

3 Jan. '96--THERE! The Fed Ex blonde just now (3:32 p.m.) came to the door and took the copy-edited ms of Bucking the Sun off toward New York. Worked on the ms New Year's Day, y'day, and today, trimming, tightening, fixing words; an astounding amount of small surgery, all the while not doing anything major to the plot or characters. Ticks're off the dawg now, Flannery.

Even the weather turned nice for the occasion. Mostly sunny, a clean washed feel to the air.

4 Jan.--Around 11 this morning, Becky Saletan's assistant Denise Roy called and kiddingly said a mysterious big package had arrived to them at Simon & Schuster. I asked her if it was ticking, if so dive under her desk. No, no, she said, it's fine, the ms looks great and--just then her other line rang and she asked if I could hold a moment. She came back on and in one of the great lines I've ever heard, said "It's the White House, but I can solve it in a second."

Well done, Denise, and after putting the White House on hold briefly to tell me that, she indeed dealt there--the debut of the much-delayed Hillary book is next week. Denise said she and Becky were invited to the White House Xmas party, got their pics taken with the Clintons, fun at last!

On my ms, she was immensely relieved to get it there today rather than tomorrow, Friday, as it's probably the last big spot she's on in the production process, getting the copy-edited version meshed into the already-composited one; says now there's "buckets of time," and she thinks the copy-edited changes can be made in the "keyboarded" (composited) version by Monday.

I spent most of the morning thinking over the Fireflies @ the Parthenon proposal and mulling over possibilities for a next book instead. Am going to have to feel my way into a comfort level with the amount of research Fireflies might take; if there is a more relaxed couple of years' work waiting in my other book ideas or one I can come up with, I'd deeply consider that instead. Back to thinking about it tomorrow, and talk to Liz on Monday.

Also, met my Scribner p'back editor, Sarah Baker, by phone today. Main info, besides that she seems alert and promising to work with, is that HarperCollins' figures (the latest Sarah has, at least) show 101,000 copies of

4 Jan. cont.--Rascal Fair sold in their p'back version, and that Scribner wants to piggyback their Sept. pub'n of the book onto the after-Labor Day Puget Sound mini-tour I'd proposed to Victoria Meyer.

Among day's chores, such as getting new diary notebooks and a new socket for my blinky desk lamp, was the last visit to Bud and Dot Christensen's C-Fresh seafood store on the Edmonds waterfront. A place, and a pair of people, we're going to miss a lot, a weekly-or-oftener stop for us, with splendid fish and crab. The demise of one more small biz, which seems to be happening increasingly in our not particularly large loop of habit patterns.

6 Jan.--Well, wahoo. Phone call late y'day afternoon, Friday, from Victoria Meyer @ S&S publicity with news, possibly almost as unexpected to her as to me, that I'm to be one of 4 Sunday luncheon speakers at the ABA in Chicago in mid-June. The session is "Poetry, Literature & Everyday Life," presided over by the poet laureate

Robert Hass, and the other 3 speakers are Laura Esquivel, Susan Powers, and John Edgar Wideman. S&S had pooh-poohed any need to try to do anything with me at the ABA, so this truly comes as a surprise, another good sign for Bucking the Sun.

Also on the book front, Denise called y'day--even later on a Friday than Victoria--to say I'll get page proofs on Saturday the 13th. That's the day before C and I intended to leave on our trip down the Coast and New Mexico-ward, so this morning we're pushing that departure date off to Tuesday the 16th, using up the days of slack we'd left in the Calif. coast part of the schedule. Worth it, we two workaholic word professionals agree, to get the pages handled properly and fired back to S&S.

8 Jan.--Snow chaos in NY. Now to see whether the big storm screws up the delivery of the Bucking pp., as per above.

Called Becky Saletan, who sounded almost relaxed, having used her snow day to go see Persuasion and have a drink at the Oak Room of the Plaza; she'll check on the pp. outlook tomorrow. I spent y'day (Sunday) afternoon working up bgnd material on the book as requested by Victoria Meyer, and much of this morning on setting out Chicago logistics (i.e., a floor badge for Carol, arrange plane tix so we

8 Jan. cont.--can fly there together, etc.) for her. Also talked to Liz @ home, both snowed-in and with an achy back, and told her I want another day or 2 before talking over the next book with her, wanting to frame up another idea for us to consider, i.e. Keeping the Days. Liz had the news that Richard Green is leaving Lynn Pleshette's agency for UTA; we agreed, after I brought up my current discontent with Richard's hip-shooting style that brought the threat of tortious-interference suit from Pac Rim guys, that Liz'll send Lynn galleys of Bucking and I'll talk with her then, about representing me or not. Some drawbacks to Lynn, who's more quiescent than Richard was, but I don't count on Hollywood to do much for me and don't want it doing stuff to me, a la this lawyering set off by Richard's way of doing things.

Weather here is mild, high 50's, C and I walked the n'hood just after dawn and then did 4 rounds of the park, and I'm now about to get on my Nordic tracker. A last note, on the recent mail: letter out of nowhere from a Santa Fe geologist named Frederick Berry saying his reading of Mariah Montana and Jick's decision in it, has "helped confirm" for him the decision to have his ranch go to the Nature Conservancy Good oh.

11 Jan.--Lo and behold, my next book is going to be not Fireflies @ the Parthenon, but Keeping the Days, a more contemporary novel closer to my own voice and experience. Thinking over the tricky research and racial delineation needed, Fireflies more and more felt like a book I'd rather accumulate toward, while the Keeping synopsis as I worked on it felt more familiar, doable, with chances to cut loose in language and dealing with the known country and current times Interrupted this so C and I could walk Green Lake @ about dawn, which was 7:48 this morn. Lovely day, pastel clouds, mild; will try to get outside some.

15 Jan.-- A very large day. Finished the page proofs at 10 this morning, and meanwhile rough b-&-ws of the revised cover were pumping in on the fax. Have also chored, done some packing, and as I type this--3:25--I'm being photo'd by Kim Zumwalt for Nick O'Connell's Seattle mag article. Tomorrow, by god, into the car and gone.

15 Jan. cont.-- The pages were reasonably clean, thank~~u~~
heavens, although "reasonably" means that every so often
there would be little hiccups of typos as compositors
changed shifts. And I made maybe 8-10 changes, in fixing
clunky usages and catching bits of illogic or error and,
I think best of all, spotting all the "half-mile of slide"
references I ~~u~~ had and changing one of them to, "Scattered
across the sunlit slope of caving earth..."

19 Jan. '96--San Luis Obispo, and I'm told that across the continent I have a new book deal. At 8:30 this morning I called S&S to check in, make sure the cover art got sent ahead to San Diego and so on, and Becky brightly said, "We have another book deal!" Liz is at home today and her number is busy, so I'll need to keep persevering here before we leave the Quality Suites and keep wending our way south. Other good news from Becky, good booksellers! quotes from Carla Cohen @ Politics & Prose and Paul ^{Ingelm} @ Prairie Lights, with Marg't Maupin about to weigh in from the Tattered Cover.

As to this trip, we've dodged weather so far, making it over the Siskiyou on the 17th just after lunch and right as the cabin-up requirement had been lifted.

--Bulletin from Liz: the book deal is same advance as on Bucking the Sun, \$260,000, with performance bonus if Bucking the Sun ~~sells~~ sells really well--\$50,000 at some benchmark (which I'll learn from Liz when she's back in the ~~off~~ office on Monday) or, beyond that, dollar per dollar on what the book earns (i.e., she said, if it makes \$400,000 I get another \$140,000). And as Carol stipulates to put down in here, all this on the basis of a hasty one ~~page~~ page synopsis for Keeping the Days. So, good news today, sitting here looking out over the courtyard and fountain of this California-Spanishy hostelry here in the town where the motel was supposedly invented.

A quick summary of our trip so far: overnight with Dick and Dee Brown in Eugene the first night out, the 16th and then timing our trip across the Siskiyou summit for midday (after a good lunch at bakery on the square in Ashland, still cute as a ~~bug~~ bug). Our intentions to stay in Willows were obliterated by truck roars from I-5--all the motels are right there in high decibel range--and so we braced ourselves back into the car and went on to Williams, where the elderly but ~~kempt~~ kempt Stage Stop Motel, run by an India Indian woman, served fine, and supper at Louis Cairo's was decent steaks, with the most heavily garlicked "Louis bread" we'd ever encountered. The storm systems keep cycling in onto the coast from Seattle to the northern Calif. coast, so y'day we stuck to I-5 down the Central Valley until

19 Jan. cont.--cutting over to here. Goodlooking oldish town, San Luis O, seeming to ~~squirm~~ squirm through the hills around. Took a back route to get here, rte 41 from Kettleman City to Templeton, and when we swapped driving at a place called the Jack Ranch Cafe near Cholame, there was a memorial built around a tree, ~~new~~ memorial to James Dean, who ploughed his Porsche into a truck just east of there. The back road from Cholame was about as twisty and undulating as any we've ever been on, making us wonder if that's what drew Dean to that area.

Other automotive note: we must have travel^ed amid thousands of trucks, semis held up by storm conditions in the Siskiyou, all day of the 17th. At Corning, where there are a couple of immense truck stops, they turned in for the day in fleet numbers, a nearly solid wall of semi^s making that exit and crossing the overpass as we drove on.

23 Jan.--Tucson, @ the Ghost Ranch motel, comfy roomy place we've liked before. This morning, hiked the ~~south~~ north part of the Cactus Forest trail at Saguaro Nat'l Park, good birdwatching and scenery in one of our favorite Southwest spots, one of the few down here that hasn't been chewed up and spat out as 'dobe ticky-tacky development of some kind. Lunch @ ~~the~~ La Parilla Suiza, then a nap, then the downtown walking tour, and supper ahead at Cafe Terra Cotta (after last night's at another favorite from our '91 stint here, El Minuto). As Carol ~~said~~ said, local knowledge helps Tucson a lot.

We pulled in here y'day just before 4:30, after leaving San Diego @ 8:20, and to our surprise, driving thru some slush and roadside snow in the mountains east of SD, @ Tecate Pass and others. The San Diego stay went well, although we always have to be aware that when we get in a car with Len DePew it turns into a major auto tour. Among the suggestions Pat and Len had lined out and waiting for us was some birdwatching and hiking at the Audubon's Silverwood reserve east of the city, and that worked wonderfully--Cooper's hawk, California thrasher, California towhee, pinon jay... And we had a fine dinner at Cafe Eleven in Hillcrest--for \$8.95 each, on the super-saver menu Pat and Len of course knew about.

23 Jan. cont--And when we reached San Diego, a computer-generated copy of the new Bucking the Sun cover was waiting, FedExed to the DePews. Good warm tones, a great improvement over the first try. While we were @ Pat and Len's, I doped out, with C's help, the timing and amounts of the Keeping the Days advance: \$40,000 on signing, \$80,000 in Jan. '97, \$60,000 in '98, and \$80,000 on completion and publication. Called these in to Liz, she said she didn't think there'd be any problem. I also, in SD in the Murphy-bed room, rewrote the Rascal Fair catalogue copy for Sarah Baker and edited a sentence off Paul Ingram's exuberant bookseller comment for Bucking. The traveling office, a bit.

27 Jan., Alb'que but about to be Santa Fe--With reasonably good weather in the offing we're going to Santa Fe for the next three nights, then coming back here when a more promising apartment opens up on Tuesday. We've spent the past 2 nights here in the Lincoln Heights apt. complex, which looked pretty good but turns out to ~~have~~ failing, worn-out systems of almost every kind: no hot water in the kitchen ~~and~~ sink, microwave dead, a faucet that spews a fine spray out onto your thigh, etc. All this and the manager's huffy message to her obliging young day-clerk that she shouldn't have ~~to~~ let us pay by check, money order is the coin of the realm here. Anyway, it has served as a port in a storm--almost literally, as there was a brutal wind night before last and much of y'day, wind chill factor down around ten degrees--and I got a lot done y'day, by fax and phone, with Becky on the other end: she sent Bucking the Sun's flap copy (which, deriving as it does from the catalogue ~~copy~~ copy I so heavily rewrote now looks astonishingly good or astonishingly familiar; I changed only one word on Becky's slightly lengthened version) and the review quotes to be chosen for the back of the book--the back-ad, S&S calls it. Carol came up with the idea of using Chuck Robinson's wonderful quote, labeling him as past president of the ABA, and Becky rather liked the notion, saying she'd have to talk to a couple of S&S higher-ups about it. This Sunday, incidentally, is finally her reward for the labors on Hillary's book--it's the #1 best-seller.

I also did a bit of finances from this makeshift

27 Jan. cont--apt. stay, sending Steve Charlston a \$50,000 check to be earning in our Piper J money mkt account while we're traveling; incredible to me that we've reached the point where we sit around a place like this while traveling and deal with a sum like that.

Besides y'day's "office" work and regrouping, we went to the Page One, Too bookstore to check out the prospect for the First Friday gathering of writers they do there every month. Promptly met up with Riley and Betty Parker, busy unboxing many boxes of Western Americana and other rare books; former Santa Fe bookstore owners, they retired for 3 months and then were drawn back into the business by Steve Scott, the P. 1, Too owner (he also has the P. 1 new-book store across the street). They've bought the books the Steins had in their fine rare-books store on the square in Las Vegas, NM, and I think some other retired booksellers stock, so they are setting up quite a collection at P. 1, Too. And if all goes well, we'll merrily join in for the First Friday lunch next Fri. noon.

Dinner last night, under the expert hanging-out tutelage of Frank Zoretich, at the Scola Italian restaurant in the Nob Hill district near UNM, with Frank and his best friends, Steve Brewer who's also a reporter on the Journal and is just having his 3rd Bubba Mabry detective novel published (by St. Martins) and Kelly ~~Brewer~~ Brewer who's assistant managing editor of the other paper, the Tribune, a Scrapps Howard. C and I liked them a lot; quick, funny people as you'd expect of Frank Z's chosen buddies.

So, our plans now--which include nursing Carol's oncoming cold a bit--are to hole up in Santa Fe until the lodgings prospect brightens a bit here, we hope--and re-embark on Alb'que then, next Wed. to ourselves and on Thursday an intended trip to Acoma with Frank Z., the First Fri. hobnobbing and dinner that night with the Brewers again, Steve's birthday. Weather and spirit willing, maybe another Santa Fe stay after that and a visit to the Olsons in LVegas.

30 Jan., Santa Fe but in reverse of the previous entry, about to be Albuquerque--We've holed up here at Fort Marcy compound the past three nights, C riding out her cold. Even before hitting town we visited Pecos Nat'l Mon't, seizing advantage of the fine blue weather on the 27th. The next day, windy though it was, windy though it's evidently often going to be down here, we went to Bandelier and, bundled up like school children on the first snowy day, we walked as far as the first set of cliff dwellings. Pecos and Bandelier are both magical places to us--Pecos, to me, something like a Hong Kong of American history, the plains Indians and the pueblo dwellers lapping into each other there; and Bandelier a stunning piece of geography and habitation--and we're pleased to have been back.

First two nights here, dinner in La Fonda bar as is our wont, people-watching along with respectable food (~~chicken~~ (chicken enchiladas in particular). We noted the flow of Indian jewelry sellers who pass through the bar. No sooner had I said, "I wonder if anybody ever buys their stuff..." than the table next to us, a bulky guy hunched over his drink like it was pretty vital, and blondish woman with him who hadn't seemed to be paying attention to anything, sprung instantly for \$30 to have the one red loop necklace among the surely phony silver and plastic turquoise. Then an amalgamated rancher type, dressed up in a bandanna at his Adams apple and an almost-cattleman-Stetson, bought necklaces for both his greatly younger wife and their little girl. The jewelry sellers, we saw, ply their goods in generational waves; a wonderfully goodlooking 11- or 12-year-old Indian boy was parked at the table next to us the 2nd night, watching the Super Bowl and sorting his jewelry; then ~~was~~ a teenage vendor, likely an older brother, showed up, and we'd seen the night before both an old man and old woman making their passes through y'day mid-morning when we went in the hotel to mail postcards, there most of them were in the lobby, the "old" woman in street clothes ~~and~~ instead of ~~the~~ long Indian dress and looking many years younger than the toothless crone she'd been on the jewelry-vending route through the bar. but not great

And last night, dinner at Casa Sena, good food in classy place but mediocre people-watching in comparison,

30 Jan. cont--we lamented. The monied elderly whites, 2 couples at table next to us, were spending their dinnertime talking about what a louse Walter Matthau (anent the movie Grumpier Old Men, which one of the * guys, an AAer kept mentioning he's an AAer, likely identified with congenitally) reportedly is or how kind and generous he must really be. Better the Indians of La Fonda, mining the tourists.

31 Jan.--A bubble-gum pink stucco townhouse, in a compound called Tierra Antigua; it's got to be the NE hills of Alb'que. This apartment seems as serviceable as the previous one was un-. Roomy (1200 sq. ft), with an imposing view of the Sandia Mtns over the Spanish-village red tile roofs of the compound next door, and miracle of all, this decent little desk-table which was tucked away in a closet. It's still going to be a day of ironing out wrinkles--somebody swiped the off-on turn buttons on the living room ~~lamp~~ lamps, of all damn things, plus the phone book, and the mailbox key doesn't work--but we feel fairly snugly in. C got a sound night's sleep in the wearing-off of her cold, and I haven't come down with any symptoms yet.

The location out here in one of the newer, tonier sections of the city is near the intersection of Eubank and Juan Tabo, with a big Furr's food store in the shopping center across the street and outside the Furr's, my idea of newspaper heaven--the NY Times, Wall St. Jnl and Alb'que Jnl boxes all in a row. Right now C is propped up in the surprisingly good recliner, working her way through the papers while I commence on phone calls, some book thinking, and so on.

Before leaving Santa Fe y'day, we went to the folklife museum and again were charmed by the Girard Collection of toys and figurines and misc. crafts from everywhere; like a wonderful attic. Then lunch at Tomasito's, another favorite; good food and service, and the manager wandering from table to table to make sure everything is OK.

2 Feb.--Snow! We're about the last 2 people in America to get snowed on in this historic winter, but last night a couple of inches here in Duke City. We'll have to see whether we get out for the day's social engagements,

2 Feb. cont--the "First Friday" lunch at P. 1, Too bookstore and dinner w/ Frank Z and the Brewers tonight. The snow itself ~~ix~~ doesn't amount to much, but Juan Tabo Road was a sheet of ice when I walked across the street to Furr's food market for newspapers, milk and strawbs this morning.

Just got off the phone w/ Becky, disposing of a trio of proofreading nits she'd come up with; as Carol remarked, the extraordinary diligence that goes into making a book--these details, a comma insertion in one place and a question about a preposition or not in another and her catch that my reference to "America the Beautiful" was wrong, must have come from her own final read-through, or possibly the in-house proof-reader.

Another note on Bucking: I feel I have enough distance from the writing work, now, to begin reading it as the book it's become, and y'day morn to warm up for some thinking and doodling toward Keeping the Days, I read the short opening chapter of Bucking and liked it fine.

Y'day's doings: met Frank Z. @ his place just past 11:30 and went back to his Nob Hill n'hood on Central for lunch @ Il Vicino, then set off for the escarpment west of the city to the Petroglyphs Nat'l Monument there. The 'glyph park is still rudimentary in admini-~~xxx~~ stration, morphed together from city holdings and federal, and access is only vaguely mapped, but what's more, is mazed into Alb'que's explosive suburban growth, right up to the foot of the escarpment. After Frank gave a couple of tries at wending us in where huge housing developments sat athwart what had been back roads a few months ago, we all voted to give up on "glyphs and head for the little volcanoes that poke up on the benchland atop the escarpment. We scrambled up Vulcan, the biggest, for a grand view of the city and the Rio Grande valley, and the bottom half of the Sandias (clouds down on the topmost). Then to the U. of NM, Frank showing us around campus a bit, C & I ambling thru the nice little archeological museum, and then, ultimately, off to supper with Frank @ Garcia's on west Central, ~~an~~ an okay family-run place w/ New Mexican ~~food~~ "Mexican" food.

3 Feb.--Cold clear day over Alb'que. @ last night's birthday dinner for Steve Brewer @ the Bangkok Cafe on sinful Central, we looked out the window and great fat flakes of snow were swirling down, so we hustled home to our northeast hills. I drove, rapidly as I could on Alb'que's wide dark streets, to get us home before the lane markers were obliterated; Alb'queans are dreadful loose drivers as it is, and I didn't want to contend with them approximating their course any more than they ordinarily do.

Dinner was Thai, pretty good, though nowhere near the league off The Provinces, which we're finding to be the case down here with all manner of food. Exceptions--really good for the money, Cafe Eleven in San Diego and Tomasito's in Santa Fe and El Patio in Mesilla (where I had great fajitas), and the deft and inventive Terra Cotta in Tucson.

