Spring Releases from New Society Publishers

**Surviving the Apocalypse in the Suburbs**
The Thrivelist’s Guide to Life Without Oil
Wendy Brown

...a clear-eyed, straight-ahead manual for what’s shaping up to be permanent hard times.
- James Howard Kunstler, author of The Long Emergency
US/Can $19.95

**Simply Imperfect**
Revisiting the Wabi-Sabi House
Robyn Griggs Lawrence

A firm rebuttal to such a rush of technological innovation...It’s about spare living spaces and well-worn handmade objects, and an appreciation of quiet pleasures.
- The New York Times
US/Can $22.95

**Urban Agriculture**
Ideas and designs for the new food revolution
David Tracey

...a road map to food security, to our reconnecting to the soil and the earth, even in cities...
- Dr. Vandana Shiva
US/Can $21.95

**Fleeing Vesuvius**
Overcoming the risks of economic and environmental collapse
Richard Dowkhwaite & Gillian Fallon, editors

Economic growth is over for good...This is the first book to explore the profound, historic implications. Its message could hardly be more urgent.
- Richard Heinberg
author, The End of Growth
US/Can $22.95

**Creating Wealth**
Growing Local Economies with Local Currencies
Gwendolyn Hallsmith and Bernard Lieter

Gwendolyn Hallsmith and Bernard Lieter share a commitment to renewing cities and creating a sustainable world for all endangered species—including our own. This is a book that provides framework, theory, tools, and examples galore. Get it. Use it.
- Edgar S. Cahn, PhD, JD, Ashoka Fellow, originator, TimeBanking
US/Can $19.95

**Consensus-Oriented Decision-Making**
The CODM Model for Facilitating Groups to Widespread Agreement
Tim Hartnett

Regardless of how much or how little you work in the decision-making space, this guide will be of immense value.
- Fred Keeley, Former Speaker pro Tempore, California State Assembly
US/Can $29.95

**The Wealth of Nature**
Economics as if Survival Mattered
John Michael Greer

Greer’s work is nothing short of brilliant.
- Richard Heinberg
author, Peak Everything
US/Can $18.95

**Industrial Evolution**
Local Solutions for a Low Carbon Future
Lyle Estill

Lyle Estill shows us the possibility of growing up the “American Dream” while losing nothing.
- Michael Gordon, E. F. Schumacher Society
US/Can $17.95

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STANDING UP FOR SCIENCE

Religion won’t save us. Or politics. Or business. According to David Suzuki, the 74-year-old environmentalist who received the 18th annual George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award in February, it all comes down to science.

If politicians had listened to Suzuki and other scientist-minded futurists about thirty years ago, Kyoto Protocol standards would have been achievable.

Now Suzuki still clings to a “very slender thread” of hope. The human race can still endure, IF we immediately enact strategic change.

“If you don’t make the changes, it’s going to be so bad by 2050 you won’t recognize it,” Suzuki said. “You can find the best scientists on the planet and they will say it’s getting worse.”

New York began to invest tens of millions of dollars in a campaign of deception,” Suzuki said. “You can find the best political expediency,” he says. “What’s happened now is absolutely terrifying.”

“Science is by far the most important factor for shaping our lives and society today…” (but) decisions are made for political expediency,” he says. “What’s happened now is absolutely terrifying.”

Suzuki recalled the advice of 300 climatologists who met in Toronto in the 1970s and identified global warming as the greatest threat to human survival, next to atomic bombs. “(But) the fossil fuel industry, the auto sector and neo-conservatives like the Koch brothers in New York began to invest tens of millions of dollars in a campaign of deception,” Suzuki said. “You can find the best evidence of this in Jim Hoggan’s book Climate Cover-Up, and in Nancy Oreskes’ Merchants of Doubt.”

“We now have public opinion on these issues driven by organizations like The Fraser Institute, the Heartland Institute, the Competitive Enterprise Institute. You just have to read The National Post and you’ll never have to change your mind on climate change. You’ll know that it’s baloney…”

“I began my career in television believing that through education, through writing books, through radio and television programs, we would have a better-informed public. But, in fact, we are going backwards.

“The level of trust in science, especially in the United States, is dropping radically. And if we can’t trust in science, then who do we turn to? The Koran? The Bible? Or all these right-wing pundits?”

This year The Writers Trust of Canada co-sponsored the Woodcock Award, presented by Margaret Atwood. Mayor Gregor Robertson also participated in the ceremony.

Since 1995, the Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award for an Outstanding Literary Career in B.C. has been supported by the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Public Library and B.C. BookWorld. Another new co-sponsor, as of 2010, is Yosef Wosk.

Born in Vancouver, David Suzuki has written more than 50 books.

Joan Vaillant’s First Book, The Golden Spruce, about a former logger named Grant Hadwin who cut down Kii’diya, a “Golden” Sitka Spruce on Haida Gwaii, in 1997, received several major book awards and was shortlisted for British Columbia’s National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction.

Five years later, at a lavish free lunch for invited guests, Vaillant received former Premier Gordon Campbell’s B.C. National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction for his second book, an investigation of events in Siberia regarding a rare tiger that was killing people in Russia’s Primorye Territory.

Like Golden Spruce, Vaillant’s The Tiger: A True Story of Vengeance and Survival (Knopf $34.95) uses a newsworthy story as the basis for an expansive look at conservation and ecology, revealing atavistic links between technological man and the wilderness.

Vaillant’s face did not register pleasure or surprise when his name was announced as the winner during the three-hour ceremony. With sincere humility, he told the audience he had decided in advance: “I am going to feel wholehearted for whoever wins.”

The event featured erudite and sophisticated dissertations on each of the five nominated titles, delivered by Daphne Bramham, Douglas Todd, Michael Levine and Wade Davis. Publisher Scott McIntyre, as one of the administrative board members, presented Gordon Campbell with a set of leather bound copies of all the award winners since 2003. Campbell received a standing ovation from nearly everyone present.

This year all four nominated titles for the $40,000 prize were published by Random House / Knopf of Toronto, including Stevie Cameron’s courageous, 768-page On The Farm: Robert William Pickton and the Tragic Story of Vancouver’s Missing Women.

UBC Press’ Title Canada, The Congo Crisis, and UN Peacekeeping, 1960-64, by Kevin Spooner, has won this year’s CP Stacey Prize for the best book in Military History awarded by the Canadian Historical Committee for the History of the Second World War and for Military History.

DA’s POLAR IMPERATIVE: A HISTORY OF ARCTIC SOVEREIGNTY IN NORTH AMERICA BY SHELagh D. Grant has been nominated for the 2011 Lionel Gelber Prize, a literary award for the world’s best non-fiction book in English that seeks to deepen public debate on significant global issues.

978-0-7748-1637-3
Treasure hunt

I AM EXTREMELY happy and honored by your coverage in B.C. BookWorld. My husband and I are impressed by the scope of this publication, but it is quite intimidating to see how many great authors there are in B.C. What a treasure you have given to the public to be able to find out about and discover all these people and their books.

Louise Jilek-Aall
Tsawassen

Curtis catchy

I'M A MEMBER OF THE ASU FAMILY FROM Quadra Island, coming out with a book about the Kwakwaka’wakw and potlatch ban history, in 2011. I just want to say I really enjoyed that autumn BCBW article on The Edward Curtis Project. I've really enjoyed that Autumn BCBW article.

I'M A MEMBER OF THE ASSU FAMILY FROM Inland Empire, in 2011. I just want to say I really enjoyed that autumn BCBW article on The Edward Curtis Project. I've really enjoyed that Autumn BCBW article.

Louise Jilek-Aall
Tsawassen

Corrections

I'VE BEEN CHATTING WITH the author Marie Clements and the photographer Rita Leisner about the correlation between the Curtis subject matter in our respective books. I was pleased to read that B.C. BookWorld was already on top of this material. I'll be posting my cheque to make sure we get a copy of it somewhere. I recall my husband Dick muttering something about it. Now I'm curious.

Garry Thomas Morse
Vancouver

Dick & John

THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDUE FOR THE piece comparing my book Edge of the Sound with Fishing with John. I wouldn't be surprised if it's going to be the only mention of my book, because I haven't got a "name" or a degree. I'm not a bright young thing, and I live on the West Coast. What the heck.

I've never read Fishing with John but I'm sure we have a copy of it somewhere. I recall my husband Dick muttering something about it. Now I'm curious.

Jo Hammond
Sunshine Coast

Unexpected

JUST CAUGHT THE NEW WINTER ISSUE OF B.C. BookWorld. Terrific exposure for me. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

With the cuts to the small presses like NeWest, the onus of marketing appears to have fallen on the shoulders of authors—the authors. Oh.

Your support is needed and appreciated. I've been waiting for this article and it was more than I expected.

Roy Innes
Gabriola Island

Sexiconoclast

THE GREAT HUMORIST ERIC NICOL WILL BE missed. It was always a great pleasure for me to drive up to Eric's house in Dunbar to discuss his manuscript. The Caustic Sexicon while we were reading it for publication. What I most remember about those visits was the way in which Eric's humour derived from his deep handling of language. I recall his eureka moment in which he playfully defined "aural sex"—as the phenomenon that occurs when the French word "oui" buds the lips, inviting a kiss. He was never mean-spirited.

Ronald Hatch, Ronsdale Press, Vancouver

Eric Nicol (centre) playing a reporter with actress Leslie Caron. Also see p. 17

Nicola was hoaxter extraordinare

SHY, WITTY AND VERY GENTLE, ERIC NICOL was one of the finest writers I ever encountered.

He was a better writer than his shyness allowed the world to see. Few of his readers were aware of just how good he was on the world stage. In his brief spell as a radio scriptwriter in London, long before he got a play on Broadway, he worked with the best in the business, the legendary Frank Muir and Dennis Norden.

Our first book together was the city history, Vancouver, what you might call an urban history. Other titles included the satire Canadile and the serious Letters To My Son (Eric's faithful readers were forewarned: "CAUTION. Contents May Prove Hazardous To Any Preconceived Idea Of An Eric Nicol Book!").

The crowning glory was Eric's "discovery" of the letters sent home by the very real Francis Dickens, son of Charles, and one of the worst Mounties in history.

Entitled Dickens Of The Mounted, this book was hailed by Andreas Schroeder in The Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada as one of the country's best Literary Hoaxes.

The book's opening line... "It was not the best of times, it was not the worst of times, it was Ottawa"... surely gave a hint of Nicol mishief above.

Yet, to quote Schroeder, "The hoax became a runaway best-seller, appearing on both fiction and non-fiction lists, apparently fooling a lot more people than either Nicol or the totally unrepentant Gibson expected."

Doug Gibson
Toronto

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Doug Gibson
Toronto

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50 Poisonous Questions

A Book With Bite

4 BC BookWorld Spring 2011
In Sadru Jetha’s first collection of beautifully crafted stories, *Nuri Does Not Exist*, we accompany Nuri on his quest to understand how servitude transcends slavery; fealty transcends servitude; and community transcends fealty, charming us with its cathartic vision. • Renee Rodin’s finely wrought autobiographical pieces in *Subject to Change* show the reader that the things we usually think of as too ordinary to talk about or too extraordinary to communicate to others are often the most formative elements of our social lives.

