YOUR FREE GUIDE TO BOOKS & AUTHORS

WISDOM FROM THE WOODS

Harold Macy’s stories reveal the mysteries of rural BC life.

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VERONICA STRONG-BOAG
Uncovering BC’s forgotten first female MLA. P 10-11

EARLY DAYS OF FLIGHT
Angus Scully profiles Canadian First World War pilots. P 8

GEOFF MYNETT
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DOROTHY DITTRICH
Love, grief and the healing power of music. P 22

DALE TRACY
Magical poetry with startling surprises. P 29
You’re invited to party with the penguins

“Cute, comical, and relatable to anyone who has traveled a long distance to visit someone... An enjoyable book that can be read over and over. Highly Recommended.”
—CM Reviews

Get within hugging distance of the legendary grizzly

“This phenomenal book is a must... [Readers] won’t be able to resist being drawn in. Highly Recommended.”
—School Library Connection

DON’T MISS

“An engaging book that will leave readers spouting facts about beavers.”
—School Library Journal

By environmental journalist and award-winning author, Frances Backhouse
Hey! We’re alive!

In 1969, Robert Davidson famously raised the first totem pole in ninety years on Haida Gwaii (at Masset). As a host of potlatches, a carver of masks and totem poles, and a performer and teacher of traditional Haida songs and dances, Davidson has been one of the driving forces in the resurgence of Haida culture in the aftermath of colonization. “The totem pole was actually a catalyst, to make a statement,” explained Davidson years later. “Hey! We’re alive, and we want to be part of this world.” Now, Echoes of the Supernatural: The Graphic Art of Robert Davidson (Figure 1 $60) is the first retrospective of his work in over 40 years. Written with Davidson’s long-time gallery partner Gary Wyatt, it includes more than 150 photos of his prints, as well as images of over 50 paintings, painted woven hats, sculptures and jewellery, and dozens of archival photos. Davidson’s Haida name is Gwaawsl Gwaayiisaay, which means “Eagle of the Dawn.”

A young mother loses her husband while still grieving the death of both her parents and spirals into a dark period of pain and rage in Chelsea Wakelyn’s debut novel, What Remains of Ellie Jane (Dundurn $24.99). Sam was Ellie Jane’s soulmate, the man she planned to grow old with, but now she is left on her own to raise her two small children who need daily feeding and attention. She feels betrayed by Sam’s secrets and how he died, and she is barely able to cope, let alone make small talk with neighbours or relatives. Wakelyn employs dark humour, especially in describing what Ellie Jane thinks about saying, but doesn’t, to well-meaning well-wishers. Her boss suggests Ellie Jane take a leave of absence. As the lonely days progress, Ellie Jane becomes obsessed with a local murder mystery, begins internet dating (it’s disastrous), and contacts a “space-time wizard” on Craigslist, magically believing it will get her close to Sam. Despite the topic of death, Wakelyn’s compelling portrait of Ellie Jane is full of life, and it’s a page-turner.

Rowing up in “a noisy East Vancouver house where there were never enough bathrooms, privacy, or salt and vinegar chips to go around,” young Jen Sookfong Lee, the youngest of five daughters, was born to parents for whom immigration from China was a recent memory. The whole family turned to popular culture—the soap operas, the fashion magazines, the celebrity gossip, and the hockey fandom—to find a way into white culture. Even her grandfather, who lived with them (and who had paid the $500 head tax in 1913 when he immigrated) listened to Chuck Berry, and her mother, who came from Hong Kong, learned to bake “the perfect sponge cake.” Losing her father before she turned 12 years of age, Lee felt like an orphan and turned to reading. As she describes in her memoir, Superfan: How Pop Culture Broke My Heart (M&S $24.95), yet she admits her relationship with pop culture will always remain, that it is how she cobbles together her own “identities and memberships from the cultural storm.”
## Spring Forward with New BC Books

### Touchwood Editions

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<tr>
<td>To Track a Traitor</td>
<td>Iona Whishaw</td>
<td>A transatlantic tale of sibling rivalry, infidelity, and espionage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crip Up the Kitchen</td>
<td>Jules Sherred</td>
<td>Recipes to make the kitchen accessible and enjoyable for disabled and neurodivergent cooks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhubarb</td>
<td>Søren Staun Petersen</td>
<td>35 savory &amp; sweet recipes that highlight the versatility of rhubarb.</td>
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<td>The Sipster’s Pocket Guide to 50 Must-Try BC Wines</td>
<td>Luke Whitall</td>
<td>The eagerly awaited second volume the Vancouver Sun calls “the perfect go-to guide.”</td>
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<td>Room at the Inn</td>
<td>Glen A. Hoffer; forward by Greg Nesteroff</td>
<td>A fully illustrated social history profiling 40 historic hotels and the people who built, ran, and visited them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galena Bay Odyssey</td>
<td>Ellen Schwartz</td>
<td>An eye-opening memoir about life on a communal farm in the Kootenays during the 1970s.</td>
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<td>Cathy Converse</td>
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### Rocky Mountain Books

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<tr>
<td>Mr. Mindbomb</td>
<td>Bob Hunter, Bobbi Hunter, Elizabeth May</td>
<td>A collection of essays detailing the achievements of a renowned environmental hero.</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
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<td>Searching for Happy Valley</td>
<td>Jane Marshall</td>
<td>A global quest to comprehend the meaning of “Happy Valley” in Canada, Morocco, and Nepal.</td>
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<td>Lyn Baldwin</td>
<td>A beautifully illustrated natural history memoir about growing-up in the southern interior of British Columbia.</td>
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<td>Robert Sandford</td>
<td>A pandemic-inspired look at the current and future challenges facing mountain communities in western Canada.</td>
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Canada’s Klondike gold rush of 1896–1899 attracted people from all over the world, including Johnny Lind from Ontario. Most suffered in the harsh North; and few made their fortune. But Johnny Lind did and went on to use his new wealth to establish a successful cement company, unlikelike so many others who gambled away their earnings. Lind also left behind diaries from his Klondike days for generations of the Lind family, as told in Tales of an Unseen Sourdough: The Extraordinary Klondike Adventures of Johnny Lind (Page Two $39.95). Written by Johnny’s grandson Phil Lind with Robert Dehl, these stories shed new light on the events of the gold rush and its hub, Dawson Creek. “Sourdough” was the name miners gave to those who had survived a whole winter in the North, giving them credibility. “Sourdough was the main bread eaten during the gold rush,” writes Phil Lind, adding, “a prospector protected their sourdough bread starter by keeping it close to the body, usually in a small container hung around the neck to keep the yeast warm and active.” Phil Lind became a collector of Klondike memorabilia, a collection he recently donated to UBC Library including diaries, letters and other personal items from the 40,000 people who joined the historic gold rush.

**DURING THE KLODNIKE GOLD RUSH, DAWSON CITY was hailed as the “Paris of the North” for its saloons, gambling halls and especially its theatres. In venues with names like Grand Opera House, Tivoli Theatre and the Orpheum, live theatre flourished until it gave way to cinema when an enterprising theatre manager, Alexander Pantages, brought the first films to the city on June 18, 1900. Many decades later, hundreds of boxes of silent films, mostly intact, were found buried in the permafrost when an old hockey arena was being demolished, as described in Hollywood in the Klondike. (Lost Moose Books $34.95). Including a good general history of the Klondike Gold Rush, the book links the two cities with icons such as Charlie Chaplin and Pan-Theater’s Orpheum, live theatre flourished until it gave way to cinema when an enterprising theatre manager, Alexander Pantages, brought the first films to the city on June 18, 1900. Many decades later, hundreds of boxes of silent films, mostly intact, were found buried in the permafrost when an old hockey arena was being demolished, as described in Hollywood in the Klondike. (Lost Moose Books $34.95). Including a good general history of the Klondike Gold Rush, the book links the two cities with icons such as Charlie Chaplin and Pantages himself, who went on to control a chain of theatres across North America.

**Ivy towers & London pubs, an education**

Carellin Brooks, a UBC lecturer and author of four books, has published her debut collection of poetry called Learned (BookHug $20). It’s set primarily in the 1990s when Brooks was at Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship (one of the world’s richest and most prestigious scholarship programs), during which she learned as much from London’s BDSM subculture as she did in the ivory towers of academe. Her explorations span the body as much as the mind, and there’s vulnerability in these poems, like the verses about a photo shoot for a media interview before Brooks sets off to England:

Black leather biker jacket shrugged over, / thick hide, weight of comfort.
Protect me.” And boldness when Brooks asserts her political side wearing a bawdy T-shirt: “Mr. President I murmur Please / Reconsider your stance / Don’t Ask Don’t Tell / His weary hand in mine.” After she earns her PhD in Modern Foreign Languages, Brooks returns to Vancouver: “Soaked stucco, builders’ rush / to erect the cheapest, California-style, / razed temperate rainforest” and the city’s tainted drug overdose epidemic, that makes her wonder, “Can I save anyone? / least of all myself? / Open ques-

**Petroglyphs on Gabriola**

Explorers of Gabriola Island seeking the historic petroglyphs created by ancestors of the Snuneymuxw First Nation can now learn the stories behind the rock art in Snuneymuxw History Written in Places and Spaces: Ancestors’ Voices—An Echo in Time (New Society $15). Written by elder and traditional knowledge keeper Geraldine Manson the book has been produced through a partnership between Snuneymuxw First Nation, the Gabriola Historical and Museum Society, and New Society Publishers. Manson shares sacred knowledge passed down through Snuneymuxw oral history. This unique work gives an overview of the many Gabriola petroglyphs as well as other sites of cultural significance and traditional Hul’q’umi’num place names on the island.

Geraldine Manson and petroglyph, Gabriola Island

**Photo by Adad Hannah from Between Us**
New books from
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Tamara Williamson

Dave Bidini calls this literary memoir by indie musican Tamara Williamson “an exquisite and unique book about growing up and living in an aquatic world, told with the intimacy of a whisper.”
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978-1-77412-280-0 • APRIL

Storylines
How Words Shape Our World
J. Edward Chamberlin

A brilliant and timely exploration of the power of stories and songs—from both the distant past and today’s news-rooms—explorer and disinformation with hope and possibility.
FEATURED BACKLIST
SHORT WRITINGS BY RICHARD WAGAMESE

Richard Wagamese was a writer of breathtaking honesty and inspiration. Always striving to be a better, stronger person, Wagamese shared his journey through writing, encouraging others to do the same.

