

AUTHOR #9,000

Nobody's counting—except a computer at Simon Fraser University Library—but **David Stanley** is the 9,000th B.C. author to be added to our encyclopedic, ever-expanding, massive on-line Author Bank for B.C. literature—replete with photos, reviews and essays—at www.abcbookworld.com. We'd never heard of David Stanley either, but hey, isn't that somehow the point?

Turns out David Stanley once purchased the longest plane ticket ever issued in Canada by Pan American Airways back in 1978. He arranged to make over 50 stops between Los Angeles and Singapore.

Now with nine books to his credit, Stanley has recorded the development of tourism in the South Pacific over the past quarter-century.

"In the early days there was only one large resort on Bora Bora," he recalls, "and it was fine to camp free, for as long as you liked, on the beach in the center of Vaitape.

"Do that today and you'll be visited by the gendarmes within 10 or 15 minutes."

Stanley's first travel book, in 1979, became the second title in the *Moon Handbooks* series, after **Bill Dalton's** own *Indonesia Handbook*. Today, *Moon's* successor company, Avalon Travel Publishing, has well over 100 titles and

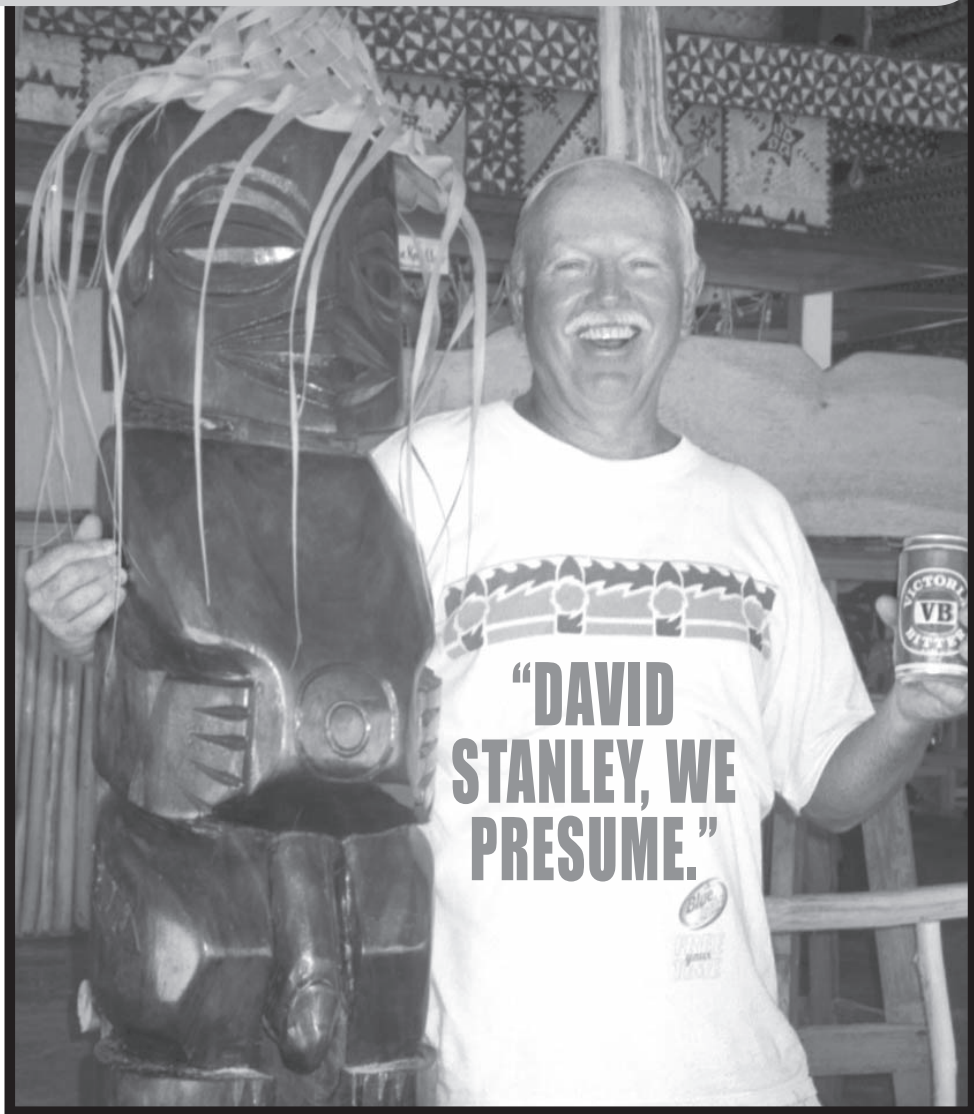
David Stanley has visited more than 195 countries and territories.

"Each year I try to get to a few more countries on my to-do list," he says. "I stay at inexpensive hotels, the kind I recommend in my guide-books. Mostly I prefer to travel incognito, and rough, using public transport as much as possible."

Stanley's "under the radar" approach backfired on him during the papal visit of **John Paul II** to the Solomon Islands in 1984.

"All news media had been banned by the government," he says, "but one reporter from New Caledonia did manage to slip through and file a story from Noumea. This provoked outrage among officials in Honiara, so when I tried to board my flight to Fiji the next day, I was taken aside for questioning.

"In the end, I was taken to see the Minister of Immigration at his villa in the hills above Honiara. When I ex-



**"DAVID
STANLEY, WE
PRESUME."**

David Stanley of Nanaimo, seen here on Aitutaki in the Cook Islands, has visited more than 195 countries and territories as a travel writer.

plained that I'd been at the Presbyterian Rest House chatting with the pastor during the Pope's entire six-hour visit, and my story checked out, they decided I wasn't an undercover reporter after all."

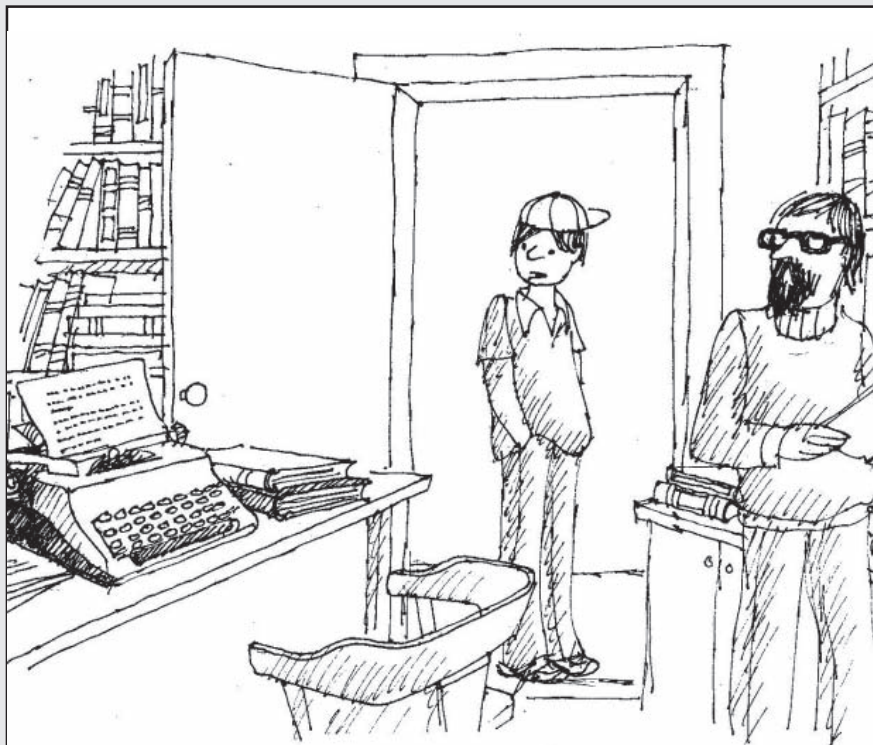
Born in Toronto in 1944, Stanley has lived in B.C. since 2003. He's now semi-retired.

"Over the past decade," he says, "book sales have declined steadily, partly due to competition from other guides but more because so much is now avail-

able for free on-line.

"What Internet users don't seem to realize, however, is that the bulk of travel websites are either paid advertising by businesses or hobby websites run by individuals. The discipline of a professional book editor is almost always lacking. I haven't seen a website yet that tells the whole story the way a good travel guidebook should."

Visit www.abcbookworld.com for a complete list of David Stanley's titles.



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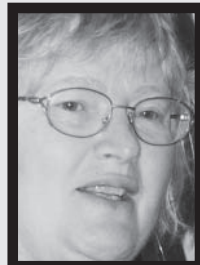
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SFU's Lynn Copeland

—David Lester & Alan Twigg

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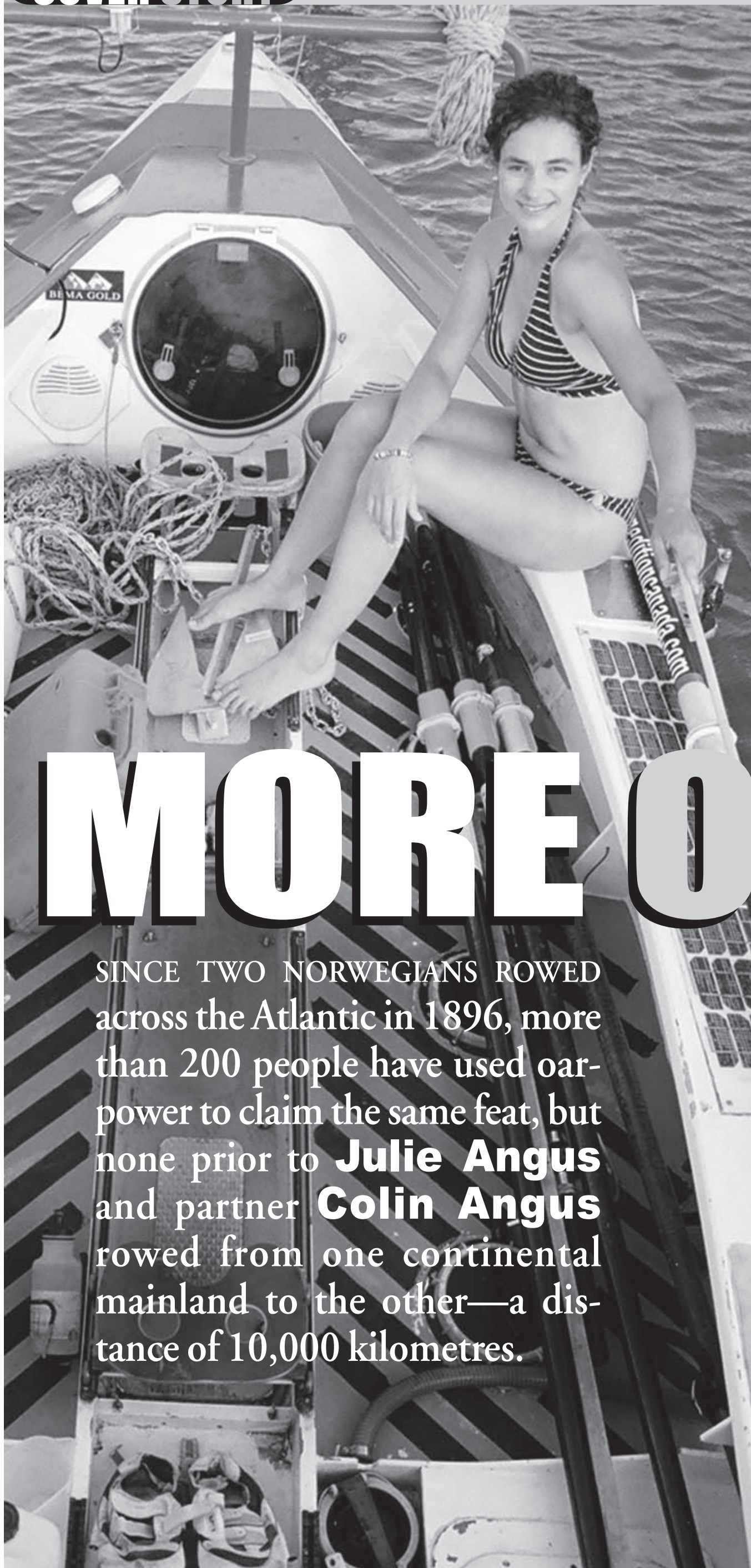
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MORE OAR

SINCE TWO NORWEGIANS ROWED across the Atlantic in 1896, more than 200 people have used oar-power to claim the same feat, but none prior to **Julie Angus** and partner **Colin Angus** rowed from one continental mainland to the other—a distance of 10,000 kilometres.

Most oar-powered crossings connect the Canary and Caribbean Islands (5,000 kilometres). Six people have died trying; dozens have needed deep-sea rescue. “The number of successful ocean crossings is low,” writes Julie Angus, in her memoir, *Rowboat in a Hurricane: My Amazing Journey Across a Changing Atlantic Ocean* (Greystone \$22), “especially when compared to other extreme endeavours such as climbing Mount Everest and skiing to the South Pole.”

Julie Angus’ compelling story of her 145-day oar-powered journey from Lisbon to Costa Rica shows she can narrate as well as she can navigate.

While risking her life making a trans-Atlantic crossing with her partner Colin Angus—who was completing a round-the-world expedition using human power only—she vividly describes being hit by two hurricanes and two cyclones, encircled by a great white shark, battered by a huge amorous turtle and almost demolished by a wooden fishing boat at full cruising speed.

Their slow-moving rowboat also narrowly avoided a collision with a twenty-eight-thousand tonne tanker. Only the rowboat’s lightness saved it by causing the bow wave of the tanker to toss it aside.

There are wonderful moments as well as terrors—such as an unexpected solar eclipse, the appearance of exotic birds, whales, porpoises, dorado and pi-

lot fish which survive by following larger fish and living on their leftover scraps. A group of four pilot fish that attach themselves to the boat become cherished pets and are given names—Ted, Fred, Ned and Oscar. Ted and Fred swim 6,000 kilometers beside the boat, accompanying them all the way to Costa Rica.

Angus’ adventure started with an internet search for a boat designed for rowing on oceans. The search turned up a seven-meter-long boat, weighing 350 kilograms empty and 800 kilograms when fully loaded. She flew to the north of Scotland to inspect it and arranged for its delivery to Lisbon, the point of departure.

The boat had two tiny cabins—a forward one to serve as a cupboard and an aft one, as big as a small closet, for living quarters. Between the two cabins was an open deck with sliding rowing seats positioned in tandem. Sealed compartments below deck held supplies.

As for a bathroom, “I soon learned that the best way... was to hang my derriere over the side while sitting on the outer rail. The life-lines made a secure backrest and it was much more relaxing than the bucket.”

In rough weather a six-meter rope with one end secured to the boat acted as an umbilical cord in case one was washed overboard.

Along the way, the reader learns about the toxicity of salt in large quantities: twelve grams are enough to kill a human being, and a single teaspoon of seawater contains enough salt for the whole day. Their desalination unit (the size of a sewing machine) had a heavy-duty pump that forced salt water past a semi-permeable membrane at high pressure. This produced drinkable water with 97% of the salt and minerals extracted. In two hours the unit could yield ten litres of clear water.

The continual spray of sea salt made clothes unbearably salty and the fabric chafed the skin and caused salt sores. It became easier to stop wearing clothes and row in the nude.

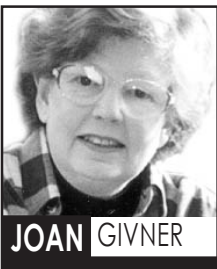
In the midst of a hurricane, when survival seems unlikely, Angus meditates on her inability to believe in an omnipotent being. Religion has always been a source of confusion and disruption for her—the result of continual conflicts between her Muslim father and Catholic mother that marred her childhood. She also broods on the anxiety she is causing her parents, a situation brought home by a telephone conversation with her father.

“Hi Dad, it’s me,” I said, happy to hear his voice. “Things are going well, and we’ve made it almost eight hundred kilometers from Lisbon...”

My father cut me off. “Honey, things AREN’T going well. I just heard on the news that the most northeastern hurricane in history has formed—Hurricane Vince. I looked up its coordinates on the National Hurricane Center website, and it’s only six hundred kilometers away from you.”

“Which direction is it heading?”
“Straight towards you.”

By contrast, phone calls to her mother provide some comic relief. When Julie Angus tries to give her mother a sense of their normalcy of life mid-ocean by describing their celebration of Colin’s birthday with a glass of wine, she succeeds only in raising her mother’s fears about the combination of boating and drinking. “Most boat accidents happen when people drink!” her mother tells her.



JOAN GIVNER

For all the drama and the rich textural detail, this voyage had a serious purpose.

With bachelor’s degrees in psychology and biology, and a master’s degree in molecular biology, Julie Angus hoped to get a more intimate sense of the life and dynamism of the Atlantic, and to see for herself the environmental damage documented by others.

Rowboat in a Hurricane therefore describes with dismay and alarm the amount of trash floating in the water, most of it plastic. It is eaten by jellyfish, which in turn are eaten by other creatures so that the toxins move up the food chain, making killer whales the most contaminated species on earth.

The voyage reinforced Angus’s sense of the interconnection of land and sea, of how the health of life on land depends on the vitality of the oceans.

Human activity has caused fish stocks to dwindle, turtles to become endangered, and coral reefs to die. Thus this book is a testament both to human courage and to human destructiveness.