**POETRY**

In *Discovery Passages*, Garry Thomas Morse sets out to recover the stolen, appropriated and scattered realm of his Kwakwaka’wakw ancestors, drawing upon written history and oral tradition in poems that scrutinize the bans on Native language and potlatching and the confiscation and sale of Aboriginal artifacts—as well as the effects these actions had on the lives of his people. • In a world where the corporate iron fist clad in the velvet glove of the state has appropriated all that is authentic and authoritative in language, *Triage*, the first book by community advocate Cecily Nicholson, utilizes the increasingly marginalized and criminalized language of protest and resistance to present a polyvocal narrative of human communities struggling at the brutal margins of the neoliberalized state. • Composed in three sections, *Glengarry* is a return in writing to the landscape of rob mcclennan’s youth and a headlong rush into the fractured, slippages and buried surfaces of what the text leaves undisclosed to him, resisting the linguistic lure of nostalgia and romanticism to uncover a living language with every step. • In *Floating Up to Zero*, Ken Norris sings the present moment, precariously balanced between a frozen past and a fluid future. The poet at the centre of this journey inward finds himself trapped in his house in mid-winter, trying to talk his way out toward a world of infinite possibilities beyond a slowly melting history. • Very little critical work exists on the poetry of bill bissett, and almost no theoretical discourse on his visual work. In *vishyuns*, Carl Peters posits that bissett’s drawings, paintings and collages challenge artistic conventions of visual language in the same way his poetry challenges linguistic conventions of syntax and grammar to escape the strictures of Western modes of thought and perception.
Working with Wool
A Coast Salish Legacy & the Cowichan Sweater
Sylvia Olsen
Cowichan sweaters, with their distinctive bands of design and untreated, handspun wool, have been a British Columbia icon since the early years of the twentieth century, but few people know the full story behind the garment. Sylvia Olsen tells the tale, drawing on her own experience, academic research, and her four-decade friendship with some of the Coast Salish women who have each knitted hundreds of sweaters.

An Auto-Erotic History of Swings
Patricia Young
Patricia Young’s latest book of poems dances, cavorts and sings through the prehistory of our species. Epic in scope, An Auto-Erotic History of Swings is about sex and God and sublime imagination.

Nobody Move
Susan Stenson
A celebration of life and its eccentricities, Nobody Move covers a great swath of territory, each page another electric surprise. “Birthed in the feast of the body,” Stenson’s poems fuse emotion and language in ways that often defy examination and transcend logic, and sometimes break your heart.

The Blackbird Must Be
Dorothy Field
In the first half of The Blackbird Must Be, Dorothy Field recalls the ancient story of Genesis. Although not explicitly Biblical, Field’s retelling of the story is hauntingly familiar—it begins with love, hope and trust on a small Edenic farm on Vancouver Island and ends in betrayal, regret and sorrow.

The second half leaps into the marvellous and surreal world of the Garry oak tree in Field’s backyard. The Blackbird Must Be is a beautiful and moving poetry collection that reminds us that there is power in vulnerability and strength in forgiveness.
HOST OF A NEW COOKING SHOW ON THE Food Network in Canada and the Cooking Channel in the U.S. called *Spice Goddess*, Punjabi-born Vancouverite Bal Arneson has followed her first book, *Everyday Indian* (Whitecap $29.95), with family recipes for classic Indian meals in *Bal's Quick and Healthy Indian* (Whitecap $29.95).

NEVER MIND PLAYBOY. GEORGE BOWERING’s new memoir Pinboy (Cormorant $32) recalls his sexual awakenings at age fifteen in the south Okanagan. He finds himself enamoured of three choices: his first love, the girl from the wrong side of the tracks, and one of his high school teachers.

CHRIS CZAJKOWSKI’s A WILDERNESS Dweller’s Cookbook (Harbour $14.95) is a multi-faceted account of how a wilderness dweller—in a non-growing climate 20 km from a road, 60 km from a store and 250 km from a town large enough to have a supermarket—feeds herself and the clients of her wilderness adventure business.

VANCOUVER MAYOR GREGOR ROBERTSON and his predecessor Sam Sullivan both watched as Chuck Davis received the George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award on October 14, 2010. It was Davis’ last public appearance. He died at Surrey General Hospital of lung cancer on November 20, three days after his 75th birthday.

A Chuck Davis Book Fund has been set up at Vancity (account #173575) for donations to hire writers to compile his mammoth work-in-progress, *The History of Metropolitan Vancouver*. Tax deductions for donations of $100 or more can be made out to the Vancouver Historical Society, Box 219, Madeira Park, B.C. VON 2H0. Crawford Kilian has created a Chuck Davis blog and the Davis’ Woodcock Award speech is on Youtube.

ALLAN ENGLER worked for many years as a cook on coastal towboats and for a decade as secretary-treasurer and then president of Local 400, Marine Section, International Longshore & Warehouse Union–Canada. He believes capitalism is based on social labour, private capital-entitlement and workplace dictatorships, a system that destroys environments, widens disparities and relies on repression, militarism and war. His new book is *Economic Democracy: The Working Class Alternative to Capitalism* (Fernwood $15.95).

WITH HELP FROM VETERAN GLOBE AND MAIL columnist Gary Mason, Olympic boss John Furlong has recounted his behind-the-scenes version of how he handled the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Vancouver and Whistler in his immodestly-titled *Patriot Hearts: Inside the Olympics That Changed a Country* (D&M $32.95).

Chuck Davis receives 2010 Woodcock Award from Mayor Gregor Robertson.

Xue Shen and Hongbo Zhao of China came out of retirement to win a gold medal at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver.
WHO'S WHO
BRITISH COLUMBIA

THE SURVIVOR
SEAN SLATER

ON SALE
JUNE 2011

An authentic, gritty debut thriller from a real-life Vancouver police officer.

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news and contests at simonreads.ca

This Spring, from the Royal BC Museum...

Sister and I
from Victoria to London
Emily Carr

Join Alice and Emily Carr on a journey across Canada by train and on to Great Britain by ocean liner. Sister and I presents Carr’s whimsical account of the sisters’ adventures at Banff, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Quebec City and many more stops along the way. She describes the highs and lows of travelling, and all the interesting characters she meets.

This book is reproduced directly from Carr’s original notebook, written and illustrated in her own hand. It includes an introduction by Kathryn Bridge, placing it in context with Carr’s life and work.

Also by Emily Carr...

Studio Billie’s Calendar
a perpetual calendar
$14.95
978-0-7726-6142-9

Wild Flowers
$19.95
978-0-7726-5453-3

Royal BC Museum books are distributed by Heritage Group.
For more information about Royal BC Museum books, go to www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca and click on Publications.

Richmond’s WENDY PHILLIPS has won the Governor General’s Award for children’s text with Fishtailing (Coteau $14.95). The lone Governor General’s Award winner from B.C. publishers was Allan Casey’s memoir and geographical study Lakeland: Journeys into the Soul of Canada (Greystone $29.95), chosen as the best English non-fiction title.

Few British Columbians have a deeper and more prodigious appreciation of this western corner of the continent than journalist and historian Stephen Hume. His latest compilation is A Walk with the Rainy Sisters: In Praise of British Columbia’s Places (Harbour $32.95). Hume was raised in various towns around B.C.

Having once lived near the apartment of Samuel Beckett in Paris, and enjoying his writing for decades, poet Inge Israel has crafted Beckett Soundings (Ronsdale $15.95) to explore his life, letters, plays and novels. The enigmatic, Irish-raised Protestant was known for his gloomy and sometimes existential world-view that spawned Waiting for Godot.

Having been nominated for the Dorothy Livesay Prize for her first poetry collection about grief and death, The Stirred Heart (Oolichan, 2004), Eve Joseph now evokes and examines the process of reaching epiphanies with The Secret Signature of Things (Brick $19). In a long poem called ‘Tracking’ she struggles with the question of how to remember missing aboriginal women on the West Coast.

TO MARK THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE City of Vancouver on April 6, 2011, Lesley McKnight has researched and collected stories about the city told from the perspectives of young people for Vancouver Kids (Brindle & Glass $12.95)—from early potlatch ceremonies and the Great Vancouver Fire to modern times.

Godfather of Canadian punk, Joe Keithley has documented more than thirty years of rocking in the free world with the world-renowned band he founded—and still sings and plays with—D.O.A. Founder of Sudden Death Records and a Green Party candidate, Keithley is now a family man in Burnaby. Keithley’s visual history of the band from 1978 to the present is Talk—Action = Zero: An Illustrated History of D.O.A. (Arsenal Pulp $24.95). A joint book launch (with David Lester’s graphic novel The Listener) and a D.O.A. concert June 4 at The Rickshaw in Vancouver is planned with tentative guests Mecca Normal.

No gloss, no grants, no interns, no internet presence. The nine-years-young non-fiction journal Lived Experience ($19) is the brainchild of back-to-the-land philosopher Van Andruss, who ran Macleod’s Books in Vancouver prior to Don Stewart. It is simply one of the most readable and mature literary publications in Canada. The journal comes out once a year from Lillooet. Van Andruss likes to get to know the people he publishes.

Contact: Box 1599, Lillooet, BC, V0K 1V0. van@yalakom.com

8 BC BOOKWORLD SPRING 2011
“When I became a mother to two sons of Chinese heritage and couldn’t find modern day adventure stories with Chinese characters,” says Bonita Sauder, “I wrote one.”

Bonita Sauder

RETIRED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

B.C. to identify resources used to combat homophobic and transphobic harassment and strategies for establishing safe spaces for queer high school youth.

Bonita Sauder

THE HISTORY OF WOMEN’S PHOTOGRAPHY

Burtch

BRIAN BURTCH

features 12 pages of young woman whose advanced education and assessment and strategies for establishing safe spaces for queer high school youth.

Manery befriends protagonist Ellen Manery befriends protagonist Ellen

Mementoring with leprechauns in Ireland, a mystical tour of Ireland, to visit sacred sites, as an unmitigated disaster that simultaneous served as one of the most significant events of her life.

Tanis Helliwell visiting a dolman (home of a leprechaun) in Keel, Ireland, 2010. Dolmans are megalithic tombs built between 4000 and 2000 BC for religious ceremonies including burying the dead.

SOME OF US ARE MORE INTERNATIONAL

TANIS HELLWELL

of Powell River has worked to bring spirituality into the workplace since 1976 with corporate clients, resulting in Take Your Soul to Work: Transform Your Life and Work (Random House, 1999). No mention was made in publicity materials about her previous publication about communicating with leprechauns in Ireland, a self-published memoir called Summer of the Leprechauns: A True Story (Blue Dolphin Publishing, 1997). It was followed by another self-published memoir, Pilgrimage with the Leprechauns: A True Story of a Mystical Tour of Ireland (Wayshower Enterprises $21.95).

“Some years ago I lived in an old cottage in the village of Keel on the west coast of Ireland,” she begins. “I shared Crumpaun Cottage with a leprechaun and his family who had lived there for a very long time. The leprechaun befriended me and taught me about elements.”

