

BC

BOOKWORLD

VOL. 40 • NO. 3 • AUTUMN 2026



JESS HOUSTY

Kinship, ancestral knowledge & spirituality. P 27

Haida **philosopher** with a brush

Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas
blended Haida design with
Japanese manga and
graphic novels—and
made it famous.

SEE PAGE 8-9

Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas
in his North Vancouver
studio, 2018.

PUBLICATION MAIL AGREEMENT #40010086 MYRIAM CASPER PHOTO

**DANIEL
GAWTHROP**

Hockey through a
queer lens. P 28-29



TREVOR MACNEIL PHOTO

WAYNE NORTON

Over 100 years ago, workers who
spent a lifetime building BC ended
their days in harsh conditions at the
province's first care home. P 18-19



PAMELA GREGORADIS PHOTO

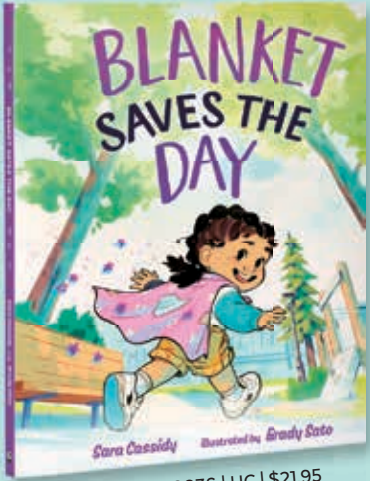
**LOUISE K.
BLIGHT**

One woman's journey to study
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BOOKS SAVE THE DAY!

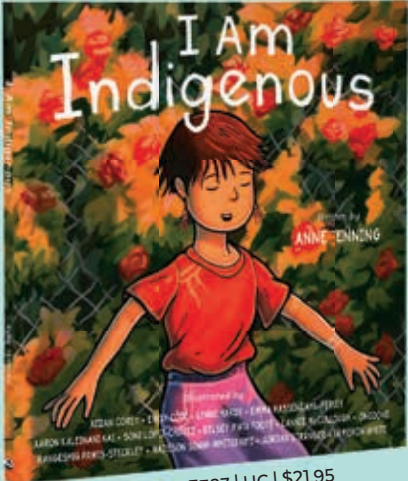
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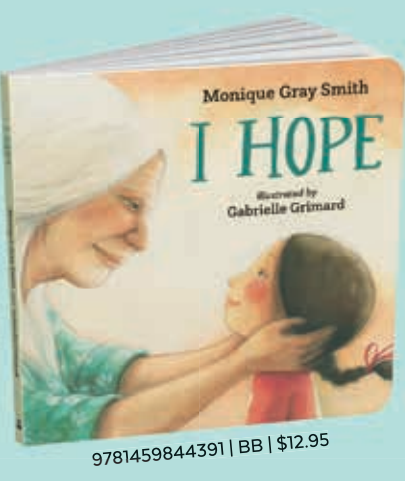
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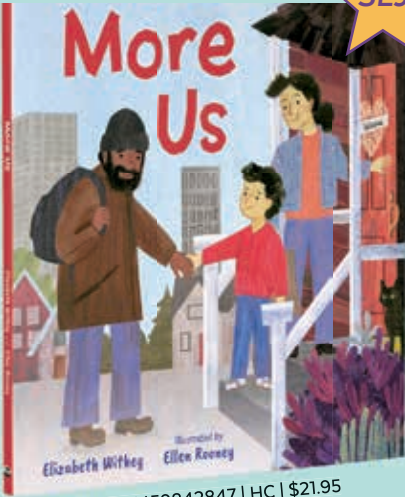
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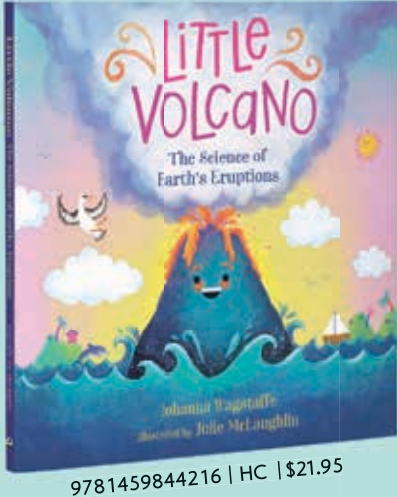
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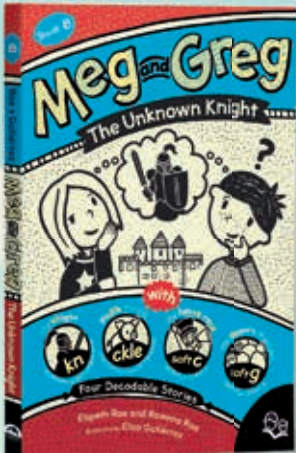
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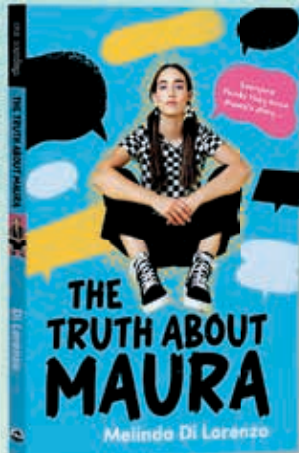
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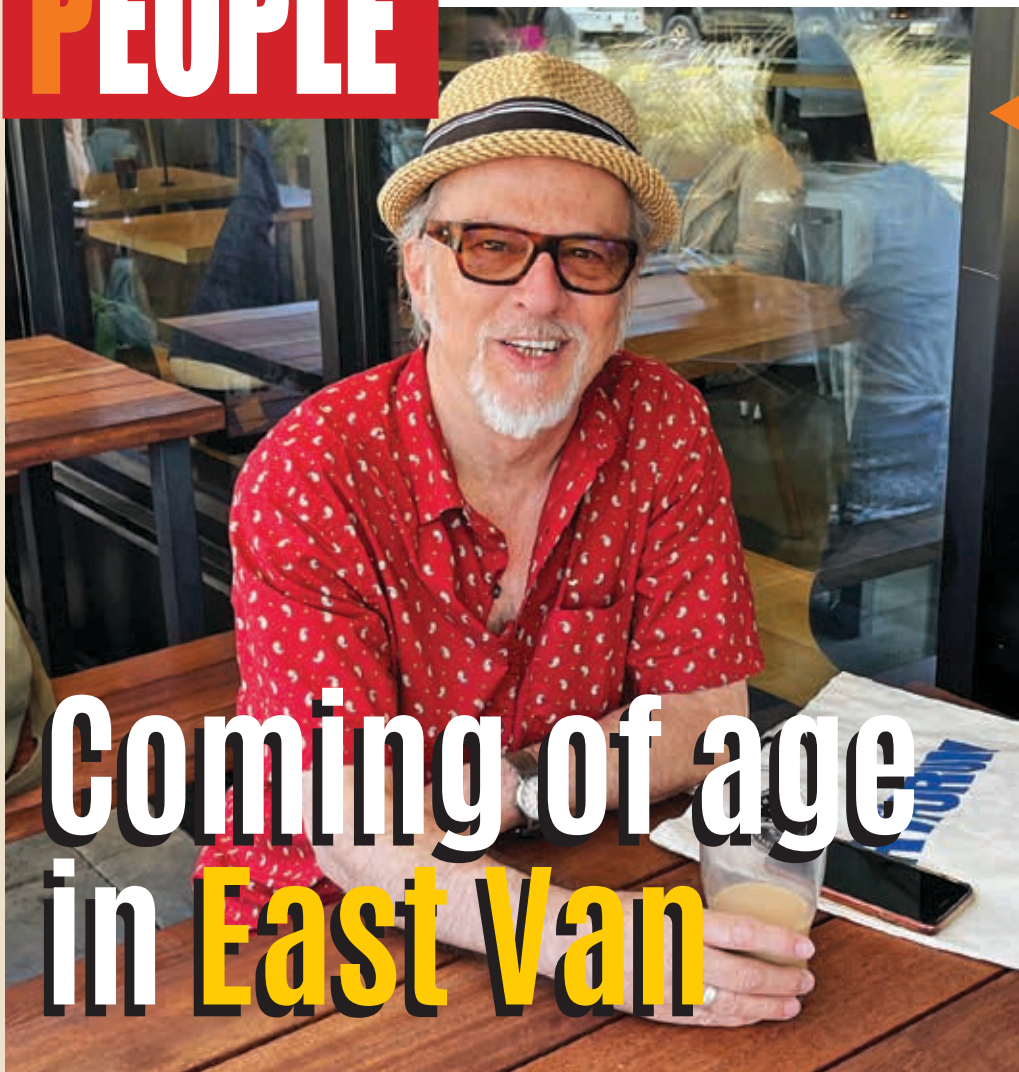
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sometimes, forest (Talon \$19.95)

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The current topselling titles from major BC publishing companies, in no particular order.

PEOPLE



BEVERLY CRAMP PHOTO

Coming of age in East Van

Having published more than 250 books through his company Anvil Press and 103 issues of *subTerrain* literary magazine since 1988, **Brian Kaufman** is set to release his own debut collection of fiction, **Cascadia Subduction Shift** (Guernica \$22.95). These coming-of-age tales are set in mid-to late-century Vancouver, mostly East Vancouver locales. The stories are divided into three sections representing childhood, teenage years and early adulthood; most are one-or two-pagers told with unvarnished stark realism and whiffs of mortality throughout.

In the first section, Kaufman's visceral scenes describe the fear and curiosity of young boys, as well as seemingly safer times with parents, such as when Frank, six or seven years old, goes with his dad to a food plant in East Vancouver: "He and his father in the Econoline van—he'd sit centre on the engine cover, where it was warm—no seat belt or even a thought of seat belts back then. His dad working the gears, 'three on the tree' ... Frank loved the feeling of accessing secured places secreted away on the waterfront, and he realized he had the key, the password, the in, and the 'in' was his dad."

The middle section is full of young men exploring drugs, getting into trouble and fights and eking out a living at early career jobs. The final section includes a few female characters and the emergence of a young struggling publisher ... named Frank. 9781778490644

Bamboo among the pines

As the teenage son of Chinese immigrants in Victoria, **Ryan Cho** was warned "not to put any visible displays of my 'Asianness' in my car like a red and gold ornament dangling from my rearview mirror," he writes in **Brotherhood is a Constant Possibility: Asian Masculinity in a World Made for Whiteness** (Thornapple \$27.95). His parents feared someone would vandalize Cho's car.

After graduating from university, Cho eventually got a job during the summers with a social justice-oriented youth program on the outskirts of Metchosin, where he worked for ten years. One of



Ryan Cho

the most meaningful things he did at this job was to collaborate on gender issue sessions. He realized that, having grown up in the very white city of Victoria "full of tall, lush trees and British-inspired architecture," he had learned to express himself within the boundaries of "white masculinity" and had internalized its norms and ideas. He was, he says, "bamboo among the pines." Cho was able to let go of those thoughts during the gender issue sessions. He explores these insights in his book, which is part memoir mixed with commentary and historical context. 97819908698221

Brian Kaufman has been operating Anvil Press for 36 years. He received the Jim Douglas Publisher of the Year Award in 2013 and a City of Vancouver's Mayor's Arts Award for Literary Arts in 2009 and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Western Magazine Awards in 2014.

TELLING A MOTHER'S STORY

When **Michelle Good's** mother implored from her cancer-ridden deathbed, "someone tell my story!" Kitimat-born Good, a Cree writer and lawyer who won the 2020 Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction for her debut novel *Five Little Indians* (HarperCollins), did just that. **Eliza Sunshine** (Random House \$27) spans three generations of Cree women, exploring motherhood, identity and generational trauma.

In a letter to readers, Good writes that the questions at the heart of *Eliza Sunshine* "call on the conscience of this country"—how did Indigenous women become "disposable" she asks, confronting the violence and injustice that continue to shape too many lives.

Good is well suited to this journey among the ghosts of her ancestors. She earned an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC while practising law and running her own firm and has consistently explored the legacy of colonialism. That she does so while emphasizing beauty, strength and resilience is to her enduring credit. 9781039011434



Michelle Good



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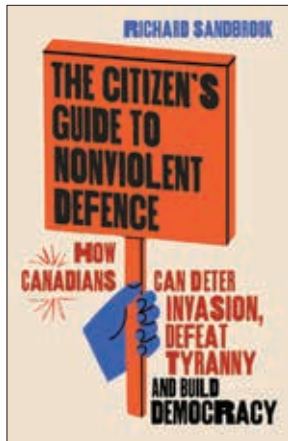
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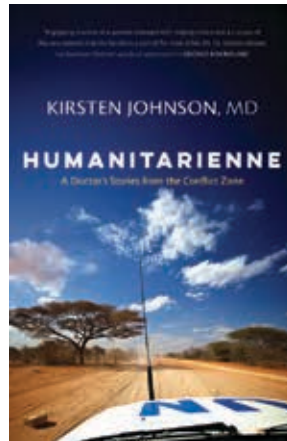
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RACHEL PHAN

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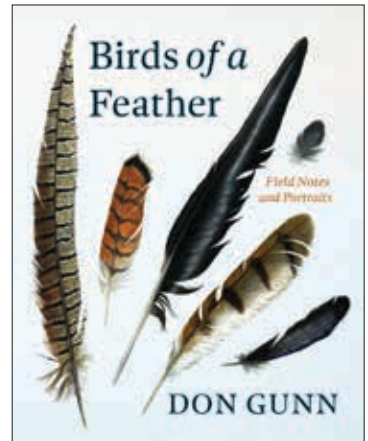
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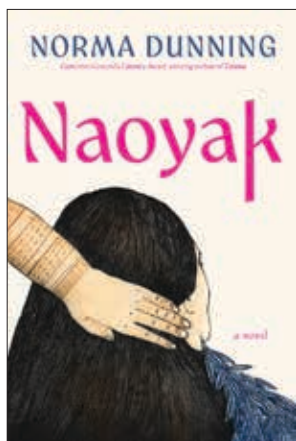
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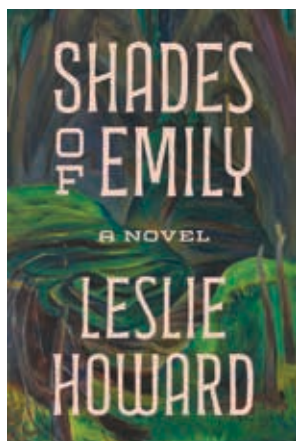
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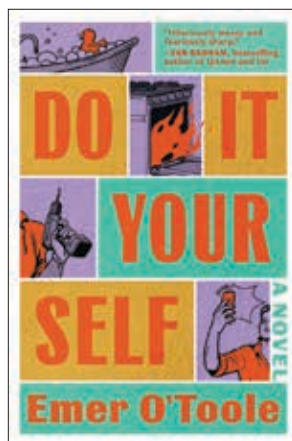
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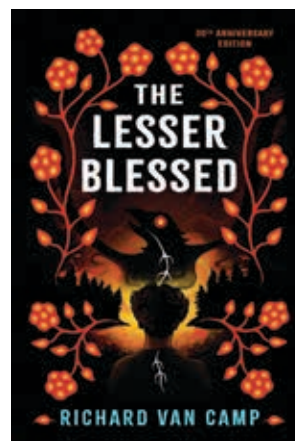
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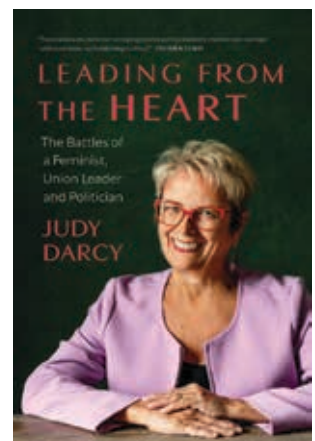
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Diane Evans

For years, **Diane Evans** hid her prowess as a practicing photographer—most knew her professionally through her dual jobs as manager of Presentation House Gallery (now the Polygon Gallery) and instructor at Emily Carr University of Art. Until her early death in 2023 from a rare cancer, she maintained a reputation as a mentor, curator and passionate collector of photobooks.

Now a retrospective of Evans' photos, completed over more than 45 years, shows the extent of her art photography practice: **Diane Evans: Photographs 1976–2023** (Polygon Gallery \$65).

"For Diane, photography wasn't simply a practice or a medium that she taught," writes curator and friend **Helga Pakasaar** in her essay in the book, "but rather a filter through which to come to terms with the world."

The thread that connects Evans' photos "is more a love for the way the world discloses itself through photographs than consistency in method or approach," writes curator, **Grant Arnold**, another contributor. "It is also a desire to enact, articulate, and depict an affective poetics of the everyday ... to seek out the often-fleeting encounters with beauty, authenticity, and intimacy that make life bearable in a culture increasingly flattened by the effects of commodification."

9780995902633

A GARDEN TO NOURISH THE SOUL

The colours of fall are an inspiration for foodie **Sabrina Currie**, a gardening blogger and now the author of a sumptuous cookbook, **West Coast Kitchen Garden: Growing, Gathering & Eating Through the Seasons** (Touchwood \$49) with photography by **DL Acken** (who can be found part of the year at her farm studio on Salt Spring Island).

"As the leaves change colour, tree fruits and tomatoes ripen in earnest and pumpkins try to break weight records," says Currie who learned young about seasons and cooking what's fresh while working with her father, a commercial fisherman. In addition to advice for the other three seasons, Currie explores eating local and fresh (hence the focus on seasons) and growing your own garden. Each chapter begins with a gardening guide followed by menus and recipes.

Currie, based alongside a highway on Vancouver Island, dug out her own front yard (a lawn) and converted it to "an urban kitchen garden," she writes. "I envisioned a place that my children could explore, somewhere they could learn about growing food. A garden to nourish my family and my soul."

9781771514781



Throughout the late 1970s, Diane Evans took a series of photos at the Pacific National Exhibition including this one from *Super Dogs*, c. 1979.



Sabrina Currie harvesting her garden, from *West Coast Kitchen Garden*.

ARCHAEOLOGY LOVERS DIG IN

The region now known as British Columbia holds some of the oldest archaeological sites in the Americas. The archaeological record in BC goes back 15,000 years and contains more than 60,000 sites—with more being added each year. These are some of the findings noted in archaeologist **Robert J. Muckle**'s guide **Once Upon This Land: Archaeology in British Columbia and the Stories it Tells** (UBC Press/Purich \$29.95).



Robert J. Muckle

Furthermore, while most early archaeology in BC focused on the stories of First Nations from the last ice age to the coming of European settlers in the late 1700s and early 1800s, more recent archaeological activities—in the 1900s and 2000s—focus on settlers, Indigenous peoples and others including Chinese and Japanese communities. New research locales include shipwrecks, airplane crashes, internment camps and modern garbage sites. Not only an introduction for archaeology lovers as well as casual observers, this book is an important reference guide for all British Columbians.

9780774881081



Don Steve

When hiking gear is stolen

Outdoor enthusiast **Don Steve**, left a lucrative legal career in Sri Lanka to relocate to Canada in 2017. After working in Eastern Canada for eight years, he moved to Vancouver Island and began working in BC's outdoor industry. Here he finds joy in hiking and canoeing ... that is until the day he was the victim of a thief.

Steve tells the story in **May I Buy My Own Stolen Hiking Gear?** (Tellwell Talent \$24.49). "This memoir is a journey of two halves," says Steve. "There is a part of my story I would give anything to forget, and another part I will carry with me forever," he adds. The other part of Steve's story is learning to celebrate life again. "The toughest lesson of all was realizing that peace comes when you stop searching for what was or what could be, and simply learn to be."

9781834540207

**Rags to Riches:
The Story of the
Nelson Brothers Fisheries**
by W.B. MacDonald with Stuart Nelson
(Caitlin \$27)

BY ALAN HAIG-BROWN



There was a time in British Columbia when a young man could leave a poverty-stricken fishing village in Asia or Europe and find a good life as a fisherman in BC. They arrived in the early twentieth century, worked hard, built lives and settled happily in Steveston, Prince Rupert and other coastal towns. But few, if any, matched the success of the Nelson brothers from the impoverished fishing village of Tromsø, Norway.

Ritchie Nelson, who would go on to found Nelson Brothers Fisheries with his brother **Norman**, was born at Tromsø in 1898. He followed older relatives to BC in 1909. They settled in the little Norwegian immigrant community of Sunbury on the Fraser River's south shore across from New Westminster. While still a child, Ritchie was able to go out with his brothers to help pull the gillnets that caught sockeye from the huge Fraser River runs. He saved his money and in 1914, Ritchie bought his own 5 HP gillnetter.

After a brief stint at a Lutheran college in Everett, Ritchie joined his brother Norman in the fish business. They were aggressive and got bigger boats, explored the whole coast and even fished halibut in Haida Gwaii. In 1919 Ritchie arranged to buy troll-caught salmon on the West Coast of Vancouver Island to pack and sell in Seattle. In 1920 the brothers added a second boat, the American-built seiner *Gradac*, to their fleet. This allowed them to pack more fish and started a growth curve that would continue for decades.

Rags to Riches is an insider look at the remarkable focus and talent that led Ritchie Nelson, with his brother Norman, to form one of BC's major fishing companies.

If the beginning of Ritchie and Norman's company was somewhat conventional, the growth and management was less so. The brothers proved to be canny businessmen. In the 1930s, the pilchard fishery became the backbone of their company. The little fish were caught by the hundreds of tons and rendered into meal and oil. Ritchie's innate business sense, enriched by the ups and downs of both fishing and packing, gave him an edge over his more corporate competitors. He understood how to manage hard times, which hit when pilchard disappeared from the BC coast. It didn't stop the Nelson brothers, though. To invoke a contemporary business term, Ritchie and Norman "pivoted" their focus to seining and gillnetting salmon to provide for their canneries.

Perhaps it was their having worked their way up in the industry from a Fraser River gillnet skiff, but the Nelson brothers had particular skills at matching seine skippers and boats. Boats are expensive to maintain and they require a lot of tender care when



FISHERMAN NEWSPAPER, 1965, FISHERMAN PUBLISHING SOCIETY COLLECTION • UBC OPEN COLLECTIONS

The REMARKABLE RISE of the Nelson Family fishery

How a poor immigrant family
built one of BC's largest fishing
operations in the 20th century.

Nelson Brothers Port Edward seine boat crewmen Arnold Pearson (behind) and (left to right) John Nelson, Willy Brillion, Dempsey Collinson, Frank Shannon and Melvin Leonard.

dently while maintaining its successful growth. The aging St. Mungo cannery in Sunbury was replaced by a modern new plant in Steveston. The company also built extensive operations in Port Edward, which continued and evolved to meet shifting demands. In the early 1960s, herring reduction and oil production provided another steady source of income as did a number of other small fish.

The fact is that BC's fishery seldom, if ever, had two decades in a row without major shifts in catches or permitting of fishermen. The Nelson Brothers were adept at shifting their operations as necessary. Secrecy was also the norm. Fishermen made different deals for vessel purchase-and-lease with the companies. Companies also made secret deals with each other. Throughout the 1960s, rumours persisted among fishermen that BC Packers owned Nelson Brothers, but it wasn't until the end of the decade that it was proven when a Nelson became senior manager of BCP.

The last half of *Rags to Riches* documents the complex changes in ownership, including the takeover of BCP and Nelson Brothers by the Weston family. The younger generation of Nelsons was managing BCP and they were not happy when **Galen Weston** took the helm of the parent company, signaling that the end of the Nelson family in BC's fishery was only a matter of time.

Happily, the family had totally devolved their participation in the industry before the sale of BCP by the Westons to the Pattison Group. There was no need for this final chapter in the book as the Nelson family was completely out of ownership by then.

9781773861777

Alan Haig-Brown, from one of BC's renowned writing families, began his career as a fisherman before becoming an award-winning writer himself. His most recent book is Raincoast Chronicles 25: mānāla goes fishing, released by Harbour Publishing in 2025.