Angus deftly weaves personal detail into the story, fleshing out her small cast of characters. Her fiancé, Colin Angus, a distinguished sailor and explorer, had not been her first choice of shipmate because she feared the strain on their relationship. However, when her chosen female partner opted out, and Colin’s male companion in a separate adventure also parted ways, the couple seemed fated to undertake the Atlantic crossing together.

Happily, the journey strengthened the relationship and they were married in August of 2007, two years after their departure from Lisbon. Following their Atlantic crossing and wedding, the Courtenay-based couple undertook a human-power journey from Scotland to Syria, on bicycles and in boats. Julie Angus has since received *National Geographic’s* Adventurer of the Year Award.

978-1-55365-337-0

Joan Givner’s latest novel is *Ellen’s Book of Life* (Groundwood \$17.95)



Colin Angus: It became easier to stop wearing clothes and row in the nude.

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HAVING WRITTEN ABOUT **Frances Barkley**—the first white woman to reach Canada's West Coast—**Cathy Converse** examines the secretive life of **M. Wylie Blanchet**, whose boating memoir *The Curve of Time* is into its eleventh printing.

Cathy Converse's *Following the Curve of Time* (Touchwood \$24.95) focuses on where Blanchet traveled and her family background. Although it is not touted as a biography, it leapt quickly onto the BC Bestseller list and has remained there for months.

It would be nice to learn Blanchet was a doting single mom, as well as a generous free spirit, sensitive to First Nations people. It would be nice to believe she and her brood happily undertook idyllic cruises, as a sort of *Swiss Family Robinson On The Water*.

Artists, however, are seldom exemplary humans. The egocentricity required for originality more frequently produces monsters than saints.

Converse's well-intentioned profile reveals that Blanchet was admirable but far from likeable. "She was not a Waterford Crystal kind of woman," Converse writes.

Translation: M. Wylie Blanchet was a piece of work. Her children must have sometimes felt like captives aboard the family's crowded 25 ft. by 61/2 ft. cedar launch.

One of them openly dismisses her famous book as a false concoction.

Blanchet, as **Muriel Liffiton**, had a tomboy-ish childhood within a well-to-do High Anglican family in Quebec. She inexplicably left her studies to marry bank employee **Geoffrey Blanchet**.

Whereas he was highly emotional, she could be intensely pragmatic. This marriage wasn't made in heaven. After Geoffrey Blanchet fell ill in his early 40s and subsequently retired, the couple and their four children drove west in a Willys-Knight touring car, serendipitously discovering and buying a cottage at Curteis Point on Vancouver Island, near Sidney, B.C., in 1922.

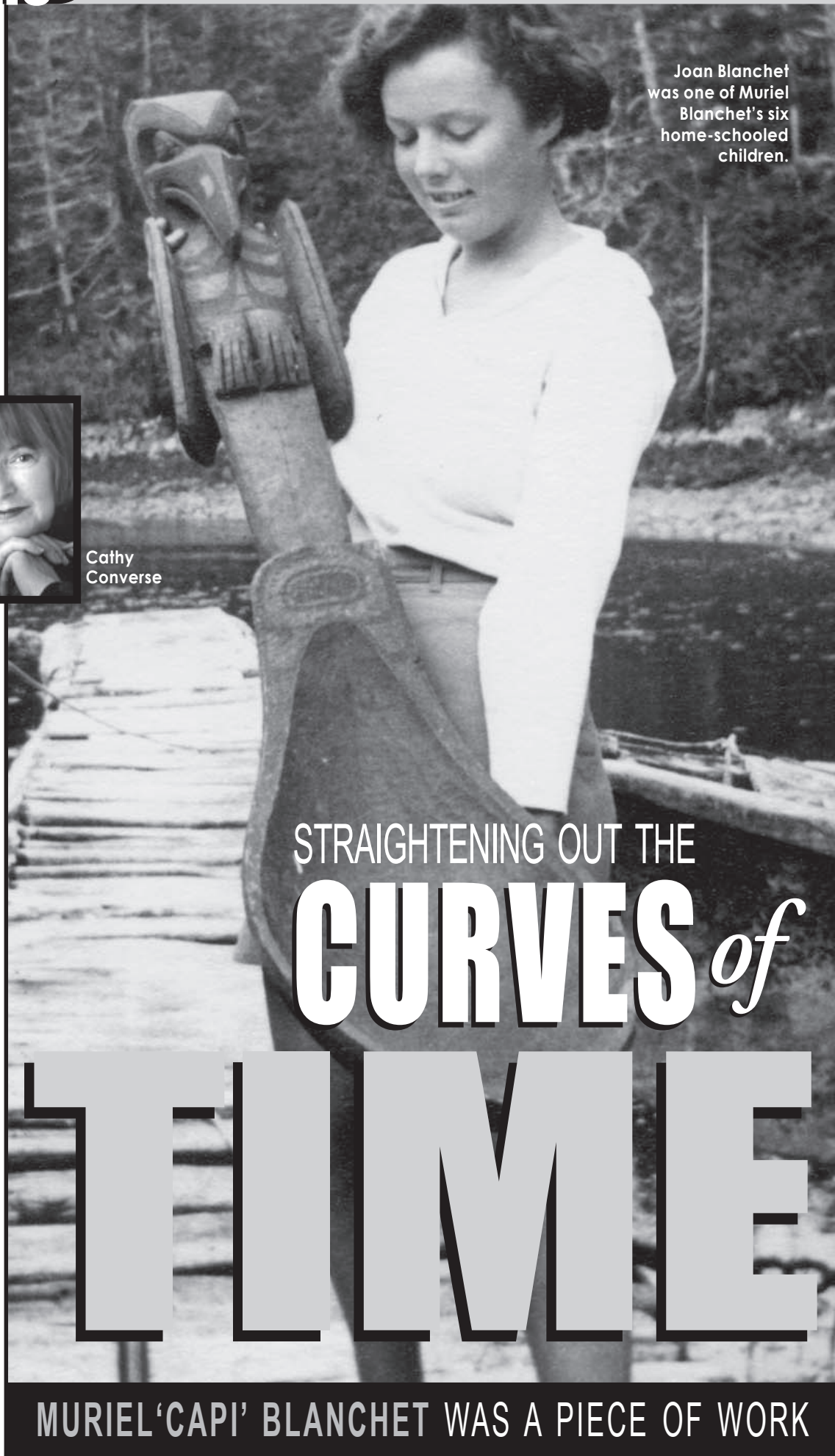
Unoccupied since 1914, this strange and abandoned little house, which they dubbed Little House, had been designed by **Samuel Maclure**. It was a case of finders-keepers, and 'Capi' Blanchet kept it for the rest of her days.

In 1923 the family bought their 25-ft. gas boat, the *Caprice*, for \$600, after it had been sunk at anchor by ice dislodged by the Brentwood ferry. The boat was only one-year-old but its engine had to be overhauled after it was raised to the surface.

Blanchet's affinity for mechanics and boats was therefore born of necessity. The engine would remain in use for 20 years until 1942.

One more child was born in B.C., then tragedy struck. Geoffrey Blanchet died, or disappeared, under very mysterious circumstances, in 1927, after he embarked on the *Caprice* and stopped at nearby Knapp Island. The boat was found by a Chinese gardener on the island. It was presumed that Blanchet's husband drowned while going for a swim, but this remains mere conjecture.

Each summer thereafter for 15 years, the indomitable



Joan Blanchet was one of Muriel Blanchet's six home-schooled children.



Cathy Converse

STRAIGHTENING OUT THE CURVES of TIME

MURIEL 'CAPI' BLANCHET WAS A PIECE OF WORK

dead at her typewriter, having suffered a heart attack at age 70. The never-solved disappearance of her husband casts a macabre shadow over Blanchet's life, even now.

Possibly M. Wylie Blanchet and **Emily Carr** could have been friends. Neither liked the outside world, and the outside world often responded in kind. And the attentions of men were not at the top of their agenda.

Just as Converse benefited from the work of **Beth Hill**, who first published *The Remarkable World of Frances Barkley 1769–1845* in 1978, this time Converse is indebted to **Edith Iglauer** for one of the few recorded interviews with Blanchet [for a *Raincoast Chronicles* profile].

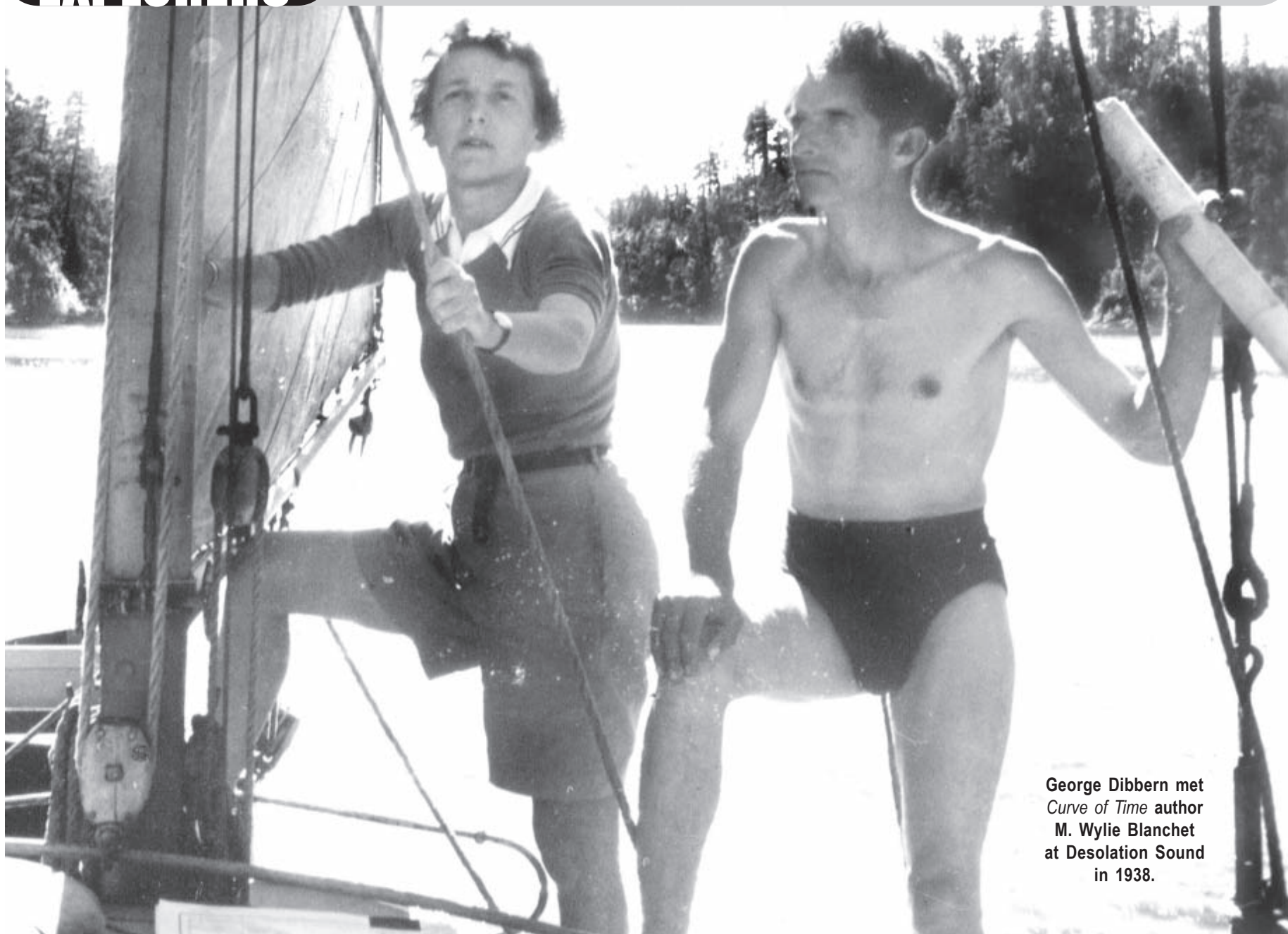
After World War II, the *Caprice* was sold for \$700 to the owner of a Victoria boatyard. It was soon destroyed by a fire when it was in for repairs.

The original version of *The Curve of Time* appeared in England in the late 1950s, published by Blackwoods in London, the company for which Blanchet had often written freelance articles. Few copies reached the West Coast of Canada. The unusual title *The Curve of Time* is derived from some writing she had on board the *Caprice* by the Maurice Maeterlinck (1862–1949) in which the Belgian Nobel Prize winner considered time as a curve.

Publisher Gray Campbell of Sidney released the first Canadian edition in 1968. It sold for \$1.95. A children's book by Blanchet was published posthumously in 1983. More info: abcbookworld.com 978-1-894898-68-3



RECLUSIVE & ORNERY: M. Wylie Blanchet (right) & her children



George Dibern met *Curve of Time* author M. Wylie Blanchet at Desolation Sound in 1938.

MANA DRIFT

A WOMANIZING RASCAL, George Dibern served as the perplexing subject of **Erika Grundmann's** biography *Dark Sun: Te Rapunga and the Quest of George Dibern*. Now George Dibern's own classic memoir of human vagabondage, *Quest* (1941), has been re-published by RockRead Press, distributed by Sandhill of Kelowna (\$29.95).



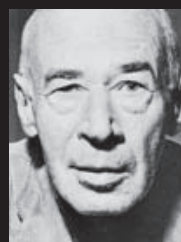
"My life is one with the sea," Dibern said. "We respect each other and I have no other master."

But this proved to be wishful thinking. Dibern could never eradicate feelings of guilt for being an absentee father of three daughters who barely knew him.

Dibern, the literal drifter, was born in Kiel, Germany in 1889. He left Germany to go to sea at age 18. During his first foray into the South Pacific, Dibern spent several formative years among the Maoris of New Zealand before he was briefly interned, with other German nationals, on Somes Island in Wellington Harbour in 1918.

Repatriated to Germany, he struggled unsuccessfully for ten years to find employment and to adapt to family responsibilities. In 1930, with his 32-foot ketch, *Te Rapunga* (Maori for "Dark Sun," i.e., the sun before dawn, or

Admired by **Henry Miller**, globe-sailing pacifist **George Dibern** explored the Pacific beneath the flutterings of his own symbolic flag, much to the irritation of the Nazi Party, port authorities and his long-suffering wife.



Henry Miller

"longing"), Dibern escaped from impending Naziism and the constraints of conventional society, as well as his failures as a breadwinner, to once more roam the Pacific, apparently with his wife's consent.

For the next 30-plus years, Dibern's South Pacific sailing adventures were only interrupted by an almost five-year second internment on Somes Island during World War II and a two-year stop-over in B.C..

Dibern's only published book about his nautical adventures, *Quest* in 1941, earned him the admiration of American author **Henry Miller** who wrote to Dibern "as a brother." Although they never met, Miller chose to view Dibern as a hero, as

a man like himself—boldly ahead of his time. The author of the sexually explicit *Tropic of Cancer* was especially impressed with Dibern's courage to *act* (not just talk) and to write openly about the anguish of doing so.

Henry Miller's fraternal and monetary support helped Dibern's family to survive the devastation of Germany after World War II. Henry Miller also tried to get *Quest* back into print, but to no avail. Miller's laudatory review of *Quest* for *Circle Magazine*, published in Berkeley in 1946, was reprinted in 1962 within a collection of Miller's work called *Stand Still like the Hummingbird*.

Dibern is perhaps best remembered for sailing under a flag of his own design that was sewn for him



Erika Grundmann

by a friend in Honolulu in 1937. He did so when **Hitler's** Third Reich decreed that all German-owned vessels must fly the swastika.

While Dibern was en route from Hawaii to Canada in 1937, the Auckland Nazi Party, in conjunction with Nazi Parties in Vancouver and Montreal, initiated correspondence to divest Dibern of his German citizenship due to his 'anti-German views.' Subsequently known as a "man without a country" Dibern also created his own passport, notarized in San Francisco in 1940, with his credo upon it. "I, George John Dibern, through long years in different countries and sincere friendship with many people in many lands, feel my place to be outside of nationality, a citizen of the world and a friend of all peoples..."

When Dibern visited British Columbia from July 1937 to June of 1939, he lectured in Victoria and Vancouver, and received praise from veteran maritime reporter **Norman Hacking** in *The Province*. Hacking's article was sent to Germany as proof of his traitorous beliefs. Ultimately the German consul in Vancouver wrote to Berlin dismissing Dibern as an eccentric, and essentially harmless.

Dibern was a charmer who "took his fun where he found it"—sometimes forming key relationships with younger women, platonic at first, who served him as secretaries for the transcription of his dictation.

continued on page 13

continued from page 11

One of these women in New Zealand, **Eileen Morris** (who later became the mother of his out-of-wedlock daughter), sailed with him to British Columbia. During his voyages on the B.C. coast, Dibbern and his *Te Rapunga* crew tied up alongside **M. Wylie Blanchet's** *Caprice* in Desolation Sound in 1938. Although Dibbern is not mentioned in Blanchet's coastal classic, *The Curve of Time* (Gray's Publishing, 1968), he's mentioned in **Beth Hill's** *Seven-Knot Summers* (Horsdal & Schubart 1994) and **Dan Rubin's** *Salt on the Wind* (Horsdal & Schubart 1996).

While visiting Vancouver, Dibbern formed an important friendship with a young idealist named **Gladys Nightingale**, later better known as **Sharie Farrell**. At the time she co-owned a two-room cabin in Lynn Valley where her socialist friends gathered. Nightingale subsequently married local boat maker **Allen Farrell** and they emulated Dibbern's bohemian, self-sufficient approach to life on the water, becoming



George Dibbern with his all-women crew, Tasmania, 1954

Though Dibbern's dreams of a better world remain unrealized, his message of international friendship is as timely as ever. He died in Auckland in 1962 while preparing to return at long last to his wife and daughters in Germany.