Helliwell describes leading her fourth mystical tour of Ireland, to visit sacred sites, as an unmitigated disaster that simultaneously served as one of the most significant events of her life.

Tanis Helliwell visiting a dolman (home of a leprechaun) in Keel, Ireland, June, 2010. Dolmans are megalithic tombs built between 4000 and 2000 BC for religious ceremonies including burying the dead.

Tanis Helliwell

TANIS HELLWELL


“SOME YEARS AGO I LIVED IN AN OLD COTTAGE IN THE VILLAGE OF KEEL ON THE WEST COAST OF IRELAND,” SHE BEGINS. “I SHARED CRUMPAN COTTAGE WITH A LEPRECHAUN AND HIS FAMILY WHO HAD LIVED THERE FOR A VERY LONG TIME. THE LEPRECHAUN BEFRIENDED ME AND TAUGHT ME ABOUT ELEMENTS.”

HELLWELL DESCRIBES LEADING HER FOURTH MYSTICAL TOUR OF IRELAND, TO VISIT SACRED SITES, AS AN UNMITIGATED DISASTER THAT SIMULTANEOUSLY SERVED AS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF HER LIFE.
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**WHO’S WHO IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

- Judy Radul
- Born in Lillooet in 1962, mixed media installation and performance artist
- Has been a cutting edge experimentalist on the West Coast since the early 1980s
- Celebrated, explained and catalogued her works, People Things Enter Exit (Presentation House $35)
- Contains essays by Christopher Eamon, Helga Pakasaar and Monika Szewczyk
- Interviews by Jeff Derksen, Stan Douglas and Antonia Hirsch
- 978-0-920293-70-6

**Vis is for Unclassifiable**

- Pasquale Verdicchio
- Has won the prize for poetry for This Nothing’s Place (Guernica Editions $15)
- Prize is named after the Jesuit priest, Father Francesco Giuseppe Bressani (1612-1672) the first Italian missionary to come to Canada, who wrote Breve Relazione, and who can be considered the precursor of Italian-Canadian writing.
- 978-1-55017-524-0

**W is for Wok**

- Yosef Wosk
- Philanthropist
- Recently described as “an all-round good guy” by Simon Fraser University News
- Completed a 15-year stint with SFU Continuing Studies during which he pioneered the Philosophers’ Café series and the formation of the Canadian Academy of Independent Scholars.
- No longer formally associated with SFU. Wosk will continue his behind-the-scenes leadership as an independent financial supporter of countless literary and scholarly undertakings.
- 978-1-59514-199-6

**Y is for Yeandon-Jones**

- With an MFA from the UBC Creative Writing program, Robert Paul Weston was inspired by Dr. Seuss and Roald Dahl to write his first fantasy novel for young readers, Zorgamazo (Penguin $17.50), an illustrated tale rich in wordplay and mythical creatures.
- Katrina, a girl, teams up with Morty, a zorgle, to uncover an inter-galactic conspiracy that threatens the existence of every bizarre creature on their planet.
- 978-1-59514-240-4
Sail away on
TRADEWIND BOOKS

Picture Books

The Flute
by Rachna Gilmore
illustrated by Palash Biswas
A little girl nearly drowns when a swollen river in India overflows its banks. She finds solace in her mother’s magic flute in this exquisite story of resilience and hope.
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The Mouse who Saved Egypt
by Karim Ahwevi
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A FEW YEARS AGO THERE WAS A SPATE OF FILMS ABOUT PEOPLE WHO COULD see just a few minutes into the future. That’s a sensation familiar to readers of William Gibson’s novels, especially his latest, Zero History (G.P. Putnam’s Sons $31), third in a sequence of novels that began with Pattern Recognition (2003), followed by Spook Country (2007).

In Zero History, a marketing whiz named Hubertus Bigend has corralled an eccentric, anti-social, mathematical genius, Bobby Chombo, to serve as an ‘agggregator.’ His synthetic analysis of economic and social factors has the potential to provide Hubertus with the ultimate competitive edge, literally of all time.

In a world where global markets are electronically integrated in real time, a head start of a few minutes, even a few seconds, would be the ultimate in inside-trading. Chombo’s calculations can afford Hubertus with a lead-time on the present of seventeen minutes. As Bigend says, when asked if that’s enough, “Seven would have been entirely adequate. Seven seconds, in most cases.”

The Holy Grail of brokers, wheeler-dealers and marketing magnates like Hubertus Bigend is that brief myopic moment of clairvoyance, just a glimpse into what Gibson calls “the order flow,” the aggregate of all the orders in the market. Everything anyone is about to buy or sell, all of it.” Watson beat them like a pair of borrowed mules and I went back to using a 500-year-old technology, the mechanically printed book. It didn’t seem like a terribly radical juxtaposition until I thought about it.

Some critics have taken shots at Gibson’s novels for being too strong on technology at the expense of character. Admittedly, his fondness for caricature and whimsical names is somewhat Dickensian, but so is the scope of his work. He’s been quoted as saying he believes we’re entering a new Victorian Age of polarization between the Haves and Have-Nots in the Global Village. So it is a not-so-brave (and not always so new) world he describes.

Despite the mock-thriller plot, Zero History is very much a character-driven novel whose real story is the gradual re-emergence of Milgrim’s personality. From a detoxed vacant near-cipher, a man whose past has become obsolete, he grows through his attachment to Fiona, a rebel-girl motorcycle courier, and begins to make ethical decisions that are no longer subject to the agendas of Hubertus Bigend and favour the shadowy subversive culture of “secret brands” and alternative capitalism.

Maybe it’s just us, with our personal and professional websites, blogs, Facebook pages, Second Life avatars, and professional websites, blogs, Facebook pages, Second Life avatars, talking and texting constantly on Blackberries and iPhones, who have become too strong on technology at the expense of what used to be called character. And William Gibson is just the guy holding the mirror.

A BLIND PERSON’S OTHER SENSES ARE SAID TO BECOME SHARPER IN COMPENSATION FOR THE LOSS OF SIGHT. WITH MILGRIM, GIBSON OFFERS THE PROVOCATIVE SUGGESTION THAT A LOSS OF PERSONAL HISTORY—A SENSE OF ONE’S SELF AS THE AGGREGATE OF PERSONAL MEMORY—MIGHT BE REPLACED BY A HEIGHTENED AFFINITY FOR “PATTERN RECOGNITION,” A TALENT THAT COULD BE MORE USEFUL IN A SEMI-CYBERWORLD THAT IS ALREADY PART DIGITAL.

Bigend has paid to have Milgrim detoxified, weaned off his anti-anxiety drugs, in order to exploit his gift for pattern recognition in industrial/commercial espionage. Milgrim’s assignment is to track down and recognize a distinctive and highly desirable blend of denim clothing produced as a “secret brand” only obtainable by those in the know from containers that appear briefly and mysteriously at outdoor flea markets and other ad hoc showcases of the post-modern world.

Bigend wants to penetrate the anti-corporate culture of the secret brand and gain control of the coveted military clothing in order to secure contracts for supplying military clothing that will inevitably spin off into civilian fashions. Inevitably, assorted thugs and goons from the underworld of global capitalism have designs on both the denim and on the predictive services of Chombo. Have you got all that?

As in his earlier novels, Neuromancer, Burning Chrome, Mona Lisa Overdrive, Virtual Light etc., Gibson excels at evoking baroquely detailed visions of a not-too-distant future, a world enriched by co-existence with its own avatar, Cyberworld. (Apparently he’s even appeared as himself as an avatar in the cyber-world game, Second Life, to publicize his books, which makes him the Hubertus Bigend of authors.)

Though Gibson has been described as a writer of science fiction, his novels are actually less fantastic than most of Kurt Vonnegut’s: and mercifully not marred by the smug self-congratulatory and patronizing humour that gets tedious in Vonnegut’s work. The Dadaist collage that is Hollis Henry’s hotel room in an exclusive London club, for instance, isn’t one iota weaker than a designer’s apartment I saw on one of those real estate shows on the Home & Garden TV channel the other night.

Back in 1978, in an essay about Walter Benjamin entitled “Under the Sign of Saturn,” Susan Sontag observed, “The genius of surrealism was to generalize with ebullient candour the baroque cult of ruins; to perceive that the nihilistic energies of the modern era make everything a ruin or fragment—and therefore collectible. A world whose past has become (by definition) obsolete, and whose present churns out instant antiques, invites custodians, decoders and collectors.” The juxtaposition of culturally coded ‘collectibles’ from the recent past with technologies only imagined on Star Trek forty years ago isn’t a vision of the future; it’s your living room right now.

I took a break from writing this article to watch an IBM computer named ‘Watson’ compete on Jeopardy against the TV game-show’s two all-time champs. Watson beat them like a pair of borrowed mules and I went back to using a 500-year-old technology, the mechanically printed book. It didn’t seem like a terribly radical juxtaposition until I thought about it.

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FEW YEARS AGO THERE WAS A SPATE OF FILMS ABOUT PEOPLE WHO COULD...
Carmen Aguirre was six years old when her family fled to Vancouver after a CIA-inspired coup in Chile ousted the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende and brought army general Augusto Pinochet to power in 1973.

Five years later, her mother and stepfather returned to South America to spend the next decade working for the Chilean leftist resistance. Her mother refused to separate from her two daughters, choosing closeness and danger for them over distance and safety. As her oldest daughter, Carmen Aguirre has now written Something Fierce, Memoir of a Revolutionary Daughter (D&M $32.95) a riveting testimonial of bravery and fear.

The family’s activities over the next decade span Bolivia, Peru, Argentina and Chile, interspersed with return trips to Canada. Blacklisted, they were unable to enter Chile by train or plane. Journeys were made circuitously with detours and doublings back to throw off the secret police.

In order to operate safe houses, Aguirre’s parents maintained a middle-class disguise, doing conventional jobs. The girls were conditioned to secrecy, trained to never confide in anyone or reveal details of family life.

This life of unremitting drama and concealment would prove excellent training for Aguirre’s later work as a performance artist and actor in Vancouver, where she has also gained considerable acceptance as a playwright (See BCBW cover story, Autumn 2008, abookworld.com).

Parental absences were sudden and unexplained. The sisters were told: Never answer a knock at the door. If you hear nothing for twenty-four hours, you will call a secret phone number, and say you’re with the Tall One and Raquel. Within an hour, the phone number will be revealed when you hold this blank page over the T all One and Raquel. Within an hour, you will call the secret police.

But Something Fierce is more than a journey into the shadows of political repression. What could have been a narrative of unremitting horror is relieved by joyous occasions—an idyllic holiday with Chilean grandparents, several adolescent love affairs—and by poetic descriptions of surroundings, such as Aguirre’s first view of the Bolivian capital city, La Paz, a place she comes to love: “We drove for hours, until the land broke like a Greek plate and there was a drop in the road. I looked out to see nothing but sky. The universe. Then, I looked down, and there below us was a city in a bowl. A bowl like the deepest crater on the moon, with a little house stuck to every last square inch of it. The bar drove over the edge of the bowl and down.”

