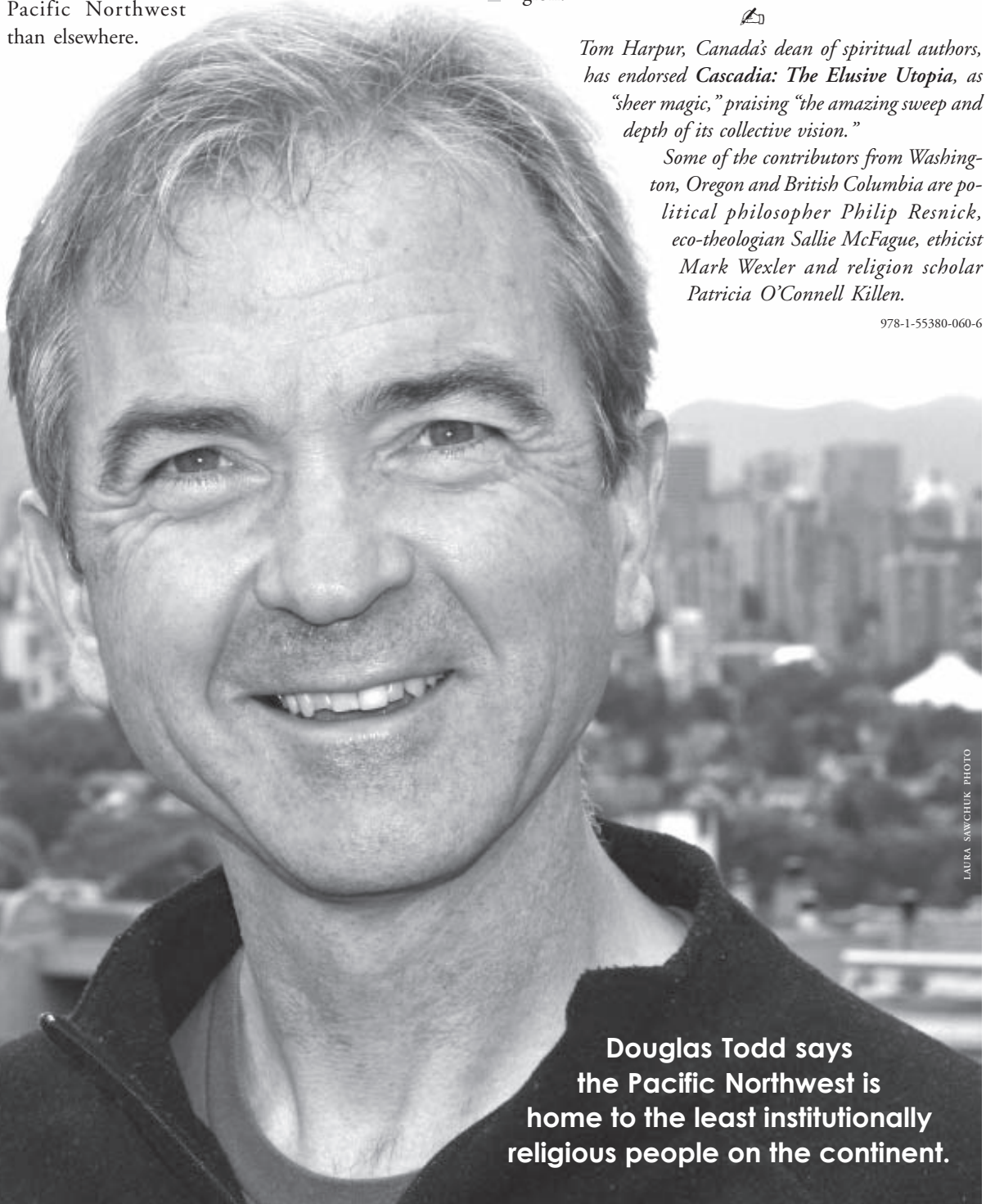
Due to the often-annoying international border, most Canadians and Americans in Cascadia remain largely ignorant of what they offer each other. And this strikes me as a waste of our collective potential as a region.



Tom Harpur, Canada's dean of spiritual authors, has endorsed *Cascadia: The Elusive Utopia*, as "sheer magic," praising "the amazing sweep and depth of its collective vision."

Some of the contributors from Washington, Oregon and British Columbia are political philosopher Philip Resnick, eco-theologian Sallie McFague, ethicist Mark Wexler and religion scholar Patricia O'Connell Killen.

978-1-55380-060-6



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

LAURA SAWCHUK PHOTO

LOOKOUT

a forum
for &
about
writers:

CRY ME A RIVER

LAURA SAWCHUCK PHOTO

John Calvert Blows the Whistle on the Privatization of Power

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.



LAURA SAWCHUCK PHOTO

John Calvert

"At the same time, BC Hydro is effectively providing the collateral for developers to borrow the funds they need to build new power plants.

"Yet at the end of the lucrative contracts, BC Hydro will have no assets to show for all the ratepayers' money it has committed.

"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.

BC BOOKWORLD: Why are we suddenly changing a system that has supplied some of the most affordable, most reliable and least carbon-polluting energy in North America for decades?

JOHN CALVERT: The government is committed to privatization, as an ideology, not fully regarding the consequences. Howe Street, Bay Street and Wall Street are all enjoying huge capital gains as a result of the government's policies of giving away the best sites for small hydro and wind development, while forcing BC Hydro to buy the energy they develop at outrageous prices. These enormous windfall profits are being funded by future electricity rate hikes which will be paid for by BC ratepayers.

BCBW: According to free market principles, logic dictates that more competition should lead to lower prices. Won't a competitive energy market be good for consumers?

CALVERT: After more than 15 years of experimenting with electricity competition, the American states that did not introduce competition have had lower price increases than states that did. The integrated public utility model minimizes transaction costs and facilitates long term planning. Crown corporations are able to borrow much more cheaply than private firms, given the better credit ratings of governments.

It is very difficult to police competitive electricity markets effectively, given the numerous ways in which companies can 'game' the system at the expense of ratepayers. The Enron scandal is only the most obvious illustration of this problem.

BCBW: To what extent has BC Hydro already been privatized?

CALVERT: The government has privatized major parts of BC Hydro's internal operations through its contract with Accenture. BC Hydro transferred one-third of its workforce to this private company as part of this deal. In addition, it has carved out the management of the transmission grid to a new company, the BC Transmission Corporation, to provide access to the grid for private power developers and to ensure that decisions about the future of the grid will now take into account the interests of these developers.

BCBW: You have written, "By 2003, BC Hydro was already spending more to buy approximately 10 percent of its energy from private power developers than it spent to generate the other 90 percent from its own hydro facilities." Why is energy purchased by BC Hydro so expensive?

CALVERT: BC Hydro's reservoirs and transmission grid were built three or four decades ago. BC residents have enjoyed the benefits of these investments because BC Hydro charges its customers electricity rates based on the actual cost of producing the energy, which is very low—currently about six tenths of a cent per kilowatt hour. It is analogous to the benefits that a homeowner enjoys from having purchased a house 30 years ago and is now living in it mortgage free.

In contrast, private firms do not sell energy at cost: they want the prevailing market price, which is much higher than the cost-of-production approach of BC Hydro. Like a landlord with a house to rent, they do not charge the same rent as 30 years ago, but rather want the current market rate. In addition, their cost of capital is higher and many of the early private power projects were expensive to build in the first place—they only got built because under the Social Credit government in the 1988 to 1991 period, BC Hydro was directed to buy their energy, regardless of cost. It is also useful to remember that while Alcan's power plant was built in the 1950s—even earlier than BC Hydro's major dams—and its costs are comparable, if not lower than BC Hydro's, it still wants to sell its energy at the market price which is roughly ten times higher than what BC Hydro charges its customers.

BCBW: In 2003, the Liberal government passed legislation creating a "heritage contract," effectively guaranteeing certain large industries access

to cheap energy, even if prices rise. What's the story there?