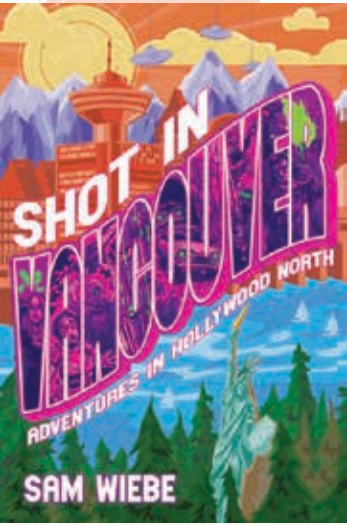
working; therefore, it is better to give a productive skipper some pride of ownership, which became an integral part of the Nelson Brothers' management style. Ritchie's gift was giving each fisherman the boat that best suited them. For example, an Indigenous fisherman who favoured his local ancestral waters could do well with a smaller boat; a Croatian immigrant fisherman to whom the whole coast was to be fished hard might do well with a larger, faster boat to attain a higher production. Within those general groups there were multiple individual fishermen and Ritchie and his managers made a point of getting to know each one to ascertain each man's talents.

In the 1950s, Ritchie brought his son **Dick** into the company. All the Nelson family boys were given entry level jobs in the industry and then, with time, they would be promoted to a level that Ritchie decided met their abilities. The 1950s, culminating in the spectacular Adams River sockeye returns of 1958, were good times for the BC fishery and good times for the Nelson Brothers. Ritchie was heard to grumble, in private, having sold some equity in the company to BC Packers (BCP) in 1941: "The worst mistake I ever made."

Like so much in the industry, this remained hush-hush and the company continued to operate indepen-



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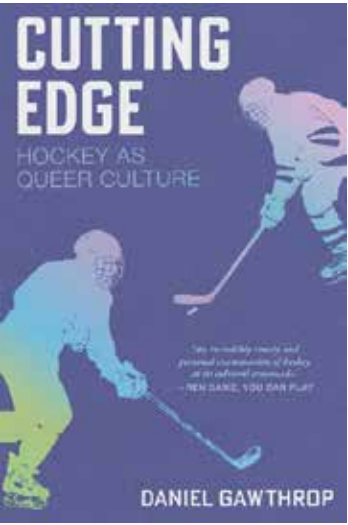


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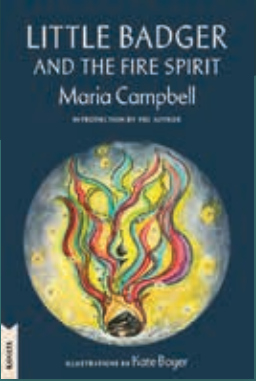
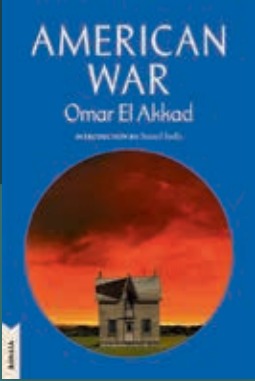
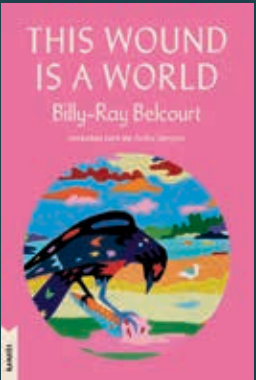
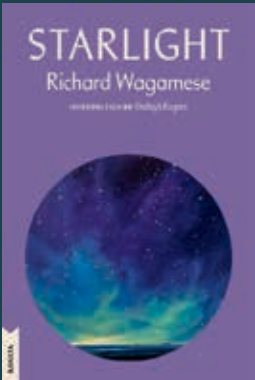
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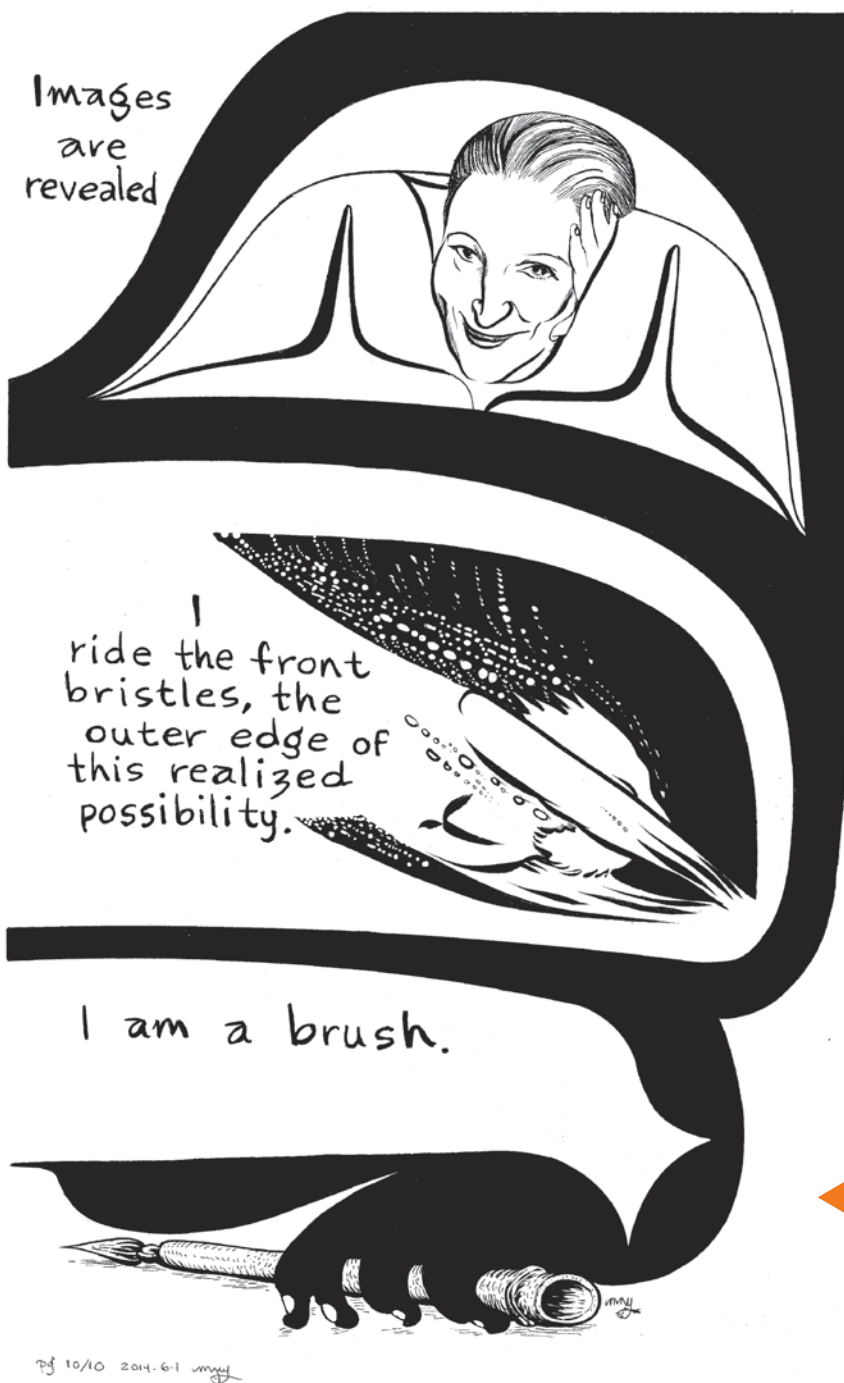
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THE POWER OF DRAWING AS A TOOL OF RESISTANCE

How artist-activist **Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas** created a distinct visual and narrative form that blends Haida design with Japanese manga and graphic novels—and made it famous.

**The Lost Haida Manga:
A Compendium**
by Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas
(D&M \$34.95)

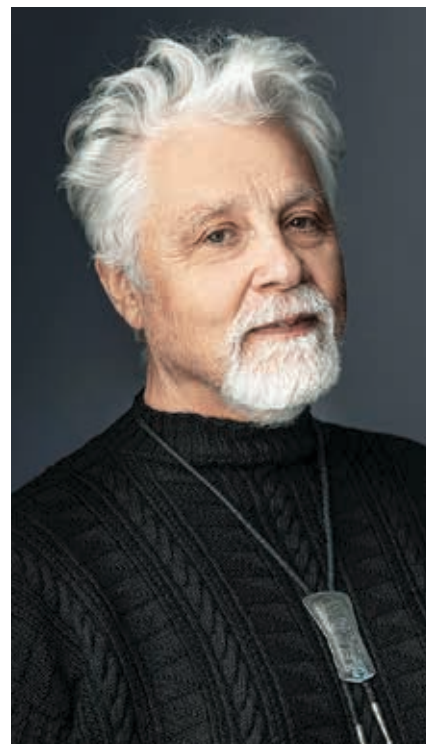
BY ROBIN LAURENCE

At the launch of **Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas's** newest book, it was striking how much time the artist spent with everyone who stood

in line to meet him and have their copy signed. In addition to speaking with each person at length and then fully inscribing the half-title page of their book, he presented every individual with a small ink or watercolour drawing. Eventually, he was interrupted by the organizers so that he could address the large audience that had gathered for the event and answer their questions. Once done that public task, however, he returned to personal interactions with his fans.

"The work I do is at some point quite solitary," Yahgulanaas says. "I burrow myself into my studio." He goes on to explain that because much of the art he creates is spontaneous rather than premeditated, he has to retreat into himself to allow the imagery to flow through him. "When I get a chance to talk to people who have taken time out of their lives to buy a book and express an interest, it's good for me. It calibrates my relationship with others."

Illustrations and text from Yahgulanaas' story *The Wave* (2014) about his existential thoughts concerning diving into ocean waves and what his art means. From *The Lost Haida Manga*.



Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas

The process is exhausting, he admits, but also gratifying.

With a foreword by anthropologist **Wade Davis**, *The Lost Haida Manga* brings together 15 previously unpublished, black-and-white works Yahgulanaas created between 1981 and 2025. Their subjects range from personal anecdotes to cultural narratives, from a story of time he spent with his grandmother as she gathered medicinal plants in the forest to a rhyming poem about "Rockin' Raven" fishing, and from an account of Haida management of culturally modified trees to Yahgulanaas's existential thoughts about diving through ocean waves and making art.

As the stories unfold over time, we see the evolution of Haida manga, the graphic style that Yahgulanaas invented and made famous. Davis describes it as "a distinct visual and narrative



Illustration from Yagulanaas' "A Tale of Two Shamans" (2000) from *The Lost Haida Manga*.

form that blends Haida design principles with the dynamic of Japanese manga and graphic novels." He then goes on to characterize Yahgulanaas, who also paints and sculpts and is currently developing an interdisciplinary performance and video work, as "an artist-activist, a philosopher with a brush, a mischief maker who has reimagined all the possibilities of the Haida aesthetic"



BORN IN PRINCE RUPERT IN 1954, MICHAEL Yahgulanaas grew up near Masset on Haida Gwaii, folded into his mother's family, clan and moiety. From an early age, he drew and painted prolifically; as a young adult, he committed himself to environmental and land rights causes. His art and his activism first came together in the 1970s, when he created the comic book *No Tankers, T'anks* for the Island Protection Society. Widely distributed, it was part of a successful campaign to block tankers from transporting Alaskan crude oil through the Hecate Strait, the perilously stormy body of water that lies between Haida Gwaii and mainland British Columbia. "The bafflegab advancing the theory



BEVERLY CRAMP PHOTO

Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas signing books at his launch for *The Lost Haida Manga* at Gallery Jones in Vancouver, May 20, 2026.

that the economy must trump ecology needed surgery," he says. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, Yahgulanaas continued to marry his graphic art to his environmental and political activism as a highly effective form of outreach. He discovered, Davis writes, "the power of drawing as a tool

of resistance," and produced thousands of comic strips, cartoons and visual essays of both protest and advocacy. "Long before Haida manga had a name," Davis continues, "Yahgulanaas understood something fundamental: if you want to influence people and inspire change, you must first meet them where they are." At the same time that his graphic art reached out to non-Indigenous audiences, Yahgulanaas was an active member of the Council of the Haida Nation. He is especially proud of his part in the anti-logging blockade on Lyell Island in 1985 and the wide support the Haida generated locally, nationally and internationally, resulting in the creation of the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site. "The degree of public support was such that I decided, at that time, I was going to try to do art that spoke across these cultural-ethnic divides," he says. Yahgulanaas has fully embraced the idea of "cultural hybridity" in his expanded art practice as well as in his actions. In fact, hybridity was a state of being he was born into. In his thirties, he added his Haida mother's

clan name (Yahgulanaas translates as "those from the middle of the village") to his Scottish-Canadian father's surname. His art studies, too, reflected cross-cultural currents: a brief stint at what was then the Vancouver School of Art, where he picked up instruction in cartooning and perspective drawing, and apprenticeships with renowned Haida carvers, **Robert Davidson** and **James Hart**, where he learned, he says, "the power of the line, that classic Haida characteristic." He also studied ink brush painting in Victoria with a Chinese master who spoke no English. "Most of the conversation was not by sound," Yahgulanaas recounts. "It was by his grabbing hold of my hand and pushing the brush when he wanted to show me this brush has this particular power." The expressive power and fluidity of working ink and watercolour with an Asian brush have become hallmarks of Yahgulanaas's style. He also forged links, both personal and historical, to Japan. Japanese university students he was guiding into "the deep forest" noticed his sketching and described it as "manga," Yahgulanaas says. "I then developed a notion that there was a merger possible between Asian and Haida graphic techniques." In his foreword, Davis writes that Haida manga emerged organically and stands as a "response to a long history of imposed binaries: traditional versus modern, Indigenous versus non-Indigenous, white versus brown, local versus urban." Yahgulanaas's art, which is not bound by such binaries or defined by outdated notions of tradition and authenticity, "insists that cultures are not museum pieces." "We live in a contemporary petri dish and I think there's some danger in governing our lives according to standards established in different times for different reasons," Yahgulanaas says. "I am more interested in the living moment." Still, he says, it is a moment informed by where he comes from—"a small fishing village off the West Coast of Canada with a really interesting cultural foundation." A lot of that foundation is evident in *The Lost Haida Manga*, in tales of shamans and sickness and supernatural creatures. Also evident is the condition of cultural hybridity, especially as expressed in Yahgulanaas's 2014 tale, "The Wave." Here, the artist muses on something a Haida elder, **Kwii7aans**, once said to him: "If I decide to dive into the ocean I must resurface outside the wave." As he muses on what that koan-like saying meant and how it might apply to his own artmaking, he considers a spooky Japanese story about immersing oneself in a stream; a couple of lines from a **Leonard Cohen** song; and a Zen-like piece of advice about creatively emptying one's mind, spoken by the Canadian-American artist **Agnes Martin**. Ultimately, Yahgulanaas depicts himself diving into his art as if it were a wave and becoming the instrument of his own creativity. Amid sinuous Haida lines and drawings of himself, his friends, his wife and his studio, he writes — exultantly — "I am a brush." 9781771624671

Robin Laurence is an award-winning writer and critic based in Vancouver.

SPONTANEOUS TRAVELLING

Winging It:
Travelling Without Reservations
 by Michael Kluckner
 (Midtown / Sandhill \$19.95)

BY DAVID LESTER

With sketchbook in hand, **Michael Kluckner** travels on his own terms in **Winging It: Travelling Without Reservations**. He

challenges the reader: “What if you don’t want to commit to six days in a Paris hotel followed by four days in an Airbnb in Lyon, moving on a schedule laid out in advance?” What if you want to “[t]ake your chances on finding a place to sleep? Move along as the spirit moves you?” Thus begins travelling the world with Kluckner and **Christine Allen**, his partner of 50 years.

The romance of travel includes: being double-booked at a *casa particolare* in Cuba; eating guinea pig (cuy) in Peru; finding last-minute accommodation at a seniors’ retirement home in France; outsmarting a cyclone in New Zealand; and discovering a monkey is trying to drink your beer in Bali as the café owner shrugs, “It is the way of the monkey.” These stories brim with the enjoyment and affection of two seasoned adventurers. The reader joins them in Greece, India, Normandy, Australia, Mexico and onward.

In a wild last-minute decision to catch a **Rene Magritte** exhibit in Bern, Switzerland, Kluckner noted it “gave us the pleasure of the unexpected and the satisfaction that we had turned a journey that was going nowhere into one with excellent memories.” At a station in India, their train arrived slowly but didn’t actually stop. Christine leapt

On the road with
Michael Kluckner
 —and catching up
 with the latest
 crop of graphic
 novels.

onto the carriage steps. As the train picked up speed, Kluckner “panicked and ran forward to the other end of the carriage. With one hand grabbing the railing I got a foot on the step and swung myself and my bag inside.”

Though not strictly a graphic novel, *Winging It* combines art and text in a way that defines the very essence of this genre. Kluckner’s evocative sketches allow the reader to share his visceral experiences in a very different way from the often generic quality of holiday snaps. Kluckner observes, “When you stop and draw something, or write about it, it sticks in your mind.”

★
 MICHAEL KLUCKNER’S GRAPHIC NOVELS INCLUDE *The Bund: A Graphic History of Jewish Labour Resistance* (Between The Lines, 2023), written by Sharon Rudahl and Paul Buhle; *The Rooming House: The West Coast in the Seventies* (Midtown, 2022), which was a BC bestseller; *Julia* (Midtown, 2018) about the life of novelist Julia Henshaw; *2050: A Post-Apocalyptic Murder Mystery* (Midtown, 2016); and *Toshiko* (Midtown, 2015), focusing on Japanese Canadians in BC during the Second World War.

BC BookWorld spoke with Kluckner about the secrets of spontaneous travel.



Roadside lunch somewhere in Normandy, 2023. Art by Michael Kluckner.

BC BookWorld: The concept of “winging it” in regards to travel, seems a radical idea in a time where so much of travel is pre-packaged, luxury, all-inclusive and panders to self-gratification rather than adventure. Are you a radical traveller?

Michael Kluckner: We’re not into luxury (even if we could afford it) must-see “bucket list” trips, especially resorts and cruises, and lavish dining has little appeal for us. Why would we want to see well-off people “having fun”—arghhhh? Winging it seems radical to some of our friends, but to us it’s an upscale version of the backpacking days of our youth, where we wandered

and adventured in a completely unfettered way.

BW: Any tips you care to share about travelling and drawing?

MK: My travel sketching has evolved considerably over 50 years. I used to carry quite large homemade watercolour sketchbooks and paint a lot of landscapes—urban and countryside. I’m now more interested in drawing people and vignettes—a donkey on the side of a road, say—that will trigger memories.

Gradually my kit has shrunk to a small Moleskine sketchbook and a collection of pencils and pens, with the idea of them fitting into a small backpack weighing about six pounds—my only luggage. There is nothing worse for “winging it” than heavy bags. And you can always tell yourself as your clothes get shabby, “These people are never going to see me again.”

BW: Do you find drawing when you travel to be more compelling than photography?

MK: The act of drawing, of slowing down long enough to get a sketch underway, fixes a place and an experience in my mind. On a typical day I might start several sketches and then add to them from memory in the hotel room that evening, maybe not finishing them until much later. Photos have their place, but often the quick snapshot is so forgettable—“where was that one?”—and when people take so many, their memories blur. A sketch, especially if it becomes a kind of cartoon like many in the book, can tell a story.

BW: How do you and your partner Christine decide where you’ll travel?

MK: We’re off-season or “shoulder season” travellers, and try to go to coun-



Tropical Australia near Cairns, 2009. Art by Michael Kluckner.

tries when monsoons and heat waves are less likely—an increasingly difficult task with climate change, which is one of the themes of a few chapters in the book, including a cyclone in New Zealand and a hurricane in Cuba which would have thwarted any itinerary.

We go to places when they are as “natural” as possible, even if it means the shorter days of their mild winter. And there are elements in our past, such as Christine’s study of Indonesia at university and my fascination with Japanese ink painting, that make places a destination.

BW: Travelling can be a real test as to the durability and compatibility of a couple. Was travelling a link you and Christine shared from the beginning?

MK: We had travelled alone and with previous partners before we got together. It was finding our compatibility—that we both wanted to wander, that we both liked modest, family-owned hotels and cottages, that we had little desire to eat and drink like gourmets, that we liked trains and buses but could share the driving if we decided on the spur of the moment to rent a car—that made us wing it over so many trips and years.

BW: Where are you travelling next?

MK: We’re probably going more often now to “the places we’ve saved for our old age” because of similar language and culture. A recent trip was New Zealand. Next stop, southern Spain and Morocco. But ... you never know.

9781988242644



Lost Harbour
by **Mike Deas and Nancy Deas**
(Orca \$16.95)

In this seventh book in the *The Sueño Bay Adventure* series, our heroes, Jenna, Ollie, Kay and Sleeves become intrigued by a book of Sueño Bay mysteries, especially the story about Jenny Mathers, who vanished without a trace years ago. The gang heads up the island in their trusty go-cart to investigate. **Mike** (artist) and **Nancy** (writer) **Deas** live on Saltspring Island, BC. For ages 6 to 8.

9781459837843



Inbetweens: A Graphic Novel
by **Faith Erin Hicks**
(First Second \$22.99)

Twin sisters Sloane and Ash love drawing, but that doesn’t mean you’ll automatically be good at it. At their summer animation classes, Sloane excels at her art, while Ash struggles with the anxiety of her own expectations. How will this play out? Vancouver-based **Faith Erin Hicks** is the award-winning and



Close On A Full Moon by **Amy Longo**
(Cloudscape)



The Big Soup: Growing Up Autistic by **Matthew Nielsen** (Cloudscape)



Still from the animated feature film *Tangles*.



Lost Harbour by **Mike Deas and Nancy Deas** (Orca)



Dancing with the Sheyd by **Rotem Anna Diamant** (Inservice Comics)

New York Times bestselling writer and artist of over a dozen books. For ages 10 to 14 years.

9781250838742



Close On A Full Moon
by **Amy Longo**
(Cloudscape \$25)

The teenage crew working for minimum wage at Big Burger restaurant faces workplace harassment and supernatural horror in this story of friendship and coming of age under capitalism. **Amy Longo** lives in Pitt Meadows, BC.

9781927742686



Love in the Time of Covid
by **Jeff Ellis** (Jeffrey Ellis \$10)
I just discovered this gem from 2023 by **Jeff Ellis**. The year is 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic is underway and, feeling isolated after a recent breakup, Micheal Lee decides to try online dating. In part, this is a book about be-

ing alone during the pandemic and a critique of online dating. Ellis is one of the founders of the Cloudscape Comics Society in Vancouver. Info: www.jeff-ellis.ca



The Big Soup: Growing Up Autistic
by **Matthew Nielsen**
(Cloudscape \$35)

Our protagonist faces the challenges of growing up with autism as his parents first get him diagnosed and then find an appropriate, supportive school. A compassionately told memoir of empathy, anger management and respect. **Matthew Nielsen** is a Welsh-Canadian comic artist.

9781927742662



Dancing with the Sheyd
by **Rotem Anna Diamant**
(Inservice Comics \$40)

Victoria-based **Rotem Anna Diamant**’s memoir (part folklore, part pop culture parable) of growing up Jewish

and queer in Winnipeg. Diamant is a multidisciplinary artist and librarian who creates comics focused on themes of identity.

9781069692610



Tangles:
A Story about Alzheimer’s, My Mother and Me by **Sarah Leavitt**
(Freehand, 2010)

Not a new book, but a film version. **Sarah Leavitt**’s *Tangles* was screened at the 2026 Cannes Film Festival where it received a seven-minute standing ovation. The animated film is directed by Vancouver-based **Leah Nelson** and stars **Julia Louis-Dreyfus** and **Seth Rogen**. Leavitt’s remarkable graphic memoir documents a woman’s experience caring for a mother with dementia.