At one point Aguirre collapses under the strain. She candidly describes her emotional meltdown, wrought by the pressure of fear, her stepfather’s stress-induced anger and a long period of isolation in a house with a diminishing food supply. “I was an agoraphobic fifteen-year-old skeleton stuck to every last square inch of it,” she writes. “My life was a crater on the moon, with a little house stuck to every last square inch of it. The universe. Then, I looked down, and there below us was a city in a bowl. A bowl like the deepest crater on the moon, with a little house stuck to every last square inch of it.”

As Aguirre finally spills out her—that when Aguirre finally spills out her convictions aren’t strong enough to face down a band of human predators, the life-expectancy of those who undertake such work is two years.

Even though she is twenty pounds underweight and suffers from dizzy spells, Aguirre still pushes herself “to master the skill of killing my heart whenever I crossed the border.” The painful impressions are left by determined women.

Dr. Vergara Emerson, a Bolivian pediatrician and professor, walks to the front of a movie theatre to denounce the dictator, Luis Garcia Meza, “I remember her,” Carmen’s stepfather tells her, “because what that woman did is the definition of courage.” Salvador Allende’s sister, Laura Allende, says with Aguirre’s family in Vancouver during her cross-Canada tour, while dying of cancer. Carmen bears her weeping in the night, grieving for the lost of her country, not her life.

Carmen’s grandmother is a role model who risks hanging pots and pans during the blackouts in Chile: “I’ve seen fear turn people into informers, monsters,” she says, “turning in their own friends and neighbors. You’re dealing with a country, sick with fear.”

Trinidad, a family friend, has given her life to the underground, at the expense of her husband and children. After a decade of struggle, she tells Aguirre, “The resistance has dissolved... we tried hard, but it’s time to state the obvious, we lost. Maybe in ten, twenty, a hundred or a thousand years, the society we dreamed of will come to be, but we lost this round.”

And we meet Carmen’s mother, a valiant spirit who can draw a knife to face down a band of human predators when they threaten her daughters. For her, motherhood and family life are not incompatible with revolutionary work.

These are hard acts to follow. But Carmen Aguirre, now a respected playwright, has found the courage to resist her terror. She has inherited the heart of a revolutionary, so the struggles for justice and freedom will continue, on the page, or on the stage.
Exit by Nelly Arcan

ISBN: 978-1-897535-66-0  $20

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by Charles Tidler

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The First Book Competition was held to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Writer's Studio at Simon Fraser University, Harbour Centre. The competition identified three fine new writers who will see their books published this spring. Watch for event info!

The winners are:

The House with the Broken Two (Creative Nonfiction) by Myrl Coulter of Edmonton;

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**TRIBUTE**

**THE TURNOUT FOR A MEMORIAL MASS IN HONOUR OF ERIC NICOL ON FEBRUARY 6, JUST FOUR DAYS AFTER HIS DEATH AT AGE 91, WAS EMBARRASSINGLY SMALL FOR SOMEONE WHO HAD SIGNIFICANT STATURE AS A WRITER FOR SIX DECADES.**

It was held in a modest Catholic church in the Dunbar neighbourhood of Vancouver, presided over by a Franciscan who deemed that anyone who is a writer is necessarily a contemplative, and all contemplatives are within the realm of God.

Nicol was a self-avowed agnostic. Precious little in the service referred to Nicol as a person and the importance of his literary career was barely mentioned beyond a letter from his Alberta-based illustrator.

Laymen who knew Eric were only invited to speak at a tea ‘n’ sandwiches reception afterwards.

Despite severe back pain, veteran sportswriter Jim Taylor attended from West Vancouver to give some appreciation of Eric as a writer, and Norman Young (a retired UBC professor) was also present as someone who knew the bigger picture, but by then the humourless mass had unintentionally served as a sobering reminder of how fleeting “literary fame” can be.

**JACK KNOX’S COLUMN IN THE TIMES COLONIST ON FEBRUARY 6 WAS A WELCOME ANTIDOTE.**

“Nicol wasn’t just good,” he wrote. “He was good for a long time, like Gordie Howe. He was a smart writer with an Everyman quality, finding humour in mundane life. Witty without being mean, he always seemed to have a cheerful sense of the absurd.”

In short, Eric Nicol cranked out 6,000 columns for *The Province* between 1951 and 1986; as well as 39 books, countless radio scripts, stageplays and magazine articles. One of his plays was produced on Broadway. He wrote two successful radio series for the BBC and he became the first living Canadian writer to be included in *The Oxford Book of Humorous Prose*.

He won the Leacock Medal for Humour three times. In 1995, he became the first recipient of the George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize an outstanding literary career in British Columbia.

Eric Nicol wrote prodigiously and chronically. His last book, *Scriptease* (2010), was written while he had Alzheimer’s.

He was good for a long time.

According to Eric Patrick Nicol—born on December 28, 1919 in Kingston, Ontario, the son of William Nicol and Amelia Mannock Nicol—in 1921 he “almost immediately persuaded his parents to flee a fierce winter in favour of a farmhouse on Kingway,” in British Columbia. He would later describe the province as “a body of land surrounded by envy.”

After a brief period in Nelson, the family relocated to Port Grey when Nicol began writing stories at Lord Byng High School. While pursuing an arts degree at UBC in 1941, Nicol wrote for the *The Ulysses* newspaper under the pen name of Jabez.

Nicol served with the RCAF in W.W. II, during which he started writing occasional columns for the *Vancouver News and The Province*. As Jabez, he published his first book, *Say We* (1943), a collection of columns by himself and the once-legendary Vancouver journalist Jack Scott.

While he was in the RCAF, Nicol wrote comedy skits that were performed to entertain the armed forces. At war’s end, he returned to UBC for his M.A. in French Studies (‘48), then spent one year in doctoral studies at the Sorbonne. He moved to London, England, to write a radio comedy series for Bernard Braden and Barbara Kelly of the BBC from 1950-51.

During this period, while writing alongside Frank Muir and Denis Norden, Nicol bought a car and lived it up a little, renting a swanky apartment.

Naively, he had not understood that he must pay taxes on his earnings. And so he skedaddled back to Vancouver, where he became a regular columnist with *The Province* in 1951.

During 40 years of writing for *The Province*, Nicol claimed he never had a contract, he never took a holiday and he never missed a deadline. He feared that if he went on vacation, he might lose his job.

For most of his life, Nicol lived in the same house he purchased in 1957, near UBC. After being at any gathering for about fifteen or twenty minutes, he invariably whispered to his companion, “Let’s get out of here.”

Avoidance of parties was akin to avoidance of embarrassment. “I’m either sitting there like a frog full of shot,” he told the *Georgia Straight* in 1989, “or I run off at the neck and then hate myself the next morning.”

It was easier to let his characters speak. Nicol was the first Vancouver playwright to have his work successfully produced by the Vancouver Playhouse. His best-known play, Like Father, Like Fun (1966), concerned a crass lumber baron’s attempt to contrive his son’s initiation to sex. After it was unsuccessfully staged in New York under the title A Minor Adjustment (1967), Nicol rebounded with *The Fourth Monkey* (1968) about a failed playwright who takes refuge on the Gulf Islands.

Nicol’s play for the National Theatre in Ottawa, Pillar of Sand (1973), was set in fifth century Constantinople and examined civilization’s decline. “The reviews were mixed,” he said, “bad and terrible.” Other plays are *Braden; Be sure the Quickly Who; The Cmall Made a Furr; a Joy Coghill vehicle, Mat* (1981), about once-legendary B.C.
Eric Nicol was given a laptop computer as a present when he was forced to retire from the newspaper game, he joked once more to Mary, his steadfast supporter, “Let’s get out of here.” Eric Nicol died at 9:19 a.m. on February 2, 2011, at the Louis Brier Home and Hospital in Vancouver.

Eric Nicol died at 9:19 a.m. on February 2, 2011, at the Louis Brier Home and Hospital in Vancouver. He left behind a legacy of words that continue to amuse and entertain his readers. His humor was a blend of his life experiences, his love for his city, and his anti-establishment views. He was a true Canadian legend, a man who wrote with a pencil and lived with pride in his wayward son. His death marked the end of an era, but his words will continue to live on, providing a feast of humor and wit for years to come.
THE PASSIONATE COLLECTOR

As books are digitized by libraries and Google, “real books” have become increasingly attractive to literary adventurers such as Andrew Irvine who search for precious objects.

FroM MiNDaY to FRIDaY, ANDREW IRVINE, a past president of the B.C. Civil Liberties Asso- ciation, works as a philosophy professor at UBC. But on the weekends he can be found hunting through Canada’s used bookstores.

Irvine’s particular passion is collecting first-edition copies of all the books that have ever won Canada’s Gov- ernor General’s Literary Awards. Between 1936 and 2010, 610 books have received awards. Of these, 357 have been in English.

Irvine has succeeded in finding all but three of the 357 English books in their award-winning editions, and seven are still without their original dust jackets.

The three books Irvine is especially eager to find are first-edition copies of Arthur Bourinot’s 1939 book of poetry, Under the Sun (The Macmillan Company of Canada) and two novels: Bertram Brooker’s 1936 Think of the Earth (Thomas Nelson & Sons / Jonathan Cape), and Gwethalyn Graham’s 1938 Sirius Son- nata (Jonathan Cape).

“It’s especially hard to find some of the older books with dust jackets in good condition,” he says, “because the first thing libraries do is throw away a book’s dust jacket. This means that for anyone wanting to consult the original book, part of the experience is lost.”

FINDING BOOKS PUBLISHED DURING THE DEPRESSION IS A challenge because print runs were small. Then, during the Second World War, paper was often rationed, espe- cially in Britain, but also in Canada.

“It’s not unusual to find dust jackets from the 1940s printed on backs of old military maps,” Irvine says.

It’s very unusual for anyone to find an earlier 1946 copy, but Irvine has one.

“In 1947, Robert MacGregor Dawson won the prize for Academic Non-fiction for his book The Gov- ernment of Canada. What’s not widely known is that, in addition to the 1947 hard copy of the book, a 1946 pa- perback student edition was also issued. The 1946 edi- tion doesn’t appear on WorldCat, the online catalogue that lists the holdings of some 71,000 libraries from over 100 countries around the world.”

It’s very unusual for anyone to find an earlier 1946 copy, but Irvine has one.

IN THE PROCESS OF BECOMING AN AMATEUR BOOK SLEUTH, Andrew Irvine has become an expert in Canadian literary history by default. Having published numerous books of philosophy, Irvine is considering compiling a book about the awards, something that would not just intro- duce readers to the wide variety of Canadian literature that has been honoured by the Governor General’s Lit- erary Awards since their inception in 1936, but that would also give Canadians the opportunity to fall in love with forgotten titles all over again.

“Some of his favourite titles in his collection are:

- Anne Chislett’s Quiet in the Land
- Leonard Cohen’s Selected Poems
- Roméo Dallaire’s Shake Hands with the Devil
- Hugh MacLennan’s Two Solitudes
- Emily Carr’s Klee Wyck
- Robert Ford, Window on the North
- Marshall McLuhan’s The Gutenberg Galaxy
- John Gray’s Billy Bishop Goes to War
- Stephen Leacock’s My Discovery of the West
- Michael Ondaatje’s English Patient

“Many of these books are worth reading more than once,” he says. “Recently I re-read Karolyn Frost’s book about the under- ground railroad [I’ve Got a Home in Glory Land]. “And for a long time, Marie-Louise Gay’s children’s book Rainy Day Magic [from 1987] was a favorite at bedtime in our house.”

