Fans embrace Doig's latest novel

BY JO-ANN SWANSON
For the Tribune


"I'm an overnight success — after 11 books," said the compact Montanan, whose Scottish roots are legendary among readers.

The red hair and beard may be going gray, but nothing else has changed for the popular fictional chronicler of history who celebrated his 67th birthday three weeks ago at his Seattle home.

"This book has legs," said his wife, Carol. "You could tell from the start, this one was going."

On Wednesday, some 200 books walked off the shelves. The Doigs expect to sell about 1,000 during this month's Montana tour.


The book is No. 1 for Pacific Northwest Booksellers and has been on the national Book Sense best-selling list of Independent Book Sellers, which includes 1,700 stores, three out of four weeks.

"The new book contains a message, which is unusual," said Carol. She said her husband feels strongly about schools acting as cornerstones of rural commu-

See DOIG, 5A

Concert opens symphony's season

RIGHT: Jona McNamee keeps dry under her umbrella while listening to the Great Falls Symphony Orchestra during the "Music on the Green" concert on the University of Montana campus.

Bishop Anthony M. Milone of the Catholic Diocese of Great Falls and Billings resigned effective Wednesday, citing health reasons, the Catholic Church announced.

A replacement is expected to be named sometime next year.

Milone's resignation was accepted by Pope Benedict XVI, effective Wednesday. Milone was appointed to his post in 2004.

What's next
A College of Consultants Monday will choose a diocesan administrator as a temporary replacement for the bishop. Members are the Revs. Joseph Diekhans of Chester, Robert Grosch of Havre, Eugene Hruska of Fort Shaw, Robert Oswald of Scobey, Joseph Peressia of Glendive, Terry Regan of Stanford, Anthony Schuster of Roundup, Stephen...
Bishop

FROM 1A

months, Milone found himself canceling meetings or sending people in his place because of his decreased mobility. He said it was necessary to be mobile as the bishop.

"It really goes with the job," Milone said. He plans to stay in Great Falls for the time being, and perhaps longer.

"It's a wonderful place and wonderful people," he said.

The Catholic Church reacted with surprise to the announcement.

"It's still a bit of a shock," said Gerry Boland of Great Falls, co-chairman of the Holy Spirit Parish building committee. "I think he's a wonderful man, a very kind and caring man. He's been a champion of parochial schools."

Milone, 73, is a "soft-spoken fellow" who was very helpful in paving the way for a new Holy Spirit Church building on the East Side, Boland said. He added that it was known that Milone's health had declined in the last year.

Mary Rearden, a member of St. Luke's Parish in Great Falls, called the bishop "spiritual and gentle."

Great Falls Catholic Dolores Rice recalled playing a round of golf in the 1970s with a man who called himself Tony.

"You're Bishop Milone, aren't you?" she asked.

"On the golf course, I'm Tony," Milone replied.

"He seemed to be very nice," Rice added.

Milone sent a request to resign a couple of months ago. He has become a bishop emeritus.

"He's going to be greatly missed," said the Rev. Jay Peterson, who supervises the bishop's staff.

The College of Consultants will choose a temporary replacement for Milone on Monday. A diocesan administrator will serve in Great Falls until the pope names a bishop to replace Milone.

Milone oversaw a diocese that covers the eastern two-thirds of Montana, an area that includes about 58,000 Catholics in 66 parishes and 44 missions.

"He was instrumental in bringing the Poor Clares here to Montana, their ministry of prayer," Peterson noted.

Milone had a good way of defusing issues.
Novel pieces of Montana

Ivan Doig mines Big Sky upbringing for books

By MARY PICKETT
Of The Gazette Staff

Ivan Doig plowed some of his family’s homesteading background into his new book, “The Whistling Season.”

But readers shouldn’t assume that the protagonist, educational prodigy Paul Milliron, is a mirror image of Doig.

Like Doig, Paul “loves books, words, language and took Latin.” “Latin is Paul’s Internet,” Doig said in a telephone interview from his Seattle home. “It’s his entry into the roots of language and broadens his linguistic ability so he can cope with the world.”

Paul and Doig also loved school and were dogged test takers.

Doig is convinced that he won a Future Farmers of America blue ribbon for a test he took just because he sat at his desk going over the test longer than any other blue-jacketed kid in the room.

“I sat there whaling away at it,” he said.

That said, a lot of Paul is not Doig. Paul successfully functions within political and bureaucratic hierarchies.

Doig continues to add new fans
Doig, other authors to appear at bookfest

Ivan Doig will be among the writers who converge in downtown Billings on Friday-Sunday, July 21-23, for the fourth annual High Plains BookFest.

The annual event coincides with the Clark Days on the Yellowstone events, which will feature several Lewis and Clark scholars.

Schedules will be posted and updated at www.downtownbillings.org.

For information about the bookfest, call Corby Skinner at 294-2390.

At 8 p.m. Saturday, Ivan Doig will read from his newest novel, "The Whistling Season," at the Alberta Bair Theater, 2801 Third Ave. N.

Reserved tickets for his appearance cost $10 and $15 for adults and $6 for students and are available at the ABT Box Office, 256-6052 or online at www.albertbaire-theater.org.

Bookfest events at the Montana State University-Billings Downtown Campus on Saturday, July 22, include:

- 10 a.m. M.L. "Mandy" Smoker, author of "Another Attempt At Rescue." Smoker is a Montana poet, a teacher and administrator on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and an enrolled member of the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes.

Please see Bookfest, 3E
Bonds between men, bears explored

Andrea Peacock is a journalist who has covered Montana politics and Western environmental news for alternative weeklies across the West. She is the author of “Libby Montana: Asbestos and the Deadly Silence of an American Corporation.”

The Peacocks, who live south of Livingston, will give a reading at this weekend’s High Plains BookFest. They will talk at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Montana State University-Billings Downtown Campus.

Praise for the book has come from across the country.

“In this riveting work,” the Peacocks convincingly show how America’s greatest carnivore connects Americans to their culture, their history, their humanity, and the values we most treasure,” writes Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

“No one has ever explored so deeply and so beautifully the heart and soul of the matter — the intricate life force of our own species’ complicated and in many ways tragic relationship with this grand predator,” says Jim Fergus, author of “One Thousand White Women.”

“Peacock and his wife Andrea have written the definitive book on the subject. I wish everyone in America, and especially our so-called ‘leaders,’ would read this wonderful book.”

And author Peter Matthiessen calls the novel “a wonderful compendium of grizzly myth and lore, modern field biology and conservation, eco-politics and ethics, interview and personal insight — all of it firmly grounded in experience in the field and an unsentimental love for this awesome animal. Indispensable.”

The fourth annual High Plains BookFest is presented by the Billings Cultural Partners and the YMCA Writer’s Voice. For information, go to www.downtownbillings.org.

Bookfest

Continued from 1E

Johnson, author of “The Cold Dish” and “Death Without Company.” Johnson lives in Ucross, Wyo. He recently won a Hillerman Award for one of his short stories.

1 p.m. Doug and Andrea Peacock, authors of “The Essential Grizzly — The Mingled Fates of Men and Bears.”

2 p.m. “Emerging Voices” will feature three or four student writers from MSU-Billings offering a mix of poetry and prose, humorous and serious works.

3-5 p.m. Authors signing...
Novel

Continued from 1E

Sixteen-Mile area east of Townsend.

Sixteen-Mile is a long way from Scotland, but, growing up around homesteading Scots, Montana native Charlie Doig spoke with a Scottish burr.

Charlie's son, Ivan, didn't pick up the burr, but he's carried on several other Scottish traits such as a love of language, a knack for story telling and a passion for reading and education.

Charlie repeatedly told Ivan to get an education so he wouldn't "wind up an eternal wage earner."

Fortunately, being a student suited Doig just fine.

"I was a quick reader and agile in school," he said. "I tested well."

A couple of teachers also pushed him toward college.

By the time Doig graduated from high school in Valier in 1957, he was courted by several schools.

Nathaniel Blumberg from Montana State University, which later became the University of Montana, walked across a field that Doig was plowing to try to talk him into coming to Missoula.

Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., came up with a better financial package, so Doig went east. Northwestern also offered the chance for Doig to travel beyond the place where he had grown up.

"I wanted distance away from where I'd been," he said.

It was at Northwestern that he met another journalist student, Carol, who was from New Jersey and became his wife.

Both the Doigs earned bachelor's and master's degrees.

After working in journalism jobs in Chicago, they moved to Seattle, where Ivan worked on a doctorate in history. They stayed on when Carol found work teaching journalism in a community college and Ivan freelanced and began writing books.

The couple has spent many summers in Montana researching material for Doig's books. Carol frequently takes photographs that Ivan uses when he's creating landscapes and towns at his desk back home in Seattle.

For his book "English Creek," he assembled a fictitious town of the 1930s using a creamery from Conrad and a bank and barbershop from other towns from Choteau to Cut Bank.

Doig's main interest when he writes is telling a story and "making language dance."

Above, Ivan Doig sits near the spillway of Fort Peck Dam. He wrote about the dam's building in the novel "Bucking the Sun." Right, Doig's notebook sits on a rock pile in a field corner near Dupuyer, where he lived during high school and has set several of his books.

Carol Doig photos

That doesn't mean that he's cavalier with the facts.

While preparing for "Bucking the Sun," his novel about the building of Fort Peck Dam, he filled 1-1/2 file cabinets with notes. He interviewed more than 30 people and listened to Montana Historical Society audio-taped interviews of 50 more.

Researching Montana's homesteading era, he wrote 40 letters to people with links to the "tri cities" of Sumatra, Vananda and Ingomar to ask them details about prairie life, from what games children played at school to how old children were when they began farm chores. He used some of that information in "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and some in "The Whistling Season."

His novels begin in his imagination as "a murmur of language in my head," he said, continuing, "I shop around for accumulated history or do fresh research."

In the "The Whistling Season," Doig not only knits into his story details about homesteading life and what it's like to be a student in a one-room school, he writes about the importance of those schools to people who live nearby.

When Paul Milliron, who benefited from a rural school education himself, becomes the state's superintendent of public instruction and faces closing small schools, he knows that without the school a community will die.

"What is being asked, no, demanded of me is not only the forced extinction of the little schools. It also will slowly kill those rural neighborhoods that have struggled from homestead days on to adapt to dryland Montana in their farming and ranching," Milliron said.

Although education issues frame the book, the heart of the story is family dealing with a mother's death and two characters from Minneapolis who seem, at first, too good to be true.

Does Doig have a favorite among the books that he has written?

After a pause, he said that by the time one book is published, "I'm running off with the next one."

The "next one" is a novel about World War II and the military base that would become Malmstrom Air Force Base at Great Falls. That base was a stepping stone in the lend-lease program through which planes were flown to Siberia.

The main female character is a ferry pilot flying planes into Great Falls.

Doig has said that he was spurred on to write about his upbringing in "This House of Sky," when he realized that, as someone who had "picked rock from grainfields, driven a power buckrake at haying time, and a D-8 Cat pulling harrow during summer fallowing and a grain truck during harvest," his life was archaic.

Doig has shaken any remnants of being antiquated. He's gone multimedia with his own Web site, www.IvanDoig.com, and has recorded some of his own works for books on tape and CDs.

He's even the voice narrating the audio version of Norman Maclean's "A River Runs Through It." At the time of the taping, Maclean was in ill health and unable to make the recording himself.

Contact Mary Pickett at mepickett@bilingsgazette.com or 657-1262.
Finding the rhythm of remembering

By JEFF BAKER | THE OREGONIAN

Ivan Doig wanted to get it right. The names of the nine bars in White Sulphur Springs, Mont. The way the contours of the Tierney Basin resemble the palms of a pair of cupped hands. The sound of his father’s voice.

Doig was writing a memoir, and he didn’t want to rely on memory. He was “a working journalist without a job,” his cheerful description of his career as a freelance writer, and he made time for what he called “the Montana book” by turning down magazine assignments. It was a risky strategy — this was the early 1970s, and Doig knew he didn’t have the patience to be a teacher or the spark to be a poet — but he believed in his story and his ability to tell it.

“I wanted to work with the boundaries of language,” he said. “I’m never going to be Yeats, where he has everything working just right in a poem, but I was determined to try to get that feeling in prose.”

Doig rewrote the first page and a half of “This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind” at least 75 times. He read the sentences out loud, listening for the rhythms inside them, working them until every word fell into place:

“Soon before daybreak on my sixtieth birthday, my mother’s breathing wheezed more raggedly than ever, then quieted. And then stopped.”

“The remembering begins out of that new silence. Through the time since, I reach back along my father’s tellings and around the urgings which would have me face about and forget, to feel into these oldest shadows for the first sudden edge of it all.”

The journalist in Doig knew he’d written a great lead. The artist in him, the one he was becoming, knew he’d written something better than anything that had come before, but he wasn’t sure where to go with it. The writer he is now had no idea “This House of Sky” would take him them talking about a table clear back in the late ’60s, and ultimately tap a couple of dozen people from that era. Well, I worked on the manuscript off and on over the years, but the real concentrated period came in the summer of 1977, after I was lucky enough to find an editor.

“I went back to Montana for six weeks, and every place I wanted to see was still standing. My wife, Carol, is very good photographer, and she took pictures while I made notes and paced off distances and made sketches and floor plans. I wanted use that map work to trigger memory.”

