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Cool-Season Crops for the Year Round Gardener – Fifth Edition

A complete guide to cool-season crops and how to raise them. Gardeners from Southeastern Alaska to southern Oregon will benefit from clear, practical advice on how to put fresh homegrown produce on your table every month of the year.

$17.95 / 6 x 9” / 208 pages

“Binda Colebrook has given us a reference book rich with practical tips, first-hand experience, and best of all, region-specific advice. If self-sufficiency and growing food are important to you, and you happen to live in the Maritime Northwest, this is a book you should own.”

— Mark Macdonald, West Coast Seeds
The Third Crop: A personal and historical journey into the photo albums and shoeboxes of the Slocan Valley 1800s to early 1940s (Sono Nis $26.95) by Rita Noir

The Chuck Davis History of Metropolitan Vancouver (Harbour $44.95) by Chuck Davis

Easy Way to Stop Smoking (Sandhill Book Marketing $19.95) by Allen Carr

Start & Run a Personal History Business: Get Paid to Research Family Ancestry and Write Memoirs (Self-Counsel Press $23.95) by Jennifer Campbell

Generation Us: The Challenge of Global Warming (Orca $9.95) by Andrew Weaver

Something Fierce: Memoirs of a Revolutionary Daughter (Douglas & McIntyre $21) by Carmen Aquirre Winner of CBC’s Canada Reads.

Elusive Destiny: The Political Vocation of John Napoleon Turner (UBC Press $39.95) by Paul Litt

I Just Ran: Percy Williams, World’s Fastest Human (Ronald Press $23.95) by Samuel Hawley

The End of Growth: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality (New Society Publishers $17.95) by Richard Heinberg

Vancouver Noir: Stories about Vancouver 1930-1960 (Anvil Press $25) by John Belshaw and Diane Purvey

Somebody’s Child: Stories about Adoption (TouchWood Editions $19.95) edited by Lynne Van Luven and Bruce Gillespie

Crossing the Continent (Talonbooks $18.95) by Michel Tremblay

The current topselling titles from 12 major BC publishing companies, in no particular order.
It only gradually dawned on Robyn Michele Levy that something was wrong. Levy had a rigid left arm, frozen facial expressions and an embarrassing limp. She lost her job after five years of depression. But she resisted her doctor’s suggestion that she might have Parkinson’s—a neurodegenerative disease that usually strikes the elderly—even though her father had the disease and had exhibited similar symptoms.

Most of Me (Greystone $21.95) describes how Levy was diagnosed with early onset Parkinson’s at age 43, then breast cancer eight months later. Along the way, she repairs a broken relationship with her daughter, re-connects with new and old friends, and gains a new appreciation for her husband, Bergen.

Levy describes disease coping mechanisms from deranged sexual fantasies about her dentist-turned-rock-star flossing her teeth to descriptions of her Cry Lady—a sobbing, blubbering woman that inhabited her body. It’s proof positive that hardship can rekindle relationships, and a healthy mindset can overcome severe physical challenges.

Penguin bound

In April of 2011, Gurinder Basran was awarded the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize for her first novel, Everything Was Good-bye. Mother Tongue Publishing on Saltspring Island has now sold Canadian rights to Penguin Canada. Everything Was Good-bye will be re-launched this year as a Penguin paperback and e-book.

Our liquid highways

Royal Roads University professor Phillip Vannini has spent five years conducting 400 interviews and taking 250 ferry rides to examine ferry-dependence on island and coastal communities for Ferry Tales: Mobility, Place, and Time on Canada’s West Coast (Routlege $32.50). He hopes to trigger an understanding that our ferry systems are highways to our homes.

Orwell would approve

F. S. Michaels’ first book, Monoculture: How One Story is Changing Everything (Red Clover Press $16.25), has been awarded the 2011 George Orwell Prize for outstanding contributions to the critical analysis of public discourse. It examines how the precedence of the economic story in our lives deeply influences six fundamental areas of life—work, communities, physical and spiritual health, education, creativity, and our relationships with others and the environment. Previous recipients include Pulitzer Prize-winner Charlie Savage, television host Jon Stewart of the Daily Show, linguist Noam Chomsky and cultural critic Neil Postman. The annual prize was awarded in Chicago by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), which has over 35,000 members and subscribers worldwide.

We can’t do it without ya!

IT’S BEEN AWHILE SINCE we’ve said THANK YOU to all our brave booksellers around the province who help us provide you with the latest news about B.C. books into our 25th year. While we regret the government’s closure of Crown Publications bookstore in Victoria, we celebrate the endurance of our smallest retail partner—teensy 32 Books on Hornby Island, managed by Judi Stransman.
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.

- Winner of the Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing
- City of Victoria Butler Book Prize (Nominee)
- George Ryga Award for Social Awareness in Literature (Nominee)

978-1-55039-177-0  8.5 x 9.25  328 pages  165 photos  cloth  $38.95

The Third Crop
A personal and historical journey into the photo albums and shoeboxes of the Slocan Valley 1800s to early 1940s
Rita Moir
The Third Crop serves a visual feast to lovers of the province's history, with more than 160 historic photographs beautifully juxtaposed with contemporary images of the valley. Moir's insights into the history of a place she deeply loves and respects, and her reflections on her experiences living there, are a significant contribution to understanding this vibrant part of British Columbia.

978-1-55039-184-8  9.25 x 8.5  175 pages  180 photos  paper  $28.95

Painting My Life
A Memoir of Love, Art, and Transformation
Phyllis Serota
“Serota’s work is an insightful portrayal of humanity—the micro and the macro of what it is to be human. Her rich and direct paintings are about her, her family, being Jewish, memory, and the impacts of the world around her. Painting My Life is a sensitive, poignant biography in word and art. The paintings, from more than thirty years, trace Serota’s evolution with form, colour, light, and depth. Serota is a truly significant Canadian artist, as this book clearly demonstrates.”—PATRICIA BOVEY, PRSA, Art Historian & Consultant, Former Director of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and the Winnipeg Art Gallery

Stunning full-colour reproductions. A page-turning insight into the place where art and life meet.

978-1-55039-188-6  8.5 x 9  240 pp  168 photos  paper  $52.95

More English than the English
A Very Social History of Victoria
Terry Reksten, foreword and revisions by Rosemary Neering
Twenty-five years ago, Terry Reksten, who died in 2001, wrote More English than the English “for those who might not usually find pleasure in reading about the past,” and strove to create a social history that portrayed the spirit of the times from the mid-nineteenth century into the 1930s. Deliberately selective and anecdotal, this is a delightful collection of stories and sagas of the people who fashioned a fort, a town, and finally, a city on the rocks and meadows of southern Vancouver Island.

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All That Glitters
A Climber's Journey Through Addiction and Recovery
Margo Talbot
Margo Talbot's unflinchingly honest account of a childhood characterized by abuse and neglect, her descent into depression, addiction, and criminal activity is both heartbreaking and, ultimately, inspiring. Finding redemption and healing through her passion for the outdoors and, in particular, ice climbing, this memoir is a stirring testament to the power of the human spirit and the healing force of nature.

“This inspiring real-life story shows us that our lives' biggest challenges can also be our greatest opportunities for personal growth, transformation, and enlightenment. Margo is magnificently!”—BIL PHILLIPS, AUTHOR OF THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER, BODY-FOR-LIFE.

978-1-55039-182-4  6 x 9  192 pages  photos  paper  $19.95

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The Riddle of the Raven
A Sailing Ship Possessed by a Ghost
Jan deGroot
When Jan de Groot decided to purchase Raven, a 140-foot gaff-rigged ketch, in order to provide sailing adventures for underprivileged children in BC, he had no idea of the bizarre adventure that lay ahead. His voyage began with a crew of thirty-one who set sail in the Bahamas to bring the ship to her new home in Vancouver. Almost immediately, strange events began to rattle the crew and all were affected by the presence of the ghost who haunted the ship and cursed the voyage with its paranormal skullduggery.

The Riddle of the Raven is a wonderful read for all those who love tales about ships and the sea, and for those who are intrigued by the paranormal.

978-1-55039-183-1  6 x 9  200 pp  photos  paper  $15.95

Celebrating 44 Years of Publishing in Canada
More English than the English
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Terry Reksten, foreword and revisions by Rosemary Neering
Twenty-five years ago, Terry Reksten, who died in 2001, wrote More English than the English “for those who might not usually find pleasure in reading about the past,” and strove to create a social history that portrayed the spirit of the times from the mid-nineteenth century into the 1930s. Deliberately selective and anecdotal, this is a delightful collection of stories and sagas of the people who fashioned a fort, a town, and finally, a city on the rocks and meadows of southern Vancouver Island.

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Gerry Andrews’ aerial photography dramatically altered forestry in BC in the late 1930s, Andrews’ remarkable life left an indelible mark on British Columbia.
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Rachel Fisher, Heather Stretch, Robin Tunnicliffe
New farmers, experienced growers, budding environmentalists and fans of natural, organic produce alike will find ground to love in this must-read book on small-scale organic farming.
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The remarkable story of a couple forced to live apart for 25 years due to Canada’s exclusionary immigration laws. “Required reading.” — Jan Wong, author of Red China Blues
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“An odyssey that spans a continent—from the Civil War battlefields, to the British Columbia salmon canneries—The Tinsmith is an ambitious and spellbinding read.” — Helen Humphreys
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Delve into a deadly world of secrets and people fighting to maintain control at any cost. A murdered co-worker, gunshots and violence on the buses are all part of the second book in the Casey Holland mystery series.
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Canada’s most decorated book of mountain literature. Winner of the Boardman Tasker Prize (UK), the Grand Prize at the Banff Mountain Book Festival (CAN) and the American Alpine Club’s Literary Award (USA).
RMB $32.95
Half-Blood Blues by Esi Edugyan

Publication was delayed in Canada with the demise of Key Porter Books. Edugyan’s husband Steven Price, whose first novel was published by Thomas Allen in Ontario, encouraged his editor Patrick Crean to read the manuscript and accept it for publication. Edugyan soon found herself a finalist for four major literary awards, having just given birth to her first child. Born and raised in Calgary, Edugyan lives in Victoria.

We asked Joan Givner to review both of Esi Edugyan’s novels.

In both her novels, Esi Edugyan illuminates little-known corners of black history, and shows the forces of racial hatred mutating against, and ultimately destroying, the black person of extraordinary talent. Her first novel, The Second Life of Samuel Tyne, is set in a small Alberta town, established as a black community by fugitives from the southern United States. Here in the 1960s, decades after it has lost its black identity, Tyne arrives with his family. An economic forecaster by profession, his real love is electronics, his ability to create a rudimentary computer marking him as a visionary. However, he is an immigrant from Ghana, and his world is not hospitable to a black visionary. What follows is the steady erosion of his dreams and the devastation of his family. He left the city to follow his vocation, fearing an ignominious epitaph: “he made it to the end.” After all his struggles those words sum up his life exactly. As Faulkner wrote of his black characters, “They endured.”