Erika Grundmann first learned about Dibbern via a conversation with friends about Henry Miller's review of *Quest*. After a further conversation with bookseller **Diane Wells** of Wells Books in Victoria, Grundmann eventually located a copy of *Quest* from a library in Saskatchewan. She met with Sharie Farrell in 1993 and then contacted Eileen Morris. After nine years of re-



George Dibbern displays his own flag in Tasmania, 1953

the subject for Rubin's biography, *Salt on the Wind*, and **Maria Coffey's** coffee-table-book tribute, *Sailing Back in Time* (Whitecap 1996). Nightingale/Farrell not only played an integral role in the preparation of Dibbern's manuscript for *Quest*, she contributed money, along with Eileen Morris, to purchase over 200 acres for a commune on Galley Bay at the entrance to Desolation Sound.

This artists' retreat was conceived on *Te Rapunga* during Dibbern's talks with the likes of M. Wylie Blanchet. The property eventually served as a commune in the 1970s, attracting, among others, writer **Paul Williams**.

One member of Dibbern's crew for his Auckland to Victoria voyage, **Roy Murdock**, stayed in B.C., married **Ruth Hammersley** and became associate editor of Victoria's *Daily Colonist*.

"If you live in harmony with life," Dibbern wrote, "life will take care of you."

search, her thorough biography is the first to document the life of "German George" Dibbern. Although Grundmann is clearly one of Dibbern's many admirers, it's a credit to her work that she provides the grist for varying opinions of her subject.

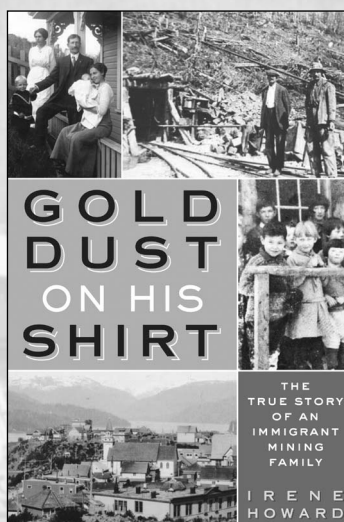
Was George Dibbern primarily an altruistic and courageous figure? Or was he manipulative and self-indulgent? There's always more to a man's life than his paper trail.

Published from New Zealand in 2004, Grundmann's biography of Dibbern *Dark Sun* is available from the author (\$40 plus postage) who lives on Cortes Island.

A second nautical memoir by Dibbern called *Ship without Port*, describing his two years in British Columbia, is yet to be published.

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— **Christopher Moore**, author and historian

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GOLD DUST ON HIS SHIRT

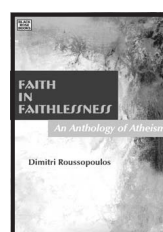
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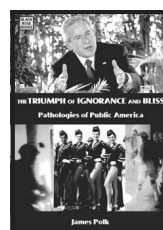
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JAMES POLK teaches philosophy at the University of Southern California.

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Conceived as a modest family history project back in 2003, **Ryan Wahl's Legacy in Wood** (Harbour \$32.95) has been refitted as an uplifting tribute to a gifted and innovative family. Hand-somely illustrated, it also doubles as an oral history of a cornerstone of the B.C. fishing industry.

How one Prince Rupert family produced the 'Rolls Royces' of the fishing fleet

Theirs is a story of Viking spirit and West Coast ingenuity.

When **Oystein "Ed" Wahl**, as a Norwegian immigrant in his twenties, came to North America with \$25 in his pocket to join his brother, he was essentially trading one rugged coastline for another.

After logging and fishing on the Olympic Peninsula, and later Alaska, Ed Wahl returned to Norway in 1920, married 16-year-old **Hildur Olsen**, and they settled at Quathiaski Cove on Quadra Island.

Three years later he loaded up his 27-foot gillnetter, *Viking*, and moved his growing family to Port Essington on the Skeena River. There, according to Ryan Wahl, his great-grandfather "made his-

tory by becoming the first fisherman to use a gas-powered boat on the river."

Wahl's forebears were not only expert navigators, they were technically advanced shipbuilders as well, so as the north coast fleet moved from sails to motorized gillnetters on the river, Ed Wahl started building his own boats. Self-taught, he didn't rely on plans or blueprints, but worked from models. Ed calculated the shape of each plank needed and cut the board without pulling out a measuring tape. Over the years he proceeded to build a fleet of boats constructed *by eye*.

Wahl would often fish the new craft through summer, consider improvements that could be made, then sell the vessel and start building another one. "His goal was not only to build a boat



MARK FORSYTHE

that would perform well but also give it lines that were just as flowing as the medium it floated on," Ryan Wahl writes.

Ed Wahl moved the family to Dodge Cove near Prince Rupert in 1928, joining a small community of Norwegian fishermen who'd settled in the area. His brother followed. They were a self-sufficient bunch, building their homes, hunting and fishing, scrounging driftwood.

The only time the Wahls had to venture into Prince Rupert, "was to buy groceries and give birth!" Six sons worked in the



Ed Wahl

shop, learning the trade from stem to stern: cutting planks, sanding, shaping planks in the steam box or hammering dry cotton into seams.

When Ed's wife Hildur died at age 34, his only option was to pull his sons Henry and Iver out of school. **Iver Wahl** was Ryan Wahl's chief informant about the rise and fall of the family business. "I was nine years old when I started school but had to quit when I was 15," Iver Wahl says, "...I helped with the house and took care of my younger brothers until Dad got a housekeeper."

Ryan Wahl also interviewed carpenters, welders and tradesmen who stayed with the family business for decades. They paint a picture of an employer who despised unions, but did his best to keep good people. The story touches briefly on Japanese boat builders, like the Sakamoto family who supplied gillnetters to the canneries until the Second World War. Everything changed when they were interned, but some of their key design concepts were incorporated into Wahl vessels.

By 1943 the boat yard was producing a boat a week, and Ed was weaving in more changes. "His straight lines became curved, his sharp corners became rounded and the Wahl boats that finally emerged in the late 1950s had all the eye-pleasing characteristics that would make them so recognizable along the entire B.C. coast." Light, strong, and to many observers, simply beautiful.

The company expanded in the 1950s, opening another boat shop in Prince Rupert. Ed retired in the 60s, and his sons carried on, building and rebuilding vessels that worked the entire coast. Eventually fiberglass nudged wooden craft aside, and Ryan helped build the last Wahl boat in 1989, his uncle's vessel, *Legacy*. You can still see the Wahl handiwork on the coast, classic wooden vessels that are mostly tied up, hoping the salmon might return.

978-1-55017-433-5

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

Caitlin Press

Fall 2008



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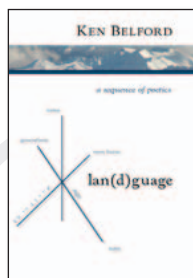
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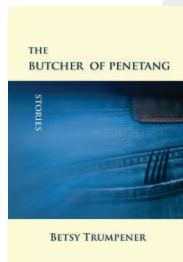
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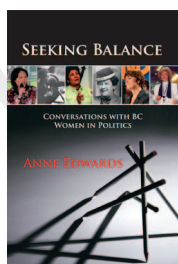
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EXPLORERS

Who was Captain

There is no known likeness of
Captain Bodega y Quadra—
another reason why his greatness
has been obscured for more
than two centuries.

IF THERE IS ONE NEW BOOK that needed to be written for British Columbia more than any other, a strong argument can be made that **Freeman M. Tovell** has just spent many years writing it.

At the *Far Reaches of Empire: The Life of Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra* (UBC Press \$39.95) is an impressively sober, extensively researched, non-fanciful biography that—at long last—provides a finely nuanced understanding of the life and times of Spain's most influential sea captain in B.C. history.

Yes, **Juan Pérez** made the first recorded European “discovery” of future B.C. territory in 1774. Yes, Tuscany-born **Alejandro Malaspina** made a significant voyage intended to mirror the scientific accomplishments of Captain **James Cook**. And, yes, **Don José María Narváez** reached the Lower Mainland area in 1791, prior to Captain **George Vancouver**. And Captain **Dioniso Galiano** provided important mapping input to Vancouver in 1792.

But it was the sophisticated diplomat, Peruvian-born Bodega y Quadra [not just “Quadra,” as he is commonly known in B.C.], who led the second Spanish expedition (in 1775) to reach B.C. waters prior to Captain Cook; who first claimed Spanish sovereignty over Alaska (in 1775); who led a second voy-

age as far north as Cook Inlet (in 1779); and who famously settled the Nootka dispute with Captain Vancouver at Nootka Sound (in 1792) and thereby curtailed further international conflict.

After the Spanish flag was finally lowered at Nootka Sound (on March 28, 1795) and *Cala de los Amigos* (Friendly Cove) became neutral territory, Bodega y Quadra's ambitions continued to be stifled by increasing debts and he suffered from Spanish prejudices against him simply because he was not born in Spain. He died at the San Blas naval port (just south of present-day California) in 1794, at age 49.

Since then, Bodega y Quadra has been under-celebrated for more than two centuries. Yes, Quadra Island was named in 1903, but few British Columbians realize that Vancouver Island was named “the Island of Quadra and Vancouver” on early maps of the 1800s until Hudson's Bay Company traders abbreviated the name to reflect British chauvinism.

The virtues of Tovell's thoroughness cannot be adequately expressed in this space. Suffice to say you won't hear thunderous applause for his Herculean efforts to fill a gaping hole in B.C. history, but *At the Far Reaches of Empire* easily qualifies as one of the books that most validates the importance of the B.C. publishing industry in recent years.

With history degrees from University of Toronto and Harvard, Tovell is former Canadian ambassador to Peru and Bolivia who served in the Canadian navy during World War II.

0774813660

For extensive background information on Captain Bodega y Quadra and Spanish explorers prior to 1800, visit www.abcbookworld.com



CY PECK, V.C.

A Biography of a Legendary Canadian

by EDWARD PECK

“Amazing stuff...
Cyrus Peck
was a
giant with
the heart
of a lion....”

Jack Granatstein

COLONEL CYRUS WESLEY PECK was elected to Parliament in 1917 while commanding the 16th Battalion (The Canadian Scottish) in the trenches of France & Belgium. He won the Victoria Cross & became the only man in British Commonwealth history to have won the V.C. while an elected member of Parliament.

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EDWARD PECK, second son of Cy Peck, was born in Victoria, B.C. He followed in his father's footsteps by serving with the 1st Battalion Canadian Scottish in the Second World War. He is best known for a distinguished career in labour relations which spanned almost 40 years.



Julie Lawson: taught elementary school for 18 years before becoming a full-time writer in 1991

WHEN VICTORIA WAS A FORT

Setting traps, speaking Cree and making dye for porcupine quills are not accomplishments becoming of a “young lady.”

Where the River Takes Me: The Hudson's Bay Company Diary of Jenna Sinclair by Julie Lawson (Scholastic \$14.99) AGES 9-13

In the summer of 1849, young Jenna Sinclair writes in her diary, “I begin with an Adventure!” and then confesses to the indiscretion of “Exaggeration” and the peril of committing a “Misdemeanor of the Gravest Sort.”

Jenna’s capitalized sins reflect the admonishments of her Aunt Grace, who cares for her orphaned Scottish-Cree niece at Fort Edmonton. This “uppity” aunt has finally settled on a husband, astonishingly a mere blacksmith rather than the expected high-ranking officer, and Jenna will leave Fort Edmonton with them after they are married.

That’s the set-up for Julie Lawson’s *Where the River Takes Me: The Hudson's Bay Company Diary of Jenna Sinclair*, the latest installment of the *Dear Canada Series* reflecting the lives of girls and young women in early Canadian history.

Jenna’s diary chronicles her journey to Fort Colville—once part of the HBC’s Columbia fur trading district but now part of the United States—and her subsequent adventures during her first school year in Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island.

Jenna is held up as an example for her prowess in mathematics and reading but her impressive abilities arising from Fort Edmonton—setting traps,

speaking Cree, doing beadwork, making dye for porcupine quills—are not considered accomplishments becoming of a “young lady.”

The droning, pebble-mouthed, whip-happy schoolmaster quickly becomes the ideal villain for Jenna’s imagined novel. But soon, Jenna will encounter a real life villain and danger and narrowly escape murder.

Marriage *à la façon du pays* (marriage in the custom of the country) served the social and economic development of Western Canada. Early French traders and later the officers and servants of the Hudson’s Bay Company, like Jenna’s

Orkney-born father, realized First Nations wives gave them companionship and family-life and better access to furs, guides and interpreters.

The women, whose relatives benefited from European trade goods, were also skilled in making moccasins, snowshoes, pemmican and the buffalo-hide sacks used to store and transport these goods. They also collected spruce roots and spruce gum for sewing and caulking the seams of canoes.

These mutually gainful unions became a bygone custom with the widespread arrival of missionaries, who deemed such practical liaisons immoral, and

the advent of imported white wives as status symbols.



Although Fort Victoria no longer exists, Julie Lawson of Victoria can walk the perimeter of where the old stockade once stood, find the exact spot for Jenna’s school and, closing her mind’s eye to the present-day Empress Hotel, easily envision the mud flats of James Bay. Along with her more than 20 other titles, Lawson has also written two other volumes in this impressive series, *No Safe Harbour*, *The Halifax Explosion Diary of Charlotte Blackburn* and *A Ribbon of Shining Steel*, *The Railway Diary of Kate Cameron*.

13-978-0-439-95620-8

BABY IN A BASKET CASE

The Lit Report by Sarah N. Harvey (Orca \$12.95) AGES 14+

Classics-reading, uber-planner Julia has been best friends forever with “big-haired, big-assed” Ruth, a drama queen with unsurpassed abilities at forging parents’ signatures.

As soon as they can kiss high school goodbye, they’re off for New York or London or Los Angeles. Like *Babar the Elephant* (who, in Julia’s opinion,

doesn’t get nearly the literary respect he deserves) their lives will be full of travel, cool clothes and a gorgeous red car.

But then Ruth ditches Julia, goes to a party without her, gets drunk and does “it” for the first time. A month later she’s crying over sappy morning television and her “boobs hurt.”

But cerebral Julia has a plan. After all, her dad’s new wife is also pregnant and, fortuitously, hiring a midwife. Under the guise of doing a school report, Julia will interview the midwife, observe her in action and pass along every bit of nutritional and pre-natal advice to Ruth.

As narrated by the sharp-minded Julia, Sarah N. Harvey’s *The Lit Report* is not only about a missed period, two pregnancies and high-school graduation plans gone awry. Harvey has also deftly added a trilingual legal-secretary known for her Holy Trinity flower arrangements, a neo-natal nurse with a second pediatrician wife and a tattooed, ex-con, red-necked, bible-thumping pastor.

Along with the midwife who has “squid-ink blue” painted toenails, the supporting cast includes the delectable Jonah, with his Christian school boot-camp buzz cut and the “stamina of a triathlete,” and the dishy, sensitive yet foul-mouthed Mark.

Julia’s high school confidential plan will be risky, of course—but it has to work out. They hope Ruth can tuck her newborn in a basket and leave it on the steps of the church for some good Christians to adopt. Then the pair can simply pick up with their plans and head for New York or L.A.

9781551439051

Louise Miki Donnelly writes from Vernon.

Sarah N. Harvey: from bookseller to editor and author



RELIEF PITCHER

Making Change: Tips from an Underage Overachiever by Bilaal Rajan (Orca \$12.95) AGES 10+

FORMERLY THE UVIC BOOKSTORE MANAGER,

Sarah N. Harvey, who lives in Victoria with “a combative fish named Yul,” has edited Bilaal Rajan’s *Making Change: Tips from an Underage Overachiever*.

In January 2001 an earthquake in the Indian state of Gujarat killed thousands and left vast numbers homeless and destitute. Although he was four years old, Bilaal Rajan wanted to help. Bundled for the Toronto winter and toting a paper shopping bag with a hand-printed “Relief Fund” sign, he canvassed his neighbourhood selling clementines and raised \$350. Bilaal went on to sell cookies for hurricane victims in Haiti and handmade plates for children living with HIV. In 2005, he was named UNICEF Canada’s Child Representative.



Bilaal Rajan: 12 year old activist

Now 12, Bilaal’s *Fundraising Tips for Activist Kids* includes putting a spin on bottle drives and bake sales to make your fundraiser stand out. For a book sale he organized, Bilaal invited children’s author Eric Walters (who had once interviewed him) to attend. Don’t hesitate to ask anyone to participate in your cause is another mantra. As is list-making, developing personal mission statements and team-building.

978-1-55469-001-5

GROUNDLED

The Year I was Grounded by Bill New (Tradewind \$12.95) AGES 11+

WRITTEN FOR AGES 11 & UP, BILL NEW’S

The Year I was Grounded is a playful facsimile of a one-year journal kept by a reluctant diarist who learns to enjoy his own introspectiveness. “I don’t tell everybody this,” he writes, “but I think I like thinking a whole lot, too. Last summer, kayaking on the lake, I spent a lot of time thinking about how things relate.”