9781551111179



The Case of David Zimmerman
by **Lucas Harari and Arthur Harari**
Translated by **David Homel**
(Arsenal Pulp \$47.95)

Though not a BC-authored book, it is published by Vancouver-based Arsenal Pulp Press. **The Case of David Zimmerman** is a compelling mystery that follows thirty-something Parisian photographer, David, who observes a woman at a party only to wake up the next day in the body of that woman. *The Unknown*, a feature film adaptation of *The Case of David Zimmerman*, is being released in 2026.

9781834050348



The Black Schooner:
Rebellion on the Amistad,
A Graphic Novel by **David Lester,**
Marcus Rediker with Paul Buhle
(Beacon \$24.95)

Full disclosure, I’m the editorial designer of *BC BookWorld*, and this is my most recent book. It tells the story of how enslaved Africans on board the *Amistad* rebelled and captured the slave ship in 1839, eventually won their freedom and returned to Africa. *The Black Schooner* is the fourth book created with historians **Marcus Rediker** and **Paul Buhle**. Translations of the previous books have been published in seven languages.

9780807016909



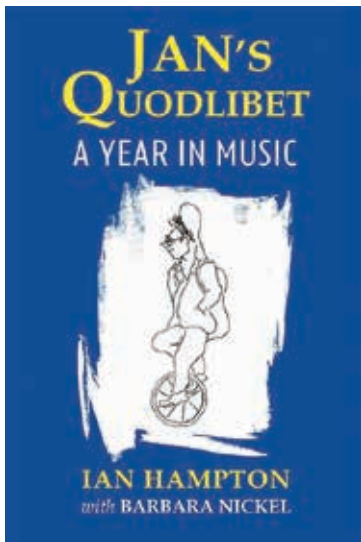
Captain America Vol. 1:
Our Secret Wars by **Chip Zdarsky**
(text) and **Valerio Schiti** (art)
(Marvel Universe \$22.50)

On the comics front, Denman Island’s **Chip Zdarsky** is the first Canadian to write the *Captain America* monthly comic. The first five issues are now collected in **Our Secret Wars**. 9781302964030



Inbetweens: A Graphic Novel
by **Faith Erin Hicks** (First Second)

Books created by **HUMANS!**



MUSIC / MEMOIR

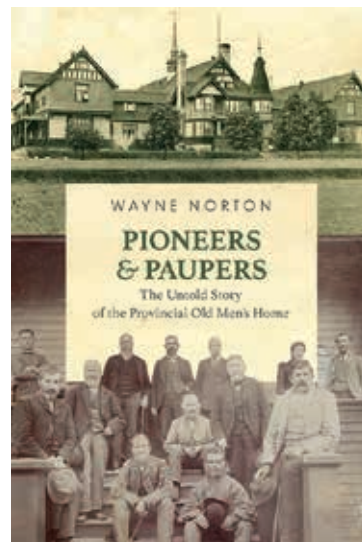
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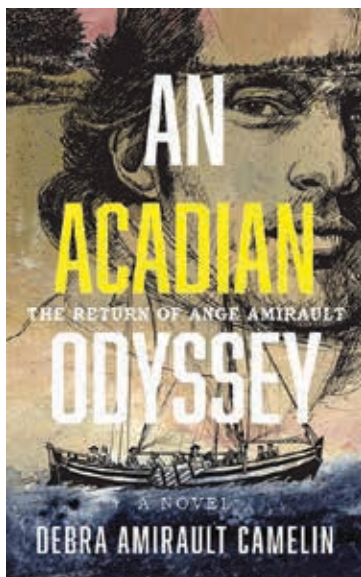
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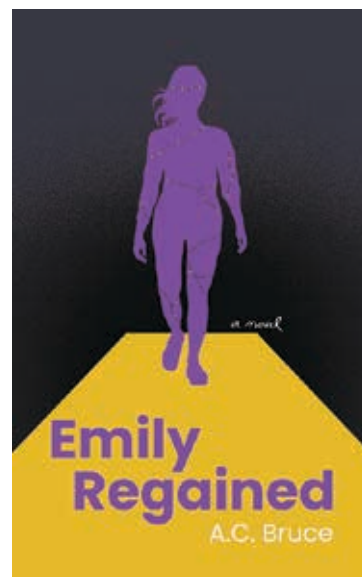
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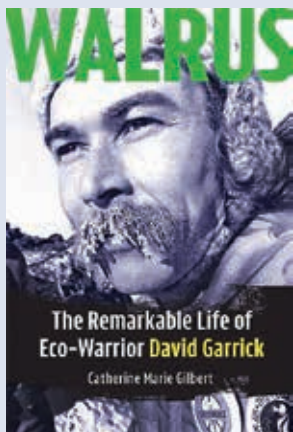
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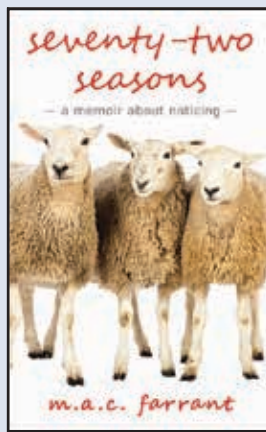


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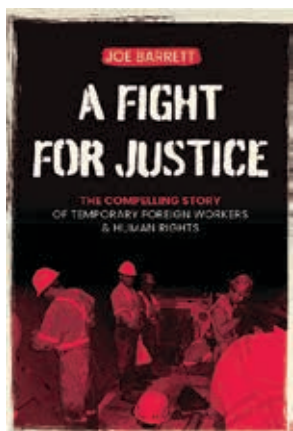
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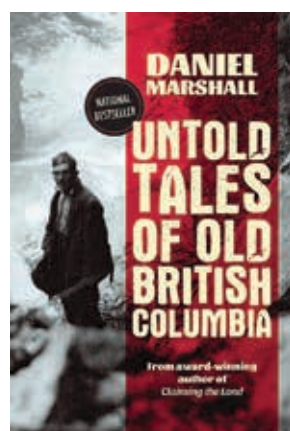
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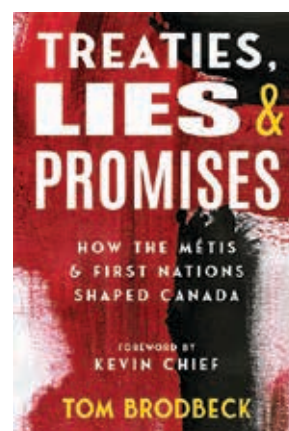


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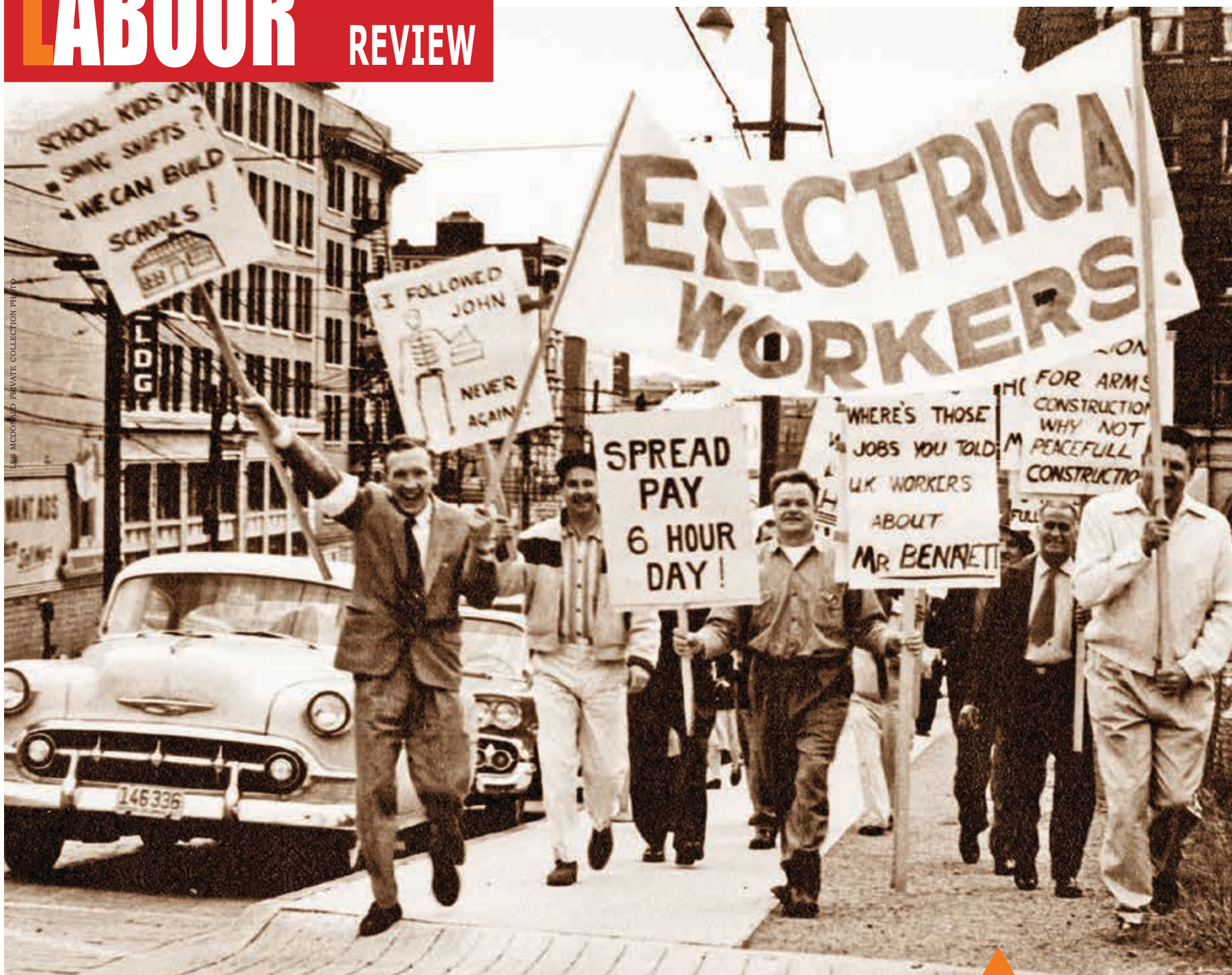
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Tom Brodbeck

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The Red Baron of IBEW Local 213: Les McDonald, Union Politics, and the 1966 Wildcat Strike at Lenkurt Electric
by Ian McDonald
(AU Press \$39.99)

BY ROD MICKLEBURGH

Many remember **Les McDonald** as a rabble-rouser extraordinaire. He shook the rafters of Local 213 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) with a boisterous activism that drove conservative IBEW leaders around the bend, worried to an extent that seems quaint today about “reds under the bed” of their union. And indeed, McDonald was a Communist, the “Red Baron” of this book’s title, but one who caused consternation for leaders of the BC Communist Party as well with his affinity to rush to the barricades without waiting for their direction.

In the 1960s, he was in the forefront of numerous IBEW campaigns and disputes, not all of them sanctioned by the union. Most notably he was part of the 1966 wildcat strike at the historic Lenkurt Electric plant in Burnaby that had a profound impact on the BC labour movement. Some credit a fiery speech McDonald made in the bitter aftermath of the failure of the Lenkurt strike with galvanizing workers to form what became one of BC’s most successful independent Canadian unions.

But McDonald’s exploits did not stop with raising ruckuses at union meetings or on the picket line. He also applied his energy to what may have been

Rushing to the barricades with The Red Baron

Les McDonald skied, rock climbed, hiked, scaled mountains and led the 1966 wildcat strike at the Lenkurt Electric plant in Burnaby, leading to the formation of BC’s most successful independent union.

his first love: outdoor physical activity. He skied, he rock climbed, he hiked, he scaled mountains and eventually he embraced the supreme test of the triathlon. McDonald threw himself into the latter sport, both competitively—a multi-time world champion for his age group—and administratively. As head of Triathlon Canada, he spearheaded the founding of the International Triathlon Union and was elected its first president. Using some of his old trade union skills, he is widely credited with prodding Olympic poobahs into adding triathlon as an Olympic sport for the first time at the Sydney Olympics

in 2000. Under McDonald’s influence, triathlon was one of the first sports to provide equal prize money for men and women competitors. In recognition of all he did for the sport, and for his promotion of women athletes, McDonald received the Order of Canada in 2013.

The citation made no mention of his trade unionism.

This remarkable individual, who died in 2017 at the age of 84, is now the subject of a full-length book, written by his son, **Ian McDonald**. The reader gets a sense of what is to come with the book’s evocative cover photo. It shows Les McDonald in full activist mode,

Les McDonald (far left) leads Local IBEW 213’s left faction en route to a demonstration of unemployed building trades workers, Vancouver City Hall, 1960.

gleefully holding a sign in each hand as he leads a march for the 6-hour day with a huge grin on his face. His happy place. It makes me laugh, in a good way, every time I look at it.

But there is more to the book than Ian’s dad. The author does a deep dive into the tortured history of Local 213 and the drive by its international representatives to purge the local of Communists and other opponents of the status quo. Through this one local, Ian McDonald opens a window into an era of BC labour history when McCarthyism and the hunt for “Reds” had shamefully seeped into the province, tainting what was Canada’s most militant labour movement.

By then, Communists were nowhere near the force they had been when they led the great industrial organizing drives of the 1930s and 1940s. Yet they still exercised an influence in unions such as the IBEW out of all proportion to their numbers. This was not because union members were itching to follow the red flag of Leninism, but because they recognized Communists as organized, effective trade unionists. The fact they were there, however, was anathema to the higher-ups.

In 1955, Local 213’s popular business manager **George Gee** was ousted from the union for life, accused of “working in behalf of Communist causes”, whatever that meant in a peaceful, democratic country like Canada. Eighteen others received

continued on page 14



Celebrating Stories for 25 Years



Glenn Dixon
Tara Gereaux
Michelle Good
Robyn Harding
Clara Hughes
Eve Joseph
Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas
Loghan Paylor
Anakana Schofield
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and More...



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Les McDonald in his North Vancouver backyard not long after receiving a 30-year suspension from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).

continued from page 13

suspensions of 10 to 30 years. But ideological turmoil continued to roil Local 213, outlined in such detail by the author that Les McDonald doesn't show up until page 93.

The impassioned electrical worker joined the Communist Party in 1958 and received his journeymen's ticket in 1963. He wasted little time embroiling himself in the ongoing battle against top-down, business unionism that was trying to keep the lid on people like him.

These tensions erupted into all-out war during the ill-fated wildcat strike at Lenkurt Electric. The walkout began when plant workers, most of them women, charged off the job to protest hard-nosed company attitudes. When they delayed their return, Lenkurt fired all 257 employees. The confrontation erupted into mayhem, on the picket line and within the union. There were violent scuffles with police as picketers from all over the Lower Mainland ignored court injunctions and converged on the site to try and keep scabs from going in to work. The international then enraged union members by suspending Local 213 business manager, **Art O'Keeffe**, and signing an agreement that did not ensure strikers would get their jobs back. O'Keeffe's replacement was angrily ejected onto the street, followed by a week-long occupation of the union hall led by (who else?) Les McDonald.

In the end, there was no course but surrender. McDonald and others were suspended for up to 30 years by the union. Four union leaders, including O'Keeffe and Vancouver Labour Council president **Paddy Neale**, were sent to jail for defying court injunctions, and 76 plant workers were not rehired.

The battle takes up a large chunk of *The Red Baron of IBEW Local 213*, as befits one of the province's most

intense labour flare-ups. The details still amaze. Given the extent of the defeat, he bemoans the decisions that turned a planned, one-hour "wobble" into an all-out illegal strike. But most wildcats are emotional from the get-go. Expecting angry workers to always do the right thing is asking a lot when they want to fight, no matter the odds. As it is, the high-profile jailings of Paddy Neale et al. spurred the BC labour movement to launch a full-blown and ultimately successful campaign to end the use of injunctions in labour disputes once and for all. Les McDonald's call to disgruntled Lenkurt workers to form an all-Canadian union was taken up, leading to the establishment of the Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers (CAIMAW) which grew to more than 6,000 members. That was one of the highlights of McDonald's trade union career, his son writes. Sadly, however, his dad didn't join the very union he set in motion. Communist leaders didn't believe in dual unionism and Les McDonald remained a member of the IBEW to the end.

Although *The Red Baron of IBEW Local 213* is perhaps overly long and discursive at times, it is good to see attention paid to this forgotten chapter of BC labour history. It is a tale greatly worth telling.

9781771993470

A former labour reporter for the Vancouver Sun and The Province and a senior writer at The Globe and Mail for more than twenty years, Rod Mickleburgh has authored several books including On the Line: A History of the British Columbia Labour Movement (Harbour, 2018), which won the George Ryga Award and, co-authored with Geoff Meggs, The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett & the NDP in Power, 1972-1975 (Harbour, 2012) that won the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize.

“The walkout began when plant workers, most of them women, charged off the job to protest hard-nosed company attitudes. When they delayed their return, Lenkurt [the company] fired all 257 employees...”

Where the Earth Meets the Sky:
A Story of Penguins, People, and
Place in Antarctica by Louise K. Blight
(Penguin Random House \$38.00)

BY TREVOR CAROLAN

Despite recent virus outbreaks aboard polar-bound cruise boats, Antarctica is now an on-trend destination for extreme travellers. Yet, as Louise K. Blight intimates in **Where the Earth Meets the Sky**, a journal-like account of a three-month research season there earlier in her career, the strange can be merely normal in this southernmost continent that otherwise exists politically as a model of international cooperation, without borders or passports.

Blight begins with reports from 2023 and 2024 of breeding failures among Antarctica’s huge penguin populations that reinforce her concern with global climate change. Although once untouchably remote, its collapsing ice shelves and record-high temperatures are “emblematic of a changing planet,” she says. Her story, she explains, is of Antarctica “on the cusp of change.”

In 2003, after previous visits as a cruise ship tour guide, Blight was offered a research sojourn on remote Ross Island. The launch pad for the earliest successful overland voyages to the magnetic South Pole, she describes it as a mesmerizing world of ice and ancient lava rock—landscapes so overpowering that they inspire her to meditate on BC painter **E.J. Hughes’** remark that he painted from nature as “a form of worship.” The only continent never to have had Indigenous inhabitants, this “highest, driest, windiest and coldest place on earth,” we’re told makes “human suffering [feel] insignificant.”

Blight’s role is to assist her new boss, a taciturn marine ornithologist, in biological studies and the banding of Ross Island’s Adélie penguins. Their two-person post at remote Cape Royds, 35 km by helijet or tracked vehicle from the larger McMurdo research base, is home to an expansive colony of the flightless, marathon-swimming penguins born without fear of humans. McMurdo, with its landing strip and emergency evacuation units, is a US facility housing hundreds of researchers and support staff. Blight describes it as a prefabricated, circa 1980s Arctic village with basic amenities: dorms; a cafeteria; storage space for every sort of winter, field, food and fuel supplies; lab and communications units; a “wine cellar” hut for relaxing; and even a bowling alley. Welcome to downtown Antarctica. Run on military-style discipline, its “isolation, extreme weather, and monochromatic landscape draw an odd mix of adventurers, iconoclasts, and loners,” she records. The next closest station, Scott Base, is a New Zealand facility of 85 souls; life is friendlier and there’s a “rugby field” where the Kiwis always win.

Welcome to downtown Antarctica

The adventures of **Louise K. Blight** in an Antarctic village consisting of dorms, a cafeteria, a lab, a wine cellar and a bowling alley in the driest, windiest, coldest place on earth.

With spring temperatures at -20°C, and kitted out in parka, neck warmer and extra layers of clothing over a couple of pairs of long johns, Blight undergoes a mandatory boot camp of extreme weather training. It’s vital as she’ll be sleeping in a mountaineering tent in summertime zero-degree weather and continual daylight beside the Royds’ solitary canvas Quonset hut.

Beneath the gaze of Mount Erebus, a snowbound but active volcano, the author’s isolated new home—“a moonscape with penguins”—proves utterly spartan. There’s meltwater for drinking and cooking, and sanitation is an old-fashioned honey bucket. Technology is an emergency radio, with a freestanding propane stove for heat and solar panels to power their computers. With a long, contemplative season ahead, she self-reflects: in Canada she’s left

behind unfinished career objectives, a partner whom she calls a “future ex-husband” and grief at her sister’s death. Yet, “there are few things lonelier than being at the end of the world and awakening to the fact that you are truly alone,” she confesses.

It’s the penguins that are the draw. We learn plenty about them. Less than 1% of Antarctica is ice-free, making Ross Island’s rocky summer terrain an ideal breeding environment. Males build nests of loose stones; females produce only two eggs. Their colony area reeks of guano, or penguin poop. Research days are spent carefully observing, weighing and documenting their behaviours, and attaching small transponder tags to the birds. They’ll be tracked for survival rates, migration patterns and reproductive success—data that can be analyzed

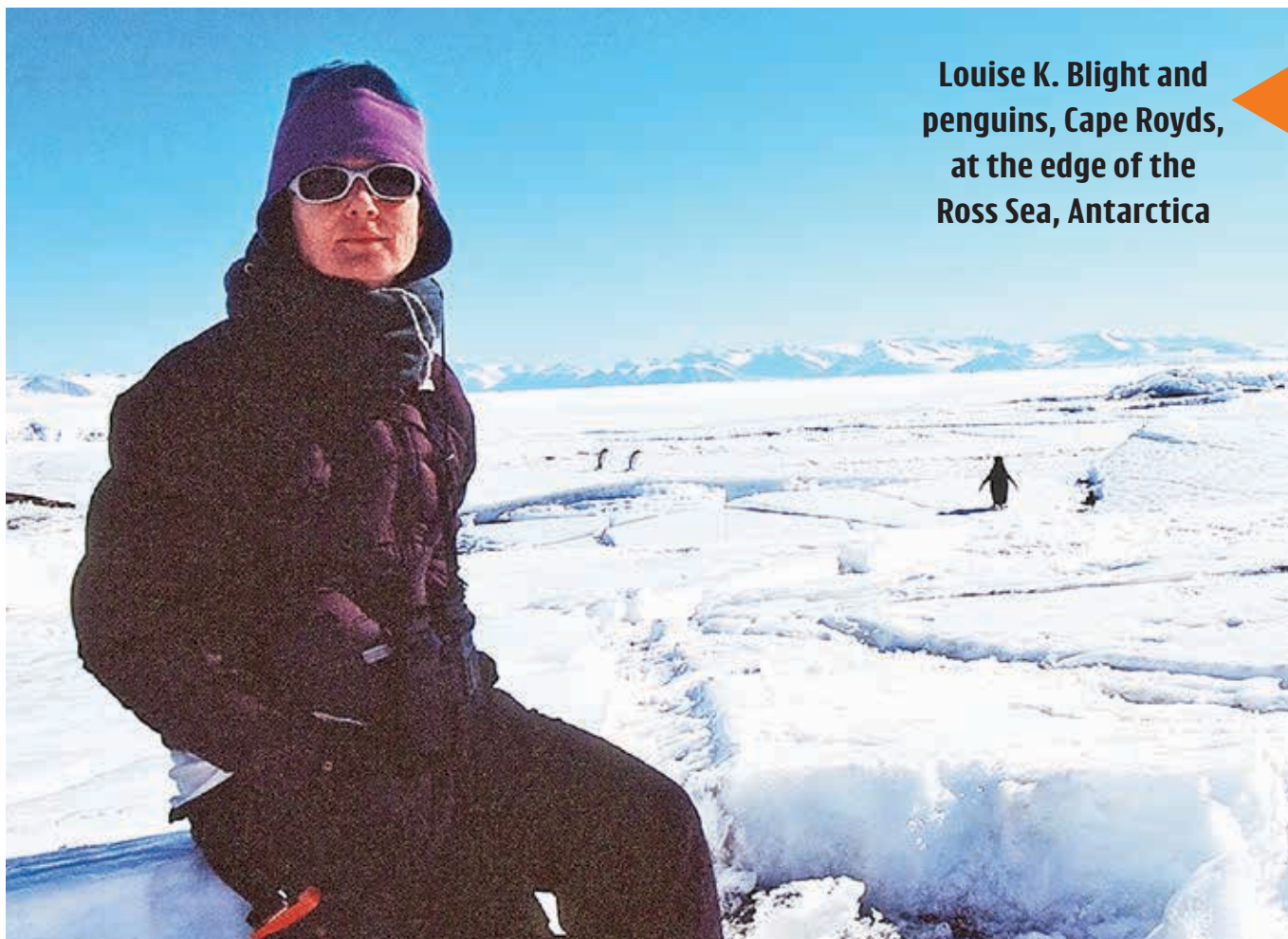
over time. David, the station boss, explains the reason: on a swiftly changing planet, there’s no better measurement of change than making comparisons with the Earth’s “last intact marine ecosystem.”