EMBERS
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ONE DRUM
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RICHARD WAGAMESE SELECTED
What Comes From Spirit
with an introduction by Dsinw Haydik Taylor
$34.95 • HARDCOVER | 160 PGS. • 5.5” x 8.5” • 978-1-77412-218-4

The Morning Bell Brings the Broken Hearted
A Novel
Jennifer Manuel

Exploring the intricacies of power, culture and emotion when a non-Indigenous person moves to an Indigenous community, this story is as captivating and perceptive as her bestselling, award-winning novel The Humanness of Things That Float.
FICTION | $32.95
PAPERBACK | 272 PGS. • 6” x 9” • 978-1-77412-219-1 • APRIL

Pacific Voyages
The Story of Sail in the Great Ocean
Gordon Miller

Historian and artist Gordon Miller is known for his ability to incorporate historically accurate detail into his stunning paintings. In Pacific Voyages, he pays tribute to the few wooden ships that first ventured across the great Pacific.
HISTORY | ILLUSTRATIONS: 978-1-77412-347-4 • JUNE

Scandal at the Savoy
A Precilla Tappet Mystery Book 2
Ron Base and Prudence Emery

The rich and famous are converging on the iconic Savoy Hotel in the swinging 60s—including a Broadway producer with anger issues, a demanding Indian rajah, and a famous film star with kooky predictions. All is as it should be—until the murder of a showgirl threatens to scandalize the hotel.
MYSTERY | $18.95
PAPERBACK | 220 PGS. • 5.5” x 8.5” • 978-1-77412-338-2 • MARCH

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6 BC BOOKWORLD • SPRING 2023
Spend time with working folks in the towns of upper Vancouver Island or BC’s interior and you’ll recognize the characters in Harold Macy’s unexpectedly fun collection of stories—men and women who still get their hands dirty when they work, usually in tough jobs and marginal, resource-based economies. Or, if you’ve yet to discover the natural grandeur and salty tongues in the bush, then All the Bears Sing will serve you like a Lonely Planet guide to community life where conventional wage-earning is always a good idea, but typically in short supply, and where dynamite-blasting, heli-logging, smoke-jumping with summer fire-fight crews, and bottle and junk collecting from the dump in winter endure as local employment options.

Women who’ve put up with all the crap that men and life can throw at them, old hippies, young stump-farm migrants from the city scuffling to live rural on soil that’s hard to till—Macy’s tales aren’t necessarily about lovable losers or roughnecks who eat nails for breakfast, although you’ll meet a few. He writes what used to be called “yarns” stories that sound so believable they might even be true. There are 23 of them in this collection, ranging in the 2-, 3-, 8- or 10-page length; just don’t expect the cultivated, ideologically approved fiction that gets nominated for the usual CanLit awards. Macy’s style is less predictable, yet familiar. Written in simple language with twists, occasionally gripping plots, the contingency of urgent decisions, and told with surprising effect from either male and female character points of view, these are “entertainments.” That’s not to dismiss the form: some of Graham Greene’s books and stories that rank among the finest literature of the 20th century he called entertainments.

The skill in making small-town talk work is to bring quirky characters alive in the reader’s mind, so that in an ordinary sense even when their experiences don’t make sense, they still have a way of pointing to a deeper truth. Raymond Carver, the Yakima, Washington, storyteller who revitalized American fiction from its New York-centered neuroses during the late seventies/early eighties understood this too, piquing his “K-Mart Realism.” A gentle guy who had to fight his way through life, this was Carver’s honest response to South America’s “Magic Realism.” His version was tales from the tired late-night shoppers you see in the glare of US discount stores, people who hung out on the dream, people with trouble coming down. What Harold Macy delivers is a kind of homogenized, buck-eyed Buck Mart Realism,” the kind you find in BC’s struggling mill-towns, where nobody passes the day-olds without any shoes or socks on.

“Gelignite,” one of the collection’s best, offers insight into why an Okanagan farm—raised wife might simply drive off one day after thirty years of marriage, encounter a stranger in a Princeton pub, and venture even further. You can hear echoes of JaneRule and Anne Cameron in her voice when she says, “How often do you get another chance?”

The bush is another country. Macy’s known it forever. “Unclipped” and “Into the Silverthrone Caldera” depict the shattering side of life when horrendous job-site accidents or catastrophic mash-ups crash like lightning, destroying everything utterly. Taut moral fables like “Donkey Shame” and “Ditch Clothes” depict paying-it-forward justice when The Others finally arrives in a strange reversal of fate reminiscent of Alice Munro at the controls.

The book’s one-long form contribution, “Overburdened,” relates a tale of Gulf Island migrant newomers, land developers and the mechanics of sub-soil resource “harvesting.” Achieving moments of real narrative sophistication, there’s plot and a mystery that’s too BC to be purely invented, but what a fine yarn it is. Unless you’ve lived your entire life in downtown Vancouver, everyone in BC has a little bit of country in them, don’t they? That’s just enough to savour these welcome accounts from a witty storyteller who knows what it’s all about.

Trevor Carolan’s most recent book is Road Trips: Journeys in the Unspoiled World (Mother Tongue, 2020).
In Our Youth: The Lives, Adventures, and Sacrifices of Early Canadian Flyers by Angus Scully (Heritage House 2015)

BY GRAHAM CHANDLER

“He possesses resolution, initiative, presence of mind, sense of humour, judgement: is alert, cheerful, optimistic, happy-go-lucky, generally a good fellow, and frequently lacking in imagination.”

So stated an article published in the September 1918 issue of The Lancet, then as now one of the world’s foremost medical journals. It was written by two officers of Britain’s Royal Air Force who were discussing the characteristics desired in a pilot. The article added, “It appears necessary for the well-being of the average pilot that he indulge in a really riotous evening at least once or twice a month.” In short, “The type of fellow wanted as a pilot … is the clean bred chap with lots of the devil in him.”

Nanaimo-based retired educator Angus Scully, who taught history for 30 years has come up with In Our Youth: The Lives, Adventures, and Sacrifices of Early Canadian Flyers, a super-sleuthed book stuffed with little-known facts about early Canadian pilots, focusing on the 15 years between the Wright Brothers’ historical flight and Armistice Day 1918. He does it in a creative way starting with a single photograph of 29 men standing in front of a Curtiss JN-3 biplane at the Curtiss Flying School—students, instructors and mechanics—in July, 1916 in Long Branch, Ontario. Fortuitously, the men’s names were included so Scully set about painstakingly researching the details of each of their respective lives through old newspaper articles, diaries, museum documents and government files.

Scully’s digging paid off as he found much material to illustrate what these young men became entrepeneurs and pioneers integral to the birth of commercial aviation in Canada in the 1920s and 1930s—like Osborne Orr, Major Earl Godfrey and George Trim. George Taylor was a founder and the first president of the Aerial League of Canada in 1919, which had the goal of applying aviation to business. The first flight across the Rockies, aerial mapping, and the formation of the Pacific Aviation Company in 1920 (BC’s first commercial aviation venture) are among the details.

An excellent selection of vintage photos is liberally sprinkled throughout. For readers whose appetites are whetted and are excited about learning more, Scully provides a thorough bibliography and source listing. 9781772034219

Canadian-trained pilots included novelist William Faulkner, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature, and actor Richard Arlen, who starred in Wings, the first motion picture to win an Academy Award.

Probably the most famous Canadian who undertook wartime pilot training with RAF Canada at that time was another Nobel Prize winner, Lester B. “Mike” Pearson. Following an initial stint with the army medical corps, he transferred to the RAF for pilot training in 1918. It wasn’t to be. He survived a training crash and then was severely injured when hit by a London bus during a blackout. However, those accidents didn’t seem to be omens of any sort. Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 for his work in helping create the first United Nations peacekeeping force, and he was Prime Minister of Canada from 1963 to 1968.

Angus Scully brings to life some of the worst fears of the early pilots. One is the mystery of what was then called the spinning nose dive, now just called a spin. Put simply, a spin is a nose-down, out-of-control, ever-faster spiral dive. Until 1916 it was considered a death sentence. Then one Royal Navy Lieutenant Parke recovered from a spin by inadvertently doing everything wrong. The initial urge was to pull back on the control stick, whereas counter-intuitively, Parke’s recovery started with full-forward stick. Ever since, spin recovery is a standard part of all pilot training curricula.

Post war, In Our Youth delves into how these young men became entrepeneurs and pioneers integral to the birth of commercial aviation in Canada in the 1920s and 1930s—like Osborne Orr, Major Earl Godfrey and George Trim. George Taylor was a founder and the first president of the Aerial League of Canada in 1919, which had the goal of applying aviation to business. The first flight across the Rockies, aerial mapping, and the formation of the Pacific Aviation Company in 1920 (BC’s first commercial aviation venture) are among the details.

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Vancouver-based writer Graham Chandler writes frequently on aviation topics. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, he also holds a PhD in archaeology from the University of London.
Books for the doers, the thinkers, and the changemakers

I Want a Better Catastrophe
Navigating the Climate Crisis with Grief, Hope, and Gallows Humor

Andrew Boyd

The most realistic yet least depressing end-of-the-world-as-we-know-it-guide out there.
—Foreword Reviews, starred review

Compost Science for Gardeners
Simple Methods for Nutrient Rich Soil

Robert Pavlis

Myth-buster Robert Pavlis has done it again, writing an essential resource on the scene (and art) of composting.
—Rebecca Martin, technical editor, Mother Earth News magazine

Escape from Overshoot
Economics for a Planet in Peril

Peter A. Victor

Uses sound economics to map a path out of overshoot. Highly recommended.
—Herman Daly

Childhood Unplugged
Practical Advice to Get Kids Off Screens and Find Balance

Katherine Johnson Martinko

Ditch the devices and bring back the magic of being a kid!

At NEW SOCIETY PUBLISHERS we are committed to building a just and ecologically sustainable society for the benefit of future generations. Find out more about how we put people and planet first at www.newsociety.com
Veronica Strong-Boag’s impressive biography explores the flawed legacy of a pioneering BC feminist.

A Liberal-Labour Lady: The Times and Life of Mary Ellen Spear Smith by Veronica Strong-Boag (UBC Press $32.95)

By Tom Sandborn

What Happened to Mary Ellen Smith?

Mary Ellen Smith was elected by a wide margin in Vancouver, to become the first female MLA in the BC Legislature: “Not only did the women of my fair city stand behind me ... but the men were there, too.”

“I would be ashamed to admit that I had risen from the ranks. When I rise it will be with the ranks, and not from the ranks.”
—EUGENE V. DEBS, US labour leader and socialist agitator
while becoming BC’s first female MLA, and the British Empire’s first female cabinet minister (albeit without portfolio, staff or stipend).

One of this remarkable biography’s chief virtues is that it resists the temptation to flatten the contradictions in Smith’s life or to explain them away. What emerges is a magisterial study of an important and too-long ignored figure in BC history, a masterclass in how to account for our bewildering past and present.