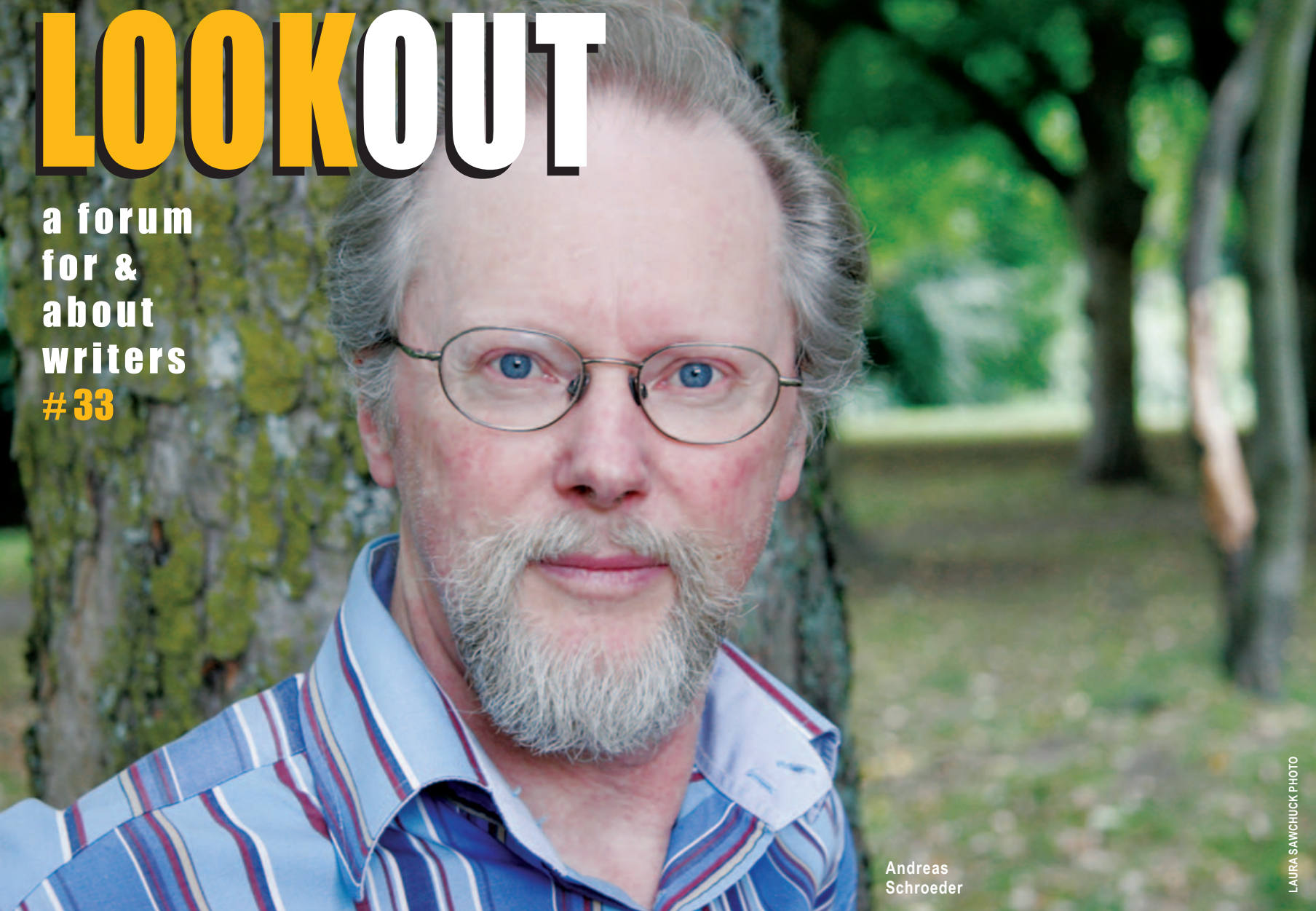


Bill New

978-1-896580-35-7

LOOKOUT

a forum
for &
about
writers
#33



Andreas
Schroeder

LAURA SAWCHUCK PHOTO

To lead the way into our coverage of 50 new fiction titles from British Columbia, we asked **Andreas Schroeder**—who has a new collection of novellas himself this fall—to comment on the ongoing proliferation of fiction from B.C. Here's his response:

WHETHER YOU AGREE this a good thing depends largely on your yardstick. I remember **Irving Layton** looking around the room at a League of Poets meeting as far back as 1979 and grumbling: "There's too goddamn many of us! They oughta shoot half of us and neuter the other half!" On the other hand, if you subscribe to the Manure Pile Theory of Literature, we're clearly on a roll. You need a lot of manure to grow prize pumpkins.

According to the PLR's databank, Canada has produced roughly 8,000 fiction titles during the past half century—and a quarter of them came from B.C. writers. The vast majority of these titles from B.C. have been produced in the past 20 years. While the province's population increased by a mere 25%, our fiction output during that same time increased by almost 500%.

With respect to those pumpkins—just where might they be found? The obvious answer would be to look at the list of winners for the Governor General's Award for English Fiction but B.C. hasn't had a GG winner for fiction since 1980. In fact, we've only had two winners of a GG fiction award (**Jack Hodgins**

FICTION FROM VLADIVOSTOK

DO THE MATH: If BC fiction writers produce 1/4 of the fiction in English Canada, why is recognition so pathetic?

and **George Bowering**) since the Canada Council took over the GG's in 1959. Both their winning titles were published from Ontario.

Even the GG shortlists produce slim pickings—rarely more than one B.C. author is shortlisted per year, and many years none at all.

The glamorous, newer Giller Prize for Fiction is virtually a carbon copy. No B.C. fictioneer has won the Giller in the 14 years of its existence. Yes, we've had an almost formulaic one title per shortlist every year (except '95, '97, '99 and '01, when there were none), but that's as close as we've ever been to that particular brass ring.

And it gets worse. If being a B.C. fiction writer seems a handicap, being a B.C. fiction writer published by a B.C. publisher appears to double the problem, at the very least. Never mind that our two GG fiction winners weren't published by a BC publisher. Of

DO THE MATH:

All ten nominees for this year's Giller Prize and the Governor General's (English) Fiction Award are from Ontario publishers.

the 12 B.C. fiction writers who have made the GG shortlist since 1979 (the year the Canada Council's archive for the GG awards begins listing finalists), only one was published by a B.C. publisher. That was **Carol Windley** for her debut collection of short stories, *Visible Light*, published by Oolichan

Books in 1993. The other 11 were all published by Ontario publishers.

Can it get any worse than that? Well, yes, it can. One might be forgiven for assuming that our own book prize for fiction—the *Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize*, inaugurated in 1985—would go at least some distance toward filling the pumpkin box. After all, its winners *have* to be BC authors. But who's published them? Does geography and publishing politics possibly influence the pecking order of a prize limited to authors who have lived in this province for three of the past five years?

Answer: It turns out that of the winners of the Ethel Wilson prize for BC fiction since 1985, a mere three have been published by BC publishers. Twice the winners were published by Douglas & McIntyre, once by Talonbooks. All the rest were published by Ontario publishers. And the shortlists reveal much the same story. They reveal an almost unbroken record of having only one shortlisted fiction writer published by a BC publisher every year. Most of the rest were published by Ontario publishers.

So what should we conclude from this? It depends on whether you favour conspiracy theories, Alice's Law of Coincidental Coincidences, or plain bad luck. Is there something inherent in B.C. fiction that just doesn't work for Torontonians? Or is it that Ontario publishers cream off our most successful authors and leave only the beginners and the mid-list authors to our BC publishers? If that were true, why aren't more of those B.C. authors published by Ontario publishers winning GG's and Gillers?

Alan Twigg, publisher of *BC BookWorld*, has made it his business to keep track of the "uneven playing field for fiction" for 20 years. Before writing this article, I asked him to comment on my research. His response was blunt. "The fiction game is played in Moscow," he wrote. "We are in Vladivostok."

Public Lending Rights founder/overseer Andreas Schroeder of Roberts Creek has re-investigated his Mennonite roots for three novellas that comprise *Renovating Heaven* (Oolichan). See page 34.

DO THE MATH:

BC authors registered 108 fiction titles with Public Lending Rights (PLR) in 2007.

Actor Stephen Miller, known for playing Zack McNab on *Da Vinci's Inquest*, has made the most of his character roles for 37 years. Now he's hitting the big-time with his new Russian historical thriller *The Last Train to Kazan*. Published internationally by Penguin Books, it's a double-agent's view of how and why the czar and his family were murdered in 1918.

IT IS A CANADIAN TRADITION TO NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO outgrow their britches. The forces of Envy and Jealousy will rise up to smite you if you try to succeed in more than one vocation. Stephen Miller, for example, has written four novels—starting with his locally published Three-Day Novel Contest winner *Wastefall* (Arsenal Pulp, 1990)—but he is seldom recognized as a writer in British Columbia, where he has lived since 1971.

The North Carolina-born actor has recently released two novels about the Russian Revolution—but he has also carried **Bette Davis** down a flight of concrete stairs, improvised all day with **Robert DeNiro** and delivered **Laura Dern**'s baby while accumulating almost 200 Hollywood and television credits.

Miller's *Field of Mars* (Penguin, 2006) introduced a disaffected Petrograd detective Peyotr Ryzhkov who, when stirred out of his apathy by the murder of a child prostitute, unravels a plot to overthrow the czar and install a puppet ruler in 1913.

Now Miller has returned with *The Last Train to Kazan* (Penguin \$24), a longer and even more intense novel that reintroduces Ryzhkov in a more ghastly, bewildering and bloodier adventure.

Although set during the Russian Revolution, nobody is going to confuse Stephen Miller's *The Last Train to Kazan* with *Dr. Zhivago*.

"There were no dogs in the city," he writes, describing Moscow in 1918, "they had all been eaten."

On the opening pages, former czarist secret policeman Ryzhkov accepts an offer from the Bolsheviks that he can't refuse: He can either face a firing squad or travel to Siberia to learn if the Russian royal family has been murdered (yet).

At the outset our man Ryzhkov is a survival artist, little else. He is seriously non-aligned, a man for whom, "Life was just a vortex of loss." He doesn't give a damn about the Romanovs. Or Comrade **Lenin**.

As hostages of the Bolsheviks, the Romanovs were first sent beyond the Urals to Tobolsk, supposedly for their own safety, but mostly because the Red

Army didn't know what to do with them. Then they were moved by steamer in April of 1918 to Yekaterinburg, an industrial city named by **Peter the Great** for his bride Catherine and designed to serve as the gateway to Siberia.

By the time Ryzhkov arrives, Yekaterinburg had degenerated into a frontier outpost where two potatoes from last year could serve as a bribe. In "a city in chaos, stupefied, not knowing to whom it should pay allegiance," our sullen, Clive Owen-ish anti-hero is told the czar and his entourage have been assassinated three nights before—but, if so, where's the proof?

When the White Russians take control of Yekaterinburg from the Red Russians (thanks to an invasion by Czechs), Ryzhkov ditches his identity papers and ingratiates himself to a dashing Italian named Giustiniani, joining the counter-investigation. Regardless of nationality or political leanings, everybody wants to learn the czar's fate because most European royal families are related.

If the Mensheviks, or White Russians, can rightfully claim the Bolsheviks have grotesquely butchered the Romanovs, powerful nations such as Germany and England could be hard pressed to support the Bolsheviks or their law firm of Lenin, Marx & Trotsky.

Hence the outcome of the Russian Civil War might not hinge on whether the czar and his eight family members have been assassinated, or who has offed them; but rather the destiny of Russia could depend on who gets the news first, and how that news can be manipulated for propaganda.

When a human finger is found at an abandoned

TV DETECTIVE STEPHEN MILLER COMES IN FROM THE COLD



MILLER TIME:
Ivanhoe Hotel,
Vancouver

"There were no dogs in the city," Stephen Miller writes, describing Moscow in 1918, "they had all been eaten."

mine site, along with jewelry and clothing belonging to the royal family, the scene resembles something we might see on *Da Vinci's Inquest*, but for the most part *The Last Train to Kazan* is chillingly original, with insights more akin to **Hamlet** than **Dashiell Hammett**.

"Ryzhkov had become a scientist of mud, a sort of Red Indian scout when it came to mud. He had come out of the war having lost his revulsion for mud and dirt, and maybe it was a welcome kind of knowledge."

Having reluctantly attended a drunken orgy with the Italian and later located the missing Yakov Yurovsky—a non-fictional character who was given the unenviable task of safeguarding the czar and/or killing him—Ryzhkov's sleuthing and double-agency is just the set-up for the web of intrigue and mayhem to come.

About one-third of the way through *The Last Train to Kazan*, Miller pulls a big plot twist, followed by an astonishing counter-reveal, and the detective procedural aspect of the story evaporates.

Miller ratchets up the tension by revealing that nearly everyone has the potential for criminality or, at the very least, dishonesty. Those who don't are the freaks. Miller investigates the emotions and schemes of literally dozens of characters, rather than focussing on Ryzhkov alone. In this way we get a cross-section of social desperation that has a great deal more to do with **Dostoevsky** than a conventional whodunit or thriller.

Miller's scatter-gun approach to narration can be off-putting, and some of the early dialogue is chronically obtuse, but the reader with stamina will be rewarded with subsequent writing that is undeniably brilliant. "Rumours were the floor upon which they walked," he writes.

Whether he's describing a vicious stabbing on a train car belonging to a lecherous grand dame named Sophie Buxhoeveden or decoding the amorous Machiavellianism of her playboy lover Captain Tommaso di Giustiniani—both are trying to out-manipulate each other—Miller is unfailingly adept at unmasking the darkest recesses of human behaviour.

The intricacies of the final two-thirds of the story cannot be revealed except to say that Ryzhkov's brief conversation with a dreamy, stupid, beautiful girl—a genuine Russian princess, the Grand Duchess Marie—prompts him to betray his better judgment and proceed on a path that is deliberately foolhardy and remotely noble.

One hint: A forensic note in the afterword mentions that the remains of two of the nine bodies of the Russian Imperial family have yet to be accounted for—the prince Alexei and one of his sisters, "almost certainly Marie."

Like most of Dostoevsky's novels, *The Last Train to Kazan* could have been shorter, but it's the unrelenting intensity, the desire to dig beneath surfaces, that resonates long after the storyline is forgotten.

The Last Train to Kazan is memorable like the movie *Mephisto* starring **Klaus Maria Brandauer**, a political drama in which a stage actor keeps transforming to ensure his survival within Nazi Germany.

After 400-plus pages, it is hard not to wonder if Miller's three decades of surviving as an actor, necessarily adopting whichever roles are assigned to him, has fuelled his ability to create a unique detective in Ryzhkov.

FICTION BC

Janey Bennett:
How green
was my novel



DIGGING UP CRETE

Archaeology, Nazis and restoring frescoes in Janey Bennett's Greece

The Pale Surface of Things by Janey Bennett (Hopeace Press \$22)

All his life, Douglas has been going with the flow, not asserting himself, as if good looks can serve as a compass. Hotfooting it from his own wedding vows in western Crete, thereby horrifying his bourgeois betrothed and his crass, rich, American father-in-law-to-be, is an unforeseen act of self-preservation.

But where does he go? Where does he hide? Having worked on a summer archaeological dig, Douglas takes refuge with a Greek widow and her young son, a goat shepherd, hoping to start his life afresh. But when our injured hero-on-the-run gets robbed a second time—by the thief who shot him the first time—he astonishes himself and the boy by stabbing and apparently killing their assailant.

So now the formerly hapless Douglas is on the lam from the police as well as an irate father-in-law. Penniless, forced to steal, he plunges headlong into village intrigues that have arisen from the brutal Nazi occupation of Greece more than fifty years ago.

That's just the beginning of **Janey Bennett's** fascinating first novel, *The Pale Surface of Things*. The young, would-be archaeologist is the hook for only half of the story. There's another, far more important central character, Father Dimitrios, wise beyond his years, viewed as radically modern by the locals, who has also eschewed romance.

The American-educated but Crete-born Orthodox priest who uses email and rides an antique Vespa motorscooter has returned to vendetta-riddled Crete to unravel a dark family secret. The paths of the two seekers finally cross about half-way through the novel, by which time Janey Bennett has easily succeeded in making her reader want to get a ticket to fly to Heraklion from Athens as soon as possible.



Incorporating points of view from a myriad of supporting characters, Bennett has a Balzac-ian zeal for bringing the society of Crete itself into the foreground of her story. We also

get drawn further into the history of the Cretan underground resistance during World War II.

"Some are born Greek, some achieve Greekness, some have Greekness thrust upon them," she says. "I was lucky. I stayed in Chania for a month, driving back and forth across Lefka Ori, tracking down villages and World War II sites, looking for locations and geographical links.

"I was planning to go back several times a year while I wrote *Pale Surface* and instead, after that trip I nearly died from a parasite I picked up in Asia, so I bought all these books and researched by reading.

"My Cretan friends think I may have been more accurate as a result of not being there, of not interacting with them. They are amazed that I know more than they do about traditions on the island and their grandmothers verify my information."

Ultimately, the confluence of village traditions, Greek law and the Orthodox church enable Douglas to learn necessary lessons of shame, terror, gratitude, forgiveness, and ultimately, accountability.

The title *The Pale Surface of Things* refers to Father Dimitrios, who, with help from Douglas, painstakingly restores religious frescoes that were covered up during the war. It's a sophisticated, movie-like novel, slightly longer than it needs to be, that persuasively shows how personal honour can be more important than sex, social striving or conformity.



