



Homegrown trio

Local books are a seasonal favourite for gift givers. Local writers and publishers always have a list of new volumes to help expand the library of a loved one on your list. These books are often loaded with content based in the region, while some are merely entertainment. This city has a stable of poets, novelists, short story writers, biographers, photographers, illustrators, children's story writers, and more so the selection is never scanty.

• *Islands West: Stories from the Coast* – What does a coastal anthology have to do with our area? A great deal if you read the list of selected writers. Tucked in amongst George Bowering, Jack Hodgins, Evelyn Lau, Alice Munro and other seminal Canadian authors is Prince George's own John Harris. His story "Report On the Nanaimo Labour School" was written for his short story compilation *Small Rain* and resurfaces now in this examination of B.C. coastal culture. Editor Keith Harrison has gathered a rich trove of literature for this book, sure to be one of the best selling anthologies in B.C. this year, so just being included is a coup for Harris, long regarded as one of Canada's best short story writers but never breaking into household name sta-

tus. This asserts his place among the very best. And it's a terrific story, too.

• *The Last 300 Miles* – The author is G. Stewart Nash who lives in Montana, but the publisher is PG's Caitlin Press and the subject matter is a fictional drama centring on the Collins Telegraph Line through northern B.C. in the late 1800s. This is a novel with adventure, murder, powerful natural elements, mysterious aboriginals, and a mighty quest to survey the route for a monumental telegraph line. Nash is a surveyor by trade, and spent many years living in the area. He has tried to be historically accurate while weaving this tale. If anything stands out it is the power of the landscape we live in.

• *Sisters Torn* – The author is Cynthia J. Faryon from Victoria, and once again the publisher is Caitlin. This is the true story of her mother and aunt who made a simple promise to each other as children. "I promise I will always look after my sister no matter what, I will never let go of her hand." That was before they were abandoned by their parents, separated by the British adoption system and lost to each other for 65 years. Through boarding homes, orphanages, a world war, and emigration to another hemisphere could not stop the sisters from searching for each other. This book is the story of two little girls, but it is also the story of our social conditions and our family priorities.

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