"I was in my twenties, living away from home for the first time. I had very little contact with my family. I was asking myself many questions about race, identity, politics, and art."

Booker shortlisted novelist Madeleine Thien is profiled in our FICTION ISSUE after winning both the Giller and Governor General’s Awards.

Pages 25-39
Faculty:
Alice Acheson
Elizabeth Austen
Paula Becker
Daniel James Brown
Jonathan Evison
Waverly Fitzgerald
Sean Fletcher
Andrea Hurst
Dan Larner
Samuel Ligon
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Left: Original serigraph titled “Along Chuckanut Drive” by Nancy McDonnell Spaulding, commissioned by Chuckanut Bay Gallery, www.chuckanutbaygallery.com

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Room, Canada's oldest feminist literary journal, is celebrating its longevity with a 400-page, retrospective anthology, *Making Room: Forty Years of Room Magazine*.

As a noted Room editor Chelene Knight reflected on how the publication has affected her life as a writer.

> “I was a shy, paranoid, weird kid who never spoke and instead just wrote a lot; I spoke through writing. I had no idea I could shape this skill into a career, and I definitely did not know there was a community of writers just like me out there feeling the same way."

> “Before I stumbled onto Room magazine, I was steadily writing poetry and awkwardly-worded 750-word-limit parenting magazine articles, so why would a well-established literary magazine of such stature have any interest in a young girl with limited experience?"

> “Room magazine was the first literary magazine to say “hey, we want you to be a part of this.”"

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> “Room magazine was the first Canadian literary periodical to publish my work."

> “Room magazine was the first literary magazine to say “hey, we want you to be a part of this.”"

> “Room magazine said, ‘your voice matters’ and they meant it. I know for a fact that many women who have published with Room over the past 40 years can easily say the same. Room has instilled an unwavering sense of pride in every woman that comes on board whether staff, volunteer, or contributor. I keep saying this aloud to myself and it is incredible to say, I am a part of this. Room is making sure the story, the voice, and the woman are heard at equal volumes, above anything else. At Room, we can shout."
ANCOUVER’S SECOND OLDEST URBAN PARK, CLARK PARK, IS THE FOCUS OF Vancouver author/historian Aaron Chapman’s The Last Gang in Town. At this location in the early 1970s the Clark Park Gang evolved into one of that era’s most notorious street gangs. In 1972, after the gang was involved in a number of headline-making clashes with police, including the ‘Rolling Stones riot’ outside the Pacific Coliseum, the Vancouver Police Department formed an undercover squad to go after the gang. Hostile interactions culminated in a shooting death of a Clark Park gang member, Danny Teece, age 17. Chapman’s history includes stories from former gang members and undercover police officers who worked to stifle gang activity. The full title of Chapman’s entirely original Vancouver history is The Last Gang in Town: The Epic Story of the Vancouver Police vs. the Clark Park Gang (Arsenal $24.95). 

I just shot Dad

NE NIGHTMARISH DAY, Holly Crichton got a call from her youngest son Mat with the news: “I just shot Dad.” It was common knowledge to neighbours that Holly and her sons had been victims of her abusive husband for years. Even after Holly and Mat had been disabled in separate accidents, the abuse didn’t subside. The shocker was that police investigators characterized the elderly father as the victim and they concluded that son Mat was the aggressor. Holly’s community fiercely came to her and Mat’s defense. A first-degree murder charge was reduced to manslaughter. No Way to Run (Caitlin $24.95) is Holly Crichton’s story of epic courage and tenacity in mounting her son Mat’s defence. Born in 1958, Holly Crichton worked as a professional horse trainer and jockey, until a racing accident in 1996 left her paralyzed. She has two sons and the youngest, Mat, was severely brain injured in a car accident in 2004. Mat lives next door to her with his wife and two children, on their cattle ranch in northern Alberta. No Way to Run is Holly’s first book.

Founders of Bolen’s & Munro’s will be missed

Known to friends and family as Mel, Victoria bookseller Madeline Bolen died unexpectedly at age 72 in December. She first opened a small bookstore in Hillside Shopping Centre in 1975, expanding four times before settling into the current 17,000-square foot space in 1996, making it one of the biggest single-location independent bookstores in Canada. Her daughter Samantha took over management of Bolen’s Books in 2010. On one month earlier Victoria also lost Jim Munro, who founded Munro’s books in downtown Victoria with his first wife, Alice Munro, in 1963, and operated it until he turned over ownership to four senior employees in 2014. He received the Gray Campbell Distinguished Service Award in 2009 in recognition of his contribution to the book industry in BC. He received the Order of Canada in 2016.

One month earlier Victoria also lost Jim Munro, who founded Munro’s books in downtown Victoria with his first wife, Alice Munro, in 1963, and operated it until he turned over ownership to four senior employees in 2014. He received the Gray Campbell Distinguished Service Award in 2009 in recognition of his contribution to the book industry in BC. He received the Order of Canada in 2016.

A SPANIEL IN THE WORKS

LIKE MANY CLASSICS FOR young readers—Winnie the Pooh books, for example—Paymaneh Ritchie’s My Name is Oliver (Tellwell $6.99) was written by a parent to entertain their own child. Told from the perspective of a lovable but depressive six-year-old Beagle-Springer Spaniel who was adopted from the SPCA, this children’s book delves into mental health issues that include separation anxiety, allergies, anxiety and depression. Ritchie’s aim is to have a light-hearted story that will enable the reader to discuss tolerance, acceptance and unconditional love with children. A portion of the proceeds will go to the BC SPCA and the Beagle Freedom Project.

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The voice of Joyce vs. choice of Trump

Joyce Nelson

ackerman is so impressed by Joyce Nelson’s Beyond Banksters: Resisting the New Feudalism (Watershed Sentinel Books $26) that he paid to mail copies to every member of Parliament in Ottawa, as well as every senator, in advance of Liberal Finance Minister Bill Morneau’s spring budget.

Ackerman sees Nelson’s investigative perspective of global financial chicanery as an ideal “toolkit” for legislators’ in the new Trump era. Beyond Banksters, Nelson’s sixth book, will likely grow in stature if U.S. President Donald Trump follows through on his campaign promises to renegotiate NAFTA and withdraw from the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Many of Nelson’s topics, like the trade deal with the European Union—CETA—or the Canada Infrastructure Bank that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is starting up, are time-sensitive subjects. “She wanted to get that information out there,” says publisher Delores Broten, “about how the trade deals, the banking institutions and the big financial investment companies all interact to remove the public interest from what government is doing with our property.”

Joyce Nelson—the Noam Chomsky of Vancouver Island—names the people responsible for eroding public accountability for trade deals and outlines the steps which have allowed trade deals to open up public services to corporate takeover and limit our ability to control banks and investment corporations.

WS Books is the fledgling book-publishing imprint of the non-profit Watershed Sentinel Education Society which began on Cortes Island. After fifteen years on Cortes, its environmental news magazine, Watershed Sentinel, was transferred to Comox.

PETE ROY

EnGendering health

EDITOR ZENA SHARMAN’S “MOVING AND INCENDIARY” LGBTQ anthology, The Remedy: Queer and Trans Voices on Health and Health Care (Arsenal $18.95), presents true stories from queer and trans people about their health-care experiences. Chapters range from gay men with HIV facing prejudice, to a lesbian couple dealing with cancer, and essays from health-care providers and activists exploring and examining the challenges and politics of LGBTQ health issues in the shadow of the new post-truth era.

Zena Sharan co-chairs the board of the Catherine White Holman Wellness Centre, a holistic health care centre for transgender and gender-diverse communities, located on Kingsway in Vancouver. She has been a cabaret host, a go-go dancer for a queer punk band and a campus radio DJ.

Victoria is Knoxville

A self-described grump, thoroughly British Columbian columnist Jack Knox has been delighting Times Colonist readers since 1988. Hard Knox: Musings from the Edge of Canada (Heritage $19.95) is long overdue. Whether he’s addressing his city’s sewage crisis, offering a rhapsodic ode to Nanaimo bars or noting that millennials and elders are now willing to pay more for their bikes than their cars, Knox charms with his curmudgeonly wit and satirical eye. “No local peccadillo, imagined or real, escapes the anthropological notebook of this latter-day Franz Boas,” says Bill Engleson in The Ormsby Review.

In his dedication, he thanks Lucille, “who has stuck with me for more than thirty years. I question her judgment.” Raised in the B.C. interior, Knox previously worked at newspapers in Kamloops, Regina and Campbell River.

Rare is everywhere

Alligators and tigers can be white. Lobsters can be blue. One in twelve people has a rare disease. So what should we do? To raise awareness of rare diseases, “the underdogs of health care,” Deborah Katz, an artist and nursing professor with twenty years of experience in health care, has produced Rare is Everywhere (Miss Bird / Sandhill $19.95). In an attempt to educate children about nature and make them feel better if they have rare disease or any anomaly that makes them feel different, The overriding message about her book is that rare diseases are truly natural and not something to worry because, The overriding message about her book is that rare diseases are truly natural and not something to worry because, "Rare is Everywhere!" Proceeds go to the Rare Disease Foundation, which began on Cortes Island. After fifteen years on Cortes, its environmental news magazine, Watershed Sentinel, was transferred to Comox.

