CELEBRATE BC

I’d like to commend Andreas Schroeder for his wonderful article “Fiction From Vladivostok” as published in the winter edition of BC Bookworld.

It irritates me that the Toronto establishment can be so dismissive of regional cultures and identities that do not fit their notion of what it means to be a Canadian.

When I went to university in Ontario I got the impression that some of my peers viewed British Columbia with the same ignorance and naivety that we normally attribute to Americans and their world view.

“British Columbia has some gorgeous scenery, nice weather, lots of Starbucks and a laid-back lifestyle,” they’d chime. “But it’s not a centre for industry, culture and history.”

Instead of trying to please Toronto, perhaps we should use our energy to celebrate our “British Columbians” as this newspaper does.

Nathaniel Christopher Burnaby

SUSPICIOUS MINDS

I was surprised reading your BC Bookworld article: “Rise of the Sisterhood,” which showed a large group photo featuring Jenny Kwan, MLA, that you didn’t include Joyce Murray, prominently behind her, a former BC MLA and current female MP in Ottawa.

Politically motivated?

M. Rocksborough-Smith

TO ERR IS HUMAN


There were very few errors in the book, but your coverage managed to reveal two of them. First, an omission: in the picture of Jenny Kwan at a community event, we failed to identify Joyce Murray, who is right behind her. My apologies to Ms. Murray.

And second, no correction was made to a statement on the cover that I served in Premier Glen Clark’s government. In fact I went into cabinet with Premier Mike Harcourt and left when he handed over the premiership.

I hope you will publish this letter of correction so that your readers will recognize the mistakes as mine, not yours.

Anne Edwards

SALTY REVIEW

I am writing regarding the Rockwell review in your spring 2009 issue. I am not a poet, but I have the anthology on my shelf and have spent hours going through it, discovering new voices and revisiting ones. It is a beautiful book, and it is not a small book. There is plenty worth mentioning. Unfortunately, the reviewer did not take that opportunity.

There is enough to satisfy different tastes and preferences, even if it is a spoonful of each. Sometimes a spoonful is all one needs.

I wonder what motivated a reviewer to write a review. She seemed bored writing it, and bored me reading it. It was not informative. I wonder if the review would have been different if her poem was accepted? Thank goodness I had the anthology before I read the review.

Nevena Giljanovic

Vancouver

PIRACY OR PROGRESS

Many writers are unhappy or confused about the proposed Google Book Search settlements. I strongly recommend they watch this video by Laurence Lessig, an intellectual property lawyer: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnL2UfihQk

Although some people take an extremist stance against copyright, arguing that it should be abolished completely, I believe it has a role in society. Unfortunately, the copyright law of today is so bloated, and its enforcement so draconian, that it no longer serves its original purpose of encouraging innovation. Quite the opposite, it now stifles personal and political expression, hampers the pace of technological improvement and locks away our culture in a massive vault owned by a select few mega corporations.

We must put an end to this ill-conceived and incredibly disingenuous “War on Piracy.” It’s time we stopped talking exclusively about authors’ rights and remember that user’s rights are a critical part of the equation, too.

Martin Twigg

Vancouver
IT IS A LITTLE-KNOWN fact that sometime in the early 1970s, the Lobsang Rampa entourage lodged for about two years at the Denman Place Inn (as it was then known) in Vancouver’s West End. The upper floors hosted residential suites with expansive views over English Bay.

The self-designated guru Lobsang Rampa stayed close to the top of the 35-storey building where he led a hermit-like existence, making occasional wheelchair forays to Denman Place Mall. It’s possible he composed one or two books during his stay. He usually wrote in bed, closely monitored by his Siamese cats.

Lobsang Rampa (not his real name) was a refugee of the celebrity kind, on the run from news hounds. While he revelled in the attention he got from his books, he hated to be recognized in person. That’s likely because he built his reputation under the persona of a Tibetan lama-physician purporting to be the author of a tome called *The Third Eye*.

The first-person narrator is a Tibetan physician with the psychic ability to read human auras—via a third eye sited vertically in his forehead.

Rather than present *The Third Eye* as fiction, Rampa stuck to his Tibetan lama identity like Velcro—in the interest of generating greater sales figures. The ruse worked—Rampa laughed all the way to the bank by writing more books about his travels in Tibet and other weird realms. His books developed a huge cult following, selling in the millions—by one count, over five million; by another count, over twelve million to date.

But in person, the illusion didn’t quite hold up. Rampa did not look even remotely Tibetan—and he spoke not a word of the language. There were a number of Tibetologists in London who were keen to expose this charlatan by remising about their time in Tibet. Among them was Heinrich Harrer, author of *Seven Years in Tibet* and fluent in the Tibetan language.

Rampa was not so keen to meet the Tibetologists. The curious were informed that he was either seriously ill, or on a lengthy meditation retreat—and could not be disturbed. A news story eventually broke revealing Rampa as Cyril Henry Hoskins, the unemployed son of a plumber from Devonshire.

Rampa weaseled his way out of monstrous contradictions in a later book by claiming that his English body had been ‘possessed’ by the spirit of a Tibetan lama. That happened on a Tuesday, when he fell out of a tree, thus explaining his full *nom de plume*: Tuesday Lobsang Rampa (wisely abbreviated as T. Lobsang Rampa in his works).

When news of Rampa’s real identity came to light, the Rampas promptly decamped from London to a fort-like structure on the coast of Ireland, overlooking the sea. They were under virtual siege from members of the press, who tried to spy over the walls through periscopes and went through their garbage.

Fed up with this kind of attention, the Rampa entourage flew to the east coast of Canada, spending some time roving around Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. Then they decided to shift to the west coast.

At the helm of the Rampa entourage was haughty Sarah Rampa, his wife—a former nurse who handled both business and Rampa’s frail health. In the role of companion and secretary was Sheelagh Rouse, a pretty young woman who came aboard in Ireland—on the lam from a marriage that didn’t work out (there was some speculation in the press of the day about whether her involvement was more than secretarial).

And there were several Siamese cats, eventually broke revealing Rampa as Cyril Henry Hoskins, the unemployed son of a plumber from Devonshire.

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which the Rampas doted on, preferring feline company to human. This had side-
benefits. According to Rampa, his Siamese cat Filli Greywhiskers telepathi-
cally dictated an entire book to him, which diligently he translated from the ‘Siamese cat language’ into English. The book is called Living with the Llama.

It is through the eyes of Sheelagh Rouse that Rampa’s Vancouver interlude comes into focus—described three de-

25 FAMOUS LITERARY VISITORS

ALLEN GINSBERG

made several visits to Vancouver, notably in No-

vember of 1978 when he headlined two

evenings in support of his friend War-

ren Tailman’s Vancouver Poetry Centre and its ‘defence’ of Talonbooks under attack from Conservative MPs in the House of Commons.

The former advertising scribe and au-

thoir of Howl in the 1950s asked for a ‘good vibe’ audience for ‘lifting the city to Heaven which exists and is everywhere about us.’ When Ginsberg appeared at the PNE Gardens Auditorium, the tone-
deaf poet received guitar back-up from Gary Kramer of the ven-
erable Vancouver group Brain Dam-
age. While in Vancouver, Ginsberg ex-
pressed some dismay that his dress-
ing and simple harmonium playing was not met with a recording contract from Columbia. Ginsberg, who
died in 1997, never made it onto American Idol.