As a child of a miner and then a miner’s wife, Smith saw first-hand the destructive impact of 19th-century capitalism on the workers who were her neighbours and family members in the hard-scrabble coal towns of northern England and then in the lethal BC coalfields around Nanaimo after she and her husband, Ralph Smith, moved to Canada in 1892. In the north of England, the young couple had already become involved in Methodist church life and the populist, co-operative projects and politics often associated with dissenting churches in 19th-century Britain. Never advocates for armed rebellion, or of militant class-conscious struggle, the Smiths saw the cross-class cooperation promoted by the Liberal-Labour tradition as the way forward for workers, and they came close to Liberal Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his wife Zoe. While moving toward the political centre along with Ralph, Mary Ellen still advocated for women’s suffrage and higher wages for women workers, as well as for backward and destructive policies like Asian exclusion and eugenics. After Ralph’s death in 1917, she ran in the by-election to replace him in BC’s Legislative Assembly, where he had renewed his political life after a few years of post-Ottawa business ventures. Her victory, as previously noted, made history, as did her brief stint as a provincial cabinet minister.

As Strong-Boag observes, “In both rejecting and reinforcing injustices, this flawed but extraordinary woman deserves far more than canonization or condemnation.” Strong-Boag, an award-winning historian associated with the Social Justice Institute and the Department of Educational Studies at UBC, and the departments of History and Gender Studies at UVic, sets out in this book to provide her readers with enough context and detail to make our own assessments of Smith’s mixed legacy. She brings to this task impressive strengths, both as a researcher and as a literary portrait painter. Her account of Mary Ellen’s and Ralph Smith’s personalities, and the political milieu in which they lived, reveals a sense of nuance and character worthy of a novelist.

We read history to see where we’ve been and to plot our course into the future. This thoughtful and informative study offers substantial help on both counts. It will be of interest to contemporary feminists and union organizers, to general readers and to fans of BC history. Highly recommended.”

9780774867252
Highly recommended.

Veronica Strong-Boag brings to this task impressive strengths, both as a researcher and as a literary portrait painter.
The Descendants
by Robert Chursinoff
(Nightwood Editions $24.95)

By Valerie Green

In July 1998, two teenagers are running away from a tragedy involving Hells Angels bikers. Jonah Steger and Ruby Samaradin had played together as youngsters in the Kootenays despite coming from two very different backgrounds. When they reached their teens and met again at school, they instantly fell in love. The first sentence in Robert Chursinoff’s debut novel, The Descendants, describes Jonah’s feelings for Ruby as “when you love someone with the force of an atomic bomb.” It’s a passionate opening that draws the reader in immediately. But their love is doomed.

The Descendants is a captivating story of love, family trauma and loss set against the background of the complex history of BC’s Doukhobors (the pacifist Christian group that emigrated from Russia to Canada in 1899, many members of which eventually settled in Grand Forks and southeastern BC’s Slocan Valley).

Chursinoff’s characters are compelling as they struggle to re-evaluate their pacifist roots, their long-misunderstood religious beliefs and the actions of the Sons of Freedom sect (a.k.a. the Freidomites a small, breakaway group of Doukhobors who protested through public nudity and arson). The days of the struggles between the pacifist Community Doukhobors and the Sons of Freedom were over by the late 1990s, but the painful memories remain for Jonah and Ruby, who are suffering the consequences of their earlier Doukhobor ancestors.

The structure of Chursinoff’s story is unusual. Not only is he writing a fictional story of love and hope, but he also begins each section with a non-fiction paragraph or two about the Doukhobor’s complicated past. This helps the reader understand his characters a little better. There is reference to the original Doukhobor leader—Peter V. Verigin, a pacifist Doukhobor—and how he arrived in Canada from Russia and later mysteriously died in 1935 in an explosion on a train, a mystery that was never completely solved.

Jonah and Ruby feel the reverberations of some of these historical happenings—especially Jonah, whose mother is still affected by the humiliation of being a member of the Sons of Freedom. When he drives Ruby in his Honda Civic, screeching around mountain road curves as they get closer to home, Jonah wonders what he has done to his family: “Was more shame on its way to his moth- er, already shamed because of her Sons of Freedom family?”

For how long could he and Ruby Samaradin just drive a loop through the West Kootenay towns?” This all makes for an exciting start to the story and encourages the reader to want to know more.

The characters in The Descendants are clearly depicted, showing the author’s compassion for each one of them. There is Virginia (Ruby’s mother), a pious stalwart of the traditional pacifist Doukhobors who only wants the best for her daughter; Sharon (Jonah’s mother), who is trying to put her painful Sons of Freedom past behind her, especially anything that involved stripping naked and burning down buildings; Sharon’s brother, Yuri, who pays the ultimate price; Ruby, the musician, who returns to her Doukhobor roots in 2005 when she writes:

“Today there are an estimated 120,000 Doukhobors and their descendants living primarily in Canada, the United States, Russia and the Caucasus region.” - Robert Chursinoff

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Chursinoff, a musician who has been a drummer for Tegan and Sara, Australian pop star Ben Lee and the Be Good Tanyas, has proven that he has a talent for writing, too, with this rich and exciting novel.

Valerie Green’s most recent book is Providence, the first title in her historical fiction, four-book series called The McBride Chronicles covering six generations of a BC family from the 1840s to present day. sales@valeriegreenauthor.com
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nce, long ago but all too recent for some, Simon McGillivray stood at the crossroads of not only two rivers, but two worlds. In what would become Hazelton, BC, McGillivray—an employee of the Hudson Bay Company—was the first white person to have reached the forks of the Babine and Simpson’s Rivers. As Geoff Mynett notes in River of Mists: People of the Upper Skeena, 1821–1930, the “largely undisturbed way of life” of the Indigenous population “would change forever.” This is Mynett’s third book on the Skeena; one is tempted to call it a tril— ogy, but he probably has more stories to tell. In River of Mists, which is the term the Gitxsan called the Skeena, the author has collected a series of bizarre, tragic, humorous and all-too-human profiles of people pulling against them- selves as much as they pull against this most hostile of environments. While each chapter is a stand-alone story (perfect for dipping into now and again), the author has primarily arranged them chronologically, provid- ing the reader a much more satisfying experience when read as a whole. Yet Mynett’s work has a definite arc to it, and certain characters overlap between pages, resisting the author’s structure and refusing to be bound by a timeline. As with his previous works, the author is consciously aware of it, the more people who pour into Hazelton, the less the surrounding wilderness is described. One can feel it being squeezed out with each succeeding chapter. But, as with his previous works, Mynett is at his best unearthing the varied personalities which occupy his work. The sheer breadth of time and place covered reveals the known and the unknown inhabitants of BC’s history. Edgar Dewdney—our province’s most prolific trailblazer—affixes a flyer early on officially demarking the lots and layout of Hazelton. That he does so without any directives, permission, or even knowledge of the government pretty much says it all about the man, this place and Victoria. At the same time, gold prospector Jack Gillis is putting a gun to his head and pulling the trigger after receiving a “Dear John” letter from his sweetheart back in PEI. That his grave has been kept in pristine condition for decades afterwards is a genuine mystery, which Mynett may or may not have solved. Alongside the historic photos and maps that are pep— ered throughout are excerpts from the Hazelton Queek, a short-lived weekly
The staff of the Hazelton Hospital, 1911–1912: falconer, laundryman, housekeeper, handyman, janitor, matron and doctors.

newspaper, which, although completely handwritten, was printed on a gelatin press owned by an Anglican bishop. “The Skeena just above the town was frozen across last Wednesday night…” and “Mr. Owen, while skating the other day, broke through the ice and had a narrow escape from drowning” are indicative of the dispatches to be found in the Queek. (UBC librarians refer to it as “one of the most unusual British Columbia newspapers digitized” by them.) At least this bishop (William Ridley) appeared well-liked; not so in the case of Father Adrien-Gabriel Morice—a Catholic priest whose arrogance and sense of entitlement had fellow priests beat the tar out of him.

A chief constable arrives along with the new century, bringing with him a handful of policemen and a stellar arrest record. His diary entries have him “getting drunks out of the streets” and stopping the illegal sale of liquor to Indigenous people. These entries are a fantastic peek into the day-to-day struggles of Hazelton as well as what today would be called an abuse of 911.

In other stories, Americans, British and even Russians appear all interested in fur, gold and telecommunication. There is the mystery of the Swedish balloon; a complaint letter from a yesteryear “Karen” whose young son had been exposed to “filthy conditions,” “drunken men” and “bawdy women” while visiting Hazelton. She didn’t write it to the town’s chief constable, but to his manager in Victoria.

Mike Selby, deputy director of the Cranbrook Public Library and award-winning author, has published more than 900 book reviews.

Emily Carr (1871–1945) arrives to make paintings of totem poles, which most of the town’s settlers at the time found grotesque and disturbing. The First World War draws heavily on Hazelton, and four airplanes land—something unthought-of when Simon McGillivray first arrived in 1833.

“I have never yet seen the want and misery,” an American complained in 1871 about his visit through Hazelton. The miserable people he saw were “trying to drag out an existence in hopes that something might turn up.” While he meant gold, Mynett’s expertly researched and accessible stories illustrate something else entirely.

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he general consensus among architectural historians—and Vancouver author Adele Weder does not deviate from this orthodoxy—is that Ron Thom’s signature building is Massey College, on the grounds of the University of Toronto. This graduate facility, with its Oxbridge-inflected exterior and a softly organic interior of pearly limestone, glowing softwoods, and warm brick, perfectly encapsulates one side of Thom’s design aesthetic: the need to find sanctuary amid the ever-increasing pace of the industrialized outside world. His other prime directive—to bring those more calming aspects of the wider landscape, forests, mountains, and First Nations heritage. Even those whose interest lies in the design community. 9781771643221

Although Thom did not see battle during the Second World War, something happened to him during that conflict, whether it was while he was on active duty in the Aleutians or learning aircraft navigation on the Prairies. As his first wife recalled, Thom left for Royal Canadian Air Force service sober and returned “soused.” Two and three martini lunches elided into the bottle and returned “soused.” Two and three

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Chasing Rivers: A Whitewater Life
by Tamar Glouberman
(Douglas & McIntyre $26.95)

BY MARK FORSYTHE

Tamar Glouberman is “running the line” through stand- ing waves and  thunderous rap- ids while dodging massive rocks. On occasion her raft becomes “bent like a rubber taco.” Welcome aboard the liquid roller coaster of a whitewater raft guide. Chasing Rivers: A Whitewater Life is her adrenaline-charged memoir, where the unexpected can be around the next bend in the river.

Glouberman writes from an insider’s perspective after years of guiding on wild, remote rivers; from BC’s Chilko River and Tatshenshini to the Colorado River’s Grand Canyon and leisurely splashes in the Galapagos. A rusty, duct-taped Honda hatchback takes her cross-continent to the next whitewater rush and paying job.