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5 BC BOOKWORLD SPRING 2017
TIME TO SPRING LOOSE

Medicine Unbundled
A Journey Through the Minefields of Indigenous Health Care
Gary Geddes
“Anyone who cares about human decency and social justice owes a debt to Gary Geddes and to his Indigenous informants. We can no longer pretend we don’t know about residential schools, murdered and missing Aboriginal women and ‘Indian Hospitals.’ The only outstanding question is how we respond.”
—Tom Sandborn, Vancouver Sun
Heritage House | $22.95 pb | $17.99 ebook

All the World’s a Stage
The Story of Vancouver’s Bard on the Beach Jayne Seagrave
The inside story of Western Canada’s most illustrious Shakespeare festival is revealed in dazzling photography and a clever narrative by Bard aficionado Jayne Seagrave.
Heritage House | $20.95 pb | $15.99 ebook

Children of the Kootenays
Memories of Mining Towns Shirley Stainton
Scenes of West Kootenay communities in the 1930s come to life in this charming memoir that features over a hundred stunning photographs.
Heritage House | $19.95 pb | $15.99 ebook

Pulling Together
A Coach’s Journey to Uncover the Mindset of True Potential Jason Dorland
A former Olympian reflects on his evolving ideas about coaching as he prepares a crew of junior rowers for elite-level competition.
Heritage House | $19.95 pb | $15.99 ebook

Camping British Columbia, the Rockies, and Yukon
Now fully updated and expanded to include the national parks of the Canadian Rockies.
Heritage House | $22.95 pb | $17.99 ebook

Mountain Footsteps
Revised and updated, with colour maps and beautiful photos which will breathe new life into the hiking experience for outdoor enthusiasts.
RMB | Rocky Mountain Books | $19.95 pb | $14.99 ebook

Active Vancouver
A Year-round Guide to Outdoor Recreation in the City’s Natural Environments Roy Jantzen
With colour photos and maps, Active Vancouver is the ultimate resource for family-friendly outdoor recreation.
RMB | Rocky Mountain Books | $21.95 pb | $16.99 ebook

A River Captured
The Columbia River Treaty and Catastrophic Change Elizabeth Delaney Pearse
A profound work that explores the controversial treaty and its impact on ecosystems, Indigenous peoples, culture, and recent history.
RMB | Rocky Mountain Books | $23.95 pb | $19.99 ebook

The Columbia River Treaty
A Primer Robert Sandford, Deborah Harford and Jon O’Riordan
A timely and accessible work that clearly explains this complex water agreement between Canada and the US and its impact on BC.
RMB | Rocky Mountain Books | $29.95 hc | $19.99 ebook

On Island
Life Among the Coast Dwellers Pat Carney
A collection of stories chronicling the characters and dramas that capture life in small coastal communities, written by long-time islander and former politician Pat Carney.
TouchWood Editions | $21.95 pb | $7.99 ebook

Death in a Darkening Mist
A Lana Winlow Mystery #2 Inna Whitlow
Former British intelligence officer Lana Winlow teams up with the Nelson police force to investigate the murder of a local Russian man in this post-war cozy mystery.
TouchWood Editions | $19.95 pb | $15.99 ebook

Icon
Flagship Wines from British Columbia’s Best Wineries
John Schreiner
Photography by Christopher K. Stenberg
Canada’s most authoritative wine writer showcases 100 of BC’s highest-calibre wines in this guide of tasting notes and information.
TouchWood Editions | $90.00 hc | $71.95 ebook

Victoria’s Most Haunted
Ghost Stories from BC’s Historic Capital City Ian Gibbs
Featuring more than 25 eerie tales from iconic sites like the Empress Hotel, Hatley Castle, and Ross Bay Cemetery, as told by a Ghostly Walks tour guide.
TouchWood Editions | $30.00 pb | $21.99 ebook
Before radio lost that lovin’ feeling, a kid from Comox thrived as the Forrest Gump of pop music in the Lower Mainland.

were singing Rock Around the Clock, before Elvis, rock and roll wasn’t just dangerous, it kept parents up at night worrying about their children’s future. In those days, as we learn from Robinson’s encounters with the likes of Roy Orbison (after a gig in Port Alberni), celebrities and musical performers could often be found in the backseat of a disc jockey’s car as they went speeding down a highway to catch a ferry.

In those days, buying an album by a black artist like Fats Domino, or Little Richard could mean having the cashier pull it out from under the counter in a paper bag, so people on the street couldn’t see what you were buying.

After Brunet introduces Robinson as an important and loved man, he goes headfirst into Robinson’s early career, sprinkling the names of countless celebrities, only to veer further back to Robinson’s upbringing. Robinson didn’t know his father while growing up with his siblings in near-poverty. Robinson disclaims the notion that his innate good humour, optimism and sense of adventure got him going forward, always fueled by his trademark enthusiasm.

Robinson disclaims the notion that he brought rock and roll to Vancouver. He was there at the right place, at the right time. His fallback position is humility, but contemporaries and friends such as music agent Bruce Allen (Bryan Adams) are quick to place a lot of the credit on Robinson’s shoulders for bringing a nascent B.C. music business into the mainstream.

There is more to this portrait than a rehash of Robinson’s disc jockey encounters with celebs. We also learn about his stunts, such as the time he was broadcasting live from the bottom of Burrard Inlet in a diving suit, and hardly anyone took notice.

His foray into broadcast television, as a sort of alternative to Dick Clark’s American Bandstand, led him to a gig with a Portland radio station which, in turn, led to him getting drafted by the U.S. Army. His enrollment in Advanced Infantry Training (and his superior officers encouraging him to pursue a military career) are sides of Robinson’s story that the average teenaged Beatles fan would not have known.

Robinson returned to Vancouver and stayed the course. His love of the city is palpable; and it trumped grandiose career ambitions or possible salary increases from afar. That’s the charm of this biography: Robinson is a man filled with life and love, and never speaks disparagingly about anyone. (Renowned and beloved sports broadcaster Jim Robson is revered for his similar appeal.) There were some who cheated him, or treated him unfairly, but Robinson’s respectful nature apparently didn’t allow for him to engage in petty vendettas or slights. But Robinson is not averse to telling it like it is, or was. Even though he was instrumental in the ad campaign that paved the way for the opening of the first McDonald’s in Canada, he has no hesitation in criticizing the company. Increasingly Robinson made his living in the advertising business, buoyed by thousands of friendships and contacts he’d made in the radio and entertainment business. According to Brunet, his honest and respectful nature was an unusual set of traits amongst the large business peddlers and Robinson has kept his integrity in tact.

Brunet closes with accolades and honours acquired by Robinson, but more compelling are the closings at the end of each chapter, in Robinson’s own words, as he reminisces about the people he has met. To read those reminiscences from what is so obviously his own voice is a real treat. His respect and awe of these various people shines through as he revels in his meetings with the likes of Steve Allen, Leonard Nimoy, Johnny Carson, The Beatles, Elvis all the way up to Buble.

Robinson is quick to point out he’s not literally the last deejay. The book’s title is meant to express that the energy, the connectivity, and the radio business itself is in its death throes. In the old days, deejays were local celebrities; now playlists are compiled by bots. Robinson compares the demise of his profession to his grandfather’s work on steam engine locomotives on Vancouver Island. He does not express indignation at the changing times, but there’s a sense of sadness knowing something important is being lost.

7674-1-200117-764-2

Ubiquitous deejay Red Robinson (left) with Elvis in Vancouver, 1957.
Enter Time
The Fungus Man Platters of Charles Edenshaw
COLIN BROWNE
In this poet’s essay, Browne ranges through the fields of art history, literature, ethnology, and myth to discover a parallel history of modernism within one of the world’s most subtle and sophisticated artistic and literary cultures.
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The Gorge: Selected Writing
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Edited by Catriona Strang – who co-authored Busted, Cold Trip, and Light Sweet Crude with Shaw – The Gorge collects a range of Shaw’s prolific writing with a focus on her collaborations and poetry.
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Jane Rule’s grave in the woods on Galiano is an oft-visited site for pilgrims who value her character and work. A new collection of Rule’s letters reveals why she is revered.

People who knew Jane Rule are still saying to themselves, “I wonder what Jane would think of this.” She has been called “the greatest lesbian writer of our generation” because the six-foot-tall, American-born, Galiano Islander wrote Desert of the Heart, a 1964 novel that dared to describe a lesbian couple succeeding in a long-term relationship.

But Jane Rule—or Jinx, as she was sometimes called—was much more. She lent so much money to her fellow islanders, so often, that she earned a different nickname “The Bank of Galiano.” For years, when she and her lifelong partner Helen Sontoff shared their pool with teens and toddlers, it was Rule who was the lifeguard who taught kids to swim. And she was hilariously funny. More importantly, she should be remembered as an iconoclastic social philosopher who was just as interested in children as she was in gay pride and civil rights.

Jane Rule’s wisdom is the best reason to wade through the misleadingly titled A Queer Love Story: The Letters of Jane Rule and Rick Bébout (UBC $50), a 650-page, overdue omnibus edited by Marilyn R. Schuster that records the eight-year correspondence between North America’s foremost “public lesbian” and her editor at the Toronto-based publication, The Body Politic.

Bébout’s descriptions of his sex life, his observations about children and the elderly as he was remembered as an iconoclastic social philosopher who was just as interested in children and the elderly as she was in gay pride and civil rights.

Here is a sampling of Rule’s private comments.

Honour
“I do think it bizarre that we are taught to honor those who die in battle, condemn those who die of pleasure.”

Incest
“Not mentioning incest is one of the ways we keep it from going away.”

Candor
“I was very much in love with several women before I met Helen, one of whom I might have lived quite happily with.”

Sublimation
“Most sexual energy directed toward me now I find simply wearying. I’m sure that importantly has to do with a fixation on her suicide when she had lived to nearly 62, a hardworking, often wonderful life against hard odds.”

Creativity
“I can never think why anyone would be interested in reading a book I’ve just finished. It loses its vitality for me, I suppose, once my imagination is unhooked from it.”

Death
“I try to figure out why the idea of my own death doesn’t trouble me. I think I have found life hard enough, demanding enough, to think of death as a sort of reward, rest anyway.”

LITERARY WISDOM

Virgina Woolf
“Virginia Woolf killed herself on my birthday. I’ve never liked that. I’ve never liked, more importantly, the fixation on her suicide when she had lived to nearly 62, a hardworking, often wonderful life against hard odds.”

Margaret Atwood
“I believe only in art and failure.”

Jane Rule
“I try to figure out why the idea of my own death doesn’t trouble me. I think I have found life hard enough, demanding enough, to think of death as a sort of reward, rest anyway.”
A Series Of Dogs

John Armstrong

Pretty much guaranteed to make you laugh out loud . . . a memorable compendium of philosophy, social commentary, slobbery kisses and love.

—Heidi Greco, Vancouver Sun

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When mine owners slashed wages in Princeton, B.C., the miners called in notorious labour activist Slim Evans, who led the newly formed union in a dramatic months-long battle against the owners, the police, the local board of trade, and the KKK.