Death usually puts a crimp in the out-

put of most authors. Not so Lobang Rampa. His books continue to sell and sell, with The Third Eye remaining his most popular title. He even managed to produce a book posthumously. It is called My Visit to Agharta, about his foary to the subterranean Himalayan realm of Agharta. The book was cobbled together from supposedly long-lost papers belonging to Rampa, and published in 2003—over ten years after his death.

To this day, librarians are mystified where to shelve Rampa’s books—under religion, occult, paranormal, thriller, sci-

fi or autobiography. The best solution yet seen: file them under ‘New Age.’
AND HE SHOWED US where to look among the garbage and the flowers...The story goes that Dan McLeod and like-minded counter-culturalists decided to start a 'peace paper' at a Vancouver party following a poetry reading by Leonard Cohen in February of 1967.

The first organizational meeting was held at the home of Rick Kitaeff on March 30, 1967. This subsequently gave rise to a cooperatively managed newspaper called the Georgia Straight, later controlled and owned by McLeod.

The history is fuzzy, but certainly the newspaper had literary beginnings. Other poets involved in its creation included bill bissett—whose blowointmentpress printed a handbill advertising an open organizational meeting for April 2, 1967—as well as Pierre Coupey, Gerry Gilbert and Milton Acorn.

**Arthur Conan Doyle**

During his fourth visit to North America in 1923 (following visits in 1894, 1914 and 1922), Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of the rationalist-hero detective Sherlock Holmes, travelled across Canada and the U.S. to lecture on his favourite topic, Spiritualism. While travelling with his wife Lady Jean and their three children, Conan Doyle spoke in 15 cities across the U.S., as well as Vancouver.

Conan Doyle's visit to Vancouver is mentioned in Our Second American Adventure (1924). He offers the following analysis of the Komagata Maru Incident of May, 1914.

"The whole incident seemed to me to be so grotesque—for why should sun-loving Hindoos force themselves upon Canada—that I was convinced some larger purpose lay behind it. That purpose was, as we can now see, to promote discord among the races under the British flag. There can be no doubt that it was German money that charted that ship."

How Kiplingesque.

**Rabindranath Tagore**

The first person from Asia to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, Sir Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) made four visits to North America and was photographed by Vancouver photographer John Vanderpant in 1929.

During his final visit in 1940 the Hindu mystic, poet and educator was detained at the border by U.S. officials and cross-examined about the purpose of his visit. He telegraphed President Franklin Roosevelt from Vancouver but never received a reply. He cut short his visit and returned to India.

Knighted in 1915, he resigned the honour in 1919 to protest repressive British measures in India. Among his many books is *The Religion of Man*.

**Theodore Roosevelt**

While not widely recognized today as a literary man, Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th president of the United States, born in 1858, first rose to prominence as the 23-year-old author of *The Naval War of 1812*, hailed as a literary and scholarly triumph. Roosevelt rose to military prominence due to jingoistic newspaper reports that inflated the heroism of his Rough Riders regiment as they overcame outmanned, under-supplied Spanish opposition in Cuba in 1898.

When Roosevelt visited Vancouver in 1915, four years before he died, Mayor Louis Dennison Taylor outwitted his political foes by hopping on the train as it stopped in New Westminster. Taylor grabbed the spotlight upon Roosevelt's arrival by escorting him around Stanley Park in his car.

The man most famous for saying, "Speak softly, and carry a big stick; you will go far," received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906.

**W.O. Mitchell**

Although he was mostly recognized as a prairie author, W.O. Mitchell spent many summers at his family's summer home at Mabel Lake, near Salmon Arm, B.C. where he and his wife Myrna Mitchell shared good times with their children and grandchildren.

William Ormand Mitchell was born in Weyburn, Saskatchewan in 1914 and died in Calgary in 1998. Most famously he wrote *Who Has Seen the Wind* (1947).
Charles Bukowski made his first trip to Canada in October of 1976, organizers for his Western Front reading were surprised that women in the audience far outnumbered men. That reading is described by Bukowski towards the end of his novel entitled Women. The slovenly Bukowski “was genuinely physically ugly,” according to reading organizer Ted Laturnus, but he had “a soothing monotone voice and a full head of hair that reminded me of Fabian.” At a post-reading party Bukowski didn’t drink much and “was besieged with offers of congress.” No matter where Bukowski went during his Vancouver visit, he “had to fight the women off,” according to Jim Christy’s The BUK Book: Musings on Charles Bukowski (ECW $12.95).

Charles Bukowski returned to give another Vancouver reading in 1979. After a night of dancing upon his arrival, he fell out of bed in the Sylvia Hotel and had to be taken to the hospital for stitches. The reading the following day at the Viking Inn was a raucous affair at which Bukowski was drunk and the audience heckled. There were approximately 650 people in the audience. It was the last Bukowski poetry reading that was recorded on film. Footage from that reading appears at the outset of Bukowski: Born Into This, a 2004 documentary about Bukowski by John Dullaghan that was screened at Vancouver’s Ridge Theatre in 2005. During the making of that documentary, the filmmakers uncovered a videotaped record of the entire Bukowski performance that was made by Dennis B. Del Torre. This full-length performance by Bukowski has since been released as There’s Gonna Be A Goddamn Riot In Here.

When notoriously foul-mouthed boozer Charles ‘Hank’ Bukowski made his first trip to Canada in October of 1976, organizers for his Western Front reading were surprised that women in the audience far outnumbered men. That reading is described by Bukowski towards the end of his novel entitled Women. The slovenly Bukowski “was genuinely physically ugly,” according to reading organizer Ted Laturnus, but he had “a soothing monotone voice and a full head of hair that reminded me of Fabian.” At a post-reading party Bukowski didn’t drink much and “was besieged with offers of congress.” No matter where Bukowski went during his Vancouver visit, he “had to fight the women off,” according to Jim Christy’s The BUK Book: Musings on Charles Bukowski (ECW $12.95).

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Dylan Thomas

Dylan Thomas liked to say that he came to America to pursue “naked women in wet macintoshes” but he was no Casanova.

Short, sickly and alcoholic, he was nonetheless accorded rock star status in April of 1950, at age 36, when he read poetry at the UBC auditorium before an audience of 1,300, then he recited more English verse at the Vancouver Hotel’s Mayfair Room.

At an after-party in his honour at a house on Davie Street, Dylan Thomas and Malcolm Lowry—who had already met one another in England—locked themselves into a room with some admirer (who Dylan Thomas promptly overruled), found him in bed with a female—and woke up there the next morning, and I guess I must have helped to get Dylan back to his hotel.

“By the time they came out,” Earle Birney recalled, “neither of them was very comprehensible. Lowry was inclined to pass out early, and I guess I must have helped to get Dylan back to his hotel.”

The Lowrys fell asleep in the house and woke up there the next morning, visited Dylan Thomas at the Hotel Vancouver, found him in bed with a female admirer (who Dylan Thomas promptly dismissed), and started drinking again.

“Today, Good Friday, nothing is open nor will be open all day long. Everybody is pious and patriotic, apart from a few people in the university & my old friend Malcolm Lowry—do you remember Under the Volcano?—who lives in a hut in the mountains & who came down to see me last night...”

“This afternoon I pick up my bag of soiled clothes and take a plane to Seattle. And thank God to be out of British Canada & back in the terrible United States of America.”

During his second visit in 1952, Dylan Thomas insulted professors at the UBC Faculty Club and again got roaring drunk. He died one year later in New York, at age 39, after a colossal whiskey binge. In 1996, Langara English instructor Ted Langley generated a Dylan Thomas Society in Vancouver.

The city of Vancouver is a quite handsome hellhole.”
— Dylan Thomas with his wife Caitlin

“Visitors

25 FAMOUS LITERARY VISITORS

Joseph Campbell

Joseph Campbell, the man who gave filmmaker George Lucas the archetypes for his Star Wars saga, visited the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1932.