Of course, in addition to all the famous books, it’s also easy to find ti- tles that over the years have been for- gotten. It’s hard to read Josephine Phelan’s account of the assassination of Darcy McGee [The Ardent Exile, from 1951] without think- ing that it’s a book that it would be good for more Cana- dians to read.”

Some award-winning G.G. books were originally is- sued in such small press runs that finding first-edition cop- ies is just a matter of luck.

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It’s very unusual for anyone to find an earlier 1946 copy, but Irvine has one.

IN THE PROCESS OF BECOMING AN AMATEUR BOOK SLEUTH, Andrew Irvine has become an expert in Canadian literary history by default. Having published numerous books of philosophy, Irvine is considering compiling a book about the awards, something that would not just intro- duce readers to the wide variety of Canadian literature that has been honoured by the Governor General’s Lit- erary Awards since their inception in 1936, but that would also give Canadians the opportunity to fall in love with forgotten titles all over again.

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Gina McMurchy-Barber has crafted a fictional memoir by someone who “grew up in Woodlands” with Down syndrome after her mother took her there one day—and never came back.

The narrator is Ruby Jean Sharp, a character not based on the author’s own sister, who also had Down syndrome but was raised by loving parents.

Opened in 1878 and once known as the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, Woodlands was a so-called school that was more like a prison. Abuse was rampant. Three thousand people were housed in the Woodlands cemetery. In her afterword to Free as a Bird (Dundurn $12.99), McMurchy-Barber provides the following historical summary, having once worked at Woodlands for six months as a young adult.

When this kid, there was one word that governed us all: retard. It served like fingerprints on a chalkboard: retard. That’s because my older sister, who was born with Down syndrome, was often stared at, made fun of, and called names like retard or by others who didn’t know any better. When I was thirteen, I looked up the word in a dictionary and found that one definition simply read: “slow or delayed learning.” I didn’t think that sounded bad—after all, everyone has something they find difficult to learn or master — and that took the sting out of the word for me.

At the time of Jane’s birth in 1954 the attending doctor told my parents there was a good chance she would never learn to walk, and wouldn’t likely live beyond the age of five. He also explained there was no support available to help care for her and that she would be a burden to the family. His recommendation was to have her placed in an institution for the “mentally retarded” — a term used back then. The doctor’s limited knowledge and attitudes were quite typical for those days.

I’m grateful my parents weren’t influenced by the dark predictions for Jane’s future and instead brought her home from the hospital. As she grew, she scored average and the nursing staff learned to walk, talk, eat, and jump, too. Jane lived into her mid-thirties. By the time of her death, she had a job and a boyfriend and lived in her own apartment. She had a full life and was loved by many. What more could one ask for from their time here on earth?

When I was younger, I had a fierce desire to defend my sister against the ridicule and derision she faced. I was just as angry at the doctors in institutions who worked on these unfortunate children and did the very best they could to help them.

I left Woodlands to work for the Community Living Society, an organization started by parents and caring staff who fought to get residents out of Woodlands. It was, unfortunately, too late for my sister.

Gina McMurchy-Barber’s heart-wrenching young adult novel, Free as a Bird, takes the reader inside Woodlands, a now-defunct provincial facility for the mentally challenged.

Woodlands, as one resident chose to describe it, was “a garbage can for society’s garbage kids.”

Some of the residents had visits from relatives, but most had no contact with the outside community. Those residents who were able to build friendships with other residents, then cried each night when they had to be separated. More often than not, the ones who needed the most attention and love got the least. Woodlands, like many such institutions, was self-sufficient. It was staffed by medical and dental professionals, therapists, cooks, teachers, ward staff, and child-care workers. As a result, there was little contact with outside services such as public health, victim support, or police. In essence, it was a self-contained city with citizens who had no say in the running of their day-to-day life.

After Woodlands closed in 1996, the provincial government asked Ombudsman Dulcie McCallum to investigate the reported abuses. Her report, The Need to Know: Administrative Review of Woodlands School, brought to light many of the problems inherent in institutions of this kind. She recommended that most residents had little if any contract with family or friends outside the institution. They had no control over any aspect of their lives. Even those who were capable were considered mentally and legally incompetent as “retarded” and therefore treated as if they were unable to speak for themselves or had any intellectual insight whatever. Some children were used for drug experiments and genetics research — some of which are known today to be quite painful. And it wasn’t uncommon for unexplained bodies to be regularly denuded to the University of British Columbia for research.

McCallum stated that Woodlands was a perfect place for perpetrators seeking an opportunity to physically and sexually abuse children and adults who were silent, unable to complain, not knowing how or to whom to report or who would, in many instances, not be believed. Severe punishment and threats were used to discourage children from reporting abuse. “Her report also stated that the cruel behaviour modification techniques were rationalized by staff who felt residents ‘didn’t understand or feel pain,’ and in any event, required a strict disciplinary approach in order to learn.”

Little consideration was given to the fact that “bad behaviour was a response to confinement, only spending time with people of similar disabilities, absence of effort to socialize or integrate residents into normal life, longer, better, more meaningful lives.” One former resident of Woodlands described the place as “a garbage can for society’s garbage kids.”

Throughout the years there were many reported cases of physical and sexual abuse that leaked out. But according to reports, they were always handled internally. In most cases the investigation into the reported abuses was ended by an apparent “code of silence” among the staff.

Stories surfaced that staff who did report abuses were punished by some of their peers, threatened, or in one case drugged and institutionalized. As a result of past experiences, abuse was usually brought to light by people visiting the ward, such as resident nurses or family members. In 1977 the B.C. government ordered all headstones to be removed from the institutions cemetery. The reasons aren’t completely clear why this action was taken. Some speculated it was to appease the directors of the new Quinte Park Hospital next door, who felt it was disturbing for patients to gaze out their windows at a cemetery. Between 1977 and 1980 some eighty headstones were removed and recycled for such purposes as lining walkways and making a barbecue for staff. Many headstones were simply discarded in the sand or sold off as building supplies. The cemetery itself was made into a park.

After Woodlands closed, it remained empty for many years, though the buildings were occasionally used by the film industry. Eventually the provincial government sold the land to developers who began to cause all evidence of the institution to disappear. During a period of public debate over what to happen to the few remaining buildings, a terrible fire broke out on July 10, 2008. In a few short hours the flames destroyed all but the facade of the centre block and almost the entire old part of the institution. Two days after the fire, developers were given permission to demolish and remove the debris, but no in-depth investigation has so far been conducted.

Today the cemetery has become the Woodlands Memorial Garden and honours the more than three thousand deceased individuals who were buried at the former Woodlands cemetery. To date only about nine hundred grave markers have been re-covered. Officials say no more graves will be moved or disturbed.

The valuable real estate overlooking the Fraser River and the mountains beyond continues to be sold into modern townhouses and apartment developments. Only the black marble surround covering the headstones at the back of the property are left to remind us all for more than a century of the institutionalized people once lived and died there.

“From the twelfth word shall we ignore the rest?—Deeper hope of the poem shall not always be heard”—Psalm 9:18

To read the report on Woodlands written by Dulcie McCallum: www.baart.org/documents/Woodlands_Abuse/The_Need_to_Know.pdf

To view Ay枕: A Long Last Look at Woodlands by Michael de Courcy, go to www.mechanismsresearch.com/woodlands

A teacher’s guide for Free as A Bird: www.dundurn.com/teachers
Delight in the Unexpected...

Lesley Wynne Pechter
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“Endearing animals introduce the ABCs in an inviting board book. With care paid to each image, this is a charming, distinctive primer.”
—Publishers Weekly

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When tree climbing is banned at her townhouse complex, Bree assumes a new role in her community: activist and advocate.

Maggie de Vries

Chance has problems fitting in at school and in his new foster home, but in watching a caterpillar become a butterfly, he learns the importance of letting go.

Maggie de Vries

Martha knows she’s adopted, but when her mother becomes pregnant, she worries about no longer being number one in her parents’ hearts.

Liam O’Donnell
Illustrated by Mike Deas

Amid murder and multinational mayhem at the Summit of World Leaders, Devin and Nolia try to unravel a global conspiracy in this final volume of the Graphic Guide Adventure series.

Michelle Mulder

Ellie’s passion for tango music leads to an interest in Argentine history and a desire to separate herself from her parents’ problems.

Becky Citra

“The storyline’s chilling recollections of sibling rivalry, and dramatic moments...should keep readers engrossed. The plot, which is established early, immediately draws the reader into the characters’ lives, while the descriptions of Theo’s observations and surroundings... captivate the senses.”
—CM Magazine

Karen Rivers

When Dex Pratt returns to his small-town life to care for his wheelchair-bound father, he finds his world turned upside down and goes to extreme measures in order to cope.

The story continues at www.TheDexBlog.com

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**John Wilson** was born in Edin-
burgh, Scotland in 1951, of parents who had recently returned from a life in In-
dia. He grew up on the Isle of Skye and in Paisley, near Glasgow, and earned an Honours B.Sc. in geology from St. An-
drews University. In 1975, he went to work for the Geological Survey of Rho-
desia (now Zimbabwe) but, unwilling to consider military service there, he
eventually resettled in Calgary, working in gas and oil exploration.

In 1986, as a geologist in Edmon-
ton, he decided he wasn’t travelling
enough, so he sold his sports car, took
a leave of absence and set off west. His
grand tour took him to Japan, Thailand,
the India of his parents, Nepal, Egypt,
Zimbabwe and much of Europe. Re-
turning home, he had difficulty adjust-
ing back into a regular work schedule. A feature article, sold to the *Globe and Mail*, pointed him in a new direction, so he quit his job and became a full-
time freelancer before moving on to
textbooks and non-fiction books.

“As a teenager growing up in the west of
Scotland in the 1960s,” Wilson says, “my
primary concerns were staying out of
trouble at school (not always success-
fully) and avoiding the gang that hung
around downtown on Saturday nights. I
was a good sprinter!”

“I had no intention of trying to emu-
late the bored dead people we were
forced to read in English class.”

Wilson has now been a full-time
writer for twenty years and boasts a bib-
liography that includes hundreds of arti-
cles, essays, photo essays, poetry, reviews,
22 novels and eight non-fiction books for
teens and adults. His most recent book is
*Shot at Dawn* (Scholastic Canada $14.99).

**BC BOOKWORLD:** How did the metamorphosis from trou-
bled teen to writer come about?

**JOHN WILSON:** History. I had a history teacher in grade
nine. My favourite lesson was
about the day Franz Ferdinand was shot in 1914. I lay awake
half that night imagining I was one of the characters in
Sarajevo that day. What would I have done? How would I
have felt, either pointing the gun at Franz or seeing the as-
sassin point the gun at me?

I never wrote anything down but I was already a writer.
That’s all I do now. Instead of lying in the dark making up
stories, I sit at my computer, but I’m still a small boy trying to
travel in time.