Once sea ice clears with warmer days, liquid ocean appears and fishing is easier for the Adélies as they struggle to raise their chicks. Everything is logged. Meanwhile, Blight’s frozen camp meals grow monotonous, relieved only by rare overnight stints “in town”—a chance to meet others, eat fresh, get clean, wash clothes of the stink of penguin guano and purchase goodies—chocolate, a bottle of liquor. For some, she notes, there are secret relationships with “ice wives” or “ice husbands.” Even on the shiftiest edge of the world there’s room for a little hanky-panky.

There are lengthy accounts of icy weather surges, landscape details and more of the penguins’ annual saga. Echoes of **Lynne Quarmby’s** Arctic book *Watermelon Snow* (McGill-Queen’s, 2020) resonate when visitors from the Antarctic Artists and Writers Program turn up, and when Blight discovers patches of unbelievably hardy lichens and moss surviving even here. Then, in an emotive interlude we see her embark totally solo into the icy vastness on cross-country skis. And amid images of **Miles Davis’** *Kind of Blue* album or **Yo-Yo Ma’s** cello drifting through on headphones into the great void, moments of “peace and tranquility” so profound arise that she intuits, “Antarctica is holding its breath.” There’s merit in this Canuck’s endurance where the earth meets the sky.

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Trevor Carolan writes from
North Vancouver.



Louise K. Blight and penguins, Cape Royds, at the edge of the Ross Sea, Antarctica

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Jason Heroux's *Unfinished Wilderness* continues his ever-morphing journey into the far reaches of a gentle surrealism and the deeply human. At times melancholy and darkly slapstick, these poems explore the growing struggle to feel at home in a world where global concepts of shelter and belonging remain scarce.

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BLOOD CLOT BANANA BAG
BY BILLEH NICKERSON

On Remembrance Day, 2022, the author ended up in the ER with what was eventually diagnosed as blood clots. This diagnosis resulted in a two-week hospital stay that overlooked Vancouver's Davie Street Village and the nightlife landscapes of his youth. *Blood Clot Banana Bag* delves into perceptions of luck and fortune, but also grief and survivor's guilt, and the privilege of universal health care, all through the lens of Nickerson's trademark humour and exacting details.

978-1-77214-262-4 | SEPTEMBER | POETRY



**STANLEY PARK MANOR:
A COLLECTIVE HISTORY**
BY KEVIN SPENST
(WITH LYN GUY)

Stanley Park Manor: a Collective History brings together dozens of voices and hundreds of lives lived in one of the West End's most iconic buildings. With previous tenants such as Pierre Berton, Simma Holt, Trish Klein (of the Be Good Tanyas), and congregations of others up to the present, this almost 100-year-old Vancouver building is steeped in stories.

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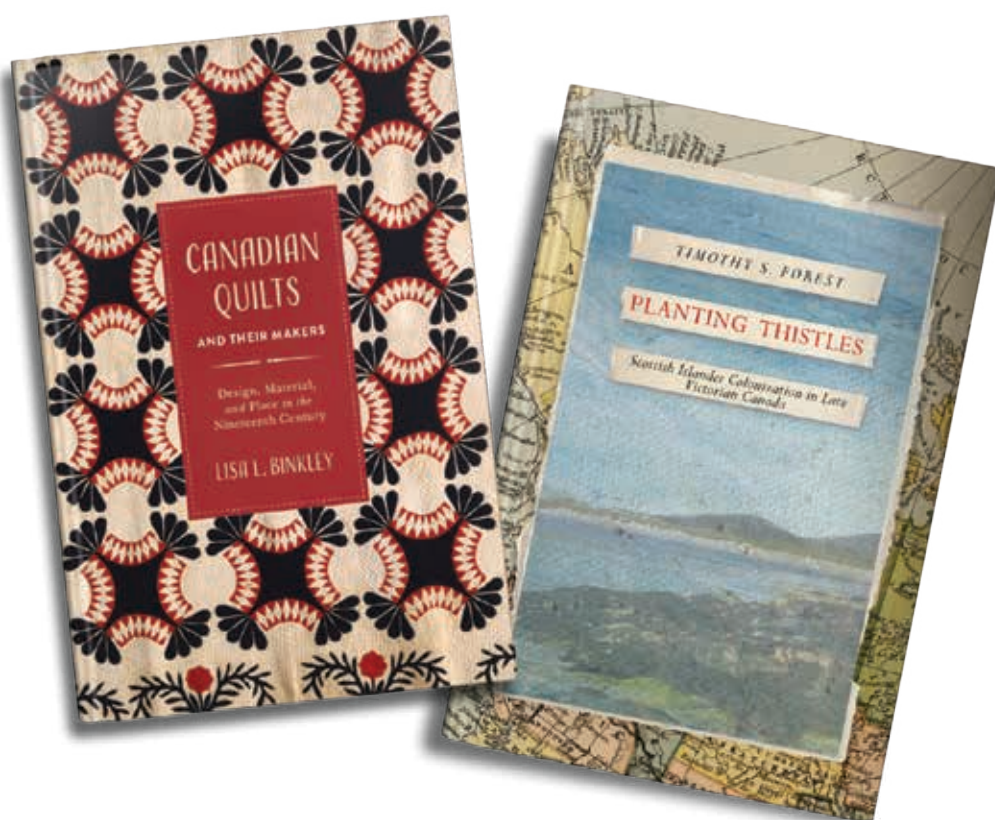
CARIBOO ASHES
BY HEATHER HALEY

Cariboo Ashes explores the tension between rugged geographies and the fragile landscapes within. Moving between intimate lyricism and unflinching observation, Heather Haley examines belonging, resilience, and the stories we inherit and resist. Fearless, sensual, and deeply attentive to the music of language, *Cariboo Ashes* reveals how grace survives fire, estrangement, and the shifting ground beneath our feet.

978-1-77214-264-8 | FEBRUARY | POETRY

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Planting Thistles

Scottish Islander Colonization in Late Victorian Canada
Timothy S. Forest

At the height of the Victorian age, governments on both sides of the Atlantic targeted Scottish crofters from the Outer Hebrides for resettlement in Western Canada. Within six years, these plans were considered tragic failures. *Planting Thistles* explores the motivations, misfires, and consequences of this state-sponsored colonization.



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ADVENTURES IN ETHIOPIA

Tizita:
A Memoir of Perseverance
and Enchantment
by Marian Dodds
(FriesenPress \$21.49)



Having spent her career teaching and doing advocacy and international work, Vancouver-based **Marian Dodds** has written about her life-changing period as a volunteer in Ethiopia in **Tizita**, an Amharic word that roughly translates as “memory” or “story” and is also an Ethiopian musical genre. Dodds encounters both beauty and challenges aplenty in this male-dominated country yet ultimately finds Ethiopian people warm and kind. Here we excerpt three sections from the book, in no particular order, illustrating Dodds’ exposure to Ethiopia’s coffee ceremonies with her first landlady (Asra) and her maid (Dirib)—who speak no English—along with her British colleague and roommate (Shelagh); an Ethiopian school dean, Ato Biru, with whom Dodds falls out; and lastly, a description of the natural beauty of the country by Lake Tana. 9781038344144



WE’RE JUST HOME FROM SATURDAY MARKET when Asra bustles in wearing traditional dress rather than her usual caftan, sets up her charcoal burner, and begins a coffee ceremony. Dirib dutifully brings her the tray and cups. Accustomed to such random events, I rustle up cookies. It’s fasting season when Orthodox Christians are forbidden to eat anything from an animal, even a whey product lurking in a packaged cookie, so I read the fine print and assure her they are *som* (vegan). Offering food to Ethiopians is complicated with all the fasting days: fifty-five before Easter, weeks before Christmas, and every Wednesday and Friday too.

Unpacking our market bags, we entertain Asra and Dirib by naming each

Marian Dodds has travelled from the Arctic to Africa, exploring colonialism, feminism and cultural learning. She is an SFU Writer’s Studio graduate.



Marian Dodds (right) with Ethiopian university instructor and gender project team member Ato Kedir at Madda Walabu University, about 430 km southeast of the capital, Addis Ababa.

item, showing off our new words. “*Sint now* (how much)?” Asra asks. Thanks to Henok, we know our numbers. If we’ve paid the local price, Dirib shouts an enthusiastic “Gobezi!” and Asra nods approvingly.

“Uh-oh, we forgot eggs. Let’s ask Dirib to get some at the neighbour’s shop. What’s egg in Amharic?”

“No idea,” Shelagh says. “Must be time for charades.” Flapping her arms, she squats, clucking like a chicken and reaches down to pull out an imaginary egg. Dirib shouts, “*Inkulall!*” and all four of us collapse into belly laughs. Sitting

back in my chair, sipping Asra’s coffee, I think, *How blessed I am to be here.*



TWO DAYS LATER, ATO BIRU APPEARS unannounced and pulls up a chair beside my desk for his makeup class, plunking his workbook on top of my papers and nonchalantly flipping through blank pages, holding his pen as if expecting me to dictate the answers. These one-to-one sessions are meant to add flexibility for those who miss class for good reasons.

“You’ll need to complete your workbook first, then come back to discuss

what you’ve done,” I tell him. “I can’t do it for you.” Taking the bull by the horns, I add, “I’m hoping you’ll be a role model for the others by following the ground rules we all set up together.”

“Ishi, I will try.” He tips his head in a “yes boss” fashion. *Is he trying to be charming? Possibly. Or insulting.*

“Let’s hope he smartens up and stops breaking every one of these,” I say afterward to Shelagh, pointing at the Ground Rules poster.

“Hard to imagine him changing his ways.”

As seasoned teachers, we’ve dealt with our fair share of chauvinist colleagues and manipulative boys who expect to sail through on their charms.



CLOSE TO SUNSET WE HOP INTO HAILU’S BOAT for a bird-watching tour. Steering past herds of cattle wallowing in shallows with egrets perched on their backs, he heads across the Lake Tana, cutting the motor to point out an eagle, a kingfisher, and yellow weaverbirds flittering in papyrus grasses. Slowing to a crawl, we watch purple jacanas strut across lily pads and huge crested cranes bobbling along the shoreline, pecking tall grasses. Closer to shore, a tree erupts into a cloud of bright red suncatchers.

“Oh look, a baby!” Carol has spotted a hippo family. Large humps of heads with small round ears emerge at eye level.

“Will they open their mouths?” I ask, thinking back to a pool of hippos I’d seen in Tanzania a decade ago, remembering massive jaws and teeth.

“Better not make them angry,” says Hailu, steering away from danger.

Twilight sky swirls with an avian symphony of soaring, swooping birds. Silhouetted against a magenta sunset, sacred ibis, herons, and cormorants alight on trees, flapping and rearranging themselves to roost.

From our dining room window back at the Kiriftu, we see a flock of bright white ibis alight on the branches of a large tree, creating an enchanting candlelit Christmas tree effect.

“Marian, if I don’t see another thing,” Carol sighs, “I’ll leave happy.”



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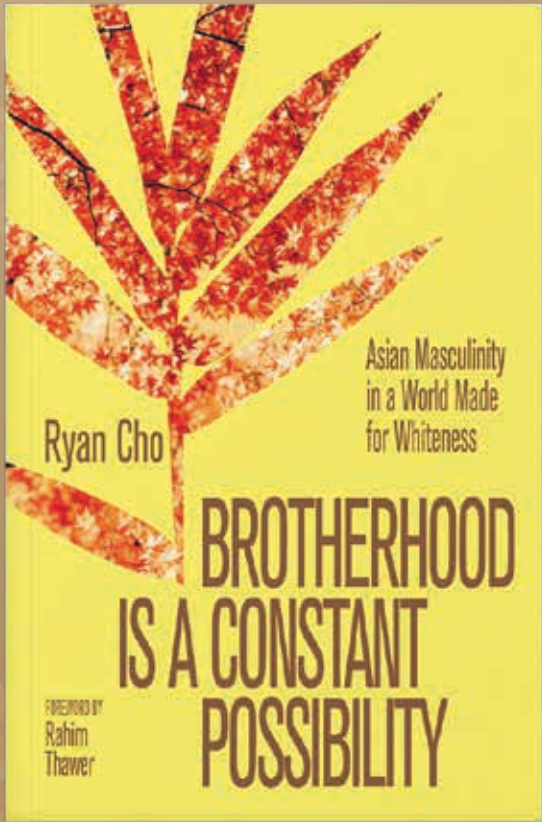
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—Laura Gao, author-illustrator of *Messy Roots*



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HISTORY REVIEW

WHEN A SANCTUARY BECOMES A PRISON

Workers who spent a lifetime building BC were treated to harsh conditions at the province’s first care home where they were called “inmates.”

**Pioneers & Paupers:
The Untold Story of the
Provincial Old Men’s Home**
by Wayne Norton
(Ronsdale \$23.95)

BY TOM HAWTHORN

The *Inland Sentinel* newspaper described the new provincial building as “an ornament to the city.” Built in the Queen Anne Revival style with a stone foundation and wood-frame construction, a government inspector noted the building’s “very picturesque appearance, with its half-timbered gables, bay and oriel windows, and copper-covered towers.” Verandahs offered views overlooking the confluence of the North and South Thompson Rivers, as well as the downtown of Kamloops, an anglicization of the Shuswap word meaning “where the rivers meet.”

It was 1895 and the provincial government had opened what would become known as the Provincial Old Men’s Home. It was to be a place of sanctuary for older men without family or the means to support themselves.

On a visit to Kamloops before construction was completed, Governor General **Lord Aberdeen** congratulated the newly incorporated city for being

chosen for the home. “Its object is one with which everyone will sympathize,” the vice-regal representative said, “that of providing a quiet retreat and home for men, who came here as pioneers and without whose qualities of energy this country would never have advanced to the point it has.”

The first residents were miners and labourers who found themselves destitute late in life. They were unmarried and without family to assist in their care. They were also white, as racist provincial laws barred Indigenous men or those of Asian heritage from being residents. The same groups were also forbidden from building the Home or from working in it.

At first, the home only had three salaried staff: a superintendent, **Joseph Ratchford**, who was a former hotelkeeper and widower who lived on-site with his two young children; a matron, **Alice Pinchbeck**, a widow who lived on-site with three sons; and a cook. The cook was to be paid \$30 per month. The Home went through nine cooks in its first two years. As well, a fireman was engaged to handle the enormous amount of wood and coal needed to keep the large building heated. After a year, the superintendent and matron married at the Home.

The residents, who in the terminology of the times were referred to as “inmates,” paid a heavy cost for this care. The provincial government operated the Home more as a poorhouse



Provincial Old Men’s Home, Kamloops, BC, 1894

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KMA PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION NO. 665

Ten of the first residents at the Provincial Home and three members of the staff in 1897. (Back row, left to right): Donald Donaldson (night fireman), Richard Copeland, John Hunter, William Welsh, Alice Ratchford (matron), Joseph Ratchford (superintendent). (Middle row): Thomas Fish, James McFadden, Robert Brodie, Mr. Holmes, William Johnston. (Bottom row): James Dooley, Mr. Hunter.

than as a care home, so the men were forced to surrender their worldly goods and even lost their right to vote.

This was their reward after a lifetime of work, either as miners, farmers or labourers, though some professional and other middle-class men would also live at the Home.

The Home has all but been forgotten in the province's history and is but a distant memory even in Kamloops, where the destruction of the Home (in 1974) is already more than a half-century in the past. **Wayne Norton** shines a light on this forgotten history in *Pioneers & Paupers*, finding a marvelous topic for capturing a slice of the province's social history, as he makes excellent use of the Home's expenses and other minutiae captured in historical documents to tell the story of this ignored institution.

He has also made solid use of newspaper clippings from the Kamloops newspapers, as well as finding a marvelous quotation in **Bruce Hutchison's** magisterial work, *The Fraser* (Clarke, Irwin, 1950/Oxford Univ. Press, 2009): "The present inmates, from all parts of the interior, represent, in the unnoted record of their obscure lives, the labour of ranch, of forest and mine, that has made British Columbia. In the busy tide of progress few people have time for the wrecks and derelicts, who cannot express the magic of a better time, and have learned, in a proud silence, to take their secrets with them."

It is to Norton's credit that he finds snippets of their biographies to share with us. In 1956, the Home celebrated the 99th birthday of inmate **Alexander McMahon**, who 71 years earlier had

"...after discovering notes from the Home's superintendent seeking a few extra eggs and a turkey dinner instead of mutton for Christmas Dinner in 1916. The response came immediately from Victoria by telegram: 'Supply mutton.'"

been present at Craigellachie for the driving of the last spike completing the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Hailed by politicians as the pioneers who built the province, once the men were taken in care the greatest administration concern seemed to be

expenses. Norton embarked on this informative, telling micro-history after discovering notes from the Home's superintendent seeking a few extra eggs and a turkey dinner instead of mutton for Christmas Dinner in 1916. The response came immediately from

Victoria by telegram: "Supply mutton."

Premier **John Oliver** visited in 1926, speaking with the inmates and reminiscing about the old days. He then signed the guest book: "Home in satisfactory condition." He was less interested in the men and their lives than in whether the province was getting its worth.

In the depths of the Great Depression, instruction came from Victoria to "exercise not merely strict economy but positive parsimony." Staff faced pay cuts. Amid these deprivations, funds were found for a commercial dishwasher, a piano and a new radio for the common room. As well, inmates began receiving \$3 every Christmas from **Charles Woodward** of the Woodward's department store, which became a welcome annual tradition.

The grimness of daily life was relieved somewhat on Christmas mornings when the band from the local Lodge of Elks performed a concert, joined one year by inmate **Barney Wilson** on violin. The Elks made sure each man also received a gift—a cob pipe and a packet of tobacco.

In time, the franchise was returned (in 1939) and racial restrictions removed (in 1955). The institution's purpose as a poorhouse also evolved into becoming more like the care homes we recognize today.

Perhaps the most fortunate resident was **Thomas Dewar**, who had been a cook in the Yukon. Broke, he migrated to Victoria, where he was refused entry to the local old men's home for not being a longtime resident. He applied and was admitted to the Kamloops home, where he was even hired as a cook for three months. Two years later, he received news both sad and joyous from the old country—a distant relative had died, leaving him the sole heir to an estate valued at 10,000 pounds sterling. The province even paid his way to Glasgow.

9781553807490

Tom Hawthorn's most recent book, *Play Ball!*, is an anecdotal history of baseball in Vancouver.

7 OF THE RULES & REGULATIONS AT THE PROVINCIAL OLD MEN'S HOME

1. Inmates shall conduct themselves with due respect to the Superintendent and to one another, and shall not use profane or obscene language.
2. Any inmate returning to the Home in a state of intoxication, or who frequents saloons or places where liquors are sold, or who brings or causes to be brought, without the sanction of the Superintendent, any intoxicating liquors in the Home, shall be liable to expulsion.
3. When an inmate is discharged from the Home for misconduct he will, if unable to support himself, be subject to imprisonment under the Vagrancy Act.
4. The hours for meals and for putting out lights, for rising in the morning and retiring at night, shall be prescribed by the Superintendent with the sanction of the Provincial Secretary, and shall be strictly observed.
5. No inmate of the Home shall leave the premises without the permission of the Superintendent.
6. An inmate of the Home shall, on admission, duly pay, assign, transfer or set over such money or property he may possess to Her Majesty for the use of the Provincial Home.
7. No person admitted to the Provincial Home shall, so long as he is an inmate of the same, be entitled to vote at any Provincial Election.

With 600 first ascents, **John Clarke** is considered one of the world’s most accomplished solo mountaineers.

John Clarke:
Explorer of the Coast Mountains
by Lisa Baile, foreword by Wade Davis
(Harbour \$28.95)

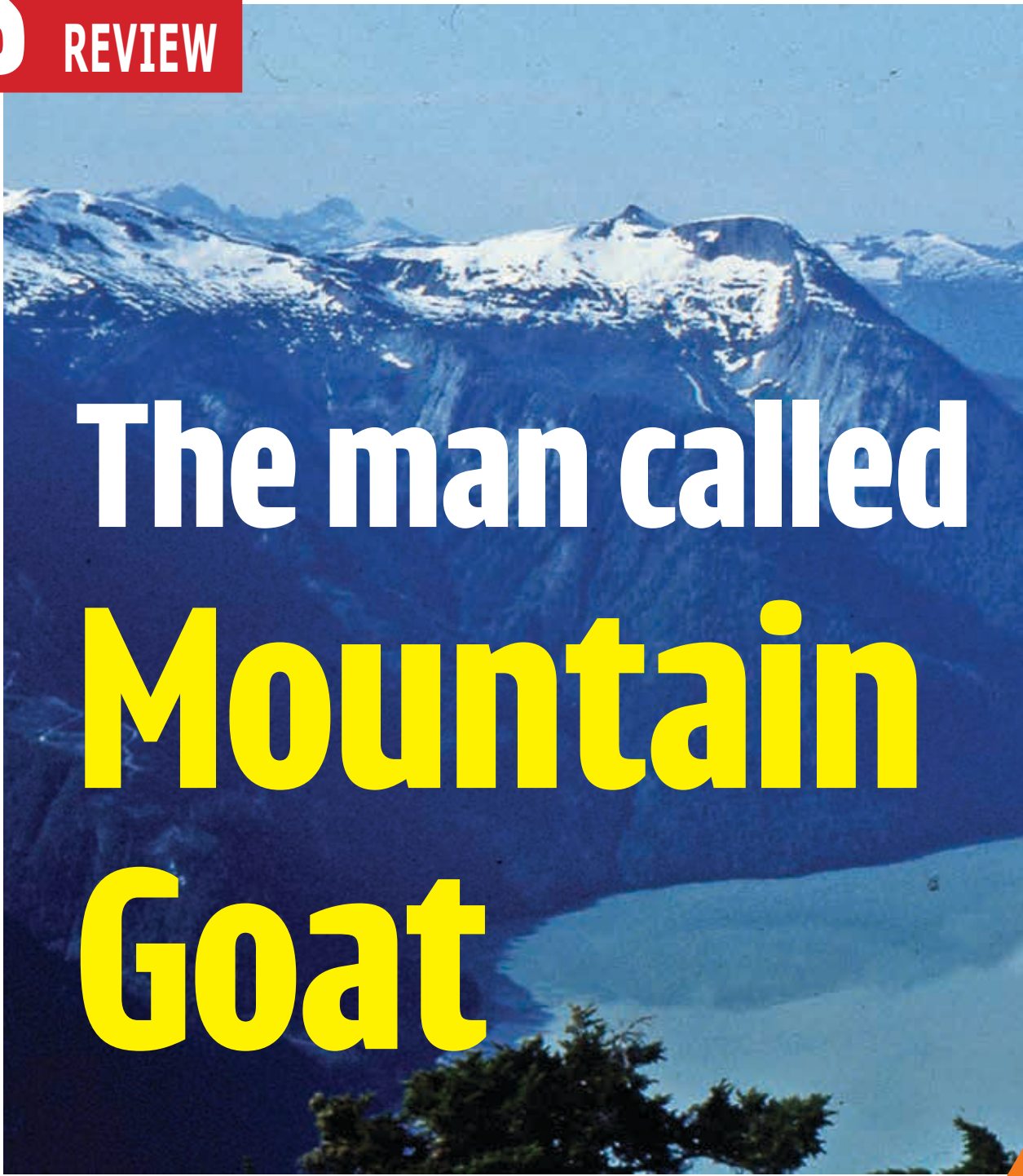
BY MARK FORSYTHE



When you read what **John Clarke** accomplished in his lifetime, the proverbial comet blazing across a night sky comes to mind. In his 58 years he achieved legendary mountaineer status, became an acclaimed wilderness educator and dedicated conservationist. Clarke lived for BC’s Coastal Mountains and spent up to six months each year traversing vast wilderness areas by foot or on skis, crossing icefields or skirting around deadly crevasses to reach the next peak. Credited with more than 600 first ascents, many of these were on solo expeditions, which broke a cardinal rule for many in the mountaineering community. (The pilot who dropped him off on glaciers and lakes later remarked, “By agreeing to fly him where he wanted to go, I became his accomplice.”)