During the Depression, Campbell was close friends with a self-taught Californian ecologist named Ed Ricketts and would-be novelist named John Steinbeck.

Ricketts made three excursions to British Columbia in 1932 [with Campbell], 1945 and 1946 to collect marine specimens. Steinbeck later modeled several characters in his fiction on Ricketts, including ‘Doc’ in the 1945 novel Cannery Row.

Ed Ricketts died when he was hit by a train near Cannery Row in May of 1948. At the time he and Steinbeck had been planning a trip to British Columbia to satisfy Ricketts’s intention to write a book about B.C. coastal marine life to be called Beyond the Outer Shores.

In 2004, at age 32, Ucluelet-raised journalist Eric Enno Tamm published the first biography of Ed Ricketts called Beyond the Outer Shores.

Whereas the sometimes stormy relationship between Ricketts and Steinbeck was well-known, Beyond the Outer Shores provided fresh insights into the friendship between Ricketts and Campbell.

Tamm’s history of the friendship and rivalries between Steinbeck, Campbell and Ricketts contains a section outlining the three-month voyage made by Campbell and Ricketts around the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1932 in the Granpau, a small cruising vessel.

At the time, the yet-to-be-esteemed philosopher Joseph Campbell was escaping the wrath of Steinbeck for cultivating an affair with Steinbeck’s wife Carol.

William Burroughs

William Burroughs first gained notoriety due to a censorship battle regarding his 1953 paperback Junkie. Associated with the Beat poets of San Francisco and City Lights Books, he is renowned for his 1959 memoir of heroin addiction entitled Naked Lunch. Burroughs screened his films and read from his works at 111 Dunsmuir street on November 17, 1974 and returned in 1988, staying at the Sylvia Hotel, for a Western Front exhibit of his ‘shotgun art’—paint gun splats onto plywood that he sold by mail until his death on August 2, 1997.

Burroughs’s presence did have some influence in the evolution of experimental writing in Vancouver. Events dedicated to Burroughs were held at the grunt gallery in Vancouver in 1999.

Michael Morris’ photo of William Burroughs (above) in Vancouver is from Whispered Art History: Twenty Years At The Western Front, edited by Keith Wallace (Western Front Society /Arsenal Pulp Press)
I became owner of 400 well-developed pines, thousands of tons of granite scattered in blocks at the roots of the pines, and a sprinkling of earth. That's a town lot in Vancouver.

"You or your agent hold onto it till property rises, then sell out and buy more land farther out of town and repeat the process. I do not quite see how this sort of thing helps the growth of a town, but the English boy says it is the 'essence of speculation' so it must be all right. But I wish there were fewer pines and rather less granite on the ground."

Kipling was duped. When he returned in 1907, he learned that he'd been paying taxes on property legally owned by someone else.

Privately, Kipling wrote, "All the consolation we got from the smiling people of Vancouver was: 'You bought that from Steve, did you? Ah-hah, Steve! You hadn't ought to ha'bought from Steve. No! Not from Steve!' And thus did the good Steve cure us of speculating in real estate."

In 1907, Kipling was met by the mayor, the Board of Trade and provincial government members. An audience of 500 attended his luncheon speech. Women weren't invited; there was not enough room. But women came anyway, crowding the hall to its doors, filling the spectator gallery.

After receiving a standing, cheering ovation and a Moroccan leather case, embossed with his initials, containing his honorary lifetime membership to the Canadian Club, Kipling rose to discourse on Vancouver.

He compared the city to the head of an army bravely passing through the mountains “to secure a stable Western civilization facing the Eastern Sea.”

Frequently interrupted by applause, he added, “If I had not as great faith as I have in our breed, and in our race, I would tremble at your responsibilities.”

Kipling was wildly enthusiastic about Victoria, having first visited in 1889. He wrote, “Real estate agents recommend it as a little piece of England—the island on which it stands is about the size of Great Britain—but no England is set in any such seas or so fully charged with the mystery of the larger ocean beyond....

“I tried honestly to render something of the color, the gaiety, and the graciousness of the town and the island, but only found myself piling up unbelievable adjectives, and so let it go with a hundred other wonders.”

Nary a word was printed about his property loss in Vancouver.
BY FAR THE MOST TRAVELLED POPE IN HISTORY, POPE JOHN PAUL II became the first non-Italian pope since Hadrian VI (1522-3) in 1978. He visited nearly every country willing to receive him, including Canada in 1984.

Born as Karol Wojtyla in Wadowice, Poland, he wrote numerous books, including an autobiography, Gift and Mystery: On the Fiftieth Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination.

A book about his visit was produced for the archdiocese of Vancouver.

"My religion is simple, my religion is kindness" — Dalai Lama, seen here with George Woodcock and Ingeborg Woodcock

THE FORMER VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, now used for small planes, was the model for the airport that appears in the climax of Arthur Hailey's Flight Into Danger, a 1956 television movie in which half of a plane's passengers and its crew are afflicted by food poisoning due to fish dinners. Hailey, a former pilot in WW II, imagined this scenario while taking a flight from Toronto to Vancouver.

The four-year-old TV network called the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation bought Hailey's script for $600. The pivotal role of the emergency pilot was played by a young James Doohan, who later became widely known as 'Scottie' on Star Trek. The airing was an unprecedented success for the fledgling CBC, leading to a screening in Britain. Hailey's script became the basis for a 1957 Paramount movie called Zero Hour. A novelized version of this story, co-authored by John Castle, was released in 1958. One year later it was published in the United States as Runway Zero-Eight, marking the start of Arthur Hailey's fiction career.

Hailey's thriller Airport was researched in Los Angeles and Chicago; his blockbuster novel Hotel was based on the Fairmont New Orleans Hotel. But his writing career—one can argue—took off from Vancouver.
IN 1876 LADY DUFFERIN visited British Columbia with Lord Dufferin, Governor General of Canada. Her impressions of Canada are contained in *My Canadian Journal* 1872-'8: Extracts From My Letters Home Written While Lord Dufferin Was Governor-General (A. Appleton, 1891).

Some of Lady Dufferin’s watercolors of B.C. are housed at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. As one of the great role models for women in the late 1800s, Lady Dufferin epitomized progressive civility.

BEFORE HE BECAME famous for sailing the *Kon-Tiki* from Peru to the Raroia in the South Pacific, Norwegian explorer and archaeologist Thor Heyerdahl visited Bella Coola in 1939-1940 to compare petroglyphs at Thorsen Creek with Polynesian art forms. He had theorized that Hawaii could have been settled by people from British Columbia. During his visit, when Germany overran Norway, Heyerdahl was forced to remain in Canada with limited funds. His resourceful Nuxalk guide suggested they might have used giant rafts of kelp.

ONE OF THE FIRST LITERARY luminaries to appear in British Columbia was the American humourist Mark Twain, alias for Samuel Clemens, who spoke to a delighted throng at the Imperial Theatre on August 15, 1895. He received rave reviews but came down with a bad cold, that left him recuperating at the Hotel Vancouver.

BRITISH COLUMBIA’S most fantastic cult leader, known to his followers as the Brother XII, Edward Arthur Wilson was a theosophical leader who had a spiritual community on southern Vancouver Island in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The financial and sexual scandals that arose from his Aquarian Foundation settlement have led to comparisons with Rasputin, scientologist L. Ron Hubbard and Jonestown fanatic Jim Jones. Wilson has been more fairly dubbed Canada’s False Messiah or False Prophet.