This bleak chronicle has a cast of grotesques—monstrous twins (right out of Marjorie Wallace’s 1986 book, The Silent Twins), and the town’s deputy mayor and his wife, a red-neck couple that arrives on Tyne’s doorstep shouting, “Call the Guinness Book—we made it here in less than a month.” Even the comedy of their antics and dialogue cannot relieve the overwhelming heaviness of the story. Seven years after this debut, Edugyan found a body of material that intensifies her themes and focussed them brilliantly. The characters of Half-Blood Blues are jazz musicians in Nazi Germany, and, as such, they face threats far more dire than the bigotry of rural Alberta. Not only is the mixed race of the performers abhorrent to Nazi ideology, but the music itself is anathema:

It was a plague sent out by the dread black hordes, engineered by the Jews. Us Negroes, see, we was only half to blame—we just can’t help it. Savages just got a natural feel for filthy rhythms, no self-control to speak of.

For any writer, the Holocaust is dangerous subject matter since the good-versus-evil dichotomy invites (almost condones) melodrama. Edugyan negotiates the territory deftly. In focussing on black victims, she neither diminishes Jewish suffering, nor makes every German a Nazi collaborator. Of her six musicians, the Jewish pianist is deported to Sachsenhausen, one German cravenly abandons the group, while the hochgeboren manager risks his life to save the black performers. These are Sid Griffiths and Chip Jones, African-Americans from Baltimore, and the young genius, Hieronymus Falk. He is a Mischling (mongrel) the son of a Senegalese soldier and a white German mother. It is the fate of this trio that the book traces, as they flee Berlin for Paris, only to arrive as the army of occupation moves in.

Sid Griffiths, anti-hero, a good but not great musician, is the narrator. Naturally for such a polyglot group, communication is a problem. Sid explains how they (and the author) solve it:

We talked like mongrels see—half German, half Baltimore bar slang. Just a few scraps of French here and there. Only real language I spoke aside from English was Hochdeutsch.

The idiomy they improvise is as spontaneous, lively, and rhythmic as their music. It allows the witty repartee of Chip Jones to run counterpoint to the harrowing events, creating a sustained chiaroscuro effect. The novel’s other stylistic distinction is the perfectly calibrated, cyclical arrangement of the six sections, alternating between past and present. Only at the end, do the implications of the opening segment become clear.

continued on next page
A CREDIT TO YOUR RACE by Truman Green

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Writing is
a Social Act!
The Environmental Rights Revolution
A Global Study of Constitutions, Human Rights, and the Environment
David R. Boyd

The right to a healthy environment has been the subject of extensive philosophical debates that revolve around the question: Should rights to clean air, water, and soil be entrenched in law?

David Boyd answers this by moving beyond theoretical debate to measure the practical effects of enshrining the right in constitutions. His pioneering analysis of 193 constitutions and the laws and court decisions of more than 100 nations in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa reveals a positive correlation between constitutional protection and stronger environmental laws, smaller ecological footprints, superior environmental performance, and improved quality of life.

February 2012, 978-0-7748-2161-2 pb $34.95
468 pages, 10 charts, 22 tables

David R. Boyd's thorough and carefully presented research provides a clear and detailed account of how environmental rights are being implemented throughout the world. After an initial orientation to the philosophical debates about human rights and the environment, Boyd moves on deftly to investigate which arguments are vindicated in practice. Identifying the evidence available about the practical effectiveness of environmental rights, he provides an invaluable assessment of developments to date as well as a guide to promising future directions of research. This extremely well written book is an essential guide to environmental rights in theory and in practice.

– Professor Tim Hayward, University of Edinburgh

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"Butterfly Winter" has been a success for W.P. Kinsella. The novel has sold well in Canada, with over 70,000 hardcover copies sold. However, it has never been a big seller in the U.S. and Europe. The novel was released by a little-known imprint, WPRK Publishing. Kinsella has been asked countless times by interviewers, "why baseball?" He puts part of his answer into Sandor Boatly's excited revelation: "The field is not enclosed. The possibilities are endless. There is no whistle to suspend play, there is no clock to signal an end." So the possibilities in Butterfly Winter are likewise endless. "Magic is only something you haven't seen before," the wizard says to Julio. So how come Butterfly Winter was released by a little-known imprint in Manitoba? That's almost as bizarre as the novel. As the man who wrote Shoeless Joe, the basis for the movie, Field of Dreams, surely Kinsella can get published anywhere he chooses. But no way, Julio. "Let's face it," Kinsella says, "the offer to publish from Enfield & Wizenty was the only offer. So I'm happy they decided to award me their Colophon Prize and publish the novel.

Major publishers want huge sales. Something like 60% of all books are sold in Canada within a hundred miles of Toronto. I have never been a big seller in Ontario. "My novel Box Socials sold like 70,000 hardcover copies in the USA, but when my next novel was ready they not only didn't want to buy it, they didn't want to read it. Reason? Not enough sales in Canada."
fateful journey from the light to the dark for Geneva, her Spirit Sister, and marries outside of her race and culture. This ancient ritual sets in motion a series of heartbreaking events that one neither she nor Mosley could ever have imagined.

Paperback 9.6 x 6.0 • 120 pages • ISBN: 9781926763194 • $25.00

MIDNIGHT EMBERS poetry by Candice James

Words, when strung together like a beautiful rare necklace, are priceless, indestructible and eternal. Poetry is the grand ballroom these words live, breathe and dance in.

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Paperback 9.6 x 6.0 • 252 pages • ISBN: 9781926763187 • $29.00

VORTEX poetry by Manolis

An ancient music runs through the poetry of Manolis, so it is appropriate that his work should be presented with Greek face. Vibrant, radiant, his poetry is steeped in an antique tradition and yet is thoroughly modern in scope and refreshingly new.

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Doctor Geneva Song’s Chinese wedding ceremony is traditional, but she marries outside of her race and culture. This ancient ritual sets in motion a series of heartbreaking events that neither she nor Mosley could ever have imagined.

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THE LIBRARY BOOK: A History of Service to British Columbians

by Dave Obee • Foreword by Sarah Ellis

Introduction by Iona Campagnolo

Written by Times-Colonist journalist and Friend-of-BC-Libraries Dave Obee, this handsome book marks the 100th anniversary of the British Columbia Library Association. A library retrospective, documented in anecdotes and many beautiful photographs, The Library Book starts with the circulating libraries maintained by the North-West Company in the years of the fur trade and progresses to the present day. Obee’s research brings to life some of the library world’s more memorable predecessors and the events that shaped library development in BC.

“In The Library Book author Dave Obee, a brilliant and articulate chronicler, captures succinctly the exciting story of a century of library service to British Columbians. It is an incredible work of historical significance and indeed is an excellent read. A copy should be on everyone’s coffee table.”

— Ray Culos, Former head of the Library Development Commission

Order online: www.bcla.bc.ca/book

Also available at: Munro’s Books (Victoria) and book/mark, The Library Store (Vancouver Public Library’s Central Branch)

profits from the sale of The Library Book will support the British Columbia Library Association

$50 (Bulk orders: $40) 11” x 12” hard cover, 264 pages, 300 photos, Adrian Raeside cartoons, extensive timeline and index; ISBN: 978-0-9692614-9-0

NEW FROM THE ROYAL BC MUSEUM


From his early days as a farm hand and rural school teacher to his long career in forestry and surveying, Gerry Andrews explored much of the province and made many friends along the way. His developments in aerial photography in the 1930s changed the way BC’s forests were managed and assisted the Allies in the D-Day landings. As BC’s surveyor general from 1951 to 1968, he supervised the mapping of the province’s major construction projects.

Return to Northern British Columbia A Photographic of Frank Swannell, 1929–39

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Royal BC Museum books are distributed by Heritage Group.
F I C T I O N

Oh, Sisters Brothers, where art thou?

Overshadowed somewhat by Esi Edugyan winning Toronto’s Giller Prize, Patrick deWitt won both the $25,000 Rogers Writers’ Trust Fiction Prize and the Governor General’s Award for Fiction for his sophomore novel, The Sisters Brothers (Anansi $22.95). The Canadian-born deWitt is getting half the press even though he has won twice as much partially because he lives in Portland. His offbeat novel is a rollicking tale of two cowboy assassins, Eli and Charlie Sisters, and their faithful horses, as they are tracking down a gold prospector with a secret. Born on Vancouver Island, deWitt was also nominated for the Giller and long-listed for the Man Booker Prize. “I think of my work as a bit left of centre,” he has said. DeWitt has been credited with a “dark and gentle touch” in his storytelling. DeWitt’s previous novel, Ablutions, was published in 2009, and he wrote the screenplay for the film, Terrifi. 978-1770890329

The first novel by five-time Ironman finisher Margaret Dietz of Squamish, From My Mother (CreateSpace $9.95), follows marathoner Nadia as she undertakes a 100-kilometre ultrarun, all the while contemplating the size of the publishing house shouldn’t matter, so we don’t discriminate against small fry. We leave it to our readers to discern any thematic trends.

In Richard Wagamese’s new novel Indian Horse (D&M $22.95) we meet Saul Indian Horse whose last binge almost killed him. Promo material describes Saul as a reluctant resident in a treatment centre for alcoholics: “Saul wants peace, and he grudgingly comes to see that he’ll find it only through telling his story. With him, readers embark on a journey back through the life he’s led as a northern Ojibway, with all its joys and sorrows... For Saul, taken forcibly from the land and his family when he’s sent to residential school, salvation comes for a while through his incredible gifts as a hockey player. But in the harsh realities of 1960s Canada, he battles obtu­rate racism and the spirit­destroying effects of cultural alienation and dis­placement.” 978-1-55885-462-5

The Far Side of the Sky (HarperCollins $24.99) weaves fictional characters into World War II history. An Austrian Jewish physician and surgeon flees the Nazis with his daughter to operate a refugee hospital in Shanghai where he falls in love with an enigmatic nurse, Soon Yi “Sunny” Mah.

Power from Within: Stories, by Anne DeGrace (above), seen here on the shores of Kootenay Lake. The size of the publishing house shouldn’t matter, so we don’t discriminate against small fry. We leave it to our readers to discern any thematic trends.

Every few years or so, we like to take stock of what our storytellers are doing collectively. So welcome to our latest omnibus about where B.C. writers are at—literally and figuratively—including Anne DeGrace (above), seen here on the shores of Kootenay Lake. The size of the publishing house shouldn’t matter, so we don’t discriminate against small fry. We leave it to our readers to discern any thematic trends.