There were memory triggers everywhere. A phone book from 1948 with the names of people and places long forgotten. Conversations with one person that would lead to another person whose casual comment was a key that unlocked a long-ago door. Photographs taken by a Brownie box camera. The tapes of his father’s soft Scottish burr, telling a story about killing a bear under a Montana moon.

Doig wanted to use that voice “like memory speaking” and put the words in italics, not between quotation marks. His goal was to capture a way of life that no longer existed, precisely but with the heightened quality of a movie or a dream.

When he came back from Montana to his home in Seattle and started writing, it poured out, 100,000 words in less than six months. The first third of “This House of Sky” had been “hard won,” worked over time, but the bulk of the manuscript came in a rush.

“It went so fast I can’t recapture it,” he said. “I couldn’t believe it really was done. I was sure I would have to cut it and rewrite it substantially.”

He sent the manuscript to New York, sure that his “high-powered editor” would demand major changes. Six weeks later “This House of Sky” was published.
Miracle of good writing brings life to characters, landscapes

Ivan Doig answers questions about “This House of Sky.” Questions and answers have been edited for clarity and brevity:

Q: Family obviously means a lot to you. What is your fondest memory of your mother who passed away when you were so young (6 years old)? What is the hardest part of writing for you? What most inspires you as a writer?

Tom Goszpeczleth, Zigzag

A: My memory of my mother was miraculously enhanced when her letters to her brother on a destroyer in the last year of World War II eventually found their way to me, an adventure in remembrance I've told in my book, "Heart Earth." My favorite episode was the Arizona desert night when spooky noises outside our cabin door convinced my father, my mother and, needless to say, 5-year-old me, that escaped German POWs were trying to dig their way in.

First drafting is hardest for me. I may be somewhat of a rarity among writers in that I like to rewrite. The dance of language and story is my perpetual inspiration as a writer.

Q: How does your narrative contrast with the way your own children were raised? I am not a writer, but I loved how you grew up on a fruit farm in the Portland area. My children were raised more in the city. I have since wondered how they viewed their years and mourned that they didn't have some of the same experiences as I had. My bet is they had a good time also. But I still wonder about it. Do you?

Shersee Hobson, Southeast Portland

A: Ways of growing up differ according to time and place, memorably so; a memoir that is one of my favorites, "Cider with Rosie," by Laurie Lee, with its Cotswold village could not be more different from my background in "This House of Sky" and "Heart Earth," yet it touches to my heart. Such is the miracle of good writing.

Q: What a coincidence — On Saturday I was at an art show in Newport. There was a quote of yours framed on the wall. It was about your grandmother and her collection of photographs. I believe it was from a book about photography. Then on Sunday I saw this article about "This House of Sky." My question is how has photography affected your writing?

Jerry Wigel, Vancouver, Wash.

A: I am constantly trying to write visually — portray in words the characters and landscape — and photographs often lend me the significant details to do so. For "This House of Sky," I had the photo albums of my mother, father and grandmother as a resource — some 500 Brownie box camera shots that gave me scenes such as my parents' 1926 Fourth of July rodeo courtship as recounted on Pages 50-51.

Q: Several years ago I read a novel you wrote about people involved in the engineering and construction of an earthen dam during the Depression era. Though I can't remember the title of the book, both the characters and the action have stayed with me. Is your memoir a later reflection of the incidents and the mind-set of incidents that were so realistically portrayed in the novel?

Jean G. Garrett, Southwest Portland

A: No, the novel you refer to is "Bucking the Sun," about the Depression-era project of building the world's biggest earthen dam on the Missouri River at Fort Peck, Mont., all of which occurred before I was born in June of 1939. I purely made up the Duff family that populates that book.

Q: If given the opportunity, what changes would you have made to your life in Montana?

Josephine Connolly, Lake Oswego

A: I believe in playing the hand dealt by life. If I were granted one wish on behalf of my father and my grandmother in those years when they joined forces to raise me, it would be for fairer economic reward for the immense hours of ranch work they put in.

Q: You seem to have had a lifelong urge to write poetry. You're not focused on poetry (although you've slipped your poems into your books), because you decided you lacked the poet's "final skill." As a published poet, do you have any advice for aspiring poets?

Alan Meyer, Newberg

A: Read masterful poets plentifully (Portland's late great William Stafford once told me Pablo Neruda was a constant wonder to him). Listen to poets read their own work, in person and by audio (Dylan Thomas), to help you grasp their wordcraft. Ultimately, study with a terrific poet with word-of-mouth reputation as a terrific teacher, such as the Northwest's own Linda Bierds (University of Washington).
'The Whistling Season'
Ivan Doig
(Harcourt, $25)

What a pleasure it is to sink into this story, which is told with old-fashioned sentences (simple but elegant, and ready to charm you with what they have to say) and old-fashioned storytelling prowess. It's 1909, and Montana homesteader Oliver Milliron is still struggling to care for his three sons a year after the death of their mother. One day he reads an unorthodox want ad in the local newspaper, placed by a Minneapolis widow seeking employment as a housekeeper ("Can't Cook but Doesn't Bite," it begins). He hires her, and when Rose arrives she is lovely, and in the unexpected company of her odd but learned brother, Morrie. Morrie's erudition and enthusiasm come gloriously into play when he fills in for the local teacher, who has eloped with the preacher. Meanwhile, Rose brings light into the Milliron boys' lives. The story's narrator is the oldest son, Paul, who is 13 in 1909 but looks back on that year's events as an adult in 1957, when, as the state superintendent of schools, he has a difficult job to do. It's a nostalgic book, with characters you'll be happy to know.

— By Anne Stephenson/Special
Books

A slow 'season'

July 16, 2006

BY STEPHANIE GLADNEY Staff Reporter

It is the arrival of two strangely sophisticated and slightly mysterious siblings that changes the course of Paul Milliron's life.

In the new frontier of Montana in 1960, 13-year-old Paul is learning to adjust to a life without his mother. His widowed father tends to Paul and Paul's two younger brothers while keeping up with farming and serving on the school board. But it doesn't leave any time for cooking or house chores so he responds to a housekeeper's ad in the paper that begins, "Can't Cook But Doesn't Bite." When Rose Llewellyn steps off the train to meet the Millirons, she brings something far more valuable than cooking skills -- her brother Morrie. The stylish pair seem starkly out of place in Marias Coulee, but they prove to be exactly what the Millirons need.

Like Ivan Doig's other works, The Whistling Season provides us with a portrait of early 20th century Western life. The book isn't plot-driven, but instead offers an intimate look at a crucial year in a young boy's existence.

THE WHISTLING SEASON
BY IVAN DOIG
Harcourt, 345 pages. $25.

The story is narrated by an adult Paul, who is the superintendent of Montana schools in the 1950s, when Sputnik has sent the country's education system into a frenzy. Paul is forced to face the possibility of closing one-room schoolhouses like the one he grew up in, so that more money can be pumped into bigger school systems. As he struggles with this issue, he reflects back on the most influential school year of his life -- which included lessons in Latin, astronomy and human nature.
At one point early in the book, the young Paul finds himself alone in the middle of the schoolyard and he is struck by the significance of that place. "Forever and a day could go by, and that feeling will never leave me. Of knowing, in that instant, the central power of that country school in all our lives. It reached beyond those of us answering Morrie's hectic roll call that first day, although we were that clapboard classroom's primary constituents, its rural minions much in need of schooling. Everyone I could think of had something at stake in the school... We all answered, with some part of our lives, to the pull of this small knoll of prospect, this isolated square of schoolground."

Rose proves to be an excellent housekeeper and a touching presence in the family, bringing a feminine lightness to the house just by whistling. Morrie struggles through a few odd jobs, proving he is highly educated but slightly ignorant about Montana matters. However, when the town is suddenly in need of a new schoolteacher, Morrie fits the bill. His knowledge and unconventional teaching methods take the schoolhouse and its students by surprise, particularly Paul who shares Morrie's passion for knowledge. It is this passion that leads Morrie to face the town bully, organize a Halley's Comet celebration and teach Paul Latin.

The charm of *The Whistling Season* lies in the seemingly ho hum plot. Doig's quiet, flowing prose keeps the subtle story in motion. For several hundred pages, we simply observe the everyday excitement and boredom of a young boy's life, from a scuffle in the schoolyard to Sunday dinner at a relative's house. In fact, although there are small moments of tension, the story almost drags at times. But it is during these dry stretches that the reader really gets to know the Millirons and their way of life.

Doig's efforts at a few dramatic revelations in the last 40 pages feel forced compared to the quiet details of normalcy such as a ride to school or a trip to the Big Ditch. The book almost feels crowded at the end, as if the author needed to cram in a couple of punches just so readers would feel like something happened. But, the twists also provide closure to a year that seems as if it will last forever. And they help seal the lessons Paul is destined to learn.

As Rose would say, "And so."

And so, the story invites readers to remember the most influential people in their lives, especially the ones that were around for just one season. For avid Doig readers, his latest work will hold true to his acute descriptions of Montana life and offer a curious, awe-striking perspective that only an adolescent can provide. For first-timers, be patient with Doig's inactivity. You'll feel so attached to the Millirons in the end that you won't have minded the slow pace.

*Stephanie Gladney is a page designer for the Sun-Times.*
Little schoolhouse on the prairie resounds with laughter

Sunday, July 16, 2006

By Rebecca Sodergren, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Ivan Doig writes about the American West in prose that reads like poetry. His keen eye for physical detail is as sharp as ever in his latest novel, yet the element that truly drives the book is humor.

This novel doesn't have the same "epic sweep" of many of his earlier works, particularly his "English Creek" trilogy. Perhaps that's because most of this story revolves around a child in one secluded community. But the difference merely underscores Doig's skill; this is every bit as rich a novel although it's a different kind.

Widower Oliver Milliron instructs his 13-year-old son, Paul, to read a newspaper want ad to the rest of the family:

"Can't Cook But Doesn't Bite."

It's an ad for a non-cooking housekeeper who wants work in 1909 Montana. The Millirons -- three boys and their dad -- could really use a cook, but Dad is drawn by the humor and refuses to believe a woman exists who can't cook. So he gets Paul to draft an answer to the ad.

Immediately, the school-yard antics begin. Youngest brother Toby can't keep his mouth shut, so everyone knows the Millirons are getting a housekeeper they've never laid eyes on. How old and ugly will she be? Will she henpeck them?

The teasing continues even after the very pretty Rose Llewellyn arrives, unexpectedly bringing along her highly educated brother, Morris.

Eventually, the school-yard teasings of the Milliron boys turn into a contest, a horse race where the riders face the wrong end of the steed. The prize for the Millirons is an end to the teasing.
It's one of the funniest scenes in the book, but that's only the beginning. Writing about kids turns almost everything into an opportunity for humor because of the way children's small fears and dramas reach magnificent proportions in their own minds.

When the teacher of that one-room school runs off with a tent-revival preacher, the only available choice to fill the post is Morris. He may not be conventional, but he's inspiring.

When the school inspector announces his imminent arrival, threatening to close the school if the students don't perform adequately on standardized tests, everyone, including unflappable Morris, gets the jitters.

Doig populates his work with colorful characters, even the minor ones. Perhaps the most colorful this time around is Aunt Eunice Schricker, a pinch-faced complainer who sends the boys into fits of dread every time their father forces them to pay her a call.

She sits around knitting lace doilies until the parlor "looks snowed on." Doig's humor and keen eye extend even to the smallest details, not just to the sweeping Montana landscape.

Only one part of the book seems a bit weak -- the climactic scene where Brose Turley, a violent trapper, and his son confront Morris. The scene itself is tense enough, but the reason for Brose's attack seems too philosophical for this man who ostensibly does nothing but drink and kill things.

Doig's skillful framing device gives this novel a bittersweet air. The action centers on the children, but it's told from Paul's adult eye. He's now the state superintendent of schools, threatened with the possible need to close the one-room schools such as the one where he was educated.

"The Whistling Season" is a true work of art from a master craftsman of the Western historical novel.

(Rebecca Sodergren is a freelance writer living in Pittsburgh.)

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The Whistling Season - Ivan Doig
Margaret Marr

I so enjoyed this novel about a whistling housekeeper and her fount-of-knowledge brother who touch the lives of a widowed father and his three sons. The story took me back to the old West with its one-room schoolhouses—back to a gentler time, when the air was cleaner, the buildings smaller, and people traveled on horses and dirt roads surrounded by the beauty and freshness of nature.

It's late in the year 1909 on the Montana plains. Halley's Comet is about to come whistling through, homesteaders are lured to the promise of the Montana prairie blooming under an irrigation project called the Big Ditch, and the Milliron family is about to hire a non-biting, non-cooking housekeeper—though they do hope she was jesting about the non-cooking part.

Told from the point-of-view of the oldest son, Paul Milliron, comes the engaging tale of Rose Llewellyn and her brother, Morris "Morrie" Morgan, who arrive in Marias Coulee, Montana looking for a new start. When the teacher runs off with the preacher, Morrie is pressed into teaching in the one-room school. Soon Paul and his brothers, along with all the children who attend the school, are learning things not found in textbooks—and Paul begins to wonder just where Morrie gained all that knowledge.

Spit bath handshakes, backward horse racing, holy rollers, schoolyard scuffles, and a host of other delightful adventures make The Whistling Season a pleasant journey. You'll catch yourself smiling as you spend time with Oliver Milliron and his three sons, who struggle to make it after the death of their wife and mother. In an uncommon way, Rose turns out to be a saving grace, even if she won't cook, and Morrie keeps them fascinated with his endless knowledge of the world around them. Both have an air of mystery surrounding them, and you can't help but wonder what, exactly, they're doing in Marias Coulee.