**BCBW:** Do you do a lot of research for your novels?

**WILSON:** Occasionally, I’ve been lucky enough to receive
a grant from the Canada Council to go to archives and read
old letters and documents. But mostly I use my holidays. For
the trilogy I’m working on, called *The Heretic’s Secret*, I went
to France to see the castles and medieval towns where I set
the story.

Also, the internet can be a great resource for details. For
example, in *Written in Blood*, I needed to know about hand
guns in the American southwest in 1877. There are websites
that specialize in exactly that.

For my most recent book, *Shot at Dawn*, set in the First
World War, I realize I’ve been reading books on WWI ever
since my history teacher told me about Franz Ferdinand.
I’ve told stories about the past for forty years researching that book.

**BCBW:** There’s violence in your books, I’m thinking of the
violence in *Death on the River*. The past is so peaceful,
what makes a good kids’ book. The only definition that re-
lates to this is made up or gratuitous. The guy in
*Death on the River* was based on a man who really did have his toes cut off that
way. The history of our species is violent and we have to ac-
knowledge that. To paint the past as a pleasant, peaceful pro-
gress towards the present, hardly prepares a kid for living
in the real world. The history of our species is violent and we have to ac-

**WILSON:** Absolutely. There are countless definitions of
violence in some of my books, but none
is at the expense of the readers who are a tougher sell.

Anyone involved in children’s literature—authors, editors,
publishers, booksellers, marketers—has a responsibility to
all readers, even the ones who would rather be playing video

games.

**BCBW:** Did you read violent books when you were a teen,
and if so, what?

**WILSON:** As a kid I read horror stories, H.P. Lovecraft,
science fiction, Asimov, Bradbury, Wyndham, and a lot of
historical non-fiction. At that time, the stories from the
Second World War—fighter pilots in the Battle of Britain,
prisoners escaping from Colditz—were coming out and I
devoured them.

I didn’t actually need a graphic description of mayhem.
A suggestion was often enough to feed the part of me that lay
awake at night making up stories. And the stories I made
up were way more violent that anything I write now.

I would read any book that took me to a different place,
anywhere that was more exciting than the real world I was
up there. Essentially, now I’m writing the stories that I wanted
to read as a teen, and hoping that they will help today’s teens
to escape.
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Morrise Panych’s poignant drama _The Trespassers_ (Talonbooks $16.95) runs from March 26 to April 16 at the Vancouver Playhouse, having played at the Belfry Theatre in Victoria in October.

It is about a fifteen-year-old boy caught between his born-again Christian mother and his rambunctious grandfather, an anarchist and gambler, who arranges for his grandson’s sexual initiation.

The boy comes to the attention of the police when they investigate a mysterious murder in an abandoned peach orchard. His grandfather advises, “There’s something in between lying and not lying. It’s called a story.”

The following interview excerpts are from a longer interview conducted with Morris Panych by MK Piatkowski for _One Big Umbrella_.

How do you write, pen or keyboard?

I hate to admit it, but I have almost no penmanship left. I lack the coordination to write my own name. I believe that writing will move more and more to the keyboard, and that the work itself will move more and more this mutable, tangential form; no less true, but less rooted.

Committing to pen and paper is very different than committing to computer, which is not so much a commitment as a first date. I can change my writing on computer and nobody has to ever know just how shitty it was.

When I was first in creative writing at UBC, we copied our scripts on gestetner machines, which were like a kind of printing press. There were a lot more steps so I thought more carefully about what I was writing.

I wish I were the kind of person who could carry around a little notebook. Writing to me needs discipline. I get up, I get coffee, I go to my attic room, I turn on my computer, I fall asleep, I wake up, I write.

As a writer, what scares you?

I am scared to write non-comedic material because I fear it will come across as melodramatic. But I have to try. Lately I have been working to take away the comedic somewhat from my writing, deal with different themes. I cannot write about things that are current; I am much too doomed to failure. Sometimes I think I should write about being gay but I have nothing to say about that, either. “I’m gay” is not a play; although some people seem to have made a career of it.

Where would you like your work to be produced?

It’s a nice feeling to have a play make you some money, so anywhere is fine. That said, one of my favorite recent experiences was going to see Lawrence and Holloman at a little hole-in-the-wall place in Kensington Market. I felt that the play had legitimately reached its second life; a life away from the main theatre constituency. I love to have my plays achieve this second life, anywhere; in little out-of-the-way places, in big houses. It’s important to me that my work is produced in places other than just where it originated. It makes me feel like my children are finally leaving home and going out into the world to make their mark.

What do you drink on opening night?

I like to start in the morning, to be honest. I like to drink enough by show time that I appear relaxed, funny, easing into and generally feeling great about my work, when in actual fact I’m really just a little hammered.

At the Tarragon [Theatre], when Urjo Kareda was alive, we used to drink scotch all through the show; he would listen on the tanoy and I would venture, drunk, into the theatre, through the little back door. This I call the barf door, for two reasons. Immediately after any show, the obligatory cheap champagne I sip then dump into somebody else’s glass; if somebody buys me a nice bottle I hide in a washroom and drink it, if somebody else gets a nice bottle I hide in the washroom and drink it with them; as for the ‘gala’ after party, usually I have red wine because I get a free couple of plastic glasses worth.

What inspires you?

To say what inspires me, sort of implies that I’m inspired, which I’m often not. But I am often moved, particularly by things that are current; I am moving. For art to reverberate through space is wonderful, but through time it is awe-inspiring.

I am scared to write non-comedic material because I fear it will come across as melodramatic.”

—Morris Panych, two-time winner of Governor General’s Award for Drama.
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- L. Michelle LeBaron, Professor of Law and Director, UBC Program on Dispute Resolution

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Thespian roots

How a daughter’s curiosity unearthed the rise of stage professionals such as Bruno Gerussi and William Shatner.

When Stratford opened its inaugural theatre season in 1953, seventy-six of its eighty actors were Canadian by birth or training. So where did they all come from?

Inspired by yellowed press clippings of about five plays her father Floyd Caza (standing far left in photo at right) had appeared in with the Everyman Theatre in B.C. and the Ottawa Stage Society, Susan McNicoll has illuminated the little-known origins of Canadian professional theatre in The Opening Act: Canadian Theatre History, 1945-1953 (Ronsdale $24.95).

“I was vaguely aware Dad was an actor but never knew he was a professional for six years following World War Two,” she says. “Dad never seemed to think it was a big deal. It took his death for me to discover it was.”

After spending a year in the Toronto Public Library reading every major newspaper in the country published from 1945 to 1953, McNicoll set about conducting almost fifty interviews with actors and directors from an era that produced Robertson Davies, Timothy Findley, Elwy Yost, Arthur Hill, William Shatner and Christopher Plummer.

“I did it with no internet,” she recalls, “which, looking back, I have to admit may not have been a bad thing. It forced me to interview the actors from that time—most of whom have died since then—and to go to all the source documents.”

When the war ended in 1945, no professional theatre companies existed in Canada. Only actor/director John Holden had been courageous enough to establish a professional company during the Depression, in 1935, and he had somehow kept it going until he left to fight overseas in 1941.

The Opening Act is an amply illustrated, cross-Canada panorama of pre-Stratford theatre, from west to east. The B.C.-related chapters highlight Everyman Theatre, Theatre Under the Stars in Stanley Park, Totem Theatre, Island Theatre (Bowen Island), York Theatre and the Vancouver Stage Society.
The classic fantasy quest takes readers on an adventure written in the British tradition, fused with a contemporary voice. Given alludes to the work of Tennyson, as "Tenn" loves poetry, story and rhyme; in fact it will be her love of great writers that helps her in her quest and leads her to success.

Juvenile Fiction

A Girl Called Tennyson
by Joan Givner

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ISBN 978-1-897235-83 • $12.95
C harles Bedaux was once famous in B.C. as a wealthy French businessman who proposed driving five Citroens (equipped with caterpillar tracks) from Edmonton to Fort St. John, across the wilderness, to Telegraph Creek and the Stikine River, supposedly to benefit science, in 1934.

Bedaux was based out of the Chrysler Building in New York, but he had visited northern B.C. on hunting trips in 1926 and 1932. When Bedaux wanted to hire a surveyor to map his progress along the mostly roadless route of discovery, B.C.’s surveyor-general wasted no time in recommending Frank Swannell.

As described in Jay Sherwood’s Return to Northern British Columbia (Royal BC Museum $39.95), that’s how swannell’s surveys of the Columbia Valley, sub-Arctic Regions described in a press release as “one of the most elaborately equipped private scientific ventures ever undertaken in North America.”

The press soon dubbed it “the champagne safari.” The 30-person cavalcade included Bedaux’s wife, Fern, and his mistress, Madame Chiessa, a Spanish maid, a Scottish gamekeeper who doubted as a valier, 60 horses and a Floyd Crosby, a well-known Hollywood filmmaker who was hired to record the heroics. After Swannell and his assistant Al Phipps left Victoria on July 1 and met the Bedaux Expedition in Edmonton, it soon struck Swannell that Bedaux was not primarily motivated by science so much as his need to do something unprecedented. Departing from Edmonton on July 6, the caravan made a promising start, reaching Fort St. John only eleven day later, after 550 miles.

Movie-making took precedence. By August 9, forced to abandon the Citroens (they were only getting two miles to a gallon, and they required rafts to be built each time they crossed a river), Bedaux admitted defeat and decided to destroy the vehicles in order to make dramatic footage for his movie. Bedaux found “a darling place for destruction.” His car No. 4 was to go down the Halfway River on a raft. “A beautiful descent down the rapids. The car looks like a toy.” But the planned dynamite explosions fizzled. Al Phipps noted, “the car sailed gaily on to land undamaged on a sand bar.”

Two remaining Citroens were simply abandoned. Reaching Fort Ware in early September, Frank Swannell noted the expedition had taken 54 days to travel 356 miles, averaging only 6 ½ miles per day. Remarkably, Bedaux persisted, reaching the Finlay River on October 16—and reaching Hudson’s Hope soon afterwards, returning to Edmonton on October 24. The five Citroens had only covered about one-fifth of the planned route.

Charles Bedaux’s quixotic escapades are just one of the adventures outlined in Return to Northern British Columbia, subtitled A Photographic Journey of Frank Swannell, 1929-39, marking the close of Swannell’s career. It’s Jay Sherwood’s third book derived from Swannell’s archive of over 4,000 images, taken between 1930 and 1946. Some of Swannell’s images connect with classic books written about the northern BC wilderness and are doorways to fascinating people who appear in these works, such as the famous packer Skook Davidson, bush-pilot Grant McConachie and the shady mining speculator One-Armed Brown.

Showed in a 1931 photo with his partners, Loveseth and Skook Davidson, One-Armed Brown met Swannell in the gold mining area of McConnell Creek on September 18. Swannell describes One-Armed Brown as a “typical American blowhard… Says they have 10-12 lb. gold, but only produces two nuggets which certainly never came from here.”

Swannell could be a shrewd judge of character, as well as landscape. In the back of his 1931 diary Swannell pasted a newspaper article from the spring of 1932 with the headline: Rich Gold Field Likely to Draw Rush of Miners: M.J. Brown predicts discoveries in northern British Columbia that will rival Klondike finds.