Published from Victoria, with an overly-modest book jacket, *The Pale Surface of Things* has received seven book industry awards, including a gold medal for multicultural fiction from USA Book News Awards, as well as Indie Excellence Awards and Indie Next Generation Awards. In Canada, *Pale Surface* has gained a citation for Best Use of Environmental Materials (from PubWest), shared with Friesens Printers of Manitoba, who used 100% post-consumer recycled paper with vegetable inks.

Raised in San Diego, the daughter of an English professor, Bennett is a UCLA graduate and architectural journalist who lives on Hornby Island and in Bellingham. 978-0-9734007-2-4

DIGGING UP REBELLION

The Frog Lake Massacre by Bill Gallaher (Touchwood \$18.95)

Bill Gallaher's *The Frog Lake Massacre* follows a young man named Jack Strong who leaves Victoria in 1884 for the prairies and witnesses the deaths of friends during the so-called Frog Lake Massacre, one of the bloodiest events of the Northwest Rebellion. Led by a Cree named Wandering Spirit, Cree warriors dismissed the objections of their chief, Big Bear, and attacked a small town near Frog Lake, Alberta on April 2, 1885, near Fort Pitt on the Alberta/Saskatchewan border, as a protest against the



Bill Gallaher

dwindling of buffalo herds.

Nine people were killed, including two Oblate missionaries, Fathers Fafard and Marchand, and the Indian Agent Thomas Quinn. Gallaher's novel opens with a commemorative ceremony held in 1925, followed by Jack Strong's memories. 978-1-894898-75-1

DIGGING UP DICK

Red Dog, Red Dog by Patrick Lane (M&S \$32.99)

Patrick Lane's intense relationship with his older brother **Richard 'Red' Lane** lends autobiographical elements in his first novel, *Red Dog, Red Dog*, about two brothers in an unnamed Okanagan town—and the possibilities for redemption and forgiveness.

The story is redolent of a harrowing upbringing and the desperation of feeling trapped within patterns of violence and secrecy. It's partly narrated by one of the dead infant daughters

that were buried by the boys' violent father. While the older brother, Eddy, acts out with drugs and weapons, the more introspective brother, Tom, tries to keep a lid on his feelings. 978-0-7710-4635-3

DIGGING UP MOM

Watching July by Christine Hart (Sumach \$12.95)

In **Christine Hart's** first novel *Watching July*, 16-year-old July MacKenzie moves to the Interior with her other same-sex parent—Marie—after her birth mother is killed in a traffic accident. As a teenage romance lifts July's spirits, it comes to light that her mother's death was not as straightforward as it first appeared, and she must unravel dangers arising from her past.

A graduate of UVic's English department, Hart also writes for *Shameless Magazine*. 9781894549714



Christine Hart

GRITTY

VICTORIA

“Murder, like every other form of extreme behaviour, is addictive.”

—STANLEY EVANS

Stanley Evans in Victoria’s Chinatown

STANLEY EVANS BIBLIOGRAPHY

Seaweed on the Rocks (Touchwood, 2008)

Seaweed under Water (Touchwood, 2007)

Seaweed on Ice (Touchwood, 2006)

Seaweed on the Street (TouchWood, 2005)



Seaweed on the Rocks by Stanley Evans (Touchwood \$12.95)

TWENTY YEARS AGO THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN A FUSS made about a white guy inventing a Coast Salish detective named Silas Seaweed.

Stanley Evans’ less-than-anthropological approach to generating a gritty mystery yarn—sprinkling depictions of indigenous mythology and religion for the purposes of entertaining storylines—would have been denounced as “appropriation” on the West Coast.

But these days it’s fiction. Get over it. That seems to be Evans’ unabashedly confident approach in his fourth, Victoria-centric police procedural *Seaweed On The Rocks*. It’s so clearly evident that he means no disrespect—and the city of Victoria takes centre stage in Evans’s stories as much as his detective—that he has been able to develop his own style with relative impunity.

“The Warrior Reserve does not exist,” we are told. “The Mowaht Bay Band does not exist.”

In *Seaweed on the Rocks*, the plotting can be a tad whimsical, but Silas Seaweed’s insouciant charm is infectious, Evans’ characters from the underbelly of society are superb and critical observations of Vancouver Island society are refreshingly candid and often revealing.

“Victoria’s ‘Viagra Triangle’ is based at Rock Bay,” he writes, “the area lying between Douglas Street and the Gorge Waterway. Fifty years ago it was largely residential, but now the few remaining houses share Rock Bay with pawnshops, one-hour motels, used-car dealerships, warehouses, hole-in-the-wall consignment shops and British Columbia’s liquor-distribution headquarters.”

What the storyline lacks in urgency, it makes up for in complexity. When Silas investigates the overdose of a girl he knew from his reserve, he encounters a ten-foot-tall mythical bear, small-time crooks, a murdered hypnotist, bogus First Nations ceremonies for profit, a murdered blackmailer and a beautiful but aloof Lexus-driving First Nations love interest.

It rollicks. There’s wit. And it’s original.

978-1894898-73-7

WOKE UP, IT WAS A CHELSEA MOURNING



Murder at the Hotel Cinema by Daniel Edward Craig (Midnight Ink \$15.95)

Having worked for luxury hotels across Canada, including stints as Vice President of Opus Hotels in Vancouver and Montreal, **Daniel Edward Craig** has conceived a Five-Star Mystery Series to follow

the adventures of hotel manager Trevor Lambert, Director of Rooms.

As the consummate host turned house detective, our hotelier hero must investigate how and why a Tinseltown starlet named Chelsea took a fatal dive from her penthouse suite in *Murder at the Hotel Cinema*, his second release.

978-0-7387-1119-5

CARDINAL SINS

The Cardinal Divide by Stephen Legault (NeWest \$22.95)

Having a launched Highwater Mark Strategy and Communications in 2005 to support ethically driven businesses, **Stephen Legault** has used his experiences in both nature and politics for a mystery novel, *The Cardinal Divide*, set in Alberta’s Cardinal Divide.

The down-on-his-luck protagonist Cole Blackwater, is a former politico from Ottawa’s environmental movement, a divorced single dad, who accepts a contract to help a conservation group stop a mining project.

Trouble is, when the head of the mining project is murdered, Blackwater becomes a suspect and must clear himself before he can help conserve the Cardinal Divide.

978-1-897126-32-5



DIANNE EVANS PHOTO

MOVE OVER MISS MARPLE

Gwen Southin's series of mysteries about a long-in-the-tooth sleuth is feminism with dentures.



Gwen Southin: Literary late bloomer among boomers

LAURA SAWCHUK PHOTO

Death in a Family Way; In the Shadow of Death; Death on a Short Leash by Gwen Southin (Touchwood \$12.95 each)

The heroine is a senior citizen *Pygmalion*, Margaret Spencer, who evolves into a feisty *Murder-She-Wrote*-type heroine, à la Angela Lansbury.

Spencer is introduced as a well-mannered, post-Edwardian type, born in 1908, who inadvertently becomes a crime-solver in the late 1950s.



In *Death in a Family Way*, set in 1958, Spencer's dissatisfaction with her corporate lawyer husband—who works for Snodgrass, Crumbie & Spencer—prompts her to take part-time work for Nat Southby, a gumshoe-detective working out of a third floor office on West Broadway.

"He certainly didn't look like Humphrey Bogart in the *Maltese Falcon* or any of the other detectives she had seen in the movies, for that matter..." Southin writes,

"Instead, Nat was somewhat overweight, probably in his mid-

fifties, dressed in baggy grey slacks and a blue-striped shirt.... There was no drink and no gun."

As she is drawn into the investigation of a string of abductions, Spencer, a mother of two grown daughters, discovers she has a knack for solving mysteries and her relationship with the former cop Southby starts to grow.



Set in the Cariboo in 1959, *In the Shadow of Death* features Margaret Spencer on a dude ranch vacation that soon detours her into unsolved murders. Eventually her boss arrives and they unravel the intrigue together.

Equally important, Margaret Spencer leaves her husband and her comfortable home in Kerrisdale in favour of a basement suite in Kitsilano and a love affair with Nat.

The more her husband harasses her and urges her to return to her suffocating marriage, the more she knows she is right to seek employment and sex.



Set in various parts of the

Lower Mainland in 1960, Southin's newest release, *Death on a Short Leash*, has the duo investigating the death of a veterinarian's assistant whose body is found in a cranberry bog.

Corruption abounds at the Silver Springs Nursing Home in Richmond, and they discover the dead body of Brother Francois in Abbotsford. Puppies link the nursing home to a phony religious sect. It's unabashedly Lower Mainland lit.

As a reward for her diligence, Ms. Spencer gains romance and a full partnership in the gumshoe business by the end of the third novel.

Family Way 1-894898-72-9; Shadow 1-894898-71-0; Short Leash 1-894898-70-2

THE PEOPLE SMUGGLERS

Angel in the Full Moon by Don Easton (Dundurn \$11.99)

In his third, all-too-believable police procedural, *Angel in the Full Moon*, **Don Easton** opens his exposé of people smuggling and sexual abuse of children with the transport of an innocent young girl from Hanoi to Canada, for eventual sale to an American as a sex slave. To nab the villainous Russian ringleaders of an international syndicate, Mountie Jack Taggart must travel to the beaches of Cuba and call upon his contacts with the Satan's Wrath motorcycle gang. Like Taggart, former RCMP undercover operative Don Easton of Victoria has had contracts on his life and has undertaken dangerous work using false identities. "I want the readers to experience what I did," he says. "In so doing, what they read will challenge their own morality of what they may originally believe to be right or wrong. I want them to see, as Jack Taggart says, the 'Big Picture.' In the world of the undercover operative, life is not black and white, where good guys and bad guys are easily defined. Instead, it becomes murky and grey."

978-1-55002-813-3

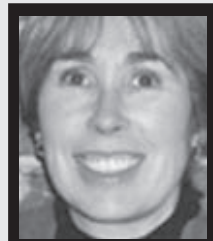
DEATH & TAXES

Fatal Encryption by Debra Purdy Kong (Gypsy Moth Press \$19.95)

As her sequel to *Taxed to Death*, former criminology student **Debra Purdy Kong** of Port Moody has a second novel featuring a Revenue Canada Agency auditor, Alex Bellamy. Eighteen months after getting fired from the RCA, Bellamy reappears in *Fatal Encryption* dressed as Kermit the Frog on Hallowe'en night, wondering where his life went wrong.

In need of cash, Alex agrees to help catch a computer prankster at McKinley's Department Store, but things turn serious when someone vows to permanently encrypt the store's data and torch the building unless ten million dollars is handed over in two weeks. Along the way Alex gets implicated in a murder. He knows there's a connection between the murder and the extortion threat, yet time's running out. People are questioning his competency; a killer is threatening his life.

9780969921110



Debra Purdy Kong

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BLAST FROM THE PAST

In Jim Christy’s Vancouver noir, the fun circles around buried treasure, stolen art, femme fatales, sad sack losers, sexual deviants and bohemians.

Nine O’Clock Gun by Jim Christy (Ekstasis \$22.95)

Reading **Jim Christy**’s fourth and final installment of his Gene Castle Private Investigator Series, *Nine O’Clock Gun*, is like watching a good late night b-movie starring **Edward G. Robinson** or **Humphrey Bogart**.

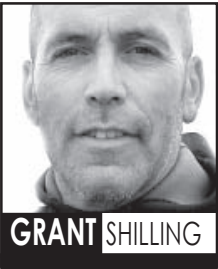
Set in a perpetually foggy night, this is a compulsively readable journey into Vancouver’s past, in keeping with Christy’s previous Vancouver noir novels *Shanghai Alley*, *Princess and Gore*, and *Terminal Avenue*—all named for Vancouver streets or landmarks.

The new novel’s dramatic conclusion occurs at the Nine O’Clock Gun in Stanley Park, a cultural landmark that was first installed at Brockton Point in 1894. For many years the cannon was fired to mark the beginning and closing of fishing hours in Burrard Inlet. With so many unemployed men trying to make a living by fishing, the canneries needed to restrict fishing to prevent over-supply. Over the years, the citizens of Vancouver began to depend on the Nine O’ Clock gun to set their watches. It was moved to its present location at Hallelujah Point in 1954.

This time Detective Gene Castle returns to Vancouver from questionable activities in what once was known as ‘Indo-China.. As Castle steps off the deck of the *Santa Lucia*, at the foot of Shanghai Alley near the end of World War II, “There was fog and sunshine at the same time and all but the very tops of the tallest buildings appeared to glow from within like illuminated cotton candy.”

The big ‘W’ atop the Woodward’s building stands for ‘Woe,’ the hero informs us. “Hell, what the old burg really looks like is a hophead’s Kubla Khan. So goddamned beautiful that, like any self-respecting hophead him or her, I don’t want to come down. They’re waiting on me, calling: Come down, Castle. Come down to these, your tawdry streets.”

What’s an old gumshoe to do? Haunted by thoughts of his advancing age and the perfume scent of an old flame, Castle watches the body count climb and all the events strike close to his rain and gin-soaked world. Events circle around buried treasures, beautiful women, stolen art and a parade of femme fatales, sad sack losers, grifters, sexual deviants and bohemians. In other words, fun.



GRANT SHILLING

Raised on the mean streets of South Philadelphia, tough guy Jim Christy is a well traveled, school-of-hard-knocks type dude who understands his characters well. Christy’s work reminds us that losers are cool, that the middle-of-the-road might be smoother but the ditches are more interesting, and that every rounder has a good story to tell.

Nine O’clock Gun is a class detective novel and one can easily imagine this series serving as the basis for a film or television series.

978-1-897430-20-0



B.C. fiction aficionados might want to know that veteran Vancouver newspaperman and golf columnist **Roland Wild** also published a collection of semi-historical Vancouver stories called *The Nine O’Clock Gun*, in 1952. Wild weaves a tale from the boisterous boom-town days of **Gassy Jack Deighton** to the repressive civic administration of Mayor **Gerry McGeer**, tracing the fortunes of a fictional Scottish immigrant.

See www.abcbookworld.com for more info.

Grant Shilling is a regular contributor from Cumberland

TOUCHING THE OLYMPICS

To See the Sky by Christopher Nowlin

(Granville Island \$18.95)

Vancouver gets renamed Olympia, Squamish is Squamoosh and Penticton becomes Penwickton. That’s how criminal defence lawyer **Christopher Nowlin** re-



Christopher Nowlin

draws the map for *To See the Sky*, an ecologically sensitive crime novel set against the backdrop of construction projects for the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver and Whistler. After the proposed expansion of

that Sea-to-Sky highway generates social unrest, two children disappear and their father becomes the main suspect.

Nowlin’s environmentally conscious protagonist, Demme Astrilsun, is independently wealthy. “I’ve lived in various cities across Canada,” Nowlin told the *Calgary Herald*, “and I’ve never witnessed the same sense of affluence, the same self-confidence that you get in Vancouver. I just wanted to question in a fairly satirical way the rationale that we need the rest of the world to put Vancouver in the spotlight [with the Olympics].”

978-1-894694-55-1

HITLER & JESUS, UNITED

Crucified by Michael Slade (Penguin \$24)

Spanning 2,000 years, *Crucified* by **Michael Slade** is a Vatican conspiracy novel that links Roman Catholicism to a high-ranking Third Reich member named Judas who betrayed **Hitler**, as the original **Judas** betrayed **Christ**.



Michael Slade

The story unravels from the contemporary discovery in Germany of an Allied bomber plane called the Ace of Clubs. The grand-daughter of the downed pilot, Liz Hannah, enlists the

help of a bestselling author and historian, Wyatt Rook, to explain how the bomber was so severely off-course when it disappeared.

Their investigations soon attract attention from the Vatican, enabling Slade to make historical detours into the Crusades and Satanism, with flourishes of torture and murder en route.

978-0-143167-78-5

A RIVER RAN INTO IT

After River by Donna Jonas Milner

(HarperCollins \$29.95)

Set mostly in a fictional B.C. border town named Atwood, **Donna Jonas Milner**’s first novel, *After River*, is a reflective memoir about a woman coming to terms with the disintegration of her family some 35 years after a Vietnam War draft resister named River Jordan crossed into Canada and changed their lives. Prejudice against the

gentle, long-haired River in a rural B.C. community mixes with the fear of homosexuality, leading to the rape of the teenage protagonist and narrator, daughter of the town’s milkman.



Donna Milner

978-0-06-146299-3

BARRY PETERSON PHOTO

Jim Christy has evolved his own King of the Road outsiderism, now reflected in his novels.



LAURA SAWCHUK PHOTO

REPORTER GETS HER CHOPS DOWN

Betsy Trumpener’s debut fiction in The Butcher of Penetang is not for the squeamish

BY **CHERIE THIESSEN**
The Butcher of Penetang by Betsy Trumpener (Caitlin Press \$17.95)

Are you up for meeting hunters with hearts of gold and the souls of children in a story called “A Slip of the Tongue”? Or a toddler who cracks eggs on the family dog’s snout in a story called “Even a Blind Hen”? Or the youth group leader who likes to show young girls his porn magazines at the Bible camp’s sleepover in “Instructions for Altar Boys”? Or Keith at the Good Shepherd Day Centre, who thinks a wet teabag is his testicle and who later is picked up for trying to rob a bank with his wife’s hairbrush in “Satan’s House”? I am. I like the sheer wackiness of **Betsy Trumpener’s** style and her courage in trying it on.