The Whistling Season is a feel-good-about-life-no-matter-how-tough-it-gets story, with a wonderful and unique cast of characters and a surprising ending. I guarantee you'll enjoy your time in Marias Coulee as much as I did.
Charles Oberndorf

Since his memoir, "This House of Sky," appeared in 1978, Ivan Doig steadily has developed a reputation as one of the important writers of the American West.

Doig's eighth novel, "The Whistling Season," starts off with great strength. The narrator is Paul Milliron, superintendent of schools for Montana, and in 1957, in the wake of Sputnik, he has to decide to close down all the one-room schoolhouses in the state. This causes Paul to remember back to 1909, when he was 13, and living in Marias Coulee, where homesteaders practiced dryland farming and migrant workers helped build the canals that would provide greater irrigation.

One morning, Paul's widowed father reads the following newspaper ad: "Can't cook, doesn't bite. Housekeeping position sought by widow." Oliver Milliron doesn't believe that there is a woman who can't cook, considers the terrible state of their home and their menu and decides to hire Rose Lewellen.

Rose doesn't come alone. She is accompanied by her brother, Morrie, a man who worked as a glove maker but who now wants to start a new life. Any experienced reader will recognize instantly that Morrie has never fashioned a glove in his life, and every reader will press on, in part, to look for clues to Rose's and Morrie's past.

The real novel, however, is about a year in the life of 13-year-old Paul. A large portion of the story resides in the one-room schoolhouse. Paul deals with a bully, the shifting allegiances at recess, a horse race done backward and the new learning brought in by a strange new teacher.

These adventures have a very old-fashioned feel to them - though some of the dramatic confrontations have the texture of a scene from a movie. Doig's rich, descriptive voice carries the flavor (but not the syntax) of 19th-century storytelling. He wonderfully evokes landscape and weather:

"I think back . . . to the dry summers when Father and George and the other homesteaders watched as clouds after cloud dragged across the Rockies and the tufts of rain would catch on the distant peaks and be of no help to their fields."

Each character is vividly rendered and stays in the memory long after the novel is done. Yet, while enjoying "The Whistling Season," I discovered myself yearning for a little more, for the complexity of the characters to match the texture of the writing. Human nature in the 19th century was not simpler. Alongside the writings of Thomas Hardy, George Elliot or Leo Tolstoy, the social and psychological complexities in Doig's novel feel more nostalgic than incisive.

In its approach to childhood, "The Whistling Season" reminded me most of "To Kill a Mockingbird," one of the great young-adult novels written for adults. The complexities of adulthood linger in Doig's background, but up-front problems
have resolution; family tensions and resentments are as uncommon as the Montana rain. The protagonists discover the right moral values and act on them with ease.

Still, Doig's writing evokes the texture and feel of turn-of-the-century Montana, and his sense of character always engages us, making "The Whistle Season" a novel well worth reading.

Oberndorf is a critic and novelist in Cleveland Heights.

To reach Charles Oberndorf:
books@plain.com

• Last show leaves sunny memory
• Students show what they know
• 2Do on the Tens

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The Whistling Season

Reviewed by Andrea Sisco

_The Whistling Season_ by Ivan Doig is a beautiful novel, with rich and delicious prose, and characters that are detailed, complex and fully developed. I dreaded reaching the final page, wanting to spend more time with Paul Milliron, his family, Rose, Morris, and the community.

Paul Milliron is the Montana state superintendent of schools in the 1950s. It is his job to determine the fate of the few rural schools that are still in use. As he returns to his home, he reminisces about the year 1909, when he was thirteen and attended a one-room school in Marias Coulee.

In 1909 Paul’s father, recently widowed and caring for his three sons, hires a housekeeper from Minnesota. The housekeeper’s ad in the _Westwater Gazette_ read, Can’t Cook But Doesn’t Bite.

The housekeeper, Rose Llewellyn, arrives in Montana with her brother, Morris. She’s already received several months advance on her salary and immediately begins to organize the Milliron’s home and quietly insert herself in their lives. But as she said in her ad, she doesn’t cook.

When the local schoolteacher leaves to marry an evangelist, Morris accepts, for the rest of the school year, her job. His arrival impacts the Milliron children and their schoolmate’s education in ways no one expected.

I expected Rose to be the focal point of the novel, but in many ways, Morris’ personality took center stage. His relationship with Paul continually broadened the young man’s life and education. There are several interesting twists and turns that were unexpected and contributed to the charm of Doig’s novel.

Armchair Interviews says: _The Whistling Season_ is a wonderful and satisfying read.
Ivan Doig's new novel, "The Whistling Season," is set in 1909

by Dave Wood

As the refugee from a one-room country school, I treasure a new book, "The Whistling Season," by Ivan Doig (Harcourt, $25). Doig, who lives in Seattle, but knows the plains states very well is deep and he's stylish.

His new novel is set in 1909. Oliver Milliron, is tired of his dray line in Manitowoc, Wis., so pulls up stakes and moves his wife and three kids to Montana, which is experiencing a land boom because its building a big ditch canal to help with irrigation. Oliver becomes a dry land farmer, his wife dies and he has a devil of a time working and taking care of his kids, including the precocious Pauli who narrates the novel from the perspective of a half century later, when he is an educator.

Desperate, Oliver answers a classified ad that opens with "CAN'T COOK, BUT WON'T BITE." Rose Llewellyn is also desperate, a new widow who lives penniless on Lowry Hill in Minneapolis. She arrives in Montana with her brother Morris in tow, a surprise. Morris is also without money and picks up jobs as a handyman, a real comedown for this University of Chicago graduate, who knows more arcane stuff than one can imagine, which impresses Oliver, who is the rare drayman who can quote Shakespeare and sound a good deal like the Bard once he gets going.

The new arrivals are a big deal in the vasty neighborhood where the kids ride horseback to the one room school, which is in for a surprise when the school marm runs off with the traveling evangelist. Guess who gets to be teacher? That's right. Morris, who brings all manner of information to the rustic children of hardscrabble farmers.

Meanwhile, his sister cleans up the house and disciplines the children, but refuses to cook because she never learned how. Poor Oliver has to slop oatmeal out to his kids every morning, but he also has an eye for his housekeeper.

Ivan Doig romps through this tender and important story about time that is past. It's important because hardscrabble farmers are becoming a thing of the past, going the way of the one-room schoolhouse.

"Rooted," by David R. Pichaske (University of Iowa, $24.95 paper) is a welcome addition to the criticism and understanding of regional writers. Pichaske, a professor at Southwest State University in Marshall, MN, examines the roots of several prominent upper midwestern writers, including Norbert Blei, the Chicago bred essayist who lives in Door County and manages to offend lots of people. There's Jim Heynen, prof at St. Olaf College who writes beautifully about growing up in Iowa's Dutch Reformed country.

A wonderful chapter is devoted to Pichaske's Southwest State colleague, Bill Holm, who is "rooted" in his hometown of Minnesota but manages to write about the four corners of the earth such books as "Eccentric Islands." How does he explain the dichotomy? Pichaske quotes Holm: "It begins with Carl Jung's idea that the wild, passionate, sometimes uncivilized inner life of human beings is best symbolized by your sexual opposite. The inner life of a woman is a young boy; that of a pale Scandinavian like me is a black haired girl. Either we make friends with this opposite, though it makes us no money, or it turns vicious and poisons our conscious lives." Holm illustrates with a poem, advice to his students:

Someone dancing inside us/learned only a few steps:/ the "Do-Your-Work" in 4/4 time,/ the "What Do You Expect" waltz./ He hasn't noticed yet the woman/ standing away from the lamp/the one with black eyes/ who knows the rumba,/ and strange steps in jumpy rhythms/ from the mountains of Bulgaria./ If they dance together,/ something unexpected will happen./ If they don't, the next world/ will be a lot like this one." A few weeks back, I waited about the University of Wisconsin Press asking $60 for the first volume of a Sherwood Anderson biography. So $24.95 seems a fair enough
price for the paperback of “Rooted.” But the University of Iowa Press wants $54.95 for cloth. What's going on with these university presses?

Dave Wood is a past vice president of the National Book Critics Circle and a former book review editor of the Minneapolis Star Tribune. E-mail him at ruthann.p.wood@uwrf.edu.
## Pacific Northwest Independent Bestseller List
for the week ending Sept. 10, 2006

### Fiction

#### HARDCOVER

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>Water for Elephants</td>
<td>Sara Gruen, Algonquin</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>The Whistling Season</td>
<td>Ivan Doig, Harcourt</td>
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<td>Rise and Shine</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>The Emperor's Children</td>
<td>Claire Messud, Knopf</td>
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<td>The Book of Fate</td>
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#### PAPERBACK

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### MASS MARKET

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<td>Lord of the Flies</td>
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Pacific Northwest Independent Bestseller List for the week ending Sept. 3, 2006

**Fiction**

**HARDCOVER**

| 1. Water for Elephants  | Sara Gruen, Algonquin, $23.95, 1565124995  |
| 2. Messenger of Truth   | Jacqueline Winspear, Holt, $24, 0805078983  |
| 3. Suite Francaise       | Irene Nemirovsky, Knopf, $25, 1400044731  |
| 4. Rise and Shine        | Anna Quindlen, Random House, $24.95, 0375502246  |
| 5. Hunters of Dune       | Brian Herbert, Tor, $27.95, 0765312921  |
| 6. The Whistling Season  | Ivan Doig, Harcourt, $25, 0151012377  |
| 7. The Emperor’s Children| Claire Messud, Knopf, $23, 030726419X  |
| 8. Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman | Haruki Murakami, Knopf, $24.95, 1400044618  |
| 9. Phantom               | Terry Goodkind, Tor, $29.95, 0765305240  |
| 10. The Keep             | Jennifer Egan, Knopf, $23.95, 1400043921 |
| 11. The Ruins            | Scott Smith, Knopf, $24.95, 1400043875 |
| 12. Special Topics in Calamity Physics | Marisha Pessl, Viking, $25.95, 067003777X |
| 13. Coronado             | Dennis Lehane, Morrow, $24.95, 006113967X |
| 15. Can’t Wait to Get to Heaven | Fannie Flagg, Random House, $25.95, 1400061261 |

**PAPERBACK**

| 1. The Memory Keeper’s Daughter | Kim Edwards, Penguin, $14, 0143037145 |
| 2. The Highest Tide            | Jim Lynch, Bloomsbury, $13.95, 1582346291 |
| 3. On Beauty                   | Zadie Smith, Penguin, $15, 0143037749 |
| 5. The Sea                     | John Banville, Vintage, $12.95, 1400097029 |
| 6. The Time Traveler’s Wife    | Audrey Niffenegger, Harvest, $14, 015602943X |
| 7. The Kite Runner             | Khaled Hosseini, Riverhead, $14, 1594480001 |
| 8. Broken for You              | Stephanie Kallos, Grove, $13, 0802142109 |
| 10. March                      | Geraldine Brooks, Penguin, $14, 0143036661 |
| 12. History of Love            | Nicole Krauss, Norton, $13.95, 0393328627 |
| 13. Friends, Lovers, Chocolate | Alexander McCall Smith, Anchor, $12.95, 1400077109 |
| 14. Citizen Vince               | Jess Walter, Regan Books, $14.95, 0060989297 |
| 15. Sky Burial                 | Xinran, Anchor, $13, 1400095646 |

**MASS MARKET**

| 1. The Lincoln Lawyer         | Michael Connelly, Warner, $7.99, 0446616451 |
| 2. To Kill a Mockingbird      | Harper Lee, Warner, $6.99, 0446310786 |
| 4. A Small Death in Lisbon    | Robert Wilson, Berkley, $7.99, 0425184234 |
| 7. Running with Scissors      | Augusten Burroughs, St. Martin's, $7.99, 0312938853 |
| 8. The Devil Wears Prada      | Lauren Weisberger, Anchor, $7.99, 0307275558 |
| 10. Angels and Demons         | Dan Brown, Pocket, $9.99, 1416524797 |
Writers, readers flock to Festival of the Book

The Montana Festival of the Book, Sept. 28-30, brings scores of the region’s writers to Missoula for a variety of readings, panels, exhibits, demonstrations, signings, workshops, entertainments, receptions and other events.

More than 5,000 visitors from across the state, the nation, and Europe are expected to attend. The festival is presented by the Montana Center for the Book and the Montana Committee for the Humanities, in association with numerous other national, state and local organizations and businesses.

As in years past, the Montana Festival of the Book will feature some of the most important voices of the West, including award-winning authors Ivan Doig, William Kittredge, Mary Clearman Blew, Barry Lopez, James Lee Burke, Annick Smith, David James Duncan, David Quammen, Sharmen Apt Russell, Charles D’Ambrosio, David Long, Gary Ferguson, David Sirota, Greg Keeler, Richard Wheeler and many others.