Clarke never felt lonely in the mountains and revelled in “absolute isolation.” During his first major solo expedition into the Misty Icefields, he climbed 12 different peaks. In 1972 he spent eight months in the wilderness, marking 50 first ascents. He bushwhacked up steep slopes, forded icy creeks, dodged grizzly bears, camped atop glaciers (often waiting out storms) and existed on granola, lentils and butter. He built stone cairns atop these peaks and tucked a hand-scribbled note inside reading: “Greetings from the 20th century.” If he missed a peak, he would return—even many years later. The level of plotting, skill and sheer determination is hard to fathom. Clarke is considered by many as Canada’s most accomplished mountaineer during a career that began in the 1960s and continued until his death from a brain tumour in 2003. Some argue he is the world’s most accomplished solo mountaineer.

Friend and mountaineer **Lisa Baile** traces his remarkable story in **John Clarke: Explorer of the Coast Mountains** (originally published in 2012 and recently reissued by Harbour Publishing). Drawing from his diaries, columns for the *Canadian Alpine Journal* and interviews with friends, a nuanced portrait emerges revealing how and why he inspired so many people. That includes another famous BC mountaineer, **John Baldwin**. Their first 29-day trip together included 10 days tent-bound by weather—yet they still managed to make 24 first ascents and reached the conclusion they were kindred spirits. “We got



The man called Mountain Goat

JOHN BALDWIN PHOTO

“I had to know what was beyond the next horizon.”

JOHN CLARKE



along instantly,” said Baldwin. “We were totally on the same wavelength and wanted to do the same things. It was fantastic.” A young climber and conservationist named **Randy Stoltmann** was another mountaineering companion; Clarke watched helplessly as Stoltmann was struck by an avalanche, falling 1,000 feet to his death. (A wilderness area north of Squamish is named in his memory.) This experience became a catalyst for Clarke to dedicate himself to wilderness preservation through public education.

There are ample photos and maps, along with Baile’s eloquent descriptions of wild spaces that most will never experience, such as this one: “... peaks floating above the clouds like lost continents; dark, horn-shaped summits rearing out of glistening icefalls; a glimpse into the narrow gorge of Headwall Creek where a falling rock takes twelve seconds to hit anything; thousands of feet of polished rock; frigid pools connected by warm granite slabs; snoozing goats; and far below, the sun-struck braid of the Tahumming River snaking its way toward the infinite blue of Toba Inlet.” You can almost hear the wind in the trees.

Even with decades of first ascents behind him, Baile says Clarke was a man of humility with a rare ability to make everyone he met feel special. He could be laugh-out-loud funny—known to climb in long johns and a white cotton shirt, he would pin on a tie while summiting. Children

loved him and he spent more time playing with them than visiting with their parents. He wasn’t interested in acquiring “trophy climbs” of the highest peaks; it was about exploring unknown territory, where he was happiest, “in a kind of a dream state.”

Baile stitches Clarke’s story together like a traverse along the peaks and valleys of his life. An Irish immigrant, as a child Clarke connected instantly with BC’s mystical mountains and was soon exploring. His mountaineering obsession also resulted in fractured relationships with women who knew the mountains were his first love. (Until much later in his life when he did marry and fathered a son.)

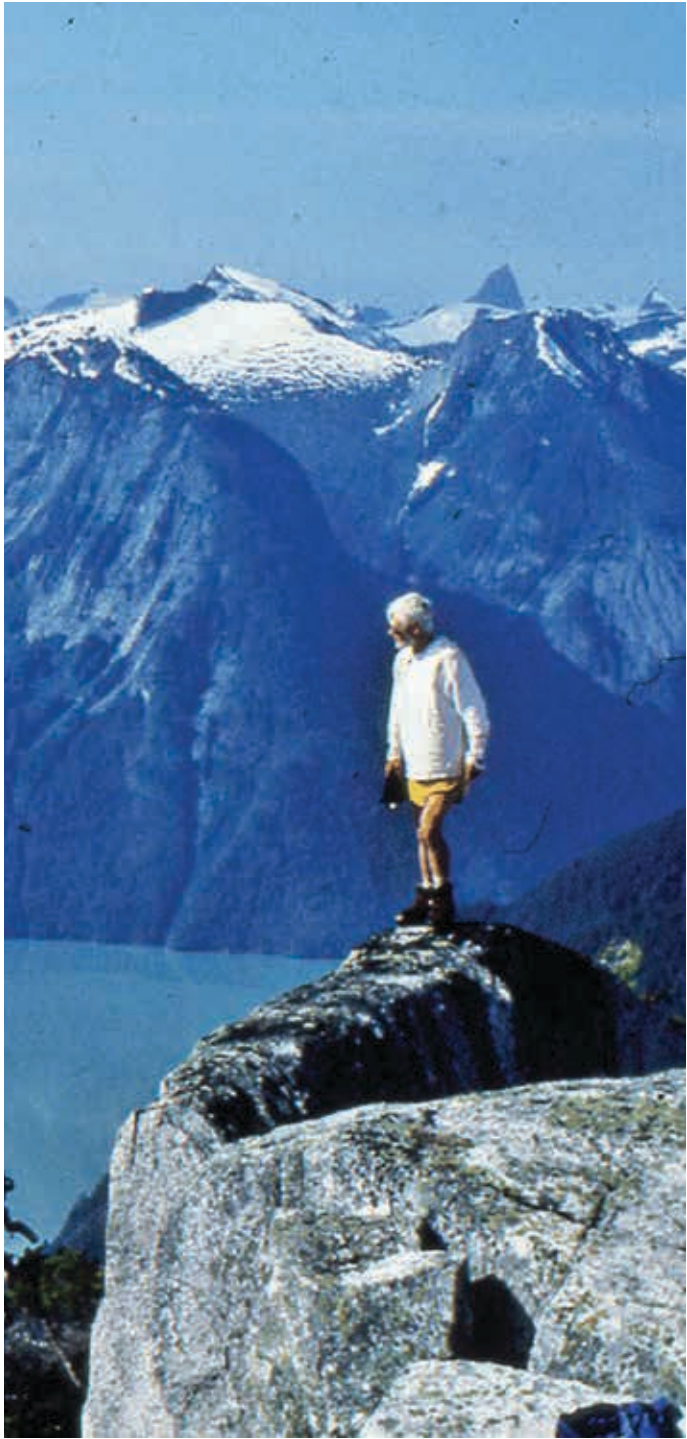
Baile closes with Clarke’s work as a wilderness educator (through WildED) and collaboration with the Squamish First Nation through the Witness Program, which connected urbanites with wilderness areas threatened by logging. The Squamish people named him Xwexwsélkn or “Mountain Goat” to acknowledge his deep commitment to wilderness and a mountain was named in his honour after his passing.

9781998526536

Mark Forsythe worked at CBC Radio for 30 years, 18 as host of BC Almanac. He co-authored four books about BC with Greg Dickson, frequents the outdoors, lives in Fort Langley and is president of the Langley Heritage Society.

John C

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNETTE CLARKE



—a remote, deep fjord located 100 air miles north of Vancouver.



off Castle Towers Mountain, Garibaldi Park, 1965.

Mount Crerar

“All of a sudden I slipped. I thought, Okay, this is it! I’m going to die on this frigging mountain!”

John Clarke once took an inexperienced friend, **Barbara Handford** on a climb of Mount Crerar located in the Elaho-Jervis Divide of south-western BC. He wrote about it for *Canadian Alpine Journal*. Several decades later, Handford verbally recounted the same climb, recorded in **John Clarke: Explorer of the Coast Mountains**. It “sounds as if the two of them had been on different trips,” writes author, **Lisa Baile**. Here we excerpt two segments about this climb: Clarke’s version and Handford’s perception of the same event. The two couldn’t be more different.



John Clarke: “Early next morning we headed for the peaks of Crerar by hiking along the crest toward the northwest peak, the lower of the two and our first objective. We were fortunate with the weather up to this point, but clouds were now boiling up from the valley to about 4,000 feet. The blocky northwest ridge of the first peak provided good class 3-4 rock, but its summit revealed that the main peak was gained by dropping south from the crest and skirting the main divide. The peak, a sharp crest at 8,000 feet, gave a great view of the mountains northwest of Squamish and those near Mount Tinniswood.

Barbara Handford: “We had to start going up to the rocky part and the ice ... I’m not used to exposure and I’m a little bit scared of heights ... We had to do some kind of chimney stuff and go around rocks and things [but] John figured we didn’t really need to rope up ... Then we came to a really pointy kind of rock, which we had to climb over; and it was two thousand feet down that way and about a thousand feet down *that* way. I’m like, ‘Oh my goodness!’ John just walked across it in his boots because he had no fear and complete balance. I thought, I’m not walking across that! John said, ‘Just sit on it and inch along.’ When I

got over it, John very nicely let me be the first person to stand on the first peak. We built a little cairn and that was all very exciting. Then John said, ‘We don’t have time to go back the way we came, so the best way for us to go is down this snow chute.’ It was August and the snow was rock hard. John said, ‘You have to be really careful. You have to kick steps, and you have to turn around and traverse down this steep chute.’ We had ice axes—I’d used one a couple of times but I’d never had to save myself. So we started down. All of a sudden I slipped. I thought, Okay, this is it! I’m going to die on this frigging mountain! I went screaming down the snow chute. I knew there was a big boulder sticking out of the ice partway down because I’d seen it. My glasses hit the side of the boulder and went flying off into a crevice—not a crevasse, thank god! As I went down, I thought, I guess I’m going to go over the edge! But then I thought this being a chute, there are probably stones at the bottom. By then, I was starting to get the axe in as John kept yelling, “Get your axe in!” I had no strength—I was a skinny thing—but I finally got the axe into the snow and that slowed me down a bit. I’m on my stomach, and all of a sudden I felt the bottom of my boots bank into the rocks. I flipped into the air and did a complete three-sixty and landed sitting up. And all I’ve got is this cut on my hand. I held my bleeding hand over my head and I started screaming, ‘God is in the mountains, God is in the mountains!’ And I’m not even religious! I was just so happy to be alive!

John was so relieved because he was visualizing rescues and all sorts of crap, but then my body went into complete catatonia. I was terrified. ‘I just can’t move,’ I told him.

‘Well, we’ve got to go,’ he said. ‘We need to get down to the timber.’

Finally I was able to get and up and follow him. I was just in shock.”



JOHN BALDWIN PHOTO

A float plane drops off John Clarke on a log boom at Cumsack Creek, Bute Inlet, BC.

**Stanley Park Manor:
A Collective History**
by Kevin Spenst with Lyn Guy
(Anvil \$26)

BY BEVERLY CRAMP

One of most iconic buildings in Vancouver’s West End is Stanley Park Manor on Haro Street. Built in 1931, the apartment building has been home to such figures as writer Pierre Berton, Liberal politician Simma Holt and musician Trish Klein of the Be Good Tanyas. Taking a deep dive into the remarkable people who have lived in the apartment building he calls home, **Kevin Spenst** has produced **Stanley Park Manor: a Collective History** with the help of the former building manager, **Lyn Guy**. Spenst navigates the lives of generations of tenants as he interviews his neighbours, some of whom include actors, artists, and journalists. *BC BookWorld* conducted the following interview with him about his book.



BC BookWorld: When and how did you come to live in Stanley Park Manor?

Kevin Spenst: The short answer is that I was in a pandemic breakup and my ex had once lived in the Manor and she recommended me to the building manager, **Lyn Guy**, who, in December of 2020, showed me a suite, which I loved on first sight.

BW: What was it like at the Manor during your first few years there?

KS: During the pandemic it felt like a safe haven—a sentiment that comes up a lot in the interviews I did with different Manor residents, the majority of whom moved in way before Covid. Early Manor resident, **Simma Holt**, one of the first female reporters in Vancouver to have a crime beat, told Lyn Guy that this was one of the few buildings that would rent to Jewish people in the 1940s.

For me, I felt safe to follow an odd impulse or two. After I moved in, I bought wool at a local thrift store at Denman Mall and started wrapping things in wool and hanging other things from webs of wool I strung around my very tiny bedroom (some would call it a large closet). That initial phase of soft sculpture lasted a year and then I took it all down. I still have one videotape wrapped in wool (which also became the title of a small book of poetry).

The building was my creative bower, buzzing with all kinds of colours. Looking back through my journals at the time, I see many instances of going



Kevin Spenst and Stanley Park Manor.
Spenst is the UBC Library Writer-in-Residence for 2026.

These walls can talk

Kevin Spenst takes us behind the scenes of the Stanley Park Manor. Built in 1931, it was originally intended as place for single women in Vancouver. Over time it has become a testament to the power of creative living.

out to swim or wander through Stanley Park, both adventures that led to conversations with strangers.

Moving into this building helped me move deeper into myself both in terms of solitude and a shared solace in nature with others.

BW: Did you already know people in the building when you moved in?

KS: I knew the artist, **Shannon Pawliw**. In fact, well before I’d moved in, I

was over at her top floor corner unit a couple of times with my partner to play cards or Settlers of Catan. Shannon calls her place the “Beyoncé Suite” because it combines one of the regular studios with a former sunroom for the people in the 1930s who paid top dollar to live on the 6th floor (a whopping 65 bucks). Today, this is where Shannon dreams big. In fact, she opened an art gallery in East Vancouver not too many

years ago, THIS gallery, which is a hive of community art with two openings a month.

I organized a “Jane’s Walk” [community-led walks inspired by the late **Jane Jacobs**] this year that started at THIS with our city poet laureate, **Elee Kraljii Gardiner**, opening an afternoon of poetry readings in various locations in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood. Shannon does so much to support the arts at THIS and she does it with a flair for fun. Many years ago, she curated informal art exhibits inside Stanley Park Manor. I like to think of my home as a creative incubator and I’m sure that’s the case for many others in the Manor. **BW:** When did you realize the Manor was more than “just” a building—that it was more like a community?

KS: After I moved into the Manor, I went through an emotionally turbulent time. One of the first people I met had a dog, who everyone adored. One afternoon as we were both leaving through

“I must add that there are many [tenants] who’ve moved in to secure their freedom from unhappy relationships, so the building maintains an emotional balance.”— **KEVIN SPENST**

the back door exit of the building, we fell into conversation. I explained how I’d moved into the building after a break up. “Me, too,” he said. “This is a halfway house for the broken hearted,” he laughed. I must add that there are many who’ve moved in to secure their freedom from unhappy relationships, so the building maintains an emotional balance. The front entrance of the building is where people stop and chat and in my first few months living here, Lyn’s friendly smile as I came or went meant the world to me.

BW: Describe some of the historical writers and interesting people that lived at the Manor before your time.

KS: One of the most interesting through lines I found while researching the book was the long lineage of journalists in the building. In the early 1930s, **Bob Bouchette** took up residence in #601. Through the thirties, he was Vancouver’s most popular journalist. In his book *The Great Depression: 1929-1939* (M&S, 1990/Anchor Canada, 2001), **Pierre Berton** wrote that Bouchette was “an iconoclast, who, when covering heavyweight boxing matches, made it his business to interview the loser while his colleagues were crowding round the champion.” Berton segues from here into Bouchette’s coverage of government relief camps, revealing the horrible conditions under which men worked for 20 cents a day. Bouchette’s articles helped sway public opinion against this “solution” to the poverty brought about by the depression. The next most important journalist resident of the Manor was Pierre Berton. Berton writes about living here in his memoir *Starting Out 1920-1947* (M&S, 1987). This was brought to my attention by **Greg Dickson**, who I interviewed for the book. Greg, who just lives down the hall from me, has been a broadcaster, journalist, CBC producer and author. He was the perfect person to talk to about the many journalists living in our building from Simma Holt to **Kiran Singh** and others.

BW: What is the architectural significance of Stanley Park Manor?

KS: The issuing of a permit for a 122-unit apartment building at 1915 Haro was in the *Vancouver Daily Province* in 1929 and its completion was advertised with a full-page spread in the *Vancouver Sun* in 1931. Given the fact that the Great Depression hit in late 1929, I think it’s remarkable that the Manor was completed. The Hotel Vancouver stood unfinished through much of the 1930s because of the drastic slowdown of the economy. The Manor is a remarkable exception, perhaps due to the clout of **W.A. Lightheart**, whose family built many houses and apartments in the city. This was the last Lightheart build. Originally, there were 139 studio apartments (“flats” is the term used in the 1931 *Vancouver Sun* ad for the building). According to Lightheart’s granddaughter, who Lyn Guy has gotten to know over the years, Stanley Park Manor was built as a place for single women living in the city. In the early 1970s, the vast majority of the units were occupied by women.

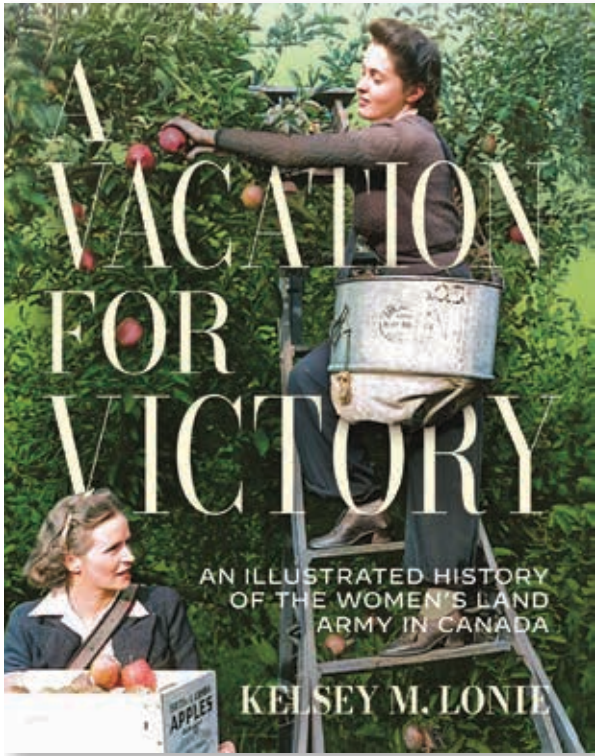
H.H. Simmonds was the architect and he also designed a series of movie theatres, starting in the 1920s, throughout the Lower Mainland (including one in Cloverdale). Perhaps our building is an expression of cinematic grandeur with a mix of the old (castellated heights) with modern interiors. Each unit feels like a house in miniature: with a small entranceway, a mantel (that originally had electric lights on either side shaped like candles), and French doors (few of which remain) to the dining nook and kitchen. In such small spaces, Simmonds designed so much detail.

BW: Anything else you would like to add?

KS: I’d like to thank all the people who trusted me with their words. It’s a remarkable honour to be the one who gets to help bring Stanley Park Manor, the building, into book form and this book is a compilation of so many voices and forms. I hope this book stands as a testament to the importance of affordable rent, an ethos of care and the power of creative living. 9781772142617



Postcard of Stanley Park Manor, date unknown.



A Vacation for Victory
An Illustrated History of the Women's Land Army in Canada

KELSEY M. LONIE

“The Canadian Women’s Land Army brought independence to a generation of young women as it fed a hungry nation at war. In *A Vacation for Victory* Kelsey Lonie unearths this fascinating history, bringing it vividly to light.”

—Elizabeth Renzetti, author of *What She Said: Conversations About Equality*

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THE BLACK SCHOONER
Rebellion on the Amistad, A Graphic Novel
David Lester & Marcus Rediker

“*The Black Schooner* is an important contribution to both public history and the growing body of graphic narratives that engage with themes of trauma, justice, and collective resistance.”
—**Graphic Medicine**

“A necessary and unique, expectation-shattering chronicle.”
—**Library Journal, Starred Review**

“It’s a history told through art and from the perspective of the many, not the few; the oppressed, not the oppressor.” —**CounterPunch**

“An evocative, incisive, and powerful piece of graphic history.”
— **Kirkus Reviews**

“Vancouver artist David Lester has pushed his black and white graphic talents to a new intensity.” —**The BC Review**

Beacon Press (distro by Penguin Random House)
ISBN: 978-080701690-9 • 6 x 9” • \$24.95 • www.beacon.org



Sarah Ellis
(right) with
Sherry

Saying goodbye to Sherry

Beloved children's author **Sarah Ellis** shares the story of the last year of her wife's life as she seeks medical assistance with death.

My partner's dog had developed paralysis in its back legs and could only be lifted from the house into the yard. Incontinence set in. Regretfully, she decided it was time. She called the vet, who arrived and administered the injection. All of us stood in a circle, holding the dog as it died.

A few months later, my grandmother finished affixing the Post-Its to the back of her paintings and tables, each with a name in her cursive handwriting. Then she mixed the pills she'd hoarded into the chocolate pudding. There was one more Post-It on the front door, for the cleaner who was scheduled to come the next morning. "Don't come in," it read. "Call the police."

Why was the death of an animal, even one as beloved as that dog, handled more compassionately and carefully than my grandmother's? Why did she have to die alone? But I knew the answer. In 2001, suicide was still

**My Year in Fairyland:
Grief, MAiD, and a Lifetime of Books
by Sarah Ellis**
(Stonehewer \$22.95)

BY CARELLIN BROOKS

Warning: The following review deals with aspects of euthanasia.

a crime. If any of us had held her as she died, we would have been under investigation by those same police.

Twenty-five years later, MAiD has made such heroic measures unnecessary. It is no longer a crime to kill yourself at a time of your own choosing. But when **Sarah Ellis**' spouse, **Sherry**,

decided to take her own life rather than become increasingly debilitated by multiple sclerosis, only a condition where death was foreseeable was eligible for MAiD. To kill herself, Sherry would have to travel to Switzerland, where the procedure has long been legally available, even to those who don't meet the Canadian criteria.

At first, Ellis can't believe Sherry is serious. After all, Ellis is so adorable and their life together so rich: surely, she'll reconsider? But Ellis reckons without her partner's strength of mind, complex moral code and ultimate choice to die with dignity rather than submit to the increasing loss of autonomy inevitable with the disease's progression. Soon enough, they are trying to sleep in an anonymous Swiss hotel room decorated with origami animals brought from hometown Vancouver, the night before the administration of the drug that will take her spouse from Ellis for good.

This memoir, written in heartbreak, chronicles Ellis' experiences both of the year leading up to her spouse's death and the aftermath of that decision. Ellis is unflinchingly honest about her own refusal to face the reality of her partner's condition and her own limitations. She shares her dual thinking: Sherry will die, and she will not.

If this sounds like a grim premise

for a book, to the contrary. Ellis, one of the foremost writers for children in Canada, is too good of a writer for this memoir to be anything but a surprising delight. Her own personality shines through these pages. As someone who has chosen to look closely and to love all around her, including her lover, whether Ellis is observing children at play, describing a cherished book or trying to wrap her head around Sherry's decision, it's a supreme privilege for us readers to peer over her shoulder.

There are singular and surprising side effects, it turns out, of your spouse announcing her intention to die within the year. Time slows down. The generic bucket list, with its travel to far-flung places and exotic experiences, turns out to be both impractical and uninteresting. Entirely ordinary moments become those that matter, because only a finite number of them are left. "In real life," Ellis writes, "when you have the luxury of paying attention, the ordinary and the amazing turn out to be one and the same thing."

