TURNING OVER A NEW PAGE

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Downtown Eastside

Here in this Trumpish era of self-glorification, people measure their value by Facebook followers. Many persuade themselves they are progressive by advertising their moral superiority in tweets—as if that constitutes a social action.

Libby Davies is from a different era. Never mind that she can now be viewed as Canada’s first openly lesbian MP. From age nineteen onward, inspired by politicians Harry Rankin and Bruce Eriksen—with whom she later had a son—Davies worked tirelessly as a city councillor for Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, running for mayor in 1993.

In Outside In: A Political Memoir (Between the Lines $26.95), she says her biggest challenge as an MP, serving as Jack Layton’s House leader, was always maintaining her stalwart activism within her community, working with the likes of Downtown Eastside poet/activist Bud Osborn to help establish the Insite safe injection site way back in 2003.

As a city councillor from 1982 to 1993, and as an NDP MP for Vancouver East from 1997 to 2015, Davies rolled up her sleeves, talked to people face-to-face, and did stuff, with perseverance and integrity and no-bullshit idealism, non-stop.

Libby Davies never made herself into the story—not until she retired.

Squamish

The last major book on Salish weaving, by Paula Gustafson, was published in 1980. Since then, retired Canadian Museum curator Leslie H. Tepper and Janice George (Squamish hereditary chief, Chepximiya Siyam) have travelled to many countries to visit museums housing Salish blankets and together developed resources that have helped revive Salish weaving.

Willard (Buddy) Joseph (Skwetsimltexw), who is also Squamish, comes from a long line of Salish weavers, and he has worked for many years with Janice George to help revitalize the skills of weaving. They started in 2004, only one Squamish weaver remained in the community of Squamish. Since then, the pair has taught over 2,500 weavers.

Now Salish Blankets: Robes of Protection and Transformation, Symbols of Wealth by Leslie H. Tepper, Janice George, and Willard Joseph (University of Nebraska Press $40) has accompanied a UBC Museum of Anthropology exhibit featuring ten Salish blankets from the 1800s, loaned from museums around the world, with more than two dozen modern Salish weavings.

Port Alberni

During his fifteen years as a reporter for the Alberni Valley Times, Shayne Morrow was in Port Alberni in 1966 when the lifeless body of eleven-year-old Jessica States was found in the woods, beaten, after she had somehow disappeared while chasing foul balls at a local fast-pitch game.

Nineteen years earlier, twelve-year-old Carolyn Lee had been abducted and murdered in Port Alberni while walking home from her dance class. Lee’s murderer was not found.

While covering the States case, Morrow had close access to investigators and scientists who also took a renewed interest in the Lee case, partly due to emerging DNA technology. Were the two murders linked? As Morrow reveals in The Bulldog and the Helix: DNA and the Pursuit of Justice in a Frontier Town (Heritage $22.95), Gurmit Singh Dillon was convicted of the murder of Carolyn Lee in 1998; then Roderick Patten was arrested a year later for the murder of Jessica States.

Since 2011, Shayne Morrow has worked as a freelance writer for Ha-Shilth-Sa, the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council news service, and the publication Windspeaker. He has an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC.

Ray and Noelle Natraoro wrapped in Salish-weaved wedding blanket.

“At the end of the day, like many of you, love, work, and wanting a better world is what I strive for.”

Libby Davies
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From Mars to Marco

Kate Harris has won the $30,000 RBC Taylor Prize for Lands of Lost Borders: Out of Bounds on the Silk Road.

Kate Harris decided to trace Marco Polo’s Silk Road by bicycle in 2011, accompanied by her childhood friend Melissa Yule. A film called Cycling Silk documented their ten months of travel, pedalling ten thousand kilometres through ten countries, avoiding land mines, rock slides and prostrate pilgrims.

To enter Tibet, they disguised themselves as androgynous Chinese cyclists. Harris’ first book, Lands of Lost Borders: Out of Bounds on the Silk Road (Knopf $29.95), recalls her adventures in Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan (the poorest ‘stam’ of them all), Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Tibet and China—leading to her $30,000 2019 RBC Taylor Prize for literary non-fiction.

Not very many first-time authors get blurbage from the likes of Pico Iyer (“It’s a modern classic.”) and Barry Lopez, but then not very many can claim they live off the grid, outside of Atlin, on the Yukon border, next to a glacier. These days Kate Harris resides with her partner in a tiny cabin with solar panels—when she’s not prostrate pilgrims.

Kate Harris has a degree in science from MIT, and in the history of science from Oxford where she studied as a Rhodes scholar.

The other B.C. finalists for the 18th RBC Taylor Prize were, Just Let Me Look at You: On Fatherhood 35 Pieces: A Memoir in Music by Ian Hampf, Mamaskatch: A Cree Coming of Age by Darrel J. McLeod.

After 33 years, this publication has been working with Alan Twigg and designer David Lester since I was executive director of the BC Book Prizes in the late 1990s. Along the way, I’ve worked almost exclusively as a freelance arts journalist in Vancouver, written several books and edited a First Nations newspaper.

BC BookWorld is a well-loved, widely-read marvel. It’s lively and non-elitist—the envy of other provinces. It will remain that way, as the most important cog in the infrastructure that supports the B.C. book industry—according to the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing.

I was born and raised in the B.C. Interior, so I will make sure these pages are never Vancouver-centric or Victoria-centric. I will represent the breadth of literary activity in the province, as always, and I’ll continue to have some fun doing it.

It is a great privilege to take over as the main gatekeeper for the always enlightening deluge of new books for, by and about British Columbians and our province.

My loyalty will be, first and foremost, to you, the reader.

— Beverly Cramp

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Congratulations to Bob Joseph, winner of the Bill Duthie Booksellers’ Choice Award

• SUMMER 2019
by Choy afterwards and he graciously told her he was proud of her. “He never forgot me and read all my books,” says Lee. “Every day of my life I think about what kind of author I want to be. I’m inspired by Wayson and the kindness he represented.”

When presenting the Sheila A. Egoff Children’s Literature Prize to Susin Nielsen for No Fixed Address (Penguin Random House), UBC chair of the Master of Arts in Children’s Literature program Judith Saltman said, “The best teacher of children’s emotional literacy and educated imagination is not the screen but children’s literature.” Nielsen’s story is about a boy and his single mother who must live out of a camper van due to the high cost of housing in Vancouver. He keeps their place of residence a secret. “I wrote this partly out of the rage I felt about what was happening in Vancouver,” Nielsen said, adding, “I’m so delighted that BC Book Prizes exist.”

Winning the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize for Our Familiar Hunger (Nightwood Editions), LaishaRosnau said, “I didn’t prepare anything. I told everyone I wouldn’t win because I’m in such great company.” Rosnau singled out her publisher Silas White saying, “This is mine and Silas’ fourth time at the rodeo. Nightwood and [its affiliate] Harbour are such amazing safe harbours for Canadian writers.”

For contributing most to the enjoyment and understanding of the province, the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize went to the story of ordinary citizens standing up to B.C.’s most expensive megaproject, Breaching the Peace: The Site C Dam and a Valley’s Stand against Big Hyro (UBC Press / On Point Press). “I think the only other thing I’ve won [before this],” said author Sarah Cox, “was a box of peanut brittle in Grade Two.” The Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize for the best work of fiction went to Eden Robinson for Trickster Drift (Knopf Canada), the second book in her Trickster trilogy. She won the same award for Monkey Beach in 2000.

Ian Boothby and Nina Matsumoto won the Christie Harris Illustrated Children’s Literature Prize for Sparks (Scholastic), about a friendship between an inventor named August who is afraid of the outdoors and a pilot named Charlie who fears nothing.

Presented to both an author and a B.C. publishing house for exceptional initiative, the last prize of the evening, the Bill Duthie Booksellers’ Choice, was awarded to author BobJoseph and Page Two Books, a hybrid publisher, represented by both. Jesse Finkelestein and Trena White, for 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act, in concert with Indigenous Relations Press, [see review page 23]

Joseph did not attend but sent a message: “Who knew a book about the Indian Act could be a bestseller? … We hope that the Government of Canada will get the message to get rid of this archaic and colonial Act and put us on the righteous path to reconciliation. When we get there, you’ll be able to share in the knowledge that you made an important contribution to a greater Canada for our children and beyond.” The publishers quoted the late Richard Wagamese: “All that we are is story, from the moment we are born.”
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In 1969, Ellen Burt married and settled in the hamlet of Johnsons Landing at the head of Kootenay Lake, near Argenta. The community was mostly developed in the 1920s on land originally populated by the Ktunaxa First Nation. Until the late 1950s, when a road was built, weekly supplies were delivered by the paddle wheeler SS Moyie. The nearest towns were Kaslo, a half day’s drive, and Nelson, a day’s drive away.

More recently, the community was partially buried by a mudslide in 2012 that killed four people and destroyed five houses, a tragedy recalled by Amanda Bath’s Disaster in Paradise: The Landslides in Johnsons Landing (Harbour Publishing, 2015).

What Forever Feels Like: A Memoir of Johnsons Landing, Ellen Burt includes buried truths of our own life story, particularly within the historical and cultural context of the counter-culture of the West Kootenays in the 1960s and ’70s.

“During all those years in Johnsons Landing,” she writes, “I had no awareness that I was also a baby boomer, a hippie, a Back-to-the-Lander, part of a mass social movement. In that life, my awareness extended no further than the barn. Dan and I went to town twice a year. We didn’t have a radio. “Race riots in LA? I may have heard a bit of it on the country and western station, after we got our little transistor. A man on the moon? Sounds hypotheti- cal. The Vietnam War? Even though the draft dodgers kept coming, it was not in my consciousness.”