8:20 a.m. now, the buttress-like rock upthrusts of the Sandias catching the sun virtually from the south, making silver corrugations against the still-shadowed bulk of the mountain range. The gorgeous view from this apartment--the red-tile roofs of the condo village next door dusted with snow, against the dusky-and-silver Sandias--helps immensely to make this a pleasant apt. stay, so far.

WINTER SLAMS INTO CITY, says this morn's Alb'que Journal headline of y'day's weather, but by late morning the skating-rink streets in this highlands end of town had thawed down to slush, and off we went to the First Friday lunch of writers @ P. 1, Too. More than 30 showed up, surprising Riley Parker who's in charge of the lunches and had to send out for a second batch of sandwiches. Met several people, notably Norman Zollinger, longtime and respected historical novelist down here. Steve B. and Frank Z. showed up, Steve freed from house-sitting his school-less kids by Frank's chivvyng his roomer Jason (who is the younger brother of Steve's wife Kelly; it all gets pretty wound together down here) into babysitting. The writers seemed a congenial bunch, although as Frank noted, despite the new lunch arrangement which puts everybody together at 3 or 4 long tables instead of the old system of a sci fi table, a mystery writers' table, etc.,

3 Feb. cont.--the sci fi writers restlessly sat with the rest of us during the eating, then got up and gravitated into a pod, in Steve's description of them.

After lunch, during our sojourn here at home in the apt. the phone rang and it was Elizabeth Hayes, who's to be the publicity person for Bucking the Sun. We agreed we'll confer by phone next Tues. at noon, working out the bookstore tour and so on. Earlier in the day, I responded to Becky's phone message about small proof-reading questions, as I see I noted in y'day's entry.

5 Feb.--Wonderful weather now, high 50s, blue sky. We took advantage of it for supertime last night by going to the County Line restaurant, north at the base of the Sandias, for barbecue and watching sunset over the Alb'que basin and the city lights beginning to twinkle--Carol said this was the way she first saw Alb'que, as a teenager with her parents when they made their trip on old Route 66 and hit town here at nightfall, and she thought to herself she was in the West now. Told her she's never gotten over it, ~~obviously~~ evidently.

The West and Scotland! The order will be reversed in his book title, but Sat. night we discovered Frank Szasz, married to my Carstensen seminar cohort Margaret O'Connell Szasz, has been researching and writing about that very topic ever since Margaret had an exchange year teaching at the U. of Aberdeen. Frank showed me the conclusion of his epilogue, which says Norman Maclean and I have written in a fashion that our forebears would not be ashamed of. We spent a really enjoyable evening with ~~Frank~~ M. and F., taken by them to their neighborhood favorite, Padilla's Mexican Kitchen, where the service is very fast and the chicken enchiladas with blue corn are very good. The Szaszs! (it's pronounced Sazz, and Margaret says they're often mistaken for a fairly common Hispanic name here, Saiz, which is pronounced as it looks) house is book-laden to an extent that makes ours look barren; Frank's office is more than waist-deep in cardboard boxes of file folders for his book research, besides walls full of books. He writes standing up, a la Hemingway, because of back trouble. Both he and Margaret are very ambitious in their academic works--Frank is a UNM American intellectual historian, also teaching history of religion and history of science, and Margaret is teaching Indian history,

5 Feb. cont--as well as writing a 3-volume history of Indian education from colonial times to I think the New Deal, as well as editing a series on "cultural brokers" (such as, she said, Jim Ronda's work on Wm. Clark, though Clark in essence was a failed cultural broker, ending up only on one side). The Szaszs reported that the UNM history dept. is badly split over hiring to replace Gerald Nash, who's retired; the westerners want a western historian, while the U.S. historians want an Americanist. (Nash was both.) Frank said there's in fact a cultural split in the dept. between East and West, the East Coast-trained historians looking down on western history. Ah, academia.

Y'day, Sunday, I took delighted advantage of the superb Page One bookstore (open 7 a.m.-midnight, 7 days a week!) and had the Sun. NY Times and Alb'que Journal here by 20 past 7. Lazy couple of hrs of newspaper reading, our idea of a good time, and then we drove the dozen or so miles across town to the Rio Grande Nature Center, both for a walk through the park's bosque along the river and some great wildfowl viewing from the Center's marvelous glassed area and outside wall-with-slots; treats for us were the gloriously designed wood ducks, and a type I think we've not seen before, ring-necked ducks which don't have an identifiable ring there but a prominent white one around their bluish bill. Then lunch of yogurt and fruit back at the apartment (oops, nearly forgot; before leaving the Rio Grande bottomland we drove through the fancy n'hood where Tony Hillerman lives; a mixed bag of architecture), a nap, more newspaper perusing, and a walk of the Academy Hills Park and n'hood across the Juan Tabo-Lubank intersection from us, and as mentioned, onward to supper at The County Line.

Details of the stay here: C says to note than it's now easier to establish voice mail (messaging service with US West, which we set up pronto last week for Simon & Schuster calls) than it is to get a mailbox key that'll work--two tries at a functionable key for the set of boxes in the drive-circle here haven't yet been successful.

--And a full-page ad in y'day's Alb'que Journal,

5 Feb. cont.--for the New Mexico Indian Gaming Assoc'n, with the headline IN A WAR OF WORDS WE NEED YOUR HELP TO WIN and going on: "The letters and editorials are flying fast and furiously; Pro-Indian Gaming letters, anti-gaming letters and everything in between...by fax, the US Mail and delivered by the guys wearing the spiffy brown suits. And it's a fact...if you don't let your legislators know how you feel about the issue of Indian Gaming, it may disappear, much the way the buffalo did." ~~Is~~ Is this a great country, or what?

6 Feb.--Another pretty day, a little wig of cloud on the crest of the Sandias but otherwise blue, blue. At noon I'm to confer by phone with Elizabeth Hayes of S&S publicity about Bucking's booktour--in essence, schedule my life from late April to late June--but we intend to get out into the warm weather this afternoon to Old Town. Y'day we hiked for an hour on the Pino Canyon trail not far from the tramway up the Sandias, with views back over all of Alb'que and interesting high desert/base of the mountains around us; much more varied foliage here than in say the Santa Catalinas @ Tucson, probably interzonal--what seemed to be bullpine and juniper mixed in with cactus and some scrub oak.

Frank Z. came over for dessert when he left work @ the Journal @ 7. His Monday story had been about a group of women carpentering a women's shelter @ Laguna Pueblo; I asked if he'd met the future Mrs. Zoretich while covering the story, and he said no, but it had crossed his mind that he maybe ought to do a series on handywomen--a plumber to get his plumbing fixed up, a carpenter for new shelves, etc. Not the least of the astonishments about Frank Z. was to see him with a tie on, evidently office policy @ the Journal.

⁶⁹ Feb.--Acoma yesterday, and now the slow turn toward home, by being on the road again after we leave this apartment stint on Sunday. C's stubborn cold at last let up, ^{while} I haven't entirely come down with one, and we've gotten fond of a lot about Alb'que, helped of course by the exceptionally fine weather, into the mid-60s y'day. With demon tour guide Frank Z. @ the wheel of our Honda, away we went west by 9:30 y'day morn, out I-40 and then

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Feb. cont.—a dozen or more miles down a side road to Acoma. Even as prepared as we were by having read about it, and having imagined it from Cather's novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, the mesa-top pueblo is surprising.

For one thing, the rock is not a Monument Valley red but a more austere tan. The tour procedure is: \$6/person, a \$10 fee for cameras (and insistence right there at the cash register that the hand-dated red sticker be put on the camera), and the schoolbussy shuttle ~~take us~~ hauls a group (14 of us in our random bunch) to the top of the mesa, a beefy young Acoma man driving and an almost equally square-set young Acoma woman perching on a ledge into the dashboard just in front of the gear shift (a floor-stick), whether inadvertent or not a seat just her width. As the shuttle bus ground its way up the fairly steep piece of road just before the lip of the mesa, the driver and the woman tour guide began exchanging secretive smiles, whether about some earlier joke of her having to go to work now, or here's-one-more-bunch-of-whities-to-put-up-with, or something old and tribal, who knows. The young woman did the tour spiel quite well, some Acoma dimensions as she gave them:

—The pueblo is 70 acres, the mesa top 367' high, 450 homes up there but only 13 families year-round, about 30 people; other use, she said, is as "summer homes," and at festivals. The youngest daughter inherits, under the Acoma system, because odds are that ~~keeper~~ provides the longest span of keeping property in the family. (Besides the pueblo, there're 5,000 in the tribe, effectively in 14 clans now.)

—On the 3/4 mile winding tour of the pueblo, some definite "sky city" details of living up there on sheer rock: generations of privies down on ledges of the mesa, one modest cottonwood tree, propane tanks at corners of the adobe dwellings (and whatever it's a mark of, padlocked steel-mesh cages around those upright propane cylinders; inasmuch as no one from the outside world can drive up there, the little pueblo population at some time must have hit a problem of thou-shalt-not-steal-thy-neighbor's-bottled-gas), and all the water hauled up in 55-gallon drums. (A leathery little ~~old~~ old guy was carefully tipping the last dregs out of a barrel he'd just hauled up in the back of his pickup—shades

8 Feb. cont.--of us on the Blackfeet Rez, I thought--as we walked past, and when he looked up and asked where we're from, the woman behind us said England. "How's the queen?" he cheerfully asked.) Doubtless most astounding, though, is the cemetery, said to be 40' deep (with layers of generations buried there, and the last spaces now saved for the people living there in the pueblo) and a couple of hundred feet across, all the soil for it carried up the 300-some stone steps by the Acoma women. I assume this must've been done after the Spanish conquest and the coming of the church, so it was accomplished in a comparatively short segment of Acoma history; proof, though, that a century or so of baskets of earth adds up.

--The church facing out onto the cemetery, and to the rimrock-and-mesa land, is a stunner, almost other-worldly. The air chilly inside, even on the lovely day of mid-60s temperature; a pink confessional halfway along one wall, a bit like an odd gay phone booth; and clay candle-holders spaced along the wall like tidy little birdnests. Overhead, the effort and misery and faith that came with the Spanish, massive timbers (these are modern replica-replacements) brought from Mount Taylor. As Frank Z. remarked, part of the Acoma experience is the reminder of just how tough the Spaniards were, somehow capturing this pueblo, fighting their way in armor up that much height of rock.

Interrupted this to go to the compound's office for the Fed Ex left there y'day, press kit bio done by Elizabeth Hayes, then left voicemail for a few fixes--such as mentioning the title of Bucking the Sun, and using Chuck Robinson's quote instead of one from older books--by way of Denise Roy switching me to the extension of Elizabeth's assistant Erin Marut: such is the modern phone game of tag.

10 Feb.--Fine warm weather promised again today, and at mid-morning we'll head for a trail along the base of the Sandias again. Hiked there twice y'day, in 67-degree comfort, and saw much birdlife--western bluebirds, scrub jays, Townsend's solitaires, and a downy woodpecker working diligently. Then last night, back to the County Line restaurant for farewell supper with Frank Z., peerless guide that he's been.

10 Feb. cont.--And this morning, laundry is being done and after this entry I'll begin winnowing and packing the road-office material; tomorrow we go north, to visit the Olsens in Las Vegas and then fetch up in Santa Fe for the first of 3 nights. This Tierra

Antigua apt. has served us very well, roomy, mostly quiet (particularly at night), and always the view of the Sandias, which just now have high streaky clouds above them like brushstrokes.

Phone flurry with Simon & Schuster y'day, when C & I came back from our afternoon hike about 3 and there still was no FedEx package with my readers copies of Bucking. I called to ask for the tracing number to begin tracking it down, and found, as Becky's mortified assistant Denise, the official apologizer who got vast practice in it during their Hillary-book adventure, put it, "Ivan, you're a victim of internal change." In a penny-wise pound-foolish regulation, the S&S staff's use of FedEx etc. has been tightened up (the staff immediately has begun skirting the internal control by resorting to a Fed Ex outlet across the st. from

Rockefeller Center) and my packet didn't get sent to arrive here by y'day as promised, but ~~will~~ Monday instead. Arranged w/ Denise to send us a duplicate package (by way of the FedEx guerrilla base across the street from her) @ Santa Fe, and while I was trying to contrive ways for the rental office here to trans-ship the original package to us somewhere, C sensibly noted that we're driving back through here on the freeway next Wednesday anyway on the route to Socorro, so we'll just divert by for it.

Further note on our Feb. 8 excursion: it turned into a doubleheader of sightseeing, as outings w/ Frank Z.

tend to. After the Acoma tour--topped off, so to speak, by Frank's notion that we clamber down the mesa's 300-some stone steps, using the ancient handholds hollowed into the stone walls; he was right, it was a wonderfully memorable thing to do--and lunch in the town of Grants, off we went on about a 100-mile diversion, to El Morro Nat'l Monument, the Hispanic version of Independence Rock on the Oregon Trail, but much older in its inscription history: in 1604 the white passers-by began incising versions of "paseo por aqui" into the base of the Half Dome-like cliffs of

10 Feb. cont.--El Morro. So, about 250 years of inscriptions--not just Spanish administrators, but U.S. camel corps officers, at least one of whom later died in the Civil War, and also the remarkable natural spout marks where rainwater collects atop the monolith and then pours down the 150' or so of stone wall into a pool.

14 Feb.--South toward home, in this big L-shaped trip. In about 45 min. we leave here, Ft. Marcy Compound in Santa Fe, for Socorro and birdwatching @ Bosque del Apache south of there, this dusk.

This second Santa Fe stint, 3 days each time, has been, as C says, a knockout. Y'day the high twisty road to Truchas, a horizon-top town so magnificently dilapidated there were textures and contexts everywhere for C's camera; and then Ortega's weaving shop @ Chimayo and a striking white wool vest for C, Valentine's Day gift, and a great lunch @ Rancho de Chimayo restaurant, where I had splendid tortilla soup. The day before, Feb. 12, was a 250-miler just knocking around, as we went to Abiquiu to see Georgia O'Keeffe's Ghost Ranch--a great backdrop of red and tan monoliths, although we actually liked the expansive view to the south, huge timbered mesas and vistas all around, from the rise before going down into Ghost Ranch's bottomland, better than her site--and then decided to keep going and make the loop, up to Tierra Amerilla, east on the 80-mile drive across the Tusas Mountains to Taos, spectacular expanses of views, to the San Juans etc. in Colo. and the high-country feel both of us like so much, atop ridge-like geography that's actually 7-8,000 feet high. Good grub at Tomasito's that night, and our other 2 nights we've divined how to best eat at La Fonda's bar, split a Salad Grande--it lives up to its name, heaped with excellent pricey lettuces and other greens, tomatoes and artichoke hearts--and a chicken enchilada.

So, a grand stay in Santa Fe, set up for us upon arrival by the waiting package of Bucking the Sun reader's copies, with the second-stab cover design looking exquisite.

16 Feb.--Las Cruces, second time on this trip, and later today Tucson again. Bosque del Apache has been our main event since leaving northern New Mexico, the first visit on the 14th when we watched the sandhill cranes come in from the fields at dusk--long glides of flight, with their thin stilty legs stretched straight behind them--by the thousands, to roost for the night in the refuge's central shallow pond. Next ~~day~~ day @ mid-day, the snow geese similarly came in, in even greater numbers, Vs and white pencil lines against the clear blue sky, arriving for a couple of hours as we watched and lunched. B d A, about 90 sq. mi. of refuge built by the CCC, produced a terrific bunch of wildlife for us. Carol's list: northern pintails, Chinese pheasants, redtail hawks, bufflehead, coots, red-wing blackbirds, avocet, northern shovelers, Canada geese, great blue herons, great egret, cormorants, a roadrunner, crows, a pair of coyotes, 2 bald eagles, mallards, 8 or 9 deer in a bunch on the trail loop we hiked, porcupine high up in a tree, a couple of hummingbird nests, and of course the two great flocks, sandhill cranes and snow geese, 20,000 or so each.

Green chile cheesbburgers @ the Owl Cafe in cross-roads village of San Antonio on our way back from the refuge that night, and last night back to El Patio in Mesilla, for combo beef/chicken fajitas, in what is actually a more attractive restaurant (vivid white-washed walls and the beams-&-crosshatch-sticks ceiling varnished to give it a bold luster instead of trying to look aged) than any we've been in in Santa Fe.

Minutes-old sun is pouring thru the window of the Comfort Inn here, the Organ Mtns jaggedly dramatic, as we start to gather ourselves for the swing west toward home.

27 Feb.--We pulled up to our front door about 1:15 last Saturday afternoon, the 24th, after 6700 miles. The first several on Sat. morning, leaving Eugene, were the worst of the trip, on black ice. Gradually we got beyond it, down the Willamette Valley to more sunshine on the Interstate; the day before, C drove us over the Siskiyou summit in icy slush--as at the start of the trip, we just missed the chain-up requirement for getting over the S'yous.

Picking up at the Feb. 16 diary entry, our trip schedule

27 Feb. cont.--then evolved into 3 nights in Tucson, @ the Wayward Winds Motel, an impeccable place with mockingbirds and big old eccentric rooms that we liked a lot, particularly the 2nd 2 nights when the desk staff (one of them, Mark Cannon, is a fan of my books) was able to move us to #38, a suite (i.e., w/ a venerable kitchen unit-in-a-metal-cabinet) at the back of the place away from the Miracle Mile traffic; next, a supremely disappointing night in Wickenburg @ the Rancho Grande Motel, a place we thought we knew--this time, instead of a kitchen unit on the east side toward the Hassayampa River, all that was available was a room in the middle unit on the west, which was a clumsy space, ill-lit, a receptacle of the town's considerable traffic noise, and most unworkable of all, the air-conditioning wasn't on (although the heat was, in an already stuffy room) at that time of year to white-noise out the traffic; onward then, navigating by the weather map which showed cloud and rain coming to the Southwest, to Palm Springs, where to our surprise we were able to get 2 nights in the comfortable old place we'd stayed before, the Villa Capri run by retired Canadians (Victoria, B.C.), Germaine & Ben Vivian; then a night @ the Marriott @ the Berkeley Marina, a terrific site but a mediocre room; and our finale on the road, taking a \$150-a-night suite @ the Valley River Inn in Eugene.

The Tucson stay yielded 3 fine morning hikes in Catalina State Park, getting there minutes after it opened each morning @ 7 and having the Sutherland Trail to ourselves; and good meals @ La Parilla Suiza, a couple of blocks away from the Wayward Winds motel room. Weather was iffy by the time we got to Palm Springs, but we managed to do the loop @ the Coachella Preserve, out Thousand Palms Road from Indio; and good meals @ the Blue Coyote. Ditto the suppers @ Skate's at the Berkeley Marina and the restaurant in the Valley River Inn.

So, much good stuff, scenically and gustatorily, on the big trip. Since coming home, I've begun dealing with Scribner's intentions for the new Rascal Fair cover and looked over the Big Sky Journal's excerpt from Bucking the Sun, as well as pushing pieces of paper here and there on my revisited desk. We've even socialized--

27 Feb. cont.--with Bill & Carelyn Reeburgh, (dinner @ the Provinces, sensationally put together by Ken Lee himself emerging from the kitchen), here from UCal Irvine and Fairbanks respectively, still trying to work out their marital conundrum of Bill's perfect job in the geosciences dept. @ UC-I and Carelyn's antipathy to the LA area. And there was Bill Clinton's visit to Shoreline Community College, which we first knew of as we drove past the gate on our way home from the trip on Sat. and saw the welcoming banner; we watched the doings on KING-TV that night and thought Shoreline's students and faculty did wonderfully in shmoozing with the Prez.

March 5, Cannon Beach--In splendid room 206 of The Waves, looking out over the mouth of Ecola Creek and the seastacks north along the coast, on the 4th of our "3-day stay." We already had some of our stuff into the car this morning, and had gone for a beach walk almost to Tolovana in a break in the weather, when I began usefully mulling the ABA talk in Chicago, and C asked if I really wanted to go home now that my head was in that gear. We're apparently learning more about whim, as we decided to stay on and I sat down to take notes for an hour, and now will try catching up on the diary while we wait out high tide and the stiff showers that keep passing through.

We got home 10 days ago and I spent last week trying to herd the Scribner p'back Rascal Fair cover away from the proletarian-art example the art director came up with and ratcheting the easternmost portion of the Bucking booktour down from 8 days to 6. We did grab the good weather of last Wed. and went up to the Skagit wildfowl refuge, gorgeous clarity to Mt. Baker and the Olympics. Ann and Marshall Nelson, keepers of our mail during our Southwestern sojourn, came back from Hawaii on Thursday, so C and I began dealing with the mounds of that, and invited Ann and Marsh to supper Fri. night to hear their tales of sprawling in the sun. Then into the car Sat. morning, the weather bright and promising, for this ocean fix. The beach has been grand--we've eked in good long walks every day, despite the stormy turns of weather--but the area was hard-hit by the winter's floods; roads closed, and long maundering detours, from just beyond Longview to Clatskanie, and from here to Nehalem Bay. The big closure hereabouts is along Neahkahnie Mtn--the ~~h~~ highway dept. barrier is at the bridge by the Oswald West St. Park parking lot, so we were able to get that far and hike down through the big trees of Oswald West. And y'day we did drive around, 35 or so mi., to reach Nehalem Bay, briefly hike that favorite beach, then sightsee the houses of Manzanita, a place we'd happily try to live if we had a couple more simultaneous lives to lead.