You can tell Trumpener of Prince George is a CBC reporter. *The Butcher of Penetang* is a good choice for a title story, and the 40 narrative snippets that comprise this fiction collection flash by as quickly as the clips from a news broadcast. Some stories are further divided into sub-chapters, and details can be sparse, so the reader has lots of work, occasionally having to provide endings, too. Frankly, I hate it when a writer does that. I want to know what happened to that missing child in “Search Party.” But, like a good, impartial reporter, the author generally keeps her own point and conclusions from being overt. We’re never quite sure, for instance, in the title story, how she feels toward Gabe when he leaves her on the butcher’s table.... In the last story, “Zap Valley,” while the narrator is seriously ill in hospital, and her friend is having sex with the wrong boyfriend, and the narrator is about to be abandoned by them both, what’s her attitude?

“The night the villagers burned each other in effigy was the night Wolfgang fell in love.”

Some of the writing is quite simply arresting: “The night the villagers burned each other in effigy was the night Wolfgang fell in love,” she writes in “Burning in Salango on Saturday Night.” Or this sentence from “Where It Hurts,” “Once, I looked out the streetcar window and saw a man flying through the air.” But mostly the writer presents the facts and then lets you decide how *you* feel. Many of the stories are written in the second person, so there’s an extra assignment for the reader—to discern who the mysterious ‘you’ is. All *yous* are not created equal.

Sometimes they change gender. Frequently they appear to be the writer herself, as in “Elk Canyon Bugler Seeks Junior Reporter.” Or, to ensure you do your homework, the point of view even shifts in the middle of the story in “Emergencies.” Just when you may be getting overzapped with the style, along comes a story like “The Coffin Maker,” veering off course with its zany, surreal black humour.

So is the *Butcher of Penetang* worth the effort? I expect different readers will respond differently. It’s a personal thing; not everyone likes his or her ‘meat’ miniscule and bloody. This is a skinny book, divided into four sections entitled, “A Slip of the Tongue,” “Even a Blind Hen,” “All the Child I Ever Had” and “Zap Valley.” Like a skilled butcher, Trumpener chops and saws through sinew, bone and cartilage, in order to serve up the best cuts. The liver gets saved for a special treat at the end. This is Trumpener’s first book, but her writing has been recognized in publications that include the *Malahat Review*, Douglas College’s *Event*, *The Globe and Mail*, and the *Guardian*. 978-1-894759-30-4

Cherie Thiessen reviews fiction from Pender Island.

DIAPER HILL DENIZENS

In the Quiet After Slaughter by Don McLellan (Libros Libertad \$17.95)

In the late 1940s, a hillside was cleared off to make way for the Renfrew Heights Housing Project for War Veterans in Vancouver. Streets were named after memorable battle sites from both world wars, such as Normandy, Vimy, Dieppe, Anzio, Mons. The lives of the people in those bungalows are the basis for many of the seventeen stories in former *Vancouver Sun* reporter **Don McLellan’s** first fiction collection, *In the Quiet After Slaughter*, thirteen of which have appeared in literary magazines.

“Demand for the rental units outstripped supply,” McLellan writes, “so the coveted homes were let to those who’d endured considerable frontline action. Successful candidates were also required to have at least two children, encouraging action amongst hopeful applicants of a more welcome sort. An appropriate moniker for the residential development suggested itself nine months hence: Diaper Hill.”

McLellan grew up in Renfrew Heights, a neighbourhood bordered by East 22nd Avenue, Rupert Street, Grandview Highway and Boundary Road in Vancouver.

9780980897975

TWINS

The Cult of Quick Repair by Dede Crane (Coteau \$18.95)

Dede Crane’s first short story collection, *The Cult of Quick Repair*, has been simultaneously released with a collection of non-fiction stories, *Birth, The Common Miracle* (2008), which she co-edited with **Lisa Moore**.

Having studied Psychokinetics at the Body-Mind Institute in Amherst, Massachusetts, and Buddhist psychology at the Naropa Institute in Colorado, Crane, a former ballet dancer and choreographer, now lives in Victoria with writer **Bill Gaston**.

978-1-55050-392-0

THE SLOW WAIT FOR FAME

The Slow Fix by Ivan E. Coyote (Arsenal \$18.95)

Nice to think that Yukon-raised **Ivan E. Coyote** has got herself a respectable teaching gig at Carleton University these days after her novel *Bow Grip* won the ReLit Award, was shortlisted for the Ferro-Grumley Fiction Prize in the U.S and was named a Stonewall Honor Book by the American Library Association.

Now we’ll see how the mainstream responds to her new short story collection, *The Slow Fix*, in which a cousin’s stepdaughter helps her overcome her lifelong dread of buying tampons and she tells a homophobe in the barber’s seat next to her to shut up—among many of the subversively comic situations. In a less conservative country, Ivan E. Coyote would be famous by now.

978-1-55152-247-0

FOOD, WINE & A 400 YEAR OLD MAN

The Order of Good Cheer by Bill Gaston (Anansi \$29.95)

Bill Gaston came to teach at the University of Victoria Writing Department in 1998 following a dozen years in the Maritimes, mostly at the University of New Brunswick, where he was initially writer-in-residence.

His new novel, *The Order of Good Cheer*, contains two parallel stories of men separated by 400 years and the span of the North American continent. Each is hoping to save the diminishing morale of his group of companions in a remote and unfriendly corner of Canada by forming an Order of Good Cheer—“where nobles and men can enjoy good local food, excellent wine, and camaraderie.” *The Order of Good Cheer* was a name bestowed by **Samuel de Champlain** on a series of feast nights he hosted during the winter of 1607.

978-0-88784-200-9

WRESTLEMANIAC

The Man Game by Lee Henderson (Penguin \$32)

In terms of its dual time structure, **Lee Henderson’s** novel *The Man Game* resembles Gaston’s *Good Cheer*. A present-day suburbia-bound narrator named Kat imagines a livelier period of Vancouver history, via archival research, when he uncovers a brutal combat game that originated from the aftermath of Vancouver’s Great Fire of 1886: Ostensibly, a former vaudeville performer and entrepreneur named Molly and her paralyzed ex-accountant husband meet two lumberjacks accused of starting the blaze, whereupon Molly invents a bare-knuckled sport more real than WWF.

Henderson’s *The Broken Record Technique* (Penguin, 2002), which won the Danuta Gleed Literary Award for debut fiction, has been reprinted to coincide with the release of this novel. In one of Henderson’s short stories, *Spines the Length of Velcro*, pubescent boys in sumo wrestler costumes compete while their parents stake the odds.

978-0-670-91147-9

REELING IN THE YEARS



Renovating Heaven by Andreas Schroeder (Oolichan \$18.95)

Born in Hoheneggelsen, Germany, in 1946, **Andreas Schroeder** immigrated to Canada in 1951 when his family joined a Mennonite congregation in the Fraser Valley that was founded by his grandfather. All 62 members of the congregation were related to Schroeder on his mother’s side.

In three novellas that comprise *Renovating Heaven*, Schroeder, who holds the Chair in Creative Nonfiction in UBC’s Creative Writing Program and lives near Roberts Creek, recounts several decades of adaptation to Canadian society and his own subsequent alienation from conservative Mennonite values.

Andreas Schroeder is the author of twenty books.

978-0-88982-248-1

HORATIO AT THE MONUMENT

Of a Fire Beyond the Hills by Ernest Hekkanen (New Orphic \$25)

History happens in the blink of an eye. There is much to be said for recording it while wounds are fresh. Subtitled “a novel based on news stories,” **Ernest Hekkanen’s** *Of a Fire Beyond the Hills* is a rare attempt to record local history with emotion and a twist of revenge—undiluted by recollections.

In the late spring of 2007, as a forest fire raged outside the town of Nelson (giving rise to the title), right wingers from across the United States sent a barrage of hate mail to Nelson, protesting the possible erection of a War Resisters Monument. Hekkanen, author of 38 books, ended up being the local spokesperson for the idealists who wanted the statue.

“What does the monument mean to me—to me personally,” he advised the media, “For me, it’s a middle finger salute to the White House, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and all the other right-wing morons who determine foreign policy down in the United States.”

In 1967, reading **Tolstoy’s** *Patriotism: The Slavery of our Times* encouraged Hekkanen to evade the draft and come to Canada. Forty years later, in 2007, the fate of the oldest brother of a friend must have also stirred his Horatio-like stance. First drafted by the New York Yankees, then drafted by Uncle Sam, this young man had his legs shot from under him while leaping from a helicopter into Viet Cong-held territory—never to play baseball again.

“I didn’t take the death threats very seriously, knowing how my former compatriots, especially those on the political right, loved to bravely puff up their pigeon chests.” — ERNEST HEKKANEN

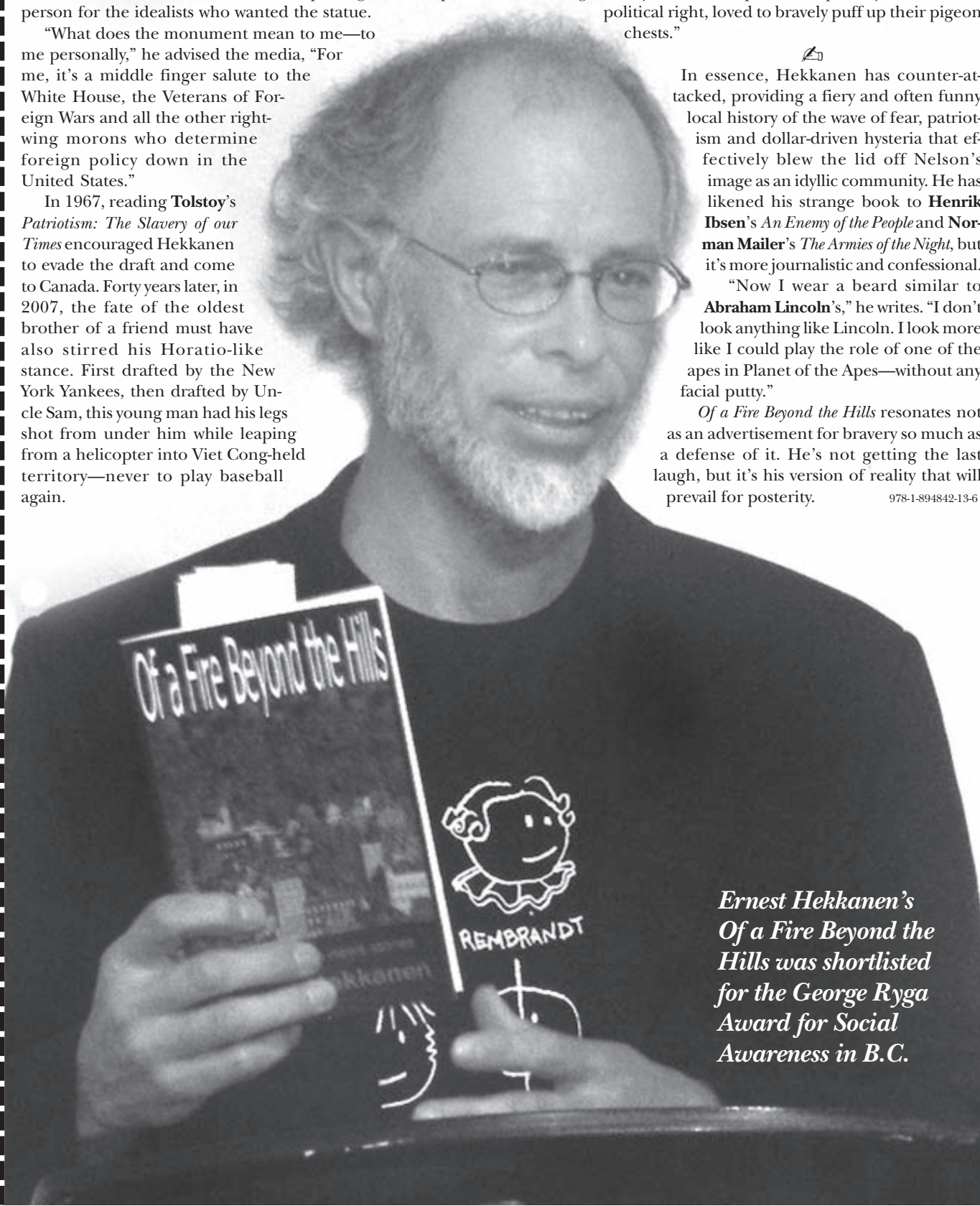
New York Times, and *Globe & Mail*, etc., he found his private life rapidly eroding. After the Doukhobor Museum outside of Castlegar failed to provide a home for the controversial monument as hoped, Hekkanen, in the novel, reluctantly provides refuge for it in his own living room—and his wife isn’t thrilled.

“I didn’t take the death threats very seriously,” he writes, “knowing how my former compatriots, especially those on the political right, loved to bravely puff up their pigeon chests.”

In essence, Hekkanen has counter-attacked, providing a fiery and often funny local history of the wave of fear, patriotism and dollar-driven hysteria that effectively blew the lid off Nelson’s image as an idyllic community. He has likened his strange book to **Henrik Ibsen’s** *An Enemy of the People* and **Norman Mailer’s** *The Armies of the Night*, but it’s more journalistic and confessional. “Now I wear a beard similar to **Abraham Lincoln’s**,” he writes. “I don’t look anything like Lincoln. I look more like I could play the role of one of the apes in Planet of the Apes—without any facial putty.”

Of a Fire Beyond the Hills resonates not as an advertisement for bravery so much as a defense of it. He’s not getting the last laugh, but it’s his version of reality that will prevail for posterity.

978-1-894842-13-6



Ernest Hekkanen’s Of a Fire Beyond the Hills was shortlisted for the George Ryga Award for Social Awareness in B.C.

CHICKLIT, CROONERS, & MOTIVATIONS

Chronicles of a Mid-Life Crisis by Robyn Harding (Penguin \$18)

Unabashedly promoted as chicklit, **Robyn Harding**'s third novel *Chronicles of a Mid-Life Crisis* details the break-up of a 16-year marriage due to the husband's unexpected disenchantment, the subsequent rebelliousness of their 15-year-old daughter, and the eventual reunion of her parents, Trent and Lucy, in order to deal with the parenting crisis. Now living in Vancouver, Harding is one of the few novelists on the planet born in Quesnel. 978-0-14-305375-0

Robyn Harding

The Old Familiar by Alix Hawley (ThistleDown \$17.95)

As a fourth-generation resident of Kelowna, teaching at Okanagan College, **Alix Hawley** explores attractions and distractions in her first "dark and sharp" fiction collection, *The Old Familiar*.

In "Romance," a young man employed for the summer by a wealthy family discovers he and his first-time lover have different sexual motivations. In "They Call Her Lovely Rita" a man feels he has absentmindedly misplaced his wife somewhere, and goes searching for her. In "Chemical Wedding," a gorgeous woman manoeuvres the murky waters of a dinner party with a former friend's family. 978-1-897235-49-2

That Tune Clutches my Heart by Paul Headrick (Gaspereau \$24.95)

In the social milieu of Magee High School back in 1948, teens are avidly debating the crooning abilities of **Bing Crosby** and **Frank Sinatra**, but May Sutherland is ambivalent about comparing the two singers.

In *That Tune Clutches my Heart*, a coming-of-age novel by Langara College teacher **Paul Headrick**, May spills her lonely heart into a diary given to her by her mother after suddenly losing two best friends. 9781554470648



Paul Headrick

Alix Hawley studied English literature and creative writing at Oxford University and UBC.

THE LONER & THE NOVELIST

Frankie Styne & the Silver Man by Kathy Page (Phoenix \$23.95)

Kathy Page's themes have been identified as loss, survival, transformation and "the magic by which a bad hand becomes a good chance." Her newly reissued *Frankie Styne & the Silver Man* is about the very odd relationship between an obsessive loner who writes gruesome killer novels and his new next-door neighbours, a new mother and her highly unusual infant named Jim.

When the novelist Frank hatches a real-life plot, the lives of the mother Liz and her very strange child are transformed.

This new edition marks the onset of a new Writers' Union of Canada initiative to assist members to revive out-of-print work. 9780969079651

MYSTERY BEA

Gifts and Bones by Barbara Murray (Soames Point Press / White Knight \$22.95)

Bowen Islander **Barbara Murray**'s first novel in her planned Bea and Mildred series of mysteries, *Gifts and Bones*, is set in Newfoundland in 1902.

Working as a maid, the heroine Bea MacDonald enlists the company of her odd relative, Mildred, to solve a disappearance from the household in which she is employed. 978-09783373-0-8



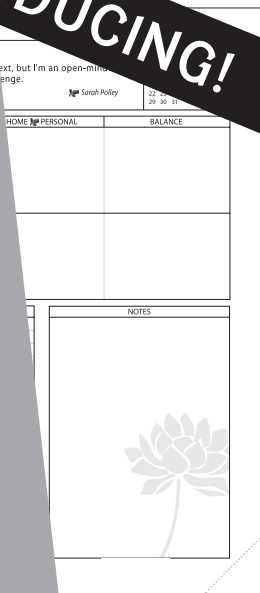
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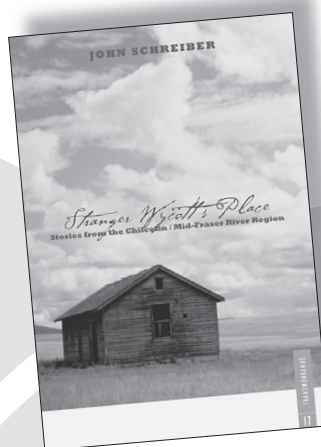
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VERNE'S RETURN

Jules Verne sets latest book in B.C.