W.D. Valgardson has returned to adult fiction for What the Bear Said: Skald Tales from New Iceland (Turnstone $19), a collection of short stories that was launched in Gimli, Manitoba, centre of all things Icelandic-Canadian. The stories capture the experiences of Icelandic settlers in Canada in the old style of eddas and sagas. 978-0-88801-380-4

Part love story, part medical drama, and part wartime saga, Daniel Kalla’s seventh novel The Far Side of the Sky (HarperCollins $24.99) weaves fictional characters into World War II history. An Austrian Jewish physician and surgeon flees the Nazis with his daughter to operate a refugee hospital in Shanghai where he falls in love with an enigmatic nurse, Soon Yi “Sunny” Mah.

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The first novel by five-time Ironman finisher Margaret Dietz of Squamish, From My Mother (CreateSpace $9.95), follows marathoner Nadia as she undertakes a 100-kilometre ultrarun, all the while contemplating the size of the publishing house shouldn’t matter, so we don’t discriminate against small fry. We leave it to our readers to discern any thematic trends.

In Richard Wagamese’s new novel Indian Horse (D&M $22.95) we meet Saul Indian Horse whose last binge almost killed him. Promo material describes Saul as a reluctant resident in a treatment centre for alcoholics: “Saul wants peace, and he grudgingly comes to see that he’ll find it only through telling his story. With him, readers embark on a journey back through the life he’s led as a northern Ojibway, with all its joys and sorrows... For Saul, taken forcibly from the land and his family when he’s sent to residential school, salvation comes for a while through his incredible gifts as a hockey player. But in the harsh realities of 1960s Canada, he battles obtu­rate racism and the spirit­destroying effects of cultural alienation and dis­placement.” 978-1-55885-462-5

The Far Side of the Sky (HarperCollins $24.99) weaves fictional characters into World War II history. An Austrian Jewish physician and surgeon flees the Nazis with his daughter to operate a refugee hospital in Shanghai where he falls in love with an enigmatic nurse, Soon Yi “Sunny” Mah.
Surely the only novelist in Lac La Hache, Maureen Foss has published her third novel, Scribes (Carmen $22.95) about four disparate women in a writers' group: a closeted lesbian, a vengeful wife, a sentimental poet and an etiquette columnist. The darkly comic novel is dedicated to Foss' husband and the Quintessential Writers Group on the Sunshine Coast that included Betty Keller, Rosella Leslie, Gwendolyn Southin and Dorothy Fraser.  

Surely the only novelist in Clinton, June V. Bourgo has worked in marketing/sales for telecommunications, managed a physiotherapy clinic, lived on a houseboat in Victoria harbour and worked at a remote Yukon gold mine. Her debut novel, Winter's Captive (Asteroid $19.95), shares with the reader what she learned through the fictitious story of one woman's struggle to enlightenment and empowerment.

J. Jill Robinson delves into the intricacies of mother-daughter relationships with More in Anger (Thomson Allen $24.95), a novel about emotional inheritance. As the legacy of anger trickles through three generations of the Mayfield family, the youngest daughter, Vivien, struggles to become the first to break the chain. Robinson has previously excelled at short fiction, and dedicated one of her collections to her sisters.

Described as a fairy tale for grown-ups, Barbara Lambert's The Whirling Girl (Cormorant $22) follows botanical artist Clare Livingstone to Cortona in Tuscany to accept the inheritance of her uncle's property. While fending off unscrupulous archaeologists, nosy neighbours and two male suitors, the shy, lovely 'princess' in her new castle must come to terms with self-deception and buried truths.

It's not exactly a statement P.D. James would make, but mystery novelist Robin Spano of Lions Bay wishes she lived inside the Charlie's Angels TV show. In Spano's second novel featuring female cop Clare Vangel, Death Plays Poker (ECW $24.95), Clare goes undercover to investigate the deaths of world class poker players who are being strangled in their hotel rooms. To catch the Poker Choker, she must pose as a card shark, alias Tiffany, dressed to kill. You don't win the Giller with a thriller, but possibly she's having more fun.

Arguably it can be better classified as a memoir than fiction, but George Bowering’s wit and storytelling are once more at play in Pinboy (Cormorant $32), previously announced for publication two years ago. It humorously recalls his sexual awakenings at age fifteen in the south Okanagan. Bowering finds himself enmeshed in three choices: his first love, the girl from the wrong side of the tracks, and one of his high school teachers. He’s also released non-chronological reminiscences of his literary endeavours, how i wrote certain of my books (Mansfield $19.95).

Carmen Rodriguez' Retribution (Women's Press Literacy $22.95) takes the form of three memoirs by a daughter, mother and grandmother. Whereas the grandmother Soledad was once convinced to vote for a right-wing candidate in Chile, her daughter Sol joined the resistance movement against the dictator Pinochet and was tortured for nine months.

The threesome arrives in Vancouver in 1974 as refugees. Sol’s child Tania is a newborn. The grandmother recalls: “As much as I wanted to pretend that I didn’t care about Chile anymore, it didn’t take me long to realize that when you leave your country behind, you don’t really leave your country behind. It haunts you, it teases you, it plays tricks on you; it shows up at every corner, in every street; in the wind, in the clouds. It doesn’t leave you alone. Your past plays in your head over and over again, like a movie that you already know by heart, but cannot stop watching.”

During their first weeks at the Cove Motor Inn in English Bay, a one-star transit hotel operated by the Canadian government, her daughter Sol tells her, “The baby’s father is my torturer.” (Rodriguez has given the reader some foreknowledge of this, near the outset.) Soledad, the grandmother, explodes with hatred: “I hated Pinochet. I hated my son’s murderer. I hated my sister for having turned my daughter in. I hated my daughter’s torturer. I hated my daughter for giving birth to the torturer’s baby and I hated baby Tania. But above all I hated myself for not having known to live my life to the fullest when I was young; for not having accepted and loved my son for who he was, for having disapproved of my children’s political views; for not having appreciated what I had. I hated myself for being alive and not having the guts to end it all and leave this world once and for all.”

The grandmother rallies herself and becomes involved in the solidarity movement of Chilean exiles and refugees in Vancouver, but the title Retribution arises from the tortured daughter Sol’s resolve to take revenge by breaking the legacy of cruelty and hate, by re-inventing love.
In Timothy Taylor’s novel that examines the culture of celebrity, The Blue Light Project (Knots $32.95), a man armed with an explosive device storms a television studio where a youth talent show is being filmed, and demands an interview with a disgraced former investigative journalist.

Arley McNeney played on Canada’s national wheelchair basketball team from 2001 to 2007, winning two World Championships and a bronze medal at the 2004 Paralympics. With two creative writing degrees, at age 24 she wrote Poor (Thistledown, 2007), her debut novel about retired wheelchair athlete Nolan Taylor who is forced to build a new identity in her post-bossball life. Leaving sports behind, she has crafted The Time We All Went Marching (Goose Lane $19.95), a novel about a mother and son trapped on a snowbound train heading west to Vancouver, and mixed with the political past of a missing father who had worked as an itinerant miner. The story chiefly explores the On to Ottawa Trek and the Regina Riots of the 1930s, two cathartic events in Canadian labour history during which the federal government and RCMP responded to the concerns of the unemployed with an iron fist. In 2011, McNeney began blogging about her recent hip replacement on her blog called Young and Hip.

Joe Denham’s first novel, The Year of Broken Glass (Nightwood $24.95), follows a struggling crab fisherman across the Pacific Ocean to deliver a glass fishing float to a high-paying collector. Against a backdrop of seismic degradation, the protagonist, Francis “Ferris” Wichbaun, has a romantic affair with his companion while he is deeply concerned about his dual daughter’s high school. As an officer, Slater’s first mystery thriller (Simon & Schuster $19.95) follows Detective Joe Denham of Halfmoon Bay and saving the lives of many prominent citizens. 20 b&w photos.

The first-ever biography of the black lifeguard who won the hearts of Vancouver’s citizens, 2007), her debut novel about retired wheelchair athlete Nolan Taylor who is forced to build a new identity in her post-bossball life. Leaving sports behind, she has crafted The Time We All Went Marching (Goose Lane $19.95), a novel about a mother and son trapped on a snowbound train heading west to Vancouver, and mixed with the political past of a missing father who had worked as an itinerant miner. The story chiefly explores the On to Ottawa Trek and the Regina Riots of the 1930s, two cathartic events in Canadian labour history during which the federal government and RCMP responded to the concerns of the unemployed with an iron fist. In 2011, McNeney began blogging about her recent hip replacement on her blog called Young and Hip.

The history of the many theatres that made freedom of expression possible in Canada, mainly in the Rockies, but also around Wilmer in the Columbia Valley. Kain lived in Wilmer (just north of Invermere) for almost 20 years and died in Cranbrook’s St. Eugene Hospital in 1934. He made almost 70 first ascents or new routes on peaks in the Rockies to go with 59 ascents (29 first ascents) in New England. Kain was the first official mountain guide of the newly formed Alpine Club of Canada (ACC). Keith G. Powell’s second historical novel, Raising Kain (Wild Horse Creek Press $19.95), recounts Kain’s remarkable adventures in Canada, mainly in the Rockies, but also around Wilmer in the Columbia Valley. Kain lived in Wilmer (just north of Invermere) for almost 20 years and died in Cranbrook’s St. Eugene Hospital in 1934. He made almost 70 first ascents or new routes on peaks in the Rockies to go with 59 ascents (29 first ascents) in New Zealand. He is widely recognized as “the prince of Canadian mountain guides.”

Lorna Goodison is the author of two collections of short stories, eight books of poetry, and the award-winning memoir From Harvey River: A Memoir of My Mother and Her People. She has received much international recognition, including the Musgrave Gold Medal. Born in Jamaica, Goodison divides her time between Ann Arbor, Toronto, and Halfmoon Bay, B.C. Her new story collection is By Love Possessed (M&S $28.99).
Surrey underworld & Little India revealed

Disturbed by Indo-Canadian gangland murders, Surrey-raised Ranj Dhaliwal took the title for his “underworld” novel, Daaku (New Star 2006) from the Punjabi word for outlaw or gangster. In his follow-up, Daaku: The Gangster’s Life (New Star $21), the protagonist Ruby Pandher is a little older, wiser and more ambitious—while remaining reflective about his lone-wolf lifestyle: “Maybe God will forgive me if I get out of this life now.” Dhaliwal now devotes some of his time to organizations that deal with at-risk, Indo-Canadian youth.