Featured events include:
- A Friday evening Gala Reading at the Wilma Theatre with Ivan Doig and William Kittredge reading from new novels;
- Several events celebrating the 2006 One Book Montana selection, This House of Sky, including a session with the author Ivan Doig;
- A Montana Poetry Summit with the state poet laureate Sandra Alcosser, Rick Newby, Tami Haaland, Lowell Jaeger and many others;
- "Beneath the Surface" – An entire night devoted to Butte including readings from Swain Wolfe’s new memoir, a discussion by contributors and editors of Motherlode; a discussion of a new history of the Granite Mine disaster; a special sneak preview of the soon to be released PBS documentary “The Richest Hill on Earth” with filmmaker Pam Roberts and writer Ed Dobb; and poetry and music.
- Readings and presentations from the Environmental Writing Institute, held this year in conjunction with the festival and featuring Sharman Apt Russell;
- A tribute and panel on Richard Hugo, featuring a showing of the re-mastered documentary “Kicking the Loose Gravel Home,” with filmmakers Annick Smith and Beth Ferris, and newly released audio recordings of Hugo reading and discussing his work;
- Writing and publishing workshops for children and adults, book appraisals, exhibits and much more.

In addition to panels, workshops and readings, Montana Public Radio is bringing a live performance and airing of “A Prairie Home Companion” to Missoula on Saturday, Sept. 30. Garrison Keillor and crew will be performing at the Adams Fieldhouse and tickets are available through Montana Public Radio.

The Montana Festival of the Book is open to the public and almost all of the more than 50 events are free of charge. Venues in downtown Missoula include the Wilma Theatre, the Holiday Inn Parkside, the Missoula Public Library and other locations.

For more information on the festival, contact festival coordinator Kim Anderson at kim.anderson@umontana.edu, call 406-243-6022 or 800-624-6001, or visit the website is at www.bookfest-mt.org.
The Whistling Season
By Ivan Doig
Published June 2006 by Harcourt, New York, NY
$25 hardcover

In his new novel, *The Whistling Season*, Ivan Doig returns to the earth and era that seem most fertile for him: the Montana prairie of the early 1900s. Widower and homesteader Oliver Milliron spies an ad in the *Westwater Gazette* for an A-1 housekeeper who “can’t cook but doesn’t bite.” He invites non-cooking, non-biting and ever-whistling Rose Llewellyn to come west from Minnesota and care for the disheveled household comprised of himself and his three sons (all hungering for a good cook). She arrives, far more lovely and stylish than any widow they could imagine, with her dandified brother Morrie—accomplished at Latin, Greek, whist, recitation and bird identification. The pair print themselves indelibly upon the Milliron tribe and the community of Marias Coulee, where Morrie takes over teaching duties at the one-room schoolhouse.

Doig, author of the memoir *This House of Sky* (the choice for this year’s One Book Montana statewide reading program) and many novels, including *English Creek* and *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, is at his finest here, succeeding marvelously his own aspiration: “that writers of caliber can ground their work in specific land and lingo and yet be writing of that larger country: life.”

From the Marias River to the North Pole A Montana History in Story Poems
By Bonnie Buckley Maldonado, in collaboration with her brother, Patrick F. Buckley III
Published 2006 by Farcountry Press, Helena, MT
$14.95 softcover

Montana native Bonnie Buckley Maldonado’s collection of poems, *From the Marias River to the North Pole*, exudes affection for the resilient people and wild landscape that shaped her childhood, as well as an ear for the cadences of western speech.

Elocuentesly, piercingly, she describes a quilt maker (“her journal done up in stitches”); and Kitty, her godmother: “Camel ashes falling/ near her crochet hook./ her blue eyes telling me/ that I could be a rancher/ not a rancher’s wife.”

Her story-telling poems tenderly probe her family’s loss of their beloved Blarney Castle Ranch in 1937 (her brothers still live nearby), their connection to the land and the Blackfeet Tribe.

Maldonado now lives in New Mexico, and is a dean and professor emeritus at Western New Mexico University.

The Essential Grizzly: Twentysix Years with the American Grizzly Bear
By Thomas D. Mangelsen
Published 2006 by Simon & Schuster, New York, NY
$25 hardcover

Famed photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen turns his lens on the majestic grizzly bear, theotype of the American West, in this collection of photographs, essays, and musings on what it means to be bear. His intimate portraits and poetic reflections on the history and future of the bear—especially his own personal experiences with the species—add a new dimension to the study of this magnificent animal.
### HARDCOVER

1. *Water for Elephants*  
   Sara Gruen, Algonquin, $23.95, 978-0-7653-0524-0
2. *Special Topics in Calamity Physics*  
   Marisha Pessl, Viking, $25.95, 978-0-6700-3777-X
3. *The Whistling Season*  
4. *Can’t Wait to Get to Heaven*  
   Fannie Flagg, Random House, $25.95, 978-0-306-01261-6
5. *Phantom*  
   Terry Goodkind, Tor, $29.95, 978-0-7653-0524-0
6. *The Man Who Smiled*  
   Henning Mankell, New Press, $24.95, 978-1-5658-4993-0
7. *Suite Française*  
   Irene Nemirovsky, Knopf, $25, 978-0-307-44731-1
8. *Dead Wrong*  
   J.A. Jance, Morrow, $25.95, 978-0-606-54090-7
9. *Messenger of Truth*  
   Jacqueline Winspear, Holt, $24, 978-0-8050-7898-3
10. *Hunters of Dune*  
    Brian Herbert, Kevin Anderson, Tor, $27.95, 978-0-7653-1292-1
11. *Blue Shoes and Happiness*  
    Alexander McCall Smith, Pantheon, $21.95, 978-1-4000-1456-2
12. *Gallatin Canyon*  
    Thomas McGuane, Knopf, $24, 978-0-374-22722-3
13. *The Ruins*  
    Scott Smith, Knopf, $24.95, 978-0-374-38787-5
14. *The Messenger*  
    Daniel Silva, Putnam, $25.95, 978-0-399-15335-7
15. *The Fourth Bear*  
    Jasper Fforde, Viking, $24.95, 978-0-6700-3777-X

### PAPERBACK

1. *The Memory Keeper’s Daughter*  
   Kim Edwards, Penguin, $14, 978-0-14-303714-5
2. *The Sea*  
   John Banville, Vintage, $12.95, 978-0-307-44909-6
3. *The Kite Runner*  
   Khaled Hosseini, Riverhead, $14, 978-1-59448-000-1
4. *A Sudden Country*  
5. *March*  
   Geraldine Brooks, Penguin, $14, 978-0-14-303666-1
6. *The Shadow of the Wind*  
   Carlos Ruiz Zafon, Penguin, $15, 978-0-307-44909-6
7. *My Sister’s Keeper*  
   Jodi Picoult, Washington Square, $14, 978-0-7432-4543-7
8. *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*  
9. *Broken for You*  
   Stephanie Kallos, Grove, $13, 978-0-8024-1210-9
10. *Case Histories*  
    Kate Atkinson, Back Bay, $13.95, 978-0-316-01070-7
11. *The Alchemist (Updated)*  
    Paulo Coelho, HarperSanFrancisco, $13.95, 978-0-618-22416
12. *The Highest Tide*  
    Jim Lynch, Bloomsbury, $13.95, 978-1-58234-291-4
13. *The Last Days of Dogtown*  
    Anita Diamant, Scribner, $15, 978-0-7432-2574-0
14. *History of Love*  
    Nicole Krauss, Norton, $13.95, 978-0-393-32862-7
15. *Wicked*  
    Gregory Maguire, Regan Books, $16, 978-0-0609-8710-3

### MASS MARKET

1. *The Lincoln Lawyer*  
   Michael Connelly, Warner, $7.99, 978-0-446-61645-1
2. *A Small Death in Lisbon*  
   Robert Wilson, Berkley, $7.99, 978-0-425-18423-4
3. *The Devil Wears Prada*  
   Lauren Weisberger, Anchor, $7.99, 978-0-307-27555-8
4. *Crusader’s Cross*  
   James Lee Burke, Pocket, $7.99, 978-0-7432-2720-1
5. *Angels and Demons*  
   Dan Brown, Pocket, $9.99, 978-0-446-61649-9
6. *Long Time Gone*  
7. *Lifeguard*  
   Merriam-Webster (Eds.), Merriam-Webster, $7.50, 978-0-87779-929-6
9. *1984*  
   George Orwell, Signet, $7.95, 978-0-451-52493-4
10. *Fire Sale*  
Pacific Northwest Independent Bestseller List
for the week ending August 20, 2006
Fiction

HARDCOVER

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<td>The Whistling Season</td>
<td>Ivan Doig, Harcourt</td>
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### Pacific Northwest Independent Bestseller List for the week ending August 13, 2006

#### Fiction

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<td>2. A Sudden Country</td>
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<td>Karen Fisher, Random House, $13.95, 0812973437</td>
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<td>Lisa See, Random House, $13.95, 0812968069</td>
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<td>4. The Kite Runner</td>
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<td>5. Broken for You</td>
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1. The Lincoln Lawyer
   Michael Connelly, Warner, $7.99, 0446616451
2. The Devil Wears Prada
   Lauren Weisberger, Anchor, $7.99, 0307275558
3. Lifeguard
   James Patterson, Andrew Gross, Warner, $9.99, 0446616761X
4. Long Time Gone
   J.A. Jance, Avon, $9.99, 0380724359
5. Crusader's Cross
   James Lee Burke, Pocket, $7.99, 0743277201
6. The Da Vinci Code
   Dan Brown, Anchor, $7.99, 1400079179
7. Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell
   Susanna Clarke, Tor, $7.99, 0765356155
8. 1984
   George Orwell, Signet, $7.95, 0451524934
9. Angels and Demons
   Dan Brown, Pocket, $9.99, 1416524797
10. Dead Man Docking
    Mary Daheim, Avon, $6.99, 0060566507
July 18, 2006

Ivan Doig
c/o Darnhansoff, Verrill Feldman Literary Agency
236 West 26th St.
Suite 802
New York, NY 10001

Dear Ivan,

It is our great pleasure to publish The Whistling Season in Select Editions during 2006. We’ve been offering the best of fiction for more than 50 years, and your wonderful novel helps us maintain our tradition of excellence. To celebrate another successful year, we are sending a special “Season’s Greetings” card to our readers, signed by the authors we published in 2006. Of course, we would very much like to include the Ivan Doig signature with those of this year’s other authors.

If this is all right with you, would you please sign the name Ivan Doig in dark ink at the bottom of this letter and return it to us as soon as possible. A postpaid envelope is enclosed for your convenience as well as a signature permission form so that in the future we won’t have to bother you about a future signature.

Thank you in advance, and again, our congratulations on The Whistling Season.

With warm regards,

Laura E. Kelly

LEK/ab
Enc.

[Signature]

Ivan Doig
July 18, 2006

Ivan Doig
c/o Darnhansoff, Verrill Feldman Literary Agency
236 West 26th St.
Suite 802
New York, NY 10001

I Ivan Doig give permission to Reader’s Digest Select Editions to use my signature on future holiday cards sent to Select Editions readers.

[Signature]

Aug. 15, 2006
# Pacific Northwest Independent Bestseller List for the week ending August 6, 2006

## Fiction

### HARDCOVER

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Bestseller List for July 27, 2006
from sales the week ending July 23, 2006
For the Book Sense store nearest you, call 1-888-BOOKSENSE
or visit

Hardcover Fiction

1. Water for Elephants
Sara Gruen, Algonquin, $23.95, 1565124995
Indies are buzzing about this rich, romantic story set in a long-ago traveling circus. The #1 June Book Sense Pick.

2. Pegasus Descending - Debut
James Lee Burke, S&S, $26, 0743277724
Summertime, a hard-boiled and flawed hero, and the steamy bayou, all add up to James Lee Burke at his finest. A Book Sense Pick.

3. Phantom - Debut
Terry Goodkind, Tor, $29.95, 0765305240
Number 10 in the Sword of Truth fantasy series. (Far too deep into the story to try and summarize plot or characters!)

4. Twelve Sharp
Janet Evanovich, St. Martin's, $26.95, 0312349483
Fans are eating up the new Stephanie Plum mystery!

5. Suite Francaise
Irene Nemirovsky, Knopf, $25, 1400044731
Long-lost vignettes set in German-occupied Paris,
by an author exterminated in Auschwitz. A Book
Sense Pick.

6. The Ruins - Debut
Scott Smith, Knopf, $24.95, 1400043875
An eerily good, long-awaited follow-up to creepy
favorite A Simple Plan.

7. Terrorist
John Updike, Knopf, $24.95, 0307264653
Updike plumbs the mind of a young terrorist born
and bred in New Jersey.

8. Can't Wait to Get to Heaven
Fannie Flagg, Random House, $25.95,
1400061261
More of the down-home charm and humor Flagg
introduced in Fried Green Tomatoes.

9. Digging to America
Anne Tyler, Knopf, $24.95, 0307263940
A family drama of cross-cultural adjustment and
acceptance.

10. The Whole World Over
Julia Glass, Pantheon, $25.95, 0375422749
A lovely, engaging follow-up to the National
Book Award-winning debut and Book Sense Pick,
Three Junes.

11. Angels Fall
Nora Roberts, Putnam, $25.95, 0399153721
Damsel in distress rescued in Wyoming, amid
menace and suspense.

12. Break No Bones
Kathy Reichs, Scribner, $25.95, 0743233492
The working forensic anthropologist's newest
adventure for alter-ego Tempe Brennan (TV's
Bones).

13. The Whistling Season
Ivan Doig, Harcourt, $25, 0151012377
"Flawlessly crafted," says bookseller Stephen
Grutzmacher of Passtimes Books, Sister Bay, WI,
of this Book Sense Pick.