Guide work is physically and mentally demanding. Standing 5 feet 2 inches tall, she is fully tested lugging rafts and supplies, grappling with oars on Class IV rivers, and dealing with male customers who wonder why they’re stuck with a woman. One guest, “Steroid Man,” finds himself “accidentally” bounced out of the raft a few times. Soon enough, he sees the light.

Raised in Montreal, Glouberman started guiding on the Hudson River in upper New York State and on the Ottawa River. Launching her kayak off Rockwell Falls in the Adirondacks sealed her fate. “It was the first time in my life that I’d focused on just one thing while every other thought, and even the outside world, went silent,” she says. Self-doubt vanished for a time too.

Glouberman headed west to BC in the 1990s shortly after the province had tightened regulations when 12 people died rafting in 1987. Five men were lost from a single raft on the Chilko River. Potential risks and the responsibility associated with keeping people safe kept changing and moving on. I wanted life to pause while I got better, physically and mentally.… At nearly 35 I was already old on the river. They say time heals all wounds, but I didn’t have time to spare.”

Today Tamar is back on the water, although now as a wilderness guide introducing people to grizzly bears in more placid coastal waters. 9781771623414

“Rivers. Time. Life. Everything kept changing and moving on. I wanted life to pause while I got better, physically and mentally. At nearly 35 I was already old on the river. They say time heals all wounds, but I didn’t have time to spare.”
— TAMAR GLOUBERMAN

Tamar Glouberman’s frank memoir of life as a whitewater raft guide in a male-dominated business. Partying hard, her life away from the river became darker.
Alexander Varty finds joie de vivre in J-C Poirier’s debut cookbook.

Where the River Narrows: Classic French & Nostalgic Québécois Recipes from St. Lawrence Restaurant by J-C Poirier with Joie Alvaro Kent (Appetite by Random House $45)

BY ALEXANDER VARTY

y apologies, Julia Child. Je suis désolée, Jacques Pépin. But with the publication of Vancouver chef J-C Poirier’s Where the River Narrows, it is now possible that the only French cookbook you’ll ever need was made in BC.

I exaggerate, of course. Beginners still might want to turn to Child’s Mastering the Art of French Cooking for their first beef Bourguignon before tackling Poirier’s marrow-enhanced pot-au-feu. Should you need to break down a bunny before diving into either of Poirier’s toothsome rabbit dishes, Pépin’s Nouveau Complete Techniques will helpfully walk you through what the younger chef assumes that you already know. And even at a hefty 300-plus pages, Poirier’s homeowner debut is not going to knock anyone’s well-thumbed copy of Larousse Gastronomique off the kitchen shelves. It’s a triumph nonetheless.

The arrival of Where the River Narrows is also impeccably well-timed. In late October of last year, Poirier’s restaurant, St. Lawrence, was one of eight Vancouver restaurants awarded a star from the prestigious Michelin organization. “There is so much to love about St. Lawrence with its textured walls, mosaic-tiled floor, antiques and open kitchen,” the anonymous Michelin judges reported. “A hit ever since opening, this charming Québécois bistro shares a true sense of place—it’s even named for the region’s mighty river. Sit close enough to chef/owner Jean-Christophe Poirier’s kitchen to experience the heady aromas of his rustic and hearty French-Canadian cooking.”

The other Michelin honorees—Anna Lena, Barbara Burdock & Co, Kissa Tanto, iZen & Quanjude Beijing Duck House, Masayoshi, and Published on Main—mostly reflect Vancouver’s positioning on the cutting edge of Pacific Rim cuisine. If they’re not explicitly reflecting Japanese or Chinese traditions, they’re combining Asian ingredients like koji and nori with European techniques. (This is something that Poirier’s co-author, Joie Alvaro Kent, has some experience with. In 2020 she co-wrote classically trained chef Angus An’s Maenam: A Fresh Approach to Thai Cooking. Maenam, An’s restaurant, didn’t get a Michelin star in 2022, but it was one of 60 runners-up.)

Poirier and St. Lawrence seem bent on bucking this West Coast focus, however. You’ll search Where the River Narrows’ index in vain for ingredients that wouldn’t have been available to an 18th-century French aristocrat or a 19th-century Québécois peasant: staples here are duck, pork, dairy, root vegetables, apples and maple syrup. Licks of maple syrup: for all that this book offers a reasonably comprehensive guide to classical cuisine, it’s most definitely French cooking with a Canadian twist. Most of what you’ll need to work with Poirier will be available at any well-stocked supermarket, with perhaps a side trip to a superior butcher’s.

Granted, some of what Where the River Narrows has to offer will require patience, concentration and perhaps even daring from home cook. Poirier’s Pâté de Faisan, for instance, is a two-day process, and while his Terrine Chaude de Homard sounds like heaven on a plate, I have yet to muster the courage to make my first scallop mousse. Instead, my household has mostly stuck to the peasant side of the menu. My partner’s first Poirier moment was with the chef’s Saucisses Toujours: Little sausage links. Instead, my household has mostly stuck to the peasant side of the menu. My partner’s first Poirier moment was with the chef’s Saucisses Toujours: Little sausage links.

In addition to being useful, Where the River Narrows is also a pleasure to read and to hold. Jennifer Griffiths’ design is both warm and elegant without ever going over the top, and that in itself is an appropriate tribute to Poirier’s food. Brit Gill’s photos are also effective: beyond providing a template for your own attempts, they actively encourage you to roll up your sleeves and get cooking. And Poirier’s text paints a vivid portrait of why food matters and how his native Québec has shaped not just his cooking, but also his approach to life.

However, one should note that the most telling anecdote takes place in France—rather than on the shores of the Fosse Saint-Laurent. Poirier and his wife are on holiday in Bordeaux and feeling a little surprised by the apparent indifference of their waiter, who tells them that all he can offer is “a baguette and camembert and dry-cured sausage.” But when the meal arrives, it’s a feast—even if it’s far from a polished restaurant experience.

“Enjoying food doesn’t have to be precious or fancy to be memorable,” Poirier recalls. Thank you, Chef J-C, for summarizing your book so well. I couldn’t have said it better myself.
MICHELIN BRANCHES OUT

One of the more interesting aspects of the Michelin Guide’s decision to survey the Vancouver restaurant scene is that it reflects a kind of culinary devotion that’s been going on for some time. Whereas the Guide began as a French guide to France and only later spread into the culinary and financial capitals of the world—London, New York City, Tokyo—it has lagged behind in regard to regional cuisines. But within the last decade, Guide inspectors surveyed such notable food destinations as Bangkok, Shanghai and Taiwan. Remarkably, neither the continents of Africa and Australia nor the Indian subcontinent have yet been deemed worthy of a Michelin star.

More than a few cooks and critics have ascribed this to cultural bias, if not out-and-out racism, and it’s true that the Michelin standards are still those of French haute cuisine. The Michelin trail, which also encompasses luxury tourism, has been dictated more by money than by culinary brilliance; it’s probable that only the success of El Bulli, in a remote corner of Catalan Spain, and Noma, in otherwise untrendy Copenhagen, forced the Guide to branch out. Still, even if Vancouver’s exaltation is owed as much to it being a playground of the idle rich as to its abundance of talented chefs and superior ingredients, it’s good news for an embattled restaurant industry, and for cookbook publishers, too.—Alexander Varty

BC BOOKWORLD • SPRING 2023
The Piano Teacher

BY CAROLINE WOODWARD

inner of the 2022 Governor-General’s Award for Best Canadian play script and the Jessie Richardson Award for Outstanding Original Script as well, The Piano Teacher is Dorothy Dittrich’s fifth script for the stage. Reading it is a master class experience for writers at any stage who write in any genre; its pitch perfect and powerful writing.

I was not in the right place at the right time to see this two-act play on stage for its debut in early 2022 but after reading the script in book form, I certainly hope other theatre companies will choose to mount it so I can plan to attend. Dittrich’s play for three actors comes with such specific musical notes that I sought out certain compositions by Haydn, as played by the Beau Arts Trio and revisited Aaron Copland’s Appalachian Spring by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra just to hear the desired musical ambiance. I could well imagine the beautiful musical pieces swirling out to an audience from amidst the 3-D presence of the players on the stage.

Do not skip over the illuminating Foreword by Yvette Nolan, who directed the first production of The Piano Teacher at the BMO Theatre Centre in Vancouver, produced by the Arts Club Theatre Company. Or the equally compelling and nuanced Introduction by dramaturge Rachel Ditor. They understand Dittrich’s clear, clean melody through the voice of her character, Elaine; the pauses and hesitant harmonies as Erin is introduced; and the bounce and energy of Tom’s lines. Both director and dramaturge understand grief and healing and joyful release, and why this play is dedicated by the playwright: For all those who have worked through a difficult passage.

THE PIANO TEACHER’S ESSENTIAL PLOT emanates from a tragedy, slowly revealed, as experienced by Erin, a classical pianist who has been unable to play for two years. The classical music quintet she used to perform with is waiting for her to recover and so is a major orchestra touring opportunity but she is blocked, overwhelmed by the loss of her husband and son. This is compounded by the fundamental loss of her own musical means of expression. Think of a painter who cannot imagine what to do with colours anymore or a sculptor whose world view has gone flat, and stays that way. A psychiatrist and another counsellor have not worked for Erin. Then, she attends a student recital and meets Elaine, an unconventional piano teacher who gives her hope for a breakthrough. As Elaine gently re-acquaints Erin with the piano, I was reminded of other kind and skilled people among us who work with traumatized children as art therapists and with the ‘whisperers’ who work with abused horses; all of whom rebuild relationships based on trust by patiently overcoming fear.

We witness the relationship between student and teacher blossom into a true friendship and then, as any perceptive teacher well knows, the roles can reverse with gifted pupils and the concepts of teacher and student flow back and forth. For Elaine, ever optimistic, kind, and generous, is coping with decades of her own repressed sadness, and no small amount of physical pain. She reminds herself, several times, that Oscar Peterson had arthritis in his hands but he didn’t let that stop him from becoming one of the world’s most accomplished pianists.

Those of us who sing in choirs know how much better we feel in mind, body and spirit after a rousing rehearsal we’ve dragged ourselves to on a cold and damp night. Some of us were lucky enough to grow up in a house with a piano and other instruments, to learn to read music by taking lessons and to become lifelong musicians, amateur or professional. Next up on the stage is Tom, a skilled carpenter whom Erin has hired to build a window beside a large and dark stairwell landing, a spot in her house she considers wasted space.

Tom comes from a working-class family and his love of old tunes like “Stardust” and “My Buddy” was instilled by listening to his grandpa sing along to the radio in his truck as they picked up lumber and did other building trade errands. Music lessons were unaffordable but music appreciation was a joyful given every day along with the love of solving design problems and working with wood. Tom confides to Erin, whom he does not know is a fairytale famous pianist with repressed arthritis to her credit, that he would love to take piano lessons some day like she does.