Newcomer Raminder Sidhu examines the lives of contemporary women in Vancouver’s tightly-knit Little India district in her first novel, Tears of Mehndi (Caitlin $24.95), to expose “the shrouded violence within Canada’s Punjabi community.” Similar in scope to Gurjinder Basran’s Wilson Prize-winning debut novel in 2010, Everything Was Good-bye (Mother Tongue), it has characters caught between two cultures—a fundamental theme in B.C. fiction first made conspicuous in Hubert Evans’ Mist on the River in 1954. Sidhu was born and raised in Mackenzie, BC, and resides in Surrey.

From Russia with $100

Diversity and a zest for life punctuate Marina’s world

Marina Sonkina still recalls being 18 at Moscow University when her cultural history professor Uri Lotman wrote a detailed bibliography on the blackboard in French, German, English and Italian:

“We, the newly-fanged scholars and researchers looked at each other in dismay,” she recalls, “but didn’t dare to raise any objections. Accepted into the Great Temple of Philology, we were treated as equals. And, if we, for some reason, didn’t have the reading knowledge of a given European language, we still had a week until the next seminar to acquire that knowledge!”

As a Ph.D student of Lotman, Sonkina learned that a variety of disciplines must be explored to study culture, so she studied philosophy, psychology, film, theatre, folklore and visual arts. In 1987, she immigrated to Canada with her small sons, two suitcases, and one hundred dollars, leaving her job teaching at Moscow University. “It was all the Soviet government—a proponent of Marxist materialism in theory, but a defender of extreme non-materialism in practice—allowed me to take with me.”

Convinced her sons would eventually be forced into military service for Russia, Sonkina has no regrets about her exodus. One son is now a tenured professor of mathematics at Dalhousie in Halifax; the other returned to Moscow as a Canadian citizen and has achieved success as an actor in 28 films. In Montreal, Sonkina initially found work in the Russian section of Radio Canada International at CBC. Now teaching literature at UBC and SFU, Sonkina has published a diverse, third collection of stories, Lucia’s Eyes and Other Stories (Guernica $20). The longer stories include “Tractornica’s Travels,” about a twice-married Russian who is uneasy about Perestroika, and ‘Carmelita,’ about a volatile, Bohemian painter who has poignant, sensual and lethal relationship with a much older narrator, Joseph, in Mexico. Sonkina’s new children’s book has a poignant, sensual and lethal relationship with a much older narrator, Joseph, in Mexico. Sonkina’s new children’s book "The Violin That Wanted To See The World" (MW Books).

When not writing and teaching, Marina Sonkina teaches yoga and dances the tango (“with an often unjustified fervor”).

Don Hunter’s political thriller, Cooper and The Queen (Mirador $14.85) opens with reports that the Queen is to abdicate, that the throne will go to her grandson William and his bride Kate Middleton, and that the Queen then will spend much of her future in her favourite Commonwealth country—Canada. The narrative then turns back to events of 1983, during the North American royal tour, scheduled to end in Vancouver where the Queen would announce plans for the Expo 86 World Fair. A rogue Irish Republican Army assassin Sean Dooley plans to assassinate the Queen on the final day of the royal tour (a tour that Don Hunter covered as a reporter with The Province newspaper). Coincidentally Sgt. Matt Cooper of the Vancouver Police Department is removed from his position as head of the Emergency Response Team and appointed bodyguard to a woman who does theatre impersonations of HRH. The story moves from Vancouver Island to Ottawa, the Caribbean, Ulster, California, Galiano Island, and Vancouver, to its dramatic climax at the Hotel Vancouver.

In End of the Line (Touchwood $18.95) by Stephen Legault, newly reinstated Mountie Durant Wallace arrives in a lawless shantytown to solve the murder of a CPR section boss before the killer can strike again. According to novelist Angie Abdou, “The End of the Line transported me. This explosive tale takes readers on a rough and tumble ride through Canada’s Wild West. I completely lost myself in Stephen Legault’s imagined world—what more could a reader ask for?”

Homelessness in the Downtown Eastside is the lightning rod for intrigue and murder for the third volume in Legault’s mystery series featuring ex-Ottawa politico Cole Blackwater.

In The Vanishing Track (Touchwood $18.95) he helps his friend Denman Scott thwart the demolition of the Lucky Strike Hotel, home to nearly three hundred poor people. When he discovers homeless people are disappearing without a trace—hence the title—the pair uncover corruption with the help of an intrepid Vancouver Sun reporter and street nurse named Juliet Rose.

Dedicated to R.K. Page, Rachel Wyatt’s sixth novel, Letters to Omar (Coteau $21) is about three interfering women “with time on their hands” who tackle a charitable cause by hosting a dinner party, only to realize that fixing the universe is no easy task.

Creator of a monthly sex column, Blush, in Vancouver’s XtraWest, as well as a stand-up improv performer and drag queen named Miss Cookie LaWhore, Michael V. Smith has received the inaugural Dawson Ogham Award for Emerging Gay Writers with his candid poetry collection, What You Can’t Have. But sex is not over the focus for Smith’s second novel, Progress (Cormorant $21), in which a lonely named Helen has to relocate when a dam is built in her small town, and she learns a family secret when her long-lost brother suddenly reappears. What Helen can’t have...

In Jenn Lafortune’s début mystery, Murder in Parksville (Diamond River $16.95), the protagonist Leann revisits her hometown of Tofino where she is woken by police who tell her that her parents are the apparent victims of a fatal car crash in Parksville. Appearances are deceiving. A local RCMP detective must unravel the case.
Kevin Chong’s Beauty Plus Pity (Arsenal $17.95) follows the travails of Malcolm Kwan, a slacker twentiesomething Asian-Canadian living in Vancouver who is pursuing a modeling career. When his filmmaker father dies and his fiancée leaves him, Malcolm is forced to confront his past relationships with women, including his own mother, and his ambivalence toward his hyphenated cultural identity. He also discovers that at some point his father had an affair, resulting in his teenaged half-sister, Hadley. Chong’s follow-up is a superb memoir about becoming part-owner of a Vancouver racehorse. See SPORTS, page 20. 9781551524160

Pauline Holdstock’s Into the Heart of the Country (HarperCollins $32.95) tells the story of Molly Norton, mixed-blood daughter of Governor Moses Norton and a personal favourite of explorer Samuel Hearne. Molly speaks to the reader from across the centuries, revealing the story of her liaison with Hearne, and exposing both its privilege and its price. When Molly’s small society is torn apart by a French attack, the women of the fort, including Molly, find themselves and their children abandoned by their British masters. 9781443405577

Robert W. Mackay’s historical novel Soldier of the Horse (TouchWood $19.95) is a World War I tale inspired by his father’s true story and letters about fighting in Picardy, France. Mackay is president of the Vancouver branch of the Canadian Authors Association. He himself served with the Royal Canadian Navy and the British Navy, in destroyers and submarines, until 1969. He returned to UBC to study law and practiced law until 2008. 978-1-926741-24-6

Robert Pepper-Smith’s first novel, The Wheel Keeper (NeWest 2002), about an Italian family that deals with displacement as a proposed hydroelectric dam threatens to flood their village. The narrator’s grandfather was forced to emigrate from Italy as a young, unwed mother, fleeing to Canada to avoid giving up her child to the church. Edited by Thomas Wharton, Robert Pepper-Smith’s second poignant novel House of Spells (NeWest $18.95) follows the friendship between teenagers Rose and Lacey. When Rose becomes pregnant, the mysterious and childless Giacomo family, whose wealth is well-known in the community, offers to adopt the child. As Rose wrestles with the decision to give up her baby, Lacey recounts her efforts to help her friend and the unsettling discoveries she makes along the way. Born in Revelstoke in 1954, Robert Pepper-Smith lives on a farm in the Cinnabar Valley and teaches philosophy at Vancouver Island University. Wheel Keeper 1-896300-49-9; Spells 978-1-897126-87-5

From the late 1800s onwards, many peasants left southern Italy to work in the orchards and vineyards of either Argentina or British Columbia. These peasants were called golondrinas: the swallows. Instead of following the swallows to Capistrano, Robert Pepper-Smith followed them to a fictional town in southeastern B.C. for his first novel, The Wheel Keeper (NeWest 2002), about an Italian family that deals with displacement as a proposed hydroelectric dam threatens to flood their village. The narrator’s grandfather was forced to emigrate from Italy as a young, unwed mother, fleeing to Canada to avoid giving up her child to the church. Edited by Thomas Wharton, Robert Pepper-Smith’s second poignant novel House of Spells (NeWest $18.95) follows the friendship between teenagers Rose and Lacey. When Rose becomes pregnant, the mysterious and childless Giacomo family, whose wealth is well-known in the community, offers to adopt the child. As Rose wrestles with the decision to give up her baby, Lacey recounts her efforts to help her friend and the unsettling discoveries she makes along the way. Born in Revelstoke in 1954, Robert Pepper-Smith lives on a farm in the Cinnabar Valley and teaches philosophy at Vancouver Island University. Wheel Keeper 1-896300-49-9; Spells 978-1-897126-87-5

Our First Winner

Gurinder Basran’s debut novel, Everything Was Good-bye, was the winner of Mother Tongue Publishing’s first Search for the Great BC Novel Contest and went on to win the 2011 Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize. The novel will be re-launched by Penguin Canada this spring and has been chosen as Chatelaine Magazine’s Book Club pick for April!
Mennonite makes an eleven-course debut

BY PORTIA PRIEGERT

The title of Darcie Friesen Hossack’s first collection of eleven short stories, *Mennonites Don’t Dance* (Thistledown $18.95) might well have been lengthened to *Mennonites Don’t Dance, But They Sure Can Cook.*

Married to the executive chef at the Okanagan Golf Club—also her high school sweetheart—Hossack, 35, is a passionate cook who writes food columns for the *Kelowna Courier* and *Kamloops This Week.*

While her stories, set mainly on the prairies, often explore sin, penance and redemption, as well as the conflicts between tradition and change—common themes for Mennonite-related fiction—there are plates and plates of food throughout.

“I didn’t include recipes,” she says, “but I considered it. To me, being Mennonite is so much about the food that I don’t know how I could ever separate it. If cooking wasn’t in my writing, I don’t think it would have the depth that I want it to have.”

Hossack, who lives in Kelowna, credits her success in part to the Humber School for Writers in Toronto, where she was mentored through the correspondence program by Mani-toba’s Giller Prize-finalist Sandra Birdsell.

According to Birdsell, Hossack’s stories “neverreiterate with what has been left unsaid, the silence between people that speaks of betrayal, forgiveness and the power of love to prevail.”

There’s no shortage of notable Canadian writers of Mennonite descent such as Birdsell, Miriam Toews, Rudy Wiebe and Andreas Schroeder, who says Hossack’s stories “prove the title true—both literally and metaphorically—but these very constraints make the stories’ hard-won moments of joy and insight especially memorable.”