These insights, the kind best understood by those in extreme situations, are sprinkled throughout the prose. Light and lovely illustrations by **Libbie Bake** do not so much anchor Ellis' words as float alongside them. And did I mention that Ellis is genuinely funny? Her chronicle of the free table

she and Sherry set up outside to get rid of the latter’s possessions—the man who takes things each day, and his wife who sneaks back to return them each night—is priceless. And even heart-break moments are shot through with absurdity, as Ellis describes when they negotiate the steep steps to the Switzerland clinic: “For a fleeting second I got concerned that she would have trouble going back down this flight of stairs. Oh.”

In lighter moments, Ellis describes their alternating taste in entertainment. “In our years together Sherry and I went to many movies, alternating her choice (which I characterized as something like an earnest documentary about a women’s health collective in Bolivia) and mine (which she characterized as a moody story of a child in Ireland watching rain slide down a window).”

Many aspects of this memoir, in short, are a delight. But I did miss one facet of the story. Memoir, Ellis confides, was never her chosen form. She’s an accomplished writer, but confessional writing is not a natural fit. And so, maybe because of a squeamishness about her own privacy, or perhaps in trying to honour her late spouse, Ellis tells us very little about Sherry and about their life together. We learn sparse details—Ellis’ previous bad breakup and legal settlement, perhaps the reason they are content to live separately, and Sherry’s current life as a landlady after MS has made other career paths impossible. But Sherry has money, Ellis tells us, and



Sarah Ellis, circa 1980s

“In real life, when you have the luxury of paying attention, the ordinary and the amazing turn out to be one and the same thing.” SARAH ELLIS

doesn’t want to use it to pay for home care once her disease progresses. The contradiction is never explained and although the reader senses that this point of tension is important in the relationship and in Sherry’s decision, we learn no more.

Eliding these personal and finan-

cial details does protect Sherry’s privacy and, by extension, Ellis’. What it doesn’t do is really allow the reader to know Sherry well enough to walk alongside Ellis in grieving her loss. A reluctance to write in this genre may have been because Ellis didn’t want to step on any toes. “My task and my

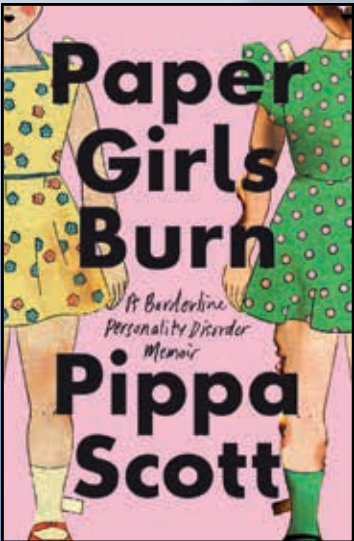
ethical responsibility was to see her as clearly as I could and love her,” she writes of her spouse. True. But her task in a book like this, and it’s a tall one, is to convey that seeing so that readers can see it too.

Nevertheless, Ellis chronicles her less edifying thoughts with a clarity and honesty I suspect readers in the same situation will find a relief. When she hears of her spouse’s decision for the first time, early in their relationship, Ellis is confident that “life with me would be so delicious that she would never really want to let it go.” Alas, that turns out not to be true.

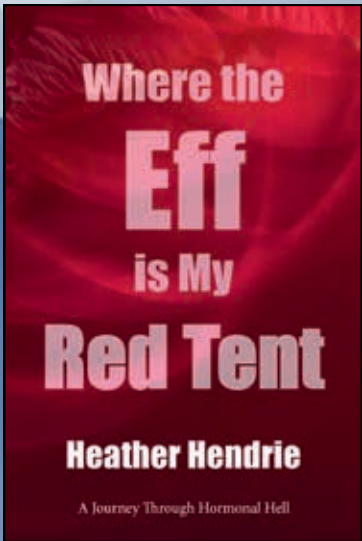
When I was young, I asked my grandmother what she wanted when she became infirm: should I move in with her, would she like to choose a seniors’ residence? “Don’t worry,” Grandma told me. “I’ll take care of it.” Sure, I thought. I dismissed the idea from my mind so fully, in fact, that I only remembered her words after her death. Ellis at least does not dismiss her partner’s wishes, nor does she try to prevent her from carrying them out. She honours Sherry’s purpose, even if she doesn’t understand or agree with it. There’s no better testament to a partnership that endures until death than this one, faithfully chronicled and thoughtfully mourned. 9781069236265

Carellin Brooks is the author of *Learned* (Book*hug, 2022), *One Hundred Days of Rain* (Book*hug, 2015), *Fresh Hell* (Demeter, 2013), *Wreck Beach* (New Star, 2007), and *Every Inch a Woman* (UBC Press, 2005).

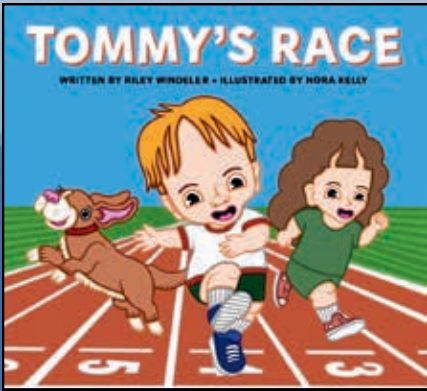
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Suzanne Simard

**When the Forest Breathes:
Renewal and Resilience
in the Natural World**
by Suzanne Simard
(Allen Lane/Penguin \$39)

BY SONJA PINTO

Our province's old-growth forests hold untold superpowers—and no, not the Marvel Comics kind. In **When the Forest Breathes**, Suzanne Simard explains the mystifying mechanisms and connections of forests in British Columbia and across the world. Her research with the Mother Tree Project, which Simard first wrote about in *Finding The Mother Tree* (Penguin, 2023), illuminates how proper forest stewardship informed by Indigenous wisdom has the potential to heal the damage done by extractive forestry practices.

Simard's team of researchers have been studying forests for decades. Their groundbreaking research on mother trees—the oldest, most resilient trees in a forest—challenges conventional clearcut logging practices: “Our data clearly shows that *leaving primary and old-growth forests intact*, allowing the trees to grow to old age, as nature intended, is the best way to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from land-use change,” she writes.

These mother trees are vital. They share their abundant resources and knowledge with younger trees, strengthening the entire area. The project's research findings suggest that “trees in forests have powerful abilities of perception and communication, and they co-exist in a finely attuned dance of reciprocity.”

From seedlings to rotting carcasses, trees have many roles to play in sustaining an ecosystem. The cyclical pattern of life and death provides the structure that sustains forests, regenerating and evolving over millennia. The forests affect us humans, too: “trees and humans are intimately interdependent, breathing in and out each other's essence in rhyme,” says Simard.

When the Forest Breathes documents key moments of Simard's research, including experiments done in several British Columbia forests around mother trees and how different logging practices impact the health of a forest. It's a memoir-style retelling of such expeditions, describing the toil of working through conditions such as intense heat and bug infestations. Simard's team survives several close calls with wildfires and escapes from wildlife such as bears.

This book will satisfy those who are academically inclined. It contains abundant citations and further reading. However, it will do just as well for

BILL HEATH PHOTO

The MARVEL of trees growing to OLD AGE

Forest ecologist **Suzanne Simard** says we can save our forests by learning from First Nations' historical stewardship. (Hint: It's not the corporate clearcut logging practices initiated in colonial times.)

someone with no interest in the nitty-gritty of scientific papers and methodology. Readers will be enthralled by descriptions of trips to local sites like Ada'itsx (Fairy Creek) and places as far off as the Amazon rainforest.

These trips include anecdotes of Simard's closest colleagues and students such as her co-researcher, **Jean**, who “once hauled [Simard] and [her] backpack up a ten-meter cliff on Vancouver Island to escape the incoming tide.”

She meets many people throughout her travels who teach her and share knowledge with her. One such person is **Dave**, a Nlaka'pamux man who shares that connections between trees are part of his people's creation story. Moreover, his nation has had to fight for the ability to steward their own land. For the ability to log their own forests, they must accept restrictive conditions from the government.

Through relationships like these, Simard observes that Western science has had a “roundly disparaged” view of Indigenous ways of knowing. It is for this reason that her research project is titled after the mother tree, a metaphor that nods to ancient Indigenous knowledge.

Simard knows that her research findings are supported by centuries

of Indigenous wisdom. According to Dave, “the forests are not being managed for the local ecosystems or the local people,” he says. “They are being managed based on the values of the big corporate owners. These corporate values do not reflect our local values.”

Indeed, BC's forestry industry profits from maximal resource extraction, placing its interests at odds with the health of the ecosystem as a whole. There are disastrous outcomes for clear-cut areas of forest, which struggle to fully recover and lose massive amounts of their carbon storage.

Part of Simard's work is to collaborate with loggers on a way forward. She engages with them at conferences, detailing the often strenuous encounters. Despite attempts at cooperation and collaboration, Simard meets friction from the motivation for profit. “Clearcutting was undisputably the easiest and cheapest method of harvesting trees. It required little knowledge of the forest or understanding the ecosystem,” Simard explains of the logging method.

Though she now advocates for sustainable forestry practices, Simard's ancestors worked in logging. In her earlier years, she too had ambitions to serve colonial forest stewardship

practices, but laments that “the goals were wrong.”

She has had to unlearn our culture's flawed ideologies around natural resources: “European settlers did not understand that the existence of abundant forests was deeply influenced by age-old ancestral [Indigenous] stewardship that honoured the natural cycles and connections of the ecosystems.” Early settlers viewed Pacific Northwest forests as “untouched wilderness” and ignored, or were ignorant of, centuries of sophisticated Indigenous stewardship, such as cultural burning and forest gardening.

By accepting a holistic view of forests and how they function, Simard gains insight on the interconnectedness of forests. “Not unlike humans, trees are deeply influenced by their families and local neighbourhoods,” she writes.

Though the book contains in-depth explanations of the Mother Tree Project's data and scientific findings, *When the Forest Breathes* is written to be accessible to a non-specialist. Simard is gifted in translating a wealth of technical knowledge into interesting, easy-to-digest anecdotes and explanations for the layperson.

The Mother Tree Project data paints a bleak picture about the state of forests if logging practices continue clearcutting. But Simard insists on hope—all is not lost in our ecosystems she says: “Even after the most destructive logging practices, forests strive to heal.”

9780735241725

Sonja Pinto is a writer, photographer, and printmaker. They reside on the unceded territories of the ɬəɬ'əḡən peoples (Victoria, BC).

How to Nourish a Cannibal
by Jess Housty
(Nightwood Editions \$24.95)

BY ODETTE AUGER

In their second poetry collection, **How to Nourish a Cannibal**, ‘Cúagilákv’ Jess Housty deepens and widens the lush spiritual and land-based poetics readers first encountered in their debut *Crushed Wild Mint* (Nightwood, 2024). Where the earlier volume often moved through prayer, medicine and kinship, this collection enters into transformation itself—asking what hunger means, what it means to feed one another and how the body becomes both feast and offering.

Drawing on Haitzavq understandings of cannibals and supernatural beings, ‘Cúagilákv’ writes toward a world where the sacred is neither distant nor metaphorical but living and immediate. The poems hold grief, longing, sensuality and abundance simultaneously. In “Taken,” the cannibal becomes less a figure of terror than a force pulling us toward surrender and belonging. ‘Cúagilákv’ writes: “When you hear the whistles in the forest / drawing closer, like a lover would, ask yourself: / are they coming to take you away / or to take you home?”

The collection repeatedly returns to the body as landscape, inheritance and threshold. ‘Cúagilákv’s particular gift remains their ability to dissolve boundaries between land and self without flattening either. In “Indivisible,” they write, “your body is a creation story / unfolding into a motherland, / into a government, / into futurity.”

Nourishment consistently becomes reciprocal rather than consumptive. Berries, geese, nettles, saltwater, rosehips and mint are not decorative



WHEN YOU HEAR THE WHISTLES IN THE FOREST

Jess Housty delves into ancestral knowledge and spirituality through the lens of Heiltsuk supernatural beings.

natural imagery but part of a living system of responsibility and intimacy. In “You Nourish,” the poet stands “warmly bloodied to the elbows / with the gifts I’ve been given,” while “Twenty-Four Bundles of Mint” transforms grief into acts of preparation and care.

Time moves strangely through

these poems. Ancestors surface beside children. Water becomes a portal between worlds. Ravens, robins, wolves and sparrows carry teachings forward through ordinary encounters. ‘Cúagilákv’s poems suggest the supernatural has never left us; rather, modern life has numbed our ability to recognize it.

In 2024, ‘Cúagilákv’ Jess Housty won the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize and the Bill Duthie Booksellers’ Choice Award as well as being shortlisted for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award and the Pat Lowther Memorial Award.

In “The Year We Lost You,” the speaker reflects that, “We thought the Indian Agents / had burned those little fiends / along with our masks and treasures, / that the supernatural / had left this world” But the speaker realizes, “we know now / how rich we are, / having spirits we can lose.”

There is also a sharpened sensuality in this collection, a tenderness that often edges into ache. Hunger is erotic, devotional and communal all at once. *How to Nourish a Cannibal* reframes the body not as lacking, but as a source of abundance: “You are not made / in the shape of hunger. / You are a glut of succulence / and succour, / an invitation to generosity.”

The striking cover art by **Nusi, Ian Reid** (Heiltsuk) evokes the circular, open-mouthed imagery running throughout the volume: transformation, consumption, invocation. The poems themselves often move similarly, circling back through repetition and accumulation until image becomes incantation.

By the end of the collection, readers begin to understand nourishment itself as ceremony—a way of holding grief, kinship and futurity together. In “What Islands Are Made Of,” ‘Cúagilákv’ writes that islands are formed partly from “The upward swell / of all that is holy / and all that is common.” That may also describe this collection.

These poems refuse separation between body and land, sacred and ordinary, hunger and love. Like the warm loaf tossed across the water in “Leavening,” ‘Cúagilákv’ offers readers something sustaining, handmade and carried carefully through difficult weather.

9780889715189

Odette Auger, award-winning journalist and storyteller, is *Sagamok Anishnawbek* through her mother and lives as a guest in *toq qaymuxʷ* (Klahoose), *łəʔamən qaymuxʷ* (Tla’amin), *łop qaymuxʷ* (Homalco) territories.

HAWKING THE SURF
Diana Hayes

In *Hawking the Surf*, myth is embodied in the particulars of place. **Diana Hayes’s** “pilgrim wander” leads the reader into a labyrinth through “the memory of wonder”: she paints an “olfactory, tactile” world of colour that is both keenly observed and gloriously illustrated. This collection soars, leaning into poetry as solace, “trumpeting alarm” for a gone world, lost and found, but always brought home. —**Penn Kemp**, author of *Ordinary / Moving* (Silver Bow Publishing)

Hawk Tower, Jeffers’ Tor House, Carmel-by-the-Sea
(photo: Diann Hayes)

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Photo: Ramona Lam

IN THE AGE OF HEATED RIVALRY

Growing up a closeted gay boy in Nanaimo, **Daniel Gawthrop** watched hockey with his family. Their favourite team was the Montreal Canadiens and Gawthrop became a fan of **Guy Lafleur** who wore the number 10 jersey for the Habs.

Looking back, Gawthrop realizes that apart from **Jim Neilson** of the New York Rangers, born to a Cree mother, he did not see BIPOC players when he was a kid. “This was the big white world of hockey men I’d witnessed since my earliest days of fandom,” he says in **Cutting Edge**, his exploration of gender, toxic masculinity and sexuality in defining—and often demeaning—Canada’s national sport.

Gawthrop played hockey in his teens, soon learning it was a homophobic world. For a while, he abandoned the game, saying, “there is much to learn about how bad hockey homophobia could get and why gay men like me felt we needed to cancel hockey before hockey cancelled us.”

As a journalist, Gawthrop began

Daniel Gawthrop on the Russian Rocket, **Pavel Bure**, and the role of gender, masculinity and sexuality in hockey through a queer lens.

playing hockey again. He co-founded a gay hockey league called The Cutting Edges to make the sport more diverse and safer—and to inculcate queer culture in the game long before the stunning success of the gay hockey romance, *Heated Rivalry* (Carina, 2019) that has become a popular TV show. Gawthrop also gained attention during the 1994 NHL playoffs when articles he published in a local gay magazine and the *Vancouver Sun* about the sex appeal of Vancouver Canucks player, **Pavel Bure**, got mentioned on *Hockey Night in Canada* by **Don Cherry**. Here’s is an excerpt from Gawthrop’s book about this period.

Cutting Edge: Hockey as Queer Culture by **Daniel Gawthrop** (Arsenal Pulp \$24.95)

BY DANIEL GAWTHROP

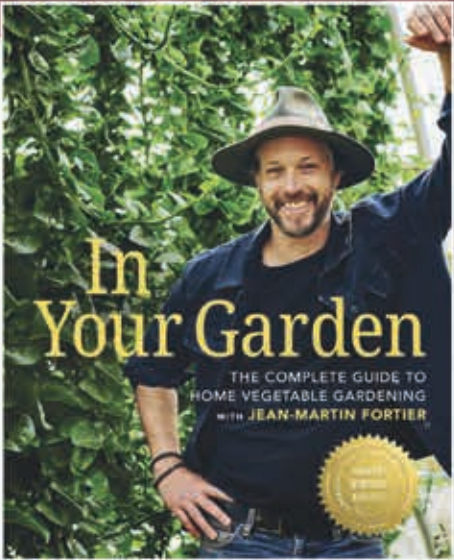
To say that the Russian Rocket was the biggest star the Vancouver Canucks have ever had, apart from **Quinn Hughes**, would be an understatement. **Pavel Bure** didn’t just score more goals per season than any other player in team history; he also

scored more goals per game than any other NHL player in the modern era not named **Mike Bossy** or **Mario Lemieux**. His talent was so off the charts that the Canucks would rename their Most Exciting Player Award after him. (This was after his induction into the Hockey Hall of Fame, when he became the only player to have spent most of his career with the Canucks to claim that distinction.)

Bure thrilled fans every night with the explosive power of his skating, his electrifying speed, and his deadly shot. He scored on most of his breakaways—of which there were many—and he always found the right moment to bring fans out of their seats. He could skate around Norris Trophy-winning defenders like pylons, make Vezina Trophy-winning goalies look silly with highlight reel dekes, and reduce general managers to tears at the thought he could have been theirs.

On top of all this? The twenty-year-old Pavel Bure who arrived in Vancouver in the autumn of 1991 just happened to satisfy every other pre-

Fall Books from New Society Publishers



In Your Garden
The Complete Guide to Home Vegetable Gardening with Jean-Martin Fortier
JEAN-MARTIN FORTIER
9781774060353 / \$49.99 / FULL COLOR / HARDCOVER

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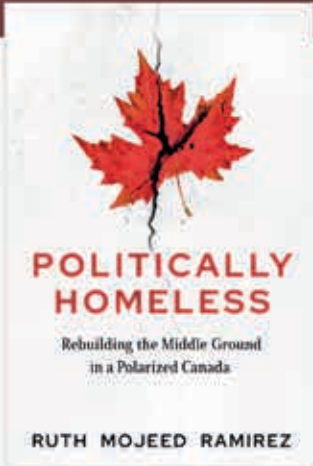
Dying Together
The Art of Community Death Care
LEE WARREN
9781774060384 / \$29.99

What if death was not something to fear—but one of life’s greatest teachers? *Dying Together* offers a path toward a more conscious and life-affirming relationship with death.



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KATHERINE JOHNSON MARTINKO
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Politically Homeless
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RUTH MOJEED RAMIREZ
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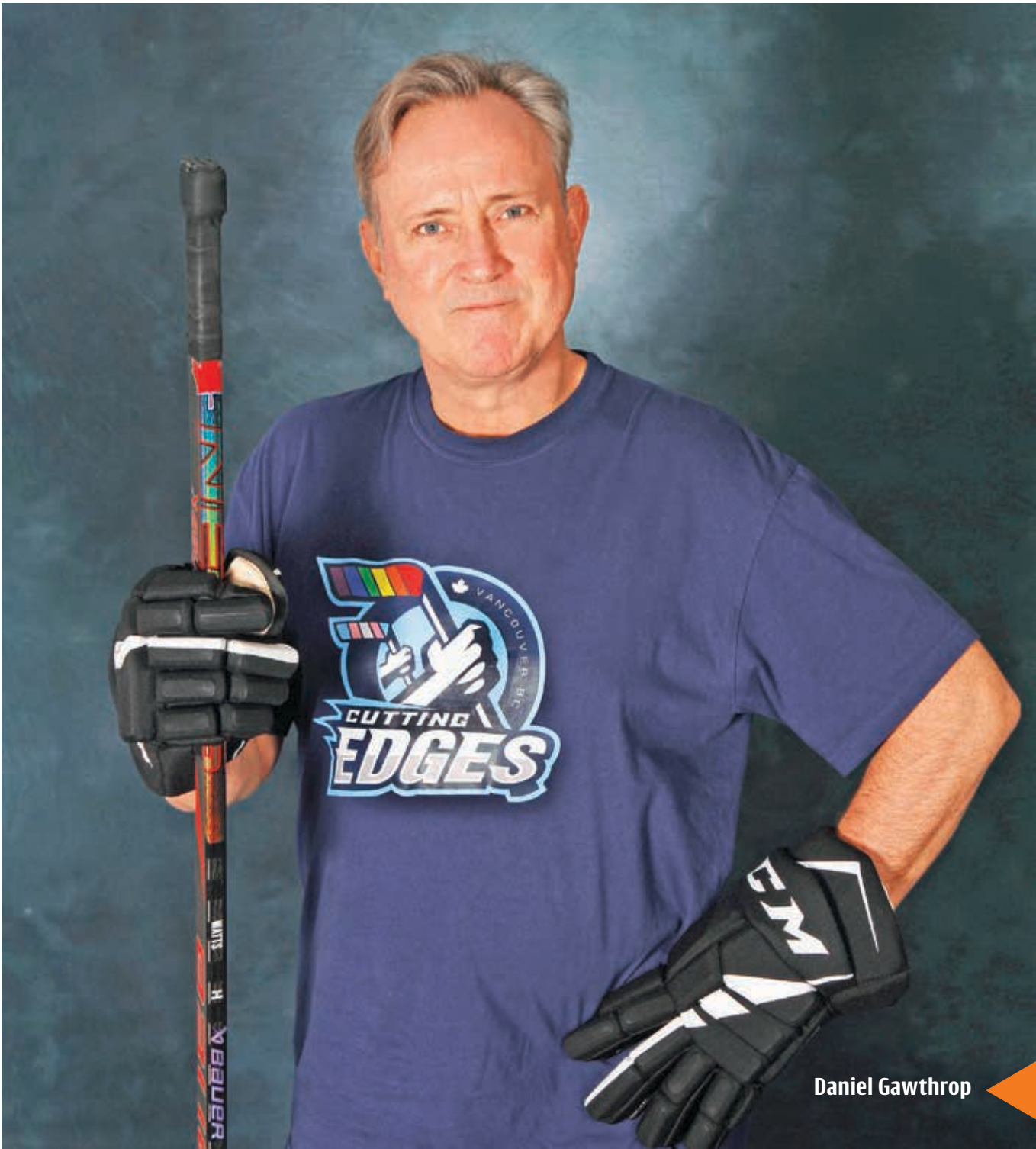
Available at fine bookstores and online retailers, or www.newsociety.com

requisite for super stardom in the pop culture stratosphere: he was exotic, mysterious, charismatic, and drop-dead gorgeous. It was my privilege, toward the end of his Calder Trophy-winning rookie season, to join what I called the Pavel commentariat. These were local Vancouver writers, not confined to the sports media, who shared their thoughts on the phenomenon that was Pavel Bure and what it all meant.