14. The Foreign Correspondent
Alan Furst, Random House, $24.95, 1400060192
thriller.

15. Beach Road
James Patterson, Peter de Jonge, Little Brown,
$27.95, 0316159786
A new "Trial of the Century" features a local
# Pacific Northwest Independent Bestseller List
for the week ending July 23, 2006

## Fiction

### HARDCOVER

1. **Phantom**  
   Terry Goodkind, Tor, $29.95, 0765505240
2. **The Whistling Season**  
   Ivan Doig, Harcourt, $25, 0151012377
3. **Water for Elephants**  
   Sara Gruen, Algonquin, $23.95, 1565124995
4. **Pegasus Descending**  
   James Lee Burke, S&S, $26, 0743277724
5. **Twelve Sharp**  
   Janet Evanovich, St. Martin’s, $26.95, 0312349843
6. **The Whole World Over**  
   Julia Glass, Pantheon, $25.95, 0375422749
   - 7. **Telegraph Days**  
     Larry McMurtry, S&S, $25, 0743250788
7. **Terrorist**  
   John Updike, Knopf, $24.95, 0307264653
8. **The Ruins**  
   Scott Smith, Knopf, $24.95, 1400043875
9. **Blue Shoes and Happiness**  
   Alexander McCall Smith, Pantheon, $21.95, 0375422722
   - 11. **Danse Macabre**  
     Laurell K. Hamilton, Berkley, $25.95, 0425207978
10. **Suite Francaise**  
    Irene Nemirovsky, Knopf, $25, 1400044731
     - 13. **Gallatin Canyon**  
       Thomas McGuane, Knopf, $24, 1400041562
12. **The Art of Detection**  
    Laurie R. King, Bantam, $24, 0553804537
    - 15. **Proof Positive**  
      Philip Margolin, HarperCollins, $25.95, 0060735058

### PAPERBACK

1. **The Memory Keeper’s Daughter**  
   Kim Edwards, Penguin, $14, 0143037145
2. **A Sudden Country**  
   Karen Fisher, Random House, $13.95, 0812973437
3. **Snow Flower and the Secret Fan**  
   Lisa See, Random House, $13.95, 0812968069
4. **History of Love**  
   Nicole Krauss, Norton, $13.95, 0393328627
   - 5. **The Highest Tide**  
     Jim Lynch, Bloomsbury, $13.95, 1582346291
6. **The kite Runner**  
   Khaled Hosseini, Riverhead, $14, 1594480001
   - 7. **Broken for You**  
     Stephanie Kallos, Grove, $13, 0802142109
7. **Espresso Tales**  
   Alexander McCall Smith, Anchor, $13.95, 0307275973
8. **March**  
   Geraldine Brooks, Penguin, $14, 0143036661
9. **No Country for Old Men**  
   Cormac McCarthy, Vintage, $14, 0375706674
10. **Gilead**  
    Marilynne Robinson, Picador, $14, 031242440X
11. **The Shadow of the Wind**  
    Carlos Ruiz Zafon, Penguin, $15, 0143034901
12. **My Sister’s Keeper**  
    Jodi Picoult, Washington Square, $14, 0743454537
13. **The Mermaid Chair**  
    Sue Monk Kidd, Penguin, $14, 0143036696
14. **Never Let Me Go**  
    Kazuo Ishiguro, Vintage, $14, 1400078776

### MASS MARKET

1. **The Lincoln Lawyer**  
   Michael Connolly, Warner, $7.99, 0446616451
2. **The Devil Wears Prada**  
   Lauren Weisberger, Anchor, $7.99, 0307255558
3. **Eleven on Top**  
   Janet Evanovich, St. Martin’s, $7.99, 0312985347
4. **Angels and Demons**  
   Dan Brown, Pocket, $9.99, 1416524797
5. **The Da Vinci Code**  
   Dan Brown, Anchor, $7.99, 1400079179
6. **One for the Money**  
   Janet Evanovich, St. Martin’s, $7.99, 0312990456
7. **Fire Sale**  
   Sara Paretsky, Signet, $9.99, 045121899X
   - 8. **Crusader’s Cross**  
     James Lee Burke, Pocket, $7.99, 0743277201
9. **Locked Rooms**  
   Laurie R. King, Bantam, $6.99, 0553583417
10. **Black Wind**  
    Clive Cussler, Dirk Cussler, Berkley, $9.99, 0425204235
“An elegy for the central power of the country school.”
—Kirkus Reviews

“Can’t cook but doesn’t bite.” So begins a 1909 Minnesota newspaper ad offering the housekeeping services of Rose Llewellyn. When a homesteading widower answers from Montana, Rose goes west, bringing her font-of-knowledge brother Morrie and a season of change to Oliver Milliron and his three sons.

“The verve and inspiration that [Morrie], an utter novice to the West, to children and to teaching children, brings to the task is told brilliantly and passionately, and is the core of the book’s narrative, with its themes of all the different ways of knowing and learning, at any age.”—Rick Bass, Publishers Weekly

Harcourt

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
### Pacific Northwest Independent Bestseller List
for the week ending August 13, 2006

**Fiction**

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<th>HARDCOVER</th>
<th>PAPERBACK</th>
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<td>Ivan Doig, Harcourt, $25, 0151012377</td>
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<td>4. Phantom</td>
<td>4. The Kite Runner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terry Goodkind, Tor, $29.95, 0765305240</td>
<td>Khaled Hosseini, Riverhead, $14, 1594480001</td>
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<td>• 5. Dead Wrong</td>
<td>• 5. Broken for You</td>
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<td>J.A. Jance, Morrow, $25.95, 0060540007</td>
<td>Stephanie Kallos, Grove, $13, 0802142109</td>
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<td>6. Special Topics in Calamity Physics</td>
<td>• 6. The Highest Tide</td>
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<td>Jim Lynch, Bloomsbury, $13.95, 1582346291</td>
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<td>Nicole Krauss, Norton, $13.95, 0393328627</td>
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<td>8. The Keep</td>
<td>• 11. Wicked</td>
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<td>Jennifer Egan, Knopf, $23.95, 1400043921</td>
<td>Gregory Maguire, Regan Books, $16, 0060987103</td>
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<td>Scott Smith, Knopf, $24.95, 1400043875</td>
<td>Marilyne Robinson, Picador, $14, 031242440X</td>
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<td>James Lee Burke, S&amp;S, $26, 0743277724</td>
<td>Jodi Picoult, Washington Square, $14, 0743454537</td>
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<td>11. Twelve Sharp</td>
<td>• 14. Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close</td>
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<td>Janet Evanovich, St. Martin's, $26.95, 031249483</td>
<td>Jonathan Safran Foer, Mariner, $13.95, 0618711651</td>
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<td>12. Digging to America</td>
<td>15. The Secret Life of Bees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Tyler, Knopf, $24.95, 0307263940</td>
<td>Sue Monk Kidd, Penguin, $14, 0142001740</td>
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<td>• 13. The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters</td>
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<td>Gordon Dahlquist, Bantam, $26, 0385340354</td>
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<td>14. Judge and Jury</td>
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<td>James Patterson, Little Brown, $27.99, 0316013935</td>
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<td>• 15. Coronado</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dennis Lehane, Morrow, $24.95, 006113967X</td>
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**MASS MARKET**

| 1. The Lincoln Lawyer                         | 6. The Da Vinci Code                          |
| 2. The Devil Wears Prada                      | • 7. Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell            |
| Lauren Weisberger, Anchor, $7.99, 0307255558  | Susanna Clarke, Tor, $7.99, 076536155         |
| 3. Lifeguard                                  | • 8. 1984                                     |
| James Patterson, Andrew Gross, Warner, $9.99,  | George Orwell, Signet, $7.95, 0451524934     |
| 044661761X                                     |                                             |
| • 4. Long Time Gone                           | 9. Angels and Demons                          |
| 5. Crusader's Cross                           | • 10. Dead Man Docking                        |
| James Lee Burke, Pocket, $7.99, 0743277201    | Mary Daheim, Avon, $6.99, 0060566507          |
Pacific Northwest Independent Bestseller List
for the week ending June 18, 2006
Fiction

HARDCOVER

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2. Water for Elephants
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3. Blue Shoes and Happiness
   Alexander McCall Smith, Pantheon, $21.95, 0375422722
4. Terrorist
   John Updike, Knopf, $24.95, 0307264653
5. Suite Francaise
   Irene Nemirovsky, Knopf, $25, 140004731
6. Digging to America
   Anne Tyler, Knopf, $24.95, 0307263940
7. Telegraph Days
   Larry McMurtry, S&S, $25, 0743250788
8. The Foreign Correspondent
   Alan Furst, Random House, $24.95, 1400060192
•9. The Blight Way
   Patrick F. McManus, S&S, $24, 0743280474
•10. The Art of Detection
   Laurie R. King, Bantam, $24, 0553804537
11. The Whole World Over
    Julia Glass, Pantheon, $25.95, 0375422749
12. At Risk
    Patricia D. Cornwell, Putnam, $21.95, 0399153624
•13. The Book of the Dead
    Douglas J. Preston, Warner, $25.95, 0446576980
14. Beach Road
    James Patterson, Little Brown, $27.95, 0316159786
•15. The Stolen Child
    Keith Donohue, Nan Talese, $23.95, 0385516169

PAPERBACK

1. Snow Flower and the Secret Fan
   Lisa See, Random House, $13.95, 0812968069
2. Saturday
   Ian McEwan, Anchor, $14.95, 1400076196
3. The Kite Runner
   Khaled Hosseini, Riverhead, $14, 1594480001
4. History of Love
   Nicole Krauss, Norton, $13.95, 0393328627
•5. The Highest Tide
   Jim Lynch, Bloomsbury, $13.95, 1582346291
6. The Shadow of the Wind
   Carlos Ruiz Zafon, Penguin, $15, 0143034901
7. Until I Find You
   John Irving, Ballantine, $13.95, 0345497926
8. Gilead
   Marilynne Robinson, Picador, $14, 031242440X
9. March
   Geraldine Brooks, Penguin, $14, 0143036661
•10. Broken for You
    Stephanie Kallos, Grove, $13, 0802142109
•11. Zorro
    Isabelle Allende, Harper Perennial, $14.95, 0060779004
12. Never Let Me Go
    Kazuo Ishiguro, Vintage, $14, 1400078776
13. The Mermaid Chair
    Sue Monk Kidd, Penguin, $14, 0143036696
•14. The Alchemist (Updated)
    Paulo Coelho, HarperSanFrancisco, $13.95, 0061122416
•15. Wicked
    Gregory Maguire, Regan Books, $16, 0060987103

MASS MARKET

1. The Da Vinci Code
   Dan Brown, Anchor, $7.99, 1400079179
2. Angels and Demons
   Dan Brown, Pocket, $9.99, 1416524797
3. The Devil Wears Prada
   Lauren Weisberger, Anchor, $7.99, 0307275558
4. Blood from a Stone
   Donna Leon, Penguin, $7.99, 014303698X
5. Deception Point
   Dan Brown, Pocket, $9.99, 1416524800

6. Black Wind
   Clive Cussler, Dirk Cussler, Berkley, $9.99, 0425204235
   Merriam-Webster (Eds.), Merriam-Webster, $7.50, 0877799296
•8. 1984
   George Orwell, Signet, $7.95, 0451524934
•9. Skeleton Man
   Tony Hillerman, HarperTorch, $7.99, 006056346X
10. 4th of July
    James Patterson, Maxine Paetro, Warner, $9.99, 0446613363
Ivan Doig mines Montana's history for fictional effect

BY JEFFERSON ROBBINS
World staff writer

Ivan Doig's characters exist in a distinctively American past, and their own pasts are very much with them. Scottish-born Angus McCaskill, the 1890s sheepherder-turned-schoolmaster pining forever for his first love, Rose Llewellyn, the homestead housekeeper of 1909, who can't cook for reasons harking back to her dead husband. Paul Milliron, a widower's son who looks back as a man from the mid-20th century and remembers not only his youth, but also the dreams that plagued him in his boyhood bed.

Doig, 67, has made a career of resuscitating the dusty history of his native Montana in novels, memoirs and historical essays. His first book, the National Book Award-winning memoir "This House of Sky," memorialized his childhood among the hardscrabble "lariat proletariat" at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, eking their living out of ranchhand jobs and shepherding contracts. In his fictional Montana trilogy — "English Creek" (1984), "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" (1987) and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana" (1990) — he captured 100 years of the state's history, from statehood to countenance, by creating a vast family tree of backward-glancing settlers, sodbusters and schoolteachers.

"I believe we all came from somewhere, back there in our own lives and the lives of people before us," says Doig, who visits A Book For All Seasons in Leavenworth for a booksigning and author's dinner Sunday. "Wallace Stegner used to say he never had any trouble knowing who he was. I don't know if it's similar or not, but I've never had any trouble thinking that we all have a context behind us, and that's what I like to work with."