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me, how can you talk about computers and poverty in the same breath?"
Indeed. But attitudes can be a hindrance to learning about computers as much as lack of dough. "I used to teach secretaries how to use computers," says Goldsmith. "Highly skilled women were scared of losing their jobs because they were intimidated by computers."
Working with them taught me that no one was ever going to be in a position of not being able to use PovNet because they didn’t think they could use the technology we offered."
It is nowadays taken for granted, especially by younger people, that nearly everyone knows about the internet and how to access it. This assumption can be crippling to someone who has never been familiar with a keyboard, or who can’t afford an iPhone, or who still doesn’t know what the heck an “app” is.
As PovNet user Gisele Guay writes, "There’s a very thin line when you’re dealing with technology—you can take an attitude when you start using the internet saying to someone, ‘Well that’s easy—just go and look it up online.’ I’ve tried to be careful not to do that. There are still a lot of people who can’t or won’t go online."
By taking into account such sensitivities to the learning curve for people without much money or experience, PovNet has grown to become a major resource for activists.
Here are some examples that Goldsmith cites as to how it can be effective as a conduit to empowerment:
A disability rights organizer in Nelson goes to the PovNet web site to get some information for a community workshop she is doing that night about changes to disability bus passes.
A tenant in Vancouver goes online to find an advocate to help him deal with a landlord trying to evict him.
Workers at a women’s centre in a small northern B.C. town take a PovNetU course about dealing with debt because they have so many clients being harassed by a collection agency.
Storming the Digital Divide also illustrates how austerity measures have impacted grassroots social justice activists when the Canadian government began restructuring social welfare policies from 1971 to the present.
You’d like to be self-sufficient, but the space you have available is tighter than your budget. If this sounds familiar, Urban Homesteader Hacks was created just for you! Our authors will help you navigate the wide world of homesteading, regardless of how big (or small!) your space and budget may be. Topics range from cheesemaking to gardening and composting—everything the building urban homesteader needs to succeed:

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Learn about fermenting, crafting, growing, preserving and other skills for the urban homesteader.
n the late 1970s, Judith Plant had just recently divorced Chris ‘Kip’ Plant, with whom she had a son, and was trying to establish her career as a writer. She had just completed her studies at Simon Fraser University and was looking for a new place to live. She heard about a commune called Camelsfoot, which was located in the Yalakom Valley in British Columbia. Camelsfoot was a commune of sixteen people, and Judith was intrigued by the idea of living in a communal setting.

The commune was founded in the early 1970s by Fred Brown, a philosophy professor, and his partner, Eleanor Hawthorne. They had both been active in the anti-war and civil rights movements and were looking for a new way of life. The commune was based on the principles of community and sustainability, and they were involved in a number of projects, including a hydroelectric project.

Judith was drawn to the commune by their idealism and their commitment to community. She was also attracted to the rural lifestyle and the natural beauty of the Yalakom Valley. She was initially a skeptic, but she was quickly won over by the commune’s ethos.

The commune was a fascinating place. It was located on a remote piece of land, and they had to live off the land. They grew their own food, and they were self-sufficient. They had a workshop for making handicrafts, and they had a library. They also had a communal living area, where they could share meals and conversations.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the commune was their commitment to sustainability. They were involved in a number of projects, including a hydroelectric project. They were also involved in the development of the Yalakom Valley. They worked with the local community to create a sustainable way of life.

Judith was a part of the commune for a few years. She became involved in a number of projects, including the development of the Yalakom Valley. She was also involved in the writing of a number of books, including Healing the Wounds, a book on community and sustainability.

Judith’s time at Camelsfoot was a transformative experience for her. It was a time of discovery and learning. She was able to see the world from a new perspective, and she was able to develop her own ideas about community and sustainability.

In 2017, Judith published a memoir about her time at Camelsfoot, titled The Promise of Paradise: Utopian Communities in British Columbia. The memoir is a fascinating look at the history of communal living in British Columbia, and it is a powerful testament to the power of community and sustainability.
The Sustainability Dilemma: Essays on British Columbia Forest and Environmental History (RBCM $34.95) explores and revisits contested issues, policies and campaigns concerning the management of B.C. forests and the forest industry’s impact on freshwater ecosystems.

To do so, authors Robert Griffin and Richard A. Rajala plunge into a vast assortment of departmental files, parliamentary debates, official records, and contemporary commentaries pertaining to the forests of B.C.

Beginning with Royal Commissioner Gordon Sloan’s support for forest management on “Sustained Yield” principles in his Royal Commission report of 1945, and proceeding through the expansion of pulp-milling operations in the 1960s, to consider controversies over extensive clear-cutting in the 1970s and 1980s, they offer an account centred on the political debates over, and policy choices pertaining to, provincial forests during these years.

In broad outline, this is a familiar story, rooted in political economy but with evident “political-environmental” dimensions. Jeremy Wilson, Gordon Hak, Patricia Marchak, Roger Hatter, and others, have provided (inevitably incomplete) interpretations of it in the last 30 years or so.

Both Griffin and Rajala completed doctoral dissertations on B.C.’s forests. Griffin served as history curator at the Royal BC Museum with special interest in the mining and forest industries for more than thirty years, and Rajala, an associate professor in the history department at Uvic, has devoted his scholarly career to understanding B.C.

Both know the province’s archives intimately and here they join together to focus on “historical events… that have been largely forgotten by the public and largely unexamined by scholars.”

The Sustainability Dilemma is a book in two parts, each reflecting the particular interests of its authors. Griffin wrote the three chapters that make up the first third of the book. The first of these traces B.C. forest policy through the labyrinth of regulations produced by efforts to implement the guiding principle of sustained yield while meeting industry’s diverse needs, responding to shifting government directives, reflecting different regional conditions, and doing so with inadequate information.

Griffin’s second chapter limns industry’s response to the government’s sustained yield policies by tracing the efforts of the Western Plywood (later Weldwood, then West Fraser) Company to establish a dominant position in B.C.’s central interior, and his third chapter centres on Forest Minister Ray Williston’s introduction of Pulp Harvesting Areas to promote economic development through the construction of pulp mills. Here Griffin again focuses, by way of illustration, on the Weldwood company’s efforts to build a mill in Quesnel.

Rajala follows, filling out the remainder of the book with a pair of case studies focused on the impact of the forest industry on freshwater ecosystems. Dealing with the controversial Stellako River log drives in the central interior in the 1960s and the Riley Creek/ Rennell Sound landslides on Haida Gwaii in the following decade, these are long (over 100 pages each) and detailed exegeses.

Griffin has the lighter touch. His 30- to 50-page chapters move the story along and, in my view at least, his discussion of the Western Plywood/ Weldwood ventures is a valuable contribution to understanding the development of the forest industry in B.C. in the third quarter of the twentieth century.

Read The Sustainability Dilemma for a deft interpretation of the reasons for, and the challenges posed by, the rise of the pulp and paper industry, and for the book’s “definitive” accounts of the Stellako and Riley Creek controversies. Admire and ponder its many illustrations. But always remember that history is at its best, most powerful, and most useful when it fires the imagination rather than when it rests content with recounting facts.

9780772669742

Historical geographer Graeme Wynn has had a career-long fascination with and involvement in environmental history. He was editor of BC Studies (2008-2016). In 2017 he will become president of the American Society for Environmental History for a two-year term.
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“Ruurs writes purely and warmly, with the text set in both English and Raheem’s Arabic translation…An astonishing book that allows the humanity of refugees to speak louder than politics and introduces readers to one of Syria’s incredible artists.” — Kirkus Reviews, starred review

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– Scott Reid, Principal at Feschuk.Reid, CTV News political analyst, and director of communications for former prime minister Paul Martin

978-0-7748-3204-5 | paperback
Ujjal Dosanjh was the second provincial premier of non-European descent ever to hold office in Canada. The first was Prince Edward Island’s Joe Ghiz, whose father was a Lebanese immigrant. Dosanjh, in contrast, is an immigrant himself. Dosanjh describes a sense of race, gender, gay rights and liberal values. His early Canadian experience also reinforced his inherently secular worldview.

The narrow religious nationalism that he encountered within his own Sikh community was something he quickly rejected. He applauded the opposition to French Canadian nationalism that defined Pierre Trudeau’s politics. Dosanjh came to see the growing religious-ethnic nationalism of his own Sikh community and the provincial nationalism of French Canadians as comparable and similarly negative forces.

Dosanjh’s memoir reminds us of the appalling troubles of Punjab and the Punjabi diaspora in the 1980s and 1990s, when nearly the whole Punjabi community in Canada was intimidated by the presence of terrorists in their midst.

Dosanjh and his wife Rami had been booked to fly to Delhi on Air India’s tragic flight 182 in June 1985. This was the flight carrying 329 passengers and crew that was blown up over the Atlantic by a bomb that terrorists had placed on board in Vancouver. They fortunately cancelled their booking a few days before.

A few months earlier, Dosanjh had been assaulted by a turbaned Sikh wielding an iron bar who inflicted deep wounds to his head requiring 84 stitches to repair. This attack happened at the end of a working day in a darkening parking lot and ended only when Dosanjh’s law partner arrived on the scene, scaring the attacker off and saving Dosanjh’s life.

For some time before that, Dosanjh had been receiving threats to his life and to the lives of his family. These threats continued. Dosanjh says that his near death experience in that parking lot attack gave him a renewed sense of life’s purpose.

Dosanjh was a lumber union organizer, an advocate for Punjabi farm workers and an NDP party worker almost from the start. But at the summit of his career he was still dismissed by some opponents as an “ethnic” candidate, although his success at election time and his handling of issues in government belied the charge.

He makes it clear that the Sikh and South Asian community was the base that launched him into politics, but when in 1991 he was first elected as an MLA — after two unsuccessful tries — it was in a riding that was fifty percent Chinese and that was only five percent Sikh and South Asian. Dosanjh deserves great credit for the principled role he played in the provincial and federal governments between 1991 and 2011 as an NDP member of the legislature, caucus leader, cabinet member, premier of B.C., Liberal member of parliament, and federal minister of health. He made difficult decisions in major portfolios and gained general respect in the process.

As a young man, Ujjal Dosanjh had unrealized ambitions as a writer in Punjab, and it is not surprising that he writes with sensitivity and telling effect. He records the best and worst of his political career frankly and convincingly.

Dosanjh tells his story with disarming honesty and modesty, superbly in English, a language that he ultimately mastered as an adult. Dosanjh’s Odyssey is Ujjal Dosanjh’s 1964 passport photo.

Hugh Johnston’s books include The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada’s Colour Bar; The Four Quarters of the Night: the Life Story of an Emigrant Sikh (with Tara Singh Bains); and Jewels of the Qila: The Remarkable Story of an Indo-Canadian Family.
THE YEAR CANADIANS LOST THEIR MINDS AND FOUND THEIR COUNTRY
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Available in bookstores this spring | www.douglas-mcintyre.com | facebook.com/DMPublishers | twitter @DMPublishers
A mother and daughter team explores a common tradition that most people take for granted in *Birthdays: Beyond Cake and Ice Cream*. Egyptian Pharaohs celebrated them — Jehovah’s Witnesses don’t. And if you reach 60, you’re ambivalent.