March 21--It took me until y'day, i.e. about 3 weeks since we arrived home, to maul through the accumulated mail, phone calls, taxes, pension plan figures and other desk chores. This morning I've managed to set up files for segments of the booktour and so feel a little more orderly about that. For all of my plowing through the tasks and paper, and C's help on it, there's still a white field of file cards on the auxiliary desk at my right and on the financial affairs desk, the Bucking detritus. May be some daylight in sight next week, when I want to get down to thinking about the ABA speech and Keeping the Days. In any case, we take a break from this on tomorrow & Sat., when we're going to the Juan de Fuca Cottages and Dungeness Spit.

Simon & Schuster seems to be doing its job on publicity and marketing, a lot of fiendish attention to detail the same as we do in this household. The boss of trade books, Carolyn Reidy, for example got hold of the Bucking broadside that's to go out to 250 favored booksellers and

questioned to Becky and me whether we really wanted it to be the 1st couple of grafts of the book (we did), and had the type and color of ink redone. Meanwhile the first couple of reviews have been middling, Kirkus saying the characters aren't memorable and I ain't Steinbeck (hey, I knew that!), PW saying the characters are memorable but the plot is contrived. But PW ends up giving it a star, "this is still vintage Doig," and so on. Booksellers and S&S's savvy and push are the hope on this one, so we'll soon see.

Weather's been chilly. C and I have done some outside work, and had one glorious afternoon when we could sit on the patio in the sun during a gardening break.

March 26--To my disgruntlement, I'm still mauling through chores, but there was just now a brightening phone call from Becky, saying a gorgeous first copy of Bucking the Sun is sitting on her desk. She said it was the first good thing that'd happened in her day (this was about 5:20 NY time!), which had featured a "brutal" editorial board meeting where 2 of her book proposals got worked over. She reported, too, that the Bay Area sales rep Bev Langer was in her office looking at the book and when Becky said she hoped the cover won't scuff, Bev said she thinks they won't sit still long enough to scuff. From her lips to God's ear, right?

28 March--Beautiful blue day, and chilly and windy; I've just made one of my customary reconnaissances up the road to the top of the bluff, and while the cloudless day is tempting, it's too blowy to try an Ebeys Landing hike. A walk in the city after the morning warms up a bit, instead.

Rising and converging, everything, at last. Y'day brought the first printed copy of *Bucking the Sun*, and it's an exquisite production job, the best on any of my books since *This House of Sky*. The off-white cover with its 1930s Tom Craig art "vignetted into a circle"--i.e., sun-shape--is striking and inviting; what in the world were any of us thinking of with that first cover candidate, dark and jangling? There's to me a really surprising attention to details by Simon & Schuster, which after all is one of the commercial colossi of publishing: the spine of the book has classy inset silver lettering and boxing, the cover spine has a beautiful little repeat of the cover's sun-circle of illustration, the "also by" p. now magisterially lists my fiction and non-fiction in distinct categories, the back cover ("back-ad," as I've learned it's called in-house at S&S, as that "also by" p. is called the "ad card") has a careful geographic array of reviewers' quotes (which Becky compiled and I helped in selecting) on my previous books, plus a blurb by Chuck Robinson as past prez of the ABA (an idea C or I came up with and S&S went for); even the author's mug shot, C's backyard profile shot of me, evidently got some darkening of its background and is far and away the best print of that shot we've ever seen. Mirabile dictu, they even remembered to give C the credit line.

So, the book as artifact seems perfectly fine. Now to see how it does as a book.

C and I had a spur-of-the-minute dinner at the Provinces last night to celebrate the book's birth; champagne chicken and wild basil prawns seemed elegantly appropriate. Also y'day, I express-mailed the 4 signed copies of the next book contract to S&S, thereby triggering the \$40,000 1st installment of the advance. The downside of dealing with a juggernaut like S&S is their Frankensteinian contracts, combos of boilerplate and new ~~razzmatiaz~~ razzmatazz about electronic rights and transcriptions. C and I spent a weekend day comparing this contract with *Bucking's*, noting down any changes of language, and then I flash-markered

28 March cont.--a copy ^{for} ~~me~~ Marshall Nelson and listed my questions. Marsh, who's at the cutting edge of new-technology questions as one of the leading intellectual properties lawyers, is so busy with clients like TCI that I'm sheepish about having him tend to my little contractual crossword puzzles, but he got back to me Tues. afternoon toward the end of one of his juggle-everything days and parsed through the questionable grafts for me. Not surprisingly, the electronic rights clause is the most arcane, in Marsh's opinion possibly giving S&S a say (in the form of "first right of refusal") in TV and movie ~~rights~~ channels of release besides commercial broadcast and customary theatre booking--i.e., shows on demand on a phone line or cable tv, the direction this stuff seems to be heading. I relayed that to Liz, who was agently unruffled (although there's also the distinct possibility that she doesn't get this electronic stuff nearly to the extent Marsh does) and whose job after all is ^{to} ~~aim~~ wrestle the publisher about how we construe ~~the~~ such rights when the issue ever comes up. Zanyly enough, the one piece of contract I ended up getting changed involves Liz. The new contract had dropped the lingo which gives the author the right to tell the publisher that his agent no longer has the authority to consent for the author in questions that come up. That raised an alarm with me, and Marsh definitely thought I ought to do something about it. It turned out, natch, that agents have scotched that lingo; as Liz told me, it'd come up financially--the publisher paying the agent who then pays the writer--with "people going crazy" in the middle of deals. I laughed and said, You mean writers, don't you. I made the point to her that as far as I was concerned she and I were in literary love forever, but if she ever sold the agency to some Generation X slacker in the year 2016, I needed the right to ~~reconsider~~ reconsider that blanket-consent clause. Liz surprised the hell out of me by saying, humorously I think, "Like Leigh Feldman, you mean!" Leigh, who has purportedly handled magazine rights (zilch on my previous books, until Big Sky Journal practically came begging to her for a Bucking excerpt this time) and audio rights (which I ended up intervening in with Audio Press and bettering my royalties by umpteen thousands of dollars), is indeed my least favorite fixture in Liz's office, though I don't think I've ever complained to Liz about her. ~~and so on and so on~~

28 March cont.--(Evidently I don't have to put it in so many words; as C points out, Liz's profession is reading other people's reactions.) I responded something like Hey, that name never passed my lips, Elizabeth; but in any case, Liz agreed to my dabbling in the change-of-ownership phrase I wanted. Now watch, as Leigh--who is starting to represent a few writers--goes on to become the Kathy Robbins or Andrew-the-Jackal of the future.

Other worlds: Andy Rockne showed up unannounced, Monday noon I think it was, with 120 wintergreen plants and did the planting he'd scheduled for the previous Tuesday; I take this more whimsically than I used to, as the previous guy we hired for such work took to not showing up at all. On other chores, C and I have both managed to buy new clothes for the San Francisco and Chicago booktrail gigs; also, she's inventoried our stash of my books and I'm offering some sets to dealers, in an effort to contain the book-burgeoning around here. (Three came in y'day, including Bucking.) And I managed to make what is in essence a \$500 thank-you to Mary Jane DiSanti at the Country Book Shelf in Bozeman, giving her 2 doz. signed copies of Heart Earth, mailed off y'day. We're chipping away.

3 April--Phone has been blessedly quiet so far this week, and a good thing too, as it took me virtually all of y'day find and this morning to sweat the ABA talk into creation. I still writing speeches abominable work, heavy, slow.

The other progress of the day, in this drive to get things set up before the dizziness of the booktour, came just now in Bucking as I read my way to a couple of scenes--logical string of scenes, more to the point--that I think will make good bookstore readings.

15 April--Mid-month now, of a choring time, the edgy interim before a bookstour starts. A week from Wed., C and I are off to San Francisco, which at least should be a good place to start the book season. (Beyond that, to the dismay of Elizabeth Hayes who leads the S&S ~~tr~~ publicity trio assigned to me, there's been a falter at the intended first stop of the "eastern" tour, Chicago, where Waterstone's evidently was so do-nothing that the Elizabeth felt she had to cancel me there.) And there ought to be a good heart to this week, Wed., when we

15 April cont.--mark our 31st anniversary; going to see Arcadia @ ACT, with dinner somewhere nearby beforehand. Friday evening, Linda Miller visits from D.C.; Sunday, we meet Linda Bierds & Sydney Kaplan for lunch and a zoo visit.

Some of the stuff of the past few weeks:

--500 broadsides of Bucking's opening grafts, which I signed up 100 per day last week, latest in the S&S marketing endeavors which, I remind myself amid all this, I said I wanted from this publisher.

--A quickie short piece for Hungry Mind Review, in exchange for which they're supposed to list my booktour schedule in their next issue.

--Sampler of Ft. Peck damworker quotes and a chronology of the dam project, done to enhance the Bucking press kit.

--Immediately after getting the ABA 10-min. talk written I whaled on into the full-length speech to be given @ Boulder next Sept., feeling I didn't dare come back from the booktour, Montana etc. for the mid-summer start of my summer and have that speechwriting looming.

--Decision on the Rascal Fair p'back cover, which kept going around and around as the Scribner art dept. did not want to let go of Diego ^Rivera-ish artist Owen Smith despite my outright telling them, when the figures in his first cover attempt all looked blocky and Central American that I didn't think his style fit the book. An effort then to have his figure of the fiddler predominate so alarmed me, in the revise sketch, that I decided we were losing ground on what this guy could do and told them to go back to his original notion, with slimmer, more European figures of Anna, Isaac, and Adair. Back comes the new version, those three are much improved but this time Angus looks callow, geeky, and woebegone. So I led my editor Sarah Baker through Angus's physiog detail by detail, she professed to see what I was talking about in comparing the interesting speculative expression on the original Angus (best thing, along with the fiddler figure, in that first cover try) with the woebegone one and thinks it can be cosmeticked okay by the artist; I told her I utterly did not want the whole thing redone in an effort to fix Angus's face, recalling the Heart Earth p'back experience w/ Penguin where every time we tried to get Linda Tippetts to improve the figure of my mother, the surrounding landscape and sky got worse.

15 April cont.--Besides the broadside signing, I've also lately done a couple of hundred sheets for the limited edition of *Bucking* that Chuck Robinson is doing at his Bellingham bookstore.

--And what else. Y'day gradually turned nice, so we got annual flowers into the half dozen big redwood pots on the patio, I did some transplanting here and there on the rest of the property, and the veg garden finally looked a bit more hopeful. (This spring in my perpetual effort to try grow sugar peas, I lost an entire row of them to combined assault by raccoons, towhees, snails and slugs.)

18 April--To celebrate our 31st anniversary, last night we went to Stoppard's "*Arcadia*" @ ACT, a very fine production, the wordcraft backed up by some bravado performances--Frank Corrado as Bernard, and a Portland youngster named Winslow Corbett wonderful as the girl genius Thomasina--and the rest of the cast very fine except for the easiest role, Lady Oroom; the actress, Suzanne Bouchard, has the requisite Diana Riggish looks but evidently was having an off-night, possibly even blowing some lines at one point. Anyway, everybody else including Stoppard were dandy, and so were we. Faced with the traffic of a Sonics game, we went early to the W. Roy area--likely the last play we'll see at that old theatre, which we're fond of for its intimacy, before ACT moves--and after scouting around for a dinner place chose Vince's, a n'hood Italian place which boasts it's been there since '57, and the food was good. Coincidentally I'd been going through my diary and letters ~~of~~ for details of our Bob Marshall backpack trip, for possible use in *Keeping the Days*, and told C over dinner what an astounding year that one ('77) just before *This House of Sky* now looks like--friends' marriages spinning out of control and crashing around us, immense work in this household (I wrote 3/4 of *Sky* and ten or so magazine pieces), travel, work on the house; riproaring.

As for now, I'm still antsy about this time of chaff (among y'day's phone calls: request to be on a radio talk show on a Napa Valley station, 3-4 some Saturday afternoon amid this bookstour--no; request from a Central Missouri U. prof to meet w/ me during my Iowa City

18 April cont.--spot on the schedule to interview me for the collectors' magazine Firsts, which not long ago had a piece about NW writers including me--no) but the major dimensions of Bucking's launch still look good; Becky told me they've gone back to press for another 5,000 after the initial 48,000 (42,000 of those were advanced, and another 1,000 going for publicity).

April 24, enroute to San Francisco -

Aboard United fl. 2133, stacked up over PT. Reyes, & our captain interceded. He just came on the intercom & in a "Right Stuff" voice said that when he was a young man there'd been a plan to build another (i.e., a 3rd) runway at SF airport, but there was opposition - " & now, 25 years later, we're suffering."

May 1, SeaTac - The only Mayday bit of distress so far is the yacking of .TV, now an audible fixture in airport lounges. The Shuttle Express ride from home was uneventful (even so, it took from 4:45 to 6 a.m.) once I told .driver to turn onto Aurora Linden Way - he was yarning by it, toward circling the n'hood. I grabbed .seat next to the driver - "riding shotgun" - as it's best for my back, & even napped from .waterfront to .airport.

I'd wanted to get .San Francisco trip typed into . diary y'day, but couldn't make .time, readying for this trip & seeing Becky this weekend to talk about .next book. To start cramming in SF here before boarding my flight: .Bay Area was never better, 70° weather, sunny, & Carol & I ensconced in a top/loft room @ .Stanford Court, w/ a view from Coit Tower to .n'hood S. of Market - plus constant cable cars toodling past on Powell & Calif California Sts. E. had Thursday to herself & headed for .waterfront, Ft. Mason & lunch @ .Bulsa Vista. My regimen of interviews went O.K., although .feature writer @ .Marin Indep't - Jnd was unfocused, unto ignoring .part of my story she actually knew something about: she'd been an NU co-ed @ .N'w'n Apts .year

May 1 cont. - I was washing dishes there. Bay Area book signings went OK, too: 15 Bookings @ Kepler's (65 people in audience for my reading) which Stacy there said was good; crowd of 800, & 80 Bookings @ Arts & lectures speech next night; & @ Black Oak, large standing-room crowd of about 150, & sold 39 of .45 Bookings they had on hand. SF escort Lynn Korman did well by us, particularly in tracing down rollerbladers for us as they marble-rolled thru sta of SF.

May 2, lvg Milwaukee, aboard ft 489 to Detroit; another NW pt, never my favorite. M'kee went OK, although I hope crowd of 30 @ Audubon bookstore last night is a low, rather than an average on this trip. Good media interviews, w/ M'kee Journal-Sentinel book editor & on Wisc. Public Radio & Vermont Public Radio. The M'kee escort, Mary Gielow, is a 49-year-old high-maintenance blonde who gives the impression of slumming - her husband "owns companies," was all I could get out

May 2 cont. - of her - but is pretty good
at job of author - shepping. Got
to visit a bit after. Audubon reading
with Chuck & Pat Schuster, good
people who've been through a hell w/
Pat's pancreatic dialysis. S & S put me
up @ . rooco old Pfister Hotel (@
a corporate rate of \$130 for my suite,
bill revealed), a place w/ cherubim
painted on the lobby ceiling, marble
escutcheons, & a general feel of
heavy German decoration. When
WUOM interviewer phoned me there,
1st thing he asked (off-air) was
whether Pfister lived up to
Hunter Thompson's denunciation
of it in Fear & Loathing on the
Campaign Trail - he said place was
run by Nazis. I laughed & said
place didn't seem to be Aspen, but
it definitely was Milwaukee. But I
thought better of Hunter T. this morn
when I went down to coffee shop
for b'fst & . hostess was a German
barrel of a woman - damn near a
vat - with linebacker shoulders, a
blonde buzz cut reminiscent of movie

May 2 cont. - SS types, & a lefty German accent.

Milwaukee: a city that could have been great, although maybe not with Chicago in same neighborhood. (Mary Bielow called it Chi's ugly cousin, Chuck Schuster mentioned that if Hitler had won WWII, M'kee was his intended U.S. capital.) Some fine old towered stone & brick buildings, but downtown is gashed w/ bad '60s buildings, faceless, featureless. Not much more distinction than downtowns of Spokane & Albright. I had time this morn for a 45-min. walk of downtown, to Milwaukee River & along it, & thought about American habit of ghost tours, as I saw empty perfectly-good old buildings.

May 5 - la Guardia, waiting for 6:30 shuttle to D.C., having missed 5:30 by about a minute - consequence of Beaky & I overshooting an exit sign & circling briefly on Long Island St. So, fuck & fudge, but this has been only glitch in a weekend of arcane transport. Beaky & Marshall picked me from Manchester, N.H., y'day morning about 11, we drove until about mid-afternoon - much of it through

May 5 cont. - heavy rain - before getting to their place in Berashires. Then we left at 10:15 this morning to head for the R.I. Julia signing in Madison, CT; left there @ 3:30 for this airport dash.

Madison & Manchester readings & signings went well - audience of 75 in little red church across st from Northshire bookstore in Manchester, & a signing of 35-40 books afterward in store, & capacity crowd of 65-70 at Julia's today. My readings were on . marks, @ both stores, glad to say. Sarah Baker, tall & Seven Sisterish, of Scribner, & Becky's assistant Denise Roy, a striking honey blonde, both came up from NY, bless them.

Becky & Marshall's B'shire place, on 8 acres of mixed woods (maple & pine, etc.), reminds me of Annick Smith's homestead house. open-interior, unfinished wood. Outside it's a tough looker, unpainted, & it's built eccentrically (although evidently solidly) but I can see why they like it. Took a couple of hours for woodstove to warm place up to bearable - Becky & I took naps under com/forters; Marshall was off buying their new used car - & life improved after that. They took me to dinner at The Inn on . Green or some such, an old place where host was

May 5 cont. - named something like Bradford Wagstaff (honest) & meal started off with a tripe hors d'oeuvre (honest again), went on to a ~~small~~ ^{small} ~~mussel~~ & sweetbread appetizer, & still gaining left, went on to Kobe beef medallions (for Marshall & me; Alaskan char for Becky) with stuffed this & that in formidable gobos on plate. We agreed it was a world-record heavy meal, in my case - haven't since Williamsburg Xmas. But Marshall, a wine maven, selected a Silver Oak cabernet sauvignon which was good, & redeemed much.

Becky & I talked for $\frac{1}{2}$ an hr or so about Keeping Days, & she had no objections to plot sketch & talked out to her, & listed notion of an opening scene of SF rollerboarding. main data I picked up from her in our book by shmoozing was that if I want any sales growth on the next book (i.e., Keeping) it'll have to be in chain stores, which I sadly acknowledge; war for market share is plainly being lost by independents.

May 6, at scarred table in Orlan's, 1 p.m. - & doing pretty good noon-hour business. D.C. weather is about as crummy

May 6 cont. - as usual, cool & showery this morn when I walked down from Hutton to Dupont Circle & muggy by time I got back. Did a phone interview w/ Auntie's newsletter editor in Spokane this morning, & go to a Scripps. Howard interview this afternoon after this - the way. Bookstore trail winds.

As usual I jinxed. Flow of customers by saying things were clicking, & now have just been signing up stock. So it goes.

May 10--What a long strange trip is the booktour trail...

This is a supposed day of r & r, after last night's good results @ Elliott Bay, and there are bits and pieces everywhere, phone calls to be made, piles to be sorted. etc. Anyway, we whupped last night, taking Mark & Lou Damborg and Linda Sullivan & Jeff Sager to dinner beforehand @ Umberto's, and then my 8 o'clock reading to a nearly-full house, 150-175 people, and a particularly good q-&a session afterward. (I read the set of 3 scenes that I've mostly been doing, the dreamwork page, the 61 degree below zero weather, and Bruce @ the ice jam, so someone asked what I was dreaming as I worked on this book. Told her I'm one of those who has trouble remembering dreams except for the frustrating sense that they've been vivid and beyond what my waking mind can do, but that C and I both tend to have some trying-to-get-somewhere-and-can't dreams. Another question was what ~~book~~ aspect of the book was most satisfying to write and I said creating the 2 characters least like me--the sheriff and Proxy--thereby having to hone my imagination.)