She now retroactively includes white colonial attempts to extinguish First Nations culture and their people; the destruction of old growth forests in the Purcell through unregulated clear-cut logging and dams; and the depression of the salmon runs and spawning channels along Kootenay Lake by the Duncan dam, or by the hydro-imposed Kootenay Diversion, which flooded agricultural lands and forested shorelines.

What Forever Feels Like offers many nuances for the reader. We experience the crystalline silence of nature; and we witness the silence of people shutting each other out (including in Burt’s own marriage). One of the dominant themes is the strength and stoical endurance of women entrapped in parenting and work.

The mudslide wiped out half the community, leaving a ghost-scape of homes and dreams. Underlying much communal generosity and genuity, Ellen Burt also describes a wordless world of anger and loneliness experienced by those who did not fit into the communal norms.

And, yes, there’s no apostrophe in Johnsons Landing.

Lee Reid is a clinical counsellor in Nelson. She facilitates groups of seniors on creative aging and now, at age 73, she is an activist for intergenerational education. Reid recently completed a project that brought teens and seniors from ages 15 to 95 together at L.V. Rogers Secondary School in Nelson. Her most recent book is Growing Together: Conversations with Seniors and Youth (Nelson CARES Society Press, 2018). Her previous books are From a Coastal Kitchen (Hancock House, 1980) and Growing Home: The Legacy of Kootenay Elders (Growing Home Elders, 2016).
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Grocery Story: The Promise of Food Co-ops in the Age of Grocery Giants by Jon Steinman (New Society $19.99)

BY GRAHAME WARE

It all began as a weekly radio show that Steinman wrote and hosted on Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY from 2006-2010. Later, in 2013, Steinman outlined social issues such as the abuse of the label “local” by Big Grocery. For example, he details alleged abuse by Save-On of their Western Family brand hamburger patties. Under a federal law, in 2013 OTA changed the definition of what could be considered local. Meat from Alberta was shipped west to Vancouver for processing and then sent back east to Nelson and called “local.”

This practice led to a protest by the Kootenay Co-op, the local Kootenay MP and the president of the National Farm Workers Union. They wanted a more meaningful definition and coined it “True Local.” The Kootenay Co-op regulated itself and in 2018, $2.6 million was paid to True Local suppliers.

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Joining the weekly show was Jon Steinman, the writer, host and producer of six episodes for his television and web series Deconstructing Dinner: rethinking the food system that few journalists would have had at this time.

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12 BC BOOKWORLD • SUMMER 2019
trying to convince your Mom to sample some “Grand-daddy Purple” bud for that infernal back pain might be easier when faced with The Little Book of Cannabis by Amanda Siebert.

Siebert has presented a vast amount of research material in an easy-to-read volume, with her chapter topics displaying a subtle sense of humour.

There’s many points made on the Cover Your THC (Cannabinoid vs Tetrahydrocannabinol) components of cannabis that would help Mom better understand why there is such a wide selection in the variety of strains available for purchase.

Typical is Chapter 7, “An Effective Source of Pain Management.” Like much of The Little Book of Cannabis, this chapter is divided up into interviews with people who’ve experienced the benefit of using cannabis (in this case, for relieving intense pain and discomfort). We also get a case study involving the treatment of Tourette’s, with references to chronic and short-term pain management, treatment of infections, and other prescribed uses that all end well.

To her credit, Siebert does state that “the compounds in cannabis affect everyone differently because our endocannabinoid systems are all different.” Dr. Mark Ware, professor and director of clinical research at Montreal’s McGill University Health Centre, speaks plainly on how it’s not the be-all and end-all of pain management.

His statements, and another alerting users to possible risk where there’s a history of psychosis or heart issues like arrhythmias, are two of the few negative associations to cannabis that I found in the whole book.

The entire book is pro-cannabis, without a doubt. I don’t dispute the research or the grand declarations made by Siebert, but some may find a counterbalance missing from the content.

The subtitle, How Marijuana Can Improve Your Life by Amanda Siebert (Greystone Books $14.95), is definitely the focus.

Siebert tends to give permission to indulging for just about every reason under the sun: relief from anxiety, depression, and insomnia; for levelling mood swings, socializing, sex, and easing creative blocks; for energy boosting, pain management, and easing effects of aging; for nutritional value, treating addiction, and extensive medicinal benefits … and much more.

The chapter “Using Cannabis as a Superfood” is especially enjoyable and informative. “[If] you thought bacon was already too good to be true, it can be made even more wonderful by simply sprinkling a little cannabis on top while it’s in the frying pan.”

This section is excellent at breaking down the nutritional value of various forms of cannabis (fresh, dried, bud, leaves, seeds, etc.) and methods of preparation. Or jump ahead to the last chapter, “How to Prepare and Use Cannabis,” for even more detailed information.

According to Siebert’s research, large doses can be problematic but low doses (the hip contemporary term “micro-dosing” may apply) seem to be a win-win scenario for just about everything one could do in their waking hours—and it seems to be as effective during the sleeping hours, too.

The Little Book of Cannabis weighs heavily on the medicinal and health advantages of cannabis consumption, a conclusion validated by a long list of professionals and the author. The research is presented well and in detail, though not in so much detail as to turn into doctor-speak.

Siebert lays out many situations where taking the high out of cannabis might benefit users. I admit to still having difficulty comprehending the uses of cannabis without the bonus of feeling high from it. Would a non-alcoholic bourbon be enjoyable or have any marketable success? But not everyone wants to get baked when they’re healing.

“The I don’t dispute the research or the grand declarations made by Amanda Siebert,” says reviewer Derek von Essen “but some may find a counter-balance missing from the content.”

Siebert’s pro-pot stance gets a little predictable and the overall “RAH! RAH! RAH!” gusto of it can tire one a bit. That was until I reached one of the last chapters, “Easing the Aging Process,” when I realized who the ideal target for this book should be.

There’s a bit of a generation gap noted with the elderly being tagged as skeptical of its benefits, but they’re also the largest group of new cannabis users.

Perhaps the benefits covered by Siebert would best serve the uninhibited and one’s parents and grandparents, who may have been most influenced by history’s “war on drugs” and “Reefer Madness.”

So next time your Mom complains about that back pain, and needs to go see her Budtender (a term I’ve only recently learned), you can send her along with the knowledge she’s gained from The Little Book of Cannabis.

It doesn’t compare with Jack Herer’s The Emperor Wears No Clothes (1985) or Andrew Brouthers The Devil’s Weed/The Sacred Herb (New Star 2017). But to each his or her own. I recall a time with friends when we were teenagers having mature conversation the likes of, “pot relieves my stress,” and “weed helps me focus,” and a multitude of other reasons justifying our favourite herb.

In the end, we’d be rolling on the floor in a fit of laughter as the statements became more and more absurd, degenerating as far as, “it makes it easier to have a crap!”

Well, as it turns out, that too is included in The Little Book of Cannabis as one of the many attributes of marijuana.

Derek von Essen is a graphic artist, painter, and photographer of No Flash, Please! Underground Music in Toronto 1987-92 (Anvil Press, 2016).
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Elaine Sedgman

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George Garrett and the Speedy Alka Seltzer News Cruiser, 1958

Of miscreants & media

George Garrett is one of 29 recipients of the lifetime-achievement award for B.C. journalists from the Jack Webster Foundation. “Over the years I built up a list of contacts that was the envy of many of my colleagues,” he confides.

Frequency of broadcast was another of his strengths. To please Speedy Alka Seltzer, the sponsor of CKNW’s first “news cruiser” in 1958, Garrett would file eight reports per shift in the Downtown Eastside. Many prominent newsmakers have arisen from the Downtown Eastside—such as Larry Campbell, Libby Davies, the late Bruce Eriksen, the late Jim Green, Jenny Kwan, and Jean Swanson.

Garrett’s memoir sheds light on a less progressive era when police and prosecutors daily criminalized the indigent. Vagrancy laws and liquor regulation made for easy arrests and prosecutions. His book alleges that drunks were often picked up and jailed, but never prosecuted, just so the constables operating the paddy wagons could report they had been earning their keep.

There is so much to learn from this autobiography.

Mike Sasges is the author of Once Well Beloved: Remembering a British Columbia Great War Sacrifice, to be published in the fall of 2019 by the Royal BC Museum.

It’s often said that journalism represents the first draft of history. As a reporter, editor, and columnist with the Victoria Times Colonist daily newspaper for the last thirty years, Jack Knox has written early drafts of a lot of the recent history of Vancouver Island and its satellite islands.

Best known as a humour columnist—his two previous books were long-listed for the Leacock Medal—Knox also has a knack for serious reportage. However, in the vein of Mark Twain and Matt Taibbi, Knox knows how to turn a phrase in On The Rocks, and will frequently colour even his most serious writing with bon mots:

“I will die contented if I never have to write another word about sewage treatment.”

More often, descriptions wax toward poetry. “You can actually sniff out a good beachcombing tide, one where the telltale odour of rotting seaweed and other flotsam is carried on the south winds hammering in from the open ocean.”

That’s Knox paraphrasing Barry Campbell about how he hunts down Japanese glass fishing floats that drift ashore on the west coast. “It smells like glass balls are coming,” Knox quotes the beachcomber, who once found 36 of the treasures on a single outing. “But the killer was not executed.”

On The Rocks consists of portraitst of memorable folks Knox has stumbled across during the last three decades. Many of them are people he bumped into while travelling to remote parts of the islands with Times Colonist photographer Debra Brash.

Keith Norbury has worked full-time as a journalist since 1986.

On The Rocks with Jack Knox: Islanders I Will Never Forget by Jack Knox (Heritage House $19.95)
Discover the thrilling, fascinating legend of the Sasquatch in BC’s Great Bear Rainforest.
Thirty years apart, Yasuko Thanh’s frank memoir resembles Evelyn Lau’s Runaway: Diary of a Street Kid. They share the same literary agency.