CALVERT: Residential customers are included in the heritage contract, but mainly this legislation was designed to appease the large industrial customers by providing them with the assurance that regardless of how much BC Hydro ended up paying private power developers for their new energy, the mines and pulp mills would still get access to BC Hydro's much cheaper public energy. It was the government's way of diffusing any possible opposition from the large industrial customers who otherwise might have opposed its plan to have BC Hydro buy its new energy from private power developers. Recently, the BC Utilities commission actually lowered the rate charged to industrial customers by slightly over 2 percent while it raised the rates to residential customers by 11 percent.

BCBW: According to a recent study commissioned by the BC Utilities Commission, approximately 270,000 homes in B.C. currently spend 10% or more of their family income on energy—a level generally accepted as signifying "unreasonable energy costs and energy poverty." How will the provincial government's energy policies impact low-income households?

CALVERT: Rates are going to go up dramatically over the coming decade. And this will cause considerable hardship, especially as BC does not have policies designed to assist lower income residents cope with higher electricity prices. Unlike other jurisdictions, such as Ontario, the electricity rate for residential customers in BC is the same regardless of how much is used. In Ontario, there is a cheaper rate for the first increments of energy. Then the rate increases once a monthly usage threshold is crossed. This is a way of assisting lower income and small users of electricity. But BC does not do this.

BCBW: With real numbers, explain what you mean when you say the sell-off of water-power resources is "a new gold rush."

CALVERT: A water license for a power plant that might generate \$10 million in annual revenues is only \$5,000. The most expensive water license for larger projects is only \$10,000. This is incredible, given the value of the resource.

In addition, the royalty payment—called a water rental—and the standing charge for the power plant—called a capacity charge—when added together, at the most, come to about 3 percent of the value of the water resource for any facility generating less than 160,000 MWh of energy annually. That's all the public gets.

It is useful to compare the price BC Hydro pays for the energy from these projects with the royalty the public gets. In 2006, BC Hydro paid 8.7 cents per kilowatt hour for energy from private power projects. But the government's royalty and other fees will amount to about 0.3 cents. All the rest will go to the developers.

BC Hydro energy purchase contracts, which vary from 15 to 40 years in length and are inflation indexed, provide a guaranteed revenue stream for private developers—a cash stream which enables them to go to the bank and borrow the money to build their new power plants. So ratepayers are effectively providing the collateral for the loans.

But when the contracts are over, unlike when ratepayers backed BC Hydro's investments, they have no assets to show for all the money they have paid to developers.

It's like getting someone to co-sign a mortgage for you to buy a house and then getting him to rent it back from you until the mortgage is paid off at a monthly rental that not only meets the mortgage payments, but also gives you a healthy profit every year. And, at the end of the mortgage, you own the house and he owns nothing, even though his money has paid for everything.

This is exactly what ratepayers are now doing through the BC Hydro contracts with private power developers. This is why there is a gold rush.

RIVERS FOR SALE

“For as little as \$5,000 you can buy private rights to generate power with a B.C. river.”



John Calvert was a member of the 2005 BC Hydro Integrated Electricity Planning Committee, a stakeholder group that spent 18 months reviewing BC's electricity options. He holds a Doctorate from the London School of Economics.

John Calvert argues that BC Hydro has become a cash cow for private developers.

BCBW: Increasingly, the provincial government has been eager to highlight the "green" aspects 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 much of this energy, as I said in response to an earlier question. Both the construction of power plants on rivers and the establishment of new wind farms impose damage on the environment. So building facilities that are not necessary is environmentally irresponsible.

Secondly, the government has consistently argued that there is very little environmental damage associated with these projects. I strongly disagree. Anyone who has actually seen some of the construction sites quickly realizes how extensive the damage can be to the sensitive ecology of BC's wilderness areas. The construction of new power plants requires major new roads, clearing land for the power plant and related facilities, creating new transmission lines to link the power plant to the grid and often boring huge tunnels through many kilometres of rock to create a penstock to divert the water. Many of the projects also have large tailponds or small reservoirs. Some have dams, one of which will be 76 metres high when the project is completed.

Some of the projects have transmission lines over 100 kilometres long. These have to be kept clear of brush, so they need access roads, which open up areas of the province that are otherwise untouched by humans. And when you consider that there may be several dozen power projects in a river valley, the cumulative damage can be very extensive. In short, it is misleading to argue that all these projects are 'green' and have no significant adverse impacts on the environment. For it is just not true.

Thirdly, once built, there is an ongoing issue about how much water will be diverted from the stream. The less that is left in the stream bed, the more impact on fish and aquatic life, especially if the low stream flow results in sharp changes in water temperature which can be deadly for fish stocks and for spawning beds. But water left in the stream bed is water not used for energy production. So the developer has a huge financial interest in maximizing the flow through the turbines, regardless of the impact on the stream.

And fourth, the government's argument that we need these projects to avoid importing energy created from coal-fired power plants in Alberta or the US is also misleading. The great advantage of BC Hydro's system is that it can store large amounts of energy in its reservoirs. Since its creation, BC Hydro has engaged in energy trade with the US and Alberta. Energy is constantly moving back and forth on an hourly basis, creating valuable synergies. BC Hydro often buys energy overnight when there is less demand—that is a surplus—in other jurisdictions. The reason there is a surplus is that thermal plants cannot ramp their energy production up and down on an hour by hour basis. They normally produce a relatively constant volume of energy 24 hours a day and regardless of hourly fluctuations in the price of energy in the market.

So BC Hydro buys energy from these facilities during periods when the price is low. It then sells it back during the day when the price is higher. This provides a profit for BC ratepayers and keeps our rates lower. But it also does something else. By having access to BC Hydro's stored energy during periods of peak demand, the electricity systems of Alberta and the adjacent US states do not need to build as many coal fired power plants as they would if they had no access to BC Hydro's system.

So our energy trade with these other jurisdictions actually reduces the number of coal fired plants that get built. If we were to stop importing energy from these jurisdictions when they have surpluses and reselling it when they have

deficits—a practice which is difficult to imagine, given the way electricity systems interact—we would not be doing any favours to the environment.

BCBW: Why has such a major policy issue not garnered more attention?

CALVERT: The government made a major effort to promote its Energy Plan as 'green.' It also was assisted by aggressive campaigns by the beneficiaries of its policies—the private power developers—who promoted their projects as both urgently needed to meet the alleged energy crisis and environmentally beneficial.

A second factor is that the full costs of this policy agenda are not immediately apparent. Ratepayers' bills are only now beginning to see the impact. The reason is that it normally takes between five and ten years for power projects to be constructed. Thus the large block of extremely expensive energy purchased by BC Hydro in its 2006 tender call will not begin to be delivered until 2013 or later. By then, of course, most of the politicians responsible for the decisions will have long retired. And the public will be stuck with these incredibly expensive contracts stretching out, in some cases, to 2051.

The value of the water and wind resources that are being given away is largely hidden from the public. There was little public debate about the policy of giving away water licenses or wind farm tenures on virtually all the best sites in the province for virtually nothing. Very few people even knew this was happening.

Decisions regarding the handing out of water licenses and wind farm tenures were handled administratively with virtually no involvement from First Nations or local communities affected by these decisions. This was compounded by the fact that many of the sites are in remote locations.

If the government were giving away Stanley Park for a dollar, the entire Lower Mainland would be up in arms. But if we are giving away hugely valuable water resources in an undeveloped area of the province, few people are likely to have any idea of the value of the resource being given away.

Now, if a future government were to try to take back these developments, the investors would be clamouring for billions in compensation.

BCBW: What's your take on the financial implications of the Energy Plan?

CALVERT: According to the Ministry of Finance, as of last October, BC Hydro had signed contracts to purchase \$28.4 billion worth of private electricity in the coming years. This is an enormous amount that is growing month by month. It may soon be larger than the entire accumulated provincial debt. Yet the media has been virtually silent about the huge financial obligations the government has forced on BC Hydro and its ratepayers.

BCBW: You predict that public opposition to the Energy Plan will grow once British Columbians understand its implications. What evidence do you have of this?