I got home Tuesday, 1st class from Dulles to SeaTac,

May 10 cont.--thank god, the 5½ hr flight (and the accumulated trip behind me) pretty wearying even so. Politics & Prose the night of the 6th went exceedingly well, the 80 chairs filled and a few standees, and a markedly high % of the audience then lining up and buying a book. (Carla Cohn, the inimitable big mama who's created P&P, said, "This is what I like to see--everybody buying a book except for people who've got one waiting for them in Missoula.") That afternoon I went to Scripps-Howard hq for an interview by Walter Veazey, a Tennessean astoundingly like a young Tom Wicker, rumpled, sweaty, drawling. After we had rambled through the interview, I asked Walter what paper was Scripps-Howard's biggest, the Rocky Mtn News? He, as a 25-yr veteran of the Memphis Commercial ~~Appeal~~ Appeal, said that in terms of circ'n, yeah, "it's Rocky," but for income "it's the Commercial"--he said there was an office joke that when the new Denver airport opened, the first plane to touch down was a FedEx from Memphis loaded with money the Rocky needed. Couple of other Veazeyisms I liked, too, were when he showed me the lobby displays of Scripps-H's triumphs (Jim Lucas's Pulitzer WWII coverage, Raymond Clapper's stuff, Henry Taylor's work before he was killed in The Congo). There in Ernie Pyle's framed neatly-pencilled expense account notebooks, there was an item, evidently while he was in Ireland at some point of WWII, "Lipsticks (gifts for England) 18' 9", which Walter didn't figure a reporter could get away with today. And in Ernie's most famous WWII column, the death of Capt. Waskow, Walter pointed out that he can never read it (the original typescript is there in the frame on the wall) without the editor in him wanting to knock off the last graf--"The rest of us went back into the cowshed" etc.--and end it where there's a terrific natural close: "He reached over and gently straightened the points of the captain's shirt collar, and then he sort of rearranged the tattered edges of the uniform around the wound, and then he got up and walked away down the road in the moonlight, all alone." Righto, Walter.

Another D.C. story, overheard from the lunch table next to me @ Wash'n Hilton & Towers, where I was amid a baffling sea of "management scientists," evidently statisticians, math'ns, & academic administrators who

May 10 cont.--deal in productivity theory, and a guy was still chuckling about having heard Pat Schroeder, the Denver Congresswoman, say that after her years in the House she could point to at least one accomplishment-- "The male side now knows that 'harass' is one word."

In D.C. I had some time between the Olsson's signing and the Scripps-H interview, so the literary escort, Mae Beth Lazelle (as I heard the last name; she works for Dick Wager's escort firm, and formerly worked for Eliz. Dole and Conn. Congresswoman Nancy Johnson), very steady and to-the-minute (and an exceptional car handler, even though the escorts generally are good drivers) dropped me off at the monuments I chose, first my pilgrimage to the Canadian Embassy forecourt fountain and "the spirit of Haidah Gwai", and then to the Vietnam/Lincoln end of the Mall. The Lincoln Memorial is being repaired by the Park Service--and needs it--but the Vietnam is as implacably unwearing, simply utterly there in its black stone and valley-of-death eternity of names, and even high school kids are plainly struck. This time it occurred to me, though I've known there were no close relatives lost in the war, to check the register for any Doigs, and there was one, doubtless out of the gene pool back in Scotland, probably from the Brechin Doigs who emigrated to Mass'tts: "Doig, Douglas William CPL MC 23 Sep. '45-28 Dec. '66 Westwood MA panel 13E Line 90". There on the wall, with the little diamond marks ♦ that separate the names, line 89 of that panel ends with Dennis F. Dalesandro, and the next line is: Douglas W. Doig ♦ Lamont W. Finch ♦ Stephen Filley ♦ Cornel Gil ♦ Ronald Giroux ♦.

May 13--More notes from the bookstore trail, while I spend the forepart of this week trying to tap things into shape, before the Denver-Oregon portions of the tour:

--A goodly number @ Elliott Bay last Th. night, the 9th, filling the reading space, which I think Rick Simonsen has told me holds 135-150. Rick was hilarious about the publicity people in publishing, many of whom are so young and move on so rapidly that there's never any continuity except for the likes of Sharon Dynak @ Scribner; and now he and I both have to deal with, in essence, publicity sub-contractors, in my case the West Coast publicist Anita Halton in Long Beach. From my point of view it's meant handling two separate schedules, and info I'd long

May 13 cont.--since sent to S&S in New York not finding its way to Long Beach. The Rick story, though: he had a phone call from Anita in Long Beach, telling him she wanted to confirm that I'd be appearing at his store and to provide him my phone number--"What," Rick reeled off to her by memory, "542-6658?"

Carol ingeniously invited Mark and Lou Damborg and Linda Sullivan and Jeff Sager to dinner w/ us before the El Bay event, @ Umberto's, where to our vast surprise the food has gotten better and the waitering this time was alert and unobtrusive. At the reading itself, I was on the beam, as often happens at El Bay, although more so during the q-&-a than the part from the book--when an elderly guy asked how old I was in 1936 when the winter I read about occurred, I said thank goodness he wasn't asking that about The Sea Runners, which occurred in 1853; and when somebody asked what'd been my favorite part of writing Bucking the Sun, I could read C's lips--and report what she was telling Linda Sullivan--"when he finished it!"

May 17, aboard United fl. # 404 to
Denver - Sigh. \$1300 plane ticket by
S&S to put me in business class & 4"m
next to the squirrel champions of . world,
4- & 5-yr-old brothers, w/ a lasing-
faire dad in . seat in front w/ an,
even younger girl. Air travel: nothing
like it since steorage.

Got up @ 3:45 this morning to drive
~~myself~~ myself (through an absolute pume
of rain on . freeway: something like a
winter storm is hitting Seattle) to this
6:10 flight. Y'day finally offered some
sunshine & I put in a big day of
yard & garden work, managing to get
2 bean rows planted, some long grass
whacked down, etc.

As to . bookstore trail, I've been pretty
weary of it, . chaff of details as well as
. Travel; not helped by my buddies @ .
U Book Store ~~sata~~ scheduling me into
. Methodist Church - 115 people in hard
pains - instead of re-scheduling to a
date when a Kane Hall auditorium
(which are ideal reading venues) was
available. This trip & for Eugene/P'land
will at least put me past . 1/2 way mark
on total appearances.

May 19 - home ward bound on United
fl. #1264, weary but pleased w/ the
big crowd @ The Immortal Tattered
Cover last night, largest since. Arts &
lectures audience in San Francisco & the
strongest book signing so far in this tour.
Dizzying flow of people past. Donate old
signing table: several w/ Ft. Peck or
larger big names, ...

And now it is May 29, Minn./St. Paul
airport, St. Louis ahead. These weeks have
been crammed, yet full of downtime too;
the hurry-up-&-wait of the book tour is
one of its toughest aspects. Overflow crowd
last night @ Hungry Mind, & I performed
OK in the 2 public radio interviews, but
that's about 4 hrs of keeping busy, and the
other 22 or so hours are coping & waiting.
At least had a good room @ St. Paul
Radisson, which is aging & tacky in its
public areas; my NE corner room on the
17th floor had a view from Mpls in the
distance to - large traffic on the Miss.
Also I was in good hands, Isabel Keating
escorting me thru the not very heavy day,
& I'm getting a break with the weather,
sunny & spring like here & supposedly

May 29 cont. - not superhot in St. Louis.
Jerry Clemens faith/fully came to the Hunger
Mind gig again last night, & as usual we
went & had a drink, @ classy old St. Paul
Hotel (where Isabel & her cell phone bodgered
St. Paul & Bill into a dinner reservation
for me, earlier) before I went back to the
Radisson. Jerry's able to delegate some
work @ his company now, but his is
constantly busy, overseeing Cargill's network
of community-based lobbyists in state
legislatures.

People of Ft. Peck continue to crop up @
readings, a man last night who'd been a
teenager there, & for once I managed to get
him together w/ a woman who'd brought a
Ft P. scrapbook. Also, another Tidyman -
Karen Marshall, daughter of Tom. & as the
signing line at last ended, I looked up &
there was David Unowsky his very self,
wanting me to sign one of Chuck Robinson's
leather-bound copies to the store.

Now aboard NW fl # 1844, 3/4 empty; in
contrast, my NW fl. from Seattle y'day ~~was~~ was
wildly overlooked, 1/2 hr late in takeoff as
- ticket-takers & then - fl. attendants tried to
sort it all out.

11 June--The ABA is the next Big Thing, and before I start to marshal myself for it, I'm pounding out a day of cleaning away desk (and living-room, and beside-the-bed...) piles and trying to turn some corners toward life after the bookstore trail. Have just totted up all that, and the total by the time I walk out the door of Books West in Kalispell the afternoon of July 3 will be 40 signings in 30 cities. As these marathons go, it's been up and down--90 books, most of them hardbacks, sold at Fireside in Olympia last Thurs. noon, and a wan 8 or 10 @ the U Book Store in Bellevue that evening--and the warm details get away from me by the time I can plod to the diary. Can begin these notes, though, by reporting on y'day's fax of next Sunday's NYTBR piece on BUCKING, which was backhanded, grudging, and favorable, all of it huffed and puffed out by a Smithsonian and ex-TIMEy, Timothy Foote, guy who sounds like a horse disease. ("What's the matter with old Dobbin there, why's one of his hooves bigger than the other three?" "He got into the green hay, don't you see, he 'has timothy foot.") Anyway, it was a full-length review for a change, and wasn't murderous. The book has been selling just fine, if it'll keep it up now; when I signed up 200 in stock @ Pac P'line during last Thursday's I-5 & 405 marathon, eased greatly by the deft Seattle escort Gail DiRe, BUCKING was #2 on P'line's bestseller list, behind only the inevitable Grisham.

13 June--Starting the countdown toward Chicago and the ABA. Spent some time this morning going over my speech, trying to accumulate it into me to a comfortable level; something like an actor learning his lines, I think, though I'm aiming toward thorough familiarity and sense of rhythm rather than memorization. Blessedly, we had an afternoon of sunshine y'day and C and I got some time to rest sprawled in the ancient lounge chairs on the patio; How I perform in Chicago is going to depend on pacing myself, gathering the energy and controlling the emotion for the given ten minutes on Sunday, and so any chance to take life a little easy now and tomorrow is all to the good.

22 June--Tales of the ABA, which I'm going to try to pound away at today, before tomorrow's packing of the car and Monday's launch into the Spokane-Montana booktour.

We arrived in Chicago on Sat. the 15th to a ~~Puerto~~ Puerto Rican parade jamming Wacker Drive and streaming south on Clark St., pickups and cars with one-star flags and musical boop-a-doop horns; encased in a taxi as we were, we lacked the opportunity that Francine Prose had as she lunched with Kathryn Barcos of the San Francisco Arts & Lectures outfit. Kathryn said FP with a perfectly straight face got off the line, "I can't believe this is all just for me." Our taxi driver, Nick Papadopoulos, did usher us into Chicago big-cityism, though, by pulling up alongside a parade cop and wheedling on our behalf, "They're old-a people, they gotta bags to carry..." The cop gave him a glare, a lecture, and ultimately let him drive half a block closer through the parade barricades under the El before dropping us off. C and I then fended our way on foot the couple more blocks, and the Renaissance Hotel desk clerk broke up when we announced we now considered ourselves honorary Puerto Ricans.

Dinner that night w/ S&S trade bks prez and publisher Carolyn Reidy and sales director Larry Norton, and Carla Cohen of Politics & Prose bookstore in D.C. and Dewey Bjorkman(?) of McKinzey-White in Colo. Sprgs. Carla, monumental in all ways, was the most valuable companion for all of us (dinner was @ Printers Row on S. Dearborn), drawing blinks from Carolyn and Larry when she said Politics & Prose nurtures 200 book groups, and also charges customers \$15 to "belong" to P&P, thereby offsetting the cost of the newsletter and so on. Carla also told the story of introducing S&S co-authors and married couple Eleanor Clift & Tom Brazalaitis, at their P&P reading, as the only authors she'd ever slept with, and then forgetting the tag-line that it'd been in a 6-person sleeper car on the European P&P tour she'd led. For her part, Carolyn told us of meeting w/ Fergie, Duchess of York, to sign her to write a memoir, and noting that Fergie, as a royal, moves not toward guests when they enter or leave the room, but away, to stand in splendid "receiving" isolation. "Who teaches them that sort of thing?" Carolyn wants to know, a la all she hopes to get Fergie to spill in this book.

Being around Carolyn that night, at my literary lunch the next day and at the Topolobampo shindig was one of the

22 June cont.--treats of the convention, seeing a big (in all dimensions) woman do the business of the publishing biz. It did me no harm at all that when the Amazon.com

on-line book providers came around to talk to S&S biggies about getting on-line "content" about backlist books etc., they told Carolyn et al they'd heard from me, etc. Carolyn parsed through that with me as we walked to the lit'y lunch, then over lunch we talked sales and returns, me learning from her that warehouse-club buys sometimes come back as returns in as little as a week if they don't sell up to the warehouse-club's "sku" (I think it's "shelving-keeping unit," in essence sales per shelf foot) formula, she learning from me that PriceCostco buyer Penny Clark, who bought 6,000 copies of Bucking (a figure that half-thrills half-horrifies me), knows her stuff regionally. Also got Carolyn to talking about how she came into publishing; she's from Silver Spring, MD, originally, her husband went to grad school at Columbia and she, a 90-word-a-minute typist, got on at Random House and became an editorial assistant there, then a job in rights, then a couple of jobs under the aegis of Howard Kaminsky, one of them giving her the experience of running a mass p'back line, Avon, before the S&S job.

The lunch speech, the big gig. Off to a delayed start because Robert Hass left his intro notes in the "green room," far away and down a couple of escalators in mammoth McCormick Place. Other writers were John Wideman, looking as handsome and lean as when he and I did the Denver Post authors' gig several years ago; John, though, was slated (alphabetically) last and felt he had to read, for time purposes, the remarks he'd obviously intended to riff from, and it stiffened up what he had to say; Susan Power, who either didn't entirely get the word that we had 10 min. each or, in the cultural tradition of the Indian prayers and speeches we've been around that went on past forever, just went on and on until she felt done, but in any case talked for 20+ min. (Carolyn Reidy was still irked at

Topolobampo that night: "She reminded me of a little kid who's been told she's cute once too often," Carolyn steamed, holding her bottle of Corona by its neck.); and Donald Hall, looking florid and rumpled, and who talked affectingly about how all of the poetry he writes now is about his wife Jane Kenyon's death but didn't give us any of it. As for mineself, I thought the setup was ideal--I got to go first,

22 June cont.--I was the only one who'd written out my stuff and rehearsed it and kept within my time allotment, and as C loyally pointed out, it maybe didn't hurt that I was the only one on the stage with a good haircut and dress clothes. ("Neatness pays," beyond the margins of our grade-school assignments.) In any case, the Washington Post deputy editor Marie Arana-Ward heard enough about my talk to call and ask to see it for possible use, the S&S people seemed pleased (Trish, one of the Scribner honchos, stage-whispered gleefully afterward, "You were the best!"), so I think I hit the mark close enough, Idt Lunch Day.

A quick accounting of the Frontera/Topolobampo cocktail party and corporate dinner afterward, which took place while the Bulls were beating the Sonics for the NBA championship--guys were coming out to curbside to watch it on tiny TVs set on the roofs of limousines, and I'm putting in the back of the diary the Chicago Trib account of the "calm" riotous conditions after the game. Schmoozed with, at one point or another, of the evening:

--Penny Clark of PriceCostco, who grinned and complacently told me "We know what we're doing" with that big buy of Bucking; with her, her sister Trish, whom she's training as a regional buyer.

--Marilyn Martin Dahl, who when we asked her how she's doing at Pacific Pipeline (afflicted recently with computer horrors and another of Vito's epidemics of firings) very levelly said, "OK." Somehow the topic of sales reps came up, and my original legendary HBJ rep Kathy Mulherin--she who once walked in to a fancy restaurant downtown with C and me telling us at the top of her voice about her current San Francisco boyfriend "who's kind of okay but the only place he ever wants to fuck is on the couch"--about whom Marilyn has an epic getting-smashed story, relatively innocent Marilyn having a few too many drinks at a Kathy M. party and then eating the brownies Kathy passed around, not realizing they were Alice Toklas specials, marijuana-laced; Marilyn swears that she hugged the toilet bowl so long and hard, tossing up all that out of her, that she had the toilet-bowl rim mark across her chest yet the next day.

--Joyce Meskis of the fabled Tattered Cover, telling me of taking inspiration from the Time magazine quotes from This House of Sky, thinking that the book biz was okay after all if something like that could happen.

22 June cont.--Becky's other fiction writer Chris Offut, one of Granta's "20 under 40" chosen comers (the kind of hothouse display I'm just as glad not to have had), a beat-up looking 38, with his gimpy leg in a walking cast and carrying a cane. C and I liked him right away, and when he went over to a wall to rest against for the sake of his leg, I went along and put my aching leg up on a chair, the two of us agreeing that between us, Becky has a writer with one sound set of pins.

--Second past prez of ABA (after Joyce Meskis) of the evening, Rhett Jackson, and then young booksellers from Olsson's and Politics and Prose.

--Gary Hart, non-schmoozable (I didn't even try, but Kathryn Barcos, one of the most personable people on the planet, tried and said it was the hardest 20 min. of her life; she and her husband George speculated to us how many times Hart must have said what he said to them: "You can run but you can't hide), moping from corner to corner by himself and not staying for the dinner with the publishing people. To my astonishment, the Chicago literary escort

Bill Young told me the next day that Hart (with one of Bill's staff for the media rounds) had bought a copy of *Bucking*.

--Neil Simon, whom we rode to and from the party with and enjoyed; no airs, and the knack for one-liners you'd expect. Back in the hotel elevator, Victoria Meyer punching the buttons and lighting up the numbers of the 3 different floors we were going to, Neil said, "Press some more, Victoria, and we'll get the money." Jackpot indeed, Chicago was.

23 June--Nearly packed for the Montana trip, a fortuitous rain this morning having taken care of the big watering chore, and we needn't leave until mid-morning tomorrow to reach Spokane by mid-afternoon.

The Evanston chapter of our ABA trip. Tues. the 18th we got on the El @ State St., rumbled east and south around the Loop, then were headed north toward nuptials. (Chicago, both from the Loop and the El, seemed greatly vaster than I'd remembered. Some of it is magnified from 30 years ago--the John Hancock and Sears Towers, huger O'Hare, and much growth of suburbs--but even familiar buildings such as the Tribune Tower and the Wrigley Bldg. and the Jewelers Bldg across the street from our hotel

23 June cont.--were bigger than memory said.) Got off @ Foster St. and walked over to campus, marveling at the jewel-box size of Howes Chapel where we got married. It still is a gem in many ways, from the half-timbered roof to the colored-glass-and-leaded windows with eclectic history--John Wesley, Lincoln, Columbus--spectrumed there. Through all this, and our subsequent stroll past the lakefill, into the probably misconceived NU library, and through the refurbished but still obsolescing Medill (the 2nd floor auditorium as shopworn and high-schoolish as ever!), neither of us came down with any nostalgia, simply interested to see what had happened. Also, the Chicago weather was crummy enough--cloudburst when we left the ABA with Victoria in a Carey car, spectacular lightning storm over the lake and clouds wiping away the tops of skyscrapers out our 15th-floor hotel-room window that night, drizzle, humidity--that we remembered why we'd packed up and pointed west. Lovely, though, to have the emotional marker that we'd started ourselves--married--there and then.

And when you're hot, you're hot. That night we chose the Kinzie St. Chophouse over deep-dish pizza at Uno or Due, and while the beef was fine the place wasn't as nifty as the pizza valhallas probably would have been, so we found ourselves wandering over to Jazz Showcase (which C had tracked to Grand and Clark, newly moved from old hustings at the Blackstone Hotel), chronically hyper-early, to hear Marian McPartland play jazz. Whatever the jazz equivalent of a maitre d' is escorted us into the nearly empty place and said if we didn't mind sharing a table with people we didn't know he could put us right down front. When we looked dubious about that, he said: "Or I can put you on stage with her." Verily, the little table he led us to was a foot from the left end of her piano (I measured out the distance with my handspan and not quite a 4" palmspan), the keyboard angled just right so that we knew we could see every movement of her fingering. And so it proved, when she came on stage (@ 8:45 for the 8 6'clock show), slight 75-year-old lady in vaguely tiger-striped muzzy pantsuit, 3" earrings dangling like ~~mini~~ miniature expander watchbands; seating herself at the piano, she glanced, a little startled, at us and the ~~one~~ singleton woman next to C and the 3 people behind us and said, "Wow, music in the round!" And, with astonishing hands--old, reddened, knobby on a couple of knuckles,

23 June--with terrifically long spatulate fingers; I estimated that her fingers are nearly half again longer than mine; her first finger joint, from the knuckle out, for instance, is nearly 3" long, compared with 2" on mine--she began to play, with an occasional little "oops" to herself, quite wonderfully. Sitting as I was half-behind a mirrored pillar I could take notes (if anybody had asked, I intended to cough demurely into my hand and say I was a West Coast jazz critic) and so was able to jot down what she played, which she too had listed on a sheet of paper she kept atop the piano. In this order, Ms. McP, an eminently innovative bass player named Jimmy Fox, and a drummer named, if I heard right, Charlie Drum, went through:

"Like Someone in Love"

"In a Sentimental Mood"

"Steeplechase" (a Charlie Parker piece)

"Twilight World" (her own work, with great warmth)

"Chasing Shadows"

"Red Planet" (a Coltrane piece which she kiddingly dedicated to Dennis Rodman, the outer-space Bulls basketball player)

"All the Things (Jerome Kern)

"Long Valley" (Duke Ellington)

"A Delicate Balance" (another of her own)

Either the set had gone well enough--she was generous with solos for her sidemen, and the bass player did a couple of glorious ones--or it's part of her routine, but she a bit hesitantly closed by saying she thought they could try a request. "Love Supreme!" someone called out, and she scoffed, "Love Supreme, my God!" Bombardment of calls then--"A Foggy Day!" "Carousel!"--which she bemusedly put up with for a showy minute before she shook her head and told the sidemen, "Love Supreme, in three-quarter time."