Lucky I’m sane

Mistakes To Run With, Yasuko Thanh’s aptly-titled third book, is a harrowing memoir of growing up in Victoria as the child of impoverished immigrants. Her Vietnamese father, who had studied in Paris, was a brilliant man, trained in business management and fluent in four languages. He found work as a shoe salesman and suffered from crippling depression. Her German mother was only seventeen when she married Thanh’s father who was 27 years old. She was profoundly unhappy and disillusioned with the new world but eventually found solace with evangelical Christians. She grew lavender wherever she lived, which was mostly in low rent apartments. Little “Suko” was five years old when her brother was born and found herself demoted as secondary to the all-important son. No matter that she was an honour roll student and a talented gymnast at school, she did not feel loved for who she was, or even for what she achieved. There were rigid rules at home, where perfection was expected. Her friends were few.

At the age of fifteen, Yasuko Thanh ran away from it all and, as the country songs lament, she went looking for love in all the wrong places. And that’s putting it mildly. A childhood habit which would stand her in good stead was reading, and staying warm and safe in libraries.

According to her publisher: “After a stint in jail at sixteen, feeling utterly abandoned by her family, school, and society, Thanh meets the man who would become her pimp and falls in love. The next chapter of her life takes Thanh to the streets of Vancouver, where she endures beatings, arrests, crack cocaine, and an unwanted pregnancy.”

To read about her love for her two children, and her compassion for her parents, is to join other readers who are cheering every victory, every hard-won chunk of wisdom, every luminous work of fiction, every prized piece of second-hand furniture, every deadbeat abuser shown the door, and every children’s birthday party celebrated with the neighbourhood.

In Mistakes To Run With we marvel at the resilience of the human mind and spirit—and that’s not entirely surprising. Although she is not yet a household name, Thanh’s Journey Prize-winning short story Floating Like the Dead led to her brilliant debut collection of short stories of the same name, Floating Like the Dead (Penguin, 2016). When the collection went on to be nominated for national and provincial literary prizes, winning an Arthur Ellis Award for Best Crime Short Story, CBC, Quill & Quire and other heavy hitters pronounced her a “writer to watch.” Everyone noticed her strikingly beautiful tattooed author photo. One of Canada’s top literary agents signed her up.

Along the way, Thanh has been guided by literary angels and by reading just the right stories at just the right time. One of Thanh’s favourite short story writers is Vancouver’s Caroline Addison, whose own debut collection, Bad Imaginings, was nominated for the Governor-General’s Award, among other accolades. Both books are on my top ten list of short story collections, with stories that haunt me still.

Caroline Woodward works as a lighthouse keeper and is the author of nine books in five genres for adults and children including, A West Coast Summer with Salt Spring Island artist Carol Evans and the 25th anniversary re-issue of the Arthur Ellis Best First Mystery-nominated novel, Alaska Highway Two-Step.
Sea Trial: Sailing After My Father
by Brian Harvey
(ECW Press $21.95)

BY THEO DOMBROWSKI

The outline is simple enough: the author records a two-month sailing circumnavigation of Vancouver Island, while, concurrently, going through a box of legal documents related to a malpractice lawsuit against his dead father, a neurosurgeon.

At the outset there is something almost “British” about the writing. Self-deprecating humour, lightness of touch, and an inclination to give a wry account of his own (substantial) fears and uncertainties make his a very easy voice to listen to, whether chatting about rocks and reefs, or lawyers and legalities.

Only towards the intense conclusion do the emotions become torrential.

✫

BRIAN HARVEY IS A SOCIAL ANIMAL. In anchorage after anchorage he sidles up to others for a chat. His capacity to describe, evoke, mimic, and mock (usually, but not always, affectionately) is one of this book’s most entertaining features.

The funniest and most endearing characters are the rest of the crew—Harvey’s wife Hatsumi, and Charley, a schnauzer. Charley cannot swim. Charley’s bladder, other dogs, squiring clams, rich sports fishermen and much else, are all drily recorded.

Spotting a Japanese flag on a nearby boat, Harvey, ever the extrovert, proposes a visit. “But we don’t know them!” Hatsumi avers. Not for the first—or last—time Harvey reminds us, carefully, “Sometimes, my wife could be quite Japanese.”

His accounts of learning to sail are hilarious: “One gloomy video was a re-enactment of the death of an entire family from CO2 inhalation: the actors rolled their eyes and went down like tenpins.”

The book is, however, arguably less about either a sailing trip or a legal case, than it is about Harvey himself. So infused is he in everything he observes, remembers, or discovers (in his father’s papers), that the overwhelming impression we are left with is of a man at sea.

✫

VERY, VERY FEW READERS ARE LIKELY TO PUT down Sea Trial and rush off to the nearest yacht broker to buy a sailboat. The postcardy bits are overshadowed by Harvey’s vivid evocations of icy temperatures, dripping, impenetrable fogs, savage winds, treacherous currents, malevolent rocks, and towering seas.

The trip is a greasy litany of mechanical crises—leaking oil, broken starters, failing batteries and more. Some writers would use these crises as an opportunity to suggest (or even underline) their prowess and fortitude. There is no swagger here. Dread, panic, nerves, anxieties—and self-criticism—inflect every gust and lurch.

Pointy mountains and emerald forests pop up on cue, as do guest appearances of puffins, wolves, dolphins, sea otters, and whales, as Harvey provides an elegiac history of a coast dotted with disappointed hopes and failed lives.

Eventually we approach the daunting kernel of the book: the malpractice suit.

Harvey takes pains to make a seamless link between discovering the coast and understanding the documents. Both the box of notes and his interest in sailing are “gifts” from his father. Ultimately, the real purpose of the investigation, to discover the elder Harvey’s character, is movingly achieved.

By the end of both “journeys,” exterior and interior, Harvey is wrung out. Appropriately, the book concludes, “we did the usual things with winches and jib sheets, the sails filled again, and we headed home.”

Some might hear echoes of probably the most seminal sea voyage in Western literature, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner:”

He went like one that been stunned, And is of sense forlorn: A sadder and a wiser man, He rose the morrow morn.

Theo Dombrowski of Nanoose Bay has written and illustrated Secret Beaches of the Salish Sea, Seaside Walks of Vancouver Island and Family Walks and Hikes of Vancouver Island (Volume 1): Victoria to Nanaimo, and (Volume 2): Nanaimo North to Strathcona Park.
in the 1960s, Phyllis Webb chose to leave behind a promising television and broadcasting career at the CBC in Toronto, where among other things she created and co-produced the weekly series, Ideas. In the 1970s, Webb’s interest in politics wavered toward west coast Indigenous art, including the ancient intertidal rock art found on Salt Spring Island, named “Wilson’s Bowl” after anthropologist Wilson Duff. She chose to make her home on the south coast of British Columbia where she insisted on living and writing on her own terms, without aspiring to an admirable public voice. This has been one of the things I most cherish about her, along with the beautiful, sideways way she has of giving me, as a poet, the gold of her story.

Wilson’s Bowl, for me, takes me back to 843. (Coast Salish, to be precise, with the uncut lands of Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), S̱ləy̓íł̓tl̓əw̓əy̓ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), S̱il̓ilw̓ətaʔɬ (Sélfálıw̓útaʔɬ) Nations.) 1963, is the year the film Phyllis Webb and the Pursuit of the Unwritten by Stephen Collis (Talonbooks $24.95) was released. It is a film that the poet and artist, Phyllis Webb, is present in this book’s often-elegiac tone. It was Gail who, during a walk with Collis in Vancouver, had given him the advice that set his compass westward, toward Phyllis Webb and Salt Spring Island: “Poetry is your way of writing all ways at once. It is your revolutionary path.”

Collis’ lavish, loquacious, zigzag essaying-forth across the “peninsula” of Collis’ own literary and political geography for Almost Islands enables Collis to raise urgent questions about writing, ecological devastation and colonial violence. It also includes some advice—including to not write at all, for a while at least—from other poets and friends. “I exist to tend the flow of language,” he says.

“The terror of Webb’s ‘No,’” for Collis, is that “it is not spoken by her, but to her.” The meditations on mortality and silence that conclude the book I found deeply affecting. Collis describes the difficulties of transferring the body of his sister to her pine coffin. “The coffin could not be got through. So we carried her out. Like furniture. Such beloved furniture. Such precious wood for the fire.”

Collis writes, “In each and every poem I write, I pick my sister up, carry her across a page or two, and lay her down again. It is method and ritual and the very practice of everyday life.” This final section of the book is where I feel Collis is converting silence and failure to hiddedness and immanence. The felicity of Phyllis’ surname imbues Almost Islands—a web of connections fleshed out by the “beyondery” of imagination. 9781772012071

Sharon Thesen has written eleven books and chapbooks. She is professor emeritus of creative writing at UBC’s Okanagan Campus. She edited the Governor-General’s award-winning The Vision Tree: Selected Poems by Phyllis Webb. Beverly Cramp Publisher

Almost Islands: Phyllis Webb and the Pursuit of the Unwritten by Stephen Collis (Talonbooks $24.95)

BY SHARON THESEN

Phyllis Webb 1999

Stephen Collis pays homage to Fulford Harbour’s silent poet

Almost Islands: Phyllis Webb and the Pursuit of the Unwritten by Stephen Collis

BY SHARON THESEN

Almost Islands: Phyllis Webb and the Pursuit of the Unwritten by Stephen Collis (Talonbooks $24.95)