Infamous for his egotism and fraudulent behavior, Wilson is rarely cited as a literary figure. Yet he spread his delusional claptrap in publications and books: *The Three Truths* (1927); *The Aquarian Foundation* (1927); *Foundation Letters and Teachings* (1927); *The End of the Days* (1928); *Unsigned Letters from an Elder Brother* (1938); *Primer of Astrology for Children* (1930).


THE EMOTIONAL RANGE AND DEPTH OF THESE STORIES, THE CLARITY AND DEFTNESS, IS ASTONISHING.” —Alice Munro
Mark Vonnegut in the 1960s

Mark Vonnegut in the 1970s

Kurt Vonnegut and his son Mark

25 FAMOUS LITERARY VISITORS

Kurt Vonnegut

"He was then 22, and I myself was a mere spring chicken of 47, a mere 32 years ago. By the time Mark and I went in a hired car from the house with the broken picture window in Vancouver to what turned out to be an excellent private mental hospital in nearby New Westminster, he had at least become a jazz saxophonist and a painter. He babble merrily en route and it was language, but the words were woven into vocal riffs worthy of his hero John Coltrane."

The Edens Express: A Memoir of Insanity (Praeger/Bantam, 1975) by Mark Vonnegut describes his difficulties with drugs and schizophrenia between 1969 and 1972. It was written after Vonnegut accepted his need for medication and returned to the society from whence he came. Initially Mark Vonnegut wrote an article entitled, "Why I Want to Bite R. D. Laing's Leg." Having first attributed his recovery to orthomolecular (megavitamin) therapy, he later came to the conclusion that he had been manic-depressive for hereditary reasons.

Mark Vonnegut subsequently studied medicine at Harvard Medical School and became a pediatrician in Boston.
WHEN I LEFT THE SPORTS PAGES for good in 2001 I swore not to become one of those tiresome carping old farts who bitch at the way things are and long for the days that were. I’d like a mulligan on that. Just a little one.

I need to know where the laughter went.

The weekly crop of fiscal foolishness, far-headed owners, tunnel-visioned executives and jockstrap me-firsters has never been more bountiful. Yet I see little laughter in the sports sections. It’s not that there’s no one who could do it. There are gifted young writers out there, sharp and sardonic and fully capable of inserting needles in the hides of the pompous or poking fun at silly masquerading as important.

But somewhere between press box cynicism and laptop creativity they sip the cliché Kool-Aid and slide the saber back into the sheath.

I’m not sure why. Maybe, in this new mixed-media universe, management doesn’t want it. Were I still with one of the Vancouver dailies I doubt I’d be allowed to lambaste Vancouver’s 2010 Olympics bid, that monument to excess and misguided enthusiasm.

In a city where the media race to see who can over-cover the Vancouver Canucks has turned into a year-long preoccupation, there might not be room for a guy who looked at the old black, orange and yellow uniforms and understood what they stood for. In a city where the media race to see who can over-cover the Vancouver Canucks has turned into a year-long preoccupation, there might not be room for a guy who looked at the old black, orange and yellow uniforms and understood what they stood for.

A city where the media race to see who can over-cover the Vancouver Canucks has turned into a year-long preoccupation, it has even more impact.

But early in the game I learned an important lesson: people like to laugh. If you can amuse them as you make your point there’s a better chance they’ll see it, or at least read to the end. The other half of the equation: When you stop laughing, when you really get ticked about something, rear back and throw the high hard one, it has even more impact.

—Jim Taylor

Jim Taylor was once B.C.’s most widely-read sports columnist. He drank beer from the Stanley Cup, saw Paul Henderson score “The Goal” in 1972, and he once predicted rookie place-kicker Lui Passaglia—who became the all-time top scorer in professional football—wouldn’t last with the BC Lions more than one season. Along the way he wrote more than 8,000 newspaper columns.

Born on March 16, 1957 in Nipawin, Saskatchewan, Taylor began his newspaper career in 1954 as a part-time sports reporter at the Daily Colonist in Victoria and later wrote for the Vancouver Sun, the Province and the Calgary Sun. His 1987 chronicle of Rick Hansen’s wheelchair journey, Man In Motion, reputedly had a record first printing for a B.C. book. In addition to Taylor’s books on Wayne Gretzky and B.C. Lions’ receiver Jim Young, Taylor is credited with the re-write of a Soviet journalist’s biography of Igor Larionov. Always mindful of his predecessors, he compiled The Best of Jim Coleman: Fifty Years of Canadian Sport from the Man Who Saw it All in 2004. A member of the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame and the Canadian Football League Hall of Fame, Taylor was awarded a lifetime achievement award by Sports Media Canada in 2000.


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Dirty 30 (Methuen, 1974)
Twenty years ago, when Judith Plant published her first book, _Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism_ with New Society Publishers in Philadelphia, she and her partner Chris Plant wrestled with a publishing decision that changed the course of their lives, leading them out of the backwoods to the forefront of the Sustainability Movement. Here Chris Plant recalls the evolution of their remarkable imprint.

As a face-to-face meeting in Philadelphia in 1995, we learned very suddenly that the Philadelphia office was basically bankrupt. Unless someone stepped up to the plate, the publishing operation would be forced to close. Unlike the key players in the Philadelphia office who seemed tried, we were not ready to stop publishing—or the company, we were just getting going. The only thing to do was to take over the whole operation. We were organized as non-profits at the time, and at first we tried raising the necessary capital through charitable means. But good fortune stepped in at the right time in the form of an angel investor. This angel had been on our mailing list from the beginning of the New Catalyst days, and so in 1995 Gabriola Island became the international headquarters of New Society Publishers.

We bought just over 50 percent of the New Society list along with the U.S. distribution infrastructure and a whole lot of goodwill. Not everyone was happy about the change, but New Society had become a Canadian enterprise, however, and our task became that of continuing authors and others that we could continue to be an effective social change publisher from north of the border. New Society had started as a social movement, opposing the war in Vietnam, nuclear power, and publishing pamphlets on peace and nonviolence, civil disobedience, conflict resolution, and social change. Their early books focused on nonviolent, anti-empire, and alternative economies.

Having to sometimes type by the light of two Osborne computers, we called this our New Society Satellite Office, and from this we did our part. For the next couple of years or so, we learned with the people who needed the material we were publishing. Green festivals, natural building colloquia and a whole lot of goodwill. Not everyone was pleased that New Society had been embraced by the mainstream, but somehow that turn-around decade was entirely pleasing. Now we were publishing about sustainability and social change. People at such conferences and events were happy to receive the material we were publishing, and in the early years of this new millennium came to pass, sustainability suddenly became the name of the game. As ‘green’ became the color of choice, sales mushroomed, and we realized we had moved into a new phase.

At last, the sustainability publisher had become financially sustainable. But we were tired. We needed to reinvent the publisher from north of the border. New Society had started as a social movement publisher, and we were still learning how to do it.

Sustainability was a hard sell but we relentlessly pursued it. We added important renewable energy books to our categories of interest, as well as a line of natural building books that caught the emerging Green building wave before it had become fashionable.

Ten years later. We added staff. We added buildings, doubling our output to three thousand titles a year. We received our first major grant. Now it’s time for us to be publishing books on sustainability and social change more effectively than ever before. It is an exciting time. It is a time of change.

Judith PlantSykes by candlelight, 1988

By Chris Plant

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Fast forward to 2009. Lieutenant Governor Steven Point jokes that he is First Nations Catholic who now officially represents the Queen of England. There are eight prizes. And nobody drinks too much.