The power of music to heal, to overcome pain and to restore joy and love in our lives is honoured by this remarkable work. Given that a musical written by Dorothy Dittrich, When We Were Singing (Canadian Play Outlet, 1995), has toured Canada and the United States, I wish for even more exposure.

Growing up on an isolated Peace River homestead, Caroline Woodward had fluteophone music lessons for several glorious weeks in Grade 7 at her two-room school. She has sung in school and community choirs for much of her life and hopes to be a musician in her next life.

Megan Leitch and Catiriona Murphy in The Piano Teacher, at the Arts Club Theatre, 2017.
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CONTINUING STUDIES
Already in their 40s, Dave and Rosemary Neads discovered the wilderness area of Precipice Valley in 1986, tucked between the coastal mountains and the Chilcotin Plateau. They fell in love with the area and decided to leave their comfortable urban lifestyles to homestead in their newly found paradise. There they stayed for almost three decades, overcoming the hardships, even thriving, as they recall in their memoir, The Power of Dreams.

The book begins with a chronological telling of how the Neads arrived in the Chilcotin, happened upon the Precipice Valley property, built their "Firhome" and enjoyed an isolated and far-from-simple lifestyle in a near-wilderness setting. They lived well despite enduring the cold, the snow, the bugs, the long winters, the wicked storms and the ever-present dangers from wild animals, forest fires, extreme temperatures, and the time-consuming and often-difficult travels in and out of their valley.

Fortunately, by the mid-1980s the couple was able to innovatively utilize modern technology to provide them a comfortable way of life, complete with power (solar panels), running water and eventually internet communications. Yet, to take advantage of modern-day conveniences, Dave had to develop skills as a carpenter, plumber, mechanic, electrician and all-around handyman in addition to being a hunter, fisherman and skilled horseman. With great patience, he often learned through trial and error and with the “sticktoitiveness” that his mother had taught him.

The Nead’s writing contains poetic descriptions of keen observations, peppered with almost spiritual-like, philosophic imagery, likely a result of their sharpened senses that had become attuned to the rhythms of nature in a setting devoid of the trappings of modern civilization. Whether they were watching the weather, lighting the fire in their home, listening to the birds, or growing vegetables and flowers, they found inspiration and peacefulness.

Most enjoyable are the many stories filled with humour, local colour and coincidences. We learn about the characters who lived nearby or visited them, the wildlife they shared the valley with, the emergencies they had to deal with, the vehicles they had to maintain and repair, the fish they caught and the trips they took into remote lakes via float planes.

One particularly memorable experience was the time they were canoeing on Turner Lake above the 280-metre-high Hunlen Falls. After paddling past a danger sign, they decided to stop for a break. “Not ten feet away, the lip of the falls disappeared into mist as the creek tumbled into oblivion. Dave stopped beside me, and we just stood there in silence, the realization sinking in that, had we not stopped when we did, we would have gone over the brink to sure death.”

An aspect of The Power of Dreams that many will appreciate are the connections made to the history of the region from geological times to the lives of the Indigenous people who used the valley as a waypoint along their much-used grease trail from the coast to the interior, and to the early explorers and settlers who used the trail to transport goods from ships that docked in Bella Coola.
This ancient trail also became a communication corridor in 1912, when a telegraph line was strung through the valley, which was still in use as a phone line when the Neads arrived. They had to go to great lengths to keep it operational, and when that was no longer possible, they found a legal route to force the telephone company to spend $250,000 for helicopter-delivered equipment to provide service.

Self-sufficiency was never an option in the Precipice Valley, given the financial resources needed for building supplies, solar panels, transportation, batteries, food and especially the fuel required for their chainsaws, generators, snowmobiles, ATVs, trucks and vehicles. Thus, Dave Nead had to work, and fortunately he landed a job as a backcountry park ranger in nearby Tweedsmuir Park. He and his work partner travelled by float plane, by horseback and on foot to clear ancient trails and create new ones, construct signage and structures, and build countless cairns in this massive landscape.

Although Dave and Rosemary Nead lived remotely, they were also part of a widely spaced community of other homesteaders and environmentalists and thus became aware of the threats to the wild spaces they loved from resource extraction, particularly clear cut logging. After helping to create local organizations to fight for wilderness protection and sustainable practices, Dave Nead’s leadership abilities became recognized by provincial conservation organizations, and soon he was employed to work incessantly as an environmental activist. Thanks to his efforts, many parks were created, including the 112,000-hectare Itcha Ilgachuz Provincial Park.

The Power of Dreams was a difficult book to put down, as with each page I was transfixed into their amazing world and was able to vicariously experience their extraordinary lives through their compelling storytelling and magical imagery. This book deserves to become a British Columbia classic, in the same vein as Ralph Edwards of Lonesome Lake and The Curve of Time.

Jim Cooperman is a back-to-the-lander and worked with Dave Neads in the environmental movement in the 1990s. His most recent book, Everything Shuswap (2017), was praised by David Suzuki.

Not ten feet away, the lip of the falls disappeared into mist as the creek tumbled into oblivion. Dave stopped beside me, and we just stood there in silence, the realization sinking in that, had we not stopped when we did, we would have gone over the brink to sure death.
BC’s NEWEST PUBLISHER

Wendy Atkinson takes over Ronsdale Press after the passing of publisher Ron Hatch. An arts programmer and musician with a background in publishing, Atkinson shows what to do with an English degree.

As we re-ignite the press, I’m passionate about collaborating with writers to bring their books into the world.”

Wendy Atkinson

BC BookWorld: After two decades in the performing arts, you are back in publishing. How does your new role as publisher relate to your previous work?

Wendy Atkinson: I worked most recently at the Chan Centre at UBC where I created and programmed a performance series called Beyond Words. That series explored the power of words in performance and highlighted progressive social justice themes. For example, I paired writers Carmen Aguirre, Aislinn Hunter and Nancy Lee with choreographers to create new work, and I booked performing artists who have published books such as Tanya Tagaq, Ivan Coyote, Cliff Cardinal and international artists like Laurie Anderson. I’m excited to bring my programming vision to my publishing ideas for Ronsdale Press.

BCBW: What is your connection to BC publishing?

WA: Many years ago, when I was just out of university and wondering what to do with an English degree, I started working at the Association of Book Publishers of BC. I was very lucky to be mentored by executive director Margaret Reynolds, who was recently honoured with the Gray Campbell Distinguished Service Award. I later worked for Brian Lam at Arsenal Pulp Press, and I have always admired his strong focus and vision for the press. In my musical life, I played bass on East-side poet Bud Osborne’s CD, Hundred Black Rocks.

BCBW: What opportunities do you see for Ronsdale Press?

WA: After acquiring the press in 1988, Ron and Veronica Hatch worked hard to build the press into its existing form. Ronsdale has ‘good bones’ with its solid distribution and sales representation; good relationships with authors, book-sellers, suppliers and funders; and solid 30-year publishing history.

Recently, we have been revitalizing marketing efforts, especially through social media. This past fall we created video book trailers for all of the fall titles, which have been very popular and increased traffic to Ronsdale’s YouTube channel.

We have also been exploring promotional opportunities in non-book media. For example, Alexander Globe, author of Gold, Grit, Guns, appeared on BNN’s Bloomberg’s Commodities show, and Antony Di Nardo’s poetry book Forget-Sadness-Grave was excerpted in Canadian Gardener.

BCBW: What are your plans for Ronsdale moving forward?

WA: My first goal is to publish all of the books that Ron Hatch contracted before he passed away, and by this summer all of those books will be released. My next step is to bring my vision to future publishing decisions. I am prioritizing diverse authors and books that tackle contemporary themes as well as continuing with Ronsdale’s strengths, such as BC history. This spring we are publishing Hands Like Trees, a story cycle by Sabysachi Nag that poetically depicts the entangled lives of the Sen family. George Elliott Clarke said “Hands Like Trees is Arunhati Roy as if written in the mode of Alice Munro.”

Next fall we are publishing two adult fiction titles: an epic story of a woman living through the Japanese invasion of China and a short story collection that takes a frank and evocative look at the power and vulnerabilities of “women of a certain age.” We are also publishing a YA novel that tackles climate change with the main character reeling from the repercussions of the Fort Mac fire in Alberta.

BCBW: What challenges do you see ahead?

WA: During Ron’s lengthy illness and after his passing there was a lot of uncertainty around the future of the press, which meant that many of Ronsdale’s activities were stalled. Assistant publisher Kevin Walsh was instrumental in keeping Ronsdale going during that difficult period. As we re-ignite the press, I’m passionate about collaborating with writers to bring their books into the world.

Ronsdale also faces the same challenges as other publishers regarding dramatic increases in paper, printing and shipping costs, the changing landscape for book review media, and how to connect with readers. Also, in this time of increasing consolidation and influence of US publishers, support of independent Canadian presses is more important than ever.

I am looking forward to connecting with colleagues through the ABPBC to talk about these issues. Book publishing has always been a challenging, vital and exciting business, and book publishers are resilient!
In a deep dive into cultural appropriation, *Voicing Identity* uncovers how both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can step out of bounds.

Voicing Identity: Cultural Appropriation and Indigenous Issues
edited by John Borrows and Kent McNeil

Voicing Identity book cover by Blake Angeconeb, an Anishinaabe woodlands artist from Treaty 3 territory.  He is part of the Caribou clan and a member of Lac Seul First Nation.
Mystery ⌈ Fiction
Memoir ⌈ Conversation

Framed in Fire:
A Lane Winslow Mystery
by Iona Whishaw
(Touchwood $16.95)

It’s been eight years and nine books since the launch of the Lane Winslow Mystery series about the 1940s heroine and British ex-secret service agent who relocates from England to a tiny community near Nelson, BC after WW 2. Working as an amateur sleuth, Lane Winslow keeps treading on the local Nelson police’s territory and that continues in this 9th book in the series as a murder and arson threaten Winslow’s neighbours and friends.

Along in the Great Unknown: One Woman’s Remarkable Adventures in the Northwestern Wilderness by Caroll Simpson
(Harbour $26.95)

Caroll Simpson tells how she came to operate a successful fishing lodge, on her own, in a remote off-grid area of northern BC. While still setting up the business, she lost her husband to a sudden health incident but persevered; she faced encounters with grizzlies and other wild animals, and treacherous weather but stayed because of her passion for the pristine land. She also became an activist who helped create new parklands.

Bloom Where You Are Planted: 50 Conversations with Inspiring British Columbians by Bekah Shane Dentzer
(Heritage House $39.95)

A coffee-table style book with lush photography and interviews that celebrate forty-nine women and one non-binary person who have merged their art and their careers in BC. Included are Hip Hop artist Kia Kadiri, chef Kiko Nakata, non-binary model Lydia Okello, author Emma FitzGerald, and Haida & Cree artist Erin Brillon. Perfect for dipping in and out of when looking for inspiration.