Some random details from my notes:

--she plays a Baldwin, with a boom mike in the piano, i.e. in there where a piano tuner would work. The hand-held cordless mike that she used to talk to the audience awaited her on a towel on her seat when she came onstage; ~~she~~ once underway, she had to turn around to it, on a tiny table behind her, whenever she wanted to announce a song.

23 June & McPartland details cont.--Wall blowups of jazz greats around her as she worked; Duke Ellington behind her piano.

--Waitresses circulated, selling drinks (we had Anchor Steam beers, \$4 a bottle), with stack of dollar bills longways into a waterglass on their trays.

--McP occasionally would tinker with her wristwatch or the bracelet on her opposite arm while she played, shoving them up her arm. The veins standing out in the backs of hands stand up into her arms, ~~which~~ far as could be seen into her sleeves.

--Her high heels matched her pantsuit, and she played the piano with her left foot on the right-side pedal, i.e. sitting a bit sideways to the audience, tapping time with her right foot.

--McPartland's fingering of the keys was a surprise to me, musical ignoramus that I am, in that she didn't play the ends of the keys. She kept her fingers mainly over the black keys, sliding a ~~finger~~ finger down alongside a black key to depress a white key; that is, not much back and forth fingering, white keys and then in to the black keys; hovering over the "seams" of both, there at the black part of the keyboard.

29 July--The diary's summer swoon began with the Montana trip and probably isn't over with yet. This morning has been the first one since I don't when that I've sat down to the desk without a dread of the stuff piled everywhere, and have actually managed to restart some thinking about the next book. (I seem to be a long way from enthusiasm about starting up the writing process, but some immersion into language filecards and notebooks may start to cure that.)

The forecast was luckily wrong for this morning, which is proving to be a good bright continuation of the summer sunshine we've been having. We made best use of this stretch of days by going to Ebey's Landing last Wed., C's birthday. And we've been barbecuing dinners often, chicken, salmon, ribs, glorious eating. I'm also working on my woodpile, sweating off some weight.

31 July--The month goes, today, but the weather is holding beautiful, and C made the sensible suggestion this morning that we work during this quiet part of the day and do our walking etc. later, when the Boeing Creek lake's construction equipment is at its worst, or Steve Kellett takes the notion to chainsaw firewood (Monday afternoon's noise) or the Andersons gear up their backyard machine-shop (yesterday afternoon's noise). So, she's been quietly at her desk or the computer and I've finally started to feel my way into Keeping the Days. I think I see a way to use "The middle name of his hometown was Sulphur, and that will tell you something of the smell of his childhood" as the opening, and then go to the San Francisco roller-blading scene that has intrigued me.

Aug. 1--The sun went, this morning. It's now 10:15 and has been foggy the past hour or so. We managed our walk of the n'hood in sun, though, by doing it at our usual 6:30. Our intention has been to do up to the Skagit this afternoon, for what the forecast said would be the last $\frac{1}{2}$ day of good weather, but we'll have to see how things look after lunch.

Meanwhile I've been at Keeping the Days again, trying to sculpt an opening scene that will lead into contemporary time.

Aug. 19--Suddenly August is on the wane. Much has been done, from considerable cleaning-out of file cabinets to filling the woodhouse, but the tempo which would have patted things into truly good shape is thrown off now by a muscle pull--tricky one in the join of the leg and the torso a few inches to the right of the groin--which has to be nursed in every major movement, getting up from a chair, rolling over in bed, etc. Damn, damn, damn. All will be caution for a while now.

Aug. 26--By getting up from chairs and out of bed with excruciating care, I got rid of the muscle pull in 3-4 days, and think I am restored enough to begin exercise routine on my Nordic tracker soon.

And so onward to other routines, such as a mild start back toward Keeping the Days today, mostly mulling and note-taking. I've hacked and hacked away at piles on desks and old file folders (which promptly hatch some

Aug. 26 cont.--more piles on desks), sent off some Heart Earth and Mariah checking files to UW Archives, stowed old mss in new archival boxes, and am beginning to get a sense of order in the office. On the eternal list of things to do, it helps that I hashed together, in I think a total of 2½ days, the Wash'n Gov's Writers Awards speech and the Oregon Book Awards speech (a variant of t'other), in my first foray on the computer since the late and mostly unlamented Wang word processor. My intention is to put in an hour each afternoon for a while, to keep accustoming myself to the computer. So far, there's no sign I can use it for ms drafting, without burning my eyeballs out. Other stuff, I'm hoping so.

Social note, Tony Angell and Lee Rolfe and whirlwind toddlers Gavia and Larka were here for supper Sat. night, 1st time we've seen the Angell clan since last spring. A fine evening, one of the warmest of summer, so we were able to sit on the patio and have a drink and talk, insofar as that's possible amid the little girls' energy field (Tony has some amazing strategies: "Gavia, here, this"--majestic long stem of grass--"is a magic wand. Now go to the garden and touch every ~~one~~ and tell it, "Grow. Grow. Grow." Be sure to touch every one." vegetable And for year-and-a-half-old Larka, he said "Go see Mommy, she has a treat for you!" and then got back to conversation with, "Quick, before she's back saying 'Deh's no tweek!'", and I used the Weber barbecue grill to do one of our favorites of this summer, boneless chicken breasts marinated in olive oil and herbed with thyme, and new red potatoes with rosemary (cooked in foil packets), plus big sausages; C fixed our garden beans in her patented mushroom soup-white wine, and Tony and Lee brought a whopping salad of spinach, beet greens, and red cabbage from their garden. A good time.

27 Aug.--Item in pocket notebook from the bookstore trail: @ the gate in Tulsa airport, the TWA agent recognized my name from having processed me in years past in Seattle.

--An event I didn't manage to note down until now was our sashay to the Seattle Art Museum reception, Mon. the 19th, for Ken Burns and Stephen Ives and their imminent PBS series on the West. I hadn't thought we'd go, then rethought it into a chance to see the Walkinshaws if they were going to attend. Walt turned out to be in Alaska catching fish, but Jean was there, and our phone-made plans

27 Aug. cont.--to have dinner somewhere afterward proved therapeutic, as the reverential reception to Burns' not-so-hot film-making (it's actually not even his; he's executive producer or some such, and his buddy Ives, son of the WGBH station manager, directed the show) plunged Jean into a well-deserved case of the blues. She'd just worked hard to wrinkle \$5,000 out of the Wash'n Humanities Commission for her next WestWords project, and Burns & Co. had been handed \$2 million in Humanities grants for their pretty pallid filming of the West--long still shots of grass blowing, or mountains sitting there, and natch the preview they're showing at shindigs like this is of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce, proven tear-jerker. Ives/Burns did a surprisingly static job even with that surefire story, a grade-schooly crawl-line across the map showing us the Nez Perce route. So, out to dinner with Jean a few blocks down the street, good food cheering us all up and Jean back at her uphill job of trying to do quality documentary work the next day.

30 Aug.--Emptying my pocket notebook which dates back through the Bucking the Sun booktour, found this quote from a woman in the line @ Books West in Kalispell; thanking me for writing my books, she said: "This morning I consigned the ashes of my 38-year-old daughter. In the end all we have are memories."

3 Sept.--And so the rains came. This morning brought a near-winter storm, water rolling down the gutters, gloom and fog, not much more than 12 hours after we were sitting on Mark and Lou Damborg's backyard deck on Capitol Hill, merrily eating barbecued chicken and salad. The afternoon has cleared off, and I'll soon go to the garden to forage for strawbs, tomatoes, beans and lettuce.

Our Labor Day visitation to the Damborgs included a walk through the Arboretum and across Foster's Island and back by way of the marsh walk, a good hour or more of steady walking after C and I had already walked Green Lake in the morning; we were ready for supper. Other socializing, John and Jean Roden here for supper on Sat. night, and when John told me, for the second visit in a row here, that when a writer raises expectations he must then meet them (not particularly in criticism of me, so far as I can tell, or at least of anything I've

3 Sept. cont.--specifically written, but as one of his general Wordsworthian attitudes, which often are pretty good), and I told him back, John, buy low and sell high. It's going on 30 years now that the Doigs and the Rodens, and probably especially he and I, have been arguing the angles of life.

I spent a considerable part of the holiday weekend working on the west edge of the roofing, which I discovered had lifted and pulled up about 20 feet of the flashing ~~now~~ above the rain gutter with it; grumpy about the chore, which was tough and snotty, but on the other hand here was this helluva rainstorm this morning which I forestalled from getting in the house.

21 Sept.--Dearth in the diary, and more ahead as we go to Denver, Anacortes and Starwood this coming week. Managed to drag myself up onto schedule in the writing this past week, achieving 6 pp. of the San Francisco rollerblading scene after a slow grim start ~~to the scene~~ partly due to backache. We'd gone to the Long Beach Peninsula for the nights of the 8th and 9th--David Campiche gave us lodging and grub in his Shelburne Inn in exchange for my doing a Winter Brothers reading--and either my back didn't like the 4-hour drive or I slept crookedly. We went on to Cannon Beach for the 10th, 11th and 12th, the weather staying fine, affording us great hikes of Nehalem Beach and Cape Falcon. So, while I was having a good time, my back (and worse, my numbing right leg) was working up its worst howl in years. ~~Back~~ As soon as we got home I began resting the aching parts as much as I could, taking Motrin, and doing a back exercise session on the living room floor. I'm pretty much restored now, but will have to try to take care on the Denver trip.

An absolute gnat blizzard of requests and chores flew in here as I tried to gear up on the writing ~~last~~ this week--a blurb (Michael Dorris's Cloud Chamber) here, a foreword there (Chuck Robinson's Whatcom conservation easement book-project), logistical questions (Los Angeles MOCA reading next March, Oregon Lit Awards in Nov.), a hurry-up blurb request (the UW Press for Bill Lang's book on that one, and while it panged me for Bill, I had to say no; they've had all goddamn year to ask me), a ms-reading request (U. of Oklahoma Press, on some series Bill Kittredge is involved in; no on that one, too), on and

21 Sept. cont.--evidently on. I am reasonably set up now to plow on through this fall's public appearances, go to LA in mid-March and pick up \$7,000 in a pair of speakings, and play it by ear from then. It is going to take a constant drone of N-O.

Keeping the Days luckily began to take on a little music as I kept after the rollerblading scene. It's a tricky way to begin a book, and I still haven't managed to hunker in and do the necessary brainstorming about plot and characters (which is what really bugs me about the time the requests etc. take), but at least something is on paper and humming back at me.

25 Sept. - Homeward bound from Denver & Boulder a bit early, but in aisle seats & apart - I'm in 28B, Carol in 31B; consequence of seeing that our 4:10 flt was already $\frac{1}{2}$ hr late, & taking what we could get on this one that left @ 3:30.

• sound system in Denver Athletic Club last night was far & away. worst I've ever spoken into - feedback galore, & I could hear a humming threat of it even when audience wasn't getting a blast - but • 350 people & I hung in there, & my speech was well-received. Today's session, a reading to 60 students & others on U. of Colorado campus, went perfectly fine, an ideal sound system.

So, we've been & done for • Center of • Ann. West & Patty Kinnerich.

3 Oct.--Eclipse of the diary as I've gone back to making 2 pp. average, daily, on Keeping the Days. I am irrevocably quirky in where and what of a manuscript I write, having intended to work my way through the opening scene of San Francisco rollerblading but then, with most of that done, abruptly switched to the revelation scene, why Mitch's father betrayed him in the daybook argument, and have done about half a dozen pp. there this week that seem pretty good.

Last week's appearances ranged from okay (the little bookstore in Stanwood, a pro bono biblio signing) to very damn good, such as the 115 people who came to my reading in Anacortes. And for that matter, the Parkplace store in Kirkland had a capacity audience. As to Denver and all that, C went along with me and came back shaking her head, at all the logistical flummoxing it takes for a speech etc. The UColo folks proudly put us up in the Oxford Hotel in LoDo, and yup, it's historic but also old and ungainly--the bathroom about 8" higher than the rest of the room, so that you have to constantly remind yourself not to trip over or sail off that doorsill; the Brown Palace has the same bathroom-on-a-mesa motif, what was it about Denver of that period? As to DIA, the gigantic new airport halfway to Omaha, it was bemusing when our flight began to make a hookback landing pattern--i.e., about 10 or 15 min. from touchdown--over some empty runways that I realized were old Stapleton: in the old days, we'd have been there already! The steerage aspects of travel aside, we liked being around Patty Limerick and the staff of the Center of the West, had a grand lunch courtesy of them at Trios in Boulder, and all in all found it instructive to see the growth, growth, growth between Denver and Boulder.

Blessedly the phone has quieted down in the past 36 hours, after a spate of friends asking for favors which left me wondering ~~what~~ how many friends ~~were~~ are lurking out there. Had to wince hardest over turning down Annick Smith who wanted an article--"Can't you just dash something off?"--for a save-the-Blackfoot-River anthology she's decided to put together. Perfectly noble cause, but if the argument hasn't been successfully made by A River Runs through It, anything hurled together now ain't apt to help, I hear. I pressed Annick a bit

3 Oct. cont.--on political remedy, but she thinks it's poison to get environmental groups involved (I don't; they know pressure points that writers are generally clueless about) and wants instead to try to change Montana public opinion by writers' urgings. If there was a cadre of me, I'd dash something off, all right, but it's always a one-by-one decision how to spend what short time there is.

4 Oct.--Am clipping and putting in the Keeping the Days file today's NY Times story of "California vs. 'Doonesbury'", the latest of reality imitating my fiction (TriGram, which I made up for Eng Crk and had come into existence by the time of Mariah Montana; Pinterich's marriages, which filled the Oregonian bldg. with vengeful ex-wives, also by the time I got Mariah done). I've been working on the "People who get their news from Doonesbury" lead for months now, having first heard the phrase, I think, from the Zeismers' LA son when they were up here moviemaking, 5 years ago.

In an hour we leave for the Bainbridge ferry and tonight's reading @ Eagle Harbor books, which I dutifully scheduled this early in the fall to try to beat the rainy season, and it's coming down like the proverbial cow on the flat rock.

Oct. 14--Rain still coming down, although thankfully it hasn't been constant since the last diary entry. Sometime Saturday night there were violent spates of downpour on the roof that were a little scary. Today it is just a winterlike skein of moisture and dim light; actually fairly dark right now, at 1:45.

The start-up of writing, this morning, went surprisingly well for a Monday, the output (2 pp., inevitably) not smooth but some clarity of organizing and pacing the first several scenes finally happening.

Oct. 18--At long SOBing last, or so it seems, I believe I have the opening of Keeping the Days, the San Francisco rollerblading scene, parsed out. To my surprise it's about 2200 words, and needed sharp reining in to be kept to that.

Been a week of slogging at the writing and dabbling

Oct. 18 cont.-- with the computer a little while most afternoons. What are we to make of a writer who, shiny new Mac on hand and megabytes to burn, delves not into Word but Excel and the spreadsheets thereof? One thing that can be construed is that eyestrain is still in the picture, literally on the screen, where I'm concerned, and so the putting of books into the computer is going to be slowly done around here. As to the arithmetic of Excel, I'm resorting to it to analyze our financial holdings, which in this rising stock market tide slosh in faster than we can quite handle. Long way to go, in acquainting with what is called the "deep, elegant" capacities of Excel, but getting a system for eyeballing each of our sets of holdings, with their various tax and pension consequences in the future, can't hurt, could help.

Today's prime phone call: the national cable TV association, arranging FedEx delivery of the set of the Two Medicine trilogy for me to sign up for Ted Turner and Jane Fonda.

Oct. 21--And for the record, those Ted-&-Jane inscriptions were:

English Creek: "This glimpse of Montana, 1939, before the world cried 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war."

Rascal Fair: "...In the words of this book, 'America. Montana. Those words with their ends open.'"

Mariah Montana: "This finale in which a TV herd chases after a cattle drive, the heroine daily does her Janing exercises, and the buffalo get the ranch."

As to other doings, this week which is rife with readings and talks got off to rickety start when, one more time, we got royally fucked up by a tree cutter; Mike Lampers calling @ 8, an ~~hour~~ hour before he was to show up here, saying he's about 3 days' behind because of transmission trouble in his truck last week. I swallowed real hard--it's the prime treework season now, just before winter storms, and no way could I get somebody else on short notice--and agreed he could come Wed. afternoon (which louses up C's grading of midterms) to do the backyard trimming and next Mon. (which louses up my writing schedule) to do the branch-thinning in the big trees out front. I'd carefully chosen today, when

Oct. 21 cont.--Lampers came by about 3 weeks ago to give me an estimate, so that there'd be a day of leeway, i.e. tomorrow would be okay; more fool me, not to realize it takes a week of leeway. So, rat shit, cat shit, and guano, and onward.

A fine evening, Sat. night, @ Tony Angell & Lee Rolfe's. They're about to embark on a 7-week van trip across the U.S., so we were glad to see Tony's recent work, which ranges from a 3-ton block, bigger than a refrigerator, which will become a "Congress of Owls" for Whatcom Com'ty College, down to a stunning platter-size piece of slate which he's turned into a pair of swallows flying side-by-side, with the rock hollowed out under their wings but the bottom of the rock still in place, in a kind of biplane effect, like the shadows of the flying birds.

Oct. 31--October going off the calendar in fine clear weather, day after day of it. Last Monday, before the weather turned, Mike Lampers came and let daylight through seven of the big trees out front (tomorrow afternoon he's supposed to come back and do the three nearest the Mailbox), so we have had splashes of sunlight in the kitchen, all the way into the bookcase in the hallway, and on the bench of land behind the house, that we never had before.

I'm back to tussling with Keeping the Days, after last week's public stuff. In much too short a summary, the Seattle U. writing seminar, dinner with faculty and students, and evening reading all went well; the Gov's Writers Awards ceremony, I screwed up momentarily by starting to declare them over when I'd missed the ~~xxxx~~ special award to Spencer Shaw, printed in a different alignment on the program in fancy obscure type--I can only hope it was more endearing than dumb; and Bookfest on Saturday, I had a standing-room only crowd and a good mike system. Done and done, all that.

7 Nov.--Well, sitting here under a swept roof, at least. The weather forecast has been hair-raising for the last part of this week, rain and wind, big-time, so when y'day afternoon looked pretty good and I had to go out on half a dozen chores anyway, one of them was to fetch a chimney cover from the Aurora Fireplace shop. When I

7 Nov. cont.--went up and installed that on the furnace chimney to cut down on weathering and leaching inside the chimney mouth (a chimney cleaner put a similar cap on the fireplace chimney for me a couple years ago), there then was the mess of spruce needles thick on portions of the roof. So thick, that they were caking onto the roof material and rotting. I swept up six bagsfull, along with the detritus that always has to be cleaned out of the rain gutters by barehand, C coming up to help me with the last 20 min. of gathering stuff before dark. Chores like this, I always think oh yeah sure, Philip Roth and John Grisham are doin' their roofs this very minute.

This is also post-election, Dole into oblivion after a remarkably inept campaign; he couldn't seem to think of anything to run on except that he'd tend to stuff if elected--meanwhile not even able to tend to a campaign staff. (I think it was back in the New Hampshire primary when Maureen Dowd marveled that after all these years in politics, Dole ~~wasn't~~ didn't know how to manage a photo op.) For his part, Clinton, whom I somewhat admire for so openly being an operating politician but I have no emotional investment in, heads into another term with investigations for breakfast, lunch and dinner. In this household our regrets are the more conservative tone of the Senate--we largely vote, any more, with an eye to who'll be appointing to the Supreme Court--and that the Gingrich Congress didn't quite get trashed. Our own congressional district is particularly dispiriting to us, perpetually appealing to carpetbaggers instead of the homegrown political brains that ought to exist in a district this professional and upscale; Coopersmith, the Demo candidate this time, was a particular dud against Rick White, who had the marginal smarts to make himself look like the littlest Gingrich dwarf in the '94 gang elected from this state.