CALVERT: I think the cat is finally out of the bag. We are seeing the beginning of a groundswell of opposition, such as the successful campaign to derail the Pitt River project.

People can see the foolishness of destroying some of our most pristine rivers to generate power we don't need in order to fill the pockets of private power developers. I think this will become one of the two or three key issues in the coming election, as it should.

BC Hydro was not broken. I believe our government broke it.

Putting Humpty Dumpty together again will be a big challenge, but I think we have to do it to have any control over our electricity system in the future.

978-1-55266-244-1

For a map containing all independent power producer licenses and applications across B.C., visit www.ippwatch.com

KYOTO FOLLIES FALLOUT

WHY CANADA'S RECORD ON CLIMATE CHANGE HAS BEEN ABYSMAL

Mainly written from B.C., *Hot Air: Meeting Canada's Climate Change Challenge* (Mc&S \$29.99) looks at the political hurdles that have prevented Canada from meeting its planetary obligations regarding global warming. *Hot Air* also examines possible solutions—that include the CIMS policy modeling tool, developed by SFU's Mark Jaccard and implemented around the world—and reveals the failed poker playing of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien at the Kyoto summit.

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 performer 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



Flanked by his Environment and Industry Ministers in 2003, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien boasted of a \$1 billion investment for his Climate Change Plan for Canada. But the authors of *Hot Air* suggest Chrétien's stance on climate change was mainly driven by hubris rather than science or common sense.

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—prompting Canada to announce a slightly higher target commitment 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 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 televisions 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.

978-0-7710-8096-8

Martin Twigg is a freelance environmental journalist.



MARTIN TWIGG

HIGH HOPES FOR LOW EMISSIONS

Only a fool would say it would be easy. But some smart people say stopping climate change doesn't have to break the bank.

As long as we start early by introducing sensible yet aggressive policies and allow time for the market and society to gradually adapt, **Mark Jaccard** believes we could soon find ourselves living in a low-emissions future.

For an idea of what such an approach might look like, one need look no further than our own province, as B.C.'s new carbon tax is essentially the viewpoints of *Hot Air* put into action.

The new B.C. carbon tax was inspired in large part by Jaccard, a member of **Gordon Campbell's** Climate Action Team.

As one of nine members who contributed to the UN's Nobel-prize winning International Panel on Climate Change, Jaccard has also worked with the NDP and is fully aware of the political realities accompanying tangible action on climate change.



LAURA SAWCHUK PHOTO

“

For once, we have some politicians in Victoria who, at least on this file, are proving to be honest and courageous when it comes to climate change.”

—MARK JACCARD

“No one should underestimate the political difficulties of imposing GHG taxes,” he writes, “since high taxes of any kind, anywhere, are prime targets of outrage.”

Unfortunately, the right policy isn't often the most popular. So, looking for the bright side, at least the provincial government has been willing to court some unpopularity in order to face reality.

A former chair of the BC Utilities Commission, *Hot Air* co-author Jaccard received the Donner Prize for his book, *Sustainable Fossil Fuels: The Unusual Suspect in the Quest for Clean and Enduring Energy* (Cambridge Press, 2005).

For information about BC's Carbon Tax go to: www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca

DUTCH IN THE CLUTCH

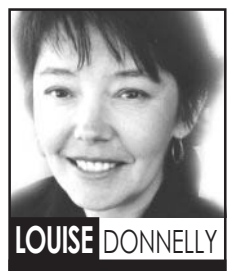


Jan de Groot (at left) has recalled the Nazi occupation of Holland during his boyhood.

Ann Alma and Jan de Groot pay tribute to family bravery

Brave Deeds: How One Family Saved many from the Nazis by Ann Alma (Groundwood \$17.95) **AGES 9-12**

Ann Alma was born in the small town of Uit-huiz-er-meeden (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. That's the basis for Ann Alma's *Brave Deeds: How One Family Saved many from the Nazis*.



LOUISE DONNELLY

After moving to Canada, Ann Alma learned that **Frans** and **Mies Braal** had hidden, clothed and fed twenty-six people in a vacation home on the island of Voorne during the winter of 1944-45. The group included Jews, a downed Canadian airman named **Philip Pochailo** and starving children. Twice their place was searched by the Nazis, and on both occasions they managed to hide everyone in time. They dug an underground hideout and made false identity cards.

Frans and Mies Braal survived and immigrated to the USA in 1957. Eventually, in 1969, they moved to the West Kootenays and built a house in the mountain, where Ann Alma met Mies, her neighbour. Every week they talked in Dutch while her husband Frans was in a seniors' home with dementia.

"The story came out little by little," says Alma, "and finally, after getting permission from Mies, and sitting by Frans's deathbed to say good-bye, I wrote the whole first draft that night." *Brave Deeds* is a true story told from the perspective of a fictional child.

978-0-88899-791-3

A Boy In War by Jan de Groot (Sono Nis \$13.95). **AGES 10+**

Partially inspired by letters written by his father from a concentration camp, **Jan de Groot** has reconstructed his life as a resourceful and resilient child during the Nazi occupation of Holland for *A Boy In War*.

Born in 1932 in The Hague, de Groot still vividly recalls the May day in 1940 when German troops, "their black boots pounding on the pavement," rounded up Dutch soldiers and loaded them onto trucks.



Ann Alma (above) and her mother used to ride into town to get supplies in Holland.

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, Jan's mother realizes they must leave the city, so Jan and his mother set off for the north with its large farmlands, hoping to gain shelter from relatives. Mostly traveling by foot, they take their direction from the sun and sky, and Jan is terrified that he will never see his father again.

Jan de Groot immigrated to Canada in 1957 as a merchant mariner. He contributes to the Dutch newspaper *De Krant*, writes for boating magazines and has self-published a how-to book for prospective yacht owners, as well as two books about his sailing adventures in the Caribbean.

978-1-55039-167-4

Louise Donnelly writes from Vernon.

PICTURING KINDERTRANSPORTE

Good-Bye Marianne: The Graphic Novel by Kathryn Shoemaker and Irene Watts (Tundra \$14.99) **AGES 8-11**

Kathryn Shoemaker has co-authored *Good-Bye Marianne: The Graphic Novel*, her new illustrated version of Berlin-born **Irene Watts'** poignant story about the *Kindertransporte* that saved ten thousand Jewish children in Germany prior to the outbreak of World War Two. The original print-only version about an eleven-year-old named Marianne Kohn in 1938 won the Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction and Isaac Frischwasser Memorial Award for Young Adult Fiction.

978-0-88776-830-9

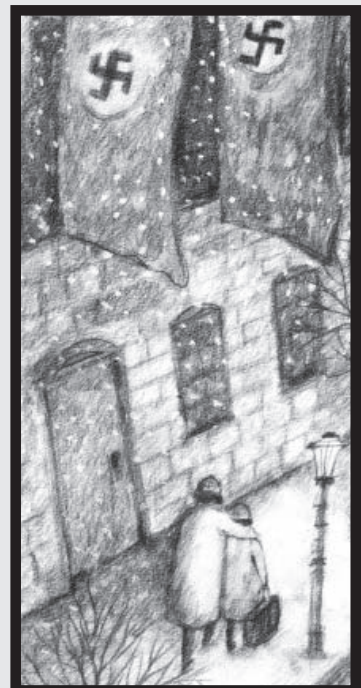


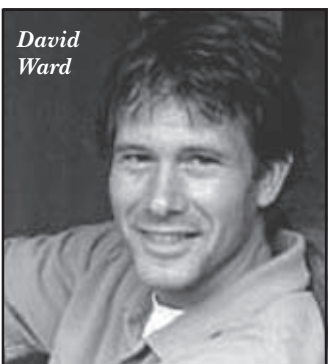
Illustration by Kathryn Shoemaker, from Good-bye Marianne

DEM BONES

Reading the Bones by Gina McMurchy-Barber (Dundurn \$11.99) **AGES 12+**

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 orangutans in Borneo with Dr. **Birutė Galdikas** and led backpacking tours in Asia and South America. 978-1-55002-732-7