Thought provoking books available on
BC Ferries
Selected by BC BookWorld

Identity

EXCERPT

Keith Thor Carlson

She is a associate professor in the Faculty of Law at UVic, where she teaches torts, transsystemic torts, Coastal Salish Law and languages, legal research and writing, and field schools. UVic prof Michael Asch, has written and edited a number of books, including Home and Native Land: Aboriginal Rights and the Constitution (1984), Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equality and Respect for Difference (1997), and On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada (2014).

Keith Thor Carlson was hired by the Stó:lo Tribal Council to be their staff historian in 1992 and has been working with Coastal Salish Knowledge Keepers ever since. Currently a Prof of History at the University of the Fraser Valley, Carlson was made an honorary member of the Stó:lo Nation in 2001. UVic Professor Emeritus Hamar Foster is a settler. He and his partner have two grandchildren who are members of the Heiltsuk First Nation. He is a coeditor of To Share, Not Surrender: Indigenous and Settler Visions of Treaty Making in the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia (UBC Press, 2021).

Sarah Morales

Sad, Angry, and Spiraling Out of Control

“A striking reminder that there can be beauty in devastation … poignant, laugh-out-loud funny, weird, and a heartbreaker window into being bereft and being in love.” — EMILY AUSTIN, author of Everyone in This Room Will Someday Be Dead

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The weird, the dreamlike, the absurd

Dale Tracy leads readers to nearly buried treasure, such as the foxes and wolves that lurk within some of these poems.

in one of the final Harry Potter films, how its inside magically grows to accommodate the three companions, with even a second storey, bunk beds and a dining room. The comparison is an apt description for how these poems reveal themselves to the careful reader. They are often magical, and they frequently open to more than one might have anticipated.

As an example, consider this small poem—almost buried discoveries, such as the foxes and wolves that lurk within these poems. There’s actually led to nearly buried—a twist midway with a nod to quantum physics, nonlocal relations vibrate. This is a celebration machine:

Poioumenon

Otherwise we’d be rocks, with no way in and nothing to eat. We’re open. But then it goes on for four more stanzas, doing a twist midway with a nod to quantum physics, animal behaviour, and time travel, and then, frankly, leaving me in the dust with its final stanza:

We’re open. Otherwise we’d be rocks, with no way in and nothing to eat.

Heidi Greco has work in Hologram (coming from Caitlin Press this spring), an anthology of poems that honours P.K. Page.

BY HEIDI GRECO

Derelict Bicycles:
Poems by Dale Tracy
(Anvil Press/A Feed Dog Book $18.00)

Poetry is an ever-changing genre. The form that was once bound into strictly controlled lines where cadence and rhyme followed long-held rules has thrown off the old reins to run freely. Derelict Bicycles, a collection from Dale Tracy, runs freer than most.

The list of those Tracy credits as influences on her work ranges freely too. From acknowledging the importance of workshop leaders Stuart Ross (also this book’s editor) and Jason Heroux, the reach of her inspiration extends from ‘90s TV series Twin Peaks, back to Dostoevsky, Keats, and even Shakespeare.

Most effective of the poems, for which Tracy shares credit with another, is “A Weird Part of Whatever”—a compilation of lines spoken over the phone by her 93-year-old grandmother during the height of the pandemic.

To put any label on these poems, one needs only look a century back to the founding of the surrealist movement and poets such as André Breton and Paul Éluard. Of contemporary surrealists, Tracy refers to Paul Celan, citing his “Essay on Craft” as work that led to her poem “Careful Is a Fire That Tends Itself,” which she calls a response to his words. It should do inside.

As for that title, the word refers to a kind of metafiction whose story is about process, the process of creation—a kind of opening into. And this consideration leads me to a poem that is called “Open,” a piece that opens in an almost straightforward manner:

Open though are their mystery pores, sensing

eye, even the back of the head, perhaps challenging our way into the heart of the work. Some of the best advice about this book comes from one of the poems:

This is a celebration machine

With no instructions otherwise:

… its process is a cycle: celebration in progress, celebration.

The derelict bicycle on the cover appears to have one working wheel. Let that be an invitation to give these poems a whirl and to celebrate the ride.

9781772241866

Heidi Greco has work in Hologram (coming from Caitlin Press this spring), an anthology of poems that honours P.K. Page.

9781772241866

Dale Tracy’s debut collection of poems is released by a Vancouver imprint devoted to surrealism and post-surrealist poetry. She is a faculty member in the English department at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

29 BC BOOKWORLD • SPRING 2023
Archaeology reveals how coastal peoples used to live, and surprisingly, changes we can make for our future.

Smith rightly cautions that if you find one as an amateur, most countries have laws that forbid collecting in order to protect and preserve national heritage sites. Stimulating and thought-provoking questions are interspersed, presented in a style befitting a grade school teacher, making Dig Deep valuable as a classroom teaching aid. Smith’s field experiences will appeal to middle school readers even if archaeology is not all like the Indiana Jones life made popular in movies. Smith shows how finds can be exciting in other ways. Like the time she was working with the Nuu-chah-nulth Nation along the west coast of Vancouver Island and the Mmak Peoples from the Olympic Peninsula, both of whom have a long tradition of whale hunting. Smith spent a summer with them in the Broken Group Islands off Vancouver Island’s west coast excavating a structure built from whalebone. Four metres down they found the skull of a humpback whale with a remnant of a harpoon blade made of mussel shell embedded in its skull. Who could resist picturing the action story behind that? Where interpretations tell a story, Smith is careful to use ‘needing more evidence,’ ‘indirect evidence,’ or ‘suggesting,’ as any scientific explanation should be so qualified.

And speaking of science, Smith covers methods used by archaeologists to date artifacts. Many non-archaeologists have heard of radiocarbon dating. But how many have heard of optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) dating, which is commonly used in the field as well? Smith doesn’t shy away from this one; very simply she gives readers all they need to know for a basic understanding of the OSL concept. (In case you’re wondering, OSL is a technique that dates when sand grains were last exposed to sunlight).

Archaeological science is an important and specialized part of the profession. But especially in places like our coastlines, Smith emphasizes, it should be supplemented or blended with Indigenous knowledge, which has been passed down through hundreds of generations. Like rock wall gardens used to capture fish, for example. Overall, Dig Deep is a well-illustrated volume, including images of youngsters happily working on a dig. There’s good discussion in the early chapters describing what archaeologists do and the “hows” and “whys” of their doing it. Kids will be fascinated by some of the lesser-known and surprising specialities like garbology (guaranteed to elicit an “ee-ew” response). Specialist fields like these lead up to showing how archaeology helps reveal humans’ effect on our environment, our oceans and our climate: the Industrial Revolution with all its pollution; modern fishing boats with their high-tech gear vaunt overfishing our oceans; and, importantly, the latest damaging impact of humans with our use of plastics. We might as well call this The Plastic Age. Smith takes care to include information about what we can do about the damage we have caused, and continue to cause.

For kids excited by the stuff in Dig Deep and wanting more, a brief list of resources, both print and online, wraps it. Every school library should have copies of this volume. 978-1-4598-2608-3

Vancouver-based archaeologist and freelance writer Graham Chandler has worked on projects in Belize, the High Arctic, Turkey, Greece, and Pakistan. He holds a PhD in archaeology from the University of London.
WHO'S BRITISH COLUMBIA

A IS FOR ABDOU

Fernie’s Angie Abdou wrote about her experiences as a hockey mom, frankly describing her son’s sporting experiences on and off the ice in her memoir Home Ice: Reflections of a Reluctant Hockey Mom (ECW, 2018). Now she explores Canada’s “other” sports in a collection of essays she has co-edited with UVic’s Jamie Dopp. Not Hockey: Critical Essays on Canada’s Other Sport Literature (AU Press $37.99). By veering away from what is often described as Canada’s national past-time, contributors, including Timothy Taylor and Aritha Van Herk, share their reflections on skateboarding, fly fishing, curling and other decidedly non-hockey sports.

B IS FOR BASRAN

Gurjinder Basran takes on the perils of social media in her third novel, Help! I’m Alive (ICW $22.95). When video footage of a teen’s death is shared online, a community is left to try to make sense of his death and whether it was an accident or a suicide. In 2011, Basran was awarded the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize for her first novel, Everything Was Goodbye. The publisher, Mother Tongue, subsequently sold Canadian rights to Penguin Canada, and Everything Was Goodbye was re-launched in 2012. Basran is a graduate of SFU’s Writer’s Studio.

C IS FOR CHONG

It’s been five years since Kevin Chong wrote his last novel, The Plague (Arsenal Pulp, 2018), inspired by Albert Camus’ classic of the same title. In The Double Life of Benson Yu (Mira $27), Chong’s narrator, Benson Yu, is trying to write a story set in 1980s Chinatown about a twelve-year-old boy, Bennie, living with his grandmother. Bennie gets taken in by an eccentric neighbour named Constantine when his grandmother is suddenly hospitalized. But Yu, a bestselling comic book creator can’t help interjecting himself into Bennie’s story from the present day. Things get dark as Yu reveals his own past demons. Kevin Chong is an associate professor at UBC Okanagan.

D IS FOR DILWORTH

During the COVID-19 pandemic, “our yards became our parks and our living rooms became our art galleries,” writes Julia Dilworth in the introduction to her coffee table-style book, West Coast North: Interiors Designed for Living (Figure 1 $50). It drove business to design studios as people largely confined to their homes consulted on ways to renovate and redecorate. Dilworth interviewed 29 BC design firms to find out what is behind their philosophies and how they work. She also showcases their projects in full-colour photographs. Dilworth highlights the environmental concerns of designers, inspiration of local craftpeople and the influences of immigrants.

E IS FOR FREEDMAN

In S.M. Freedman’s psychological thriller Blood Atonement (Dundurn $22.99), Grace DeRoche escapes the fundamentalist Mormon compound of Brigham and tries to prosecute its leaders. But when loyalists, including her own family, commit mass suicide to avoid jail, Grace retreats into solitude. Racked with guilt and suffering from dissociative identity disorder brought on by childhood abuse, Grace’s life is fragmented; she never knows when an alter personality will take the reins. When other Brigham escapees die under suspicious circumstances, Grace’s tenuous hold on reality crumbles. Notes left at each scene quote scripture and accuse the deceased of committing sins. As evidence mounts against her and one of her alter personalities becomes the prime suspect, Grace must determine if she’s a murderer … or the next victim.