BY SHARON THESEN

Phyllis Webb 1999
Paula Wild provides a good general introduction but the homogenized First Nations’ interpretive tales of the wolves as though all First Nations cultures interpreted ‘the wolf’ in the same way she also resurrects as fact Erna Thompson Seto’s fictional tale of Lobo, without taking into account the many of ‘human and wolf’ that sparked among the giants of nature writing from John Burroughs to Theodore Roosevelt before the First World War. As a time of global biodiversity collapses, as recently pointed out in a study fittingly entitled ‘Protect the last of the wild, Canada is nevertheless the second most important of only five nations still blessed with ‘relatively intact’ ecosystems.’ Meanwhile, as reported by the World Wildlife Foundation, Canada has lost a staggering 60 percent of its wildlife since 1970. Wildness continues to be eliminated at this rate unprecedented since the great Ice Age extinction. Between them, Russia, Canada, Australia, the USA, and Brazil house much (70 percent) of the 25 percent global wilderness that remains today. While Canada’s position as a wilderness champion may sound reassuring to Canadian readers, the practical reality is far more chilling. While most of our urban and agricultural development is clustered around the 49th parallel, the natural resource exploration and infrastructure that supports our cities, extends all over our wilds and ‘wilderness.’ We rate among this planet’s highest per capita energy consumers, and we have a disproportionate high impact on wilderness. The state of Canadian ecosystems can be measured not only by the impacts of the Athabasca Tar Sands Project, or bit C, but by the disappearance of iconic flora and fauna accompanied by an increase in the case of management ‘by crisis.’ In B.C., spotted owls, a wilderness conservation emblem, have collapsed to a population of less than a dozen. Caribou populations across Canada are collapsing, largely due to decades of forestry and oil and gas extraction. The attitude is that there’s ‘too expensive to save.’ Half of B.C.’s Chinook salmon populations have been found to be ‘endangered’ or ‘critical’ in the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, at a time when the future of the iconic resident killer whales of the Salish Sea hangs in the balance. Meanwhile, the health of the ocean and wildlife are increasing demand on the Atlantic coast of Canada, and the threat of future oil tankers traffic. The decline of polar bears and caribous are just the most widely publicized concerns. If there is a fit to the ‘wolf’ today, it is in this precarious}

Wildness is as misunderstood as the wolf itself, in our increasingly suburbanized and digitized global, deeply disconnected, society. In some cultures, such as First Nations, there is traditional understanding of how wildness is co-extensive with cultural meaning. For ‘human-nature,’ the wolf is a primal animal, and to be human is to be a potential wolf and a wilderness champion may sound reassuring to Canadian readers, the practical reality is far more chilling. While most of our urban and agricultural development is clustered around the 49th parallel, the natural resource exploration and infrastructure that supports our cities, extends all over our wilds and ‘wilderness.’

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Bachelor Bannock, from 1939 to today

Constance Brissenden pays tribute to a Métis settlement sustained by the land—physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Memories of a Métis Settlement: Eighty Years of East Prairie Métis Settlement by Constance Brissenden, editor (Thetys Books $14.89)

E
arly East Prairie settler and bachelor George Harvey was a veteran of the First World War. He lost an eye in the war and was wounded in other parts of his body; thereafter he wore a glass eye.

Harvey had a war disability pension and helped others when they were in need. In return, they looked out for him, bringing him his “bachelor bannock.”

When I first received Constance Brissenden’s Memories of a Métis Settlement, I earmarked Theresa Auger’s recipe for Bachelor Bannock. In preparation for reading, I made a batch.

 Shortly after taking the bread out of the oven, I slathered butter and gooseberry jam over its warm surface, embraced a cup of hot tea, and sat down to meet the residents—both past and present—of East Prairie Métis Settlement, northwest of Edmonton.

Published by Theytus Books in Penticton, Brissenden’s latest book speaks to the beginnings and transformations of numerous families within the East Prairie Métis Settlement. Generational stories of the Bellerose, L’Hirondelle, Auger, Beaudry, Desjarlais, Dumont, Petenaude, Supernault, and Haggerty families address larger themes of resilience and collaboration, while the book also outlines the specific failures and successes of the settlement.

Clearly the land sustains Métis people—physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually—and informs our basis for natural laws. This book also brings attention to the camaraderie and connection that the residents have continued to practice over the past eighty years, not only with their human kin, but also with their non-human relations.

Community members experienced flooding, shortages of food and provisions, financial inadequacies, and a lack of roads and schools for their children. However, by living and working together as a community, the residents shared their harvested crops, meats, medicines, and labour. Despite their hardships, they worked together to create a successful and enduring community.

Over time, floorless log cabins turned into modern housing, a bridge, school and church were erected, and the road into the settlement was built. Electricity was brought into the settlement in the late 1960s. According to elder Margaret Supernault, life is now much easier but the closeness of the community has diminished now that people are losing their “old-ways” for survival.

I recommend this book to anyone interested in the Métis diaspora that now extends throughout British Columbia and western Canada.

 Angie Tucker is Red River Métis from the Poplar Point/St. Anne’s area in Manitoba. As an Indigenous feminist and cultural anthropologist, she is currently enrolled as a Ph.D student in the Department of Native Studies at the University of Alberta.

Sea Trial

Brian Harvey

After a 25-year break from boating, Brian Harvey circumnavigates Vancouver Island with his wife, his dog, and a box of documents that surfaced after his father’s death. John Harvey was a neurosurgeon, violinist, and photographer who answered his door a decade into retirement to find a sheriff with a summons. It was a malpractice suit, and it did not go well. Dr. Harvey never got over it. The box contained every nurse’s record, doctor’s report, trial transcript, and expert testimony related to the case.

Only Brian’s father had read it all — until now.

“Harvey has serious skills, and his riveting story is impossible to put down.”

Cruising World
In my wallet is a piece of plastic issued by the federal government that clearly identifies me as “an Indian within meaning of the Indian Act, chapter 27, Statutes of Canada (1985).” It reflects that I have 6(1)(a) status and my status number is 609XXXXXXX.

To someone familiar with the Act, and Indian status in particular, I just told you how I got status (technically no one is born with status) and what region and First Nation I am from. To someone uninitiated with the Indian Act, what I said makes little sense.

Bob Joseph’s 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act aims to rectify the latter situation. Joseph simply wants to tell non-Indigenous Canadians why the Indian Act doesn’t work—and he delivers, in 21 ways.

The Indian Act has come to symbolize many things to many different people, with some Canadians ruled by it and other Canadians unaware of its existence or what it means. First passed in 1876, it consolidated previous pieces of colonial (pre-Constitution) legislation that formed the nucleus of Canadian Aboriginal policy. Numerous amendments have followed, with the most recent ones made on December 22, 2017 to try to remove sexism from the laws that determine who can get status.

Simply repealing the Act is problematic, as was revealed in 1969 when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chrétien, proposed to do so. They ran into the complexity of the things the Act legitimized and with which it was associated. I say legitimized rather than created because treaties, for example, predate the Indian Act and do not need the Act to exist or provide legal weight to them.

A hereditary chief of the Gwawaenuk Nation, part of the larger Kwakwaka’wakw Nation, Joseph is the founder and president of ITCINC blog, a major source of information for the public about Indigenous topics. In fact, the title and use of a list of “top” 21 items reveal the online origin of Joseph’s book.

Joseph wrote this book in an approachable, accessible manner for readers with little to no understanding of the Indigenous situation in Canada; and the structure of 21 Things is suited to its intended audience. Joseph begins by briefly explaining the Indian Act is, followed by 21 outrageous and unbelievable aspects of it.

His conclusion, that the Act should be replaced by Indigenous self-government, should come as no surprise.

A member of the Tsay Keh Dene First Nation in British Columbia, Dr. Daniel Sims is assistant professor in History and Indigenous Studies at the University of Alberta’s Augustana Campus.

Jean Walton revisits early 1970s Vancouver in Mudflat Dreaming, diving into confrontations around housing and development problems that reverberate into 2019.

Catch Jean Walton at the Vancouver Historical Society, Museum of Vancouver. April 25. 7:30 PM
Malcolm Island image by Nicola Weston. An exhibition of Weston’s paintings from Love of the Salish Sea Islands was held at Merchant Mews, Salt Spring Island.

Our idyllic isles

40 writers sing the praises of 26 islands in the Salish Sea

Love of the Salish Sea Islands: New Essays, Memoirs and Poems by 40 Island Writers by Mona Fertig (editor) and Gail Sjuberg (introduction) (Mother Tongue Publishing $23.95)

First encountered the term “islandmania” in Lawrence Durrell’s Reflections on a Marine Venus, his memoir of living on the Greek island of Rhodes. The islamone, according to Durrell, is someone who is intoxicated just by the thought of being on an island. What better place to suffer that condition than Greece? Well, how about the entire archipelago of islands within what has become known as the Salish Sea? Anyone who has spent time on BC Ferries or other craft or else flown over the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Puget Sound and the Strait of Georgia has seen these islands strung out like seaglass, blue, aqua, bottle-green, tawny gold; some of them rough-hewn and craggy, some of them smoothed by wind and tide.

As a child growing up on Vancouver Island, I camped with my family on Salt Spring, rowing to a Spanish conquistador who never saw the island. But having grown up on a large island and having lived for extended periods on smaller ones—Cret, and a small island off the west coast of Ireland—I know they can also be insular. Gary Goddes, who lives on Thetis Island but writes here about Texada Island, quotes songwriter Valdy: “Islands are differences of opinion surrounded by water.” Des Kennedy echoes this, remembering his early years on Denman Island, half a century ago, learning the rules, spoken and unspoken. He also recalls island life at its best: “Oh, and the dances that rocked the old community hall in those days! There’d be chairs lined along the perimeter and the centre jammed with the flailing bodies. Doug and the Slugs, Pied Pedar and other bands on the hippie circuit squeezed onto the little stage and played long into the night. Halloween dances were especially wild extravaganzas of outlandish costumes and question-able behaviour. Little kids would sleep safely on a bed of coats in the corner.”

The stories of how people are drawn to islands can be fascinating. But it’s even more interesting to consider why they remain, how they build lives, build houses and gardens, build community, and work to preserve the integrity of place. Mother Tongue Publishing has provided us with a wonderful palimpsest; adding stories written on rock, beach glass, leaves of grass, old barn wood and Neptune soil. The anthology concludes with Lasqueti Island poet Sue Wheeler’s brief “Moonlit Night, January:”

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So few secrets on an island.