David Ward
Archipelago by David Ward (Red Deer \$12.95) **AGES 12+**

Strikingly similar, **David Ward’s** first juvenile novel *Archipelago* is a time travel adventure set on Haida Gwaii. To cope with the tragic death of his father, 12-year-old Jonah accompanies his mother, a well-known photographer, on a self-healing journey, only to plunge backward 14,000 years in time, back to when ancient peoples were beginning to make their way from Asia over the Bering Strait and down to the Americas, stopping at Haida Gwaii en route. In these pre-historic times, Jonah teams up with a mysterious girl named Akilah who helps him survive and reawakens his yearnings for love. Ward lives in Pender Harbour. 978-0-88995-400-7

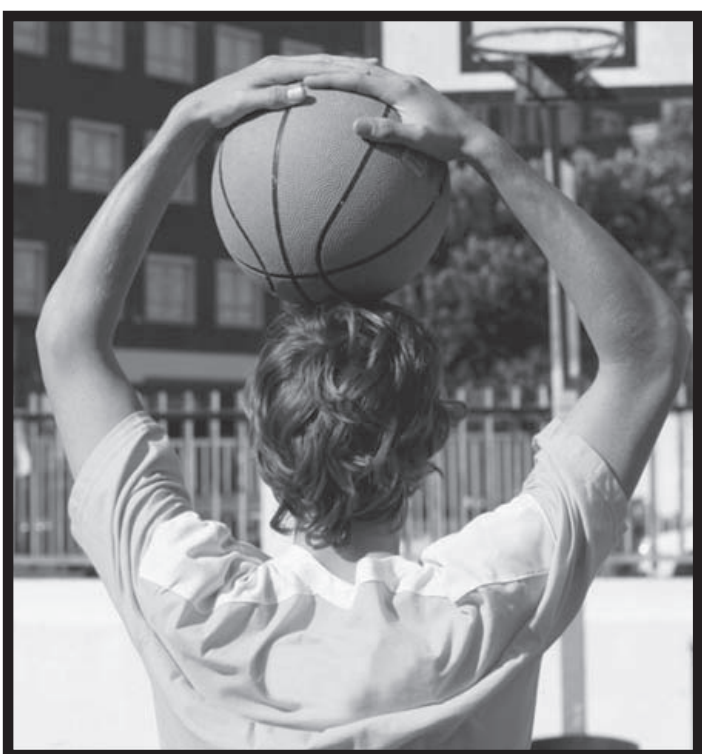


TRIO HITS 20

Having met in 1999 at a North Delta library writing group, Diane Tullson, Shelley

Hrdlitschka and K.L. (Kim) Denman have stuck together as friends, discussing and critiquing projects while living in different cities. This year they celebrated the launch of three more books, bringing their collective total to 20. The new releases are Tullson’s *Lockdown* (Orca), Hrdlitschka’s *Gotcha* (Orca) and Denman’s *The Shade* (Orca). These will be followed later this year by Denman’s *Spiral* (Orca) and Hrdlitschka’s *Sister Wife* (Orca).

Lockdown: 1551439166; Gotcha: 1551437376; Shade: 155143931X; Spiral: 1551439301; Sister Wife: 1551439271



Cover art for Jeff Rud’s Crossing

THESPIAN VS. HOOPSTER

Crossover by Jeff Rud (Orca Sports \$9.95) **AGES 12+**

Now a political columnist in Victoria, former sports columnist **Jeff Rud** has written numerous sports-related books, including a biography of **Steve Nash**. In Rud’s aptly-titled *Crossover*, teenager Kyle Evans is a good basketball player but his coach is asking for one hundred per cent commitment. Trouble is, Kyle’s also got a part in the school’s upcoming stage play. He’d only auditioned to placate his girlfriend, thinking he’d be lucky to get a bit part, but then he landed the plum role of the Artful Dodger. Now his drama teacher is demanding fulltime commitment, too.

Trouble increases when the

play’s set is vandalized with homophobic graffiti and dog crap gets dumped in Lukas Connor’s locker. So what if the somewhat effeminate co-actor Lukas, who’d aced the role of Fagin, favours fitted sweaters over baggy t-shirts, hates sports and loves dancing and singing?

Still, Kyle’s left wondering if his old friend is really gay. And does it matter?

1-55143-981-5
—by Louise Donnelly

Out on a Limb by Gail Banning (Key Porter \$11.95) **AGES 12+**

Secrets are burdens, as Vancouver crown prosecutor **Gail Banning** reveals with her highly original plot for *Out on a Limb*.

When Rosie’s Ph.D-seeking parents are forced to vacate their apartment building, they find a clause in a long-forgotten will that reveals their estranged great-aunt Lydia inherited everything from a rich relative’s estate except a large treehouse. So up they go.

At first the family’s bohemian digs in the tree are just fine. Who needs electricity and running water when you can see for miles? But when their idyllic summer ends, and Rosie and her sister Tilly are obliged to attend an upscale school in the neighbourhood, Rosie can’t risk revealing the treehouse to her snobby classmates.

Rosie starts telling lies—and those lies become far more troubling to her than poverty.

978-1-55470-012-7

Sammy Squirrel and Rodney Raccoon: A Stanley Park Tale by Duane Lawrence (Granville Island \$12.95) **AGES 6+**

Duane Lawrence’s *Sammy Squirrel and Rodney Raccoon: A Stanley Park Tale* is touted as “the quintessential BC children’s book.” Previously released as *The Adventures of Joseph Squirrel and Dean Raccoon* in 2003, this self-published story follows the adventures of two best friends who explore the world beyond Vancouver’s Stanley Park when they get swept out to sea and end up in Nara, Japan.

The errant park residents receive a ride back home from Winifred Whale.

The new version features illustrations by **Gordon Clover**.

978-7-894694-54-4

NEW FROM ANVIL PRESS

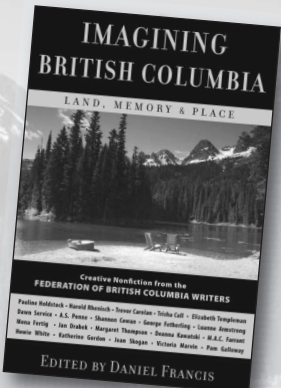
Imagining BC: Land, Memory & Place

Edited by Daniel Francis

Twenty contemporary writers focus on the particular “sense of place” that *is* British Columbia.

Essays and memoirs from some of Canada’s best-known authors, all members of the Federation of BC Writers, are featured in this anthology, including Pauline Holdstock, Harold Rhenisch, George Fetherling, Howie White, Katherine Gordon, and M.A.C. Farrant.

**IN BETTER BOOKSTORES
ALL OVER BC!**



ISBN: 1-895636-90-6
\$18 | 212 pp.



TRANSMONTANUS 17 Stranger Wycott’s Place

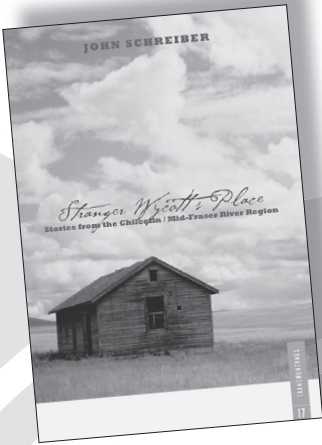
Stories from the Cariboo–Chilcotin

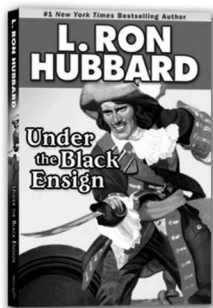
by John Schreiber

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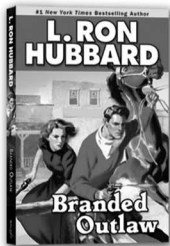
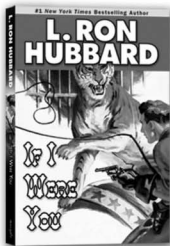
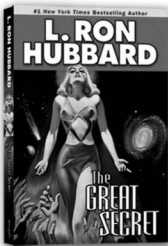
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Stories from the Golden Age
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news PUBLISHING

YATES RESURFACES

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 Morriss 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 Morriss**.