Book Prizes’ co-founder and emcee Alan Twigg asked how many people had attended the first bun toss back in ’85. Seven people raised their hands. When he asked if anyone had attended all 25 successive galas, only Howard White of Harbour Publishing stood up.

His Honour Steven Point had some competition this year for Best Speech [see next page] and half the prizes were won for books published in B.C., even though B.C.-published titles only amounted to about one-third of the nominees.

First-time event organizer Fernanda Viveiros is off to a good start for the next quarter-century.

Downtown Eastsiders Teresa Chenery and Clyde Wright were on hand to root for Hope in Shadows: Stories & Photographs of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, nominated for the Haig-Brown Prize.

Photographer Barry Peterson and Ming Ow mounted the Lit Happens exhibit featuring B.C. authors.

EGOFF PRIZE PRESENTER MEG TILLY AND HAIG-BROWN PRIZE NOMINEE GILLIAN JEROME

QUARTER CENTURIONS

IT WAS TWENTY YEARS AGO TODAY, SGT. PEPPER TAUGHT THE BAND TO play. And it was twenty-five years ago that a little-known and much-forgotten umbrella group called BC Book Promotional Council suggested folks should rally round to produce an alternative to the defunct Eaton’s Book Award.

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The President of the West Coast Book Prize Society, Sally Harding, declared it was The Year of the Speech. Here are two pages of excerpts.

GABOR MATÉ RECEIVING the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize for his book about addictions, In the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts, Downtown Eastside physician Gabor Maté sat down with the audience of the proximity to Main & Hastings:

“I’m honoured to have been awarded this prize for literary non-fiction. It’s a validation of a deep part of me. Since childhood books have played an essential part in my development. Books show us what life is, what it truly is beneath the surface dross of the mundane and the day-to-day superficialities of our culture. Beyond that, they show us what life could be like if we honoured who we really are, and what existence is at its human and divine core.

“As a writer, I work on two levels. First, the level of facts and ideas, and in this realm I don’t have too many self-doubts. I’m arrogant enough to believe that by the time my thoughts find their expression in print, they are grounded in science and logic and intuition, no matter how they are received and who agrees or disagrees with me. But on the level of literary expression I’m vulnerable. This is where I have insecurities and for that very reason this prize is such a welcome validation, an affirmation that I belong to the great community of writers.

“Having said that, there is a living fact I cannot neglect to mention. Ten blocks to the east of us is the epicenter of the world I depict in my book, Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. Here are fellow human beings who are ill and impoverished and hunted and ostracized because they were abused early in their lives and, as a result, came to the conclusion that only through certain substances will they find relief from their pain, only through drugs a source of pleasure, only through addiction any escape from torments most of us would find unbearable.

“In the Downtown Eastside thirty per cent of my patients are of First Nations origin, whereas our aboriginal peoples make up only a small percentage of the Canadian population. There is a prevailing myth that they are genetically prone to addictions to drugs and alcohol. Nothing is further from the truth. There were potentially addictive substances in North America before the European invasions: peyote, tobacco and even alcohol. As elsewhere in the world, aboriginal peoples used psychoactive substances as spiritual teach...

and shows himself in public, he shouts, “It is true, the king does have goat ears!”

“By doing that he is a winner. In children’s eyes he is a hero just like any other, for what makes a hero is not his perfection but his strength and the ability to act in an exceptional way.”

“I felt a huge admiration for this character, after the book had been published. Presenting it to the young readers and answering their questions I realized that even though I had written the book and had created the protagonist, there was a lot for me or any other adult to learn from it.

“I am a person of words and language had been my major channel to life since I was a child. Fifteen years ago, I lived the words: I was a writer and a journalist with a solid career in radio broadcasting. I saw poetry in every segment of the day. But it was all in another country and in another language. When I came to Canada I spoke English very well like many people from Europe who went through university studies and travelled. My English was good enough to work, to read, to teach, to integrate and to make friends. But not sufficient to be the writer I used to be.

“Language is not only about grammar and morphology, it is also about the mind and the feelings. It took me years of silence, years of seeing myself as a diminished poet, before I started sensing the English words the way I had felt the words in my first language. It took me years of not writing for the simple reason that I couldn’t decide in what language to write.

“It took me years before my deepest reflections and thoughts touched the words and I started writing literature in English. Still, it takes courage to talk about that.”

KATARINA JOVANOVIC RECEIVING the Christie Harris Illustrated Literature Prize for The King Has Goat Ears, Serbian-born Katarina Jovanovic repeated the aphorism, “Good children’s literature appeals not only to the child in the adults, but to the adult in the child.”

“I wanted to make a book about the necessity of self-acceptance, but also about its complexity. Accepting yourself the way you are is not an easy job and it requires work and patience.

“The main character in my book is the king who was born with goat ears. Of course, he is very much ashamed of that and his difference creates lots of difficulties in his life including the barbers who come one after another to shave him and do his royal haircut. When the king finally pokes his head out of the carriage for the first time...”

Gabor Mate writes exploratory books about mental and physical health issues such as addictions and attention deficit disorder.

BOOKS:
Scattered Minds (Knopf 1999)
When the Body Says No (Knopf 2003)
Hold On To Your Kids (Knopf 2004) with Gordon Neufeld
In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts (Knopf 2008)
ACKNOWLEDGING HIS PREDECESSORS

(P.K. Page, Gary Geddes, Patrick Lane, Jack Hodgson, and Robert Bringhurst)

“Terry Glavin is the seventh recipient of the Lieutenant Governor’s Award for Literary Excellence. When I was in high school, I came upon Gary Geddes’ 15 Canadian Poets, which led me to P.K. Page and Pat Lane. Drawn deeper into the interior, upriver, and upcoast, I saw in Jack Hodgson’s Spi Delaney’s Island a magical landscape, in a work of fiction, that I immediately recognized as the real world, which was also a kind of a hidden world that I was only then discovering around me.”

“I’d been noticing that there were words in the language I spoke, and I didn’t even know where they came from. They were words like skookum, cultus, hyack, and klootchman.”

“I found myself returning, puzzled and awestruck, to the epic stories the old people used to tell in places like Katzie and Popkum and Musqueam.

“I didn’t fully understand why until years later when I read Robert Bringhurst’s translations of the oral literature of the Haida mythtellers, and the stories of Ghandi, the blind poet of Sea Lion Town.

“On the old maps, such works of grandeur and beauty were supposed to be located only in such places as the Ramayana, or the Epic of Gilgamesh.”

ON FALSE IMAGES

“The old maps show Alexander Mackenzie’s route from Canada to the coast in 1793, and you will be told that he was the first white man to do it, and fair play to him, but they do not show the route the Algonquin chief Mongsoaethinywuk took on his own overland journey from Lake Michigan to the Pacific in 1728.”

ON JAMES DOUGLAS

“New parochial histories admonish us to be ashamed of our colonial legacy, and fair play to shame. But there is nothing to be ashamed of in our first governor, James Douglas, the grandson of a ‘free coloured’ woman from Barbados, or in Douglas’s wife, Lady Amelia, an Irish Cree, both of whom were followers of the great British abolitionist, William Wilberforce.”

ON CROSS-CULTURALISM

“Unless you’ve been listening to Todd Wong, the animator of Vancouver’s annual Gung Haggis Fat Choy celebrations, you might not know that the Cantonese merchants of Chinatown were celebrating Robbie Burns Day as far back as the 1930s.”

ON UNIVERSAL VALUES

“If I hadn’t listened closely to old people like Vera Robson on Mayne Island, I would never have known about the white people who fought against the internment of their Japanese neighbours in the 1940s.