Islands included in Love of the Salish Sea Islands are Bowen, Cortez, Denman, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Hornby, Lasqueti, Lummi, Mayne, Mitlenatch, Newcastle, Penelakut, Pender, Prevost, Protection, Quadra, Retreat, Salt Spring, Saturna, Savary, Sena-nus, Texada, Thetis, Thormanby and Tumbo.

9781986840473-24

Theresa Kishkan lives on the Soocheh Peninsula. Her 15th book will be The Marriage of Rivers, a novella from Palmagens Press, due in the spring of 2020. She runs a small press devoted to the literary novella, Fish Gotta Swim Editions, with author Anik See.
Zach advocated and proselytized for the use of driftwood not only as a “truth to materials” element, but one that was distinct to the larger Pacific Northwest region—ultimately leading to a fascinating mix of “hippie virtuosos” whose works are also well represented in this book.

Sculptor Godfrey Stephens, featured on the cover of Out of the Woods, has been at it for over forty years and is rightfully the elder statesman of this book. Stephens was previously the subject of Gurdeep Stephens’ Wood Storms/Wild Canvas: The Art of Godfrey Stephens (D&I Enterprises, 2014).

A deep spiritual empathy for the forest and the sea binds the sculptors and carvers of the Salish Sea (once called the Strait of Georgia and neighbouring Juan De Fuca Strait). They tap into wood’s timeless and ancestral quality, which surely is a primary source of human artistic expression. One has to look only to the oldest piece of recorded sculpture or idol in the world, made over 11,000 years ago—the Shigor idol from Siberia, a seventeen-foot log of Siberian larch. There are two lines of origin for West Coast wood sculpture. The first line is that of Mungo Martin (1879-1962) and Indigenous people. Martin was old enough to have been spared the de-programming of Kwakwalt beliefs and shamansitic practices by the Potlatch Law and residential schools. As a chief, he taught the craft of carving totems at Thunderbird Park in Victoria. Mungo Martin taught and influenced many, including Godfrey Stephens, Bill Holm (the Seattle art historian who married his daughter), Bill Reid, and Tony Hunt. Martin’s belief in seeing native objects as art was buttressed through the empathy and intellectual understanding of UBC anthropologists, Harry and Audrey Hawthorn, who provided tremendous support. The second line of influence can be traced back to Jan Zach (1914-1986), a Czech artist and teacher who moved from Brazil via New York City to Victoria with his B.C.-born wife, Judith, in 1951.

**Mungo Martin & hippie virtuosos**

*Out of the Woods: Woodworkers along the Salish Sea* by Pirjo Raits (Heritage House $34.95)

A history of Salish Sea carvers and woodworkers is long overdue. *Out of the Woods: Woodworkers along the Salish Sea* by retired newspaper editor Pirjo Raits is a treat to the eyes and hearts of West Coasters. With photography by Dale Roth and Michele Ramberg, it surveys 26 craftsmen and artists whose “truth to material” is wood derived from the bio-region skirting the Salish Sea. The story of the first generation of Salish Sea wood artists is long overdue.

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Philip Huynh’s brilliant short stories range from Vancouver to Vietnam.

The Forbidden Purple City by Philip Huynh
(Goose Lane Editions, $22.95)

PHILIP HUYNH’s stunning collection of nine stories is bigger than its title. There’s a lot to relish and some that stand out more than others. Huynh, a second-generation Canadian whose parents fled Vietnam during its civil war, now a lawyer in Richmond, Huynh easily sets his stories in New York, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Jeju Island in Korea, and Hue and Hoi An in Vietnam.

In an unforgettable story that flirted with magic realism, a Vietnamese Abalone Diver, a young Vietnamese bride—who was forced by poverty to leave her country and marry a stranger—tries to find a sense of community on an isolated Korean island by befriending, and eventually joining, a bizarre coterie of crazes who dive for abalone and double as a tourist attraction. In his old age he recalls he had no adequate tools or supplies to undertake proper renovations. There were no historical photos for reference but the pretense of refurbishment kept him employed and fed. In his old age he recalls he had no adequate tools or supplies to undertake proper renovations. In the title story, The Forbidden Purple City, a man who escaped his homeland in 1980 recalls the glories of Hue, the old imperial capital that was leveled in 1947. Vietnam’s Nguyen (NWEE-en) dynasty in central Vietnam had its own ‘forbidden city’ that housed thirteen emperors until its final emperor abdicated in 1945. The walled palace was desecrated by the Communists after their arrival in 1968.

In Toad Poem, Diem, now 64, is similarly returning to Hoi An after 45 years to honour his parents with a Toad Poem, based on a well-known Vietnamese folk tale. His poem must reouse the heavens and memorialize his parents. In a new suit bought with his meager life’s savings, he travels to his parent’s village as a pilgrim to the past. His poem must rouse the heavens and memorialize his parents. In a new suit bought with his meager life’s savings, he travels to his parent’s village as a pilgrim to the past.

Huynh easily handles various points of view as he describes relationships that range from father and son, mother and son, husband and wife, friends and sweethearts, strangers, and even between the living and the dead. The stories set in North American span from 9/11 to the present.

There are memorable descriptions on nearly every page: “The French kindergarten teacher is writing on the chalkboard: le chat, le chien, au pays, and other short words arranged like little bonbons on a plate.” Or from The Tale of Jade the description of a strand of ivy on a building as “a single vine of Ivy like a raised vein.” Nine words but suddenly you see it so clearly and get what it implies.

Most of these stories have been published in Canadian literary journals, as well as in two editions of the Journey Prize anthology. Collectively, this is a brilliant debut. These are not stories primarily about prejudice or about victims. They are quite simply and exclusively tales of human nature, and therefore one never knows what will happen next. Chekhov and Alice Munro would thoroughly approve.

Cherie Thiessen writes from Pender Island.
Growing Up in Wild Horse Canyon by Karen Autio, art by Loraine Kemp (Crensh Press $25.95) Ages 7-10

A ponderosa pine time capsule

History through the growth of a tree.

Growing Up in Wild Horse Canyon is the illustrated story of the life of a Ponderosa Pine from a seed in the year 1780 to its death in the Okanagan Park fire in 2003. As the tree grows, the story is told of the history of the Okanagan Valley and the Syilx people, who have seen profound changes to their culture during the same period of time.

The story uses Wild Horse Canyon, located on the east side of Okanagan Lake, as the location of its episodes, which include the arrival of the first fur traders in 1811, the fur brigades that travelled the valley in the first half of the 1800s, the B.C. gold rush era, the arrival of settlers, the sternwheeler era, logging, the Kettle Valley railway construction, the round-up of wild horses to sell to the Russians in 1926, and the use of the Wild Horse Canyon area for training Chinese commandos in 1944.

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Although only 25 pages long, the ongoing story provides an overview history of the Okanagan Valley with particular emphasis, respect and sensitivity toward the Syilx people.

Despite the book’s considerable strengths and fine illustrations, a few historical inaccuracies mar the otherwise well-researched presentation. For example, Karen Autio asserts that the fur trade, “…radically altered the traditional practices of the Okanagan people.” While it is important not to diminish the impact of white intruders on the Syilx people, it must be emphasised that the most devastating effects came with the arrival of gold miners and settlers in the valley, not in the time of the fur trade.

I also question the assertion that “the gold rush era was devastating in the Okanagan Valley. It drastically altered rivers, creeks and fish populations which wreaked havoc on the Okanagan people’s way of being.” This greatly exaggerates the impact of miners in the Okanagan Valley during the gold rush years. There were short-lived gold rushes to the Similkameen in 1859 and to Rock Creek in 1860, and a minor rush to Mission Creek near present-day Kelowna in 1860. But to state that these early gold mining incursions devastated rivers, creeks and fish populations of the Okanagan Valley is not accurate.

Finally, I would question the statement that “raising cattle and hogs became the main industry in the Okanagan Valley.” To my knowledge, few hogs were raised in the Okanagan in the years before orchards began to replace cattle ranching.

Despite these questionable interpretations of history, the book is an excellent resource for students as well as adults who are interested in Okanagan history, particularly in the recent history of the Syilx people who had lived here for thousands of years before their culture was, indeed, eventually devastated by the colonists.

A PICTURE BOOK FROM OLIVE SENIOR AND LAURA JAMES, the creators of the bestselling Anna Carries Water—a New York Public Library Best Book, a Canadian Children’s Book Centre Best Book and a Kirkus Reviews Best Book of the Year.

Jamilla celebrates her electric, kinetic, bombastic, fantastic, twirly, whirly, curly, fuzzy, snappy, nappy, wavy, crazy, boonoonoonous hair.

“The bestselling duo of writer Olive Senior and artist Laura James team up again (to) follow a young girl as she learns to love her “snappy, nappy, wavy, crazy” do… Jamaican-Canadian writer Senior uses playful rhymes to speak directly to young readers who may struggle with standing out from other kids their age. . . . The artwork by James—of Antiguan heritage—is an explosion of colour and energy, with each one of her illustrations perfectly echoing the vibrancy of Jamilla’s ever-changing electric and kinetic hairstyles.”—Quill & Quire

Olive Senior, one of the Caribbean’s most celebrated writers, is a recipient of the Commonwealth Book Prize.

The Nature of Canada
Edited by Colin M. Coates and Graeme Wynn
These captivating reflections on the history of our environment and ourselves will make you think differently not only about Canada’s past but also about our future.

May 2019 / 72 b&w photos, 4 maps / paperback

Vancouverism
Larry Beasley
“Larry Beasley takes us on one of the most intense and transformative city-building journeys of our time. Vancouverism is a tale of breathtaking conversion – of principles, ideas, and players – that saw a rather provincial town come of age on the global stage.”