Next, Yates was involved in **Margaret Fridel's** Burnaby-based Cacanadadada 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, releasing *Hongyun: New and Collected Shorter Poems 1955-2005* (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 Charlottes” 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 Screw*, resulted in severely strained relations with its publisher, M&S.

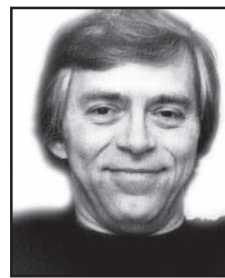
The *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* once compared Yates' plays to those of **Beckett**, **Pinter** and **Albee**.

J. Michael Yates' 32nd 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** (Libros Libertad \$34.95).

Concurrently, Yates provided the jacket blurb for **El Greco—Domenikos Theotokopoulos** (Libros \$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 reinvent book publishing and promotion,” the pair has literally parted company. A former Vancouver stock broker, Aligizakis says he's now quite happy to be free of Yates—who he still admires as a writer.

El Greco: 9780978186548; Yates: 9780978186531



J. Michael Yates in 1993, when his prison guard memoir, *Line Screw*, was published.

critical books for critical thinkers

LIQUID GOLD

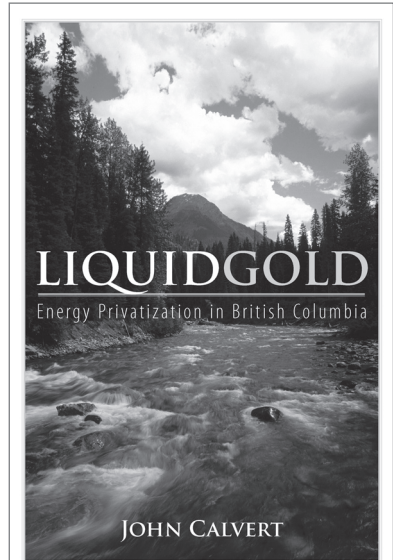
Energy Privatization in British Columbia
by *John Calvert*
ISBN 9781552662441 \$24.95

John Calvert shows how B.C.'s successful public energy system is being hijacked by a deregulated private electrical system. Read the feature interview with John Calvert — *Cry Me a River* — in this issue.

John Calvert debunks the claims of the private energy industry's equivalent of snake-oil salesmen, while ably defending B.C.'s public power heritage that serves us so well. — **BILL TIELEMAN**, columnist and political commentator

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ANVIL PRESS



Suicide Psalms

poetry by *Mari-Lou Rowley*

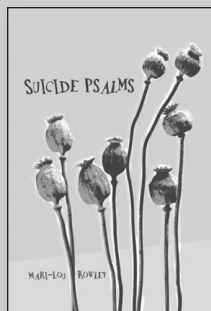
A collection of poetry that is both hymn and visceral scream—of loss, despair, hope, and ultimately redemption.

“This is Rowley at her heart stammering, howling, apocalyptic, playful, musical best.” — **DI BRANDT**

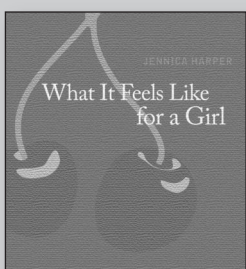
*“Rowley's *Suicide Psalms* are deft, double-edged, ‘kill sites bedded with violets,’ songs of violent beauty.”*

— **SYLVIA LEGRIS**

ISBN: 1-895636-92-2 | \$15 | AVAIL. OCTOBER



∞ CANLIT WITH AN URBAN TWIST ∞



What It Feels Like for a Girl

poetry by *Jennica Harper*

*“Smart, brave, hard-edged, and a little frightening ... Jennica Harper offers a compassionate glimpse into the turbulent lives of teenaged girls. May this book find its way to school libraries. May it find itself in the hands of every young person who ever wondered *What it Feels Like for a Girl*.”* — **ELIZABETH BACHINSKY**

ISBN: 1-895636-96-5 | \$15 | AVAIL. OCTOBER

26th Annual Lieutenant Governor's Award

for historical writing of non-fiction books published in 2008
by authors of B.C. History. (*reprints not eligible*)

Entry deadline: **December 31, 2008**

British Columbia Historical Federation

Contact: **Barb Hynek**, BCHF Book Competition
bhynek@telus.net or 604-535-9090

Winner of the 2007 Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Historical Writing on B.C.'s history: **Judy Thompson** for *“Recording their story: James Teit and the Tahltan”*

GETTING OUT FROM DOWN UNDER

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

BY CHERIE THIESSEN

Far from Botany Bay by Rosa Jordan
(Oolichan Books, \$22.95)

Thelma and Louise have met their match in Mary Bryant, née Broad. Mary is far more interesting, partially because she's not mere fiction. In real life, 1787, she was a Cornish convict, one of the first to be sent to a fledgling prison colony in Australia, and, four years later she was one of the first to lead a successful escape.

Some escape! At sea for sixty-six days and traveling five thousand kilometers, she led eight men, with her 2 babes in arms, as they rowed and sailed a 20' longboat through the infamous Coral Sea, bristling with the reefs that had wrecked many a boat. Her ultimate goal was Kupang, on the island of Timor in Dutch-controlled Indonesia, and armed with compass and chart, she led them right to it. En route they survived starvation, thirst, aggressive natives, a violent storm, alligators and illness. While doing all this, Mary also had to pander to her insecure husband's sulks at not being leader, do the cooking, wash the dishes and put the children to bed. Sound familiar?

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 order to protect herself.

The escape is surprising enough, engineered as it was by

an uneducated young woman with a chart and a compass, but the fact that a group of convicts in those days even allowed her to be 'captain' is just as surprising. This is Chick Lit at its best. We love to read about a female super achiever who, even though she's victimized and battered, rises up again and again.

No wonder, then, that Mary's story has been made into a musical, a successful play in 1989 (*Boswell for the Defense*), and a 4-hour TV mini series shown in Australia and England in 2005 and 2006.

She's the subject of at least nine books, but according to *Far From Botany Bay* author **Rosa Jordan**, it was the presidential address for the Elizabethan Club of Yale University, "Boswell and the Girl from Botany Bay," that inspired her to write this story. She managed to obtain a copy from the university library, and once inspired, sought out primary sources at the British Museum, including newspaper accounts from 1792.

You may be wondering what the famous journal writer, **James Boswell**, has to do with all this. He turns out to be the *deus ex machina*—the badly needed saviour. More I will not say.

Although Jordan has clearly gone the extra fathom in researching facts for her narrative non-fiction, her book appears more heavily weighted toward narrative, especially compared to the other publications. She creates a love interest for Mary, and dreams up friends for this larger-than-life heroine as well—friends like Colleen, and Bados, the flute-playing slave from Barbados. Jordan also



Rosa Jordan of Rossland is the tenth person to write about penal colony heroine Mary Bryant who escaped back to England from Australia in 1791.

As the social justice programme director for Earthways Foundation, Rosa Jordan has developed a jungle cat reserve in Ecuador and a food security programme in a war-torn village in Guatemala.

Jordan, author of *Dangerous Places: Travels on the Edge*, and Lonely Planet's *Cycling Cuba*, is clearly an unusual woman herself. She calls herself an internationalist, and in her capacity as social justice programme director for Earthways Foundation, she has helped to develop a jungle cat reserve in Ecuador's Choco rainforest and a food security programme in a war-torn Mayan village in Guatemala. When not traveling, she lives and writes in Rossland.

In addition to presenting us with a strong, Christ-like literary and historical figure, and crafting an unput-downable plot, Jordan portrays the inhumane way in which prisoners, and especially women,

fictionalizes a relationship Mary has with a Dutch captain, trading her body for what she needs for her escape.