As an architect of an imagined past that's nonetheless true, Doig has won gold-plated praise from reviewers and fellow authors — who often put him on par with Stegner (1909-1993), the quintessential writer of the American West. In 1999, he was named No. 56 of the 100 most influential Montanans of the 20th century by The Missoulian newspaper.
Book excerpts

"The past. The past past, to speak, back there beyond myself. What can we ever truly know of it, how can we account for what it passes to us, what it witholds? Employ my imagination to its utmost, I could not see myself doing what Alexander McCaskill did in his Bell Rock years, travel an extent of unmistakable water each day to set Abrose stone onto reef stone. Feed me first to the flaming hounds of hell. Yet for all I knew, my ocean-defying great-grandfather was afraid of the dark or whimpere at the sight of a spider but any such perturbances were whited out by time. Only his brave Rock accomplishment was left to sight. And here I lay, sweating steerage sweat, with a dread of water that had no logic newer than eighty years, no personal beginning, and evidently no end. It simply was in me, like life’s underground river of blood. Ahead there, I hoped far ahead, when I myself became the past — would the weak places in me become hidden, too? Say I ever did become husband, father, eventual great-grandfather of Montana McCaskills. What were they going to comprehend of me as their firstborn? Not this sweet night here, nor my midnight cage of stergeo, not my mental snaggers. No, for what solace it was, essentially all that could be known of Angus Alexander McCaskill was that I did manage to cross the Atlantic Ocean. If I managed to cross it.

— from "Dancing at the Rascal Fair"

"Memory, the near-neighborhood of dream, is almost as casual in its hospitality. When I fix my sandwich lunch, in a quiet noon, I may find myself sitting down thirty years ago in the company of the great cowboy from Texas, Walter Badgett. Forever the same is the meal with Walter; fried mush with dark corn syrup, and bread which Walter first has toasted and then dried in the oven. When we bite, it shatters and crumbles in our mouths, and the more we eat, the fuller our plates grow with the shrapnel of crusts. After the last roaring bite, Walter sits back tall as two of the ten-year-old me and asks down. Well, reckon we can make it through till night now?"

— from "This House of Sky"

"I suppose it was the point of life I was at, less than a man but starting to be something more than a boy, that set me aware of every thing around, as though Mariah Coulte School and its height of flagpole and depth of well were the axis of all that was in sight... Out beyond the play area, there were round rings of shadow on the patch of prairie where the horses rode to school to eat the grass down in circles around their picket stakes. Perhaps that pattern drew my eye to what I had viewed every day of my school life but never until then truly registered: the trails in the grass that radiated as in many directions and there were homesteads with children, all converging to that schoolyard spot where I stood unnaturally alone."

— from "The Whistling Season"

Doig

Continued from previous page

Doig: Well, this is a bit eerie, because passing the time till our interview came up, I pulled out the character genealogy I did for my books — all way back in the mid or more age ago now, when the Washington Post asked me to do a piece on the creation of fictional characters. And I’m working on a scene now where in World War II, an influential United States senator is going through the weekly newspapers from his Montana constituencies, and he comes on a list of those killed in the war so far. And it’s the newspaper from the fictional town of Gros Ventre that I introduced in “English Creek” and “Dancing at the Rascal Fair.” And I’ve been picking out names off this genealogy and assigning minor characters, or relatives of minor characters, or some grim fates in World War II that come up and hit this senator in the face, as he realizes the terrific toll the war is taking on these small communitics.

Go: For critics who have written about your work, “evocative” is the adjective that creeps in there an awful lot. So when you are writing a passage that’s trying to catch a feeling or the making of a reader on the other end?

Doig: What I’m conscious of as I work on the scenes is the language. I’m often really deep into that — what verb carries some implication I want, do I use adjectives or adverbs in this situation or not. In this morning’s work, again in this scene describing this potent old senator, it’s a pretty straightforward scene, until I hark back when he was the ranch hand in Montana and really learning to read his way up in the world — and all of a sudden I’m calling him this “gaunt old bone sprung prairie Caesar.” In most cases, I would not put that many adjectives together, but in that particular line, at least so far, it seems to me it works reasonably well to add these things on to some of the things he adds up to at this point in his life. Rhythm is often on my mind — at some points of books I will put in iambic pentameter or something if it seems to fit. I’m fairly conscious of the insides of words certain prongs line up pretty nicely in a row. So there is some appeal to the eye and the ear both as I work on the language.

Go: Were there challenges with “The Whistling Season” in terms of writing from the perspective of a young boy?

Doig: Oh, sure — particularly a kid who has this mental situation of “inesia” where he can remember all his dreams all his life, which is an acute psychological condition that I put a tag on.

Go: It sounds very valid, though. It sounds very DSM-IV.

Doig: Yeah, well, people seem surprised, at readings and speeches and so forth, when I tell them as far as I know, it came straight out of my head. It doesn’t seem to exist in anybody else’s. So yeah, I had to then figure out what kind of dreams does this kid have, and in essence, what does he do with them. How is this not easy. I really don’t want to be perpetually thinking your way into the situation of a character, but to me, that’s the job description of a novelist. So I’ve done it with a writer who is teaching today who was one of the protagonists of my previous book, “Prairie Nocturne”; Mariah McCaskill, who works for a fictitious newspaper in Montana as a glamorous photographer; and one who I am interested in the characters you’re creating, I think, and you have to bring the toolbox of a professional writer — give them their characteristics, their dialect, their shadowy world."

Go: Teachers seem to look pretty large as heroes, or at least as key characters, in a lot of your books.

Doig: I’m married to one. My wife Carol taught for 30 years at Shoreline Community College, here near where we live on Puget Sound, so she and her cohorts are heroes to me. And education has been my ladder up in life. It started in a one-room school in small-town Montana. Money wasn’t there, land wasn’t there, nobility of breeding or anything was not there, but school always was. So I have all these years of schooling unpacked into me, and for what it’s worth, I’m an education sitting here writing books.

Go: Paul Milliron could be compared to yourself in your memoir — the fact that he is an autodidact who learns a lot on his own.

Doig: Yeah, Paul is maybe closer to some aspects in me than any of my other fictional narrators, or maybe any characters at all. He’s very different in some ways, in that he’s able to go out in the world and be an administrator, a politician — he can stand to be around committee and so forth. I don’t have any of those knacks. And he also comes from a larger, more complicated family. I never had the one-room school experience, either, so there are some differences. But some of the slants of mind, the love of words and adventuring into other languages — I guess I gave those to Paul, because I savvoys all those the way into my heart, as well as my head.

Go: When you write a scene set in Montana, as they almost all are, do you have the landscape very clearly in mind?

Doig: Pretty clearly, and I’m also willing to invent some landscape if the scene needs it. That’s why I’ve invented town names for actual sites in northern Montana, this territory I’m writing about. More than a lot of the time. I’ve had quite a collection of photos to work with — my wife Carol is a quite a gifted photographer, and she has a lot of photos from Montana for me, for what, thirty, thirty-five years now, I guess. So I have that around, I’ve got more of these file cards — the look of sunsets, clouds and various seasons on the land in Montana. So I have a category of landscape description and weather to refer to, and every so often the language will just help you out, either to fit into fresh words some landscape of memory, or to give me an imaginative detail on a piece of landscape that will help the story along.

Go: You haven’t lived in Montana for some time, and it looms so large in your work. Do you think it’s easier for a writer, so to write about place that’s had a deep impact on him, to write from a distance?

Doig: Well, it has worked for some pretty good writers — Joyce writing "Ulysses" in Paris, and Conrad writing about the sea in the English town of Rye. So there are potent precedents. It works the other way too, of Faulkner sitting there in Oxford, Miss., and turning everything around him into Yoknapatawpha County. I think the situations tend to be individual. In my case, hooling up here on Puget Sound, in weather I find comfortable, a place that provided my wife, frankly, the job to support us while my books caught up to that — has been excellent work to place. So I’ve never seen any reason to change that. I left Montana as an economic exile, as so many Montanans have done and continue to do... I went out and carried with me, in my head, the material and forces of habit learned in ranchwork, of doing the chores and things of that life. So, that I’ve been able to apply in these books ever since.

Jefferson Robbins can be reached at 664-7123 or e-mail at robbins@wenworld.com.
August 29, 2006

Mr. Ivan Doig
17277 15th Ave NW
Shoreline, WA 98177-3846

Dear Mr. Doig,

I’m not sure your clipping bureau (or what serves as today’s electronic equivalent thereof) is even aware of this review of The Whistling Season. After all, a Livingston MT weekly freebie is an insignificant asteroid in the Great Firmament of Media these days.

However, I’d like you to have a copy of my review, all the same. The magic and power of your classic This House of Sky helped me levitate (and remain confidently airborne) over some bumpy times during my first winter in Montana. I was thrilled to discover your writing, albeit late in my life (I’m just six years your junior), and have enjoyed it ever since.

My review of The Whistling Season offers a somewhat different take on your plot and characters than most reviewers have concluded. See what you think...

... and thank you—more than you know.

Best wishes always,

Jane Susan MacCarter

P. O. Box 803
Livingston, MT 59047-0803
Heanyjw@wispwest.net
August 29, 2006

Mr. Ivan Doig
17277 15th Ave NW
Shoreline, WA 98177-3846

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... and thank you—more than you know.

Best wishes always,

Jane Susan MacCarter

P. O. Box 803
Livingston, MT 59047-0803
Heanyjw@wispwest.net
The Whistling Season
by Ivan Doig

To Montana and its one-room schoolhouses, with love....

Dateline 1957. Sputnik, the ominous Soviet satellite—hurting comet-like out of Cold War and into my bland, oblivious Minneapolis Life—is jolting America into an educational panic.

My teacher Mrs. Constantine—Roman nose, grizzled triangle of curls, and the most alive eyes I’ve ever seen—glowers at us students in a mixture of shame and loathing. After all, she’s just as guilty of being an American Slacker as we are. Her tremulous voice accuses us all: “You kids have got to wake up, ALL Americans have to wake up! While we’ve been sleeping, the Communists have overtaken us in science, in math, in most everything that counts. But hey, it’s our own fault. And now we must struggle like crazy just to catch up. It’s going to take years. I hate to say so, but... we’re really in for it now.”

Our childish cheeks burn with collective shame. Afterwards, we huddle together on the playground, taunting one another with false bravado, “So, would you rather be Red than dead? Or dead than Red?” Even now, I can clearly draw from the well of memory a sense of overwhelming guilt from which I’ve never entirely recovered. And that was nearly 50 years ago.

As The Whistling Season begins, it is 1957, and the specter of Sputnik hangs over Montana and the nation.

Paul Milliron, aging superintendent of Montana schools, has come to Great Falls to address the superintendents, teachers and school boards of Montana’s 56 counties and, in doing so, will be deciding the fate of the state’s last remaining one-room schools. In order to be “modern” and efficient, the State of Montana has proposed such a closure.

In the hours before his fateful presentation, Paul Milliron begins recalling his thirteenth year at the one-room Marias Coulee School in 1909-1910, the year of Halley’s Comet’s return, and so the novel winds backwards to the story of Paul’s father, recent widower Oliver Milliron, who scrambles to raise three sons: the main character and eldest son Paul, scrappy Damon and ingenuous Toby all while operating a dryland farm among other time-consuming tasks.

When Oliver happens across a newspaper ad for “housekeeping position sought by widow, sound morals, exceptional disposition, can’t cook but doesn’t bite,” he hires the woman sight unseen from Minneapolis.

The widow turns out to be lovely Rose Llewellyn, crackerjack housekeeper and whistling aficionado. However, Rose is more than a bit enigmatic about certain aspects of her life, especially when she brings with her to Montana an unexpected appendage—her brother Morris. Hugely mustached, scholarly, effusive and brimming with life, Morris “Morrie” Morgan turns out to hold mysteries of his own.

When the incumbent old-maid schoolteacher at Marias Coulee School elopes with an itinerant preacher, brother Morrie is pressed into service to fill the schoolteacher’s job—and does he ever. Morrie’s enthusiasm, encyclopedic knowledge, and crackling vitality is almost too good to be true—even for a character of fiction. But what the heck... Morrie is the teacher we always wish we had, but seldom did: appealing, compelling, enlightening and enthralling. Damn, what a guy.

The Whistling Season is really three stories in one. Three themes create an artfully interwoven backdrop against which the story unfolds:

It’s the tale of ‘dueling heavenly bodies’—1957’s Sputnik vs. the 1910 visitation of Halley’s Comet. Morrie Morgan says it best, straight out of the book: “Light is the desire of the universe... You carry a lantern when you go into the darkness. The traveling bodies of the cosmos do the same. The impulse to illumination somehow is written into the heavenly order of things. The sun, stars, they all carry light, that seems to be their mission in being. ...the comet sends us light, not fire...

“Whatever little else we know
about the properties of existence, we map our days and nights by the fires in the heavens... Just once in most of our lifetimes, this comet comes from nowhere and returns to nowhere — but its passage unfailingly strikes a chord somewhere deep in us.

“Harmony can take surprising forms like that. Here, beneath the guiding fires of heaven, in the life we pass through, we must imagine our way to our own episodes of stellar harmony...” even as the aging Paul Milliron must weigh the challenges of Sputnik against the underappreciated value of the one-room schoolhouse in his own quest to find harmony, both in Montana’s school system and within his own soul.

Next, the story is a paean to the enduring value of the one-room schoolhouse in America. The Whistling Season relates the story of one remarkable teacher with one remarkable student in a one-room schoolhouse and the many ways and means by which education is imparted, both in and out of the classroom.

Young Paul gains a sense of this knowing, when he stands behind the one-room schoolhouse looking off to the horizon: “Out beyond the play area, there were round rims of shadow on the patch of prairie where the horses we rode to school had eaten the grass down in circles around their picket stakes. Perhaps that pattern drew my eye to what I had viewed every day of my school life but never, until then, truly registered: The trails in the grass that radiated in as many directions as there were homesteads with children, all converging to that schoolyard spot where I stood unnaturally alone. Forever and a day would go by, and that feeling will never leave me. Of knowing, in that instant, the central power of that country school in all our lives.”