12 Nov.--Microsoft day. Mostly because I want to have a scene in Keeping the Days w/ a computer/software zillionaire (at housewarming being catered by Lexa), partly out of curiosity, and somewhat because I haven't been doing enough keeping track of the world out there, off I went @ 6:50 this morning to Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue and the Microsoft shareholders meeting. Got there just a minute or so before it began, just after 8, in a hangar-like meeting room in the basement, about 1500 people ultimately there, last couple hundred of us standing. Dark brown-burgundy drapes, about 15 feet high and oddly monkish, lined the wall behind Bill Gates and the chief operating officer Rob't Herbold and two other officers at raised table; a sort of movie-modern lectern of steel tubing, w/ oval nameplate Microsoft across it, was the only showy item at all. (Although there were computers in the lobby w/ Microsoft techies showing off previews of Excel '97, Internet stuff, etc.) You'd never have known this austere outfit sitting there in the semi-gloom has more than twice the capitalization of General Motors.

The audience had a majority of gray hair and baldspots, maybe always the case @ shareholders meetings, predominance of retired people. The couple of hundred standees, in front of the little soundboard stage (run not by Microsoft itself but a contract a-v outfit called Barr, I found when I asked) and elsewhere along the back of the room, were more middle-aged; few were very young, and I saw only one nerdy prototype in Birkenstocks. To this audience, Herbold made the financial news big and brief--\$8.4 billion revenues last year, up 46%; in most recent quarter, income up 14% over comparable quarter last year, which was the Windows '95 quarter--and said here in "Greater Redmond" (the Puget Sound area) Mic'ft employs 11,000. The audience through all this was quiet and interested, and Gates slightly rocked as he sat at the dais table, his brown bowlcut hair making him look even younger among the three grayheads up there with him. Getting up to speak, he looks truly tweeby, big wide maroon tie with 6 or 8 design clots of some kind, his body starting to slope to his waistline, and as he talks in his upper-range voice he has a habit of little uhs, barely interrupting himself. Nobody on the face of the earth who owns any Microsoft stock gives a hoot about

12 Nov. cont.--any of that, natch, and Gates' focus, or what he said the company's will be, was on the Internet and easy-to-manage personal computers; he believes the Internet will drive PC sales, and Mic'ft is dependent on improved PCs. Said he thinks there'll be "deep integration to the Internet. Said he's got Myrhold working on advanced technology, such as speech recognition and synthesis, and maybe video recognition. Again made the point that Mic'ft has a lot riding on computer friendliness, and said he's conservative in thinking how well Mic'ft can do against all the competition in these fields, it "has a lot to prove in these areas."

Q-&-A began, with a black minister named Moore from Wash'n DC wanting to know why no African-Americans (such as Franklin Delano Reynes from right here in Seattle) aren't on the board. The answer, in essence, was that Mic'ft had just appointed a new board member, a woman!

After a question about whether NT was being pushed harder than Windows (Gates said Mic'ft is committed to both, natch) an elderly Asian man in a white ballcap asked why Herbold had been hired from Procter & Gamble at a big salary, and in essence Gates said they have to hire such people to run the outfit. Gates got more enthusiastic in answering a techie question put by a ~~mineralogist~~ 20ish guy in a nice suit, his feet twisting around each other nervousness as he stood at the microphone; I couldn't hear all of his question but it had to do with upgrading the Internet navigator.

Then, to applause, came the inevitable question about a stock split. Herbold said only that the board is always looking at it.

Gates perked up again when someone asked what he thinks the biggest segment of the business will be, 5 years from now. G. said he sees Mic'ft as being in 4 businesses: desktop apps, service, office productivity, and new stuff such as MSNBC, games, and if I heard him right, "money". Said he thinks the first 3 will be of similar size in the next 5 years, but the 4th category is the wild card.

Another question or two, meeting closed at almost precisely an hour, zingy music came on from the Barr a-v guys, coffee cups and saucers were everywhere (including stacked along edge of the a-v stage), and that was that.

16 Nov.--More or less a day off, this cool Saturday, amid smooth sailing; I calculated our financial holdings and the figure is up more than \$49,000 in the past two weeks.

It fair near dazes us, this accumulation of money, even though we know the stock market has to reverse itself someday; but we're keeping a majority of our holdings clear of the market, so even if stock and mutual fund investments turn stinky, we'll have capital and income.

Thursday we flew to Portland for my emcee gig at the Oregon Book Awards, and everything went slick. Almost everything; our buddy Craig Lesley, the favorite for the fiction prize, didn't get it. Which has had me pondering in a minor ethical way. Craig called, just before we left for Portland, to ask about getting together, we arranged that, and although I knew the winners-to-be that night--i.e., not him--I kept to the secrecy the Oregon Literary Arts people wanted. Accordingly, Craig's aged relatives and who knows who the hell all else among his friends etc. turned out to see Tracy Daugherty receive the award instead. Out of friendship, should I have cleared my throat during our phone conversation? Would it have helped any? (Craig actually took the outcome with grace and class; Kathy was bummed out by it, as a loyal spouse who has watched a book have a hard history would be.) Would it have been sticky for both of us if I'd hinted to him and word of that got out, as it always does? Dunno, dunno. As for the ceremony itself, I know for sure that I achieved the Spencer Tracy minimum of stagecraft--remember your lines and try not bump into the furniture--and that the fussing I did with the script did pay off in pace and a kind of graciousness in the ceremony's rhythms. The Literary Arts people who put on the annual event were ecstatic afterward. My approach, which I should keep in mind, is to shun one-liners, keep a pretty brisk pace, and keep the language sounding good, with a witty (hopefully) passage every page or two. The more I think about it, I think Woody Allen is right that 85% of life is just showing up, ~~the~~ but the other 15% is taking it seriously.

19 Nov.--A snow day, which, as the light now fades at 3 o'clock, is getting tedious. The power went off at 10:30 this morning, and while we're happily hearing the purr of the furnace thanks to our emergency power system, we have to be a bit stingy on lights.

C. tried to get the Honda up the snowy hill to the college this morning but spun out, brought it home, and damn well walked up. I got in a reasonable morning of writing, and have gone out 2 or 3 times to bat snow off limbs; the snow turned from quite dry, first thing this morning, to very damp, and so far we've lost one fork of the big old madrona behind the house.

21 Nov.--Thursday now, the weathery week drawing down, fat patches of snow still on the hill behind the house. And along the side of the road, so much so that I haven't done my usually daily $2\frac{1}{4}$ mi. walk of the n'hood the past three days, and am beginning to feel it, a bit cabin-feverish and logey. Will get on my Nordic-track

exerciser later this afternoon. C. is out loading us up with more grub etc., in case another of these snow surprises hits; this one was forecast as snow showers and must have dumped at least 8 inches (there still was 6" of heavy wet snow on the roof y'day afternoon when I checked the raingutters and drainpipes to see that they were flowing). The ninnies who run Shoreline College called off classes after 8:30, the morning of the snow, which meant C. walked up there pretty much for nothing; y'day she got a break, when they announced classes would be held from 10:30 on, giving her a free day since her 2 classes are 8:30 and 9:30.

In the writing life, I've spent the week tinkering with the second scene, a tough thing to bring off--I'm trying to show Mitch have a kind of environmental nervous breakdown while flying over the Cascade volcanoes.

4 Dec.--Grueling weather, along with all that piles up this time of year; tough to get out for exercise, and the desk calendar always full of year-end this and that.

Been heavy rain virtually all morning--now 10 to 11--and 40 mph wind is forecast for this afternoon. Humbug. C and I looked at each on Monday and said, 2 weeks until we go to Tucson.

At the wordworks, I've had an up and down week, trying

4 Dec. cont.--to both achieve a few pp. this week and get Keeping the Days to take on more plot. I think the plot picture improved today, ~~much~~ as I thought toward bringing Mariah into the high-country hike with Mitch and Lexa.

Thanksgiving was nearly a week ago, what a welcome respite it was. Mark and Lou Damborg volunteered to take it off our hands this year, offering up what may be a kind of farewell to their big Capitol Hill house if they go to a Queen Anne condo next year. So, C and I got to watch the two of them emerge periodically flushed with kitchen heat and the chores of hosting the bunch, which this year was: Peter Rockas and Cathy Acker, Richard White and Beverly Purrington, John and Kathrin Maloof, Linda Bierds and Sydney Kaplan, Ann McCartney and Norm Lindquist, Jack Gordon and us. (The other regulars, Linda Sullivan and Jeff Saeger, took the chance to go to the Bay area.) People in pretty good fettle, although with some career frets--Cathy vowing only a couple of more years of overseeing computers at SeaFirst (when the overnight clearing of millions of checks breaks down, as it did with the Spokane ice storm, she's in charge and has to phone her boss in the middle of the night with the bad news), Peter having to slack up on therapy patients because of the harsh economics of working with HMOs, Beverly in a teetery time because Antioch is teetery; and Richard, who'd originally blown off the Harvard quest for a western historian, is now saying that even the admirable new UW prez and administration don't seem to be doing much good for the trend of public education, and the Harvard job is a standing offer for him--C merrily told him goodbye, Thanksgiving and likely beyond, with "Richard, it's been good knowing you."

9 Dec.--Yesterday the road at last turned, from its beginning on April 24 when we flew to San Francisco to start on the tour for Bucking the Sun. At 4 y'day afternoon, having sold 71 hardbacks of Bucking and 50 or so assorted paperbacks (they ran out of Rascal Fair), I left the Oregon Historical Society 75-authors' shindig and C and I flew home to the next life--this the last week of her usual autumn regimen of Western Lit and the mass media course (a reduced course load ahead for her, next year), and I'm now free to try to achieve Keeping the Days.

9 Dec. cont.--Perhaps more than coincidentally, along with putting the promotional trail behind me I was also able this morning to shed the jitters of how to handle my dab of Microsoft stock. (A soaring dab; in essence I bought it at \$40, and today it split at \$152.) If we never make another goddamn dime in the stock market, we at least cleared 50% profit on our original \$16,000 and I still have 500 shares left, pure gravy. It has been astounding to C and me, because we had to run scared in our finances all the years my folks or hers were heading into ailing and aging territory, what we've been able to do now that my book contracts and her TIAA/CREF pension plan have given us some assets to work with; our holdings went up nearly \$65,000 in November's roaring stock market. Knowing there market collywobbles or worse somewhere ahead, now we're tucking away some of the gains.

But ah, back to Portland. We had our usual fine time there, although this probably marked the end of our long love affair with the Heathman Hotel, no longer the same--which is to say, we thought it was super--since Mary Arnstad got promoted to running the whole hotel chain.

It always struck me as unlikely anyway, blue-denim type that I am to be bemused by a snazzy hotel; but there it was, good times, good food, smack in downtown Portland, and I spilled a lot of publishers' money into the place across the past decade or so. Back to transience, with a rueful sigh, but for that matter I'm not apt to be in Portland as often as I've lately been, determined now to cut back on the OHS events to no more than every 3rd year, when I have a new hardback out. This year's was a good goodbye-for-awhile, Craig ~~lesly~~ on hand selling books in high old style--C and I had dinner with Craig @ the Heathman the night before (Kathy laid low by a migraine) and caught up with his promising next-book idea, an Alaska version of the damaged-kid story he's gone through with John, the boy from his first marriage--and next to me,

Bruce Hamilton, selling his Portland Rose Garden photo book like crazy. Bruce sold 6 or 8 before Mary Schlick--our other tablemate--or I could get sat down, and while we all kidded uproariously about that, Bruce was also pretty pumped and half-serious about the list's he was starting to mark down. Then, though, up shuffled some guy damaged in various ways and planted his elbows

9 Dec. cont.--squarely atop Bruce's pile of books while he expounded in garbled fashion for about 5 min., giving Bruce a taste of the other side of this booksigning stuff. The previous day, C and I went out to Powell's in Beaverton, as I'd done on previous OHS weekends, and while we were coping pretty well with escort Kay Reid's aversion to freeways or anything resembling one (it did cross my mind that some of her backstreet route out to Beaverton must originally have been deer paths), we arrived to the spectacle of the Powell's store wrapped in plastic, a la Christo. Inside, the mid-renovation was even more dire, buckets here and there under leaks in the ceiling. Mine was their first reading in these new circumstances, and while it took them some scurrying, particularly to find a mike stand (pretty damn vital, since I was reading from Rascal Fair and would've had to hold the book and mike simultaneously), they got it together, had a full house, and we sold a nice number of books.

25 Dec.--Christmas morn, of this large and prosperous year of ours. Near dinnertime we go to Jean and John Roden's--Lisa and Jerry Clemens due there from Mpls @ mid-day--for the get-together we've done before; tomorrow night it's at the Nelsons', where there's getting to be a tradition of the DeForrests and us gathering with them; and Friday night, away we go to The Nutcracker.

But ah, where we've been, Tucson the 16th-21st. The edge of the massive blue norther that moved down the country from Montana and the Dakotas to New Orleans brushed Tucson, taking the thermometer down to below freezing the first few nights, but it was just our kind of weather, bright, blue, 60ish. Except for a usual pilgrimage to Saguaro East one morning, we hiked in Catalina State Park every forenoon of our stay, usually down to shirtsleeves by 10 or 10:30. Then it'd be lunch back at our room in the nearing-venerable but well-kempt Wayward Winds motel on the considerably unkempt Miracle Mile (a truly seedy-looking "adult motel", the Tropicana, sits 2 doors down from the Wayward), a nap, an hour or so of flopping down in the sun by the pool, a drink while watching a bit of TV news, and out to dinner. Talk about restorative!

25 Dec. cont.--C has done the Tucson dinners report card in her diary, so I'll do what I can, from memory, of our birdsightings: @ Catalina, a roadrunner or two buzzing along the roadside as we'd drive out after our hikes; a kestrel in a treetop; a cardinal sighting a day, a vivid visual treat for us; doves, doves, doves taking a-fright along the trail; gila woodpeckers yapping, and a pileated industriously going after a tree near the trail out of the parking lot; flocks of LDBs, little dark birds of sundry kinds; and besides birdlife, a couple of deer, backlit by the morning sun, on the rim of the arroyo. At the Wayward itself, more gila woodpeckers and LDBs using a dead palm as a bird apartment house--the palm's top, like a pine cone the size of a beachball, is honeycombed with nest holes; and thrashers and mockingbirds, which produced two wonderful moments--the mockingbird breaking into medley above us as we were getting into the car to leave, and an extended scenario in the red-berried hedge outside our room where a mockingbird tried to scold the much larger thrasher away from the berry larder, the impassive thrasher at one point surfacing out of the hedge like a submarine to look around while the mockingbird hopped high and low looking for an angle of influence.

The weather was so nice and our afternoon hibernations in the sun so comfortable that we didn't even do some of the intended sightseeing, such as San Xavier del Bac or the Desert Museum; did go to a movie, The English Patient, splendidly photographed and well-acted, often loopy in plot or continuity logic--as C caught, how was the cuckolded husband supposed to fly Almas out of the desert in the 2-seater bi-plane when in the front seat, lo and behold, is the prized blond wife along for the ride?

As to Tucson in general, it's a fine small dose for us, but in larger terms it's slowly but continuously heart-breaking: every time we're there, we can see the desert being murdered that much more. (Phoenix is infinitely worse.) The Tucson basin, with artesian water and all that surminess, was cut out to be a kind of paradise for a population of about 50,000; it's damn near 20 times that now, and the growth to the north is rampant, a "development" of 13,000 houses (plus golf courses etc.) approved for the nowhere little burg of Marana while we were there.

And in the time since we've been back, we've whipped into assorted financial stuff (year-end charitable

25 Dec. cont.--contributions, my Def Ben pension calculations, some stock-guessing) so vigorously we're actually a few days ahead on all that. If the weather here ever gets out of this rainy cycle, we'll go off and hike Dungeness; meanwhile, we hunker in and tend to chores.

27 Dec.--Hunkered, thoroughly, is the word for it. Snow is about knee-deep; I measured 6" on the trunk of the cars y'day before sweeping it off, and another fresh 7" when I did the same this morning. There'd been some general-muttering forecasts about possible snow, so after breakfast y'day I did something I don't habitually, dialed up the phone weather forecast, and heard the winter storm watch warning. Hotfoot to the food store go the Doigs, the QFC pleasantly surprising us by having dandy beef roasts available the morning after having been closed for Xmas, and we bought 4-5 days' worth of milk and other stuff. It now looks as if we'll need it, especially if the threat of more snow tomorrow night comes true. I went outside mid-morning and shoveled open the woodshed and the garbage-can compartment, and threw some old cereal in places for the birds; will need to go out again before dark and knock ice out of the bottom of the drainspouts. Otherwise, we're satisfactorily in. We had Christmas dinner at the Rodens', catching up with Lisa's new job of coordinating Cargill lobbyists in various states (she told of gingerly trying to immerse in the South Dakota Cargillers' desire to put heavier trucks on highways and the opposing railroad lobbyist leaning toward her to say, "Not on your life!") and more briefly with Jerry, who by the end of dinner had been done in by unaccustomed cups of coffee in that megaton-caffeinated household and disappeared to sleep off a coffee hangover-headache. The snowstorm did kill off last night's gathering at the Nelsons', and tonight we were at long last to go to The Nutcracker--C put the phone on automatic redial this afternoon until she got through to beleaguered Pacific NW Ballatt and was told they are going to try to put together an extra show for us snowbirds.

29 Dec.--The Big Melt. It snowed again last night, another 10" or so atop the extant foot of snow, and then began raining about 5 this morning. I've now yanked ~~the~~ all six drainpipes off the raingutters, because they freeze shut at every elbow, and water is pouring out of the spouts. The next question is where the hell all this moisture--still a dense foot or more of it on the roof, and nearly two feet of it around the house--is going to go.

The warmth perimeter around the house, the couple of feet beneath the roof overhang, has become a bird refuge. Varied thrushes in particular have worked the thin remnant of bark path under the overhang at the back of the house, and other birds were at the puddle from the drainpipe near the kitchen window, using it as a water-hole.

30 Dec. --Still melting furiously; all six drainpipes have been running like open faucets for at least the past 36 hours, and there's still about a 9-12" snowpack on the roof. (I went out y'day afternoon and cleared out ice frozen in the bottom of the raingutters, prying it out in lengths about a foot long and couple of inches thick.) The snow now looks all beat to hell, lumpy, graying, and strewn with branches in the driveway from the fairly considerable wind that came up about supper-time last night. The roads are such a mess that we figure we'll forgo the substitute performance of The Nutcracker today at 4. So, we're spending the day at our desks, C doing coursework for next quarter (and cussing the computer when it freezes rather than prints for her) while I've literally cleaned my desk--took everything off and scrubbed the surface--and am trying to catch up on some correspondence.

31 Dec.--Now the weather warning is wind with a 2-day rainstorm, so this morning at daybreak we moved a few minutes' worth of snow, plotted our trajectory to back the Honda out, and headed up to the QFC to stock in several days' food again, repeating the prime part of the snowstorm menu, a big pricey reliable standing rib roast, by god.