“I would not have known that from the camps, the Japanese sent back Christmas cards with maps that showed the places where they’d hidden troves of sake for their islander friends, as presents.

“These are the maps worth keeping and studying. On those maps are the small kindnesses and the purely local affairs that make up what is universal in human affairs, and no true story can be told without them.”

“Throw away the old maps that don’t show these things. Listen closely to the stories the old people will tell you in places like Gitannax and Captain George Town and Yakwakwinoose, and you’ll learn that the old maps are wrong, that there are no impenetrable mountains ranges between the wild and the tamed, nature and culture, or language and landscape, and there is no unfathomable sea between east and west.

“Throw out the old compasses, sextants and chronometers. Travel back overland across Canada without them, and you will notice that this is not a western country. It is just as much Canada as anywhere else.

“Take this method with you to such places as the Russian Far East, Afghanistan, or Guangdong, and you will notice the same.

“The compasses that never worked here won’t work there, either, so you put them aside, and you see there is no such thing as ‘western values,’ only universal values.

“There is only the whole world and its stories, and we’re right in the middle of it all, no matter where we are.”
ROBIN’S WHO’S WHO
THE LAST WORD ON THE LAST COAST

Robin Inglis untangles the fascinating blend of characters and events that were major influences on the early history of the last temperate coastline to be placed on the world map.

When you go to a hockey or baseball game, there’s generally a program that provides the names and numbers of the players to enhance the meaning of the contest, to make the encounter into a better story. Similarly, if you go to the theatre, or open a Russian novel, there’s a list of characters provided at the outset to prevent you from losing your way.

Robin Inglis’ mouthful-titled Historical Dictionary of the Discovery and Exploration of the Northwest Coast of America now provides a similar orientation service to untangle the fascinating blend of male and female characters and events that were formative influences on the early history of the last temperate coastline to be placed on the world map.

For a succinct endorsement of this volume, one cannot do much better than cheer, “It’s about time!”

After four years of concentration, Inglis’ Northwest Coast, at 428 pages, could have been twice as long, but it would have been half as valuable. Confused but all-inclusive, this authoritative guide casts a gigantic biographical net over a dizzying range of little-known Russian, British, French and Spanish and American mariners and traders.

The first European known to have visited British Columbia waters was Juan Pérez, sailing from the San Blas naval base, south of San Diego, in 1774, to Langara Island (Haida Gwaii) and then south to the mouth of Nootka Sound (eastern Vancouver Island). He was followed by Captain Bodega y Quadra in 1775, and more famously by Captain James Cook in 1778 (including young officers George Vancouver and William Bligh of Mutiny on the Bounty fame). Beyond that, most British Columbians know next-to-nothing, or simply nothing, about the first invaders of coastal First Nation’s lands, so Inglis has provided more than 400 cross-referenced entries, along with a cogent introduction, maps and illustrations, an extensive bibliography (with advice on essential reference works) and an engaging chronology of events dating from the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 (when the Pope divided the undiscovered world between Spain and Portugal) and the purchase of Russian America by the United States in 1867.

Where Inglis’ streamlined omnibus is the fourth volume in a series of historical dictionaries of discovery and exploration edited by Jon Woronoff who has noted there has been a tendency towards scholarly patriotism—“or just laziness”—Inglis has expanded North Pacific history into a new league.

“Thus the greatest merit of the ‘author,’ according to Woronoff, ‘is to have placed equal and fair emphasis on all of the actors, including the Spanish, French and Russian, who all too often and unfairly come in a very distant second to the British and Americans.’ This is true. The dozens of Russian names we encounter are made pleasing to learn when we know their numbers, the positions they play, their stats. Inglis has expanded North Pacific history into a new league. Who knew that Kirill Khlebnikov (1785-1838) was the official historian of the Russian-American Company? And that in 1953 his private papers revealed the long-lost journal of Vasily Khromchenko, navigator for the Otto von Kotzebue expedition, 1815-1818?

Better yet, this compendium is as trustworthy as it is culturally unbiased. As the guiding force behind Vancouver-based Instituto de Historia del Pacifico Español (Spanish Pacific History Society), Inglis, former director of the Vancouver Maritime Museum and North Vancouver Museum and Archives, has been able to benefit from the intelligence and knowledge of an impressive list of contacts such as Barry Gough, Kylie Hayes, John Kendrick and Freeman Tovell—to mention only a few.

Perhaps as a consequence of his intimidating peer group, Inglis assiduously avoids going out on limbs of scholarly conjecture. As to whether or not the mysterious Greek-born Apostolos Valerianos, better known as Juan de Fuca, might have reached a broad inlet between latitudes of 47 and 48 degrees in 1592, Inglis will only concede to agree this intriguing scenario “is not entirely outside the realm of possibility.”

Inglis’ restraint in not including titillating tidbits is admirable. For instance, he limits his entry on the fantastical life of John R. Jewitt, a sixth-generation descendant of Captain Cook in 1778. The two descendants first met as young men in October, 1867, at the Vancouver Maritime Museum, at which time the museum made available the dagger made by Jewitt for Chief Maquinna during his captivity.

In 2003, John R. Jewitt, a sixth-generation descendant of John Jewitt, traveled to Yuquot on the east side of Vancouver Island to meet with Mike Maquinna, a descendant of the Chief Maquinna who met Captain Cook in 1778. The two descendents first met as young men in October, 1867, at the Vancouver Maritime Museum, at which time the museum made available the dagger made by Jewitt for Chief Maquinna during his captivity.
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“...Vipond does a super job with port detail and background. With her crisp writing and in-depth reporting, she’s created a terrific series of guides.” – Cruise Critic

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Distributed by UBC Press.

Georg Steller is depicted measuring a sea cow on Bering Island, from Bering’s Voyages by F.A. Goldob (1925), art by Leonard Stejneger.

continued from page 31

and he does not accord much historical status to the bizarre misadventures of John Mackay, the first European to live year-round at Friendly Cove and Tahsis with Chief Maquinna. From 1786-1787, the famous captain of John Hewett, from 1808-1805 is worthy of just one paragraph. Clearly Inglis is serving the interests of posterity, not People magazine. But he does play a few favours. Notably he trumpets the work of German botanist Georg Wilhelm Steller, who documented the sea cow or northern manatee, *Hydrodamalis gigas*, before it was hunted to extinction by Russians in the late 18th century. (British Columbia’s provincial bird was later named *Cyanocitta stelleri* or Steller’s Jay, another tidbit excluded by Inglis, who is clearly writing for an international readership.) Entries range far beyond maritime explorers such as the ineffectual Vitus Bering and the under-appreciated George Vancouver to include overland explorers (David Thompson, Simon Fraser etc.), sea otters, scientists, Nootka Crisits, Shumagin Islands, San Juan Border Dispute, Chief Maquinna (there were likely two Maquinnas between Cook’s arrival in 1778 and Jewitt’s captivity) and the far-sighted Thomas Jefferson (who sponsored Hay’s expedition, after being encouraged by Ledyard). The art of concision is seldom rewarded, or even mentioned— but North Coast of British Columbia. “ – Pacific Sticking

... author Anne Vipond goes beyond the standard cruise-shore excursions and cultural insights for each destination. Over 700,000 cruisers now rely on our books for the inside track on ports, local attractions, shore activities and aboard an 18th century trading vessel. The Imperial Eagle reached Nootka Sound in June 1787. Here Barkley met John Mackay, a ship’s surgeon who had been left there the previous summer by another trader, James Strange. Mackay offered valuable information about local trading activities and the geography of the coast, which suggested that Nooka was on an island, not the American continent. As a result Barkley sailed his ship south and traded successfully in Clayoquot Sound and another large indentation in the coast, which he named Barkley Sound after himself.