Finally, The Whistling Season is a coming-of-age story about watershed events and unforgettable persons in our lives.

The book is replete with memorable characters—folks who live and move and have their being, lives that seem independent from the book. There’s the good-hearted father, Oliver Milliron, still tethered to the memory of his late wife. His sons Toby, Damon, and especially the restless prodigy Paul. The fey, fetching widow Rose Llewellyn and her equally mysterious brother Morrie—big-hearted, larger-than-life, a walking encyclopedia with brass knuckles in his pocket. Things are not what they seem on the surface with any of them.

What is the secret of Rose’s and Morrie’s past? Will the whistling season in these many lives end before it’s even truly begun? (Ah, you’ll have to read the book for the answer to that.)

Throughout this tale, each character (in ways great or small) learns to reinvent, remake himself or herself anew and move forward into life. Morrie puts it in simple terms that I love: “People do these things to transcend the ordinary. To find their own boundaries, of bravery or willpower. To plow a deeper furrow of life.”

The Whistling Season plows a memorable furrow in the mind of the reader, at once deeply evocative and truly inspiring.

Born in White Sulphur Springs, Mont. in 1939, author Ivan Doig spent his childhood years in and around Ringling, Mont. and the Crazy Mountains. Together with his widower father and live-in caregiver grandmother, Doig relocated to northwest Montana during his high school years, in that harsh and beautiful country where mountain meets plain southeast of Glacier National Park.

Now age 67, Ivan Doig is the author of eight previous novels and three works of nonfiction, including his classic memoir This House of Sky. A former ranch hand, newspaperman and magazine editor, Doig holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Washington.

There are some who say Doig lacks “the hard edge,” a virtue, in my mind. He simply has no need for it, preferring instead to showcase the human heart and things as they are, with warmth, honesty and sumptuous language.

—JANE SUSAN MACCARTER
BOOKWORMS UNITE

ALEX SAKARIASSEN
MONTANA KAIMIN

With the brunt of Rolling Stones bedlam still days away, Missoula prides itself for a far quieter celebrity crowd tonight. The classic-rock words as sung by Mick Jagger will momentarily fall by the wayside as the literati of the West gather to celebrate Missoula’s seventh annual Montana Festival of the Book.

“There’s such a strong, deep local tradition of high powered writing,” said renowned Western author Ivan Doig. “People in Missoula are aware that it is and has for a long time been a creative center.”

Doig is one of roughly 129 writers, professors and bookstore owners participating in the two-day event. Literary personalities from across the country will take part in readings, book signings, receptions, panel discussions and other events from Friday morning through Saturday afternoon. The festival’s host, the Montana Committee for the Humanities, invited many of the festival presenters to promote their newly published works.

“It was just a really rich year for published material coming out of the West,” said festival coordinator Kim Anderson.

Doig and local author William Kittredge will highlight this year’s festival during a gala reading at 7:30 p.m. on Friday in the Wilma. The duo will read selections from Doig’s novel “The Whistling Season.” After the reading, Doig and Kittredge will respond to questions and comments from the public.

“It’s always a pleasure to get up in front of people and read, but the real thing I look forward to is seeing old friends,” Kittredge said.

The MCH invited Doig to headline this year’s gala reading with Kittredge after his novel “This House of Sky” was chosen as the One Book Montana reading selection for 2006.

“All the stars lined up,” Doig said.

The Montana Center for the Book and a statewide advisory board chose “This House of Sky” 28 years after its original publication date. The book’s renewed success brought the Washington-based author’s work back to the attention of neighboring states, and South Dakota quickly adopted “The Whistling Season” as its state read for 2007.

“It was very pleasing news, and South Dakota is going to follow,” Doig said. “Once again Montana sets the trend.”

Other festival presenters include internationally renowned author Greg Mortenson, who will offer a special presentation promoting his book “Three Cups of Tea” on Saturday afternoon. Montana Poet Laureate Sandra Aliceaner will host a panel discussion titled “Montana Poetry: A Conversation” on Saturday morning. The team behind Missoula’s graphic novel “Slumgullion” will hold a fundraiser in Caras Park in conjunction with the festival.

“We try to hook into what interests the students on campus,” Anderson said.

Several writers from the University of Montana faculty body will also take part in the festival, including Clemens Wickwied, Dennis Swibold and Judy Blunt.

“I first met Judy, indeed, when she was a student there,” Doig said. “So the proof that talent and hard work and tutelage will pay off is present in the case of Judy Blunt.”

This year’s event marks the seventh anniversary of the Montana Festival of the Book. Each year the festival honors the thick literary atmosphere surrounding the state of Montana and the copious celebrated writers the state has birthed.

“Montana has an incredibly rich literary history, far out of proportion with our population,” Anderson said.

Anderson said she believes the strength of the Creative Writing Department at UM has made a valuable contribution to Missoula’s own literary richness.

“I think the creative writing program here, which was one of the first in the country…played a huge role in making Missoula what a magazine called, ‘The Left Bank of Montana,’” she said.

According to Anderson, similar literature-based festivals have flourished and founedered all across the country. The one thing that ensures the success of Missoula’s book festival year after year is the impressive audience turnout that festival events experience, she said.

“We have accumulative audiences of 5,000 over the two days,” Anderson said, referring to past festivals.

Doig credited the festival’s success to the number of dedicated followers of local literature in Missoula and the level of appreciation the community as a whole has for the creative arts.

“Maybe it’s a bit like the Newport Jazz Festival or the Monterey Jazz Festival,” Doig said. “All the cool cats want to join in and be part of the music.”

Kittredge agreed, pointing to the popularity of other festivals in Missoula’s artistic community as evidence of the overall desire to celebrate creative expression alongside the state’s successes.

“Basically, it’s a big celebration of community life in Missoula,” Kittredge said. “There’s lots of things to like about this town, and this is one of them.”

Oh shit, it’s back...
Heard you say it on Facebook!
(Sing it when you say it)

OK kids, you know the drill. You get stupid drunk, blab about it on the Web and the Kaimin calls you out on it. You better shape up though, next time we’re running names.

...I also enjoy gettin' f**ked up with my girls, getting my hair and nails done, tanning is a must...uhmm I am completely obsessed with the color *aquas* always have been and always will be... and I love pink too! I adore Paris Hilton, and I'm down with Barbies...

- Class of ’08

- Hahah, I will never let a boy in our bed again. Nobody is more cuddly and sweet and you love! My deepest apologies. Ewwww. I am robbing the cradle aren’t I......Bwahahah. — Class of ’08

- We’re being watched, but, I want to tell you in code - hj 454 jkm knen naner, butitimate toad sniffer. Use the Da Vinci Code tactics. P.S. Others are watching, find RoBeer? IanGdm ON — Class of ’05

- my profile is pretty explanatory. In a previous life, i was an intergalactic princess who could out-fly anyone in a space craft, and hit anything from any distance with my super-powered ray gun. — Class of ’06

MEDIA

Continued from Page 12

with a minor in media arts when we started,” Murphy said. “Now we have 150 enrolled for a minor. We’ve had to open new sections to accommodate the growth.”

One possible stumbling block that was avoided came from Montana State, which already offers an undergraduate degree. “Bozeman didn’t protest, but they wrote a letter of concern that we’d take (prospective students) away from them,” Murphy said.

“We made a clear case that this wasn’t a duplication of their program. There are plenty of students out there to go around.”

Hughes and Murphy shared the opinion that this will lead to greater things for media arts at UM.

“It’s a great opportunity and allows us room to grow,” Hughes said. “It was a thrill to be in the room when the Board of Regents said, ‘Yes, this should be a program.’”

“We still are feeling the growth spurt. In five years we could have 150 students enrolled for the major,” Murphy said. “We feel like there’s no limit.”

Kaimin: sounds like diamond, and just as hard.
$25M slated for roadwork

By CHELSI MOY
Tribune Staff Writer

Two dangerous stretches of road in northcentral Montana will soon get a facelift, the state Department of Transportation recently announced.
The state awarded a $9.6 million contract this week to Wickens Construction Inc., out of Lewistown, to reconstruct a 10.8-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 287 north of Bowman's Corner toward Augusta. The second 7.9-mile project — costing $15.5 million — is west of Cut Bank on U.S. Highway 2 toward Browning. The construction is an extension of a recently completed project east of Browning, said Steve Prinz, a state engineer. S & K Construction, Inc., out of Helena, was awarded that contract.

Workers plan to tear out the current stretches of both roads and start from scratch. Some work will begin immediately, but most of the construction will occur in spring 2007. Cut Bank residents have been waiting for close to a decade for improvements to the road, said resident John Osborne.

A study conducted in 2005 showed that approximately 2,280 vehicles drive daily on U.S. Highway 2 west of Cut Bank. The highway also sees heavy bike traffic in the summer months from cyclists traveling to and from Glacier National Park despite limited shoulder space, Osborne said. He noted that widening the road would make it safer.

See ROADWORK, 3A

Beloved Big Sky author advises young writers

Above: Best-selling author Ivan Doig provides tips and inspiration to a group of young writers Wednesday at the High Plains Heritage Center.
Below: Doig shows the group his version of a "laptop" during a question and answer session.
Montana native was National Book Award finalist

By KEILA SZPALLER
Tribune Staff Writer

Celebrated author and Montana native Ivan Doig recently talked with a group of young Great Falls writers.

Emma Martin asked Doig how he came up with the name of his first book, "This House of Sky."

The Whittier Elementary fifth-grader and seven other students met Wednesday at the High Plains Heritage Center, where they asked Doig about his work, his research and his writing habits.

"These are probably the future authors of Montana gathered here," said Christine Morris, executive director of the Heritage Center.

Doig was researching his next book there. The novel is set in Great Falls, and it's coming along, but on his Web site, he asks readers not to rush him: "Don't push, but it is more than halfway done."

"This House of Sky," a memoir, was published in 1978, and it was a finalist for the National Book Award.

Doig told Martin that he chose its name because of the way the words sound together. He said it aloud. "Hear those esses?" he asked.

Writers need to pay attention to the interiors of sentences, said Doig, a former ranch hand, newspaperman and magazine editor.

This school year Mary Rearden introduced the group of students to each other because she noticed they shared a common interest.

See IVAN DOIG, 3A
Author Ivan Doig reads from his “laptop” during a question and answer session for young writers Wednesday.

Ivan Doig

FROM 1A

“There were kids all over town who were passionate about writing,” said Rearden, extended curriculm services coordinator for Great Falls Public Schools.

They didn’t know each other, though, and last week she brought them together.

The students bonded, and they took front row seats Wednesday to talk to Doig, one of a number of writers they’d heard about this year.

Doig was born in White Sulphur Springs, grew up along the Rocky Mountain Front, and now lives in Seattle. And some of his works still show Montana ties.

Katie Schreffler, an East Middle School seventh-grader, asked Doig how long it took him to write his first book.

Doig was working as a full-time magazine freelance when he worked on the memoir, so he used “whatever time I could steal,” he said.

It took some two-and-a-half years of work over a six-year span. The book was a success, which allowed him to give up freelancing.

Since then, he’s written 10 books, and each book has taken about two years to complete.

North Middle School seventh-grader Jack Martinez asked what makes Doig interested in a topic.

Family is the first topic for many writers, Doig said: “That’s really what you know best.”

When Doig turned to fiction, he began exercising his imagination and asking himself “What if” questions.

Doig encouraged the students to immediately write down ideas that occur to them. If they want a good idea could vanish, he said.

Brianna McLean wanted to know if Doig ever suffered writer’s block, and Doig told the East seventh-grader that he did not believe in it.

He writes 400 words daily. “You can always write something”— even if it isn’t the material planned for the day, he said.

And people who live in Great Falls can turn to a forever-fertile topic, he said: “There’s always the weather to write about.”

Timothy Seery, a North eighth-grader, wanted to know Doig’s favorite part of writing about Montana.

Doig likes creating Montana characters, he said, and exploring how the state’s distances, weather and economies shape its residents.

He told Megan Bernhardt, a North eighth-grader, about his research. Doig listens to oral histories, copies materials and looks at photographs.

His upcoming book covers female pilots during World War II, and he described a photograph of one pilot. A small gap between her front teeth drove all the guys on base crazy.

More info

For more about Ivan Doig, go to his Web site: www.ivan-doig.com.

Do you have a favorite Doig book? Want to chat online with others about it?

Visit www.greatfallstribune.com, and click on the “storychat” button above this story.

Kate Ruud, an East eighth-grader, wanted to know Doig’s favorite time in Montana history. “It’s probably the (Great) Depression,” he said.

People were broke and television wasn’t around and many folks flocked to work in Fort Peck.

They entertained themselves in an old-fashioned way: “What do you do? You date,” he said.

Nolan Fromm wanted to know how Doig started his stories—did he start with a plot, or with characters?

He told him the question was a good one. The characters carry the story, he said.

He chooses a time period, and he also asks himself the “what if” question to create the plot.

What if a 14-year-old goes through a summer of his life when everything changes?

Doig holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Washington and is the author of 11 books.

Reach Tribune Staff Writer Keila Szaller at 791-1466, 800-438-6600 or kszaller@greatfallstribune.com.
Liz Darhansoff

From: "Saletan, Rebecca (HTP-NYC)" <Rebecca.Saletan@harcourt.com>
To: "Liz Darhansoff" <liz@dvgency.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2006 12:40 PM
Subject: Dog Bites Man, Indies Love Ivan

Liz--more nice Ivan news, if not a surprise--want to let him know?