F IS FOR GREEN

The hard-working author of more than 20 books, Valerie Green has published a historical fiction novel, Providence (Hancock House $27.95), the first in a series she is calling the McBride Chronicles. Book One is the story of a young woman, Aki, fighting as an atomweight while studying overseas in England. Always viewed as a “good girl, good student and good daughter” back home, Aki must also break the news to her parents that she is gay in this story about reconciling competing cultures, traditions and values. Sasagawa is an award-winning journalist whose writing has appeared in publications ranging from The Washington Post to Room.
“Under the Banner of King Death is a historical fiction that cleverly merges the spaces between our understanding of the myth and reality of pirates and the Golden Age. It is a tale of rising-up against a tyrant merchant king’s wanton cruelty and the oppressive regimes that emboldens and protects them.”

— Gibson’s Bookstore (Concord, NH) Staff Pick

H IS FOR HAYES
It would be putting it mildly to say that BC’s geography presented challenges to road, bridge and rail builders. Engineers and construction workers faced formidable barriers doing their work, as Derek Hayes shows in Incredible Crossings: The History and Art of the Bridges, Tunnels and Inland Ferries That Connect British Columbia (Harbour $46.95). Hayes covers suspension bridges, cable-stayed bridges, both wooden and steel trusses. There were once five covered bridges in the province, and only one is left today. Hayes travelled BC to find the most interesting crossings, and he combines hundreds of photos with the most compelling stories about the province’s transportation connections.

— BC Bookworld

J IS FOR JOHN-KEHEWIN
In her YA graphic novel, Visions of the Crow (HighWater $23.95), Volume One in the series Dreama, Cree writer Wanda John-Kehewin introduces us to Damon Quinn, who is struggling to get through his senior high school year. Bullies taunt him; a new girl named Journey keeps getting personal; and a mysterious crow begins following him. At home, Damon’s single mom struggles with alcohol and barely copes. One day, Damon is seized by a waking dream in the middle of a busy street, and his dream life becomes as real as his waking life. He also travels through time and space to move forward in his life. Wanda John-Kehewin uses her work to understand and respond to the near destruction of First Nations cultures, languages and traditions. Visions of the Crow is illustrated by nicole marie burton.

K IS FOR KYI
Headlines often tell of how social media causes depression in young girls and can be a source of destructive bullying. While this may be true, girls can also be empowered by social media, says mother and daughter writing duo Tanya Lloyd Kyi and Julia Kyi in their book, Better Connected: How Girls Are Using Social Media for Good (Orca $24.95), for ages 9 to 12. Despite the trolls and the self-esteem tolls, girls are using their platforms to change the world for the better,” they write. “So while this book acknowledges the challenges, we’re focused on the less-recognized—and more positive—parts of girls’ online experience.”

L IS FOR LEWIS
A few years back, suffering from burnout and too many hours hunched over a desk, over-achieving editor Amanda Lewis pledged to get outdoors and visit all the biggest trees in BC. She had recently returned to the province after nearly a decade away, and it seemed a good way to get re-acquainted with its rugged, natural beauty. What could go wrong? For starters, a pandemiced, climate change nightmares and the pressures of a one-year deadline she had given herself. In the end, Lewis gave up her “checklist” method and resorted to the slower, more fulfilling approach of simply getting to know the forests. While this may be true, girls can also be empowered by social media, says mother and daughter writing duo Tanya Lloyd Kyi and Julia Kyi in their book, Better Connected: How Girls Are Using Social Media for Good (Orca $24.95), for ages 9 to 12. Despite the trolls and the self-esteem tolls, girls are using their platforms to change the world for the better,” they write. “So while this book acknowledges the challenges, we’re focused on the less-recognized—and more positive—parts of girls’ online experience.”

I IS FOR INDIGENOUS JUSTICE
One of the many social falloutso from harma done to Indigenous peoples by the residential school system continues to be an overrepresentation in prisons, affecting even those who did not attend the schools. Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice: A Search for Ways Forward (Ferndwood $32) by UVic associate professor of law David Milward gives an account of the ongoing ties between enduring trauma caused by residential schools and Indigenous over-incarceration. He also provides compelling examples that show a better way of doing justice in Canada. Milward is a member of the Beardy’s and Okemasis First Nation of Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, and he assisted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the authoring of its final report on Indigenous justice issues.

Tanya Lloyd and Julia Kyi
Better Connected: How Girls Are Using Social Media for Good (Orca $24.95), for ages 9 to 12. Despite the trolls and the self-esteem tolls, girls are using their platforms to change the world for the better,” they write. “So while this book acknowledges the challenges, we’re focused on the less-recognized—and more positive—parts of girls’ online experience.”

Amanda Lewis
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WHO’S WHO

BC

20 Canadian comics to check out in the first half of 2023

C BC Books

Beacon Press
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“I IS FOR INDIGENOUS JUSTICE
One of the many social fallouts from harm done to Indigenous peoples by the residential school system continues to be an overrepresentation in prisons, affecting even those who did not attend the schools. Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice: A Search for Ways Forward (Ferndwood $32) by UVic associate professor of law David Milward gives an account of the ongoing ties between enduring trauma caused by residential schools and Indigenous over-incarceration. He also provides compelling examples that show a better way of doing justice in Canada. Milward is a member of the Beardy’s and Okemasis First Nation of Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, and he assisted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the authoring of its final report on Indigenous justice issues.

Tanya Lloyd and Julia Kyi
Better Connected: How Girls Are Using Social Media for Good (Orca $24.95), for ages 9 to 12. Despite the trolls and the self-esteem tolls, girls are using their platforms to change the world for the better,” they write. “So while this book acknowledges the challenges, we’re focused on the less-recognized—and more positive—parts of girls’ online experience.”

Amanda Lewis
A few years back, suffering from burnout and too many hours hunched over a desk, over-achieving editor Amanda Lewis pledged to get outdoors and visit all the biggest trees in BC. She had recently returned to the province after nearly a decade away, and it seemed a good way to get re-acquainted with its rugged, natural beauty. What could go wrong? For starters, a pandemic, climate change nightmares and the pressures of a one-year deadline she had given herself. In the end, Lewis gave up her “checklist” method and resorted to the slower, more fulfilling approach of simply getting to know the forests. She relates her metamorphosis in Tracking Giants: Big Trees, Tiny Triumphs, and Misadventures in the Forest (Greystone $24.95).
**WHO’S WHO**

**M IS FOR MCKEEN**

Channeling the gothic horror stories of Mary Shelley, the Brontë sisters, Henry James and others, Erica McKeen has released her debut novel, *Teardrop* (Invisible 

$22.95), a university student, Frances, who struggles to distinguish between what is real and what is imagined. McKeen’s style is lyrical. “The darkness was the palm of her hand, spread out and invisible in front of her eyes,” McKeen writes in an early passage. “She knew only by wriggling her fingers that the hand was there, by the texture of skin on air.” McKeen’s website calls the novel “a reclamation of female rage and a horrifyingly deformed Bildungsroman.”

**N IS FOR NORTON**

Often tackling historical subjects far removed from main urban centres, Victoria’s Wayne Norton has returned to one of his favourite places, the Elk Valley in his tenth title, *Beneath the Coal Dust: Historical Journeys through the Elk Valley and Crowsnest Pass* (Caulfield $26). Norton made many childhood visits to the area, and he recalls it as “a magical place of mountains and fishing adventures up Coal Creek.” His book of 12 local history stories details people such as Hollywood great Boris Karloff, who appeared as a minor actor in a 1909 Fernie play when he was an unknown English immigrant called William Pratt. Other characters in the book include members of a 1920s women’s hockey team, Chinese and Syrian immigrants, and a German brewer who built a local beer empire.

**P IS FOR PLANTE**

Librarian, musician and cat photographer, Hazel Jane Plante has released her second novel, *Any Other City* (Arsenal Pulp $22.95), a two-part factual fiction ostensibly written by the narrator, Tracy St. Cyr, leader of an indie rock band. Referencing the two sides of a vinyl record, the book’s first half, *Side A,* covers the year 1993 when Tracy, a fledgling artist, arrives in a big city to pursue her ideals and falls in with a group of trans women; “Side B” flashes forward to 2019, when Tracy returns to the same city after a long healing period from a traumatic event, only now she’s a semi-famous musician. Plante’s debut novel, *Little Blue Encyclopedia for Wolves* (Metonymy Press, 2019) received a Lambda Literary Award and was a finalist for both a Publishing Triangle Award and a BC & Yukon Book Prize.

**O IS FOR ODYSSEY**

An urban girl who grew up in the suburbs of New York, Ellen Schwartz later studied French at the University of Chicago. Not exactly the career route to becoming a back-to-the-lander, but that is what Schwartz did in the 1970s, moving to a remote BC area in the Kootenays, as she describes in her memoir *Galena Bay Odyssey: Reflections of a Hippie Homesteader* (Heritage House $26.95). In her new surround-

**R IS FOR RAESIDE**

Political cartoonist Adrian Raeside began work in the early 1980s for Victoria’s Times Colonist, eventually becoming syndicated in more than 200 newspapers. He also published books of his collected cartoons as early as 1992 on subjects ranging from Canadian history and the BC Ferrys to relationships with animals.

His most recent compilation, *Wildlife for Idiots: And Other Animal Cartoons* (Harbour $16.95), includes 340 full-colour cartoons of wolves, bears, eagles, elephants and even shedding mammals.

**S IS FOR SAMPLER**

Patrik Sampler describes his upcoming novel, *Naked Defiance: A Comedy of Menace* (New Star $19), as “the story of ide-

alists who seek a richer engage-

ment with life, but are repressed by the intrusion of interminable politics.” Set at the turn of the 21st century, the story features a radical art group that undergoes disturbing disruptions of their public performances as well as the death of their leader, who dies mysteriously while in police custody. Vancouver-based Sampler’s first novel, *The Ocean Container* (NineBark Press, 2017), was about climate change. His writing has appeared in *The Guardian,* *Vancouver Sun* and *BC Bookworld*.

**T IS FOR TSANG**

In 2019, artist and Emily Carr Univer-
sity instructor, Henry Tsang created a video walking tour of the places in Vancouver’s Chinatown and Powell Street area where a crowd of white people in 1907 had rioted against any-

one of Asian descent. Although no one was killed in the historic riot, exten-

sive damage was caused by rocks and bottles thrown through Asian-owned businesses, and people of Chinese, Japanese and Indian heritage were beaten if encountered. Now Tsang will publish a book on the subject, *White Riot: The 1907 Anti-Asian Riots in Vancouver* (Arsenal Pulp $32.95), about the dark legacy of British settler colonial violence and domination, as well as the resistance from the targeted communities. Includes a foreword by Patricia E. Roy, author of *A White Man’s Procris: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (UBC Press, 1989).