Jordan has also come up with a far more sympathetic crime for her heroine to have committed. Mary has gone to prison for stealing a cloak so that she can take it to warm her dying mother. In reality, however, Mary was a career thief.

On the non-fiction side, she really did marry Will, a fisherman and a drinker, and they were both Cornish. The incredibly harsh and frequently unjust

punishments meted out are also historically accurate, and the ships involved are all as described. Mary really did have two children called Charlotte and Emanuel, the first by a rapist on the boat, and the second by her husband. What befalls the escapees once they actually complete their amazing journey and reach Indonesia also appears to be factual.

It's a good story, especially for women. How many men, after all, went to see *Thelma and Louise* without being dragged there?

were treated in earlier times. The men we meet are pretty grim, often operating on primeval instincts. It's perhaps to balance this unattractive historical gender portrayal that she introduces Mary's love, John, as an intelligent and gentle Canadian clerk.

Good to know that the male has evolved considerably in the last few hundred years. You've come a long way, baby!

A lot of us will be awaiting the chick flick.

9780889822498

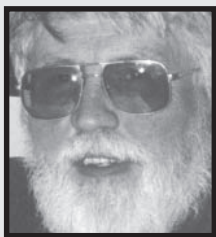
Cherie Thiessen reviews fiction from Pender Island.



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THE JOLTING JEREMIAD OF RITA WONG

“Assume poison unless otherwise informed.”

Forage by Rita Wong (Nightwood \$16.95)

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



HANNAH MAIN-VAN DER KAMP

One hesitates to open a book of poems if the back cover blurb announces “an important book for an important time,” but *Forage* comes close to justifying the hype. Alongside a list of Monsanto patents on transgenic plants, Wong has placed instructions on growing basmati 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, colonization and the destruction of indigenous cultures, sustainability, linguistics, globalization, biopiracy and civil disobedience. (Not to mention Chinese poetry both ancient and modern.)

For a mere 66 pages of poems, 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, variety and even love poetry, often employing unique forms and language. Though occasionally just skirting rant and inaccessibility, this poet’s energetic ethical indignation shakes the reader up. Her aphorisms are striking, at times bordering on sloganeering,

“Profound mistrust of fashion is healthy.”
“Assume poison unless otherwise informed.”

When the public ear has been deafened you have to be outrageous to be heard. So who can blame her for trying? There are many pages of clever but also daunting wordplay:



DAVID LESTER PHOTO

“intermittent insistence sinister complicity stillborn mister minister toxic tinctures stinking pistols stricken cysts”

The density of her unpunctuated prose pieces does not always surrender to comprehension, even upon re-reading, and the hand-written marginalia can be a bit coy. Transliterations are not always offered for the Chinese ideograms that exclude many readers. So this is a difficult book for a difficult time. Toxicity and its toll on our health is one of the main connecting themes. Dioxins and exponential mistakes *“magnify their way up the food chain / into my mother’s thyroid / my neighbour’s prostate / my cousin’s immune system / my aunties’ breasts / my grandmother’s cervix”*... *“industrial food defeats nutrition/ immune systems attrition...brain murmurs tumour.”*

This jeremiad verges on apocalyptic prophecy. After the devastation that is *“more disfigurement than development / we summon precautionary principles / in agriculture, manufacture / voluntary simplicity / coyotes bare their sharp teeth / have the last howl.”*

So out we’ll go, not with a whimper or a bang, but a coyote’s howl.

Given the language needed to describe the toxicity of circuit board recycling villages, benzene in aquifers or the disposability of Shenzens’s factory girls is different from the language generally used to describe mountain mists and ocean’s drama, Rita Wong has emerged as a valuable counterweight to the nature poets so plentiful in B.C.

978-0-88971-213-3

Hannah Main-Van Der Kamp writes from Victoria.

Rita Wong at the BC Book Prizes

SARTRE OF THE CHUCK

Tides at the Edge of the Senses by John Skapski (Libros Libertad \$12.95)

A fisherman mystic philosopher, **John Skapski**, now a lawyer, spent many decades drifting on the tides. His first book in thirty years, *Tides at the Edge of the Senses*, is an elegiac tribute, tinged with surreal imagery, to fishing, gillnetters, the fishing community on this coast and to the fish. He knows that world intimately but is never romantic about it; too much discomfort, fear, boredom, and accident.

Sartre of the chuck, Skapski proffers salty sutras on being and non-being. *“Tomorrow is only one permutation of yesterday.”*

“Things are what they are, and also what thought would have them be.” Though he has a weakness for abstractions, (life, death, always, never), Skapski’s best pieces are short and imagistic. *“The words lay beached on the air / Stretched like kelp on its dry frames.”* *“Thunder like a cat, rubs its back along the air.”*

There is a lot of death in this book. Not only the decay/spawn life cycle of salmon but also the constant reminder of the men who have drowned. He’s philosophical, too, about the demise of that fishing culture, blaming no one, but the affectionate memories are tinged with regret. Though he has had a love/hate relationship with the lifestyle, he’s also clearly been hooked.

978-0-9781865-6-2



John Skapski

“Insofar as there is a community, I always feel on a remote edge.” —MIKE DOYLE

MIKE DOYLE REVEALED: THE SAMUEL PEPYS OF VICTORIA POETRY

Paper Trombones: Notes on Poetics by Mike Doyle (Ekstasis \$19.95)

Time reduces history or magnifies it. Poet and UVic professor **Mike Doyle**’s annotated diary of his literary life in British Columbia since 1969, *Paper Trombones: Notes on Poetics*, is a rare magnifier for the lower Vancouver Island literary scene.

Some of Doyle’s observations of writers, offhandedly made at the time, gather historical weight due to their natural candour.

For instance, having favourably reviewed Milton Acorn’s *I’ve Tasted My Blood* and contributed to a special award to honour Acorn, Doyle recorded a disastrous midday reading by Milton Acorn at UVic in 1974.

“His face ugly, somewhat misshapen, has the high colour and rough texture of a booz-er’s,” Doyle writes. “His eye glaucous, bloodshot, his teeth a mouthful of rotten discoloured stumps. He mumbled irrelevancies and stray remarks of a vaguely Maoist nature.

“Incoherent, deadly dull, nearly inaudible. I believe he ‘performed’ one poem at the end of an interminable dithyrambl, but by then I had left. I had persuaded my first-year students to go hear him. Tomorrow, must offer humble apologies. Dorothy Livesay, under whose aegis he appeared, must have been embarrassed. Anyone would be.”



Ever the observer, Mike Doyle (left) with poets Allen Ginsberg and Doug Beardsley (with pipe) outside Pagliacci’s in Victoria

More sympathetically, Doyle offers a candid assessment of a wake for poet, critic and anthologist, Charles ‘Red’ Lillard at the home of Robin Skelton in 1997. Again, it is the jotted down, fly-on-the-wall honesty 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, Patrick Lane, several of whom I like, though I am close to none. A moving occasion though some banal poetry. A bit of dopey by-play, celebrating John Barleycorn, spitting into the wind.

“Saw Diana Hayes, P.K. [Page], Phyllis Webb (all to talk with, I mean) and many others,

including Rona Murray and Walter Dexter. For Charles’ sake, and Rhonda’s, I’m glad this happened; 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.

“Insofar as there is a community, I always feel on a remote edge. Rilke said, ‘Love your loneliness’; I do, for the most part. Charles will be missed, though, not least by me.”

Some of the names dropped include Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Creeley, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, William Carlos Williams, George Woodcock, Earle Birney, bill bissett and literally dozens of other poets.

“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 in a world where one must fend for oneself.”