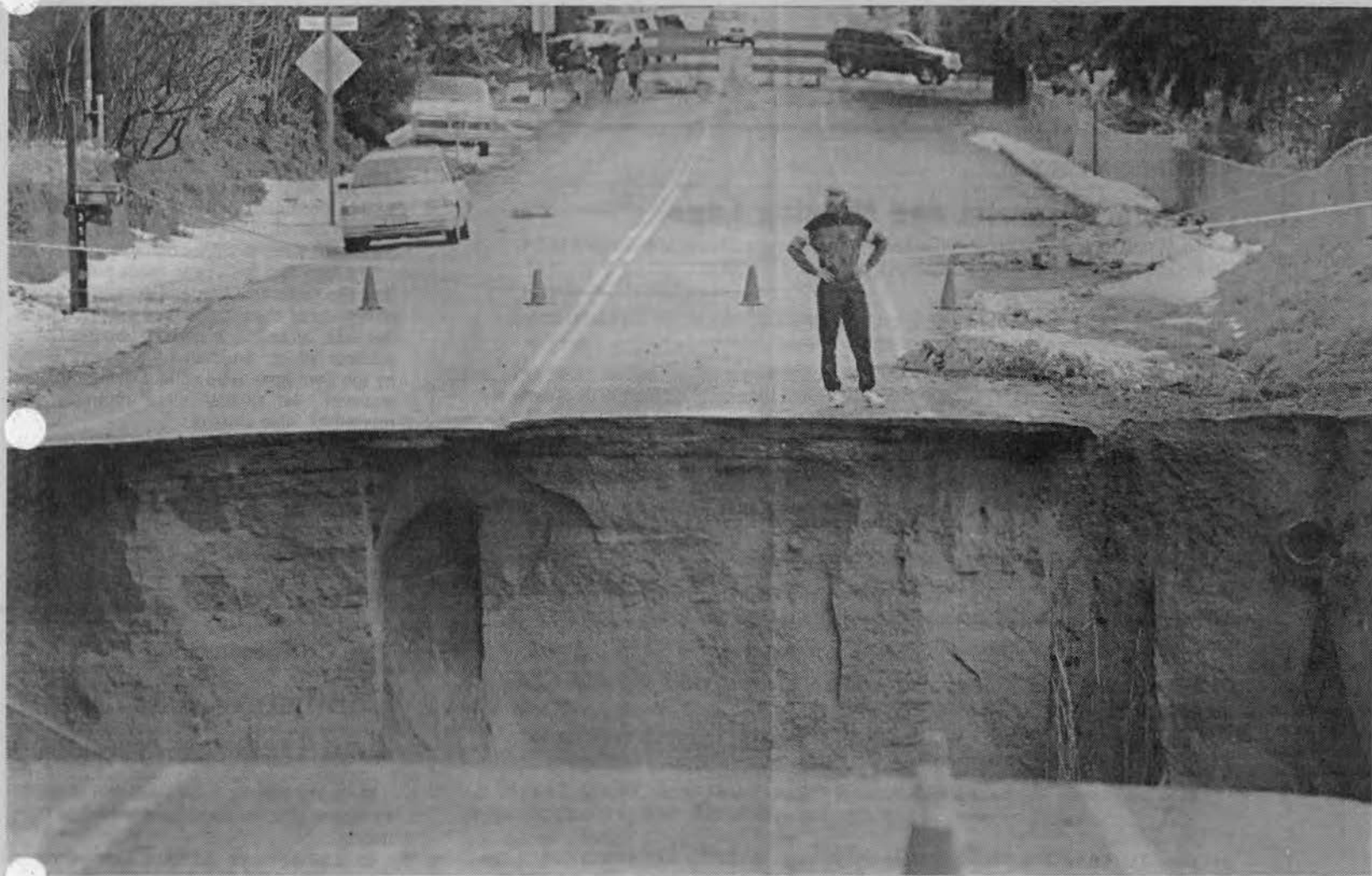
We also bought newspapers with both hands, deprived these past several days of the NY Times, and when the

31 Dec. cont.--last 3 days' Timeses were dropped on our carport at mid-day, we're about running over in news-print.

Meanwhile it's raining, raining, the downspoutless gutters running like half-open faucets as they have been for what, 3 days and nights? There's still 3 or 4 inches of snow around, although a lot of bare patches too, now.

I've tried to catch up on correspondence by doing letters on the computer the past couple of days, and it's a medium thrill. But now, 3:15, I'm about to shut down the desk, do moderate exercise on my Nordic tracker, then with a fire in the fireplace and roast beef on the table and Carol on the other side of a clinking glass of wine, call it a year.

Our sink hole
@ 175th & 6th



Associated Press

A 30-by-100-foot sinkhole swallowed a three-way intersection in Shoreline, Wash. Similar giant holes, mud slides and flooding ushered in the New Year in the Pacific Northwest after a week of wild weather that included snow, rain and ice storms. Some likened the weather to the 10 plagues.

Season of Woe in the Northwest Leaves at Least 11 Dead

~~This is the~~
~~Welcome to an~~
evening when the State of Washington becomes a state of literary exultation, a place where we celebrate that strange tapping behavior which somehow turns the keyboard's scrambled alphabet into a book, and a place where we declare ourselves a statewide community with--in the wise counsel of our late great literary neighbor, the Oregon poet William Stafford--"a one-word constitution: Patience."

Literature and politics are both work you can't rush, and maybe it's those terms of the two jobs that brought about Washington's distinctive tribal habit of its governors honoring its writers--Dan Evans gazing into some page on a green and gray winter day those 30 years ago and realizing that the same rain falls on chiefs and storytellers.

This is the fourth time that **Mike and Mary Lowry** have graced this annual occasion, and we thank them for faithfully carrying on the tradition of these awards.

There of course can't be awards without judges, the critical quintet who took on the task of choosing tonight's books for their literary merit, lasting importance, and elegance in their published form--the five who read and read and read:

Bruce Barcott, of Seattle

Scott Blume, of Bellingham

Nancy Olsen, of Bainbridge Island

Doris Pieroth, of Seattle

and **Konny Thompson** of Spokane--please stand and get a hand of thanks for your work.

As to why I'm up here, I've been cropping up at this event now through--well, four governors. This is my first time here as a tourist, although **Margaret Ann** has fancied up the job description to "master of ceremonies." What I am mostly to master is time, and in my assignment tonight to "comment for about 15 minutes on the art of writing," I do know what a deadline is.

Let us begin at the beginning, when art began to dance off the cave walls to us. Literature perhaps begins there, in the painted bison running in the tunnels of time, and the

"You're not sugar nor salt nor nobody's honey, so the rain will never hurt you," she crooned to me.

"That one goes around looking like she's been yanked through a knothole backwards," she huffed about our worst-dressed neighbor.

And, she confided about the couple dallying together in our wide-eyed little town, "Those two are as close as three in a bed with one kicked out."

Into my life had come that river of proverbs, my grandmother.

I was ten years of age, but my ears were as old as sin. All of a sudden I knew I was in new territory of life, something like honorary adulthood. Now, besides my Scots-burr storytelling widower father, here was my mother's mother in this reluctant knot of bloodline they had made, to raise me.

So, you bet, my ears were busy from then on, with the picture-play of words from my grandmother--whose formal education had broken off at the third grade--whenever

the prairie wind would swirl up her dress and she would announce, "Balloon ascension!" Or with the bloodstream music of rhyme when my father, from the heights of his eight-grade education, would ask, "Have they taught ye this one yet" and begin reciting, to my dropped jaw, "Hiawatha".

It lasts.

We've known so ever since art began to dance off the cave walls to us--literature perhaps begins there, in the painted bison running in the tunnels of time, and the hunting

escapades they represent being told around the fire. I think that's what we're still up to, in the white canyons of paper and now the nebulae of cyberspace... Donald and Robert as poets John and Susan and I as literary story-tellers... I think stories and their singing teachers, poems, still can be our way of sharing light--of sitting together around humanity's fire with the universal dark all around us.

Our work, our words, of course ^{have} ~~has~~ to start on the cave walls between our own ears--the everyday life of the writer,

if that's what you can call sitting around in your own head all the time. In my case, I probably reveal something in Bucking the Sun when I have the Fort Peck taxi-dancer Proxy Shannon ask her new companion of the night about his suspicious political background: "Darius, if they pin something on you, will any get on me?"

In my everyday work, I see it as my job to try to get poetry and literature on people.

On my characters, first. People who are poor in all else

are often rich in language. (My god, the history of the Irish!) The everyday-ness of that pair of imaginative tongues I grew up around must have drilled that into me, because from my very start as a book writer with *This House of Sky*, I've always tried to attain a language which makes a shimmer behind the story-- the appeal, the wonder, of the vernacular of people's lives coming through. Any kind of work has its own vocabulary, and people are dauntingly good at making up a language about what they do.

Trying to learn the lingo of damworkers of the 1930's, I showed one of them a picture by Margaret Bourke-White in her famous photo-essay of Fort Peck Dam and its boomtowns in the first issue of LIFE magazine--the photo showed one of the dam's tunnel liners, a steel culvert thirty feet in diameter, cobwebbed inside with crisscross support rods bolted to collars in the middle of this colossal tube, and a bunch of damworkers 15 feet in the air, in there, climbing on these skinny rods--and I asked, "What's going on here?"

Well, he said, those rods and collars keep the tension on the shape of the tunnel liner until it can be put in place, so they're called "tension spiders"--and when you're up there in mid-air working on them, naturally that's called "riding the tension spiders."

If that's not everyday poetry and/or literature, I don't know what is.

But do people in the larger sum of their lives, American peasant stock such as my pagefuls of Duffs and McCaskills

9
and Doigs, really make use of literary analogies and poetic
urges, of all things?

I'm here to tell you they do. Literally here, beside
this lake, where I went to college, and tapped out my first
writing tries--where Carol and I met and courted and were
married, 31 years north of here at Northwestern--I think
it's not mere coincidence that after those Great Lake years,
of winters beside frozen shores and with the thaw called
love arriving with Carol and lakeside spring, I think

it cannot be just coincidental that the story that ultimately fascinated me was of the creation of an inland sea, Montana's Fort Peck Dam and its mammoth manmade lake, and its Depression-driven damworkers and taxi-dancers and their lives and loves on that created shore.

Another Montanan who was led here, young, to this lakeside--Norman Maclean of the University of Chicago--chose as the final words of A river Runs through It the sentence, "I am haunted by waters." Many of us from the West, where

water so often has been made to flow uphill toward money,
hear the course of our lives in that most literary of sentences:

When readers imbibe our writing--and we as the brewers
and you as the bartenders of the stuff have to hope they
positively swim in it, don't we--when readers take it in,
I believe they have to know at first glance and steadily
from then on that what they're seeing is not only the work of
the head, but of more than one heart.

One of those is the heart of the language, the sounds

that come off the page.

The other vital pulse on the page I don't know what to call except the blood-sum of the writer. Magical, inexplicable, whatever it is, but the literary quality by which a writer write better than he has any right to. By which Faulkner, who could barely rouse himself to sort mail in a somnolent post office. has somewhere in him the ambition as a writer "to put everything into one sentence--not only the present but the whole past on which it depends and which keeps overtaking

the present, second by second." By which Yeats, his pince-nez eyeglasses perched on his upper-crust nose, somehow-- somehow--could see deeply to "where all ladders start/ in the foul rag and bone shop of the heart."

Here in this convention cavern, full of all of us for whom poetry and literature are everyday life, we are happily haunted by words and what they can do. Art is never "for its own sake," so long as there is any other set of eyes to take it in. Robert Pinsky has said of poetry:

"The poem, new or old, should be able to help us, if only to help us by delivering the relief that something has been understood, or even seen, well."

As a practitioner of novels, I think the same aim must be set for fiction. Poetry and literary prose, those echoes around the fire--at their best, they are also heartbeats of the world.

IVAN DOIG CHICAGO ITINERARY

Contact: Erin Marut

w: 212/698-7528

h: 201/792-2126

Saturday, June 15

Depart: 6:39 AM from Seattle on American Flight # 1892

Arrive: 12:30 PM in Chicago

Ivan and Carol, please take a taxi to the airport. We will reimburse you for the cost:

Hotel: Renaissance Hotel (four nights)

One West Wacker Drive

Chicago, IL 60601

Phone: 312/372-7200

Fax: 312/372-0093

Postcard to Ann Nelson, 643 West Wacker Drive, 72100

**Depart bet. 7:30 PM
and 7:45 PM**

DOIG DINNER WITH BOOKSELLERS

*Car for 4 -- pickup at Renaissance Hotel, 1 West Wacker Drive,
Carolyn Reidy (S&S President & Publisher) Larry Norton (V-P and Direc
of Sales), Ivan and Carol Doig.

Ivan, please meet Carolyn Reidy and Larry Norton in the hotel lobby.

8:00 PM

Reservation: Printer's Row Restaurant, 550 S. Dearborn

Ivan, you will be joined by booksellers (names tk)

Carey Car Confirmation # 96156104

Local Carey Number: 312/763-0009

Sunday, June 16 7-8

~~8:45~~

9:30 AM

~~8:45~~ review speech

Ivan and Carol, you can meet Victoria Meyer at the Concierge Desk in the hotel lobby. The three of you will take a taxi to the S&S Booth in the North Bldg., #2214

11:10 AM Walk with Victoria to the East Bldg. (Green Room)

11:30 AM Arrive in Green Room
East Bldg/Room 450
McCormick Place

12:00 PM Poetry & Literature in Everyday Life Luncheon
*You will speak for about 10 minutes. The order of speakers: Robert Haas (emcee); Ivan Doig, Susan Power, Donald Hall and John Edgar Wideman.
*Following the event there will be a brief Q&A in the Green Room

Victoria will walk with you and Carol from the East Bldg back to the North Bldg. for autographing.

2:45 Arrival Please "check in" at the office set up in the autographing area.

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM Autographing (Table 9)
North Bldg/Lower Level
McCormick Place Complex

4:10 PM Carey Car pick up at North Bldg (Lower Level) of McCormick Place
Confirmation # 96156112
Carey local number 312/763-0009

You will head back to the Renaissance Hotel where the car will wait while you prepare for the evening event.

6:10 PM Meet Victoria at the Concierge Desk

6:15 PM Depart for the Frontera Grill
445 North Clark St.
*Neil Simon will ride over with you.

6:30 PM S&S Cocktail Party for authors and booksellers at the Frontera Grill

8:00 PM Private S&S dinner at Topolobampo, adjacent to the Frontera Grill.

Monday, June 17

Ivan, your morning is free so far.

2:40 PM - 3:00 PM

WDWS-FM/Mark Heimberger Show BY PHONE

Mark will call you at the Renaissance hotel.

Station number: 217/351-5609

*This is a live phone interview. WDWS broadcasts all over Illinois.

3:30 PM until...

Chicago Sun Times Interview

John Barron, the Sun Times' Sunday Showcase editor, will meet you in the hotel lobby at the Concierge Desk.

His number: 312/321-2897.

*I will let you know if he will bring a photographer.

5:00 PM to....

Phone interview with Dan Webster

Spokane Spokesman

Phone: 509/459-5000

*Dan will call you at your hotel.

7:10 Bill Young will escort you to and from your signing at Barbara's. He will call your hotel to arrange a pick-up time. His number is 847/864-1587.

7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Barbara's Books

1350 N. Wells St.

Contact: Isabella Reitzel

Phone: 312/281-9919

Tuesday, June 18

Free Day.

Wednesday, June 19

Please take a taxi to the airport.

Depart: 2:55 PM from Chicago O'Hare on American Flight # 1387

Arrive: 5:13 PM in Seattle.

...son her into her Highland Park...
while the child's mother was hospital-

man says she was trying to save the
from an abusive environment in
the child maintained she was often
1. Now she is seeking to adopt her in
County Circuit Court.

child doesn't hesitate when asked
world she prefers.

not just a house, it's a family," she
of her Highland Park home. "I have
of love in this house. I have better
s and a good school to go to."

with her mother, she said, was diffi-
She would yell at her and hit her, the
aid. At the grocery, she said, she
walk away in embarrassment while
mother tried to peddle food stamps to
customers.

few weeks ago, the child penned an
e plea, numbering each thought as it
to her.

8 says her mother didn't let her
er. No. 26 says her mother left her
frequently, and No. 27 says her
er didn't take her to the doctor when
as sick.

girl said she's afraid to return to her
er.

Leyzerovich's lawyer, Kendra Rein-
n, said: "I would be suspicious about
real the fear is. If it is in the child's
that it is dangerous [to return to her
gical mother], that needs to be dealt
in a way that's different from taking
om her family."

the case has disturbed some in Chi-

SEE RUSSIAN, PAGE 2

INSIDE



Discrimination after death

Dawn Meschick (above) faced insults
and abuse when she tried to have her
aunt buried. Her aunt weighed 500
pounds when she died. **Page 4.**

Helping the two-wheel crowd

en Gomborg, the city's new bicycle
ordinator, is charged with making it
ore friendly to bikers. **Page 3.**

Eric Zorn is on vacation.



Tribune photo by Carl Wagner

Neighbor Brenda Davis (right) comforts Gwen Carter, whose mother lived in the 7039 S.
Wentworth Ave. building that was gutted by a reported firebomb after the Bulls' win.

CHICAGO TRIBUNE, TUESDAY, JUNE 18, '96 It wasn't safe, sane for all

By Julie Deardorff
and Andrew Martin
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITERS

At least four people were
reported shot. Six hundred
and fifty were arrested.
Thirty-eight stores were bro-
ken into and some of them
were looted. Fifty-eight
police cars were damaged,
many by flying bottles and
rocks. Forty-five fires were
touched off in buildings or
cars.

But despite the mayhem
Sunday night after the Chi-
cago Bulls clinched their
fourth NBA title, the statis-
tics were the kind that
prompted city officials a day
later to pronounce their sat-
isfaction with police efforts
to curb the post-game pande-
monium.

"It was outstanding and
went according to our best-
laid plans," said Police Supt.
Matt Rodriguez, who satu-
rated the city with 6,000
police officers. The beefed-

SEE AFTERMATH, PAGE 2



Tribune photo by Carl Wagner

High sign: Sportmart, 620 N. LaSalle St., sports a
victory banner. For details on Tuesday's rally, see **Page 7.**

ANN LOVEJOY: Drowning out street noise with a few soothing drops. **C4**

■ Ann Landers **C2** ■ Television **C3**
■ Coffee Break **C6**

LIFESTYLE

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Ivan Doig



Sherman Alexie

Northwest authors draw praise, deflect criticism

By JOHN MARSHALL
PI REPORTER

CHICAGO — Northwest authors again had their time in the ABA spotlight this year, especially Ivan Doig, David Guterson, Sherman Alexie and Betty J. Eadie. Doig was one of five speakers at ABA's premiere literary event, a Sunday luncheon that also featured American poet laureate Robert Hass, novelists Susan Power and John Edgar Wideman, and poet Donald Hall. Hass introduced Doig by describing his memoir, "This House of Sky," as "an American classic."

Doig, looking unusually serious in sport coat and tie, responded with a soft-spoken, but eloquent description of his approach as a writer. He told the crowd of 500, "I see it as my everyday job to get literature and poetry over to people. I've always tried to attain a language that makes a shimmer behind the story."

Guterson arrived at ABA to find himself and his work splashed across the front page of a special convention edition of USA Today. The Bainbridge Island writer's first novel, "Snow Falling on Cedars," was listed as the fourth best-selling book this year, after "The Rainmaker" by John Grisham, "Primary Colors" by Anonymous and "Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus" by John Gray.

The staggering sales of "Snow Falling on Cedars" turned Guterson into the eighth best-selling U.S. writer this year, in USA Today's tabulation.

So it was no great surprise that booksellers named "Snow Falling on Cedars" as the favorite book they sold during the year (it had been a finalist for the same award last year). The "ABBY" carries a \$5,000 prize and a Tiffany glass sculpture.

Accepting the award Sunday morning, Guterson told hundreds of booksellers that he was "greatly honored to have this recognition from those who know books better than anyone else."

Guterson came in for some light criticism in a New York Observer article that was literary Topic A throughout ABA. The article was a savage attack on the selection of 20 writers that Granta magazine tabbed as "the best American novelists under 40." Guterson's Granta photograph, which showed the writer reclining barefoot on a couch, was republished in the New York Observer with the caption: "Granta — or J. Crew? David Guterson." That prompted a huge laugh from the author himself.

Alexie, Seattle's other honoree on the Granta list, did not get off so easily, becoming one of the prime Granta targets of the Observer's Vince Passaro, who wrote, "Mr. Alexie is the Native American representative. The judges probably thought they couldn't do without him. . . . Mr. Alexie presents narrative that looks more like notes than finished product."

Alexie had come to his second straight ABA to promote his fall novel, "Indian Killer," for Atlantic Monthly Press and also to receive a book award from the Before Columbus Foundation for his first novel, "Reservation Blues." Instead, Alexie found himself in the unfamiliar position of being harshly criticized, and even controversial.

He minced no words in response, saying, "I'm never surprised by anybody's racism, but to blame Granta for the diversity of its list is absurd. If I hadn't achieved a lot already, I might consider criticism of my selection to have some validity. But I've been one of the most critically acclaimed young writers. I've actually been surprised that I have not received more criticism. Probably 95 percent of my reviews have been positive — and nobody's that good. Certainly not me."

Having a far more pleasant time in the ABA spotlight was Betty J. Eadie of Seattle, who burst onto the best-seller lists with an account of her near-death experience ("Embraced by the Light") that was first released by a tiny publisher. Now, Eadie basked in big commercial publisher star treatment, as Pocket Books fired up its publicity engine for her fall book, "The Awakening Heart."

Eadie's lighted picture had a place of prominence in the Pocket Books booth, she was toasted at a breakfast for booksellers, her autograph session drew throngs of eager fans. And Eadie was treated to the ultimate ABA plum for a writer — a publisher-hosted, invitation-only dinner party at the Ritz-Carlton.

Eadie has arrived, and then some. A few years ago, she was an unknown writer struggling to get published. Now, she is a prime example of what bestsellerdom can bestow.

ABA convention loses some of its zing

By JOHN MARSHALL
PI REPORTER

CHICAGO — Oprah led them, almost 1,000 strong, as they headed out of Soldier Field on a "power walk" across vast expanses of parking lot, up highway overpasses, and, finally, along the lakefront to the Oz of Bookselling.