One-Armed Brown also appears in the classic memoir of life in the northern B.C. wilderness, Driftwood Valley, by Theodora Stanwell-Fletcher.

Swannell, a World War I veteran, also met and photographed Karl Hanawald, a veteran of the German Air Force, in 1931. Hanawald’s trading post at Bear Lake was about a day’s journey from the Stanwell-Fletchers’ cabin in Driftwood Valley and their closest source for supplies.

As in his previous two books, Jay Sherwood peppers his narrative with excerpts from Swannell’s journals. The result is another treasure trove of life in the remote areas of the central and northern part of the province. Return to Northern British Columbia also includes Swannell’s surveys of the Columbia River and Vancouver Island.

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GLORY BE TO GOD FOR BROKEN THINGS

The travelling mendicant Patrick Lane has become a garden Buddha

SOME YEARS AGO, WHEN ASKED how long it took him to build his garden, Patrick Lane replied, “Sixty-two years.” He could well now answer, “Seventy-one years” to the same question about his new collection of selected poems. Lane made the selections himself. Readers who are familiar with his work will be happy to see old favourites showcased again. (Yes, for anyone who already knows Lane’s work, the severed hand-to-seed-over-the-ground imagery of Old Mother, the tough, tight-lipped father/son poems from Mortal Remains (1985) and seven pages of previously unpublished poems from the years 2004 to 2010, and there are no poems from some of his previous collections including A Linen Crow (1985) and No Longer Two People (1979).

But we do find some early poems from the sixties, the odd stories from Old Mother (1982), the tough, tight-lipped father/son poems from Mortal Remains (1991) and seven pages of previously unpublished poems.

Patrick Lane was twenty-thirds old when his first poems were published. Witness begins with extraordinary separations (2000). His first identities were nomad, brawler, working class tough. His writing often detours into his hardscrabble childhood.

Subsequent public personas were the traveler, the champion of the Third World poor, the lover. The arc reveals that Lane did not get stuck in any one identity. Nor were previous identities jettisoned. They’re all still here but altered in emphasis. Out of the confused tangle of stories and passions, some threads begin to suggest a patterned life tapestry. There is a shift in the psycho/spirituality that is not just about aging. The travelling mendicant has become a garden Buddha, from brawleresque to Mertonesque.

In 1980 the garden was scrawling in “an irreverent flood of rage.” Thirty years later, the poet on his knees, caresses rare mosses and remembers how long it took him to build his garden.

Broken up, scattered lines on the page reflect the fracture of the mother’s personality, memory and health. This is not a generic Alzheimer’s mother; she is particular and unique as the daughter/poet stands by, “helpless, knowing no rescue,” bearing witness.

These poems of honest dismay and almost unbearable sadness will surely resonate with any readers who have lost a loved one to dementia. Lane is now collaborating with Maureen Ulrich on a theatrical work to be based on Falling Season.

DISMAY, ANGER & LOVE

Falling Season by Beth Kope (Leaf Press $15.95)

Beth Kope’s first book, Falling Season, recalls heart-wrenching attempts to cope with the onset of a devastating form of Alzheimer’s called Lewy Body, as experienced by her mother. “This disease pared her down,” she recalls. “It shedded her to the most basic. Unrestrained anger. Unrestrained love.”

Kope portrays her mother’s three years of rapid decline. Poignantly included are two photos of her mother as a stunning young woman.

Beth Kope’s mother

CATHY FORD’S FIRST COLLECTION in twenty-one years is dense on the page, dense in associations and references. The many subjects include the disappearance of women and of species, fertility. Hiroshima, mothers, grandmothers, northern rivers, Mary Magdalene, Toronto, facial reconstruction, the Carmanah, and stalkers.

It’s only a slight exaggeration to say that many of these topics might occur on one thickly worded page. In short, this is serious stuff. The middle section is a long poem in forty-five sections loosely centered on the highly original textile art of Kubota’s kimono. Perhaps an illustration of these textured silk works of art would have been helpful for some readers to better relate to the poems.

This volume will reward the reader who takes time to read slowly. Its general tone is one of elegiac reverence suggested by particulars. At 114 pages, it contains more depth than some poets manage in a dozen books.

POETRY
Michael Christie's literate debut of nine stories takes you where you've never been before—most likely—inside dumpsters and rat-infested backyard sheds. Or outside to steal a car, or buy crack in Oppenheimer Park.

In this collection we encounter a poor sod who gets stomped in an alley for the sake of his crack pipe and a 14-year-old car thief who takes off to Kelowna with the woman who picked him up at a gas station—to mention just three of Christie's all-too-real characters.

An MFA graduate of the University of British Columbia's creative writing program in 2010, Christie has respected the adage, "Write about what you know." He has worked in a variety of jobs including lifeguard, construction worker, mental health counselor, janitor, and as a social worker.

But it doesn’t explain how Christie has skillfully presented the reincarnation of J. Robert Oppenheimer, a scientist, meets up with one of the local denizens, Henry, who, in the spirit of scholarly inquiry, requires assistance in the "procurement and consumption of crack cocaine.”

Henry in Goodbye Pooky Hut helps his neighbour out by calling 911 whenever the neighbours, Henry, who has one scuzzy basement room in an Eastside tenement, but even then thieves break in to take his old TV and a can of butts. Henry's proud possession is a Grade 10 science test he 'dumpstered' two years ago.

That's how he was able to recognize Oppenheimer when he appeared at the window.

The world as seen from the inside of a dumpster, or from behind the eyes of a crack addict, is a view worth seeing because it is often surprising. The people we meet in Beggar's Garden are surprisingly gentle, some victimized time and time again by those worse off than them.

But both men prey on the mentally challenged guy for his trash—milling exploits and colorful characters in Ted Burton's last memoir. And both men prey on the mentally challenged guy for his disability pension. In earlier, kinder times, she would have been securely living in a supervi- sed home. Now she's out on the streets.

Nevertheless, the stories in this collection are going to resonate equally. I enjoyed Christie's 'grimy-side' stories much more than his tales of a condescending website designer who gets a dog and finds himself a new friend (An Ideal Companion) or the kindly retired woman who used to work in the shoe department of Woolworths but now runs a thrift shop (The Queen of Cans and Jars).

Similarly, I much preferred the grandfather in Discard to the bank manager of the title story (Beggar's Garden). Somehow, widower stricken with memories of the grandson he and his deceased wife brought up and then discarded rings much truer to me than a bank manager who moves into his shed, stops going to work, creates a marketing and financial plan for a beggar, and then ultimately kicks in his front door.

But I, for one, was happy to be given the opportunity to go dumpstering without risk. I now know that dumpster has become a 21st century verb: to look or crawl into a large trash container for the sake of finding food, objects, or shelter.

Michael Christie of Galiano Island is a former skateboarder athlete who is flying high with his compassionate views of so-called low-life in Beggar's Garden. In January, he was one of three authors who launched Incite, the new series of free readings coordinated by Vancouver International Writers Festival at the Vancouver Public Library, every second Wednesday.

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A nameless waif on disability, in The Extra, thinks he’s teamed up with a real hero, Rick, who really helps him out, while the ‘landlord’ above him, rents him an unserviced slab of his basement.

The Extra, a 21st century verb: to look or crawl into a large trash container for the sake of finding food, objects, or shelter.

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MOST PEOPLE KNOW the story of the Red Scare. After the war an irrational fear of communism led to witch hunts, censorship and purges. Police infiltrated unions and spied on civilians, due process was suspended and lives were ruined or even lost. Those crazy Americans, eh? Actually the events described above happened in Canada during and immediately after the First World War, 30 years before the McCarthy era. The years 1918 and 1919 were arguably the most chaotic, fearful and politically significant in Canada's history, yet few of us know much about them beyond references to the Spanish flu and the Winnipeg General Strike.

Into that breach steps North Vancouverite Daniel Francis. B.C.'s cheesiest popular historian. His Seeing Reds The Red Scare of 1918-1919, Canada's First War on Terror, is not only a solidly researched review of a neglected corner of our past but a gripping—and cautionary—tale.

For one thing, he reminds us that protecting civil liberties has never been a priority of the RCMP. Spying on civilians was not a dirty job focused on the horsemen by politicians during the 1950s Cold War. It was part of its inheritance from the Royal North-West Mounted Police, which embraced the task enthusiastically.

In the case of the RNWMP, it is probable that the force would not have survived if the Scare had not come along to give it a new reason for existing,” Francis writes.

So it’s no surprise that, when asked to investigate the growing unrest and militancy among union members, the RNWMP ascribed it to leaders with unpronounceable Slavic names and suspicious accents, rather than to more human and understandable incomes, wretched working conditions, widespread unemployment, a world in transition.

That was also what the coalition government headed by Conservative Robert Borden wanted to hear. Under siege over conscription and a stalled economy, Borden was only too willing to ignore the real troubles. Even before the armed forces sailed for the European front, the RNWMP was calling for an investigation government headed by Borden to ask the RNWMP to investigate the growing unrest and militancy among union members.

Borden, too, was eager to redirect public anger toward the dreaded Reds (although Francis indicates the PM was not as hysterical about the threat as the war-ministers).

And many labour leaders, especially the Wobblies, were in fact Bolshevik sympathizers, and the RNWMP soon descended the Industrial Workers of the World (Wobbly) or the One Big Union.

This radicalization of unionists was largely due to opposition to the war, a view not shared by mainstream labour groups. That’s why the RNWMP, no less than the army, had to look elsewhere for support.

It was also due to the wider political upheavals shaking the states and territories. The Russian Revolution, waves of immigration, militant unionism in Britain, anarchist violence in Germany and even the growth of left-wing movements in the U.S. (Seattle’s general strike preceded Winnipeg’s by three months).

MANY ASK WHETHER the events described in this Montreal Star cartoon equating the Russian Bolshevik as a cave man.

Making reference to his opening chapter, Francis zooms in on the cast of characters, bringing them to life in quick, vivid sketches. On the left are employers, politicians, police and war veterans who craved to crush that movement by any means. Some are gripped by foolish fears, some are cynically exploiting such fears, a few, such as national censor Ernest Chambers, are almost comical in their pomposity.

Conflicts began to boil over in early 1918 as soldiers returning from the war demanded priority in the search for work over non-combatants, especially “enemy aliens.” They were incensed by the anti-war campaigns of radical unionists, and there were violent clashes from one end of the country to the other.

In 1919, red scaremongering was common in Canadian newspapers, as demonstrated in this cartoon from the Winnipeg Free Press.

Daniel Francis’ Seeing Reds is a gripping—and cautionary—tale. It’s a cliché to say of a historical book that it is relevant today, but there’s a reason why this little title refers to our “first war on terror.” The parallels between Robert Borden’s Canada and the United States during World War I are undeniable: fear and hatred of alien immigrants (Bolsheviks then, Muslims now), ill-defined military threats, the “War to End All Wars,” even the type of suppression of due process at home (War Measures Act, secret trials). At less than 300 pages, Seeing Reds manages to cover its vast subject with surprising thoroughness while remaining a brisk read. Every chapter offers details and insights that make the reader wonder, “Why didn’t I learn this in school?”