978-1-897430-05-7

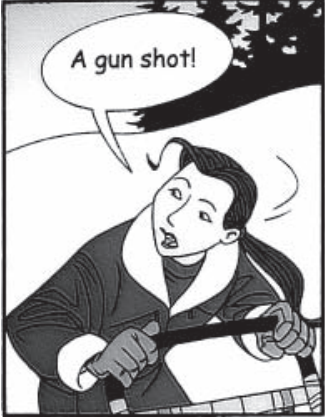
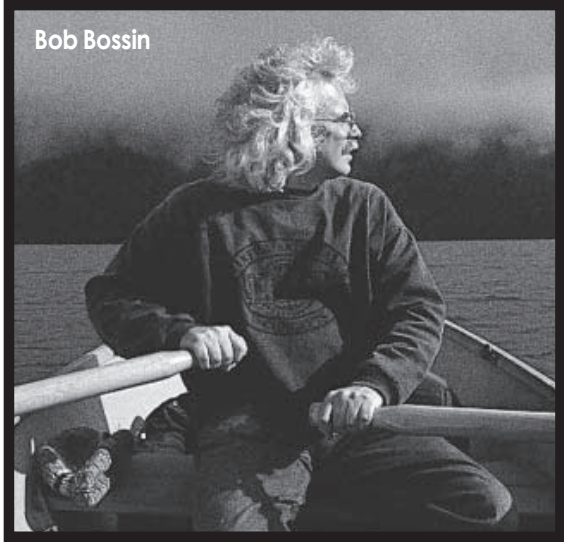
Okanaganites

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 a once-active ranch on the long-abandoned 800 acres they purchased.

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).

Bossinova

It might look like kid's book at first glance, but *Latkes* (Gabriola: Nick Books \$12) 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



With 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 dogsled 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.

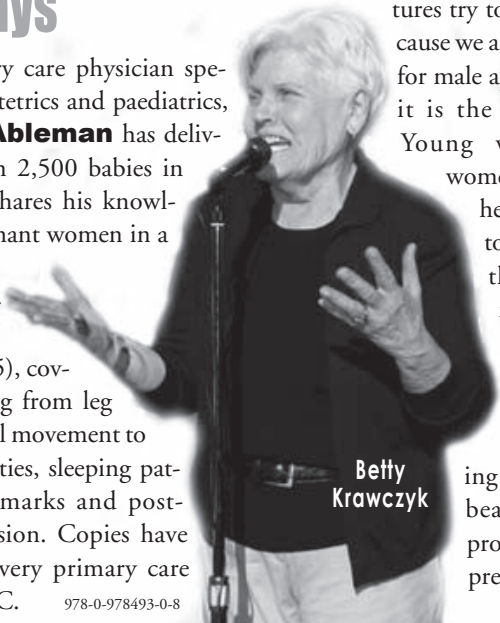
century Jewish folk tale and a 20th century conflict between an "old country" father and his Canadian son. "Twenty-five years ago," says Bossin, "I took a tape recorder around and interviewed a dozen of my old aunts and uncles. *Latkes* would not exist but for those recordings."

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).

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 no-frills primer, *Circle of Pregnancy* (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.



Diamond's distinction

Having digested his 36 years as a theatrical activist for **Theatre for Living: The Art and Science of Community-Based Dialogue** (Trafford 2007), **David Diamond** has received the Distinguished Book Award from the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE). It's the first self-published book to receive the honour.

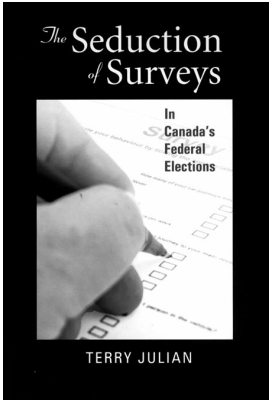
Krawczyk's crusade

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 grandsons 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 elder 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."

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WHO'S WHO BC

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, *Sgaana 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.

0-9809888-0-2

B 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 ArtStarts, 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.”



Jean Baird

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.

978-1-55152-241-8

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



Haidaways: April White



Alan R. Drengson

of Earth Day Canada, he has co-written **Wild Forestry: Practicing Nature's Wisdom** (New Society \$24.95).

978-0-86571-615-2

E is for Ellis

In 2007, **Sarah Ellis** won the \$20,000 TD Canadian Children's Literature Award for *Odd Man Out* (Groundwood).

Her latest of nearly twenty titles in twenty-two years is **Days of Toil and Tears: The Child Labour Diary of Flora Rutherford** (Scholastic \$14.99). It is the fictional 1887 Ontario diary of an orphan who works in a textile mill, with entries written to her mother and father, who died when she was age five.



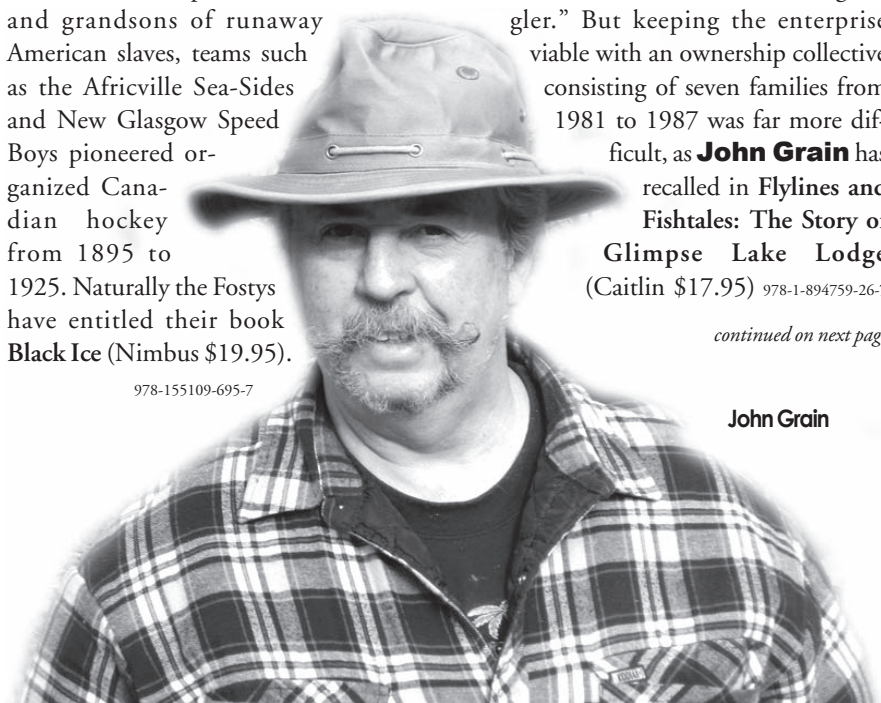
Sarah Ellis

978-0-439-95594-2

F is for Fosty

B.C.-born historians **George Fosty** and **Darril Fosty** have produced the first book-length study of Coloured Hockey League of the Maritimes, formed in 1895 in Halifax, twenty-two years prior to the creation of the NHL. Comprised of the sons and grandsons of runaway American slaves, teams such as the Africville Sea-Sides and New Glasgow Speed Boys pioneered organized Canadian hockey from 1895 to 1925. Naturally the Fostys have entitled their book **Black Ice** (Nimbus \$19.95).

978-155109-695-7



John Grain

G is for Grain

With only two permanent residents nearby and the closest town fifty kilometres away, Glimpse Lake Lodge near Merritt, with 5,000 feet of waterfront, had no difficulty living up to its 1940s slogan as a place “dedicated to the lovers of nature and the discriminating angler.” But keeping the enterprise viable with an ownership collective consisting of seven families from 1981 to 1987 was far more difficult, as **John Grain** has recalled in **Flylines and Fishtales: The Story of Glimpse Lake Lodge** (Caitlin \$17.95)

978-1-894759-26-7

continued on next page

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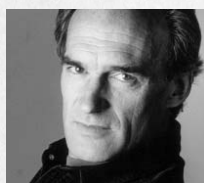
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WHO'S WHO



BILL KEAY PHOTO

Stephen Hume sending email near Lillooet on the spot where explorer Simon Fraser also camped for the night. From *Simon Fraser: In Search of Modern British Columbia*

continued from page 37

H is for Hume

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.