The Golden Volcano by Jules Verne (University of Nebraska Press \$15.95 U.S.)

Everyone knows that **Jules Verne**, “the most translated author in the world,” gave the world *Journey to the Center of the Earth* and *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Few know he also wrote a cautionary tale set in B.C. and the Yukon.

Two naïve Canadian cousins, Ben Raddle and Summy Skim, travel across Canada by train and spend one of the opening chapters of Jules Verne’s novel *The Golden Volcano* in Vancouver prior to seeking their fortunes in the Klondike via the deadly Chilkoot Pass.

The completed manuscript for *The Golden Volcano* was one of eight unpublished novels found after Verne died in 1905, but the author’s son **Michel Verne** re-wrote much of it to erase his father’s cynicism about gold (an attitude Verne developed while working at the Paris Stock Exchange). With the recovery of Verne’s manuscripts by the Société Jules Verne, **Edward Baxter** has provided a newly translated version, undoing the tamperings of Verne, Jr.

978-0-8032-9635-0



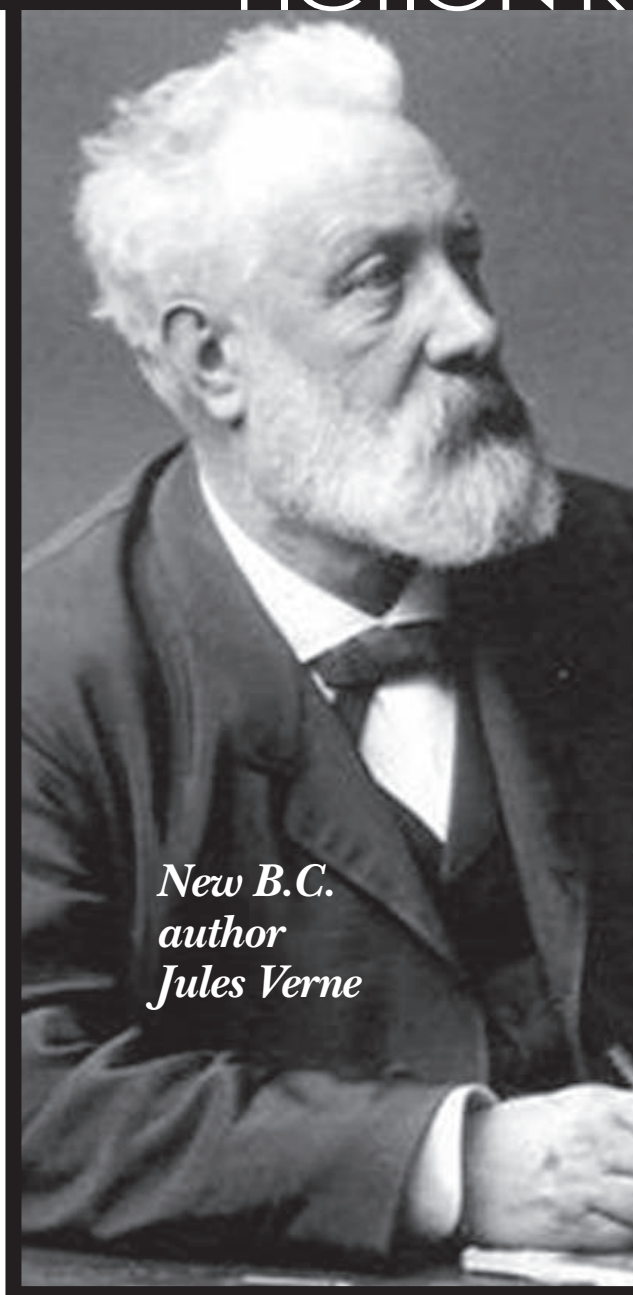
Cibou by Susan de Biagi
(Cape Breton University Press/Nimbus \$19.95)

Set in the 17th-century Mi’kma’ki territory of the Mi’kmaq, **Susan de Biagi**’s first novel, *Cibou*, is narrated by a Mi’kmaq woman who is the daughter of a French father. It chiefly concerns her relationship with a Jesuit historical figure, missionary Anthony Daniel, who was first stationed in Cape Breton in 1632, and his brother, Captain Charles Daniel, who established a French trading post in 1629. The priest Daniel was later martyred in Huronia and became known as Saint Anthony Daniel.

Susan de Biagi of Powell River holds Métis status under the constitution, as a member of the Nova Scotia Federation of Métis. Her heritage is French and Mi’kmaw, dating back almost exactly to the time of her novel, “so I feel it is my story and my heritage.”

Biagi does not call herself a First Nations author.

978-1-897009-29-1



*New B.C.
author
Jules Verne*

SHAKESPEARE'S WOMEN

Silent Girl by Tricia Dower (Inanna \$22.95)

Tricia Dower has produced an unusual collection of stories inspired by female characters in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, *Pericles*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Winter’s Tale*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night* and *Coriolanus*.

Set in Canada, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand, and the United States, the stories in *Silent Girl* portray girls and women dealing with issues such as racism, social isolation, sexual slavery, kidnapping, violence, family dynamics and the fluid boundaries of gender.

The novella-length allegory that closes the book, *The Snow People: 30-46 AGM* is set on Vancouver Island in a future in which environmental degradation has spawned fear and oppression.

978-0-9808822-0-9

PORTRAIT STORIES

Undertow by Virginia Dansereau (Kalmalka Press \$10)

Okanagan College in Vernon marks its 20th year of publishing with the release of *Undertow*, a collection of short stories by **Virginia Dansereau**.

The stories vary in texture from the ordinary to the extraordinary, range in locale from Canadian towns and waterfronts to a New Mexican mesa and a Costa Rican hideaway, and they mostly explore the notion of portraiture in fiction.

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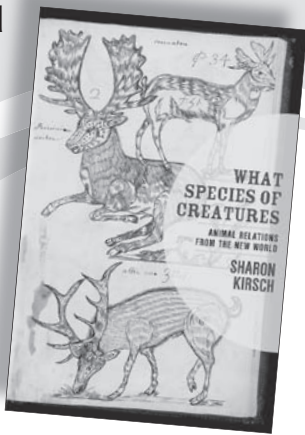
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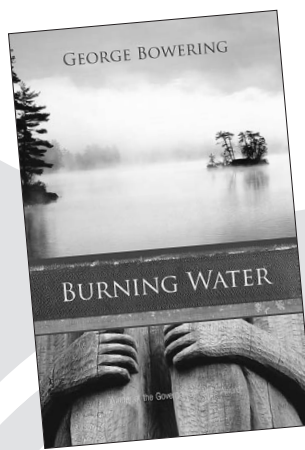
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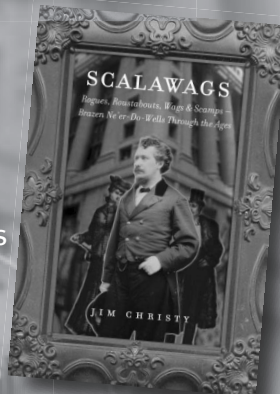
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by Jim Christy

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lyricist/singer for Vancouver rock duo
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of **Fugazi**, and others.

ISBN 978-0-9818706-6-3

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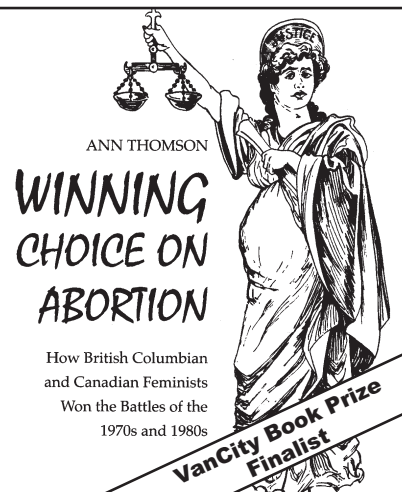
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GENERATION Y

Monument by Patrick Blennerhassett
(Now or Never Publishing \$19.95)

As an arts and entertainment reporter for the *Victoria News*, **Patrick Blennerhassett**, at age 26, has released *Monument*, a first novel about “Generation Y confusion” in the form of a fictional memoir by a central character named Seth Wilhelm.

“A lot of the book is derived directly from personal experience,” says Blennerhassett, “playing hockey, drinking, drugs, dealing with being young and very, very stupid in a culture of Canadian bars, clubs, hockey rinks and house parties. This book is about my friends and I, and how we all sort of get lost after, or during, high school.”

A self-described Thompson Rivers University English drop-out, Patrick Blennerhassett graduated in journalism from Langara and won a Jack Webster Fellowship Award in 2007.

978-0-9739558-4-2

GENERATION XXX

webc@m girl by Natasha Davies
(Le Bon Mot Books \$18.95)

In **Natasha Davies**’s ground-breaking first novel **webc@m girl**, Brandon Chase, a privileged 30-something playboy, is infatuated with Vancouver’s hottest webcam girl, Shelby Munro—but the path of virtual love doesn’t run smooth.

Shelby wants out of the on-line adult sex industry. After she turns off the webcams in her apartment, Brandon sees the newly virtuous Shelby—the real Shelby—in a trendy bar and introduces himself, hinting she might get some work with his company.

When Shelby’s former on-line manager Craig discovers Shelby has not only left him for a job at Brandon’s security software company, but is also having an affair with her boss, Craig descends deeper into a world of drugs and extortion, plotting to humiliate and ruin Shelby.

If **Doug Coupland** had worked in the Vancouver on-line sex industry, he might have written this all-too-believable novel of manners. Natasha Davies has a background in business journalism, and has covered the Web for magazines, TV, new media and newspapers including *Internet News* and *The Globe & Mail*.

0973584041

Natasha Davies:
pay-for-view sex
in the city



GENERATION EX

Potshots by Hal Sisson
(Manor House/White Knight \$24.95)

As a prequel to his comedic Figgwiggin and Fowler trilogy, former lawyer **Hal Sisson** offers his seventh novel, *Potshots*, another humorous romp about the misadventures of Phil Figgwiggin, QC, who defends a call girl and a marijuana grow-operator after his stay at an idyllic Gulf Islands guest farm.

978-0-9809356-0-8

ALSO RECEIVED

No Easy Answers
by Deanna Lueder
(Women’s Press \$22.95)

Passe Partout
by Sam Wharton
(Libros Libertad \$19.95)

Good to a Fault
by Marina Endicott
(Freehand Books \$25.95)

Template by Matthew Hughes (PS Pub. \$37)

Pretenders by Lynda Williams (Edge \$20.95)

The Silk Train Murders
by Sharon Rowse
(Carroll & Graf \$24.95)

The Well & Other Stories
by Nick Faragher
(Thistle-down \$16.95)

Previously listed BC fiction

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

Red Dust, Red Sky by Paul Sunga (Coteau \$21)

Kill All the Lawyers
by William Deverell
(M&S \$34.99)

Post by Arley McNeney
(Thistle-down \$19.95)

Darwin’s Paradox by Nina Munteanu
(Dragon Moon \$19.95)

Zorgamazoo
by Robert Paul Weston
(Penguin \$17.50)

Memories are Murder
by Lou Allin
(Napoleon \$15.95)

He Rode Tall
by Ross Buchanan
(Libros Libertad \$22.95)

Wild Talent
by Eileen Kernaghan
(Thistle-down \$15.95)

Stickboy: A Novel in Verse by Shane L. Koyczan (House of Parlance \$22.99)

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

Incidental Music by Carol Matthews
(Oolichan \$18.95)

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(Now or Never \$21.95)

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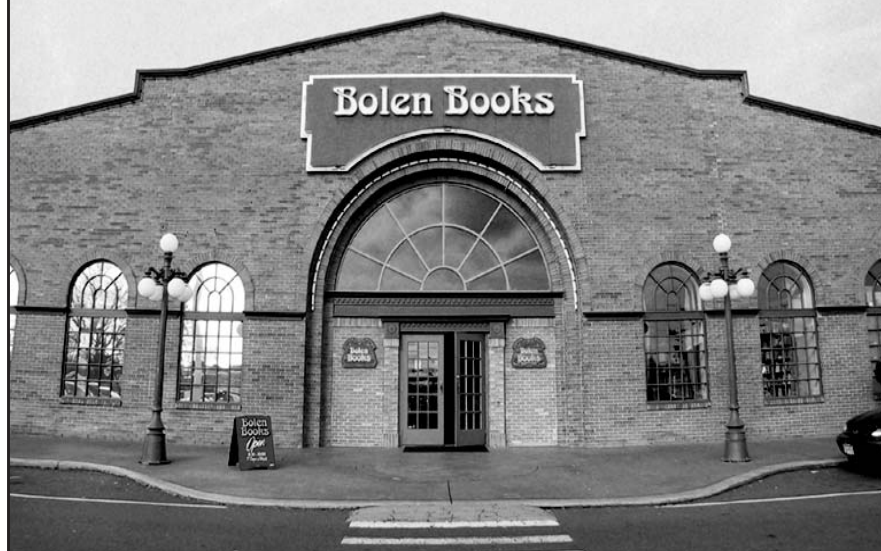
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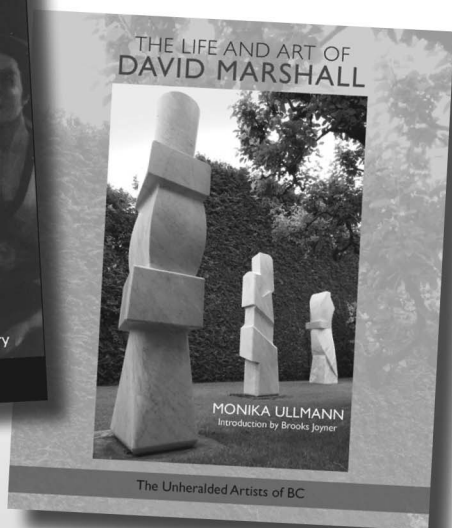
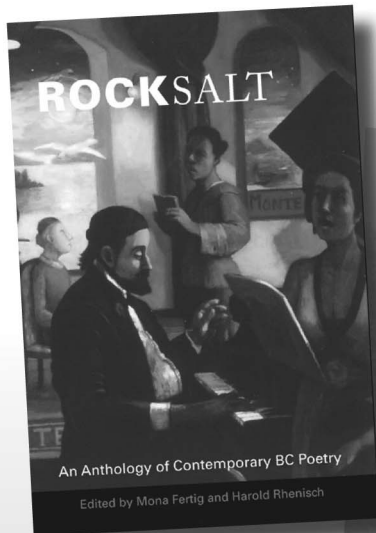
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reviews POETRY

NOT AN AIRY ABSTRACTION TO BE FOUND

Living Things by Matt Rader
(Nightwood \$16.95)

A poet who can do woodstoves and chain-saws, **Matt Rader**, who grew up in Comox and now lives in Oregon, is not a nature faddist. *Living Things* is a slim volume that shows a highly familiar knowledge of trees, plants and birds which did not get picked up by browsing a field guide.

In a poem from a longer piece, *Lives of North American Trees*, the poet gets hectored by the "heart on sleeve, bad skin" arbutus.

"Windfirm. Hardscrabble./I unravel a standard in the rock and grime / of the subsoil where you too will return/ in the post burn of your life."



**HANNAH MAIN-VAN
DER KAMP**

Rader's nature is specific; there's not an airy abstraction to be found. The poems about compost exude the sweetish scent of semi-decomposition.

"Chipped enamel of egg, cuttings, kitchen chaff, coffee grounds ground down to earth by a staff of earthworms, the compost moulded in its spot at the garden's verge, a fetid incubator of rot...."

End-rhymed, cadenced and often in formal patterns such as sonnet, there is nothing sloppy about these wry observations and they are very informed.

Sit with one of Rader's tree poems, close the book, close your eyes, and there is his exact tree. You've been momentarily away from your self, the tree took you away.

Described as "little hobgoblins of muck," frogs drag the poet "nightly by the mind rushes/into the reeds, thrash me with sedge and leave/me for a moment, mugged of myself, relieved."

9780889712232

*Hannah Main-Van Der Kamp
writes from Victoria.*

RALPH MAUD VS BOSWELL

Charles Olson at the Harbor
by Ralph Maud (Talonbooks \$19.95)

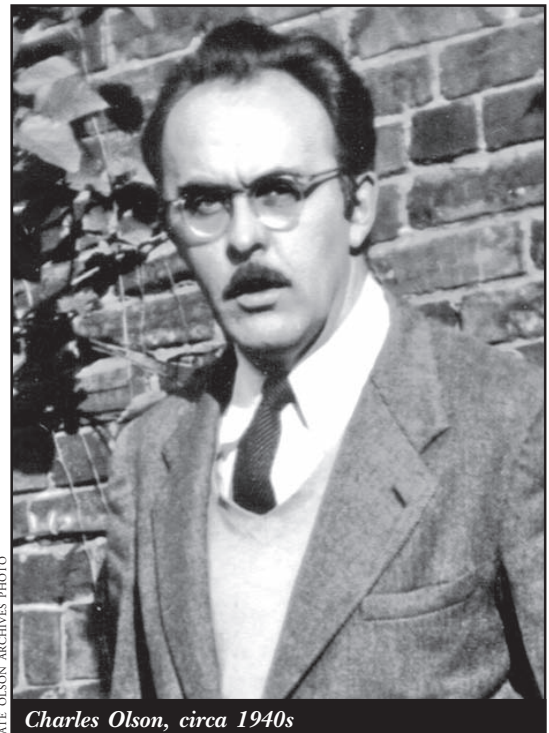
Dylan Thomas expert and a B.C. First Nations authority **Ralph Maud** first met the American poetry icon **Charles Olson** during a two-year stint at State University of New York at Buffalo—and there arose the third side of his split literary personality.