To honour her heritage, Hossack has used her mother’s maiden name, Friesen, as a middle name. Her mother’s family came to Canada five generations ago and farmed at Schoenfeld, a small Mennonite village in southwestern Saskatchewan. Hossack grew up nearby in Swift Current, living with her mother and attending public schools, but was exposed to traditional culture through her grandparents.

As a teenager, she moved to the Okanagan, joining her father, a Seventh-Day Adventist, and finishing high school there. Her next project is a novel, *What Looks In*, which will explore a family divided by grief and religion.

“The two ideologies, although they’re both Protestant, don’t mix very well,” she says. “But hopefully, by the time I come to the end of the story, there will be some kind of meeting of hearts or, I suppose, meeting of souls, and the family can come together.”

Meanwhile Hossack welcomes her inclusion in the realm of Canadian Mennonite Lit. Mennonite writers, she says, “seem to write about life with raw honesty. They don’t cover it in flowers. They don’t try to engineer it. They don’t try to steer it toward a conclusion. To me, they can come together.”

Portia Priegert writes from Kelowna.
Why Edmonds deserves Starr treatment

JUST DO THE MATH.

Six-out-of-ten students at Edmonds School in Burnaby are learning to speak English as a second language. Eight-out-of-ten don’t speak English at home. One-third come from refugee backgrounds. Many have witnessed horrific violence.

David Starr’s From Bombs To Books (Lorimer $22.95) tells the inspiring story of how refugee and immigrant children—if they are well-loved and well-taught—can be remarkably resilient and thrive in a new country. Here is an edited excerpt.

Edmonds street, in the southern corner of Burnaby, has always been a place of new beginnings. The Scottish, Irish, and English arrived here more than a century ago, soon followed by successive waves of Japanese, German, Italian, and Polish immigrants. In the 1970s and 1980s the Indians and Chinese came, joined by Bosnians and Croatians, Koreans and Filipinos.

Today the neighbourhood is an assortment of small shops and businesses: a Balkan butcher shop is next to an Afghan restaurant; an African grocery store is adjacent to a tattoo parlour; a temple is across the street from an adult video store.

Condominiums are taking over the vacant lots once occupied by boarded-up buildings and empty houses. Although Edmonds has long been a rough place, it is a tight-knit community, one in which residents take pride. That pride is evident in the regular neighbourhood clean-ups, in the Santa Claus parade, and in the faces of the children who attend Edmonds Community School.

In a profoundly personal and concrete way, that school represents the most distinctive aspect of the community: the dreams of a better life for families of refugees and immigrants.

Edmonds Community School isn’t much to look at from the outside. Originally founded in 1894, the school is a two-storey white-and-green building that was built just after the Second World War. Among its alumni are Carrie-Anne Moss of The Matrix and Hollywood star Michael J. Fox. Edmonds lacks the flash of newer schools in other parts of the city and, despite recent updates, the place seems a little tired. The pavement in the parking lot is cracked, the playground needs upgrading, the gravel soccer field has a habit of flooding in the winter rains and, last year, a cherry tree on the south side of the school—one of the few green things left on the grounds—fell sick and was chopped down.

But looks can be deceiving. Inside, the school is spotless, with new flooring throughout. Artwork covers the walls and, in the foyer, there is a beautiful mosaic that encapsulates the school’s demographics.

In 2009 Keith and Celia Rice-Jones, well-known Vancouver-area artists, were commissioned through the Artist in Residence program to make the mosaic, entitled From Many Places—a fitting choice since the school currently serves students from almost fifty countries.

Nearly 100 students of refugee families from countries such as Ethiopia, the Congo, Sudan, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq now call Edmonds their home. The school and the refugee population it serves have frequently been featured in local, provincial, and national media.

But there has been negative publicity as well. The Fraser Institute—a right-wing think tank that takes assessment numbers from the controversial Foundational Skills Assessment (a reading, writing, and math assessment written by students in Grades 4 and 7)—has singled out Edmonds as one of the “worst” schools in British Columbia. Traditionally, the school ranks low in these assessments—and not just low, but very low—and the rankings have always been a source of anger in the building.

The Fraser Institute’s assessment is simply wrong. Far from being one of the worst schools in the province, Edmonds is actually one of the best at what it does. The Fraser Institute fails to take into consideration some essential realities:

• Six-out-of-ten Edmonds students are still learning to speak English as a second language.
• Eight-out-of-ten don’t speak English at home.
• Fully one-third of our students come from refugee backgrounds.

In many cases, students have witnessed scenes of horrific violence and bear the scars of significant physical and psychological trauma. Often, new students arrive at the school having never attended a school before.

When I came to Edmonds, I had almost as much to learn as my students. I had spent eight years teaching social studies and English literature in the comfortably middle-class suburb of Coquitlam, and then—armed with a newly acquired Masters Degree in Administration and Leadership from UBC—spent two years working as a vice principal in a small rural public school in the eastern Fraser Valley.

When I began working as vice principal at Byrne Creek Secondary School in 2006, it was immediately clear to me that small-town schools with predominantly white and First Nations students were worlds apart from the large, urban, multicultural community where I now found myself in Burnaby.

The penny dropped for me one day when I was registering a new student from Afghanistan. “We came so that our children could attend school and have a good life,” the child’s mother told me through an interpreter. I agreed with her that school was indeed important. “No,” she said forcefully, her voice quaking with emotion as she touched the office wall. “You don’t understand. We came for this school.” Byrne Creek was a new school beset by difficulties, a school the Fraser Institute didn’t like either, and yet this mother from Afghanistan had travelled thousands of kilometres to put her most precious possessions—her children—into that school and in my care.

I carried the hopes and expectations of that mother with me to nearby Edmonds Community School two years later as its new principal. Although the students are younger at Edmonds, the faces and the names are the same as at the high school and, in many ways, the story of Edmonds is incomplete without including the story of Byrne Creek.

Edmonds and Byrne Creek are not easy places to work. In an age of shrinking budgets, the spectre of reduced services hangs constantly over the schools, which have relied on additional staffing and resources from the school district to do their job effectively.

The level of commitment demanded of the staff is high; emotional burn-out is an occupational hazard. For those who come, stay, and learn to love the students and the neighbourhood, the rewards are extraordinary as they enable some of Canada’s newest and perhaps most vulnerable residents to integrate and succeed.

I wrote From Bombs to Books to chronicle and celebrate the roles that Edmonds Community and Byrne Creek Secondary schools have played in educating, accommodating and welcoming people who have fled from some of the most dangerous places on earth, but first and foremost this book about brave families—their journeys and their experiences.

#19BCBOOKWORLDSHOUT #46
SOCCER

If you discount Whippets co-owner Steve Nash of NBA fame—who grew up playing soccer in Victoria and would dearly love to have played professionally with brother Martin. Nash is one of those fans who believe in the CFC.

Arguably it should be John Catfill, the Vancouver-born striker who has scored the second most goals for the Canadian national team, or it should be prolific scorer Christine Sinclair, who is leading Canada into the London Olympics, but

Bob Lenarduzzi, current president of Vancouver Whitecaps FC.

Co-written with veteran sportswriter Jim Taylor, who accompanied Lenarduzzi, his brother Sam Lenarduzzi and the rest of Canada’s national men’s team to their only World Cup appearance.

Bob Lenarduzzi: A Canadian Soccer Story

Lanarduzzi was serving as a ball-boy during games when he first noticed the Vancouver Whitecaps.

It’s said that Lenarduzzi’s Whitecaps, won four straight Canadian Soccer League titles and amassed a 46-game unbeaten streak, for which any professional team in North America would have been envious.

The story of his career is so vivid that even in the midst of the television broadcast of the victory parade some 100,000 Vancouverites attended a victory parade.

They became a football club and a player for the Vancouver Whitecaps.

He has experienced the thrill of the victory parade and the heartbreak of the defeat.

This quintet of gents won B.C.’s five-a-side soccer championship in 1993.

The story of the Vancouver Canucks is the story of men who have lived through the highs and lows of professional sports.

Lori Bowden’s Victoria is one of 22 women profiled in Timothy Moore’s, Salt-Nut History: The Fastest Ironwoman (Greystone $14.95 plus postage) about women in the world who have finished an Ironman race in less than ten hours.

In 1932, having only track in common. Williams found the 100-metre world record from 1930—worn a prominent maple leaf on his chest, his Cinderella story as a 10-year-old runaway to Rome: The Running of Percy Williams (circaNow Media $99.95), a 252-page coffee table book based on his in-person interviews with every living NHL GM who has taken a team to the Stanley Cup Final. Collectively these GMs represent over 500 seasons of GM experience. It is touted as a part history book, part encyclopedia and part manual for would-be managers.

This quintet of gents won B.C.’s five-a-side soccer championship in 1993.

This quintet of gents won B.C.’s five-a-side soccer championship in 1993.

They are precious few Canadian books about socc—now that it is the most-played sport in the country—so one has to admire Robert Lanning’s, who published his book, Westcoast Action: The British Columbia Soccer Championships 1982-1995 (Ballpress $19.95). There was a time when the possibility of a B.C. club winning a championship was considered impossible.

This quintet of gents won B.C.’s five-a-side soccer championship in 1993.

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played both pro hockey and long-track speed skating. When he tried professional baseball, he was marooned in the minors. The NHL dandy “Neon Deion” Sanders played both major league baseball and pro football. John Ferguson and Jack Bionda played both pro hockey and lacrosse.

Canadian cyclist and speed skater Clara Hughes is the only person to have won multiple medals at the Olympics, for cycling and speed skating.

Before he was a hockey legend, he was a hockey player. At age 14, Gerry was strong enough to pursue pro sports. James has vivid stories of his twin brother, remorselessly, into competitive nature, but he was also competitive. He could do all the things he couldn’t. Can you beat ‘em on the ice? you can’t beat ‘em in the alley, you can’t beat ‘em on the track. James lost his two front teeth playing a fight in Broadview, Saskatchewan, against grown men, while playing baseball at age 15, in St. Boniface, against grown men, when he was sucker-punched by a rival first baseman. “That was probably the shortest fight I was ever in. For two days I kept quiet and hid my mouth because I knew my mother would be upset and I knew she couldn’t afford the additional financial burden of replacing them. I never did find the teeth.”

James was once offered an NFL contract by the New York Giants, but in those days the CFL paid more. Eventually the Leafs decided that James not play football in 1956 if he was contracted to play hockey. James has vivid memories of the Original Six. “For all-round skill, Gordie Howe was the best,” he says, “but for sheer entertainment value, the Rocket would get my vote.”

Smith devotes more than half the book to chronicling James’ athletics, then deals with his coaching years, which included a stint coaching Special Olympians.