Proceeding farther south he was astonished to find, at the end of July, that he was off the entrance to a great strait, which he promptly named after the legendary navigator Juan de Fuca, who was said to have discovered a strait in the same latitude on the American west coast in 1592. He was particularly surprised because the strait’s existence had been discounted by James Cook a mere nine years earlier in 1778.

Tragically then befell the voyage when, near Destruction Island and the mouth of the Hoh River in Washington, six men landed a small boat but were promptly killed by local natives.

Barkley sailed immediately for Canton to sell his cargo of furs. He reported not only an already saturated market but also, more ominously, that the East India Company had discovered the threat to its monopoly. As he planned a second voyage his partners dissociated themselves from the venture to save their positions; their agents sold the Imperial Eagle and Barkley’s charts, journals and stores were acquired by John Meares.

Meares used the information in the account of his own voyages to the Northwest Coast, published in 1790, in which he credited Barkley with the discovery of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

It’s easy to predict that Inglis’ *Historical Dictionary of the Discovery and Exploration of the Northwest Coast of America* will gradually become a required reference work, stored on the same shelf as the *Encyclopedia of B.C.*, Chuck Davis’ *Vancouver volumes* or Jean Barman’s *West Beyond the West*.

Unfortunately the process of reliance upon this book can only be gradual due to its price.

“The book is a superbly useful reference,” says historian Derek Hayes, “and should be on every ship, but unfortunately it won’t be unless there is a cheaper paperback edition. Amazon has it for $133.76 (Cdn.). I think this American publisher calculates the number of institutions they can sell it to and prices it accordingly, and are even trying to sell to the general public. It’s a shame really. Just one way of doing business I guess.”
GREGOR’S GIFT

This ain’t no Dead Poets Society—it’s a coherent choir

By William New

my Vancouver starts somewhere behind blackout curtains,
starts in a fenced-garden
with the canopy cloth on a wooden toy truck,
camouflaged:

starts with a streetcar ride
and the dead soldier on cordova street,
limp on an angel’s arm,
dragged upward
beside the southeast corner of the cpr station:

the soldier never moved:
every childhood trip to town, there he stayed, hanging:
heaven as close as maybe
the north shore mountains,
on of reach:
the coastline dissolving in war and death,
as clear as fear and rain

—From A Verse Map of Vancouver, edited by George McWhirter (Anvil Press $55) 778-1-97753-02-0

In 1921, the Canadian Pacific Railroad paid Coupe de Lion MacCarthy to make this Cordova Street statue depicting an angel carrying a World War I soldier to heaven.

When the famously handsome English poet Rupert Brooke visited Vancouver and Victoria in 1913, he wrote, “You think B.C. means before Christ, but it doesn’t. I’m sitting, wildly surmising, on the edge of the Pacific, gazing at mountains which are changing colour every two minutes in the most surprising way. Nature here is half Japa-
ner."
EQUUS FOR TEENS

Susan Ketchen’s young adult novel combines a teen’s obsession with horses & a struggle with Turner’s Syndrome.

For one thing, no matter how many weird stretching routines she devises, Sylvia is no bigger than an eight-year-old. The kids call her Pygmy Chimp and laugh at her ears. It’s only when Sylvia and her well-meaning but overly-analytical and recently-graduated psychoanalyst mother are delivered to a young replace-ment psychiatrist that the truth comes out. Dr. Cleveland looks at Sylvia’s palm and, like Sylvia’s cousin, notes she only has one line, not the usual two. When she makes a fist, she has three knuckles, not four. Her fingernails look like claws. She has a really thick mass of hair at her nape, like the mane of a horse. Her mom weeps at the probable chance, with treatment, that she might grow taller.

Turner Syndrome is a 1-in-2000 chromosomal malfunction. The condition occurs only in girls, who normally have two X chromosomes. Girls with Turner Syndrome are either missing an X chromosome entirely or have one that is incom-plete, or they have cells missing the X chromosome. Like Sylvia, these girls are short with absent or incomplete development at puberty and they can be prone to health problems such as arthritis, middle ear infections, diabetes and kidney ailments. There are also fertility issues. With medical intervention such as growth hormone, and estrogen replacement therapy at adolescence, girls with Turner Syndrome can lead normal lives or, as in Sylvia’s case, whatever passes for normal for the severely-horse-addicted.

Born That Way is Susan Ketchen’s first young adult novel and she suffers from severe horse addiction as well. To write and to ride have been her life goals achieved through an overly-long education in a number of fields at a number of universities across the country. She’s a Marriage and Family Therapist, living on a Vancouver Island hobby farm where she teaches her horses to play the piano with their noses and identify flash cards.

Solstice is a magically potent time. Anything can happen on the longest day of the year. Of the shortest. In The Solstice Cup twin sisters Breanne and Mackenzie are facing the win-ter solstice in Ireland and Mac-kenzie is terrified the Otherworld is reaching out for them again.

For one thing, during the summer solstice, Mackenzie knows for certain that a long, thin arm came out of the shade. She’s not the same girl. Breanne scoffs at the outlandish idea that her limp, a leg that won’t heal, is the work of a malevolent night-dwelling creature’s clart.

But Breanne does blame her sister for the affliction and when once again the two girls cross into the Otherworld the fester-ing resentment may well cost them their lives.

The Solstice Cup began brewing for Rachel Dunstan Muller a few years ago when she accompanied her husband on a teaching exchange to Northern Ireland and found inspiration in the mysterious glens. A mother of five, including twins, she lives in a small community on Vancouver Island.

Louise Donnelly writes her quarterly column from Vernon.
Aaron Bushkowsky’s quirky romance My Chernobyl (Playwrights Canada $16.95) has won the 2008 Victoria Critics’ Spotlight award for Best Professional Production and Best New Play. When a naive Canadian travels to Belarus, in order to give an inheritance to his father’s last remaining relative, he meets his long-lost cousin, a beautiful, young Russian woman who views the Canadian as a ticket out of the radiation-blasted country. Cultures and ideals clash with touching and hilarious results. 978-0-88754-859-8

In k.c. dyer’s A Walk Through a Window (Doubleday $14.95) a young girl named Darby reluctantly spends a summer with grandparents until she and a neighbourhood boy discover a magical stone window frame that transports them into Canadian history. After she encounters the Underground Railroad; the coffin ships of the Irish Potato Famine and the Inuit as they cross the Bering Land Bridge into North America, her perception of Canada changes and she is strengthened to face tragedy within her own family. 978-0-385-66637-4

Translated by scholars working in collaboration with Salish storytellers, Salish Myths and Legends: One People’s Stories (University of Nebraska Press $31.95) is an anthology of stories, legends, songs and oratory edited by M. Terry Thompson and Steven M. Egesdal. Thompson has conducted research on Salish languages for forty years and co-authored Thompson River Salish Dictionary and The Thompson Language. Egesdal has written Stylized Character Speech in Thompson Salish Narrative. 978-0-8032-1089-9

George Fetherling’s novel Walt Whitman’s Secret will be published in December by Random House. It’s not about Whitman’s well-known homosexuality. Rather, it involves Whitman’s link to the assassination of Abe Lincoln. Fetherling and friends recently celebrated his 60th birthday at the Kathmandu restaurant in Vancouver.
The Catholic archives of the archdiocese of Vancouver were not organized until the 1980s, but Jacqueline Gresko has managed to prepare an extensively illustrated and broad history to celebrate its centennial, Traditions of Faith and Service (Archdiocese of Vancouver $39). The archdiocese is one of B.C.’s oldest and largest institutions, currently representing some 456,000 Catholics.