Jennifer Keesmaat, CEO of the Creative Housing Society and former chief planner of the City of Toronto

May 2019 / 200 colour photos, 4 maps / paperback
When a kiss is dangerous

The hazards of escaping a polygamous life

Lost Boy
by Shelley Hrdlitschka
(Orca $14.95)

BY CAROL ANNE SHAW

Each day is much like the previous one in Unity. Seventeen-year-old Jon must spend hours toiling in fields, working construction, caring for younger siblings, and studying the scriptures under the watchful eye of The Prophet. The Prophet cannot be questioned. But, at seventeen, Jon finds himself wondering why a man should have at least three wives before he can get into heaven; why short-sleeved shirts are forbidden, along with listening to music of any kind.

After being caught kissing a girl, Jon decides he must leave Unity before he is banished.

That’s the set-up for Lost Boy, Shelley Hrdlitschka’s sequel to Sister Wife (Orca, 2008) which was set in the same fictitious polygamous community.

After hitchhiking to the nearby town of Springdale, Jon is taken in by Abigail, a former Unity member. After being caught kissing a girl, Jon decides he must leave Unity before he is banished.

That’s the set-up for Lost Boy, Shelley Hrdlitschka’s sequel to Sister Wife (Orca, 2008) which was set in the same fictitious polygamous community.

Bright and compassionate, Jon must not only learn how the “real world” works; more importantly, he has to learn who he is without the narrow-minded programming of The Prophet. This story credibly shows how easy it can be to fall into hard times when you have no real sense of who you are.

Compelling and well-written, Lost Boy had me on #TeamJon right from the get-go. The novel ends with potential for a third story about the young people who grew up in Unity—the girls in particular.

Carol Anne Shaw is the author of the “Hannah” books, all from Ronsdale Press. She lives in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island.

Raincoast Chronicles 24: Cougar Companions: Bute Inlet Country and the Legendary Schnarrs by Judith Williams (Harbour Publishing $26.95)

An illustrated history of the Schnarr family, their pet cougars and their neighbours in Bute Inlet, this Raincoast Chronicles #24 features rare photos, diaries, oral history and interviews to respect and illuminate homesteading on the remote BC coast when it was more populated.

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Ann M. Pavlick
Her story in the FREE ebook from KOB0.com

So You Think You Need A Lawyer?

“Advocating for the brain injured remains Ann’s passion. Her reasons for helping the disabled are revealed in the story.”

ISBN: 978-0-2285-0163-3

THE RISK THEATRE MODEL OF TRAGEDY:
Gambling, Drama, and the Unexpected

Why are tragedies endearing to the human heart? This question has haunts inquiring minds from Aristotle to Hegel and Nietzsche.

Edwin Wong reveals that tragic heroes, by making delusional wagers, trigger unintended consequences. Tragedy functions as a warning mechanism. Because tragic heroes lose all, audiences wonder: how did the perfect bet go wrong?

The Risk Theatre Modern Tragedy Competition—inspired by this book—is hosted by one of Canada’s oldest and most respected theatres. It is the world’s largest playwriting competition for the writing of tragedy (risktheatre.com).

Eve Joseph of Victoria is one of three Canadian finalists for the handsomely-endowed 2019 Griffin Poetry Prize for her collection Quarrels. The winner—to be announced in early June—receives $65,000 and runners-up are accorded $10,000 each.

Quarrels
by Eve Joseph
(Anvil Press $18)

BY PAUL FALARDEAU

We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry.

—W.B. YEATS

That quotation at the outset of Eve Joseph’s Quarrels leads us into short prose-poems about the conflicts within herself. She focuses on moments when she must vindicate the coexistence of the infinite and the finite.

Part one of Quarrels is a series of meditations. Part two reflects upon the photography of Diane Arbus. Part three is an extended sequence that engages with the death of her father. Ultimately, death is one of the themes that links all three parts. Joseph’s parents make frequent appearances in the early poems.

Along the way, Joseph frequently includes references to the ocean, such as her room with a view, or Demosthenes shouting at the sea with pebbles in his mouth. There are many birds throughout and also plenty of booze (wine, rum, gin) that is shared during visits from a plethora of artists and mythical figures, from Aeschylus to Al Purdy.

A quote from American cultural critic Joan Acocella firmly opens one section of the book, but helps with our receptivity to all of it:

“The goal of art was not the truth but the marvelous—indeed the marvelous was the truth.”

Like lotus blossoms, these poems open from a central image into something seemingly limitless as Joseph “quarrels” with the infinite complexity of life. Or, as poet Jack Spicer once confessed, “I am thinking that a poem could go on forever.”

Truth is not set in stone but left to the reader to construct and decide upon. One particularly exquisite example starts as “Light stutters down the closed blinds and builds a spine, one vertebræ at a time.” This blind is transformed into “a door that could open but remains closed.”

Joseph’s explorations of the minutiae of life are vital. “The trick is to return to the moment. To smell the butts in the ashtray, the air freshener dangling from the mirror. Stairway to Heaven was playing on the radio. God arms himself with his smallest creations.”

The final chapter is the payoff as Joseph takes the same approach to capturing moments she shares with her father, connected by the inescapable fact that they are his last. This concluding chapter reveals the height of her prowess for observation and reflection. For all the talk of eternity, there is still a hollow Hallelujah.

Joseph wonderfully ends Quarrels by retelling the events of her father’s death to his horses, and recognizing the catharsis in the moment when “their long heads bow in consolation.”

Joseph’s private quarrels in Quarrels reflect and accept the uncertainties of perception. The closer we look at one moment, the more we see that there is no such thing. The more we try to be in the present, the more we can appreciate the past and the future, as well. The closer we are to understanding, the more we must let go.

9781772141191

Paul Falardeau is a poet, essayist and journalist who has published in The Ormsby Review, Pacific Rim Review of Books, and subTerrain. He lives in Hastings-Sunrise, East Vancouver.
The kinked garden hose of

catastrophic thinking

The pleasure in A Violent Streak is knowing Stephanie Warner will push the limit.

Some of the poems, such as "The Queen of Spades," track the speaker’s experience in Dawson City, home of the infamous Downtowner’s pickled toe drink, made with the actual frostbitten human digit, where the speaker has:

a job chamber maiding, and
you try to muster up
the prospector’s zeal, as
your hands crack, bleed
folding sheets straight out
of the industrial dryers.

already half-cut on the
mickey left in your last
as a tip, as you pin more
and more of your life
to the axis of a cool crease,
on the snap of sheets
perfectly set, and the cer-
tainty that any odour
(jizz, stale wine, fags in the
toilet bowl, black-out sex) will
be trumped by the chemical
spray making progress in
your lungs.

In "Fire season," we read these
associative words: flicked ciga-
rettes, good fires, lightning-
struck, lava flows, carrier oil,
fire, a superhero flick, elec-
tricity dosed, scorched earth,
and ultimately, "the kinked
garden hose / of catastrophic
thinking."

We know fast cars do
damage: to the environ-
ment, the parking lot, wild-
life. "The Heart Land" is
one of the best (meaning
viscerally accurate) poems
I’ve read about a collision
with a deer, referred to as
a "dowry of wasted meat;
its blood purling, still hot/
through the sagging glass."

THE Pleasure in A Violent Streak is knowing Warner will push the limit; just short of a
game of literary chicken, she is
never out of control. Warner’s
thrill is the intensity of her im-
ages and settings. In "Surface"
she describes a childhood dare
from boys to let fire ants crawl
up the speaker’s body: "the
ants clotted/ like pomegranate
seeds, sequining my legs, until
another slap/of God-water,
like a sheet of tin, scraped
them."

Stephanie Warner’s A Violent Streak is cutthroat and
clever, never pretentious and
never hobbled by shame or
preciousness, which makes
me love it all the more.

BY ELEE KRALJI Gardiner

Stephanie Warner’s A Violent Streak is cutthroat and
clever, never pretentious and
never hobbled by shame or
preciousness, which makes
me love it all the more.

9781554554461

Elee Kraljii Gardiner’s most
recent book is Trauma Head
(Anvil, 2018). She co-edited
V6A: Writing from Vancouver’s
Downtown Eastside (Arsenal
Pulp, 2012) with John Asfour.

In the Shade of the Tractor’s Wheel

Each day my mother
delivered to the fields
where my father toiled
a mid-day meal
of hard-boiled eggs
course wheat bread
buttered yellow as barley
and slathered in wild raspberry jam

Coffee in mason jars
sweetened with molasses
thick with cow’s cream
all wrapped in newspaper
and towels
hot to touch

she popped the seal
from the jar
with the edge of the golden lid
poured it
let the fragrant liquid cool
before he sipped the edge
of the green glass cup

Strained muscles dust sin and sweat
washed away by that sweet drink
followed by a little sleep
in the shade of the tractor’s wheel

From Oona River Poems (Thistledown Press
$20), a collection intended to be an antidote to the
plethora of information, propaganda, and opinion with
which we are confronted every day. 978-1-77187-190-7

Peter Christensen

Peter Christensen

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WINCHELL PRICE

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Homeless Memorial:
Poems from the Streets of Vernon by John La Greca (Bastian Editions $23.95)

BY PHYLIS REEVE

“I’ve been a client of government social agencies since I was 13. My grandmother evicted our family just before Christmas that year. My mother’s mental illness was causing antagonisms. It didn’t help that my father assaulted my mother’s brother while he was drunk… I cracked up when I was 17. I took a year off after Grade Eleven. I was finding that I was a painter and a writer.—JOHN LA GRECA, AT AGE 64

John La Greca was literally tearing his hair out for years due to an obsessive compulsive disorder. He briefly attended four universities: UBC, Okanagan College, Guelph, McGill. Eventually, having been homeless, he shared his poems with his sister, his mentor the artist Greca Castiini who employed him for fifteen years as her gardener in Vernon, and Vernon Library’s poet-in-residence, Harold Rheinsch who helped him compile his first book.