James and his wife visited Vancouver Island during a trip to B.C. to attend Expo 86. They bought a lot near Nanoose Bay in 1989, arrived in B.C. in 1993 and took possession of their present home in 1997. Not long after, he met Ron Smith on the putting green of the Fairwinds Golf Course. It might have been one of the luckiest breaks of James’ life.

Kid Dynamite: The Gerry James Story is a rarity—a sports biography that does its subject the justice it deserves. It recites Gerry James as a fascinating personality, not simply an exceptional athlete.

An anecdote towards the end of the book serves as a case in point. James firmly believes the two sexes are wired differently. He doesn’t believe that men can write about what women think, so he skips over any part of a novel that purports to reveal the female mind.

“I once thoroughly enjoyed a particular work of detective fiction,” he recalls, “skipping the female parts as usual, only to come to the end of the book and discover that the author was P.D. James. I was so pissed when I saw P.D. was female. I threw the book down on the floor. I felt like I’d been tricked.”

Despite his frizzy nature, James remains genuinely modest about his many achievements. When his biographer told him he held the record for most appearances in CFL post-season games (36), James wasn’t even aware of the record.

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When he learned he had a book contract, he was dumbfounded. “What do they want me to write about me? I don’t know what women think, so I skip over anything to do with the female sex.”

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Cavalry or the Mexican Army? There’s a mini-series in here somewhere, perhaps to be called Divided Loyalties. Wilson knows his history and he knows his storytelling. Due in May, Victoria’s War will be the Lantzville author’s 32nd title for juveniles, teens and adults.

кажет 978-3-529-47447-5

When a new security cop named Jasmine Birch is killed, co-worker Marie Crenshaw asks her rival security team member Casey Hollander to clear her brother of the murder rap. Colleagues and employees soon become mired in a swirling maelstrom of deceit in Deadly Accusations (Touchwood $14.95), the second Casey Holland Mystery by Debra Purdy Kong.

In Cathy Ace’s debut novel, The Corpse with the Silver Tongue (Touchwood $14.95), a Welsh Canadian criminologist and professor, Cait Morgan, also investigates a murder at a dinner party in the south of France. In classic Agatha Christie style, all the guests are suspects. An ancient gold collar has disappeared in the process, alleged to carry with it a curse. It is described as “a Nicoise salad of death, secrets and lies.”

Debra Purdy Kong

Victorio’s War

When Mel goes to an MS clinic for her annual check-up, she learns the results of a Sexual Neuro-Response Study. Dr. Sharma tells Mel that she’ll only be able to have a few more orgasms before her “sensory nerves, the sympathetic system, will stop responding.”

Before long, Lillian dreams herself “agile as all get-out” and into a feline body. Her “dreams become reality” and we go along for the shape-shifting ride, largely because Clark appears to delight in her own word wizardry, and we share in that delight.

The other long story, “Six Degrees of Altered Sensation,” introduces Melanie, a writer with MS, another of Clark’s feisty female characters. At her launch in Nanaimo, Clark said she finds this story the most fun. Indeed it is. Melanie’s inner dialogue is hilarious at times. She is another word wizard, and we share in that delight.

How desire and imagination fuel the fiction of Kim Clark

There are various psychological reasons given for why people must invent stories. Some say, for instance, that most fiction writers are injustice collectors.

Kim Clark believes that before MS began its insidious infiltration of her body, there was no writing in her head at all, that somehow, the damaging changes that shut down certain functions in her brain also opened up other unused areas that housed a secret love affair with language and all its delicious sights and sounds and feelings. Here Kim Clark’s first story collection, Attempts, is reviewed by Mary Ann Moore.

KELLY LOUISE JUDD’s cover artwork for Attempts

leads one to expect the unexpected. A woman appears to be leviating. There is a rabbit in mid-air, poised to land on her throat. It turns out the characters throughout Attempts have physical challenges—and, of course, nearly all physical afflictions arrive unexpectedly. Even the dog in “Dick & Jane and the Barbecue” has epilepsy. Jane has “an obscene disease involving physical wasting.”

Shorter stories at the outset build towards the longer ones. In “Solitaire,” Lillian, an aging woman with arthritis, plays cards on her own. Her days consist of taking her meds, eating a poached egg for dinner, and perhaps watching a documentary about superstorms and tsunamis.

With a desire to have her own lucky rabbit’s foot, Lillian hears about the human feet—“mostly left”—that are being washed up onto Gulf Island beaches. (Detached human feet, mostly left ones, have been found on various occasions on West Coast beaches.)

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its trumpets – love driving the
getaway car, love forgetting
why it came, love hollering
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The Joyful Friction of Granite

"As the deaths multiplied, those who survived began to feel immortal." — Bernadette McDonald

plummeted to -35 at night, storms screamed through camps and tents froze. He and Tadek Piłtrowski reached the peak of Noshaq, Afghanistan’s highest mountain. "The wind on my cheeks, and the cold when it was winter, the warmth in the summer, the friction of granite against my fingers," Andrzej said. "They bring me so much joy." Andrzej began to dream of a first-ever winter assault on Everest. In 1980 he fronted a team of 20 that put Leszek Cichy and Krzysztof Wielicki on the summit. Andrzej would inspire many others to test their limits, including Voytek Kurtyka and Jerzy Kukuczka, two of the most innovative of the Himalayan climbers.

Wanda Rutkiewicz was also making a name for herself at this time. A slight figure and a lone wolf, often at odds with her climbing partners, she had a willfulness that was forged from tragedy. Wanda's brother was killed as a child by a grenade explosion; her father was murdered and buried in his garden. Approximately thirty of her climbing partners and friends were lost over the years. McDonald writes, "Perhaps it was an overexposure to premature and sudden loss of life that prompted her, and other climbers, to ignore their own mortalities rather than succumb to trauma. As the deaths multiplied, those who survived began to feel immortal."

Wanda Rutkiewicz became the first European woman to climb Mount Everest on the same day Polish Cardinal Wojtyła was elected Pope John Paul. Poles were euphoric, and she later presented him with a stone from the Everest summit. Another Polish team followed by tracing a challenging new route up its peak, and through these successes fellow Poles saw new hope and possibilities. These individual achievements soon had Polish authorities worried. Trouble was brewing with food prices going through the roof in 1980, and Lech Wałęsa launching the Solidarity trade union movement in the Lenin Shipyards. The hammer came down with the imposition of martial law. Money for climbers was drying up, so Wanda Rutkiewicz sought private sponsors for future climbs. Her life was now completely focused on climbing (with personal relationships left in the dust). She continued to set more records, but then took on too many chances.

In 1992, while attempting to climb her ninth peak over eight thousand metres, she was struck down with mountain sickness on Kangchenjunga, the world's third highest peak (elevation of 8,586 m. or 28,169 ft.), located along the India-Nepal border.

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Bernadette McDonald of Naramata is the first person to win the 'Triple Crown' of mountain literature.

With Freedom Climbers, McDonald received the Grand Prize at the Banff Mountain Book Festival, then she won Britain's £3,000 Boardman Tasker Prize, becoming the first Canadian to gain that honour. (The Boardman Tasker Prize commemorates the lives of Peter Boardman and Joe Tasker, two British adventurers who died while climbing Mt Everest.) In February she won the 2012 American Alpine Club Literary Award.
Old Macdonald had a B.C. riding

I am curious as to the basis for the subheading, “First B.C.-based Prime Minister John Turner finally gets his bio” (BCBW Winter). Sir John A. Macdonald was the first person elected to serve as prime minister from British Columbia, when elected as MP for Victoria on Oct. 21, 1878, though he never resided in B.C.

John Turner was not an MP when he became prime minister on June 30, 1984. He announced he would run for election in Vancouver Quadra on July 16 and was subsequently elected as MP in the general election on Sept. 4, 1984, though he ceased being prime minister on Sept. 16 following his party’s defeat in the election. As I recall, Mr. Turner’s principal residence in 1984 was in Toronto. I do not recall exactly what kind of residence he had in Vancouver in 1984 when he was prime minister, though it’s likely he did not spend more than a handful of two days in Vancouver during that period. An article entitled “Turner sells posh home in Toronto” in the Globe and Mail on Dec. 6, 1984, page 1 notes Turner sold his Toronto home and was looking for a residence in Vancouver in Shaughnessy or Kerrisdale, as well as moving into Stornoway as leader of the opposition in Ottawa.

Kim Campbell may be the first truly B.C.-based prime minister when she became prime minister on June 25, 1993, having been born and raised in B.C., and being a sitting Vancouver MP with a Vancouver residence when she became prime minister. Though, like Turner, her tenure was short—only Campbell, while not elected as a prime minister, had a constituency, Turner probably had some kind of temporary residence in Vancouver for a residence in Toronto in Shaughnessy or Kerrisdale, as well as moving into Stornoway as leader of the opposition in Ottawa.

imagime no Bcbw

It’s true that BC BookWorld has always given coverage to independently-produced titles from B.C. especially, even though most self-published authors have little or no advertising fund. I am one self-publisher who has been grateful for BC BookWorld’s support through the years, most recently for my fourth book, The Lennon-Bronte Connection that reveals John Lennon was the reincarnation of the troubled Brantwll Bronte, brother to England’s literary sisters Emily and Charlotte.

Jewelle St. James.
Delta

Imagine no BCBW

I had to think long and hard about how to write this letter. This is a difficult letter for me to write. I want to talk about how my words were represented in your article in BC BookWorld in the Fall 2011 issue. I was quoted as saying “Writers have always been getting the shaft from publishers.”

While it is true this is pretty much what I said, pulled out of the context in which I spoke it and placed into the context in which it appeared in your article, I feel I need to clarify a couple of things. First of all, I am first and foremost a writer and a storyteller. This means my first loyalty is and will always be to other writers and storytellers, and cultural creators in general. Of course I wish that all writers sold more money, and that our other related skills (five readings, teaching, etc.) were valued more, and that writers shared a bigger piece of the literary pie, along with publishers, festivals, booksellers, agents and others who take a cut out of what writers produce and what we do.

But the thought of self-publishing is not an option for me. Between my touring, production, teaching, writing and trying to maintain some semblance of a personal life schedules, just making a living more than fills my calendar. I cannot fathom adding distribution, marketing, attending book fairs, and doing other promotion related work to my pile, not to mention editing and market research. This is where my publisher comes in. I have been working with Arsenal Pulp Press since 1999. Almost thirteen years now. We have published seven books together; our eighth is due out this spring. I have always found Brian Lam and his crew to not only be true professionals, but also committed to many of the same ideals and values I hold dear in terms of creating and producing cutting edge queer literature. They truly believe, as I do, in bringing marginalized and politicized voices to bookshelves all over the world. I could probably have moved on to a bigger press at some point in the last ten years, I have intentionally chosen not to.