**How Birthdays Vary**

**INTERVIEW**

ROM THE GET-GO, Dani Tate-Stratton [(interviewed below)](https://example.com) knew it was tough to make a living as an author.

Her mom, Nikki Tate, worked at Bolen Books in Victoria and has written more than thirty books.

But now, having participated in a national celebration of Adults Day in Tokyo to honour those who are turning twenty, she and her mom have co-authored *Birthdays: Beyond Cake and Ice Cream* (Orca $24.95).

**BCBW: This is a smart and simple idea for a book. How did you come up with it?**

I was lucky enough to spend my 20th birthday in Tokyo and took part in Adult’s Day, a national holiday celebrating my half-birthday during my early writing, is that editing isn’t personal and that to be a writer is to have a job, one where you grind away harder than most people imagine.

**BCBW: What about giving them?**

I have always loved planning birthday parties for others, like my mom’s 50th, where we managed to surprise her with about 50 friends and family members and my grandfather’s 80th, where we arranged for him to have a letter from Prime Minister Trudeau. You can see a photo of Grampa holding his letter in our book.

**BCBW: And your mom?**

She has never been the type to bake fancy cakes and arrange delicate goodie bags, so her favourite birthdays for me were probably some of my favourites to attend — camping at Goldstream, building driftwood forts on French Beach, and a murder mystery where we turned the entire living room into a train car.

**BCBW: Is there any place in the world where people never celebrate or recognize birthdays?**

We were actually surprised just how prevalent birthday celebrations of one sort or another are, both all around the world and throughout history. That said, Jehovah’s Witnesses do not celebrate birthdays, as they believe it would displeasure God for various reasons consistent with their religious beliefs.

**BCBW: Before there were calendars and people understood the lunar year, did ‘pre-history’ people ever have some ‘natural’ recognition for becoming one year older?**

We found instances of birthday recognition dating back to the Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt, but as we imply this makes total sense—they are thought to be some of the first to have any sort of consistent and accurate calendar. Before we were able to keep track of time, it was certainly difficult to keep track of specific dates, such as birthdays.

**BCBW: Did you long harbour the notion that you would become an author?**

I'm sure there are more of us out there! My friend Xan Shin contributed photos to her mom/Marilyn Browning’s book in the last year or two...

**BCBW: Did you long harbour the notion that you would become an author?**

No! I loved growing up in the stacks at Bolen Books. My mom worked there for years while I was growing up. I was lucky enough to tour with her and hang out at the edges of the Canadian book scene. I saw what a struggle it was for my mom and most Canadian authors. I was not at all interested!

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**BCBW: Maybe we should do an issue of BC BookWorld devoted to other mother/daughter or father/son or mother/son collaborations.**

I’m sure there are more of us out there! My friend Xan Shin contributed photos to her mom/Marilyn Browning’s book in the last year or two...

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No! I loved growing up in the stacks at Bolen Books. My mom worked there for years while I was growing up. I was lucky enough to tour with her and hang out at the edges of the Canadian book scene. I saw what a struggle it was for my mom and most Canadian authors. I was not at all interested! The story in our family is that with such creative parents, mom ‘rebelled’ by getting an honours neuropsychology degree. While I wasn’t so extreme in my ‘rebellion,’ I did study both graphic design and contemporary cultural anthropology. I knew I didn’t want to be an author! Funny how the things we ‘know’ can change...

**BCBW: Having done a book on birthdays, what’s next?**

As someone who firmly believes that 364 days of the year are just in the way of Christmas and who starts their Christmas shopping in January, gift wrapping in July, caroling in August, and baking in November, I couldn’t be more excited about researching a book on the origins of Christmas.

**Nikki Tate and daughter Dani Tate-Stratton**
By Beverly Cramp

Owners and publishers of Canada’s media are villains for failing to keep pace with the times, says Ian Gill. In No News Is Bad News he scathingly attacks complacency and greed.

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So who will cover all the crucial news beats and public meetings? Politicians? Corrupt businesses? Gill quotes a New York Times article asserting that “nonprofit news organizations, digital start-ups, university-based centers and public radio stations are beginning to fill the gap... But they probably won’t fully take hold while newspapers, even in their shrunk state, remain the domi-nant media players in local markets.”

Much of Gill’s overview bristles with gleeful invective and scorn. “That giant sucking sound you hear?” he writes, “Oh, that’s just the implosion of Canadian media.” He dismisses local newspapers like those managed by the David Black chain foisting “truly execrable fare” on the public. He bashes the CBC with equal ease. Our media landscape is a horrid and almost hopeless mess. “It’s as if Canada’s jour-nalists were assigned to cover a state funeral,” he writes, “and only now are wising up to the fact that the body in the casket is their own.”

Gill abhors Ontario-based The Walrus magazine as “a flaccid, self-satisfied kind of poor man’s New Yorker.”

The only smart people in Canadian journalism, it would appear, are David Beers, founding editor of The Tyee and Gill himself, a columnist for The Tyee. In the fourth chapter, and arguably the weakest section of Gill’s otherwise highly entertaining romp, called Wither the Future? they foresee the road ahead could or should be paved by philan-thropies. Gill was able to undertake research for his analysis of Canadian media due to a senior fellowship in the Future?

But he has done a great service to the Canadian media community by provid-ing this feisty diagnosis of Canadian journalism, getting vital conversations started. As he noted on a CBC Radio inter-view, if Canada’s roads and schools and hospitals fell into such decay, the public would not stand for it—and yet the news services of a nation are equally essential services to guarantee the well-being of a country.

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Beverly Cramp is associate editor of BC BookWorld.
“David Suzuki is one of our wisest ecological experts and storytellers, and he has created yet another one-of-a-kind resource. This is an unflinching look at the meaning of the climate crisis and an impassioned call to rise up, with joy and confidence in our collective ability to forge a just future.”

NAOMI KLEIN, author of This Changes Everything and The Shock Doctrine

978-1-77164-274-3 • $22.95
It wasn’t exactly Steve Fonyo running all the way across Canada, but Alan MacLeod’s transcontinental Great Canadian Statue Hunt also required dedication and stamina.

MacLeod and a great many who fought in World War I, Nova Scotia-born-and-brought-up Alan MacLeod of Victoria commenced an unprecedented odyssey in 2011, searching across Canada to document and showcase all military statues erected between 1918 and 1929 that feature a figure of a Canadian soldier in bronze or stone.

His resulting compendium, Remembered in Bronze and Stone: Canada’s Great War Memorial Statuary (Heritage $24.95), profiles 130 Great War memorials with family histories of the fallen and biographies of the craftsmen who made the statues.

Cesare Lion MacCarthy’s Winged Victory statues commissioned by the CPR for their railway stations in Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver are perhaps the most recognizable. There are statues from each province, representative works by well-known sculptors such as Alfred Howell in Ontario and New Brunswick; as well as statues by Sydney March and George William Hill, but most of the sculptors are unheralded. Many of the sculptors were unnamed artisans in Italy where many of the statues were made.

British Columbia has relatively few statues erected in comparison to the number of those who served—but the B.C. statues are no less interesting.

The book’s cover shows Emanuel Hahn’s “grieving soldier” statue located in Fernie. It’s one of ten similar statues credited to Hahn’s design that can be found across the country. The original that first appeared at Westville, Nova Scotia in 1921 was something of a Cadillac, a status symbol for communities who wanted to show how much they cared, but only one other copy was bronze like the original. The other eight were granite, carved by craftsman using the same scale and Hahn design. Some have since suffered due to preservation issues. “The imitations are not all equally well executed,” MacLeod writes, “and not every carver felt obligated to pay skillful homage to the Hahn original.”

MacLeod writes that 7,000 people gathered in New Westminster on Remembrance Day in 1922 to witness the dedication of a new board of trade-sponsored war memorial representing a bronze, wounded soldier wearing a headband and no helmet. With his bayonet mounted, he peers over the crowd, seemingly ready for action, but also contemplative. A soldier named Major Jackson envisaged the design and A. Fabri produced it.

“The figure wears the green patina typical of bronze exposed to the elements for an extended time,” MacLeod writes, “a patina that only enhances its effect. Because it is bronze, the design and A. Fabri’s effort are as enduring as it was on the occasion of its unveiling.”

The striking bronze soldier on a granite base at the northeast corner of the B.C. Legislature grounds is credited to Sydney March (1876-1966). We learn he was one of eight siblings who were sculptors, including Vernon March who was chiefly commissioned to undertake a World War I memorial in Ottawa that was commenced in 1926 and not completed until it was finally dedicated by King George VI in 1936—just below World War II started.

“Sidney March’s Victoria soldier takes a back seat to none of his other sculptures,” MacLeod writes. “The soldier is unique—in contrast to most of his stone and bronze comrades across the country, he is not handsome, he is not young, his face is one only a mother could love.”

He is a worn, weathered, ancient-looking infantryman wielding his Lee-Enfield, bayonet mounted, ready to deal with the enemy. Weather-beaten face notwithstanding, this is one of the finest war-monument soldiers in Canada.”

Approximately 60,000 Canadians died as a result of the so-called Great War. For a new generation of Canadians who have never heard of Ypres, the Somme, Vimy and Passchendaele, Remembered in Bronze and Stone is a novel approach to education: The project began after Alan MacLeod came across a remarkable bronze war statue in Westville, Nova Scotia. MacLeod became curious about finding similar statues, gathering materials for illustrated talks he presented to members of the Western Front Association and other organizations. After a talk for the WFA’s Pacific Coast branch, military historian and supporter along with two other significant and prolific B.C. authors who are WFA members, Wayne Ralph, who served as a critical reader, and Barry Gough, helped him find his publisher.

Alan MacLeod studied English at Dalhousie University and worked in Nova Scotia and British Columbia in the field of labour relations prior to retirement.
COMMON MAN / UNCOMMON LIFE is a collection of true stories from the life of Canadian adventurer, writer and award-winning filmmaker, Stan Walchuk Jr. A former guide and outfitter, his life has been one wild, hilarious, hair raising adventure after another. Grizzly bear charges, being swept down rivers, Bigfoot and brawls. Taking horses over remote mountain passes, getting lost on ice, getting lost in love. And so much more….. A unique journey through city streets, across parklands, over mountains and lakes. The serenity, drama and hardship of adventure. Walchuk’s vivid story telling voice varies from strong to sensitive but it’s always distinct.