A new collector’s edition of Donald Pettit’s archival photos, The Peace: A History in Photographs (Sandhill $79.95) has tied for a gold Ippy award (Independent Publisher Book Awards) for Western Canada, and has also received an Honourable Mention in the Art category of the Eric Hoffer Book Prizes.

Formerly a career banker in B.C. for 30 years, Eric Jamieson also doubled as a freelance writer of outdoor articles and gradually switched to historical subjects. He co-authored Gareth Wood’s account of his unsupported journey to the South Pole with a British Expedition. Jamieson has now written a memoir volume about the collapse of the Second Narrows Bridge in 1958, Tragedy at Second Narrows: The Story of the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge (Harbour $32.95).

San Francisco-based Lloyd Kahn, a former editor for 1960s magazine The Whole Earth Catalog and the publisher of Shelter (1973) and HomeWork (2004), has featured many builders and carpenters from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands in his photo-essay of ingenious, eco-friendly experimentalism in building styles and dwellings. Builders of the Pacific Coast (Shelter $26.95), includes more than 1,200 colour photos of mostly “hippie-style” contemporary architecture.

Having studied medicine at Yale University and given fitness advice to Quentin Tarantino, B.C.-based fitness model Christine Lydon, M.D., offers 35 recipes and 65 exercises for her program to slimmer hips and flatter abs in Ten Years Thinner: 6 Weeks to a Leaner Younger You (Penguin $32).

G is for Gresko

H is for Hickling

Meg Hickling is a retired R.N. who has been instilling knowledge of sexual health in children and adults for over 30 years. A recipient of numerous awards, including the Order of British Columbia and the Order of Canada, she has most recently published Grown-Up Sex: Sexual Wholeness for the Better Part of Your Life (Wood Lake $18.95) and previously The New Speaking of Sex: What Your Children Need to Know and When They Need to Know It (Wood Lake 2005).

I is for Ippy

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First, come, first served. For our Quickies community calendar of ads from authors—see page 30—we accept reservations from the first 30 applicants. Just email us.


As a retired associate professor in the humanities at Simon Fraser University, Mary-Anne Stouck has edited A Short Reader of Medieval Saints (UTP $19.95), a selection of readings based on her earlier and longer book, Medieval Saints: A Reader. Portraying the lives of nine saints, the text ranges from accounts of torture and trials to descriptions of virtues and visions.


In a heartfelt collection of reflective essays on travel and family life, in particular the challenges of coping with her parents’ mental and physical decline, Prince Rupert-based photographer Nancy Robertson has evinced difficult intimacies that are universal in Searching for the April Moon (Sandhill $21). Robertson grew up in Nelson, married in the 1960s, and moved to Prince Rupert with her two children in 1973.


Like her earlier and longer book, Oonagh Corcoran and a Fugitive American Slave (McGill-Queens $32.95), touted as the first in-depth book on Inuit oral literature to appear in English in nearly a century. It provides versions of the legend of the hero-shaman Kiviuq, an Inuit counterpart to Homer’s Odysseus, as told by forty Inuit elders. Van Deusen also points out cultural connections across the Bering Strait, past and present.


In 2006, Jack Whyte launched a new trilogy about the original nine Templar Knights, commencing with the madness and cruelty of the First Crusade in 1088. The final volume Order in Chaos (Penguin $38) follows the plight of Templar Knight William St. Clair after Philip IV arrests every Templar in France, seizes the Order’s assets and launches the Inquisition.


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We have to mention June Hutton. Who’s who Punch The Boss Jan 22 $16 is a novel of social unrest in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside as the 2010 Winter Olympics approach. Walter’s own GFP imprint will next publish Punch The Boss, a semi-autobiographical novel chronicling the author’s varied work history. For more about his 17 books, visit www.punkbooks.com


To be right… Our apologies to June, who’s just a little bit like a young Jane Rule.


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Final chapter

The word 'ekstasis' comes from an ancient Greek word meaning 'to stand outside oneself.' Richard Olafson is now in a state of ekstasis.

After publishing 328 titles in 28 years, Olafson, who owns and operates Ekstasis Editions of Victoria, has received a letter from Canada Council advising him, in his words, that his operations are "not up to the standards of the Canada Council." Without Council backing, he is reluctantly pulling the plug. The potential loss of Olafson as a literary lynchpin in Victoria is also lamentable because his offshoots include the Pacific Festival of the Book, the City of Victoria Book Prize and the Pacific Rim Review of Books. Olafson says he is unwilling to mount any counter-offensive, having received widespread support from writers during a crisis involving his relations with Canada Council two years ago.

"I am one of the few poetry publishers who pays advances to poets," he says, "and it is a slap in the face of the West. There are at least three entities that will expire when I quit.

"First off, what Victoria and Vancouver Island and the province need more than anything is a major book festival and the Pacific Festival of the Book satisfies that goal. It occurred this year because Carol and I financed half of it. We had about 50 local and international authors, brought some Beats up from SF, and had visitors from Europe participating.

"Secondly, the country needs more than ever a publishing house with a purely literary mandate, that is willing to risk the publication of first time authors, and addresses the nature of the modern lyric. Ekstasis Editions is a necessary press. I have already invested in this year, paid advances for books including new poetry by Pawel, current chair of the League of Canadian Poets, as well as a tribute to Victoria with art and poetry by the city's major figures such as PK Page and Marilyn Bowering, edited by poet laureate Linda Rogers. As well I have signed the contracts for 4 translations, two from Quebecois writers, and all these books may never see the light of day. This will affect the careers and incomes of writers and translators, as well as many others including editors, graphic artists, employees and printers.

"Thirdly, with the disappearance of media and especially book coverage in the popular media, it is a necessity that a journal like the Pacific Rim Review of Books exists, a journal devoted to pure critical discourse yet in a familiar and casual style. The PRRB is the perfect journal for Canada right now. Now that Books in Canada no longer exists in paper format it is the only one."

Some like it short

Ric Beairsto learned in 2007 that his book, The Tyranny of Story: Audience Expectations and the Short Screenplay, was #1 on the American Film Institute's list of required reading for its incoming students, under the screenwriting category, when an AFI student called him looking for the book. The call prompted Beairsto to rewrite and self-publish The Tyranny of Story as a print-on-demand title. "At the risk of hubris," he says, "I don't believe any of the other books on short screenplay writing have grasped the essential difference between writing feature-length vs. short screenplays.

"The Vancouver Public Library has announced Brad Cran's appointment as the city's second poet laureate, following George McWhirter. One of Victoria's most integral literary personalities, Linda Rogers, is that city's poet laureate until 2011. Her forthcoming novel is The Third Day Book (Cormorant).

Screenwriter, playwright and performer Mark Leiren-Young joins Eric Nicol, Howard White and Arthur Black as a B.C. winner of the Stephen Leacock Medal for humour. He pocketed $15,000 from the TD Bank Financial Group for his memoir Never Shoot a Stampede Queen: A Bookie Reporter in the Cariboo (Heritage).

D.C. (Dennis) Reid, as president of the League of Poets, is taking Access Copyright to task regarding how little money they give to writers for photocopying revenues and, conversely, how much they give to large publishers. "While writers were the target of the program, the big publishers are taking, along with administration, about 90% of the estimated $40 million taken in this year, leaving 10% for us writers."