I remain as committed to Arsenal as they have proven themselves to be to me in return. I am saddened that my off the cuff remarks after a panel discussion that I was only a member of the audience for were recorded and published, and that these remarks hurt my long-term relationship with my publisher. This was not my intention, I was merely speaking in terms of the publishing business in general, and how I often feel that writers are not compensated financially as they should be. I was certainly not speaking of my relationship with Arsenal Pulp Press, which has been and continues to be a fruitful, respectful and supportive one.

BC BookWorld has always been a great support to me and my work in the past. I have truly appreciated the excellent coverage your publication has given to me and my books, and I do sincerely hope that this letter is read with the same appreciation and respect for you and your work that you have always shown me.

Ivan Coyote.
Vancouver

Written permission to print Ivan Coyote’s comments about e-rights, made at the Galiano Literary Festival, was obtained from her prior to publication. –Ed.
In this debut collection, linguist and philologist Daniela Elza shapes an unusual format to convey the fugitive nature of words. Using italics, spaces, dashes, alternate punctuation and broken-up words, she weaves a web of print that does not restrict itself to conventional verse form.

For example:

"as my heart
(b-e-a-t) s"

Daniela Elza's imaginative alterations of words will raise a few eyebrows, thoughtfully. The arrangements will halt the speed of the hungry eye and give it cause to pause.

Does Elza intend for the words to be read in a sequence? It's unclear and part of the strategy. Appearing to not be trying to control a word flow is also a technique, an artifice.

For the titles and the liberal sprinkling of quotes from other writers, it's possible to read these phraseset in any order. But then they are not intended to evoke linear thoughts. Feelings, thoughts and images dance on the page and the page, the only apparent structure, can hardly contain them. The dance has eccentric rhythms.

Mostly concerned with birds, water, light, sky, leaves, the first and last of the three sections have an ephemeral quality. The middle section of the three is a record/journal of a car trip with very young children through BC. Here the reader who longs for some concrete narrative can relate to geographical and touristic experiences: Osoyoos, Fort Steele, picnics, motels, elk and moose.

At one point, the poet asks us to "suspend your ability to comprehend." But the scattered text and rich word play in the weight of dew may still be barricades for some readers.

It's pleasant, nonetheless, to wander through these verbally deconstructed landscapes, not unlike engagement in any absorbing activity when the talky self-conscious brain lets itself be parked.

Elza's imaginative alterations of words will raise a few eyebrows, thoughtfully. The arrangements will halt the speed of the hungry eye and give it cause to pause.

Isn't that, in part, what poetry is for?

Hannah Main-van der Kamp

Daniela Elza

Wah named PL

Fred Wah has been appointed Canada’s parliamentary poet laureate. Born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan on January 23, 1939, he grew up in the West Kootenays. He is the son of a Canadian-born Chinese-Scots-Irish father raised in China and a Swedish-born Canadian mother from Swift Current. In the early 1950s, his family operated the nearest and most modern Chinese cafe in Nelson, the Diamond Grill, subject of one of his more than twenty books.

Fred Wah

Dragging the Cabin

It would be easier, they thought, to move the six-sided cabin they'd built than to start again with a pile of logs, spikes and two-by-fours, so my parents unroofed the place shingle by shingle to avoid snagging passing hydro wires, pried out all the glass windows, jacked up the walls and floor.

The wood cookstove still inside, loaded the thing on skids and dragged it, eight miles on gravel roads.

The logs began to shift, unhinging the horizontal and the floor beneath the cookstove, splintered, heaved, gave itself up to the rutted driveway, that long dirt track thick with timothy, chickweed, the occasional lowbush blueberry.

From Kerosene (Nightwood $18.95) by Jamella Hagen, who grew up in Hazelton.

Jamella Hagen

The speed of the hungry eye versus the fugitive nature of words

Such writing can be likened to very loose knitting. Each poem—most short enough for one page—has many dropped stitches, dropped with skillful intent. Playing with words and the spaciousness between them, she’s not asking them to carry much weight.

It’s difficult to replicate the shape of these word nets in a short review. One wonders if they can even be read aloud. Readers will have to see these poems for themselves.

🌟 THE SO-CALLED “LANGUAGE poets,” most of them academics (Legris, Tutwin), have had a profile in B.C. for decades. At times these poets risk being too clever with their typography as with the over-use of brackets.

Elza quotes from, and acknowledges the influence of, the poetics of Tim Lilburn regarding the hubris of trying to capture the world with words. How helpless words really are when confronted with the particularity, the “thisness” of things.

Lilburn, poet/philosopher and teacher, has articulated an approach, especially to Nature, that questions a writer’s ability to “capture” the essence of anything let alone understand it. Even so there is the paradoxical importance of continuing to write poems with reverence and humility.

Daniela Bouneva Elza has a Masters in English Philology from Sofia University and a PhD in Education from Simon Fraser University (USA). In 1999 she immigrated where she gained her Masters in Linguistics at Ohio State University. She acquired a second Masters in Linguist and Philologist and a Masters in Education from Simon Fraser University. She is the Vancouver editor of Pandora's Collective Citizenship Frasrer University. She is the recipient of Pandora’s Collective Citizenship Award.

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Tim Buck ing to live in Alberta. Following their divorce, he would marry a George, but they barely survived one long winter before return- 重回 along with Nazis.

Swankey was eventually transferred to another internment camp for intellectuals and communists in Petawawa, Ontario. [The internment camp at Kananskis is no longer recognizable as a barbed wire compound; it was used in the 1980s as an Environmental Science Centre for the University of Calgary] When the Soviet Union joined forces with the Western allies to combat Hitler’s Nazis, Swankey was released and he soon enlisted in the Canadian Army. After serving briefly overseas, he became Communist Party leader in Alberta in 1945. He ran in the 1945 federal election in the Alberta Riding of Jasper-Edson but received only five per cent of the vote. As the Communist Party had been outlawed, he represented the newly formed Labour-Progressive Party, a euphemism for the communists. Again he ran federally in 1949 in Edmon ton, then in 1953 in Peace River. In 1957, Ben Swankey moved to Vancouver where he befriended lawyer Harry Rankin, also a World War II veteran. As a journalist, Swankey was editor of various trade union publica-
tions. As reported by Tom Hawthorn, Swankey said his mos-
cow-published biography of the Metis military leader Gabriel Dumont, for which he could find no publisher in Canada, sold 50,000 copies in its Russian-only version. Swankey later became a strong advocate for the Old Age Pensioners Association, fighting to preserve social programs and appearing in the media to defend and affirm seniors’ rights. The City of Vancouver declared Ben Swankey Day in 2003 to mark his 90th birthday.

Ben Swankey remained committed to social justice even dur-
ing his final years in a Burnaby care facility where he had the newspaper read to him daily. In Hawthorn’s words, he remained “engaged and outraged.”

BOOKS by Ben Swankey

Man Along the Shores: History of the Vancouver Waterfront and the Canadian Area, International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union (ILWU Local 500 Pensioners, 1975). Two printings.


The Fraser Institute (Centre for Socialist Education, 1984)

The Tory Budget (Centre for Socialist Education, 1985)

Brother Can You Spare a Billion? The Politics of Corporate Concentration in Canada (Centre for Socialist Education, 1987)


Margaret Primeau (1914-2011)

Under-heralded five-time novelist Margaret Primeau died at age 97 in Vancouver on October 29, 2011. Born in Saint Paul, Alberta on May 10, 1914, she wrote in French, having lived in France and Italy. Primeau first came to Vancouver in 1954. She later became associate professor Emerita of the UBC French department. Memories of a fairytale child-

hood were the basis for Sauvage Sauvageon (Editions des Plaines, 1984), winner of the Prix Champlain for the best novel written in French in North America (1986). In that book, when Maxine is five years old in Alberta, her father is like ‘a magic lantern,’ like a prince who holds the key to a world of magic. Later, the heroine comes to terms with her disillusionment with life while surveying her past from a retreat on Galiano Is-

land. The novel was trans-
lated and B.C. published as Savage Rose (Ekistics, 1999).

Norman Newton (1929-2011)

Novelist, playwright and CBC radio producer Nor-
man Newton died on December 27, 2011. Born in Vancouver in 1929, Newton corresponded with Earle Birney and became part of Birney’s Au-
hor’s Anonymous circle that included Robert Harlow. Norm Kienman. Ernest Perrault, Ben Maartman and Hilda Thomas. During Newton’s many years at CBC radio, his friendship with fellow CBC announcer Bill Reid led him to an enduring interest in the Haida. Released one year prior to Alan Fry’s breakthrough novel about B.C. Indian reserves, How A People Die, Norman New-
ton’s third novel, The Big Stuffed Hand of Friend-

ship (1986), provides a credible and occasionally r"ald portrait of a coastal B.C. town and its often strained relations between Aboriginals and whites. Newton later produced a non-fiction book, Fire in the Raven’s Nest: The Haida of British Columbia (1973) that is an amalgam of interviews, oral narra-
tives, myths and documentary materials, with some direct input from Bill Reid. One section recalls how smallpox destroyed the traditional culture on the Queen Charlotte Islands. Published in England, New-
ton’s first historical novel about Mexico, The House of Gods (1961), recalls Toltec culture from the 15th century. His second novel set in Mexico, The One True Man, incorporates Mayan and Aztec stories to theorize that Phoenicians could have established colonies in North America centuries prior to the birth of Christ. Newton’s non-fiction book, Thomas Gage in Spanish America (1969), recalls the Englishman who went to Spain in 1612 and became a Dominican priest. He retired to Gabriola Island.
A Girl Called Tennyson

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Yoka’s Literary pick for summer: The Midwife of Venice by Roberta Rich
O n a lovely sunny fall day in October 2011 in Prague, I wrote the following note for a Czech journalist Tyden (“The Week”) that had a special issue on Václav Havel’s 75th birthday. Little did I know this birthday greeting to my friend would be to my last.

Dear Václav,

The first Becherovka [aperitif] of my life I drank with you in September 1978. It was in Prague at a wine shop. We had just fled Hradec, his summer house, and it seemed to me like a dream. You said then that I should come back in a couple of days with my mother, and you would make us scrambled eggs with fresh mushrooms.

As it turned out, this did not happen. The police stopped us in front of Hradec. We both played the roles of slightly stupid tourists, who totally mixed up a detour and had no idea where they were.

You have been with me from 1978 onward and enriched my life in so many directions that I have no words for it. So, just simply in the Canadian way, HAPPY BIRTHDAY, VASEK! [diminutive for Václav]

—Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz

In 2012, as the plane carried me from Frankfurt to Prague, I was late for the main memorial for Václav Havel, the country’s ex-president, in St. Vitus Cathedral at the Hradcany Castle.