These stories each and every one a gem……One of the most captivating biographies I have ever read……Story telling at its finest……Truly a remarkable piece of art written by an incredible man……By far the best book I have read in a long time……

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COMMON MAN / UNCOMMON LIFE is a collection of true stories from the life of Canadian adventurer, writer and award-winning filmmaker, Stan Walchuk Jr. A former guide and outfitter, his life has been one wild, hilarious, hair raising adventure after another. Grizzly bear charges, being swept down rivers, Bigfoot and brawls. Taking horses over remote mountain passes, getting lost on ice, getting lost in love. And so much more….. A unique journey through city streets, across parklands, over mountains and lakes. The serenity, drama and hardship of adventure. Walchuk’s vivid story telling voice varies from strong to sensitive but it’s always distinct.

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The life and work of an Abenaki man illuminate the troubled history of Indigenous peoples.
Madeleine Thien never showed her writing to anyone before she entered the MFA writing program at UBC.

Now she’s the only B.C.-born author ever shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. Madeleine Thien’s third novel, Do Not Say We Have Nothing (Knopf) has also won the Governor General’s Award for Fiction and the $100,000 Scotiabank Giller Prize—an unprecedented feat for a B.C.-born author.

By Allan Cho

Madeleine Thien’s third novel, Do Not Say We Have Nothing, won the Governor General’s Award for Fiction and the $100,000 Scotiabank Giller Prize—an unprecedented feat for a B.C.-born author. By Allan Cho

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Land Rover heroine

AS HIS TRIBUTE TO A MODEL OF LAND ROVER known as the Defender—the production of which was discontinued in 2016—Land Rover mechanical whiz Ray Wood's first novel, Stalking Geraldine (MW Books $33.95) follows freelance journalist Giles Jackson on a plum assignment to Africa to track down a specific, vintage Land Rover nicknamed Geraldine.

While on the trail of its enigmatic owner, Sarah Oakes, Giles learns of Sarah's character from ex-lovers, friends, mechanics and even her cat, Horatio.

"If you've ever wondered how to fix your vehicle's water pump while in a war in Eritrea or pondered how to winch a van out of muddy water," writes Coast Reporter reviewer Jan DeGrass, "then this book is for you." Ray Wood is a Land Rover expert who once explored the spine of Africa on a Vespa Scooter. Now he lives in a heritage grocery store in West Vancouver when he is not sailing a 37-foot sloop or traveling the world in his elderly, Australian-built Land Rover.

WW I heroine

John Wilson revisits World War I for his 32nd book, A Dangerous Game (Doubleday $14.99), a novel for ages 8-12, which pays tribute to the resistance and spy network in Belgium called Le Dame Blanche (The White Lady) whose name was derived from a legend that predicted that the fall of the German monarchy would occur with the appearance of a woman dressed all in white.

By the end of World War I, there were an estimated 13,000 agents in this underground resistance network, including many girls and women.

Wilson's protagonist is a teenaged student nurse, Mansen, who enjoys cycling beautiful Bruges. After she becomes a conduit for information to the British, she uncovers crucial details about where deadly German weaponry is stored—only to discover that innocent people are being killed on both sides of the front.

WW II heroine

In Alisa Smith’s debut novel, Speak-easy (D&M $22.95), heroine Lena Stillman works as an elite code-breaker at the Esquimalt naval base outside Victoria during WW II—and nobody knows she was formerly a member of a bank robbing outfit. Her world turns topsy-turvy when her old underworld boss, Bill Bagley, is sentenced to hang. An infamous bank robber in the 1930s named Bill Bagley did have a female accomplice, never named, who assisted on some of his heists and Smith had a great aunt who worked as a code-breaker on the west coast during World War II.

Also published

• Eden Robinson, Son of a Trickster (Penguin Random House $32)
• Elan Mastal, All Our Wrong Todays (Dundurn $24.95)
• Zoey Leigh Peterson, Next Year for Sure (Doubleday $24.95)
• Mabel Hartley, A Sapphire Moon (Gentle Soul $8.99)
• Adam Pottle, The Bus (Quattro Fiction $18)
• Shannon Mayer, Venom & Vanilla; Mayer, Fangs & Fennel (47 North $21.95 each)
• Ahmad Danny Ramadan, The Clothesline Swing (Nightwood $19.95)
• Cary Fagan, Wolfe & Fly (Tundra $19.99) Illustrations by Zoe Si
• Deborah Willis, The Dark and Other Love Stories (Penguin Random House $29.95)
• Lori McNulty, Life on Mars (Goose Lane $19.95)
• Susin Nielsen, Optimists Die First (Penguin Random House $21.99)
• Janie Change, Dragon Springs Road (HarperAVenue $22.99)
• Elle Wild, Strange Things Done (Dundurn $18.99)
• Anna Ptoniak, The Futures (Lee Boudreaux Books $34)
• Iona Whishaw, A Killer in King’s Cove (Touchwood $16.95)
• Dan Donaway, Heart Like a Wing (Ronsdale $11.95)
• Susan J. Crockford, Eaten (CreateSpace $12.95)
• David Funk, The Last Train to Leningrad (CreateSpace $16.99)
• Rachel M. Greenaway, Cold Girl (Dundurn $17.99)
• Claire McCague, The Rosetta Man (Edge $19.95)
• Nathaniel G. Moore, Jettison, (Anvil $20)
• Martin West, Long Side Yellow (Anvil $20)
• Christopher Gudegon, The Encyclopedia of Lies (Anvil $20)
• Kat Rose, The Loss (CreateSpace $13.13)
• Robert Pepper-Smith, The Orchard Keepers (NeWest Press $22.95)
• Andrea Spalding, Finders Keepers (Dundurn $11.99)
• Robyn Harding, The Party (Scout Press $26)

Land Rover aficionado Ray Wood has made a Land Rover named Geraldine into a central character. Photo taken in Tanzania
**FORMALDEHYDE & BURLAP**

**Roy Innes’ The Extra Cadaver Murder**

By James Paley

**The Extra Cadaver Murder by Roy Innes (nWoW $15.95)**

Picture this. A first-year medical school class gathers in the old anatomy lab at the University of British Columbia. Many have never even seen a dead body before—let alone cut into one. Sealed in formaldehyde and wrapped in burlap, these cadavers are real. But wait a second. The med students literally uncover a problem: Why is there an extra corpse?

At the outset of Roy Innes’ fourth Inspector Coswell novel, _The Extra Cadaver Murder_, we learn the uninvited, very dead, very naked, extra guest is Dr. Patrick Kelly, head of UBC’s department of surgery. Given that he’s both a cruel perfectionist and a drunken, gambling troublemaker, his murder is not as surprising as it should be.

Six suspects ultimately emerge, each investigated with Coswell’s characteristic intensity. Kelly’s ex-wife could well have done him in for his philandering. Or maybe it was Dr. Conor Donohan, a gang member, whose boss, Corporal Bostock, a female detective, to help with the investigation, which enables Innes to explore sexual harassment within the RCMP.

Corporal James, who is gay, also serves as a confidante to Corporal Bostock. The duo empathize with one another over the prejudices faced in their professional lives.

Bostock proves to be an exemplary officer at every turn, performing above and beyond Coswell’s expectations of her. Gradually he is won over after his initial dismay when she was assigned to him.

The investigation veers off campus to locales around Vancouver. Eventually an undercover visit to an Irish pub leads the team to Larry, a gang member, who is gay, also named by a prostitute as Kelly’s gambling connection.

The three detectives also explore Roy Innes’ old UBC stomping grounds such as the student residence, the Pit Pub and the Endowment Lands, as well as Vancouver General Hospital where Innes did residencies in internal medicine and then eye surgery.

*The Extra Cadaver Murder* is a multi-faceted novel, with complex characters and realistic details, doubling as a sympathetic portrayal of the difficulties faced by women and gay officers in the RCMP.

James Paley is a Vancouver freelance writer.

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**Meet Lori McNulty at the following Vancouver events:**

**Launch Party**
6:30 pm
Wednesday 15 March
Book Warehouse
4118 Main Street

**Incite**
7:30 pm
Wednesday 29 March
Alice MacKay Room
VPL Central Branch
350 West Georgia Street
Hana’s mother is in the grips of dementia when the story begins. Clare, Hana’s sister, takes care of her mother back in Vancouver. Hana tells everyone her father is dead.

As Hana ascends towards stardom as a classical pianist, she feels some guilt about her aloof position in her family as a pampered musician with a rare level of talent and a passion for Chopin, but she tempers such feelings with thoughts of her struggles during her career’s outset. Without any money of her own, Hana’s music career is being supported by her patron, Mrs. Flynn, whose billions come from mining. As one of New York’s most prominent elite, Mrs. F.—as she is sometimes called—provides Hana with everything from her apartment to her wages and donations in exchange for her hand-knitted clothing. A wise and deeply rendered novel, The Performance by Ann Eriksson

Ann Eriksson lives on Thetis Island.

James Paley is a Vancouver freelance writer.

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The contrast between Hana’s inability to take care of her mother and her increasing concern for the vagrant Jacqueline comes to the fore when Jacqueline is badly injured in a mugging. Hana tracks her down in the hospital as the staff is about to release her, regardless of her poor condition, during a harsh New York winter. Hana puts her up at her stately Manhattan apartment. By this point, it would be giving away too much to say what happens next—so let’s just say it’s an astonishing and disturbing twist in the power dynamic between the two women.

Just as her mother remains on the periphery of Hana’s life with her illness, her father will remain afar for reasons that should not be revealed here. Will Jacqueline prefer the streets? Will Hana reconcile with her sister? The Performance is a wise and deeply rendered novel about Hana’s evolution beyond the ambitions of a self-centred artist. Chopin can be perfected; charity cannot. Ultimately she gains an understanding that empathy is the soul-food for decency.
Louis Riel: Let Justice Be Done

David Doyle

In this re-enactment of his trial, Riel is finally given the opportunity to respond to his conviction for treason. Using new historical research, Doyle shows how John A. Macdonald created a show trial, and we see for the first time Riel’s inside political manoeuvring at Batoche and Red River—showing why he is now a Father of Manitoba and deserving of exoneration in 2017. With 15 b&w photos & maps.