978-1-55017-434-2

I is for Innes

"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

J is for Jerome

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. 1-55152-238-1

K is for Kaufman

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-



Brian Kaufman

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'—

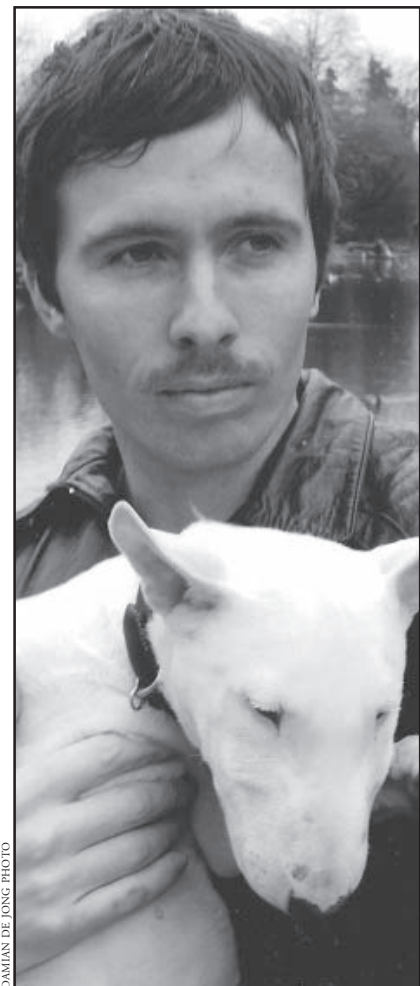
thus the play on that with the title."

Kaufman, who doubles as the publisher of Anvil Press, published the 50th issue of *subTerrain* earlier this year.

L is for Lukyn

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



DAMIAN DE JONG PHOTO

Justin Lukyn with friend Jeffrey

M 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.

1-55285-932-0



Sylvia Main

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.

978-0-9783879-4-5

N is for Nagorsen

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).

978-0-7726-5869-2

O is for Oaten

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).

978-1895636-93-4



Meredith Quartermain

Q is for Quartermain

An "earth-geist" 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."

Night 978-1-897126-34-9;
Matter 978-1-897388-18-1

R is for Rose

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).

978-0-470-15387-1
continued on page 41

P is for Paull

With an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC, **Shauna Paull** promotes women's equality in areas of labour and mobility rights, poverty alleviation and career continuity.



Shauna Paull represented Canada at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2006.



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Douglas College

continued from page 39

S is for Stone

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, *Bingamon* and *Granco*. Copies of the approximately ten books and publications from the society are available via the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

978-0-9784800-0-4 www.uasbc.com

T is for Thomas

Having won just about every literary award open to her in Canada except the Governor General's Award and the Giller, Galiano Island and Victoria-based short story writer and novelist **Audrey Thomas** has been named to receive the Order of Canada.

For more information, visit www.abcbokworld.com



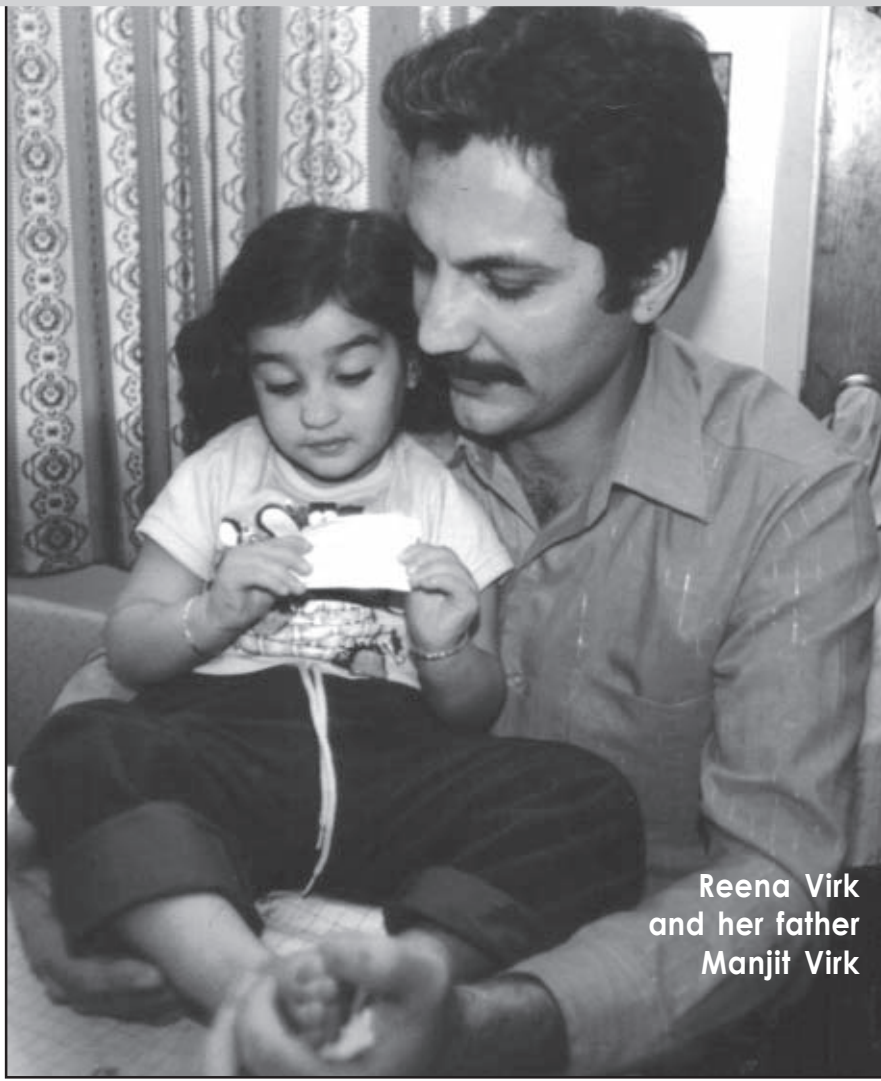
Audrey Thomas

U is for Usukawa

After 25 years with the same company, **Saeko Usukawa** has received the 2007 Tom Fairley Award for Editorial Excellence for her contribution to **Abstract Painting in Canada** by Roald Nasgaard (Douglas & McIntyre), having honed a 190,000-word manuscript to 155,000 words with 901 endnotes. She has edited more than 25 books about art and architecture.



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



Reena Virk
and her father
Manjit Virk

V is for Virk

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.

His wife Suman mostly spoke to the media in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy; now Manjit Virk reflects on the social support and legal systems in B.C., as well as the bullying and death of his daughter.

978-1-894974-51-6



Robin Wheeler

W is for Wheeler

Founder of a local organic growers group, One Straw Society, and a columnist for the bike magazine *Momentum*, **Robin Wheeler** of Edible Landscapes in Roberts Creek has updated previous publications for **Food Security for the Faint of Heart** (New Society \$16.95), a guide to eating locally, and well. Be prepared; learn how to forage for wild foods, manage during an earthquake and save freezer food during a power outage.

978-0-86571-624-7

X marks the Spot

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."

Y is for Young



Patricia Young

With her first collection of poetry in nearly a decade, **Patricia Young** is venturing into darker and even 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.

978-1-897231-43-2

Z is for Zonko

Born in 1943, **Billy Little** has claimed to be the illegitimate son of New York poets **Paul Blackburn** and **Diane Wakoski**, but, then, he has also claimed to be a Buddhist lesbian. Following his arrival in Canada in 1973, Little, in his public persona as **Zonko**,



Zonko

was one of the most frequent readers at anti-war rallies in Vancouver during the seventies. He remained an ardent anti-militarist since serving in the U.S. military from 1960 to 1963. "In other words," says long-time cohort **Jamie Reid**, "he's really been around."

As a tribute to Little's indefatigable activity on behalf of poetry and poets, his friends and colleagues cooperatively produced **St. Ink: Selected Poems/Billy Little** (Capilano University Editions \$16), containing tributes from many writers and graphic artists.

978-0-9810122-1-6

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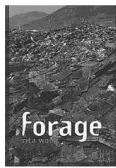
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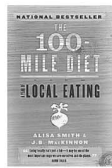
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