My own fascination with Bure began with the Christmas morning-like atmosphere—the excitement of gift unwrapping—of his first media conference with the Canucks. In those days, the internet was still in its infancy, so there were few images of Pavel Bure in circulation. A subject of the Soviet Union just before its collapse, he was a highly gifted player whose progress international scouts had been tracking for years. But his media presence in the West was limited to a few grainy bits of footage from the World Junior Championships of 1990 and 1991, his features obscured by the cage of his helmet. So when he arrived in Vancouver after a cloak-and-dagger departure from Russia via the US, the mystery surrounding him only added to the anticipation of that media scrum, which was held two days before his first NHL game. Like most Canuck fans, I watched the whole thing on TV during that day’s evening news sports report.

When Bure stepped into the room to reveal himself, the strobing effect of all the camera flashes going off had a Hollywood feel to it. Like **Tom Cruise** arriving on the red carpet for Oscar night. What a stunner, I thought. A perfect 10 ... and oh, look, that’s the jersey number they’re giving him. **Guy Lafleur**’s number. My number ... Bure was dazzlingly pretty, his symmetrical Eastern European features worthy of

a runway model. This was a presence seldom seen in the rough-and-tumble NHL, a league overpopulated with mullet-maned, meat-and-potatoes regular dudes. The blond-haired Bure was an Adonis with lips like rose petals and



Daniel Gawthrop

“My own fascination with Bure began with the Christmas morning-like atmosphere—the excitement of gift unwrapping—of his first media conference with the Canucks. In those days, the internet was still in its infancy, so there were few images of Pavel Bure in circulation.” —**DANIEL GAWTHROP**



sparkling green-blue bedroom eyes. His astonishing beauty combined the cherubic androgyny of **River Phoenix** with the mystique of **Rudolf Nureyev** or **Rudolph Valentino** and the insouciance of **James Dean**. Smoking hot. Apart from being blown away by his looks, Canuck fans like me were left wondering how such features could survive the wear and tear of a lengthy NHL career. As we would soon discover, Bure’s being faster than everyone else would help.

It would take the Canucks a long time to realize what they had. Too long, in my view. I did not begin writing about Bure until I saw what was lacking in their promotion of him. Once I did, I found there was plenty to say. In joining the Pavel commentariat, I soon learned that I was the only openly gay

writer among its ranks. My interest began innocently enough: a hot young prospect arriving in town to save the Canucks from chronic mediocrity turns out to be much more than anticipated. Were the Canucks taking full advantage?

Later I would be accused of stalking Bure with my interest, my “obsession,” even. Apparently there was something tawdry—a breach of good taste—in an “older” man objectifying a defenceless young male athlete. But I was still in my twenties, like Bure, so the age objection was groundless. And this defenceless young male athlete also happened to be a millionaire, soon to be loaded with money, lawyers, agents, and media handlers. He had power and influence, while I had words. He was fair game.

9781834050485



Pavel Bure, Vancouver Canucks, in Vancouver, 1997.

Never Again, for Anyone
by Stacy Friedman,
illustrations by Elly Stern
(Arsenal Pulp \$22.95)
Ages 6 to 10

BY BEVERLY CRAMP

In her debut book, self-described “Jewish mama, educator and organizer” **Stacy Friedman** begins by telling of a kindergarten boy named Lev who is celebrating Shabbat with his mother. They make challah (a braided bread traditionally eaten on the Jewish Sabbath) and light a candle for Lev’s late Bubbie (grandmother) who was a Holocaust child survivor.

When Lev asks his mother about why Bubbie looks sad in pictures, his mother carefully measures her words so as not to traumatize her young son. Because of “many people with power who didn’t like Jewish people,” Lev’s mother says, “[Bubbie] had to pretend she wasn’t Jewish ... [and] she moved into a stranger’s house without her parents, and she missed them a lot.”

While many Holocaust survivors later said, “Never again,” Bubbie instead said, “We can’t ever let anyone be treated like that again.” Bubbie often took her daughter, Lev’s mother, to march and speak out for people who weren’t treated fairly. One of Bubbie’s favourite sayings came from an ancient Jewish sage, Hillel the Elder: “That



ELLY STERN ILLUSTRATION, FROM NEVER AGAIN, FOR ANYONE

A Jewish mama for Free Palestine

Stacy Friedman created a book she needed that hadn’t previously existed.

which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow.”

Lev has a Palestinian friend, Ameera, and he decides to light a candle for her, too. It inspires Lev’s mother to take Lev to march with people in support of Palestine. Their sign reads, “Never again, for anyone.”

The story ends with Lev and his mother, after the march, sharing a meal with Ameera and her mother.

In a “letter from the author,” Stacy Friedman says: “I was raised in a Jew-

ish community, but I am not raising my child in the same one I grew up in. I’ve had to find my own way to connect with my Jewish heritage and find a Judaism that makes sense to me, that I can feel proud of ... that will help my child have roots so he can grow strong and loving (not strong and brutal).”

Like the mother in her story, Friedman has taken her preschooler with her to protests. “We joined Parents for Palestine,” she says. “He played with Gazan children who are growing

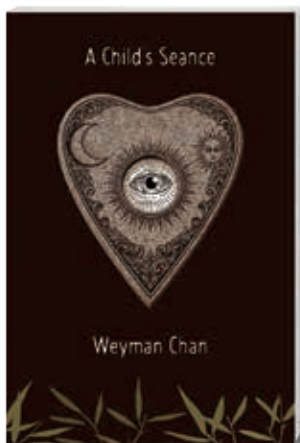
strong in a land far from home while they watch their families barely survive (and sometimes not survive at all) on a screen.”

Friedman knows of many “beautiful Jewish children’s books about holidays and families,” she says, but she could not find any “that modelled for my child what it means to be a good person at this moment in time when children his age are starving, living in tents, unable to attend school, orphaned, missing limbs, losing their lives.” She adds: “It broke my heart that I could not find a book that conveyed that standing with others in their struggle for justice is part of being Jewish.”

Friedman began connecting with more Jewish families who supported the Palestinian cause. “I found that they, too, were eager for a book to offer their own children loving words and ways of being in this frightening world. The book we needed didn’t exist, so I decided to write it.”

Vancouver-based **Elly Stern** provided the gentle, warmly coloured art. Her publisher’s blurb reads that Stern is an “... artist, animator and community organizer who uses visual storytelling to inspire change.” Stern is also a third-generation Holocaust survivor and “anti-Zionist Jew from Israel-Palestine” who is “committed to intertwining art with justice advocacy.” Stern created several protest march signs that line the book’s inner covers, including “Self-Loving Jews for Palestine,” “All Children Need Protection/Ceasefire Now,” “This Jewish Parent says Teach My Kids About Palestine” and “Stand Up Against Anti-Palestinian Racism.”

At the back of Friedman’s book is a discussion guide to cultivate understanding and empathy. 9781834050522



A Child’s Seance

Weyman Chan

Beginning with a brother and sister’s attempt to reach their dead mother through a Ouija board, *A Child’s Seance* travels from the prairie landscape into the cosmos, finding resilience and connection amid grief and the fleeting chaos of human life.

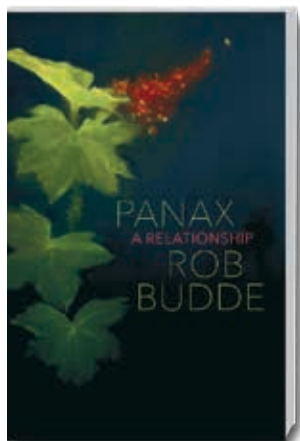
Forthcoming August 25, 2026

notes from recently

Chris Turnbull

A gorgeous, arresting collection that traces loss and transformation across forests, wetlands, fields, and city streets, asking how we might attend more closely to the interconnected world we inhabit and disrupt.

Forthcoming September 10, 2026



Panax: A Relationship

Rob Budde

Poetry and decolonial thought converge as Rob Budde traces his evolving relationship with Hoolhghulh, known in English as Devil’s Club.

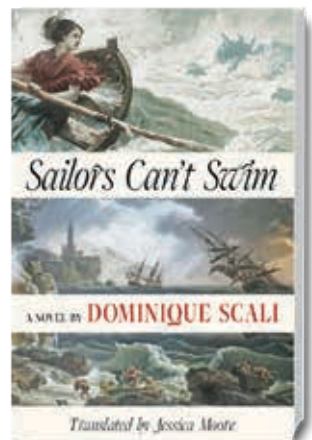
Forthcoming August 25, 2026

Sailors Can’t Swim

Dominique Scali
Translated by Jessica Moore

The winner of the 2023 Prix des libraires du Québec, Prix Jacques-Brossard de la science-fiction et du fantastique, and French Prix Imaginales is now available in English.

Forthcoming September 4, 2026



Krill:
Tiny Giants of the Ocean
 by Yolanda Ridge
 (Orca \$24.95)
 Ages 9 to 12

BY HEIDI GRECO

Rossland-based author **Yolanda Ridge** introduces this book with a recollection of being 12, when she proudly wore a silver necklace that proclaimed “Save the Whales.” She’s moved on and now supports the necessity of saving more than just the whales. She’s done her own “deep dive” and gone to the source of food for so many species of whales: krill.

It’s hard to fathom just how a creature that’s sometimes only as big as one’s fingertip or a paperclip could sustain a body as large as that of a blue whale, but that’s exactly what krill do—though, admittedly, they do this in very large numbers: “... up to 40 million per day!” writes Ridge. “If you piled all those krill on the world’s largest dinner plate, they would weigh between 17 and 18 tons (16 metric tons)—the same as 8,800 burger patties.”

Making this kind of comparison is one of the things Ridge does so well. She uses examples from everyday life to explain numbers and terminology. One of my only disappointments regarding these illustrations occurs when she compares the size of the biggest krill species to the length of a five-dollar bill. Sadly, the accompanying image is not of the lovely Canadian blue example but of the American five.

She takes readers through the entire life cycle of krill, beginning with them as tiny eggs that float near the ocean’s surface. But then down, down, down they go, like tiny submarines to the bottom where more transformations take place. Although Ridge focuses on Antarctic krill, she also takes us around the globe, exploring the many different environments where the various species of krill live—apparently in every single ocean, including our own local waters. Krill, in fact, are one of the reasons our beloved sockeye salmon



Northern krill (*Meganyctiphanes norvegica*) is often no bigger than a fingertip. This creature serves as one of the foundations of the entire aquatic food chain.

The krilling grounds

How does a creature that can be as small as a paperclip sustain a body as large as that of a blue whale? But that’s exactly what krill do.

have a deep orange-pink flesh while other salmon species such as chinook or coho have a paler pink flesh, as the latter feed on small fish rather than krill or zooplankton.

Ridge also squeezes in a number of complicated explanations, but somehow makes them clear enough to be easily understood. She describes what’s involved in the course of ocean acidification and even breaks down the process of bioluminescence—the ability that krill have to glow in the dark.



Yolanda Ridge

Like all the books in the *Orca Wild* series, nearly every page features a colourful photograph highlighting some aspect of this little species’ importance. Many pages offer explanatory sidebars and, whether these might be called a “deep dive” or “krill corner” or a “giant fact,” each contains enlightening information about these tiny critters. More than one mention is made of poo, but that’s typical of a book that clearly aims to make learning fun.

And though the book makes it fun to learn about krill,

their life cycles and habitats, it also makes a number of very serious points about the changes our species is making on the planet, specifically its oceans. These range from the impact supertrawlers make on krill populations with their “... vacuums that can suck up more than 550 tons (500 metric tons) of krill per day—the daily diet of about 150 humpback whales,” to citing some of the effects of climate change, especially the rising temperatures and acidity of seawater. Ridge also reminds us about the dangers of microplastics, substances now turning up in even our food.

While these cautionary signs demand our attention, they are particularly critical to keystone species, a classification in which krill are now recognized for all that they do to support the greater food chain.

There’s an old-timey proverb that claims “for want of a nail, the kingdom was lost.” No nails here, but the parallel seems true: if we don’t protect the existence of krill, more than some imaginary kingdom will be lost. This tiny creature serves as one of the foundations of the entire aquatic food chain. These days, Ridge’s slogan has evolved into “Save the Krill” for without them, life on the planet as we know it would be terribly altered.

Tiny giants, indeed. 9781459842878

Without realizing she was swimming with krill, reviewer Heidi Greco has enjoyed the wonder of paddling about in bioluminescent waters off Hornby and Salt Spring Islands.

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WHO'S WHO BRITISH COLUMBIA

A IS FOR ASAHI

Up to 1941, the Vancouver Asahi baseball team was a source of pride for the Japanese Canadian community during a time of harsh racial discrimination. The players adopted strategies such as bunting and aggressive base stealing to outplay more powerful teams and win championships. In **Asahi: Japanese-Canadian Baseball Heroes** (Heritage House \$22.95) fourth-generation Anglo-Japanese Canadian writer, **Carolyn Nakagawa**, traces the team's history from its founding in 1914, its many successes and the team's last year before the players were dispersed during World War Two to internment camps far away from Vancouver. Illustrations by **Erica Isomura**. 9781772035926

B IS FOR BILLEH

Known for his use of satire and humour, **Billeh Nickerson** famously blended Canadian hockey culture with queer desire in his poem, "Why I Love Wayne Gretzky—an Erotic Fantasy," published in his first collection *The Asthmatic Glassblower* (Arsenal Pulp, 2000). The title of Nickerson's fifth collection, **Blood Clot Banana Bag** (Anvil \$20), about two weeks he spent in St. Paul's Hospital in 2022 when he was diagnosed with blood clots, refers to the nickname medical workers give to IV bags (banana bags), which are tinged yellow from electrolytes and hang above patients like banana bunches. 9781772142624

C IS FOR CHOUINARD

Michael Chouinard has worked as a warehouse labourer, cab driver, convenience store clerk, newspaper reporter and communications professional—experiences that inform his fiction writing. Inspired by **Kurt Vonnegut** and a lifelong love of storytelling, Chouinard makes his debut with **The Thirty-Three and a Third Revolutions** (MEC33 \$19.48), a novel set in the 1990s vinyl record business. Following 22-year-old art school graduate Garrett Fagan as he takes a job at a record warehouse on the West Coast, the story explores friendship, precarious work, music culture and disillusionment as Garrett and his co-workers struggle to find stability and meaning in their lives. 9781069919007

Billeh Nickerson of East Vancouver.

D IS FOR DYBIKOWSKI

What do Doukhobors, the comedian **Lenny Bruce** (1925–1966), *The Tropic of Cancer*, *The Georgia Straight* and the historic, much-loved Fraser Book Bin have in common? They were communities, books, magazines, stores and individuals that the BC Civil Liberties Association and its forerunner, the Vancouver Civil Liberties Union (1938–1958) legally supported when governments trampled on their rights or deemed them morally obscene. These stories and more are covered in **James Dybikowski's Challenge and Persist: The Origins of the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association**



Elee Kraljii Gardiner



Carolyn Nakagawa

(self-published, free). Dybikowski, one of the early founders of the BCCLA, is professor emeritus at UBC and former head of the department of philosophy.

Contact: jamesd@mail.ubc.ca

9781069767905

E IS FOR ELIZABETH



Elizabeth Bachinsky

Plainspoken poet, **Elizabeth Bachinsky** has released her sixth collection, **Real Grownup** (Nightwood \$19.95) after a 13-year absence from publishing. Motherhood, the Covid pandemic and chairing the creative writing department at Douglas College have kept her busy, although Bachinsky never stopped writing. The new poems, a mixture of formal lyrics, blank verse and prose poetry include reflections on her

family, especially her daughter, adolescence and references to other poets such as **Dylan Thomas**. Bachinsky has been nominated for the Bronwen Wallace Award for Poetry, the Pat Lowther Award and a Governor General's Award. She lives in New Westminster.

9780889714960

F IS FOR FLYNN



Alexandra Flynn

Associate professor at UBC's Al-lard School of Law, **Alexandra Flynn** shows how cities use bylaws "as powerful and often violent legal instruments," she says, when it comes to dealing with unhoused people in **The By-law State: Encampment Evictions and the Struggle for Public Space** (Fernwood \$25), coauthored with **Joe Hermer**. The authors use case studies from Prince George (Moccasin Flats and Millennium Park) and Vancouver (Crab Park) to demonstrate that bylaws are the primary response of governments to unhoused people living and surviving in public spaces when they have nowhere else to go. They also argue for a more inclusive approach that protects people not just spaces. 9781773638027

G IS FOR GARDINER

Vancouver's Poet Laureate, **Elee Kraljii Gardiner** meditates on the forest as a place of refuge as well as harm in her book of poems, **sometimes, forest** (Talon \$19.95). The title, Gardiner told **Margaret Gallagher**, host of CBC radio's *North by Northwest*, relates to her idea of addressing a beloved, which is "the forest, sometimes or sometimes I'm talking to myself, to a friend, my mom, my daughter, a lover, a memory, the best sense of myself in the future... I'm addressing a wide ecology of selves." 9781772017113

H IS FOR HALL

What if the past refused to stay behind? **Alyssa Hall** returns to her recurring investigator, Joe Parrott, in **You Can Never Go Back** (FriesenPress \$17.99) with a mystery that follows Parrott as he grapples with the aftermath of a case that continues to unsettle both himself and those around him. Based in Langley, Hall uses psychological tension and shifting relationships as her characters confront trauma, change and the possibility that revisiting the past may come at a cost. 9781038357977



Frances Koncan

I IS FOR INFLUENCER

Frances Koncan’s sci-fi play, **Space Girl** (Talon \$18.95) centres on the first person born on the moon. Social media is still being used and Lyra is a successful social media influencer with followers on Earth. Then the day Lyra turns twenty-one, disaster strikes on two fronts: competition shows up when a new, moon-based influencer is born and Earth is in the line of a massive asteroid that might destroy all human life, including Lyra’s followers. Unintentionally, Lyra goes to Earth where she must choose between saving her social media fame or saving humanity. Koncan is an Anishinaabe/Slovenian playwright from Couchiching First Nation and an assistant professor at UBC. 9781772017298

J IS FOR JENNIFER

Writing under the nom de plume Eliza Gordon, **Jennifer Sommersby** has released **Wish Upon a Rosie** (SGA Books \$23.99), a novel that follows a woman rebuilding her life while helping others face loss—and then confronting the secrets she’s been avoiding herself. With more than a dozen titles across genres, Sommersby also works as an editor and mentor to writers through her BC publishing ventures. 9781989908082



Aloha Wanderwell, Europe, mid 1920s

K IS FOR KEN

Ken Wyder grew up as a member of the Bentall/Wyder family. His mother’s family shaped Vancouver’s skyline through their company, Dominion Construction, with buildings from pre-World War One such as the Sun Building (finished in 1910 and still standing) to Rogers Arena and the Bentall Centre. His father was known for starting the innovative Wyder Electric Co. in 1960. Yet, for all the privilege he was born into, Wyder endured an abusive, destructive childhood as he describes in his memoir **Kill Not the Butterfly** (Vespera/Tidewater \$29.95). The family businesses disintegrated under the pressures of bitter infighting and, after a series of tragedies, Wyder sought to develop a masculine identity free of toxicity. 9781067457600

L IS FOR LAUREL

Idris Hall (1906–1996), aka **Aloha Wanderwell**, was a statuesque explorer and film star raised in North Vancouver, Duncan and Qualicum who has been dubbed the first woman to travel around the world by car, which she did from 1922–25. She faced a firing squad in Russia, drove across Africa and China, briefly lived with Amazon tribes, shook hands with **Mussolini** and flirted with Hollywood royalty. Her husband, **Walter Wanderwell**, a World War One spy and the man behind the car trip adventure, was mysteriously murdered on their yacht. Others have written about Aloha and now Victoria-based **Laurel Corona** has released her take on the adventure in the creative non-fiction title, **Aloha Wanderwell Takes the Wheel** (Sibylline \$20). 9798897409426



George Mercer

M IS FOR MERCER

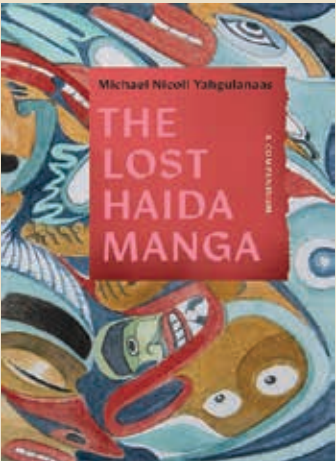
Retired national park warden **George Mercer** has released book five in his *Dyed in the Green* fiction series about Canadian national park wardens and their exploits with poachers, developers and bureaucrats. He has previously covered Canadian locales (Cape Breton Highlands, Wood Buffalo and Jasper national parks) but his new title, **The Rhino’s Horn** (George Mercer \$20), sees Canadian park wardens assist an all-female anti-poaching group in East Africa striving to save threatened wildlife such as the iconic rhinoceros, Cape buffalo, elephants, lions and leopards. *The Rhino’s Horn* provides insight into the challenges facing park rangers. 9781775251224

Food & Art
Crime & Ferries



West Coast Kitchen Garden: Growing, Gathering, and Eating Through the Seasons by **Sabrina Currie** (Touchwood \$49)

The creator of the popular food and gardening blog, *West Coast Kitchen Garden*, Sabrina Currie has published a garden-to-table cookbook of the same name for eating local and in season all year round: from seeding, to tending, to harvesting, to the table. It’s all about realigning our kitchens with the land around us. The book covers appetizers, main courses, snacks, desserts, and drinks as well as crafted seasonal menus.

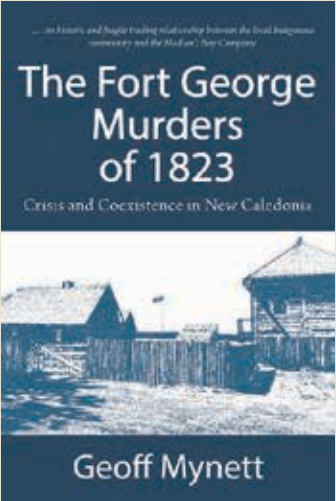


The Lost Haida Manga: A Compendium by **Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas** (D&M \$34.95)

Haida artist, Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas created “Haida Manga,” a new style of Haida comics that uses traditional North Pacific Indigenous arts and storytelling. His goal: to connect as many people as possible to the values and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples. Its energetic, political, philosophical, humorous and just plain fun to read. And it’s *BC BookWorld*’s cover story!

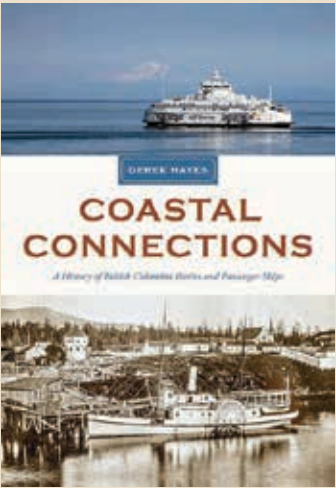
The Fort George Murders of 1823 by **Geoff Mynett** (Caitlin \$26)

Over 200 years ago, what is now BC was home to about 500,000 First Nation Peoples and a tiny band of settlers chasing furs. The settlers depended on First Nations for trade and survival, operating out of various forts. Then two settlers were murdered, almost shattering the fragile trading relationship. Historical sleuth, Geoff Mynett seeks answers.



Coastal Connections: A History of British Columbia Ferries and Passenger Ships by **Derek Hayes** (Harbour \$50)

Ferries and passenger vessels have a long history in BC with its thousands of miles of rugged coastline and hundreds of islands. Derek Hayes tells of the historical fleets of Pacific Princesses, Prince ships and the Union Steamships that culminated in the creation of BC Ferries in 1960, which all have richly served our coast. Includes hundreds of old and new photos.