978-1-55380-496-3 (PRINT) 978-1-55380-497-0 (EBOOK) 6 x 9 • 240 pp • $24.95

Finding John Rae

Alice Jane Hamilton

Hamilton follows Rae as he discovers not only the missing link to the Northwest Passage but evidence of cannibalism within the Franklin Expedition—his report to the Admiralty sending shockwaves throughout Victorian England—and into his later life as he fights to restore his reputation.

978-1-55380-481-9 (PRINT) ● 978-1-55380-482-6 (EBOOK) 6 x 9 • 230 pp • $21.95

Collecting Silence

Ulrike Narwani

In this moving debut volume of poetry, Narwani travels paths of disconnect and connect, loss and renewal, from North America to Asia, with a stop at the Berlin Wall—listening to the silence in which our deepest experiences talk to us in a “language we all know without speaking.”

978-1-55380-487-1 (PRINT) ● 978-1-55380-488-8 (EBOOK) 6 x 9 • 94 pp • $15.95

The Nor’Wester

David Starr

A Scottish boy has to flee to Canada, where he is taken on by the North West Company and is sent by brigade canoe across the country. Here he joins Simon Fraser on his epic 1808 journey to the Pacific down what Fraser mistakes for the Columbia, encountering death, danger and treason along the way.

978-1-55380-493-2 (PRINT) ● 978-1-55380-494-9 (EBOOK) 5-1/4 x 7-1/4 • 214 pp • $11.95

The Griffin in the Griffin’s Wood

Stephen Scobie

Scobie is not known primarily as a novelist. Tense and wisely drawn, The Griffin in the Griffin’s Wood is his first and probably only novel, he says. That would be a shame.

978-1-77271-105-0

“Wikipedia will tell you, a griffin is a mythical creature with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion. It is typically depicted with pointed ears and with the eagle’s legs taking the place of the forelegs.

In northern Germany, on the shores of the Baltic, Greifswald is a university town named after a legendary Griffin who lived in a tree in the town, seizing and devouring children who lived in that town lives Helga Brandt, a university employee and informer for the Ministry of Intelligence officer based in West Germany who has recently received him. Shots ring out. Group 7 has gathered to receive him. He is Peter Felsen, a relatively new Canadian intelligence officer based in West Germany who has recently been assigned to Group 7, a hazardous attempt to coordinate intelligence operations among the Baltic Coast for France, the USA, Western Germany, Britain and Canada. One takes Canada’s role seriously, including its young agent. Frank Carpenter, spy, is about to fall in 1989.

The Berlin Wall is coming down. There is confusion and intrigue in the two Germany. The Berlin Wall is coming down. There is confusion and intrigue in the two Germanys. It appears Peter Felsen has been killed. But who fired the shots and why? It becomes the inexperienced Carpenter’s job to go under cover into East Germany to find the answers. But before he gets there, he fails in love, survives an attempt on his life, is betrayed and disregards orders. Ultimately Carpenter will meet up with a family member whose shadow has always loomed large in his life. This novel is dark, funny, and—at times—intentionally predictable. Scobie skilfully empowers the reader with information the characters don’t have. (We know the history of the Berlin Wall; they don’t.)

Mostly I enjoyed being immersed in a realistic sense of place. Greifswald, where Carpenter spends much of his mission, is portrayed with precision and empathy. That’s partly because Scobie visited Germany several times in the 1980s and ‘90s as a poet/lector and guest professor of Canadian literature.

“At first, these visits were mostly to Kiel,” he says, “but later concentrated on Greifswald. And I have been to Lübeck, and to the border site, which is setting for the first and last chapters of the book. It was also in Lübeck for a weekend just two weeks after the Wall came down.”

Scobie has returned several times since. “Both Kiel and Greifswald are cities very dear to my heart—due perhaps to their proximity to the sea, and the cleansing effect of the Baltic winds.”

Stephen Scobie has been invited to speak abroad because he is diversely talented as a critic, scholar and poet who won the Governor General’s Award for Poetry in 1980. He has also written critical studies on Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen.

Scobie is not known primarily as a novelist. Tense and wisely drawn, The Griffin in the Griffin’s Wood is his first and probably only novel, he says. That would be a shame.

978-1-77271-105-0

Cherie Thiessen reviews fiction from Pender Island.
International death
In Not a Clue (Touchwood $14.95), the second installment in Janet Brons’ Forsyth & Hay mystery series, the head of the Canadian High Commission’s trade section has been found brutally murdered in London. Detective Stephen Hay of Scotland Yard teams up with RCMP Inspector Lia Forsyth to investigate an international conspiracy and militant nationalism. A second death raises the stakes. From Ottawa and London, the duo investigate the puzzling murders of two women—a Canadian backpacker in London and a Chechen woman shot by a hidden assassin during a protest outside the Russian embassy in Ottawa. Brons had a seventeen-year career in the Canadian Foreign Service with postings in Kuala Lumpur, Warsaw, and Moscow.
9781771511476

Sleeping murder
According to Publishers Weekly, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt signed a six-figure deal to acquire Eileen Cook’s twelfth book, With Malice ($17.99 US) a YA, psychological suspense novel about a boy who survives a terrible mishap while his embittered son of a famous artefact collector, and an affair with a local potter. A friendship with the dying, Grace Oakden comes home to Canada amidst of her life as a painter in France, and buys a cabin on a west coast beach. A friendship with the dying, and in her latest novel, The Cure for Death by Lightning, a female character is chased by a transforming spirit. In A Recipe for Bees, a female protagonist travels through time. In her Turtle Valley, a woman and her family are haunted by ghosts.
9781771511483

Painting dusk
Winter Wren ($18) by Theresa Kishkan, a novella set on Vancouver Island, has been released via her new imprint for novellas called Fish Gotta Swim Editions. In 1974, in the disrupted midst of her life as a painter in France, Grace Oakden comes home to Canada and buys a cabin on a west coast beach. A friendship with the dying, embittered son of a famous artefact collector, and an affair with a local potter working in the Bernard Leach tradition, buttress her awakening engagement with a chosen place and a discovered purpose: to paint the view at dusk.
978-0-9780054-5-0

More to Life than Meets the Eye
Gail Anderson-Dargatz’s affinity for the inexplicable results in ghosts and spirits in her stories.

In Gail Anderson-Dargatz’s breakthrough novel, The Cure for Death by Lightning, a female character is chased by a transforming spirit. In A Recipe for Bees, a female protagonist travels through time. In her Turtle Valley, a woman and her family are haunted by ghosts.

So fans of her fiction shouldn’t be too surprised to learn that in her latest novel, The Spawning Grounds (Knopf Canada $32)—very significantly set in the Adams River area of the B.C. interior—there’s a wandering soul who slips back and forth from “watery boundaries” in the river to inhabit the bodies of people.

Fiction and dreams are close cousins. And so, as the late writer Margaret Thompson pointed out, ‘magic realism’—premonition, dreams, synchronicity, second-sight—is an integral part of her novels, as much as her rural B.C. landscapes.

“In the years immediately after my mother died,” Anderson-Dargatz recalls, “I dreamed of her. In these dreams, we often walked a familiar street and talked about writing, about my kids. My mother offered advice as she always had. Then we embraced and she left me, again. Once, my father was with her. In one of those lucid dreaming moments that are so rare, I asked, ‘How can you be here? You’re both dead.’ And my mother said, ‘We’re not real.’ But they both felt so real, so very real. I hugged them and said, ‘I miss you both so much.’”

Gail Anderson-Dargatz woke, heart-wrenched, convinced she had spent a few precious minutes with her parents.

“These are the moments in which we say our good-byes,” she says.

“So it’s an obvious question to ask: Do you believe in ghosts?

“No,” she says. “I don’t believe our souls survive death. But, yes. We see the ghosts of those we love in our dreams, and in our grief, and we see them walking on the street. They appear at the foot of our bed in the wee hours hovering in that space between sleep and wakefulness.

“Sometimes these encounters frighten us. But for the most part I believe that within these final visits with our beloved dead we find solace and closure. I know for a fact my mother’s spirit lives on, in the stories I tell, in the bits of wisdom I pass on to my children.

“I see my mother in my own lovely daughter, in her haunting grey-blue eyes, in her grace, her humour, her will, and her ability to read the emotion of a room. I know when my life ends, my daughter will carry my stories and sensibilities forward. She will see me in her own children. And just as I carried on my conversation with my own mother long after she was gone, my daughter will visit me within her dreams.”

978-0-345-81081-6

Theresa Kishkan will be in Salmon Arm at the Word On The Lake Writers Festival, May 19-21.

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30 BC BOOKWORLD SPRING 2017
Renovation or teardown: He loves me, he loves me not.

Teardown by Clea Young

By Sharon Kurtz

The twelve stories in Clea Young’s debut collection Teardown are largely concerned with friendship and betrayal. Best friends can become strangers, or worse, sworn enemies.

There are childhood friends, jealous friends, friends who sleep with husbands, friends who were never really friends at all.

Some stories centre on love: love lost, love discovered, the love of siblings, the love of children and babies, and love betrayed.

Babies, thinking about having babies, and other people’s babies are a central theme to a number of the stories. In the title story “Teardown” Marni is stressed during her last days of pregnancy. As she and her partner visit IKEA, they find themselves quarrelling over a light fixture. Sometimes this sort of domestic meltdown in a public place can be forgotten; but other times it can be a game-changer.

With Young’s deft handling, we proceed at a quick pace; rich in complexity, description and dialogue. They can be depressing or uplifting, and often surprising. The surprising possibility of romance infuses the final story, “What are You Good at, What Do You Like to Do?” when the main character, who is looking for work and love in all the wrong places, finds herself being pursued by a loveable character as a result of her job search.

The main characters are usually in a new and unfamiliar territory. How they react to the desires of others, as they are thrust into old and unfamiliar territory. How they deal, or don’t deal, with these new situations provides the storyline.

These stories in Teardown proceed at a quick pace; rich in complexity, description and dialogue. They can be depressing or uplifting, and often conclude with a surprise ending. The complexity of relationships is at the core of all of them—at times raw, and other times romantic and hopeful. Some stories readers may hate, some they will love, but none of these stories can be dismissed as boring. Teardown succeeds by revealing how scary and resilient love can be.