This media magnate, whose talk show seems to have launched 1,000 best sellers, exhorted the booksellers to move smartly along as they headed out toward the huge hulking edifices of the McCormick Place Complex, site of the 1996 American Booksellers Association Convention and Trade Exhibit (ABA).

Oprah, her legs and arms moving as fast as her mouth ("Come on, girl!"), set a brisk pace. Many booksellers soon fell behind. Part of that was probably from having eaten too much at the vast low-fat breakfast buffet set out under tents on the pro football field to promote Oprah Winfrey and her personal trainer Bob Greene's fall book for Hyperion, "Make the Connection: Ten Steps to a Better Body — And a Better Life."

Part of the booksellers' slow-footedness may have resulted from the usual ABA angst. But as the three-day event unfolded, it began to seem symptomatic of a certain crisis of confidence caused by a variety of factors: absent publishers, booksellers and big-name literary authors, tough economic times, fewer social events, the late date of this year's show and its behemoth size.

To have 42,000 attendees walking through 2,500 exhibits spread over 360,000 square feet of space might look great in the Guinness book. But it can make an attendee feel like an ant crossing a freeway at rush hour.

Chicago is to be ABA's home through the end of the century and last year's event there had horrendous logistical snafus, both inside and outside. This year's ABA faced a more daunting problem before it opened.

The 7,000-member association, which represents independent booksellers, had sued Random House, accusing the publisher of giving price breaks and promotional dollars to the huge chain bookstores (a charge denied by the publisher). Random House promptly pulled out of ABA, forfeiting a \$150,000 deposit, but also leaving a huge hole at the convention, since the publisher was to occupy 8,700 square feet of McCormick, more than twice as much space as anyone else.

No such hole could be seen on the floor when the convention opened, but it could be felt. A convention that usually focuses on who's here (can you believe . . . came?) instead found itself pondering the effect of who wasn't — not just the Random House staffers and booths, but also the prestigious authors and high-gloss

events that Random House hosts.

ABA assumed the air of a wedding which the parents of the bride were boycotting. It went on as scheduled, but everyone who came was drawn into endless discussions of just how important the defection had been. Camps of opinion emerged.

There were those who saw the Random House defection as a one-time thing, despite recent ABA pullouts by other publishers, including St. Martin's Press and Viking/Penguin, and scaled-back efforts by others.

"I'm sorry that Random House is not here," said Chuck Robinson of Village Books in Bellingham, a past president of ABA and longtime board member. "The impact on the show is not so much that Random is not here, as that this is supposed to be the gathering of the book business — this is our time to come together as a community. So I'm hopeful that Random House will come back next year."

Molly Cook of Magnolia's Bookstore took another view, saying, "The fact that Random House is not here — they're so big, so glitzy — has meant that I'm getting so much more done."

But there were also many who felt the loss of Random House and worried what that might portend. Among those was Morgan Entrekin, the respected publisher of Grove/Atlantic.

"This ABA seems a little flat to me," Entrekin summarized. "I miss my friends from Random House and the convention just seems to be lacking critical mass, although there are tons of 'book products' which I would just as soon see thrown out of the convention. I just hope ABA hasn't killed its golden goose."

ABA did retain its expected essence — part high school reunion, part nonstop shopping spree, part summer camp for adults. But it all seemed turned down a couple notches, more workman-like, muted in many ways.



Renee Bullock of Baltimore rubbed shoulders with Fabio.

See ABA, Page C4

ABA: Fewer parties and less hot-book buzz

From Page C1

Big-name literary authors were replaced by the sorts of celebrities whose books now dominate the best-seller lists. Promoting their books at ABA, besides Oprah, were such celebs as Jane Fonda, Mia Farrow, Ethan Hawke, Richard Simmons, Cindy Crawford, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and "Fergie," the Duchess of York.

Even the traditional ABA "buzz" about some upcoming book, a can't-miss hit, seemed lacking. Nothing seemed to rivet attention this year as Nicholas Evans' "The Horse Whisperer" did last year.

And the diminished number of ABA parties was much remarked upon. After a difficult period for many booksellers and publishers — Entretien described it as "the toughest six months I've ever seen, for lots of reasons" — ABA attendees were all dressed up and ready to party, but found fewer hosted events.

Ingram, a book distributor, again invited the entire convention to its Sunday night soiree on Chicago's huge Navy Pier amusement center. Publishers Group West, which represents 25 publishers, countered with a

gala with Morphine (the band, not the drug). Both events were hampered by fears the Chicago Bulls' championship victory over the Seattle SuperSonics might prompt rioting, or at least cause cabbies to pull their cars off the streets, stranding partygoers.

Microsoft Press of Redmond did its part on the party front Saturday evening, taking over Chicago's entire Shedd Aquarium, where 200 people strolled among the exhibits and sipped cocktails. Later, they selected from elaborate buffet tables featuring Italian and Asian entrees.

Microsoft Press was the most prominent Northwest presence at ABA, bringing half of its 120-person staff to the convention. And business was indeed brisk for the publisher, which now devotes itself exclusively to putting out books on Microsoft products, 150 titles in the last year.

Another Northwest presence at ABA was Jeffrey P. Bezos, president of the Seattle-based Amazon.com Books, which sells books exclusively on the Internet. Bezos roamed the floor with the frantic energy of a politician on the hustings, but might not have made such a big splash if he had not taken out glossy full-page ads in the ABA

daily put out by Publishers Weekly. "Bookstores in 180 Countries and Growing," one ad crowed.

Bezos, who headed a staff of 14 at ABA, would stop anyone and offer a quick reprise of his fledgling company's remarkable growth, how in less than a year the company's Internet bookstore has had 100,000 browsers and 10,000 paying customers.

"We are the top commercial web site," the 32-year-old Bezos said. "We're here to tell publishers that they can build their own web pages in our Internet bookstore. And authors too — we've already had thousands of authors do that in only five weeks."

The current state of ABA remained the most debated question wherever attendees gathered.

The convention has long been a Memorial Day weekend tradition, but competition for dates in Chicago and construction pushed it later into June. This year's confab was the latest ever, which meant that booksellers had completed their book ordering for fall, once the rationale for the convention.

Some orders were still being written this year. Pat Soden, director of the University of Washington Press, was thrilled with the orders written

for "Whispered Silences," a book about the World War II internment of Japanese Americans.

As ordering has fallen by the wayside, ABA has begun to seem more like a gigantic schmoozefest, an event whose benefits are much harder to quantify, or even justify. So the cadre of Random House staffers were not the only people missing in action. Much noticed was a decline in the number of booksellers.

Kristine Kaufman, manager of Parkplace Books in Kirkland, was thinking about that as she attended a small dinner party for ABA officers and other influential booksellers hosted Monday evening by the new Hungry Mind Press of St. Paul, Minn.

"I always believe," Kaufman told a dinner companion, "that ABA won't be in real trouble until booksellers are outnumbered on the convention floor by those dressed up in costumes."

While that sort of trouble might seem a long way off, the 1996 convention saw a throng of costumed characters, including Barney the dinosaur, Santa Claus, Spider Man, the Bear Who Went Over the Mountain, Elvis, Book Buddy, Nurse Kindheart, Miss Piggy, GI Joe and Fabio.



for President Bill Clinton —
a fellow admirer of FDR
and the American fate
of bucking the sun.

Ivan Doig

BUCKING
THE SUN

A NOVEL

Ivan Doig

SIMON
&
SCHUSTER

June 3, 1996

for Governor Roy Roman
of Colorado -
this book of our West.

Ivan Doig
BUCKING
THE SUN

A NOVEL

Ivan Doig

SIMON
&
SCHUSTER

June 3, 1996

31 Jan. '96
Albuquerque

Dearest Linda & Sydney—

E-mail, hah; this missive is coming to you via A(rtifact)-mail, namely my elderly Olivetti Lettera 22 portable typewriter that I bought to lug along with us in Alaskan bush planes during the "Sea Runners" research in '81. We are now ensconced, with writing desk and all, in a bubble-gum pink stucco townhouse in the northeast hills of Albuquerque, with the Sandia Mountains in gorgeous view. (The Sandias are like having a Mt. Si, but ten times bigger and rockier, right out the window.) Carol is shedding the cold that overtook her late last week, I'm not yet showing any signs of succumbing to it, and so we are perking nicely, @ 2 weeks and 1 day into what already seems a considerable trip.

We've watched the Seattle weather reports with astonishment and, um, a modicum of guilt since we left, and so you are not likely to be sympathetic to our road report of dodging through the Siskiyou between snow closures of I-5—we had a leisurely lunch in Ashland, by which time the previous day's snowfall had melted off the pavement and we didn't even have to chain up. One consequence of the Siskiyou snows and road-closures, though, was that we traveled in virtual convoy with thousands of trucks down northern California; then at a couple of immense truck stops near Corning, all those Peter-bilts and Kenworths exited in what looked like a solid wall of semi-trailers going off the road, and the Doigs and the Honda breathed easier. Highlights then, after we were truly launched down California:

—San Luis Obispo: whole town cuter'n a ladybug, with a beautiful setting for the Cal Poly campus. Ate at a student hangout called the Hudson Grill; the grill of an old Hudson car (coincidentally, Carol's family's make of car when she first came west as a teenager) looks like it's crashing through the roof of the place—even we got it.

—Next and I hope last automotive motif: on a back road we idly chose on the way to San Luis Obispo, ~~th~~ out in the middle of nowhere there was a startling metal sculpture wrapped around a tree—in memory of James Dean, who piled up his Porsche near there.

—San Diego, pleasant stay with Carol's cousins, including a fine afternoon of birdwatching in the desert hills east of SD and, o god one more automotive note, much driving around with cousin Len in his teensy black BMW convertible which kept bringing that James Dean memento to mind.

But ah, awaiting us in San Diego was a FedEx package with the second try at my book cover, and this version is as warm and interesting as the first version was daring and alarming. Can't recall if I had a chance to report the cover contretemps before we left, but while I and my editor and the higher-ups were all telling ourselves about the first version, "Well, it's unique and...strong," the sales reps all took one look at it at the Simon & Schuster sales conference and said, "It's dour and unfriendly." Getting the S&S art dept. to reverse itself was like trying to turn a battleship around "unique" and "strong," they kept saying—but this new version carries out the book's sun theme with a comely globe-shaped landscape scene ("I vignettes

it into a circle," the art director glumly told ^eme on the phone the day he was snowed in at home in Teaneck, NJ, and having to re-do my damned ~~cover~~ cover—and the rest of the cover a warm off-white, with the title in a light serif typeface. I like it.

And I guess I'd better, as an unexpected development during this trip is a deal on the next book—not, Linda, the "Fireflies at the Parthenon" one I told you a bit about, but another idea I'd been mulling, about a couple on a high-country backpacking trip that turns treacherous; you can well see, you two will be nagged ruthlessly for trail tales when I get underway on this one. All in all, things are going incredibly well between me and the publisher. They keep proclaiming themselves excited about Bucking the Sun's prospects, and this fall they'll issue (as a Scribner's paperback) Dancing at the Rascal Fair, besides this new contract—I entirely expect that the amalgamated hyperglomerate company that owns Simon & Schuster will look down from the 75th floor and say, Hey, that's all going too well, we're gonna kill off the publishing unit...

Now ^{about} to Albuquerque and our guide here, Linda Sullivan's ex-husband, Frank Zoretich. I really wish you two had known Frank Z—he and Linda split up about the time we all met—but you've been at least subliminally aware of him, as he was the P-I reporter who first got the scientists to say out loud what the possible consequences of Mt. St. Helens erupting might be. Besides his journalistic talents, Frank is a world-class expert at hanging out; by the time we had been with him 20 minutes here, we knew where the best Greek restaurant in town is, which bookstore is the coziest, etc. (Indeed, it was his hanging-out penchant—not wanting to work a regular job @ regular hours, trying to freelance and get by on whimsical article topics—that broke up the marriage; Linda said the two of them always knew how to have fun together, it was the daily nitty-gritty that Frank couldn't master.) Inasmuch as Frank is about a six-footer, bulky across the upper chest, and has a drooping gunfighter mustache and the damndest light-blue eyes—you've heard of acetylene blue? Well, Frank's are a lighter and yet more blazing blue than that—he can get away with hanging out in places and neighborhoods which would turn us pale, and has written two Cheap Thrills guidebooks to New Mexico and one to south Florida (he's the originator and sole proprietor of the Cheap Thrills Adventure Club, for the sake of his books). So, when Frank isn't at his newspaper job, we are in Wallingford—y funky expert hands, here; tomorrow, weather permitting, we go with Frank to Acoma Pueblo, the famous skytop mesa one in Death Comes for the Archbishop; Friday, a monthly lunch with Alb'que area writers, all a la Frank Z.

We're hungry for news of you two—your trip to be with your father, Syd, and your job tenterhooks, Linda—but given that we are still somewhat moving targets, we'll regretfully not look forward to any letter from you, just your smiling faces eventually. In case there's a dire reason to reach us, though, our current phone number is (505) 294-9802, until at least Feb. 5 and perhaps until Feb. 10.

Finally, the enclosed, a Santa Fe artifact I picked up in the adobe condo we stayed in at Santa Fe: thought you might get a kick out of the names and details of matrimony Santa Fe/New Age style.

love from us both,

p.s. Linda! Is this not
reminiscent of the difficulty
of writing on the right section
of the fold-up airletters from London?
My damned carbon paper folded over a corner.

(opening remarks @ NW Bookfest reading, Oct. 25, '96)

The Norman Maclean Stage, hmm? If you hear a sort of a dry, ornery, cosmic Presbyterian chuckle down out of the rafters here, that'll doubtless be Norman. Remember that line from *A River Runs through It*--

"Practically everybody on the West Coast was born in the Rocky Mountains--where they failed as fly fishermen--so they migrated to the West Coast and became lawyers, certified public accountants, presidents of airplane companies, gamblers, or Mormon missionaries."

I don't know which of those categories any of you are in, but I'm at least a cheerfully failed fly-fisherman--whenever a not un-Normanlike dry fly guy shows up on English Crick in one of my novels, my characters like to recommend that if he really wants to catch any fish, he ought to try baiting his hook with chicken guts--and I like to think what a kick Norman would have got out of us sitting here in a place named for him, trying to keep our various West Coast body parts warm.

Today I'm in the surprising situation of having two recently issued books that I'm supposed to read from--before we close off with any discussion you'd like, any questions you'd like to ask. The hardback published this year is *Bucking the Sun*, but the book of mine that has sold the most copies, down through the years--*Dancing at the Rascal Fair*--has just been given a haircut and a new suit of clothes and re-issued as a Scribner Fiction Paperback. Right in there, the publisher keeps telling me, with their other Scribner scribblers--F. Scott Fitzgerald and Hemingway. We'll see about that when the royalty statements start coming in. The more immediate problem is to do a reading from two very different books and not sound like I'm speaking in tongues, and so I think a genealogical link is worth trying.

From *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, I'm going to read a short section that introduces the Duff family into America and, I guess, several hundred of my pages of fiction, by now.

hunting escapades they represent being told around the fire. I think that's what we're still up to, in the white canyons of paper and now the nebulae of cyberspace--I think stories still can be our way of sharing light, of sitting together around humanity's fire with the universal dark all around us.

Our work, our words, of course have to start on the cave walls between our own ears--the everyday life of the writer, if that's what you can call sitting around in your own head all the time. Herman Melville surely gave the creed of all us stay-at-homes, hunkered there trying to make books, when he let forth in *Moby Dick* his narrator's ever so literary yearning: "Oh, Time, Strength, Cash and Patience!"

The patience of one of the odd patron saints of our trade, the late Flannery O'Connor, has always guided me in the long devotion of the writer's backside to the seat of the chair where he or she sits and works. Flannery O'Connor was ill, most of her short writing life, but her collection of letters show her to have been a dedicated sardonic professional, as when she gave this unbeatable version of the experience of looking over one's own writing: "I have just corrected the page proofs and I spent a lot of time getting 'seems' and 'as if' constructions out of it. It was like getting ticks off a dog."

This is what she had to say about a writer's necessary state of patience:

"I'm a full-time believer in writing habits, pedestrian as it all may sound. You may be able to do without them if you have genius but most of us only have talent and this is simply something that has to be assisted all the time by physical and mental habits or it dries up and blows away. I see it happen all the time. Of course you have to make your habits in this conform to what you can do. I write only about two hours every day because that's all the energy I have, but I don't let anything interfere with those two hours, at the same time and the same place. This doesn't mean I produce much out of the two hours. Sometimes I work for months and have to throw everything away, but I don't think any of that was time wasted. Something goes on that makes it easier when it does come well.

And the fact is that if you don't sit there every day, the day it would come well, you won't be sitting there."

Ultimately, Flannery O'Connor's advice does add up. Tonight we have these ten honored books--days, nights, weeks, and years turned into words. Norman and Angela, Malcolm, Chris, Denise, Paul, Tiina, Mark, Myron, Richard and Robert now will forever face, at booksignings, readings, and other gatherings, that eternal audience question: "Where do you get your ideas?" Always a good question, but the answer is tough. It's not as if writers live in an aquarium. The writer floating dreamily all day long in the fluid of thought and word, and at suppertime the figure of God--in the unlikely disguise of a literary critic--drops in the fish food.

No, art comes by way of craft, of working and reworking those sounds that come off the page. The heart of the language must beat there. Three hearts, really. The rhythms and tides of the bloodstream we all share, words, constitute the first. I think it is one of the lasting glories of the Governor's Writers Awards that an early recipient, poet Richard Hugo, once of White Center and Boeing, gave the world one of the canniest books on the craft of using words on paper--*The Triggering Town*, with alloys of common sense and revelation such as this paragraph:

"A student may love the sound of Yeats' 'Stumbling upon the blood dark track once more' and not know that the single-syllable word with a hard consonant ending is a unit of power in English, and that's one reason 'blood dark track' goes off like rifle shots.... The young poet is too often paying attention to the big things and can't be bothered with little matters like that. But little matters like that are what make and break poems."

The second vital pulse on the page, I don't know what to call except the blood-sum of the writer. Magical, inexplicable, whatever it is, but the literary quality by which a writer writes better than he has any right to. By which Faulkner, who could barely rouse himself to sort mail in a somnolent post office, had somewhere in him the ambition as a writer "to put everything into one sentence--not only the present but the whole past on

which it depends and which keeps overtaking the present, second by second.” By which Yeats, his pince-nez eyeglasses perched on his uppercrust nose, somehow--somehow--could see deeply “to where all ladders start/ in the foul rag and bone shop of the heart.”

The third heart of writing is geographical: where we speak from. “They call it regional,” Bill Stafford wrote in another of his telling poems, “Lake Chelan”--“They call it regional, this relevance: the deepest place we have.” For my part, as someone who writes about both the Rocky Mountain slopes where I grew up and about the Puget Sound country where I’ve spent the majority of my years, I’ve always believed that writers of caliber can ground their work in specific land and lingo and yet be writing of that larger country, life.

Here on our own turf, my travels convince me that Washington is an incurably bookish place, from end to end. In a back room of Auntie’s Bookstore in Spokane, you could find a running list on the wall of “Why books make great entertainment,” such as:

“In a book you always have somebody else’s life to live when you can’t handle your own.”

And: “Won’t electrocute you if it falls in the tub.”

Out at Neah Bay, when I was following the tracks of the pioneer diarist James G. Swan for my book *Winter Brothers*, I discovered that when experts on the art of the coastal natives would be looking at the motifs of the Makah tribe and come across a Chinese dragon or the double-headed eagle emblem of the Hapsburg Empire, they figured Swan had been lending the Makahs his books again.

And--a final tantalizing literary thought--it has occurred, not just to me, that we scribbling residents of the state of Washington may be naturally onomatopoeically gifted, just from living in the place. Sinclair Lewis must have thought so, as in one of his novels he had a young poet make up a poem of place names as she drove through our state, with lines such as

“Humptulips, Tumtum, Moclips, Yelm...

Soap Lake, Loon Lake, Addy...Usk...

Fishtrap, Carnation, Shine, Monte Cristo...”

Whether or not we live in a state of demented haiku, Washington writers across the decades of these awards have produced some of America’s most distinguished writing, and it has always particularly pleased me, in my times of hanging around this event, that the Governor’s Awards cover so many literary fields so well. The lions of narrative, the foxes of mystery, the griffins of sci fi, the watchful herons of history, the gazelles and dolphins of poetry, the badgers of biography, the lop-eared leopards of memoir--all prowl prominently in our Washington wordworld. Now, Governor and Mrs. Lowry will present the awards to this year’s representatives from the kingdom of words.

(This does NOT conclude tonight’s celebration of Washington’s writers. There’ll be an informal reception now, upstairs, in the McCurdy Gallery. You’re all invited to meet these authors; their winning books will be on sale, and they can probably be persuaded to sign up copies for you. So, thanks for coming--and to be continued, upstairs.)