Several of his poems tell stories of railway workers and machine operators with whom he occasionally worked, but most are vignettes, character sketches, and conversations featuring his fellow homeless citizens—vagrants, addicts, hookers.

The latter included Brandi, “the most confusing woman I have ever talked to,” who wanted domesticity but suddenly died of natural causes, or cancer, or maybe it was AIDS. “Brandi’s dead, and she’s still in my head. She’s the gift that keeps giving back.”

Greca’s poet’s voice is matter-of-fact and colloquial but highly literate, “cosmopolitan and democratic.”

Poems in Homeless Memorial include: Terry Gilliam’s Revenge, or Move Over Montezuma; The Killer Breasts of Tchaiko’s Body Guards; Waiting for Dolly Parton’s original cover version from the film The Bodyguard. I think I would move me even if I did not know that Dolly Parton is alive and well, and Whitney Houston isn’t.

John La Greca’s book has been published and celebrated in Vernon and around the province. He emerges from his writing as very much an individual, but also on the edge of a community or several communities, each in need of what he has to offer.

He reflects, “I have always felt denied as an outsider. In the prison and the psychiatric ward, I was seen as a delusional person with grandiose thoughts about his own value. I always knew that I could contribute.”

9781771712750

POETRY REVIEW

Greca wrestling with truth

J

John La Greca was literally tearing his hair out for years due to an obsessive compulsive disorder. He briefly attended four universities: UBC, Okanagan College, Guelph, McGill. Eventually, having been homeless, he shared his poems with his sister, his mentor the artist Greca Castiini who employed him for fifteen years as her gardener in Vernon, and Vernon Library’s poet-in-residence, Harold Rheinsch who helped him compile his first book.

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9781771712750

REVIEW

You can contact B.R. Bentley via:
kingsgate88@hotmail.com • To order: www.brbentley.com
978-1-5255-4859-8 (Paperback)
978-1-5255-4860-4 (ebook)
The early plays of Chilean Canadian Carmen Aguirre about the “hardships, horrors, and heartache of exile” have been collected into a triad for Chile Con Carne and Other Early Works (Talonbooks $19.95). As preliminary to her recent plays, Refugee Hotel (premiered at Langara’s Studio 58), Broken Tailbone, Blue Box and The Trigger, these works supplement her two memoirs: Something Fierce: Memoirs of a Revolutionary Daughter and Mexican Hooker #1 and My Other Roles Since the Revolution. The three revitalized plays are Chile Con Carne, "QUE PASA with LA RAZA, eh?, and In a Land Called I Don’t Remember.

C is for Cassidy

Sara Cassidy has been a human rights witness in Guatemala and won a Gold National Magazine Award. Having previously promoted other authors as the co-director of the Victoria Festival of Authors, Cassidy can finally gain her rightful share of the creative spotlight with four new titles released in 2019. Those titles are Helen’s Birds illustrated by Sophie Casson (Groundwood $24.95); Nevers (Orca $10.95); and Scalliwag on the Salish Sea illustrated by Mike Deas (Heritage $10.95).

With fourteen titles, Cassidy has kept a lower profile than her sister Anne Giardini, a novelist and SFU Chancellor. Cassidy’s novel Skylark was shortlisted for the Bolen’s Book Prize in 2014; A Boy Named Queen was nominated for several awards in 2016. Helen’s Birds: 978-9780030855; The Moon: 9781450816161; Nevers: 9781259821657; Scalliwag: 978-1772032799

D is for Dawkins

Co-owner of Vancouver’s Lattimer Gallery, Alexander Dawkins has written Understanding Northwest Coast Indigenous Jewelry (Greystone $24.95) to convey that his subject is an art form that goes beyond bracelets, rings and pendants. With more than 100 photographs, he analyzes designs, delves into the history of the art form, highlights the traits of the most common animal symbols and includes biographies and works from more than fifty of the Coast’s best-known jewelers. Northwest Coast artist Grant Hayter-Menzies respects the intimacy Carr: A Biography (Heritage $10.95).

Woo, The Monkey Who Inspired Emily Carr: A Biography (D&M 2019) by Grant Hayter-Menzies respects the enduring relationship with a Javanese macaque whom Carr adopted in 1923 after she spotted the green-eyed primates in a Victoria pet store. Hayter-Menzies suggests that Woo was like a surrogate daughter, a reflection of herself, a piece of the wild inside her boarding house because Carr was never able to reconcile her wild and passionate nature with the stifling modes of the well-to-do Victorian society in which she was raised. After Carr was hospitalized due to heart failure, she arranged for Woo to be sent to the Stanley Park Zoo where Woo died a year later.

F is for Fiona

A rancher and professional breeder of quarterhorses, Garry Gottfriedson grew up in Kamloops, the son of Indigenous parents who were both at the forefront of community activism in the era of George Manuel. “When you’re born Indian,” he says, “you are born into politics.” Gottfriedson, with a Masters in education from Simon Fraser University, has taught at Cariboo College. He has developed his own teaching method for the Shuswap language, one that requires physical responses to learning individual words. He has served as a councilor and consultant for the Kamloops Indian Band.

Gottfriedson’s ninth book is Clinging to Bone (Ronsdale $17.95), a collection of poetry that examines betrayal, grief, love and survival.
The beauty of the Nootka Sound and the $14.95 which uses poetry to highlight in Harmony: Aboriginal Connections (kindergarten-grade 3) Ready by Indigenous people. A new imprint, led the way for books for, about and for the senses.” With a partner named Aldo, Huber believed he was realizing A dream when the two took over a defunct French restaurant, in Vancouver’s West End just months before the 2010 Olympics. Huber recounts his love affairs between the staff, difficult patrons, touchy health inspectors and above all, precarious cash flow. “The money that would painstakingly come in the front, left out the back faster than it came,” writes Huber, who had invested all his RRSPs and savings into the venture. Selling the bistro at a loss two years later, Huber had no regrets. “It was a fantastic time and we entertained all our friends, and my wife loved the bistro.”

I IS FOR INDIGENOUS

2019 is the International Year of Indigenous Languages aimed to raise awareness of the consequences of and endangerment of Indigenous languages across the world, “with an aim to establish a link between language, development, peace, and reconciliation.” B.C. publishing has long led the way for books for, about and by Indigenous people. A new imprint, Rebel Mountain Press, is launching Michelle Sylliboy’s Kiskajeyi—I Am Ready ($19.99) which blends her poetries and politics.

IN THE ROCKIES

Elk Lakes, St. Mary’s Alpine, Akamina–Kishinena, Top of the World, Height of the Rockies, Elk Lakes, St. Mary’s Alpine and Bagaboo Glacier.

K IS FOR KUJUNDZIC

In 1993, Talonbooks released George Ryga’s posthumous writing, Summerland, a collection of essays and excerpts that reflects Ryga’s deeply political nature and his abiding sympathy for the downtrodden. The book was edited by Ann Kujundzic, a guiding force within the George Ryga Society in Summerland until it was disbanded in 2014. Born in Scotland, Kujundzic married artist Zeljko Kujundzic at age nineteen. They immigrated to Canada and raised five children. The couple went on to help establish the Kootenay School of Art in Nelson. Her latest book New Ground: A Memoir of Art in the Kootenays (Caitlin Press $24.95) covers her life as a feminist, artist and activist fighting for women’s reproductive rights and social justice. She later joined the Raging Grannies.

L IS FOR LIU

The Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver is home to approximately 800 objects pertaining to Cantonese opera and worked in Ontario’s IT industry prior to receiving a Silver Birch award in 2009 for her debut YA novel, The Chicken transplantation in reverse, Embrace the Chi-kun: A History of Scottish poetry and attempted rape, infertility, and three years teaching in Africa taught her that choosing to grow forward is essential—even when you can’t go back. Her degrees are in psychology, education, and social work. In Growing Forward When You Can’t Go Back (Bethany House $12.99), she shares stories of contemporary and biblical women who transcended extraordinary pain and grief.

J IS FOR JANICE

Janice Strong, who lives on a rural property outside of Cranbrook, is a hiker, snowshoer, skier and photographer whose images are widely published. She has led hikes for the City of Cranbrook’s Parks & Recreation department for many years and written Mountain Footsteps: Hikes in the East Kootenay of Southeastern British Columbia (Rocky Mountain Books $30). A fourth edition in 2018 has been revised and updated, including enhanced colour maps and photos, as well as bike trails. The trails and routes are between the Rocky Mountains in the east and the Purcell Range in the west, including trips in the Cranbrook, Kimberley, Creston, Invermere, Radium and Fernie areas. Also featured are the BC provincial Parks Akamina–Kishinena, Top of the World, Height of the Rockies, Elk Lakes, St. Mary’s Alpine and Bagaboo Glacier.

M IS FOR MATWICHUK

Every life is full of close calls, is it not? So, the debut poetry collection of Laura Matwichuk has a beguiling title, Near Miss (Nightwood $18.95). Subjects for this SFU Writers Studio grad range from actual cataclysms such as meteor collisions and volcanic eruptions to everyday failures and accidents.” As we go about our fragile, miraculous, ever hopeful lives on planet Earth, we hope someone will indulge in a tempest headline. Near Miss is a Hit.

K IS FOR KUJUNDZIC

Laura Matwichuk

K IS FOR KUJUNDZIC

Ann Kujundzic: feminist, artist, activist

P IS FOR PAWLICK-KIENLEN

Laurie Pawlik-Kienlen writes in her treehouse overlooking the ocean at Vancouver. Her experiences with a schizophrenic mother, foster homes, family estrangement, attempted rape, infertility, and three years teaching in Africa taught her that choosing to grow forward is essential—even when you can’t go back. Her degrees are in psychology, education, and social work. In Growing Forward When You Can’t Go Back (Bethany House $12.99), she shares stories of contemporary and biblical women who transcended extraordinary pain and grief.