Since his Buffalo days, Maud has resolutely admired and championed Olson, editing Olson's letters and contributing to efforts to restore Olson's house at 28 Fort Square, Gloucester, Massachusetts as a research centre for Olson studies.

Now, to undo the harm done to Olson's reputation by **Tom Clark's** 1991 biography *Charles Olson: The Allegory of a Poet's Life*, Ralph Maud has written *Charles Olson at the Harbor* to depict Olson as a great poetic genius as well as a highly successful **Herman Melville** scholar.

It's all heady, esoteric stuff. Olson is touted as the author of one of the two greatest American long poems of the twentieth century, 'The Maximus Poems,' rivaling **Ezra Pound's** 'The Cantos.'

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Charles Olson, circa 1940s

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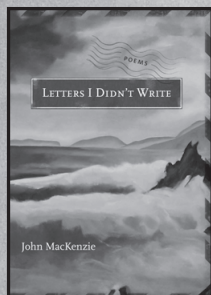
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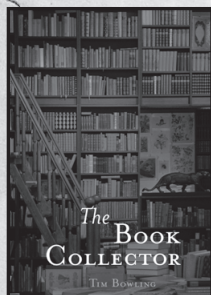


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Paul's previous collection *Taking the Names Down from the Hill* won the 2004 Dorothy Livesay Award for Poetry. In *Little Hunger*, he continues to draw upon the rich oral culture and traditions of his WSÁ,NEC people. With elegance and wisdom Paul speaks of "the stories gone sad, / singing to the hunger that made them, / running past the voices no longer speaking."

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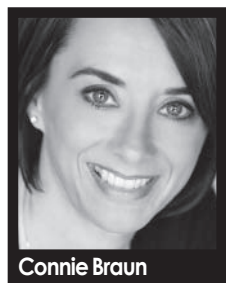
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A is for Argillite

Carol Sheehan began visiting argillite artists in Haida Gwaii in 2006 with the help of **Sarah Hillis Davidson** of Sarah's Arts and Jewellery in Old Masset. The 15 artists she has profiled in **Breathing Stone: Contemporary Haida Argillite Sculpture** (Frontenac \$35) are Sean Brennan, Michael Brown, Donnie Edenshaw, Shaun Edgars, Chris Russ, Gary Minaker Russ, Marcel Russ, Lionel Samuels, Jay Simeon, Robert Vogstad, Darrell White, Gryn White, Martin Williams, Cooper Wilson and Freddie Wilson. There are 200 colour photos by **Jack Litrell** and **John W. Heintz**.

978-1-897181-21-8

B is for Braun



Born in the Fraser Valley, **Connie Braun** provides a creative non-fictional memoir of an extended Mennonite family during the 20th century, from eastern Europe to the valleys of the Fraser River, in **The Steppes are the Colour of Sepia** (Ronsdale \$24.95).

Historically faithful to documents, letters, old photos and personal testimonies, it complements **Andreas Schroeder's** fictional views of his Mennonite background (see *Fiction reviews*).

978-1-55380-063-7

C is for Collis



As a descendant of Scottish coal miners who came to Vancouver Island in the late 1800s, poet **Stephen Collis** wrote *Mine* (New Star 2001), a reconstruction of the early history of the B.C. coal industry. Now Collis has explored further back in time for **The Commons** (Talonbooks \$16.95), an anarchy-inspired exploration of how commonly-held lands were essentially privatized in the English countryside. Amid the peasant revolts, Collis includes cameo appearances from the mad poet **John Clare** and back-to-the-land philosopher **Henry David Thoreau**.

978-0-88922-580-0

D is for Diamond

Having digested his 36 years as a theatrical activist for **Theatre for Living: The Art and Science of Community-Based Dialogue** (Trafford), **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. Diamond suggests, "If we are to deal with the pressing issues of global warming, global violence, hunger, poverty, we must find a way, whether on the so-called left or the so-called right to stop perpetuating the concept of 'the other.' There is no 'them.' There is only 'us.'"

E is for Ellis

Donald Ellis has edited the remarkable story of how Tsimshian ceremonial art objects were removed from Old Metlakatla by Scottish missionary **Robert J. Dundas** in 1863. These were eventually brought back to Prince Rupert for display

WHO'S WHO

BRITISH COLUMBIA

A IS FOR ARGILLITE

Marcel Russ—pictured with his wife and muse Lori—began carving argillite at age eight and moved to Haida Gwaii to live with his grandparents at age 13. From *Breathing Stone*.

DAMIAN JOHN W. HEINTZ PHOTO

in May of 2007, after setting a record \$7 million price for First Nations art at an auction at Southeby's. Originally acquired for an unspecified price from the missionary **William Duncan**, the so-called Dundas Collection remained in the Dundas family's "cabinet of curiosities," along with a 250,000-word diary, for more than a century.

As outlined in **Tsimshian Treasures: The Remarkable Journey of the Dundas Collection** (D&M \$55), featuring 72 colour plates, Canadian institutions and collectors have recently purchased most of the major items.

0295987383

F is for Fertig

Billed as the first wide-ranging anthology of contemporary B.C. poetry in 31 years, **Rocksalt** (Mother Tongue \$24.95), edited by **Mona Fertig** and **Harold Rhenisch**, features 108 new, mid-career and established BC poets "from Dawson Creek to



Mona Fertig

Massett and Prince Rupert to Vancouver." Each poet has one previously unpublished poem and a statement of poetics. It's the first book from Mona Fertig's efforts to establish her Saltspring Island imprint as a literary and art trade publisher. Eight book launches are planned in the province.

978-1-896949-01-7

G is for Greco

Born in Milwaukee in 1947, **Heidi Greco** came to Canada in 1968. "The award I am proudest of is my Canadian citizenship," she says. "I'm still convinced I 'picked' my parents because I thought they were Canadian. At the time, they were honeymooning at the Lake of the Woods." Greco is one of 76 poets who have contributed to a new anthology by former Americans, **Crossing Lines: Poets Who Came to Canada in the Vietnam War Era** (Seraphim \$19.95), edited by **Allan Briesmaster** and **Steven Michael Berzensky**.

Other B.C. contributors include Jim Christy, George Fetherling, Kim Goldberg, Ernest Hekkanen, Keith Maillard, Susan McCaslin, Bud Osborn, Sue Wheeler and J. Michael Yates.

978-0-9808879-1-4

H is for Horsfield

As a follow-up to her award-winning *Cougar Annie's Garden*, **Margaret Horsfield** has produced **Voices from the Sound: Chronicles of Clayoquot Sound and Tofino 1899-1929** (Salal \$52.50), based on long-forgotten letters, diaries and memoirs. "I unearthed so many obscure documents in so many unlikely locations," she says, "at times I felt nearly deafened by all the chatter of those voices. I met many characters who have become part of my life, and I learned an enormous amount about the underlying social and economic realities of the West Coast. Because the research was so intensive and detailed—and because I am so slow—this book has occupied seven years of my life."

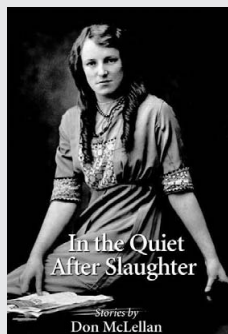
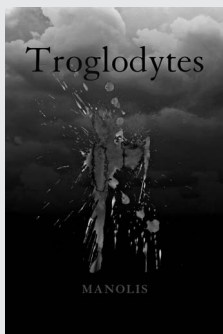
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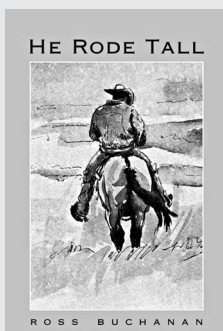
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Poetry by
Manolis



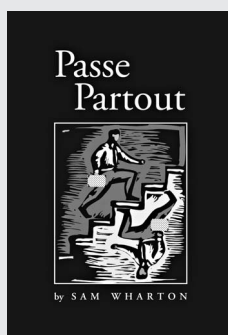
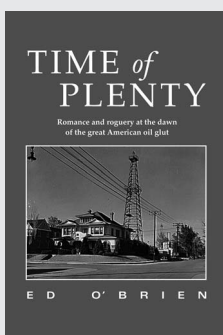
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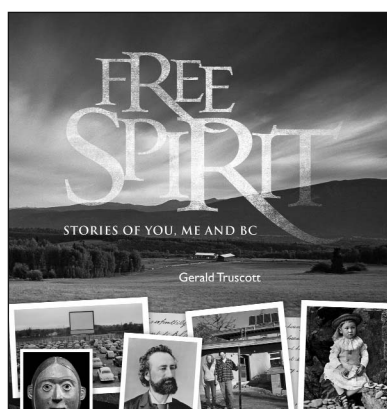
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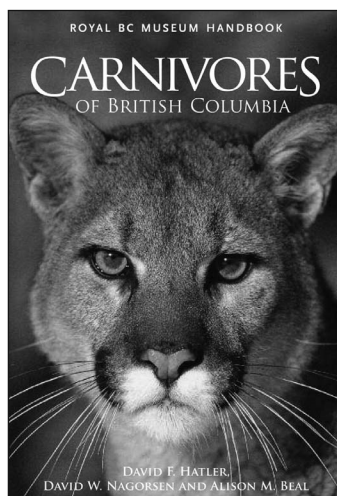
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WHO'S WHO

continued from previous page

I is for Innes

"When my first crime novel was finished," says Gabriola Island's **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 to Vancouver where they investigate a series of hate-crime murders. 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 Jerusalem

A place of wisdom, yet seldom free of strife, Jerusalem and the universal yearning for a holy land is the focus for poet **Dvora Levin's** *Sharav* (Ekstasis \$17.95). Her new chapbook *To Bite the Blue Apple* simultaneously examines her experiences with cancer. 978-1-897430-17-0

K is for Kerr



Kevin Kerr

Kevin Kerr's *Studies in Motion* (Talonbooks \$18.95) examines the obsession of the Victorian photographer **Eadward Muybridge** to stop time and freeze motion, partly to alleviate the painfulness of an overly dramatic life that featured adultery, jealousy, betrayal, murder and an abandoned child. Kerr reveals how the pioneering cameraman used technology to try and absolve his guilt due to tragic actions from his past, including his acquittal for killing his wife's lover as justifiable homicide. 978-0-88922-592-3

L is for Lent

A mainstay of the literary world in the Okanagan, **John Lent** has co-authored a collection of conversations about writing with "Mr. Canadian Postmodern," **Robert Kroetsch**. *Abundance* (Kalamalka Press \$10) is the fourth release from the Mackie Lake House Writer-in-Residence Project. 978-0-97380574-1

M is for McKay

Three years ago, **Don McKay** examined Vancouver Island wilderness "in the scheme of infinite time" for *Deactivated West 100*, six movements of prose and poetry.

McKay has moved much further north for *The Muskwa Assemblage* (Gaspereau \$49.95), his poetic exploration of the Muskwa-Kechikan region in northern B.C., framed by Toad River in the north and the Tschodi



MARLENE CREATES PHOTO

Don McKay

Lakes to the south. This work arose from an art-camp organized by **Donna Kane** and **Wayne Sawchuk** in August of 2006 to direct aesthetic attention to an ecosystem undisturbed by industry or human settlement. 9781554470655

N is for New Society

Having recently acquired Gabriola-based New Society Publishers, CEO **Scott McIntyre**, of Douglas & McIntyre Publishing Group, has announced a name change to D&M Publishers Inc. as a banner for New Society, Douglas & McIntyre and Greystone Books.

New Society has been around for more than 30 years; Greystone was hatched with **Rob Sanders** in 1993.

O is for Orca

Orca Books founder and publisher **Bob Tyrrell** has exchanged his publisher's baton for a fishing rod, making way for **Andrew Wooldridge**, who started in the warehouse fifteen years ago.

Wooldridge "moved from marketing to editorial to rodent catching," and now, with the purchase of fifty percent of the company, to publisher and partner with Tyrrell, who will re-focus on the editorial direction of the company.

P is for Patterson

After he made his journey down the Nahanni River in 1927, **R.M. Patterson's** outdoor memoirs appeared in nearly every issue of *The Beaver* during the 1930s and 1940s.

Those Earlier Hills Reminiscences 1928 to 1961 (Touchwood \$24.95) is a compilation of articles by Patterson that appeared in the Hudson's Bay Company-published magazine during a 25-year epoch that included the long-serving editorships of **Clifford P. Wilson** and **Malvina Bolus**. 978-1-894898-67-6

Q is for Q'um Q'um

Also known as **Q'um Q'um Xi'em**, **Jo-Ann Archibald** worked with elders and storytellers to develop ways of bringing storytelling into educational contexts, resulting in *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit* (UBC \$85), written when she was Associate Dean for Indigenous Education in the UBC Faculty of Education. 978-0-7748-1401-0

R is for Rimmer

Revered typographer **Jim Rimmer's** private papers and his Pie Tree Press collection were recently donated to SFU Special Collections on the seventh floor of the Bennett Library. Now the letterpress artist has released his first trade publication, *Memories from the Composing Room Floor* (Pie Tree Press / Gaspereau \$59.95).

The Vancouver-born designer and illustrator has created 190 digital and seven metal typefaces at his Rimmer Type Foundry in New Westminster.

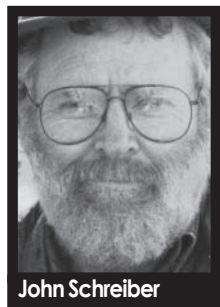


Jim Rimmer

For more info see
abcbookworld.com
9781554470624

S is for Schreiber

“As a young boy after the Second World War,” writes **John Schreiber** in *Stranger Wycott’s Place: Stories from the Cariboo-Chilcotin* (New Star \$19), “I lived up the North Thompson River, north of



Kamloops, near a post office stop on the highway called Darfield.” Since then, having walked and driven backroads for many years, Schreiber has gathered a lifetime of stories and a richly personal sense of history, culminating in a title story about **William Wycott’s** homestead above Wycott Flats off Churn Creek, west of the Gang Ranch.

Wycott was also featured in Harry Marriott’s *Cariboo Cowboy* and *Tales of the Ranches*. 978-1-55420-037-5

T is for Tougas

Chris Tougas won the inaugural Bolen Books Children’s Book Prize at a gala October 15 at the Union Club of Victoria. Bookseller **Mel Bolen** presented him with a cheque for \$5000 for *Mechanimals* (Orca \$18.95) which he wrote and illustrated. *Mechanimals* tells the story of an old farmer who loses all of his animals to a tornado. 978-1-55143-628-9

U is for Uqalurait

With **John Bennett**, former editor of *Inuktitut* magazine, UBC’s **Susan Rowley** has released a paperback version of their account of Inuit life in Nunavut prior to extensive contact with southerners, *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut* (McGill-Queens \$34.95). *Uqalurait* describes the seasonal rounds of four different groups, incorporating 19th century exploration journals as well as contemporary views. 978-0-7735-2341-8

V is for Vegan

Sarah Kramer is back and she never went away. With info on “How to say ‘I Am Vegan’ in different languages, Victoria’s leading vegan has released her fourth title, *Vegan A Go-Go!: A Cookbook & Survival Manual for Vegans on the Road* (Arsenal \$17.95). 978-1-55152-240-1

W is for Will

Will Morrison’s memoir *Between the Mountains and the Gantries* (Belfast: Appletree Press) was shortlisted for the \$80,000 U.K/Ireland literary prize in conjunction with the Irish Writers Association. “I knew my book was a long shot,” Morrison says, “going up against journalists writing about China, Iraq, and Islam, and a book on **John Donne**.”

X is for Exploring

Exploring Vancouverism (Mantua Books / CanadianValuesPress \$25) by **Howard Rotbert** of Kitsilano was launched in November at Spartacus Books in Vancouver. Critical of the status quo, it is subtitled *The Political Culture of Canada’s Lotus Land*. He spends one week of each month in Ontario developing rental housing for low income people. 978-0-9734065-1-1; Info: Mantua2003@hotmail.com

Y is for Yi Fao

Yi Faois the Chinese name for New Westminster, meaning second port. **Jim Wolf** and **Patricia Owen’s** *Yi Fao: Speaking Through Memory* (Heritage \$19.95) is a history of New Westminster’s Chinese Community from 1958 to 1980, although many of its photos pre-date that time period. It features four key families: Law, Lee, Quan and Shiu. 978-1-894974-40-0

Z is for Zuehlke

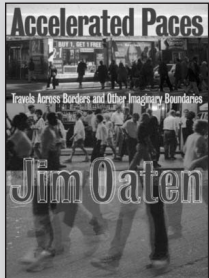
The Allied invasion of Sicily was the first battle experience for 20,000 troops from the 1st Canadian Infantry Division and the 1st Canadian Tank Brigade. **Mark Zuehlke** recounts their combat versus fierce German opposition for 28 days in *Operation Husky* (D & M \$36.95), his seventh war volume. 978-1-55365-324-0



Sarah Kramer: her first three cookbooks have sold 150,000 copies.

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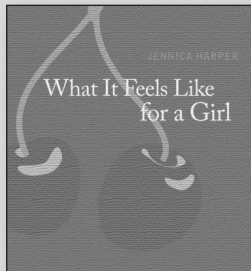
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