**Hairpieces from Adrian Raeside’s latest collection, Wildlife for Idiots: And Other Animal Cartoons**

**BC BOOKWORLD • SPRING 2023**
In her debut collection of poems, *Shapeshifters* (Nightwood $19.95), Délani Valin embodies different personas to deal with her urban Métis experience and neurodivergence. It embodies different personas as a way to access different moments and conditions like autism and depression. Other poems are straightforward confessional. Valin’s publisher says “This Here Paradise” maps ways in which an individual can attempt to fit into a landscape alive with radiant, open waters.” Previously, Wharton published a collection of short fiction and a poetry chapbook. *This Here Paradise* (Anvil $18), which tells stories of the Canadian Army’s encounters with victims and survivors of the Holocaust at the end of World War II.

**U IS FOR UPTON**

Colin Upton is a veteran of the Vancouver comics and lowbrow art scenes for more than 30 years, is set to release Post-Modern Mini-Comics (Conundrum $10) a palm-sized collection of rare autobiographical work of the artist’s everyday experiences. See him struggle with a new pair of stiff Doc Marten boots, or cross the border on a bus. One thing you won’t read about is celebrity culture, which Upton says misleads people into believing life has no meaning without fame. After dropping out of art school in 1985, Upton went on to produce over 300 mini-comics and digests. His comics include *Big Thing, Buddha on the Road* and *Inchcubus*. In 2016 he created the 24-page comic book *Kicking at the Darkness* (Vancover Holocaust Education Centre), which tells stories of the Canadian Army’s encounters with victims and survivors of the Holocaust at the end of World War II.

**V IS FOR VALIN**

In her debut collection of poems, *Shapeshifters* (Nightwood $19.95), Délani Valin embodies different personas to deal with her urban Métis experience and neurodivergence. It embodies different personas as a way to access different moments and conditions like autism and depression. Other poems are straightforward confessional. Valin’s publisher says “This Here Paradise” maps ways in which an individual can attempt to fit into a landscape alive with radiant, open waters.” Previously, Wharton published a collection of short fiction and a poetry chapbook. *This Here Paradise* (Anvil $18), which tells stories of the Canadian Army’s encounters with victims and survivors of the Holocaust at the end of World War II.

**W IS FOR WHARTON**

Former chair of creative writing at Douglas College, Calvin Wharton has published his second collection of poetry, *This Here Paradise* (Anvil $18), which is balm for a troubled world facing a number of existential crises. There is a recognition that ‘paradise’ has both highs and lows, but Wharton ends on a high note. According to the book description, the tension in these poems resolves through the book’s five sections “as Wharton opens a suitcase of birds and watches them soar over a landscape alive with radiant, open waters.” Previously, Wharton published a collection of short fiction and a poetry chapbook. *This Here Paradise* (Anvil $18), which tells stories of the Canadian Army’s encounters with victims and survivors of the Holocaust at the end of World War II.

**X IS FOR AVIATRIX**

Like Leonardo da Vinci centuries before her, Lilian Bland (1878–1971) liked to watch birds soaring in the sky, fascinated by the mechanics of flight. Airplanes were still new when Bland was growing up and mostly flown by men. No one would teach the young woman to fly, so she designed, built and eventually flew her own plane, becoming the first woman in the world to do so. Her achievements are related in *Lilian Bland: An Amazing Aviatrix* (Heritage $19.95), for ages 12+. Written by Calvin Wharton

**Y IS FOR YAHGULANAAAS**

Using his blend of traditional and modern art, Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas’ third graphic novel, *JAJ: A Haida Manga* (D&M $34.95), concerns the history of the first contact between Europeans and Indigenous peoples, and the colonization of the northern West Coast. A number of historical figures are tracked by Yahgulanaas, including a Norwegian settler named Johan Adrian Jacobsen (JAJ), who went to the Haida village of Masset to collect items for a German museum. *JAJ: A Haida Manga* chronicles the devastating smallpox epidemic, and the mass resettlement of disenfranchised peoples (Indigenous and European). Yahgulanaas doesn’t use traditional comic-book cells; rather, his panels flow from one scene to another that together, if merged, form one large image reminiscent of a woven robe.

**Z IS FOR ZWICKY**

“Western civilization is over.” So begins Jan Zwicky’s latest collection of essays. *Once upon a Time in the West: Essays on the Politics of Thought and Imagination* (MQUP $29.95). In her exploration of the root of global cultural and ecological collapse, Zwicky charts how the Renaissance led to industrialization, the growth of capitalism and Big Technology. She shows us that, unless it was monetized. In general, we have become oblivious to context and big picture thinking, all the while rejecting empathy and compassion as distorting influences. Western thought has become blind to critical features of reality, and now the consequences of that blinkered vision are beginning to unfold.
Imagine... there’s a writers festival

How Jack Whyte’s daring idea led to the 20th anniversary of Word on the Lake.

BY BEVERLY CRAMP

Imagine... there’s a writers festival

How Jack Whyte’s daring idea led to the 20th anniversary of Word on the Lake.

BY BEVERLY CRAMP

A t a one-day writers workshop in Sorrento, BC, in 2002, the late author Jack Whyte dared to imagine something bigger. Why not expand the format? Whyte, who was rumoured to have sold more than a million books of his historical fiction series Dream of Eagles, offered to invite some of his favourite authors for the following year to make something resembling a proper writers festival.

Boom! The Shuswap International Writers Festival was born. Held a year later in the larger city of Salmon Arm, the event will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year and is now called Word on the Lake.

Right from year one, the festival attracted prestigious writers like Gail Anderson-Dargatz, bill bissett, and Ann Walsh. And of course, Jack Whyte. But that first year wasn’t without its glitches despite the enormous amount of work done by early organizers Kay McCracken and Fran Bach. On day one of the festival, McCracken was up at 4 am. While registering participants and volunteers, a call came in from one of the festival’s guests, a literary agent, reporting that she had landed at the wrong airport—Kamloops instead of Kelowna. McCracken placed a call to poet Garry Gottfriedson, who operated a ranch near Kamloops and was slated to be one of the workshop presenters. Although Gottfriedson was still haying that morning, he agreed to pick up the stranded literary agent. She would have to wait at his homestead until he finished haying, but “they arrived in plenty of time for the gala,” says McCracken.

Word on the Lake is held annually at the Prestige Harbourfront Resort in Salmon Arm. Author Deanna Kawatski, who is also a founding member of Word on the Lake, served as the main consultant for the festival in its early years. She recalls that first year too: “The air in the Prestige Inn buzzed with excitement as I wove through the chattering crowd of authors, agents and publishers. When I checked in, I learned that my room was on the fourth floor and that the elevator was broken. Broken! Luckily my partner, Eric, helped me pack my heavy bags; one containing material for the three workshops (on three different subjects) that I had agreed to give, up the steep stairs. At the top a chambermaid told me the elevator would be fixed in a week.”

Kawatski, who had spent much of the previous year as writer-in-residence at the Naga Centre in Penticton, says she was inspired to help bring more literary life to the Shuswap. “It was the first writers festival to be held in Interior BC,” Kawatski says, “and presenters were brought in from as far afield as Toronto, Seattle and even Minneapolis.”

Kawatski is quick to acknowledge Fran Bach and Kay McCracken for getting the festival off the ground. “Together they built the flying machine,” but they’d be the first to agree that without the enthusiastic team of volunteers it never would have gotten off the ground.” Deanna Kawatski will be in Salmon Arm at this year’s Word on the Lake (May 19-21). Other presenters include the Giller-nominated Brian Isaac Thomas, playwright Caitlin Hicks, author Theresa Kishkan, and publisher and author Howard White.
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The influential literary magazine TISH until 1964, when he left BC. As a professor of English Literature and Poetics at Carleton University, Hogg published five books of poetry and Tidewater Press, as well as editing a comprehensive anthology of Canadian poetic theory. His poems appeared in more than 70 periodicals. Hogg remained a friend and colleague to many BC poets and writers, and a poetry reading event was held in his memory at People’s Co-op Bookstore in February, which was attended by George Bowering, Daphne Marlatt, Fred Wah and others.

Anne Cameron
1938–2022
BY ALAN TWIGG
British Columbia original Anne Cameron was born in Nanaimo on August 20, 1938, and she died of bacterial pneumonia on November 30, 2022. Easily one of the province’s most ground-breaking writers, the 16th recipient of the George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award and the author of possibly the best selling work of fiction ever published within British Columbia by a BC-born author (Daughters of Copper Woman), she was also an accomplished screenwriter (Dreamspeaker, Ticket to Heaven, Bomb Squad, The Tin Flute, A Matter of Choice, Homecoming and Dying Up the Streets) and a doting and doting mother and caretaker for three generations of children.

“I don’t think anyone has captured the idiom of the working-class, BC, coastal small community as well as she has,” says Howard White, Cameron’s long-time publisher, in a Tyee interview. “I sort of think of her as the William Faulkner of the BC coast.”

Anne Cameron’s audacious Daughters of Copper Woman (Press Gang, 1981) has been reprinted at least fifteen times and translated into numerous languages.

Anne Cameron is a “strong voice for queer rights,” said Vancouver LGBTIQ+ city councillor Eilen Woodworth when she presented the Woodcock Award in 2010 and declared Author Appreciation Day in Cameron’s honour.

Often her books celebrated perseverance in the face of adversity, and she delighted in West Coast culture at-large, capturing the inventive ways people spoke and the freedom to be unconventional beyond European traditions.

“I always enjoyed Cam’s humour, admired her publications, and respected her serious commitment to good causes,” says fellow Vancouver Island novelist Jack Hodgins. To many, Cameron was a mentor. “With her as a lighthouse,” says Haida artist Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, “I might never have left my sheltered coastline to sail out into the offshore waters of Art.”

Robert Hogg
Born on March 26, 1942, Robert Hogg was raised on the VT Ranch in Green Lake in the Cariboo, and in the lower Fraser Valley. He died of cancer on November 13, 2022, in Ottawa, Ontario. Although he spent the majority of his adult life in Ontario, Hogg studied English and Creative Writing at UBC—and where he co-edited the influential literary magazine TISH until 1964, when he left BC. As a professor of English Literature and Poetics at Carleton University, Hogg published five books of poetry and a comprehensive anthology of Canadian poetic theory. His poems appeared in more than 70 periodicals. Hogg remained a friend and colleague to many BC poets and writers, and a poetry reading event was held in his memory at People’s Co-op Bookstore in February, which was attended by George Bowering, Daphne Marlatt, Fred Wah and others.

Glen Mofford
Writer and historian Glen Mofford of Port Alberni died on February 19, 2022. Mofford wrote about BC’s historic hotels and their drinking establishments for many years, with his work culminating in the books Aqua Vitae: A History of the Saloons and Hotels Bars of Victoria, 1851-1917 (TouchWood, 2016) and Along the E&N: A Journey Back to the Historic Hotels of Vancouver Island (TouchWood, 2019). His most recent title, Room at the Inn: Historic Hotels of British Columbia’s Southern Interior, will be posthumously published later this year by Heritage House.

### New Books

**New Star Books**
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