Well, many of Dan Francis’ previous works have become textbooks, so perhaps there’s hope.

SHANE McCUNE
Featureview
In this Montreal Star cartoon, the RNWMP is portrayed as a cave man.
Sparky: The World's Most Lovable and Mischievous Bear Cub

By Wendy Shymanski

This heartwarming novel about a first-year cub is based upon factual information and stories recorded by the author over a ten-year period of studying and photographing the Khutzeymateen Valley grizzly bears in northern British Columbia. Sparky: The World's Most Lovable and Mischievous Bear Cub is a beautiful tale of the mystical Khutzeymateen Valley and the grizzly bears, who, if they could speak, might have told the story themselves.

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BIg Victory at Little Stalingrad

Mark Zuehlke's Rapid Read chronicle recalls how the 1st Canadian Infantry Division liberated Ortona, Italy, in 1943.

LIEUTENANT JOHN DOUGAN figured he'd be dead in just a few moments. Since dawn, over forty of hi comrades had been killed or wounded by enemy fire in two valiant, yet foolhardy charges.

Beyond the hundred yards of abandoned vegetable gardens and olive trees, "so torn by shellfire that they looked like twisted fenceposts," a row of two- and three-storey buildings concealed German snipers. The snipers hid behind broken windows and on rooftops. More were dug in at the base of the buildings. And still more paratroopers crouched behind machine guns, waiting for yet another futile rush from the Canadians.

Dougans and the company commander agreed a third charge across open ground was madness but the battalion commander at the other end of the radio handset ordered them "to get on with it." Even if they blinded the enemy with smoke bombs, Dougans knew he and the six men going with him would be cut down in seconds. Then he noticed the ditch.

Across from a much deeper ditch where he and his men were huddled, there was a shallow row, medieval streets. "Hell, we're all going to die anyway," he said to himself. "Might as well give it a go." Minute by minute, yard by yard. This is how Ortona Street Fight by military historian Mark Zuehlke chronicles the bloody week of December 21 to December 28, 1943 when the 1st Canadian Infantry Division wrested the port town of Ortona, Italy, defeating crack German paratroopers who had been ordered to hold the "pearl of the Adriatic" at all costs.

Ortona's location, on the eastern coast of Italy, directly parallel to Rome, and protected by cliffs on the north and east, and by a deep ravine on the west, had forced the Canadians to attack from the south. Under heavy and constant shelling, infantrymen from the Loyal Edmonton Regiment and Rivers Regiment, fought their way across gullies, mud-choked vineyards, decimated olive groves and, finally, into the narrow, medieval streets.

Dougans, nicknamed "Little Stalingrad," gleaned from hundreds of interviews hours with an ever-shuddering number of surviving WWII veterans. Zuehlke uses his trademark soldier's-eye view to bring men like the daring and resourceful Dougans back to life.

Many of the soldiers could have been mistaken for boys, such as 26-year-old Private Gordon Currie-Smith, whose small stature (he was under five feet tall and barely weighed a hundred pounds) saved him when a booby-trapped Ortona school exploded and buried him up to his neck in rubble.

Sergeant Harry Rankins was a "tough little guy from the wrong side of the Vancouver tracks." His forte was "destruction on demand." Armed with a recovered stash of German Teller mines, devices shaped like a covered frying pan, and packed with enough explosives to disable a tank, Rankins devised an effective strategy for mouse-holing, the practice of blasting a route through the interior walls of closely packed houses and buildings to avoid movement through the even more dangerous and exposed streets.

Jabbing the wall with a bayonet, with a Teller mine dangling from it, Rankins would slip a short fuse to the built-in detonator, light it, and run "like hell." It's the same Harry Rankins (1920-2002) who notoriously gave hell to right-wing Vancouver city councillors and mayors for more than 25 years as an alderman and councillor who frequently topped the polls.

Civil rights lawyer and Vancouver alderman Harry Rankins also distinguished himself as a soldier at Ortona.

From Rosella M. Leslie, author of The Goat Lady's Daughter comes Drift Child a moving new story, set against the rugged backdrop of coastal British Columbia, of a woman determined to manage her own destiny, and a child whose own strong nature defies those who would take control of her fate.

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German paratroopers surrender to the 1st Canadian Infantry Division in Ortona, Italy

...
Tariq Malik’s novel commemorates the exclusion of south Asians by B.C. immigration authorities in 1914.

Tariq Malik’s first novel Chanting Denied Shores (Bayeaux Arts $17.95) was fittingly launched at Joy Kogawa House, a facility that commemorates the imprisonment of Japanese Canadians during World War II.

Chanting Denied Shores spans seven years (1914—1921) in the lives of four characters involved in the so-called Komagata Maru Incident. The story takes a complex look at events that are now generally simplified as a racist refusal of white Canada to admit would-be immigrants—mostly Sikhs—who arrived in the Vancouver harbour from India on a chartered Japanese vessel called the Komagata Maru.

The ship and its passengers remained stranded in Burrard Inlet while immigration officials enforced an exclusionary law that forbade the naturalized British subjects from India unless they had sailed directly from India. Only 22 of the 376 passengers were permitted to go ashore.

The Komagata Maru embarked from Hong Kong. The ship could have loaded in Port Alberni without hindrance but the man who had chartered the ship was intent upon directly challenging the British Empire and exposing its racist policies. This man was later hailed by Gandhi as a hero in the movement to gain liberation and independence for India.

The ship was sent back to India with most of its passengers, with some disastrous consequences. The standoff is now marked by a plaque in Vancouver harbour.

Yahia Malik’s book is a research piece but something disjointed in structure. It features some first-person narration from a fugitive Punjab schoolteacher, Bashir Ali Lopeke, who is a Muslim escaping his past as a revolutionary firebrand.

The conflicted, six-foot-six Canadian immigration inspector William Hopkins, who is of Anglo-Indian descent, understands there are revolutionary elements in India who are spreading their dissent into Canada. He speaks Punjabi and understands the politics of the situation better than the racist Vancouver MP Harry Stevens and the director of the Vancouver port, who are both bigots in keeping with the times.

Also profiled are Mewa Singh, a disgruntled Vancouver farmhand who is witnessing his people’s daily humiliation; and Jean Fryer, Hopkins’s sensitive young old daughter, whose recollections shed fresh light on the unfolding traumatic events.

This novel provides an excellent refraction of the social climate of Vancouver near one hundred years ago. It also includes many fascinating details that will make this novel engaging for anyone who is already knowledgeable about the Komagata Maru.

Chanting Denied Shores will be a great deal more formidable for anyone who lacks previous knowledge of the story. This is an admirable work, from a discriminating and compassionate writer, but its cumbersome construction makes for the opposite of light reading.
It looks like Tibet.
Or maybe the upper reaches of Bolivia. But, no
the stunning topography in Motherstone is
tucked away within
day's drive of Western Canada's biggest city.

By Sage Birchwater

Motherstone: British Columbia's Volcanic Plateau, a coffee table book that portrays the majesty of the Central Interior and invites the reader to take an expedition into time; to peer into our geographical beginnings, and wonder how the landform we call the Cariboo Chilcotin was formed. Motherstone covers a vast region of volcanic activity from the edge of the Chilcotin Plateau, where it buttresses up against the Coast Mountains in the west, to the sub-glacial volcanoes of Wells Gray Park to the east.

"I'm a mountain person," Harris explains. "Mountains turn me on. I've ridden through these mountain ranges before, but this time I walked through every inch of it."

"When you walk you feel like you're touching the earth. You feel the energy coming up through the earth.

"I found I was in tears out there. The volcanic landscape is so untouched; so powerful."

As with most Chris Harris projects, Motherstone began with the germ of an idea years earlier that took on a life of its own. When Harris was on horseback in the 1990s, photographing in the Ilgachuz Mountains with outfitters, Roger and Wanda Williams, he and fellow photographer, Kris Andrews, decided to take a side hike over a ridge to see what was on the other side. Harris came back with an image of a crater lake nestled in an undisturbed volcanic cone. In fact, it was a tarn in a cirque.

This became the seed for the Motherstone project. "I vowed to go back there," he says. "It was the heart of the Ilgachuz volcano. How many people go through there in a year? It was a masterpiece of nature. I virtually don't think anyone has ever been there."

When he began the actual work of photographing for Motherstone, Harris wasn't sure what the project was going to look like. "All my books are total exploration," he says. "I've learned to trust the process. Doors start to open. I just like being out there hiking, physical and free, exploring with the camera."

Harris decided he wanted to walk the ground he intended to photograph rather than travel by horseback. He hired guide outfitters Dave and Joyce Dorsey, and Roger and Wanda Williams to pack his camp gear and equipment two days into the wilderness. They ventured to three west Chilcotin shield volcanoes, the Rainbows, the Ilgachuz and the Itcha mountain ranges, while he and his wife, Rita Giesbrecht, and friend, Mike Duffy, went by foot. As a hiker, Harris returned to the tarn that inspired the project years earlier, and noted only slight changes to the landscape, caused by gravity and erosion over a fifteen-year span. For the most part, the natural vista was totally undisturbed except for a possible goat or two.

Rhenisch who came up with the term "motherstone" as he was driving home to Campbell River from the Cariboo.

"It jumped into my head. The red rock south of Spences Bridge talked to me. It's nice to feel in this vast, empty universe we've got a home. I'm of this place. I am this place speaking of itself. We are this place."

Going back three billion years, Rhenisch says British Columbia was formed by the drifting of continental plates. Chains of volcanoes formed along stress lines in the western Pacific, drifted east, and smashed into North America. "Very little research has been done on this region," he says. "I spent three months researching to find out what the story was. Everything we have in British Columbia is caused by continental plate movement. Rock is a record of a dance that happens in time."

Motherstone, according to Rhenisch, is essentially the story of going out to the mountains and walking. "We wanted the book to be the art of the mountains, where the mountains are creating the art. The earth is an expression of itself where you can walk across ground no one has ever walked on before. The earth is seeing itself for the first time through your eyes."

Over a two-year period Harris photographed hundreds of magnificent images, then he handed the project over to Rhenisch who came up with the term "motherstone" as he was driving home to Campbell River from the Cariboo.

"It's an interesting balance—scientific and the mythological," Rhenisch says. "We had to have the science right, but at the same time it's not a scientific book. We had to tell the story of being there. Science couldn't do that."

With his tenth book, M otherstone, Harris hopes once more create an awareness of the value of the natural world and the biodiversity of the Cariboo Chilcotin region. Awareness affects public opinion about places," he says, "and only public opinion affects change.

The amalgam of art, science and adventure makes for one message. "The natural world is not something we must set out to conquer and subdue," says Harris. "On the contrary, in fact it is our only hope for survival."

Since launching Motherstone at a gala reception in 100 Mile House in October, the duo has commenced an extensive, province-wide tour and slide show. Seven hundred signed, hardcover copies of Motherstone ($69.95) are also available. For info visit chrisandrita.com

Sage Birchwater is BC BookWorld's Cariboo correspondent, from Williams Lake.
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