O IS FOR OLGA

Olga Campbell

O IS FOR OLGA

Seventeen years ago, after listening to a radio programme about second generation Holocaust survivors, Olga Campbell experienced repressed feelings of grief and sorrow. All members of her mother’s family had perished in the Shoah but no details ever emerged. Campbell’s A Whisper Across Time (Jubaji Press $32) depicts her family’s experience of the Holocaust and the first advertent legacy of trauma. Described as a healing ritual, a Shamamic Soul retrieval and a celebration of life, A Whisper Across Time resulted in an art exhibit last November in conjunction with the Jewish Book Festival in Vancouver.

N IS FOR NARSIMHAN

Mahtab Narsimhan

N IS FOR NARSIMHAN

Mumbai-born Mahtab Narsimhan immigrated to Canada in 1997 and worked in Ontario’s IT industry prior to receiving a Silver Birch award in 2009 for her debut YA novel, The Chicken.

It was Gordon Campbell's regime that instructed ICBC to become more litigation-friendly, and it's not hard to see why. Canadian citizens try to get compensation as accident victims. Possibly it says something about his popularity, after a decade-long premiership that included the Winter Olympics, that the first critical book to examine his legacy isn't B.C.-published. From the McGill-Queens's university press, UNBC professors J.R. Larche and Tracy Summers have gathered 368 pages of critical essays for The Campbell Revolution? Power, Politics and Policy in British Columbia (MQUP $31.46).

Elizabeth Ross' poetic primer for new mothers, After Birth (Palimpsest $18.95), the messy moments and disdistant discoveries she writes about include "not having the water birth you planned" and coming to terms with a daughter's Cinderella obsession. Plus, there's the unanticipated burden of caring for a parent or perhaps developing "an unhealthy fixation with Real- tor.ca." Piercingly apt, wry and a tad disturbing, Ross' second book "taps into the contradictions of creation—joy, distress, lassitude." 978-171135775

Covering topics as different as domesticity, sensuality and disease, Leslie Timmins' debut collection of poems Every Shameless Ray (Inanna, $18.95) has been described as one that "shimmers with a radiant engagement of life." The poems are arranged in three linked movements ending with a meditation on the visual artist Matisse. Timmins' poems have been shortlisted for the Montreal International Poetry Prize. Timmins' currently reviews for Event magazine, and is a member of the powerX6 writing collective.

So You Think You Need a Lawyer?: Committee for Social Justice (free Kobo download) by Ann M. Pavlick tells the true story of her struggle as an advocate for those with a brain injury. Before her brain injury, Pavlick was a special education teacher and was instrumental in the development of the Peabody Language Kits for disadvantaged children. After her accident she co-authored, with her late husband Leon E. Pavlick, former curator of botany at the Royal B.C. Museum, Red Pines on the Ridge. They were also able to draft two further nature books—Foxes on the Ridge and Aspens on the Ridge. For further information about her work to promote change to protect the brain injured, see acquiredbraininjuryawareness.com 978-0-228-50163-3

With the forthcoming release of the second in her Crow Stories trilogy for the 4-8 years old crowd, The Ranger (Groundwood $17.95) a follow-up to The Outlaw, Nancy Vo is one of six B.C.-writers with books from Groundwood Books. The author/illustrator will be joined in the fall list by B.C.-based Bill Richardson, Anne Fleming, Scot Ritchie, Sara Cassidy and Slava Kolesar. Vo's new story explores the nuanced friendship between a ranger and a fox.


Non-Fiction Contest winners feature in every volume since 1989 and have received recognition from the Canadian Magazine Awards, National Magazine Awards and Best Canadian Essays. All entries considered for publication. Entry fee of $34.95 includes a one-year subscription. We encourage writers from diverse backgrounds and experience levels to submit their work.

Visit eventmagazine.ca
Cecil Paul and Briony Penny on Maple Leaf Island, Stories from the Magic Canoe of Wa’xaid

Mountain Books $30 as told to Briony Penny, who is also releasing her own 400-page book, A Year on the Wild Side: A West Coast Naturalist’s Almanac (Touchwood $26).

“My name is Wa’xaid,” Cecil Paul says, “given to me by my people. ‘Wa’ is ‘the river’, ‘Xaid’ is ‘good’—good river. Sometimes the river is not good. I am a Xesdu’wäxw (Huschduwaschdu) for ‘blue, milky, glacial water’. Our destination is what I would like to talk about, and a boat—I call it my magic canoe. It is a magical canoe because there is room for everyone who wants to come into it to paddle together. The currents against it are very strong but I believe we can reach that destination and this is the reason for our survival.”

Magic Canoe: 978-1-77151520-2

Henry Yu

Born in Vancouver as a fourth generation Canadian, with a PhD in history from Princeton University, Henry Yu first published Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exclusion in Modern America (Oxford University Press, 2001) which won the Norris and Carol Hundley award. Yu is a professor at UBC and a board member of the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of B.C. He is currently working on a book entitled How Tiger Woods Lost His Stripes: Finding Ourselves in History.

STELLAR SUMMER BOOKS

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Introduction by Gall sjalgur

“A sparkling assemblage of writers who share as to what the sea, land, and nature of their islands matter. A wonderful read—no, rather, many wonderful reads.”

—Ronald Winge

We who live on the islands of the Salish Sea know how beautiful it is to be part of this magical place. Each writer in this volume reflects the islands themselves. Poets, novelists, short-story-tellers, thinkers, writers, mysterious and true: We do this island’s culture.

—Elizabeth May

This unprecedented anthology of previously unpublished brilliant memories, essays and poems, gather forty skilled and award-winning island writers in one place for the first time. The many islands of the Salish Sea, and the waters that surround them—are considered one of the most threatened ecosystems in Canada.


For more information, please visit www.bccompwb.com.
Thank you for this award. It is most kind. Nice too have the ceremony here in Victoria if it can be arranged. As you suspect know, I've been ill these past three years with an ongoing, undiagnosed inflammatory disease which has attacked my immune system, and I am prediabetic among other pernicious drugs. The media leave me a bit challenged, but short of being in hospital I will be there...

Patrick Lane
Victoria

Bohemian rhapsody

BC BookWorld helps me to keep my sanity! I feel I'm not the only one dig- ging into my reading questions, and kicking the fences. Every issue goes around in my Bohemian Household for weeks and weeks, moves from kitchen table to purse and back. Articles are discussed, wish- lists made, reviews ripped out and 'magnetically' attached to our fridge yay, part it finally ends up, full coffee and wine stains, in the wood stove or cat litter box. BookWorld is my tangible sanity experience. Thank you!

Titia Jetten
Ladysmith

Humble opinion

Even after all these years, I always look forward to receiving BC BookWorld. I love following what's going on in the book world. In 1982 I started a little second-hand bookstore on May Street, in Victoria's Fairfield neighbourhood, called Maystreet Books. Two years later I teamed up with Diana Leeming, who had been working at Ivvys Bookshop in Oak Bay for years, to start Hawthorne Books, which was located just offFort Street on Cook Street.

We were the first shop in Victoria to carry both new and second-hand books, which doesn't sound so unusual now, but was rather revolution- ary at the time. In 2005 I started another book- store, this time in Port Alberni. A lot has happened in the past thirty-plus years, but despite all of the dire predictions about the death of the book, here we are: people are still reading, books are being published in ever-increasing numbers thanks to the Internet. The old fashioned book review, in my humble opinion, is more important than ever.

Heather Graham
Graham Island

Passionate reader

My wife and I are avid readers of BC BookWorld and The Ormsby Review. Together, they fill a tremendous void in a world where any culture is not sufficiently cherished, not supported by the plutocracy.

I am about as passionate about Carpe Diem as I am about wine and dungs, and I cannot overstate my thankfulness for your many contribu-

Lore Maingon
Courtney

Peace offering

Thank you for such a great publica-

tion. I appreciated the review of Dam-

ming the Peace and its identification of a background agenda for the proj-

ect, as well as a serious downstream environmental issues in Peace River Country.

Neither the book, nor the review seems to appreciate the devastating im-

pact the new dam will have on the Lake Athabasca wetlands, water levels in great Slave Lake and the probable end of the Mackenzie as a navigable river.

The Peace has always been a major hydraulic contributor to Lake Atha-

basa, and downstream lakes and riv-

ers. The construction of the Bennett Dam materially changed peak flow requirements, thus less water through the spillways for downstream needs.

Also, climate change has materially reduced the forest capability to retain water. Trees killed by the Mountain Pine Beetle, and then logged, do not contribute to the land’s ability to mod-

erate water delivery.

What has bothered me in all of this is that the GNWT government seems blissfully unaware of the peril associated with these changes. I have never seen a protest by them about the B.C. government’s actions.

Christopher Wright
Digby, Nova Scotia, Purported Scallip Capital of Canada

May to July to provide enough water to float the tugs and barges that car-

ried, and continue to carry, seasonal re-supply materials to river communi- ties and the Western Arctic.

Site C will further reduce, and probably eliminate, peak flows. Another important factor is that the Peace has always been critically de-

pend on snow pack for its water.

With climate change, that snow pack is endangered and instead of having a reliable annual snow fall, quantities year by year have materially changed. It is only infrequently that the Rockies will see an “historic” snow pack.

Last year they called an interna-

tional tender for four new double hull barges. This $19.5 million fleet of barges, paid for by Ottawa, may have a very short working life.

Joe Rosenblatt
(1933–2019)

Michael Yates
(1938–2019)

Patrick Lane
(1933–2019)

Wayson Choy
(1939–2019)

Keith Harrison
(1945–2019)

Greg Younging
(1961–2019)

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