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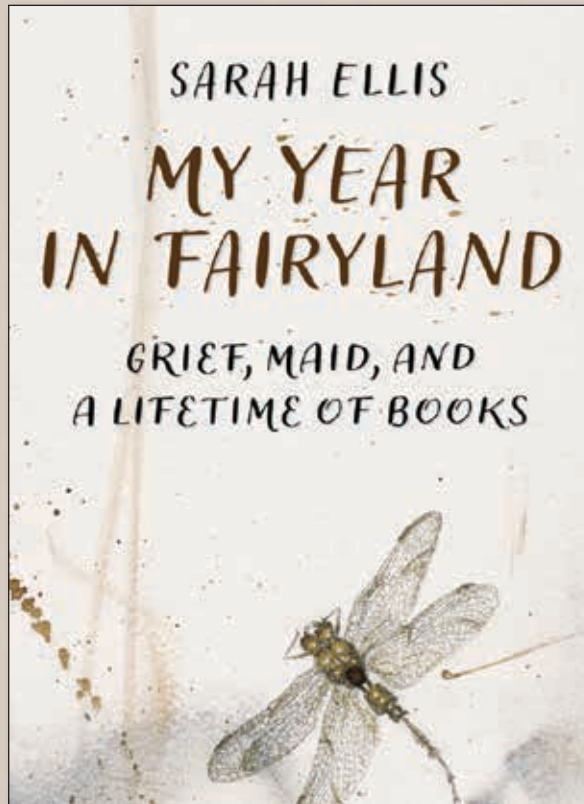
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WHO'S WHO

BRITISH COLUMBIA

N IS FOR NEIL

In the titular poem of **Neil Surkan**'s collection of lyrical poems, **Empties** (MQUP \$19.95), his playful wording is on display: "And who / isn't my neighbour / now? We alley / bottles / mouthing / ooooo / when gusts prowl, empties / blown / into / a chorus – wind, / song what — difference / if air / grazes / or emits / from our lips?" The author of two other books of poetry, *Unbecoming* (MQUP, 2021) and *On High* (MQUP, 2018) as well as four chapbooks, Surkan is the poet laureate of Nanaimo and a professor in the Department of English at Vancouver Island University.



Mark Leiren-Young

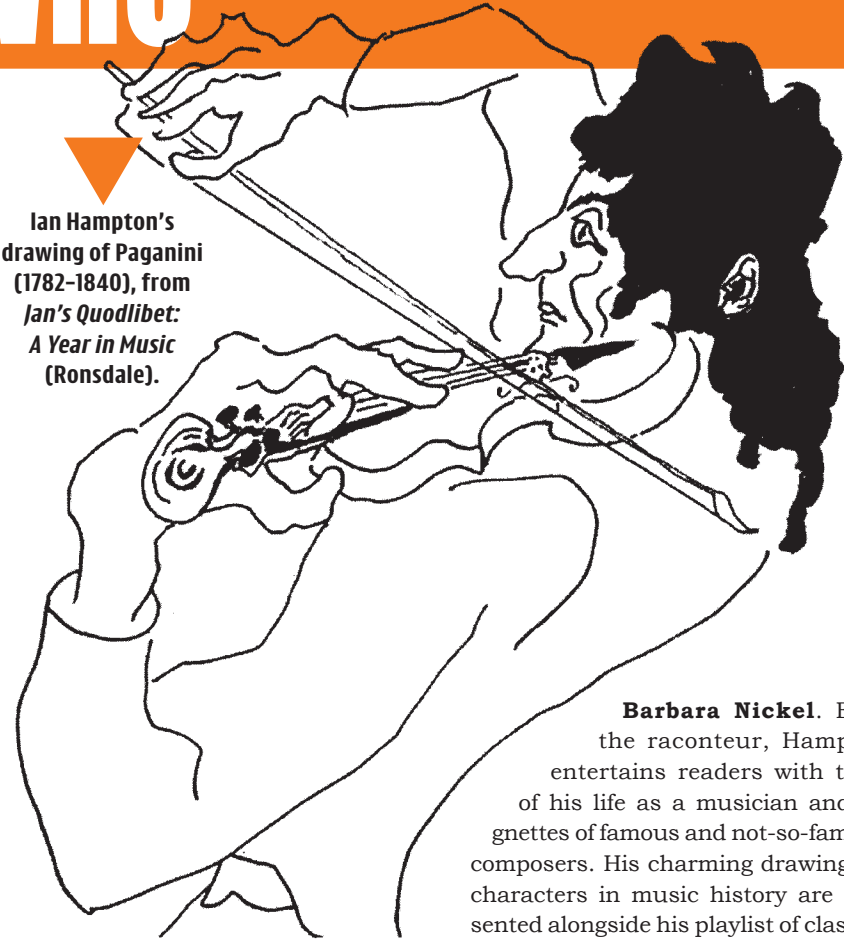
O IS FOR OCEAN

Atlases show there are five oceans but **Mark Leiren-Young** argues there is really only one as all Earth's oceans connect in his new book for middle-grade readers aged 9 to 12, **One Ocean: 7 Ways to Save the Seas** (Orca \$19.95) illustrated by **Bithi Sutradhar**. More important, the book is about how kids can help protect the ocean because, as Leiren-Young writes, "most of the animals who live in it—from the biggest whales to the tiniest plankton—are in trouble," caused mostly by climate change and other man-made problems. Leiren-Young shows how children, no matter their age, can help and highlights young people around the world who have made a difference.

9781459842939

P IS FOR PREECE

Written in wet tents and along rugged trails, **bronwyn preece's hiking beyond: poems from the trail** (Caitlin \$24) gathers reflections from solo backcountry journeys and the realities



Ian Hampton's drawing of Paganini (1782-1840), from *Jan's Quodlibet: A Year in Music* (Ronsdale).

of living in a body marked by injury and genetic disorder. A Whistler-based, site-sensitive artist and community-engaged practitioner, preece draws on her interdisciplinary background in applied theatre and performance to create work grounded in place, ecology and lived experience. This second poetry collection continues her exploration of movement, resilience and connection to land, weaving geology, botany and personal narrative into a poetic practice centred on awareness, responsibility and small acts of repair.

9781773861845

Q IS FOR QUODLIBET

A quodlibet is a musical composition that combines several different melodies in counterpoint, often in a humorous, fun manner. The word has found its way into the title **Jan's Quodlibet: A Year in Music** (Ronsdale \$24.95) written by former Vancouver Symphony principal cellist **Ian Hampton**, with



Neil Surkan

Barbara Nickel. Ever the raconteur, Hampton entertains readers with tales of his life as a musician and vignettes of famous and not-so-famous composers. His charming drawings of characters in music history are presented alongside his playlist of classics and hidden gems from classical, jazz, folk and pop.

9781553807452

R IS FOR ROSS-GRAYMAN

In **Voices of Resilience: An Anthology of Stories Written by Children of Holocaust Survivors** (Amsterdam Publishers \$24.95), edited by **Deborah Ross-Grayman**, the personal stories of 12 second-generation descendants of Holocaust survivors are brought together, many of whom are connected to the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre (VHEC). The events told are set across Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America and explore intergenerational memory and trauma. Contributors recount childhoods shaped by war, migration, political upheaval and rediscovered family histories, while also reflecting on resilience, compassion and renewal across generations. Includes a foreword by **Robert Krell** (psychiatrist and founder of VHEC) and an historical overview by **Chris Friedrichs**.

9789493418615

S IS FOR SAKLIKAR



Renée Saklikar

Ten years in the making, **Bramah's Discovery: Book Three** (Nightwood \$26.95) is the final instalment of **Renée Sarojini Saklikar's** fantasy saga in verse, *The Heart of This Journey Bears All Patterns* (THOT J BAP). The year is 2110 and Bramah's journey to find out about her origins and her parents continues. Along the way, Bramah discovers the price of idealism in the face of ecological and economic calamity. This series is also a meditation on good and evil. Fellow poet and colleague, **Stephen Collis** calls the three books, "the first epic poem of climate change."

9780889714946



Glenna Turnbull

T IS FOR TURNBULL

In her debut novel, **The Art of Getting Lost and Found** (Breakwater Books \$24.95), Kelowna-based **Glenna Turnbull** tells of the lives of two women over one week in August, but 130 years apart—1887 and 2017. Both women struggle with difficult lives and violent partners. Turnbull explores the effects of domestic violence on mental health and the "importance of getting out while you still can," she says. Turnbull is already working on a second novel about a young girl who wants to play hockey and a former NHL player who takes her under his wing.

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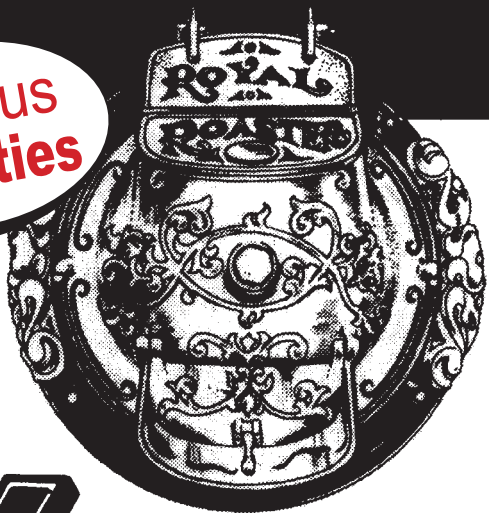
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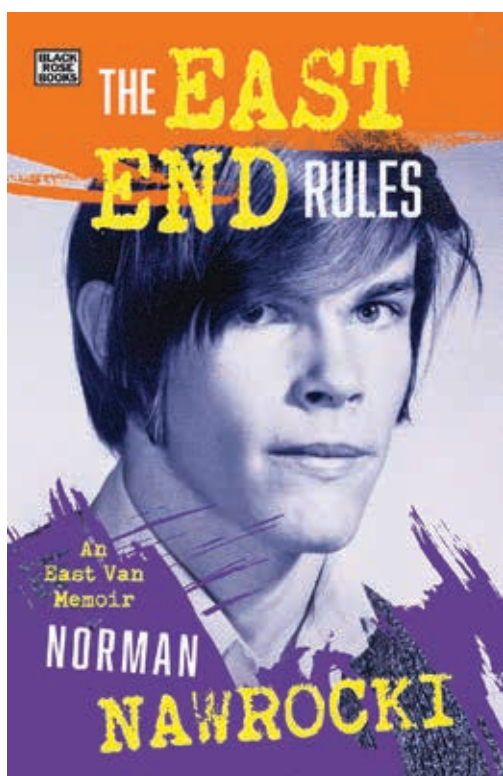
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WHO'S WHO BC

U IS FOR ULTRA

In his second book of creative nonfiction, **Decadence** (Biblioasis \$24.95), **Richard Kelly Kemick's** 14th chapter titled “Ultra” describes a visit with his ex-girlfriend, Litia, to the doctor for an ultrasound. “It has been eight weeks since she came out to me as gay and we broke up; six weeks since we found out she was pregnant; and four weeks since we decided to keep it—rather, since she decided to keep it,” writes Kemick. It's a compelling scene told through Kemick's sensibilities and writing style that was described as having “astonishingly, a tone both earnest and ironic” when he won a National Magazine Award for his writing.

9781771967136



Roy Henry Vickers, artist

V IS FOR VICKERS

On the occasion of his 80th birthday, Pacific Northwest Coast artist **Roy Henry Vickers** has released an affordably-priced retrospective commemorating eighty of his greatest works. **The Best of Roy Henry Vickers** (Harbour \$24.95) traces his artwork over the fifty-year period, 1974 to 2024. Vickers spent his early childhood in the Indigenous village of Kitkatla surrounded by stories and storytellers, setting him on his journey of carving, painting and printmaking. This celebratory book showcases the evolution of Vickers' vibrantly-coloured landscapes and iconic Northwest Coast imagery. Vickers also provides a short but informative biography in his introduction.

9781998526635

W IS FOR WHITE

He began carving as a teenager and five decades later, Haida artist **Kihl'Yahda Christian White** is acknowledged as a master carver. He is known for cedar works such as totem poles and canoes, and also for sculptural works in a special argillite, or “black shale,” found only on Haida Gwaii. These argillite carvings, often with inlays of abalone shell and mastodon ivory, are sought after by White's patrons around the world. As such, most of these artworks have rarely been seen by the public—until now. **Raven Transforms: The Haida Argillite Art of Kihl'Yahda Christian White** (Figure 1 \$55) is the first-ever monograph of his sculptures, featuring nearly 200 of his artworks in private collections.

9781773272771

X IS FOR MAX

UBC political science prof **Max Cameron** is known for his work on the dangers to democracy one of which is polarization. “We are nowhere near as polarized as countries that have lost—or seriously damaged—their democracies,” he writes in **Divided We Fall: How we can resist polarizing pressures and strengthen our identity as citizens** (James Lorimer \$27.95). “But Canadians can ill afford to be complacent.” COVID-19 deepened divisions here, the Freedom Convoy showed how angry some people were and the Conservative Party lurched further to the angry right. Cameron sets out how Canadians can resist toxic discussion, rebuild trust and renew our shared civic culture. 9781459420656

Y IS FOR YU

Vancouver-based **Charmaine Yu** has illustrated **More Than Books: Why the World Needs Libraries** (Orca \$29.95) by **Margriet Ruurs**, a book that celebrates libraries and the many beneficial activities these institutions provide. The back page blurb notes: “While libraries began as places to protect and preserve knowledge, they have grown into community hubs where everyone can access diverse books, pick up a new hobby and fall in love with learning.” *More Than Books* includes a history of written records (from clay tablets to e-readers), historical libraries such as the fabled Library of Alexandria and describes the work of librarians. For middle-grade readers. 9781459844001



Charmaine Yu, artist

Z IS FOR ZOKOL

Richard Zokol started his rise as a Canadian golf legend when he won the 1981 NCAA Championship. On tour, he initially struggled but discovered that listening to music on his Walkman improved his game tremendously. The first pro golfer to ever try this, he became known as “Disco Dick.” Zokol played in over 450 Tour events, winning twice. Zokol was also twice named Canada's male professional golfer of the year. He explains how he did it in **Zokology: Change Your Perspective Not Your Swing—How I Competed and Won on the PGA Tour by Changing the Way I Thought** (ECW \$24.95). He currently resides in Kelowna.

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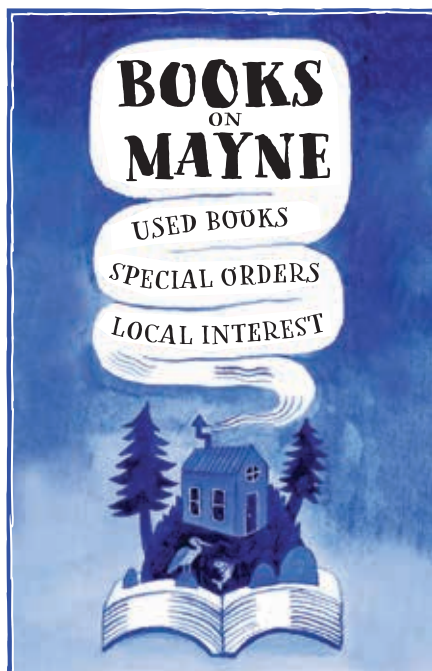
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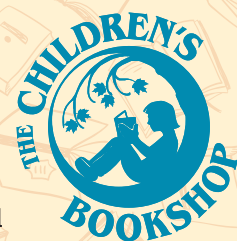
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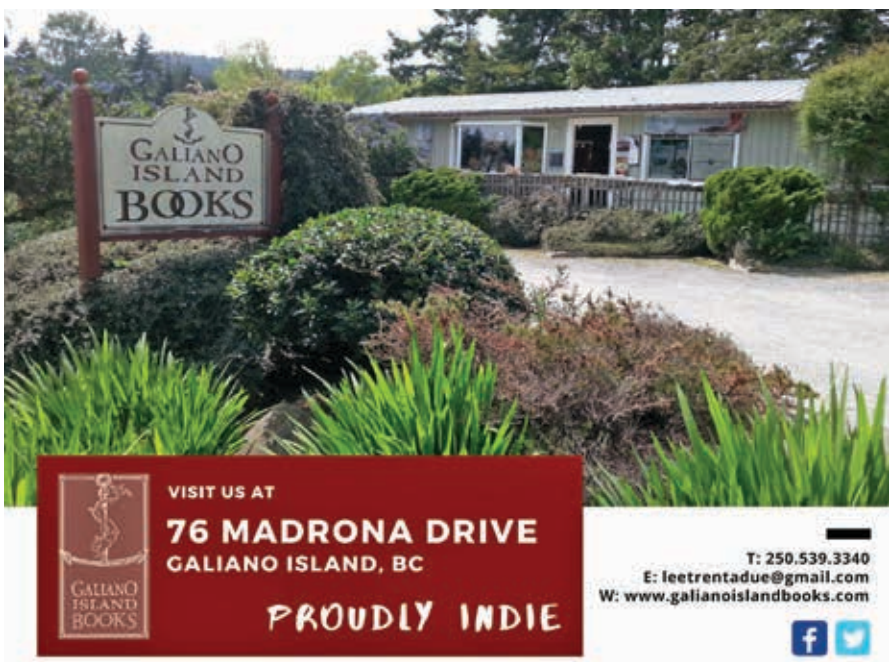
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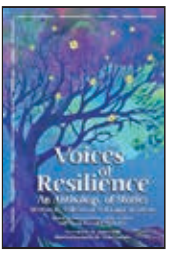
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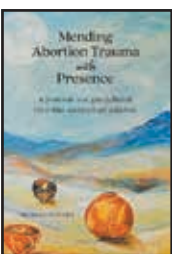
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Happy subscriber

I only today realized one could get a physical subscription to *BC BookWorld*. My local library seems to only ever have one copy, which they cling to fiercely and keep an eye on me when I come in to read it. So, I've subscribed. Thank you for everything you do to encourage literacy and spread awareness of our local authors. You are so very much appreciated!

Susan Cormier
Langley

Frame up

A note of gratitude for all who continue to make *BC BookWorld* a reality in today's world. I recently took my Spring 2026 subscription copy with me to Puerto Vallarta to show a circle of writers and artists. They were amazed! Comments ranged from "We need something exactly like this!" to "Imagine how stimulating that would be for our work." Amen to that.



Vickie Jensen

That also reminds me to thank *BC BookWorld* writers and staff for years of support they've given over the course of my twelve books and the 50 language and culture books my husband Jay Powell and I have produced in collaboration with Elders in 50+ years of working with First Nation people. We still have framed copies of those *BC BookWorld* stories in our office.

This last issue [Summer 2026] also got me into my local bookstore and library to seek out new, highlighted books. Thank you for all of that!

Vickie Jensen
Vancouver

Correction

The review of *Murder at the Fort*, [*BC BookWorld*, Summer 2026, page 10], misspelled the name of the Dakelh peoples. It should be Dakelh, not Dakehl. We regret the error.—Editor, *BC BookWorld*

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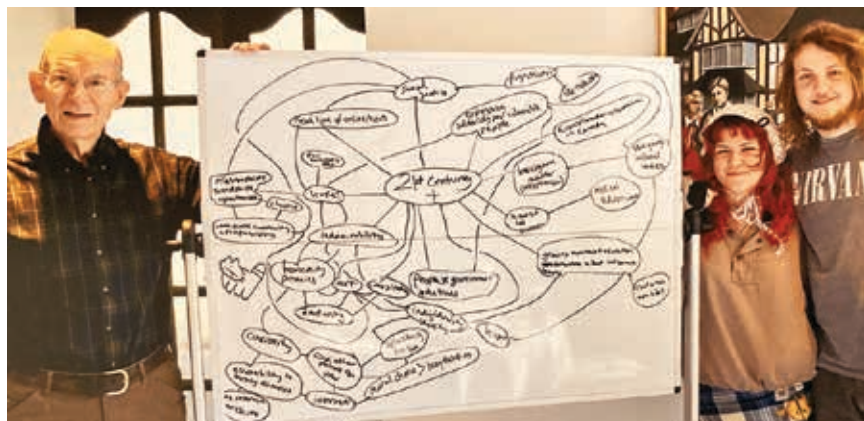
Hager Books staffer Alanna Burns stands beside a commemorative poster for the late Andrea Davies who owned the bookstore from 1985 to 2022.

Hager Books: a half century on

Started in 1974 by **Louise Hager** and her business partner, **Carol Dale** (two former employees of the renowned Duthie Books), Hager Books has long been a literary milestone in Vancouver's posh Kerrisdale neighbourhood. The late **Andrea Davies** bought the store in 1985 and ran it until 2022 when another independent family-owned business, Black Bond Books, acquired it. The deal was hailed as an inspired match as both independents emphasize a community-based focus to bookselling.

Today, Andrea Davies' two stepdaughters, **Budge** and **Carrie**, still manage the store. They carry a wide selection of fiction, memoir, biography, travel, psychology, history, cookbooks and gardening. They also stock a range of art and decorating books as well as volumes on architecture, cinema and photography. And, not to be left out, Hager Books carries children's books for all ages.

Hager Books selects its titles with their customers in mind—one of the reasons it remains a cornerstone of Kerrisdale's cultural life.



Michael Clague (left) and his two contributors, Lauryn Clague and Logan Brown at Vancouver's Brock House Society Seniors Centre. Lauryn led a "mind mapping" exercise for the question: what are our positive and negative experiences, our hopes and fears of this time in our human journey?

Two Gen Zs and a Boomer

Retiring as director of the Carnegie Community Centre in 2005, **Michael Clague** has written and self published four books since then. His most recent self-publishing effort is an essay booklet, ***Lost in the Twenty-First Century*** (2026) that he worked on with two contributors: his granddaughter, an artist, **Lauryn Clague**, and her boyfriend, creative writing student, **Logan Brown**. "I wrote this essay with no one in mind," says Michael Clague, adding "rather as a cry to the Universe." Describing himself as a child of the twentieth century and Lauryn and Logan as children of the twenty-first, Clague was delighted when the Gen Zers agreed to collaborate with him: Lauryn designed the cover art and Logan contributed a poem at the end. "The results frame this story—as they should," says Clague. "We are entering their world." To purchase the booklet, contact mclague@telus.net.

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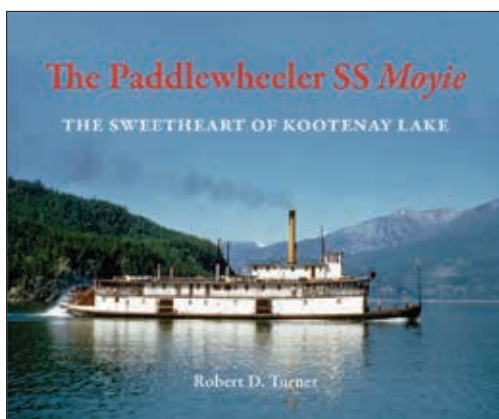


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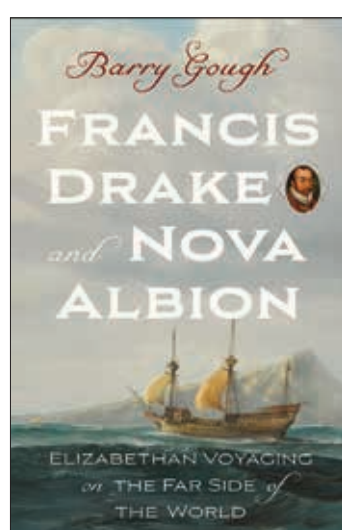


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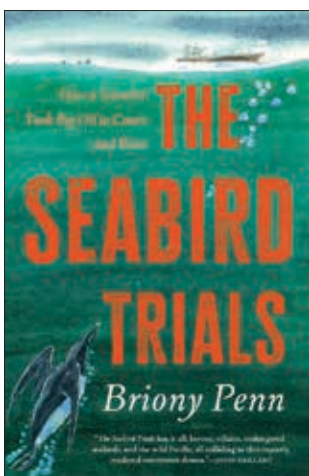
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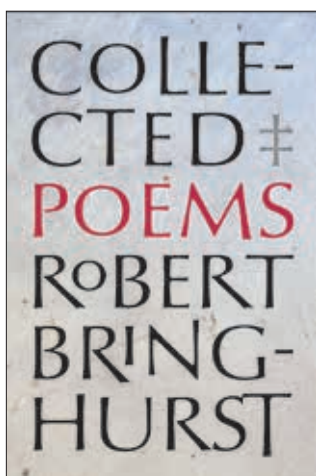
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