Clea Young’s work has been included three times in The Journey Prize Stories, as well as the publications Event, Grain, The Fiddlehead, The Malahat Review, and Room. 978-198298-01-6

Sharon Kurtz is a Vancouver writer.
Yoka, the beekeeper, is engrossed in Mark Winston’s Bee Time: Lessons From the Hive (Harvard U Press).

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Light within the Shadows
A visual artist’s memoir

PNINA GRANIRER

25 years ago, Pnina Granirer co-founded Artists in our Midst, the first Vancouver Open Studios walk. During her 52 years in Vancouver, she has exhibited widely, both nationally and internationally.

978-1-926991-84-9 / $24.95
308 + 16 col pgs / May 2017

This lively and moving memoir of an artist, a wife and a mother unfolds from Romania, Israel, Paris, the US, Montreal and Vancouver. It describes her experiences with wars and upheavals, huge life changes and challenging political, social and cultural situations. Told with wry optimism, humour and appreciation for life, this memoir gives an inside view of how art is forged and released into the world. Granirer’s works are found in museum collections in Canada, Spain, Chile and Israel.

Two other books published on Granirer: The Trials of Eve by Pnina Granirer (Gaia Press) and Portrait of An Artist by Ted Lindberg (Ronsdale Press)

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Syria to Canada

FORMER SYRIAN REFUGEE AHMAD DANNY RAMADAN OF VANCOUVER is a journalist with bylines in the Washington Post, The Guardian and Foreign Policy. He has also been Grand Marshal for Vancouver’s Gay Pride Parade. Prior to his first novel in English, The Clothesline Swing (Nightwood $19.95), he published two collections of short stories in Arabic.

The Clothesline Swing draws inspiration from Arabic tales in One Thousand and One Nights, as two lovers lament their separation from Syria. From the mountains of Syria, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the characters describe journeys through the valleys of Lebanon, the seas of Turkey and the heat of Egypt before reaching Canada. Hakawati, a storyteller, tells fables to his dying male partner. Meanwhile Death, a looming character in a dark cloak, shares a house with the two men, eavesdropping on their secrets.

978-0-88971-312-1

continued from page 30

Being gay in Iraq

God in Pink, the debut novel by Hasan Namir, won the Lambda Literary Award in the category of best gay novel at an awards ceremony in New York in 2016. Previously it was named to the “Globe 100” list of the best books of 2015 by The Globe and Mail. God in Pink (Arsenal $17.95) is about Ramy, a young Iraqi boy who is gay. Ramy struggles to find a balance between his sexual yearnings and his culture. Having lost his parents, he lives with his strict twin brothers in an Iraqi town. He longs to return to a culture that accepts him, and when an opportunity presents itself to escape to Canada, he is forced to make a difficult choice.

978-0-9949377-5-4

Slocan lockdown

Katherine Prairie is the first author to be published by a new imprint for 19th century noir: Double Dutch (House of Anansi $19.95). Laura Trunkey, who grew up in the Fairfield neighborhood of Victoria, was shortlisted for the $5,000 City of Victoria Butler Book Prize. Appropriately dubbed as weird and wonderful, Trunkey’s stories can delve into bizarre storyline: An elephant named Topsy is killed on Coney Island by Ronald Reagan’s body double falls in love with the first lady. A man grieves for his wife after a bear takes over her body. Other stories are touching and realistic: A young deaf girl visits Niagara Falls before she goes blind.

978-1-77068-776-6

continued from page 35

Open relationship

Zoey Leigh Peterson has published her first novel, Next Year, For Sure (Penguin Random House $22) about longtime romantic partners Kathryn and Chris who experiment with an open relationship, which leads them to reconsider everything they thought they knew about love. The story takes place over a year, and is at times tumultuous, revelatory and also funny.

Zoey Leigh Peterson

978-0-385-48477-8

Weird & wonderful

With her first short fiction collection, Double Dutch (House of Anansi $19.95), Laura Trunkey, who grew up in the Fairfield neighborhood of Victoria, was shortlisted for the $5,000 City of Victoria Butler Book Prize. Appropriately dubbed as weird and wonderful, Trunkey’s stories can delve into bizarre storylines: An elephant named Topsy is killed on Coney Island by Ronald Reagan’s body double falls in love with the first lady. A man grieves for his wife after a bear takes over her body. Other stories are touching and realistic: A young deaf girl visits Niagara Falls before she goes blind.

978-0-385-48477-8

continued on page 35
The refrain from his lyric for a song of that same name is an invitation from a woman to a broken man, “Come in... I’ll give ya shelter from the storm.”

We meet Chelsea who is sitting out a hurricane in Halifax, anxiously awaiting the return of her lover. They had a brief, intense love affair in Mexico, and she fondly remembers the night they took shelter from the storm.

Flight from impossible circumstances is a recurrent motif. Some characters cross Canada for good in order to escape the stifling love of his mother. Shocked by his ruthless treatment of his mother, Chelsea tells him, “I hope I never have a kid like you.”

Marco has returned to port and is headed to the airport to fly to Halifax. He is carrying a ring, engraved with part of a Spanish phrase, en mi media naranja, meaning “you are the other half of my orange.”

As in the first story, there are ominous signs. Marco might well be shocked to discover that the symmetry of their relationship will be changed by the birth of a child. Meanwhile, Chelsea’s words “I hope I never have a kid like you,” hover in her mind.

Between these two stories, elev- en others ring the torments of love.

In general, friendships seem to fare better than love affairs. A teenage girl, who leaves her group home to cross the country in search of the mother who abandoned her, finds a supportive friend in a homeless street performer, temporarily living in a bus.

Millennials these days, it would appear, year for love only to discover that it offers no safe haven from the coming global environmental catas- trophe.

Joan Givner reviews from Victoria.
continued from page 33

Happy endings
Shereen Vedam is possibly the only B.C. author who was born in Ceylon, later renamed Sri Lanka. She came to Canada in the early 1970s, eventually relocating to Vancouver Island. As an avid reader of fantasy and romance novels, she is self-described as "a fan of resourceful women, intriguing men, and happily ever after endings." A Dev- ilish Slumber (Imajinn $14.80) is her first novel in a fairytale-inspired trilogy or "historical paranormal romance series" set in London, England, in the year 1813. A troubled heroine must undertake an extraordinary journey to clear her name and protect those she cares for. It mixes humour, fantasy, romance and history.

978-1-61194-592-8

Tenderness in Bombay
BORN A BOY, BUT A EUNUCH BY CHOICE, BOMBAY SEX worker Madhu, at 40, can no longer support herself as a transgender prostitute in the red-light district of Kamathipura. Since her teens she has managed to survive as a hija-ra—a person belonging to the third, middle sex—and now she must adapt to life as a beggar in Anosh Irani's fourth novel, The Parcel (Knopf $32). Her past comes back to haunt her when the most-feared brothel owner, Padam Madam, wants Madhu to take charge of a new arrival from the provinces, a 'girl' who has been betrayed and trafficked by her aunt. This 'parcel' to be trained by Madhu evokes feelings of tenderness in her that have been long suppressed.

9780345816740

Bodyguard in Paris
James L. (Jim) McWilliams created a series of historical novels known as The MacHugh Memoirs, about Rory MacHugh, a young Canadian of Scottish/French/Blackfoot background. The series begins in 1792 on the Canadian prairies then continues with Rory MacHugh's adventures involving the Sphinx and Napoleon in Egypt, the 79th Cameron Highlanders in Spain, and at Waterloo, eventually to end in 1836 at the Alamo.

McWilliams' new novel, The Mac-Hugh Memoirs: The Assassins (Birch & Norgate $19.95), is set in 1803. Rory MacHugh returns to Paris as the bodyguard for the mysterious Count Mehée de la Touche. There his affair with the glamorous Duchess of Abrantes lands him in the mountaintop prison, the Fortress of Bitche. After he escapes, he becomes embroiled in several assassination attempts aimed at his very personal enemy, the Emperor Napoleon. McWilliams has also written (with R. James Steel) three First World War histories: The Suicide Battalion, Gas! The Battle For Ypres 1915, and Amiens: Dawn of Victory.

978-0-9617949-3-5

Double trouble
Kathy Page's fiction has often been about Hanne Lemmon who, at age sixteen, moves beyond her isolated, home-schooled life in the Cowichan Valley with a protective father to seek independence and love within the very different landscape of Eastend, Saskatchewan. Nelson-born Bill Stenson of Victoria was the driving force behind The Claremont Review, a magazine focused on publishing literary works by teens.

978-1-77187-114-3

Mineral exploration
Robert Longe worked in mineral exploration for many years as a geologist, consultant, and chief executive of a junior public company. His own experiences searching for mineral deposits in many parts of the world convinced him that the industry, much of it based in Vancouver, provides enough excitement, unique characters and engrossing situations for an entire genre of novels. His first novel, The Nisselinka Claims (Self-published $27.49), is a 456-page, family saga that spans three generations. In the early years of the 20th century Edward Wickford, a settler in the Bulkley Valley, lays claim to a rich vein of copper and gold in the Nisselinka Mountains of central B.C.

978-1-4602-5294-9

Seeking love
Never mind Hannah and Her Sisters. Hanne and Her Brother (Thistledown $19.95) is Bill Stenson's novel about Hanne Lemmon who, at age sixteen, moves beyond her isolated, home-schooled life in the Cowichan Valley with a protective father to seek independence and love within the very different landscape of Eastend, Saskatchewan.

978-1-77187-114-3

Anosh Irani's The Parcel was a finalist for both the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize and a Governor General's Literary Award. He lives in Vancouver.
Horses and healing are a good fit in Luanne Armstrong’s Sand, a YA novel about a therapeutic riding centre.

Sand by Luanne Armstrong
(Ron Dale $11.95)

BY CHRIS BRAUER

Sitting at the formal table, Luanne Armstrong is buzzing with excitement. She has recently read and re-read Seamus Heaney’s poem ‘North’ that reflects the ancient and modern faces of Ireland.

Armstrong eagerly discusses the mechanics of poetry, her involvements with the UBC Creative Writing Program and a book she has just brought about sailing—even though she doesn’t sail before she gets around to her own new book, a teen novel.

“It’s a story about Willy,” she says, “a teenager reacting to trauma and physically finding a place in the world where she feels she belongs.”