With a grey feeling of unreality I dragged my take-on suitcase to the exit at the airport. There I could hardly believe my eyes. A man was holding up a sign that said “Marketa.”

The grey feeling gradually evaporated as I was driven to the Prague crematorium where a less official memorial for friends was to take place. Still there was a crowd outside. Darkness was falling but the evening was illuminated by hundreds of candles.

Inside, people brought flowers and stopped by the small coffin that was raised above the crowd. Friends stepped forward one by one, and spoke about how Václav had affected their lives.

There was a powerful choir and classical music—some of it Czech—but this gathering was also punctuated by silence as a deep sense of irreparable loss filled the air.

A few days earlier, television screens around the globe showed hundreds of thousands of Czechs moving slowly, following the car bearing Havel’s casket across the ancient Charles Bridge to the castle where, twenty-two years earlier, a youthful dissident playwright had been catapulted into the presidency by— in this case—the benevolent storms of historical change.

Václav Havel wrote a new constitution, reopened the Castle Gardens, inaccessible to the public for many decades, and re-established a democratic government after more than four decades of totalitarian rule. The latter work, of course, encountered many difficulties and proceeded only gradually.

Freedom, so passionately yearned for by multitudes everywhere in the world, imposes a heavy burden of responsibility on those who fight for it, then struggle to maintain it. In the case of Havel, he sacrificed some of himself as a writer in order to serve his people as a politician.

When still a persecuted “dissident” whose writings were banned in his own country, Havel had come to worldwide attention through his essays: “The Power of the Powerless” (1978), “Politics and Conscience” (1984), and his Letters to Olga, written from prison between 1979 and 1982.

His plays, including The Vanek Plays (published by UBC Press in 1987) and the formidable Faust play Temptation, were produced in many countries.

Literature always infused him with wisdom and courage. As president, Havel travelled the world, giving speeches to five continents, talking (in the words of his English translator Paul Wilson, a Canadian) “about Godot and political patience to the French, about Gandhi and non-violence to the Indians, [and] about Kafka and self-doubt to the Israelis.”

Václav Havel wrote all his presidential speeches himself. He claimed that this writing kept him sane on the job “because it is really one of the more creative aspects of being president.” So it was he made the name of his small country, the Czech Republic, crushed for centuries on that restless crossroads at the centre of Europe, internationally known and respected.

All this is doubtless generally familiar to literate people, but it seems only fitting at the time of his death to renew publicly our homage to this man whose moral courage had an extraordinary national and international impact.

During those days in Prague that were darkened by the loss of a unique man, I again became acutely aware of the perennial contradictions that seemed engrained in Václav Havel’s life.

While basically shy and entirely free of political posturing, he was yet able to address huge gatherings and keep their undivided attention; he was deeply sincere, yet had an ironic detachment from events, while capable of genuine self-deprecation, he was unbendable when a basic value was at stake; he preserved a sustained sense of humour even during the gravest situations, and having lived through decades of harassment and persecution, he claimed he was incapable of hatred.

Now, as I grope for the mysteries of his personality, I must refrain from becoming emotional (a quality abhorred by the Czech character, and Václav himself). So I will end with this reminiscence of Havel by noting his connection with Vancouver—where his plays were published in English.

The Czech-born novelist Jan Drabek lives here, and I have translated some of his plays, but Havel also had a persistent curiosity about the city itself. In 2004, Havel had been planning to come to Vancouver to participate in a panel that also included the Dalai Lama and Bishop Tutu but his doctor forbade him to do so due to his frail health.

Although several of his plays have been performed here, he himself never managed a visit. Still he maintained a deeply-felt connection to Canada.

For many years, Václav Havel loved to wear a T-shirt I sent him that said “VANCOUVER MILUJE VASKA” (“Vancouver loves Václav”). It is a joyful thought that this amazing man liked to show, with a twinkle in his eye, the loving note on his chest that displayed the affection of a Canadian city. While mourning his loss, I remind myself of the T-shirt, and smile.

I particularly cherish a photo of Havel in his Vancouver T-shirt in 1984, a short time after he came out of prison. He is carrying a sack of potatoes, clearly not at his best. Others show him wearing it earlier, in the garden of his country home where friends and dissidents met and discussed philosophy, literature and politics.

—Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz is a UBC professor emeritus of comparative literature. While Václav Havel was imprisoned by the Communist Party, she edited The Vanek Plays, Four Authors, One Character (UBC Press 1987), which featured Havel’s fictional Ferdinand Vanek as a dissident playwright. Born in Czechoslovakia in 1927, Goetz-Stankiewicz also wrote The Silenced Theatre: Czech Playwrights Without A Stage and edited Critical Essays on Václav Havel.
B R I T I S H C O L U M B I A
WHO’S

A
is for Alert Archivist

LONG ENSEDONCED AT POSSIBLY THE ONLY archives on pilings anywhere on our West Coast, Joyce Wilby (above) of the Alert Bay Public Library and Museum has been a local librarian and archivist for 53 years, having arrived at Alert Bay in 1948. In the above photo she welcomes Rick James on his tour to promote Raincoast Chronicles 21: West Coast Wrecks & Other Maritime Tales (Harbour $24.95).
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B
is for Bartlett

FOLLOWING THE PATH MADE BY SONG-gatherers Phil Thomas, the duo of Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat have mined the archives of Princeton and Hedley for an unprecedented collection of heritage writing, Dead Horse on the Tulameen: Settler Verse from BC’s Similkameen Valley (Canadian Folk Workshop $29, includes postage). Their illustrated narrative and verse anthology is a rare, thorough reflection of pioneer life in B.C. to accompany their new CD of Similkameen-made songs and poetry, Now it’s Called Princeton, their fifth musical release.
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C
is for Compton

AFTER HIS ONE-YEAR STINT AS THE VANCOUVER Public Library’s seventh writer-in-residence, Wayne Compton has been selected to take over from Betsy Warland as the director of Simon Fraser University’s Writer’s Studio. The new Poet Laureate for Vancouver is Evelyn Lau, and Victoria’s Deborah Willis is the 2012 writer-in-residence at Joy Kogawa House, where she will live and work until April 15, 2012.

D
is for Douglas

STAN DOUGLAS: ABBOTT & CORDOVA, 7 August 1971 (Arsenal $40) arises from his creation of a gargantuan photo mural depicting Vancouver’s infamous 1971 Gastown Riot. The book is a rare attempt to delve into the historical and social ramifications of a pivotal and violent event in Vancouver’s history during which police, equipped with newly acquired riot sticks, pummeled peaceful demonstrators during the “Gastown Smoke-in” held to protest harsh anti-marijuana laws. The debacle was the pinnacle of friction between Dan McLeod’s Georgia Straight ‘hippie’ newspaper and Mayor Tom Campbell, marking the beginning of the end of the ‘peace ‘n’ love’ counter-culture movement in B.C.
978-1-55152-406-1

E
is for Eden

ONE WAY TO WEEN YOUR KIDS OFF THE computer, cell phone and plethora of other consumer items is to get ’em hooked on 100 fun, green garden projects for the whole family as outlined by Christina Symons and John Gillespie’s Everyday Eden (Harbour $29.95). There are step-by-step directions for projects that can take anywhere from five minutes to an entire weekend. It can be for a balcony-sized plot or a rural acreage.
978-1-55017-538-7

F
is for Furstenwald

LIKE ‘EM OR HATE ‘EM, FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR York Furstenwald wants parents and children to know more about guns. There are almost 300 million guns in North America, so Kids, Guns & the Truth (North Vancouver: 3B Publishing $19.95) shares facts and advice: A modern high calibre rifle has more force at ¼ mile away than a point blank shot from a handgun. Firing guns in celebration often kills people when the bullets come to earth. Treat every gun as if it’s loaded.

G
is for Gambone

LARRY GAMBONE Grew up in logging towns on Vancouver Island where he was active in the anti-nuclear weapons ‘Ban-the-Bomb’ movement. He founded Red Lion Press in 1984 and began to publish a series of chapbooks on labour, social history and anarchism. His most recent books are The View From Anarchist Mountain (Red Lion Press $16) and The Impossibilists (Red Lion Press $10), which features the writings of the Socialist Party of Canada and the One Big Union (1906-1938). It is a revised edition that also includes writings by Ginger Goodwin. More info: Redlionpress@hotmail.com
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Tis for Taylor

FOUR OF THE FIVE finalists for the $25,000 Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction are British Columbians: Charlotte Gill for her treeplanting memoir, Eating Dirt (Greystone), Wade Davis, for Into the Silence: The Great War, Mallory, and the Conquest of Everest (Knopf), J.J. Lee for The Measure of a Man: The Story of a Father, a Son, and a Suit (McClelland & Stewart), and Madelaine Sonik for Afflictions & Departures: Essays (Anvil). In February, with Premiers Christy Clark in attendance at the Vancouver presentation, Charlotte Gill was selected as the 2012 recipient of the BC National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction, worth $40,000.

X is for X-Files

THE FACE OF WILLIAM B. DAVIS is recognizable worldwide. As the Cigarette Smoking Man or “Cancerman” in the television series The X-Files, Davis dishes candidly about the show’s famous co-stars Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny in his memoir, Where There’s Smoke (ECW $22.95), while revealing the character of his undergraduate colleague Donald Sutherland and recalling his own work at the National Theatre in London with Sir Laurence Olivier, Dame Maggie Smith and Albert Finney.

Y is for Yellowstone

WITH A FOREWARD BY JOE MCBRYAN of Buffalo Airways, pioneering ice pilot Don F. Hamilton’s self-published journal of flying in Canada’s Arctic, Flying Overloaded (Aspire Media $26.95), is packed with the requisite hair-raising episodes. It recounts his flying in the Far North for various companies, including training pilots on the DC-3 for Buffalo Airways in their early days, and in support of his two fly-in lodges with his own aircraft. It appears at a time when there are two new television series about aviation in Canada’s far north. Concurrently, Mike Vlissides’ The Ice Pilots: Flying with the Maverick of the Great White North (D&M $17.95) is derived from the History Channel show about pilots based in Yellowknife, currently airing in eleven countries.

Z is for Zastrozzi

IN HER SELF-PUBLISHED MEMOIR OF LIVING aboard a ship, The Life and Times of the Floathouse Zastrozzi ($15), Mary Hughes asserts that getting a 1917 Heintzman piano down the ramp at Fisherman’s Wharf in Victoria was a minor challenge compared to what she and Alan Hughes faced in their twelve years living aboard the ship. Over the years, Zastrozzi narrowly avoided a collision with the Coho ferry, repelled a mink invasion, and only barely survived sinking at the dock. Then there was the daunting challenge of moving Zastrozzi ashore on Salt Spring Island in 2002. The book is available at a few coastal book outlets, from her website, or from her front porch on Salt Spring.

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