In Sand we are introduced to fifteen-year-old Willy Cameron who is paralyzed from the waist down after a car accident. Demoralized, she needs to take up therapeutic riding and regains the use of her legs, developing a bond with a spirited rescue horse named Sand. Trouble arises when she takes Sand from the stable, against the order of the stable owner, to search for a missing friend.

Named after the horse that helps Willy, Sand is dedicated to the Creston and District Therapeutic Riding Centre. All horses in the book are based on real horses at the Centre. Therapeutic riding is something close to Armstrong’s heart.

“I remember when Karen Brain came to Creston,” she says. “She was a member of the Canadian Equestrian Team, but she had a severe accident and her spine was crushed. She was told she would never walk again—and certainly not ride—but she demanded to be put on a horse two months after her accident.”

“Three years later, she represented Canada in the 2004 Paralympics in Athens, winning Individual and Team Bronze medals.”

Karen Brain came to Creston to teach riding workshops. She is one of numerous examples of individuals who have regained the ability to walk while using horses as therapy. Armstrong herself also has an understanding of trauma and the recovery process, having herself overcome brain surgery.

Writing about teenagers for teenagers, says Armstrong, has allowed her to get back to the habit of writing: “Writing Young Adult books is not difficult for me. In a way, it’s a form of entertainment. I sit down to write in the afternoon and it carries me away for the rest of the day. I wonder, what will happen today? Where will the story go? I try to write a great story with action and interesting characters. My brain gets to run wild. I didn’t know the ending of the book while I was writing it. Sometimes the characters lie to me and then the truth comes out later. I allowed the characters to unravel the story for me.”

Armstrong was interested in exploring how teenagers react to dealing with various trauma. Specifically three teenagers in the book—Willy and her two friends—are all dealing with hard emotional truths: paralysis, psychosis and bullying. “It’s a sweet, positive book,” she says, “but it’s also about ferocious anger and the emotions of teenagers,” says Armstrong.

“Willy has to deal with paralysis; Ben has a psychotic break from taking drugs; and Lailla is bullied. But they recognize each other for who they are, and help define each other.”

Sand is part of Armstrong’s ongoing recovery from a brain injury. Now she has finished the book, she regained the rhythm of constantly writing. “I used to write everyday,” she says, “I’d get dressed as if I was working a regular job and cross my living room and write at 9 a.m. But my brain injury forced me out of the habit. It’s harder during the summer with so many visitors at the farm. I’m harvesting fruit and chasing away bears. But now I’m working on four different projects. Still the process of writing is no picnic. ‘Every book is a book I haven’t written yet,’ she says, ‘so it takes a lot of thinking and walking around before I figure things out.’

Chris Brauer’s article is adapted from the Creston Valley Advance, reprinted by permission.
“When lying in a puddle outside a bar after being mauled by three rednecks who saw feathers coming out of his underweare in the urinal, Henry sees a blueprint in the sky for a massive, knitted chicken, one that will totally cover his mother’s house.

Places where there has been pain or evil need to be covered up, or need attention brought to them in an act of honouring and remembering. So when he is lying there, fighting back pain and tears, Henry connects that concept with his childhood and decides he will cover his mother’s house with a gigantic cozy. It’s a broken place in need of healing.

Welcome to Cluck by Lenore Rowntree, an entertaining, sad, tragic and funny story about a man whose bi-polar disorder has brought to them in an act of love. His family is stricken and friendless, joyless and a bit embarrassed them as a young child.

“ Without consciously thinking about it, I took my experience of growing up close to mental illness and exaggerated it for Henry by making him an only child living with a single parent with bipolar disorder. Because my sister was ostracized and I was associated with her, so was I at times. Even when I wasn’t the direct target it impacted me because I saw up close how it hurt her.”

Henry cannot bring himself to leave his mother on her own even though she is often out of control and she’s always embarrassing him, thwarting any of his attempts to have a social life. Although Henry is friendless, joyless and a bit weird, he has not allowed his pain to corrupt his basically caring nature or distort his gentle sense of humour. Henry could have opted out of looking after his mother after quitting Dovetail Joint, his dream job. Except he really wanted, studying hard and slogging for three years as an apprentice before finally becoming an accredited poultry technician with Agri-culture Canada.

Henry is still lying in that same puddle. That radio station in Cluck is loosely modeled on Cortes Island’s community radio station, CKTZ, 89.5 FM, started in 2004, which the author dedicates her book.

“I first heard it when I was driving a truck on Savary Island,” says Rowntree, who was a radio junkie as a kid. “I have a cabin there, which is about 20 kilometres south of Cortes Island. I listened to the station a lot when I went to Savary to do a couple of major edits and rewrites of Cluck, and some of the quirksiness of the station convinced me as I rewrote the novel.”

The novel is an extension of a short story Rowntree wrote in the 1980s. “Because of the evolution of this novel from a short story into a longer piece, the rest of the process was a spinning backwards and forwards from the short story. So over the years I thought about Henry from time to time. I took about three years to write it as a focused effort, beginning in 2010. I’m one of those writers who writes to find out what the story is.”

A graduate of UBC’s Creative Writing Program, Rowntree also has a collection of short stories, Dovetail Joint (Quadra Books, 2015) and she co-edited and contributed to the anthology Hidden Lives: Coming Out on Mental Illness (Brindle & Glass, 2012), a publication to which her sister also contributed.

Cherie Thiessen listens to radio on Pender Island.
Hamlet re-imagined

After thirty-one years as an English teacher, primarily in Terrace, Alan W. Lehmann has combined his admiration for Shakespeare with his desire as a teacher to make Hamlet more accessible. In Hamlet, The Novel (Lulu $24), a self-published tale largely told from the perspective of Horatio at Hamlet’s castle Elsinore, the novel opens with the Norwegian Prince Fortinbras arriving at Elsinore claiming Denmark should cede the castle to Norway.

Lehmann imagines contemporary dialogue for all the characters as Horatio ostensibly creates a journal that provides insights into Hamlet’s character from an admiring friend. 978-1-4534-2067-3

And in the end...

As a Metis/Icelandic writer in Vancouver, Carleigh Baker has produced stories with unexpected and strange endings for Bad Endings (Anvil $18), a collection rife with bad decisions and misconceptions. Salmon, bees and rivers play reoccurring roles. Animals and humans can merge, adding a touch of magic realism. Baker won the Lush Triumphant award for short fiction in 2012 and her short story “Chins and Elbows” was published in the Journey Prize Anthology in 2015.

978-1-77214-076-7

Dark secrets

Former Monday magazine editor Grant McKenzie now works as the communications director for a street community centre in Victoria on Pandora Avenue that provides 1,500 meals per day as well as transitional housing for the homeless. On the weekends he writes like a demon.

McKenzie’s novel, The Fear In Her Eyes, introduced a new protagonist, Ian Quinn, a child protection officer with Children First in Portland, Oregon. Ian Quinn returns in a stand-alone sequel and McKenzie’s tenth thriller, The Butcher’s Son (Polis $37.50), in which Quinn discovers a dark secret about his family’s past concerning the disappearances of both his sister and his father. Quinn has a tough exterior but he’s something of a broken man within.

McKenzie signed a five-book deal with Polis Books of New York last year that brought three of his previously published novels to the U.S. for the first time, plus two new ones.

978-1-943818020

Mexican noir

Chelsea Bolan’s debut novel, The Good Sister (HarperAvenue $22.99) was the second winner of the Harper-Collins/UBC Prize for Best New Fiction. It focuses on contemporary Mexican culture in a tourist town in the Baja, particularly a family whose daughter Gabriela Amador Prieto has been banned after a sexual assault, just prior to her fifteenth birthday.

Bolan was born in Spokane, WA and received her MFA from UBC.

978-1-44344-241-1

Grant McKenzie: 5 book deal

Carleigh Baker will be part of The Growing Room Festival, a celebration of diverse Canadian writers and artists organized by Room magazine, March 11-12 in Vancouver.

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By Trevor Marc Hughes

THE CHILCOTIN ARK

Photographer Ian McAllister identified, named and then successfully lobbied to preserve The Great Bear Rainforest. Now photographer Chris Harris seeks to preserve the Chilcotin Ark, a 2.5 million hectare tract of B.C. wilderness that he has explored and named—from Tweedsmuir Park to the Fraser River.

Chris Harris

Provoked a reverential state in Harris, who decided that taking photos would be sacrilege. The glacier’s awesome presence and antiquity reminded him that he was following in the footsteps of the First Peoples, who since time immemorial have made such pilgrimages without need to capture images along the way.

The section of the book that describes a journey through the Anahim Volcano Belt is notable for its close dedication to natural history, making British Columbia’s Cariboo Chilcotin Coast more than just a photographic reconnaissance.

The shield volcanoes northwest of Anahim Lake defy age. Millions of years old, the Rainbow Volcano has withstood two ice ages. Here Harris points out the innate wisdom of these aspects of the natural world. For him, even jagged, eroding lava remnants have their own story, their own personalities.

On a canoe expedition across iceberg-laden Jacobson Lake, Harris describes the parental glacier as “a moving, breathing entity.” Capturing these environments is an exercise in finding light. The challenge to an author is describing that light.

When a shaft of light hits theussel of Pipe Organ Mountain it’s hard not to cheer Harris for this ideal opportunity to capture the image through his viewfinder. This is nature photography at its superlative best.

In The Fjordlands and the Coastal Rainforest section, the tone changes. Here Harris looks more on the human history of the area approaching the Bella Coola Valley. He investigates the ways of the Nuxalk (Nuxalk, previously Bella Coola) people, and learns the cultural uses of cedar trees for bark and planks.

He also travels The Precipice, a ten-thousand-year-old trail used by nomadic hunters in an ages-old valley of eroded basalt. Harris tells of a depository of obsidian, a volcanic glass traded extensively within Indigenous B.C.

What’s clear in Harris’s tale is that modern industry has been short-lived and fleeting in the Chilcotin Ark. He compares the ancient obsidian trade route with the short-lived pulp and paper mill of Ocean Falls and a derelict logging wharf in Kwatna Bay. It’s a germane and fitting comparison.

At times bordering on the poetic, this is not an ordinary collection of photographs from the natural world. It’s a love letter to a region the author admires and respects—and a letter that invites his readers to appreciate it as deeply as he has.

It’s often posited that mountains, glaciers, flora, and fauna make an overall map of the Earth’s history. This hits home when Harris tells of the Cariboo-Chilcotin depository, its endangered ecosystem, which he describes as “one of the ecological wonders of the world.”

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