WHISTLING SEASON SELECTED FOR BOOK SENSE HIGHLIGHTS YEAR END SUMMARY

Mark Nichols writes:

"It's time to produce our annual year-end Book Sense Picks Highlights list, and I'm pleased to let you know that the follow title published by Harcourt has been chosen to appear:

THE WHISTLING SEASON, Ivan Doig, 0151012377 (A June Pick)

Congratulations!

There are a total of 72 titles on this year's list, and the flyer will be printed in tabloid format -- similar to the Summer Paperback and Reading Group lists -- and distributed in the November Red Box mailing to all Book Sense stores. We've been told by booksellers that the Highlights flyer serves as a very helpful sales aid during the busy weeks leading up to the holidays, and many stores request additional copies to use throughout the season. A print run of 450,000 flyers is planned. The public announcement of the full list for 2006 will appear in the October 26th edition of Bookselling This Week."

10/18/2006
THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SHOPPING IN SEATTLE

I55 BEST SHOPS
NEW BOUTIQUES
"IT" BAGS & SHOES
SALES YOU CAN'T MISS

+ COOL SHOPS FOR KIDS
+ MENSWEAR IS EVERYWHERE
+ CHAMPAGNE & SHOPPING
AND OTHER TRENDS WE LOVE

ROUNDING UP CATTLE WITH THE LAST OF THE COWBOYS
SHOULD SAINT EDWARD PARK GO PRIVATE?
IN SEARCH OF THE BEST CHOCOLATE CHIPS
THE MINUTEMAN PATROL: PROTECTORS OR VIGILANTES OF THE U.S./CANADIAN BORDER?
THE THERMALS

Hearing The Thermals for the first time can be a bit irritating. The Portland trio so wholeheartedly embraces its influences—Robert Pollard's brilliantly skewed indie pop, the tuneful punk of the Buzzcocks, chunky, grunge-era guitars—that you can't help but wonder where you've heard their songs before. But what saves The Thermals from being mere imitators is their canny ability to twist the sounds of their heroes into something fresh. On their latest album, for example, "I Might Need You to Kill" borrows the up-tempo guitar riff from the chorus of Nirvana's "Lithium." But instead of a direct rip-off, guitarist/vocalist Hutch Harris decelerates the riff and places it in the song's verses. The result is a slow anthem that barely resembles its muse. Overall, TBTBTM is overtly political, with Harris, whose singing style can best be described as yel-lalking, predicting a United States someday governed by fascists. Highlights include the driving, muscular opener "Here's Your Future" and "A Pillar of Salt," on which bassist Kathy Foster and drummer Caitlin Love back Harris as he jams on a Cars-like guitar line. Which is OK because "A Pillar of Salt" is pure punk rock. Do you see a pattern developing? Chris Clayton GRADE: B

THE WHISTLING SEASON

BY IVAN DOIG

We've never been fans of Seattleite Ivan Doig's contemporary Western novels. His stories—almost all of which deal with rural life in mid-1900's Montana—are told with an antiquated narrative voice that we find grating and forced. Surprisingly, we loved The Whistling Season, a story about Paul Milliron, a Montana superintendent of schools in the 1950s, who's on the verge of having to close the state's outdated one-room schools. The novel starts with Paul flashing back to 1909, when he was a seventh-grader at one of those schools. That year, Paul's father, a struggling farmer and recent widower, hires Rose Llewellyn, a spirited housekeeper who is accompanied by her bookish brother Morris. Rose and Morris change Paul's life in surprising ways and cause the elderly Paul to question the state's decision to close the schools. Season is classic Doig (i.e., filled with poetic prose describing the harsh Montana landscape), but what sets it apart from the author's previous works is that it feels timeless instead of dated. This has as much to do with Paul's thoughtfully restrained narration as it does with Doig's sharp look at the changing face of Montana in the 20th century. C.C. GRADE: A
“District and Circle” by Seamus Heaney (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). A new volume of verse by the Nobel Prize-winning poet.

“The Unfinished Novel and Other Stories” by Valerie Martin (Vintage). A paperback-original collection of stories about “artists — driven and blocked, desired and detested, infamous and sublime.” By the author of “Mary Reilly” and the Orange Prize-winning “Property.”

“Everyman” by Philip Roth (Houghton Mifflin). The prize-winning novelist’s new work is about a man “whose youthful sense of independence and confidence begins to be challenged when illness commences its attack in middle age.”

“Digging to America” by Anne Tyler (Knopf). The latest by the Pulitzer Prize-winner (“Breathing Lessons”) focuses on an Iranian-born American woman “who, after 35 years in this country, must finally come to terms with her ‘outsiderness.’”

JUNE

“The Whistling Season” by Ivan Doig (Harcourt). Set in 1909, the new novel by the Seattle writer portrays a community of rural homesteaders drawn to “a gargantuan irrigation project intended to make the Montana prairie bloom.”

“Touchy Subjects” by Emma Donoghue (Harcourt). The always surprising lesbian writer (“Slammerkin”) delivers a book of 19 stories encompassing “characters old, young, straight, gay, and simply confused.”

“The Whole World Over” by Julia Glass (Pantheon). In her sophomore effort, Glass, whose debut novel “Three Junes” won the National Book Award, portrays a “fiery” Greenwich Village pastry-business owner whose impulsive actions affect those around her in serendipitous ways in the year leading up to 9/11.

“Telegraph Days” by Larry McMurtry (Simon & Schuster). The latest novel by the prolific author is set during “the gun-slinging days of the Old West” and is narrated by a young woman who becomes her frontier town’s telegraph operator.

“Terrorist” by John Updike (Knopf). In a nervy move, Updike enters the mind of an 18-year-old would-be Islamic terrorist, born of an Irish-American mother and a long-vanished Egyptian father.

“She May Not Leave” by Fay Weldon (Atlantic Monthly). The feisty satirist addresses a new side of the domestic-help issue: A partnered-but-not-married London couple, with a new child on their hands, are so desperate not to lose their Polish nanny that they engineer a marriage between nanny and father... a solution that isn’t exactly trouble-free.

Continued on next page >
5. Search results and tips

Did you find what you were looking for? The items owned by the most libraries are listed first. Search results appear with minimal details about each item. To learn more about any item, click on its title.

More tips

Like what you are finding? Click on the Related Authors or Related Subjects buttons to find more.

Once you have your results, you can sort up to 500 records using the Sort button, or decrease the number of results by using the Limit button.

Want to save your results? Use the checkbox on the left to view, e-mail, print or (from home) save-to-disk a subset of your search results.

Advanced and Expert Search options are also available, allowing you to specify your search more precisely and to combine search terms.

The Montana Library Network Catalog is a project of the Montana Library Network (MLN), part of the Montana State Library. MLN partners with Montana libraries to ensure the delivery of quality, standards-based, networked library materials and services to all Montanans. MLN is funded by a federal Institute of Museum and Library Services' Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant.
Looking for a good book?

One search of the Montana Library Network Catalog gives you the whereabouts of most of the books, magazines, films, music, etc., in more than 250 Montana libraries. Additionally, for Montana citizens, MLNCAT provides access to OCLC WorldCat, a worldwide library catalog with more than 56 million records.

Find what you want? Your library likely can borrow it for you. Here's how to use the catalog:

1. Connect to the catalog
   http://mlncat.org

2. Select a group of libraries
Use the drop-down menu labeled “Limit to:” to pick a group of libraries by library type or region. The preset search is “All Montana Libraries.”

3. Start with a basic search
Once you’ve selected a library group, a “Basic Search” screen displays.

4. Perform your search
Type a word or short phrase into the search box next to the type of search you wish to perform.

Example: Type “this house of sky” in the Title box, or “ivan doig” in the Author box.

Press ENTER or click the Search button near the bottom of the screen.

For more searching tips, please see back panel.

For additional help, please contact your librarian.
Auntie's Best Novels of 2006

Water for Elephants
by Sara Gruen
Algonquin, $23.95, hardback.
First sentence: "I am 90. Or 93. One or the other." What's good about it: As a pundit once said, one of the greatest serendipitous pleasures of reading is learning something new. In this dramatic novel, you are taken deep inside the quirky world of the American circus of the 1930s. At press time, Auntie's was still waiting to learn whether or not this book had won either of the Quill Awards it has been nominated for: Book of the Year and General Fiction.

The Madonnas of Leningrad
by Debra Dean
Harper Collins, $23.95, hardback.
First sentence: "This way, please. We are standing in the Spanish Skylight Hall." What's good about it: The clean, lyrical way Dean weaves in between the outer life of an octogenarian who is starting to lose her battle with Alzheimer's and her rich inner life as a young woman protecting the paintings in the State Museum of Leningrad during World War II. Awards: This book is also up for a Quill Award.

The Blight Way
by Pat Mamanas
Simon & Schuster, $24, hardback.
First sentence: After happily noting that the mud puddles of the parking lot had frozen over-night, Sheriff Bo Tally momentarily regretted having established the departmental policy that neither he nor any of his deputies could use obscenities while on duty.

What's good about it: Genuine laugh-out-loud humor and recognizable Idaho and Washington types. Reading Mamanas is like eating chocolate—consistently delightful and a bit addictive. Autographed copies are available. Awards: Pat Mamanas himself has received the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award for Literary Excellence (1983), the Trustees Medal, and the Governor's Award for Literature, among others.

Citizen Vince
by Jess Walter
Harper Collins, $14.95, paperback.
First sentence: "One day you know more dead people than live ones." What's good about it: This tale of a lovable called Vince in the Witness Protection Program starts off in Spokane, is as brimming with dark humor as an America-no, and incorporates some very clever plot twists. Autographed copies available. Awards: This book won the 2006 Edgar Award; Walter is up for the National Book Award for his latest, The Zero.

The Whistling Season
by Ivan Doig
Harvey Brace & Company, $25, hardback.
First sentence: "When I visit the back corners of my life again after so long a time, little things jump out first." What's good about it: Doig's reverence for education and good teachers as well as the major role they play in the lives of children in a remote area. And always, his sense of humor and ability to capture the zest of the lives of working people. Awards: Montana author Ivan Doig is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Evans Biography Award, the Pacific Northwest Booksellers' Award for Excellence, and the Western Heritage Award. Autographed copies may be still available if you hurry because Mr. Dog visited Auntie's recently for a reading.

In the Spirit of the Season

A Christmas Caroline
by Kyle Smith
hardback, $14.95
William Morrow (Harper)
In this modern remake of the Charles Dickens classic A Christmas Carol, Kyle Smith's A Christmas Caroline is the story of a spoiled shopping magazine editor who holds nothing back, brazening everyone's feelings without remorse. Until one Manhattan Christmas Eve, that is, when Caroline's ghosts of Christmas past, present and future are ushered in by her dead (and equally snotty) roommate. They arrive in the form of a spooky child actress, a UPS guy and a Reaper in need of a manicure. Can Caroline change her ways and learn to treat people better? Supporting cast includes her designer mother in dummy Branson, Missouri, her redheaded assistant, Ursula Heep, the ever-knitting receptionist Mrs. Detagle, and the Caroline-obsessed Tiny Tim—who is, of course, a six-foot-seven football player. If you loved The Devil Wears Prada, you'll adore this witty and spirited romp from the film critic of the New York Post.

Falliday Fun*

Whew, That's Officially a Wrap Wrap
Read this list to catch the buzz on the tasty event good goings on at around Auntie's this fall & winter. Our embarrassment of riches includes:

* Fantasy powerhouse Robin Hobb reading Nov. 27 from her new book Forest Mage.
* Auntie's seasonal window display with critters and lights—sponsored by the Downtown Business Improvement District.
* Christopher Moore appearing at Auntie's Jan. 27—Mark your calendar now! Moore will present his hilarious sequel to Bloodsucking Fiends: It's called You Suck: a Love Story and will be available in January.
* Spokane's Jess Walter, winner of the Edgar Award for Citizen Vince, being nominated for the National Book Award for The Zero. Go, Jess!
* Over 200 Spokaneites participating in November's National Novel Writing Month, with periodic write-ins at Auntie's. Call 838-0206 for info.
* The creation of our new Auntie's Club Card, saving you 10 percent every time you shop with us. For more details, please see page eight.

All About
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Editor's Choice

Or, why you should buy this book as a holiday present for everyone you know. So I was er...scanning this book while I waited for my scanner to warm up...and before you know it, fifteen minutes had gone by...oops! Not since Sarah Ban Breathnach's Simple Abundance have I read a more enthralling daily devotion which stimulates the intellect and spirit.

Abundantly satisfying, The Intellectual Devotional will probably, as it claims, "revive your mind, complete your education, and roam confidently with the cultured class." Divided into 365 daily lessons from the seven fields of knowledge, you'll learn about everything from Shinto (the indigenous religion of Japan) to, art, Edgar Degas to Moral Relativism and the Lascaux Cave Paintings discovered by four boys in central France in 1940. Did you know, for example, that Babylonian scientists used a counting system based on the number 60, which is why minutes have 60 seconds? Trivia buffs: Also check out Brainiac: the stunning memoir of Ken Jennings' record-breaking 74-game run on America's best-loved quiz show. (Make that "What is Jeopardy?, Alex." And remember, you always hit the Daily Double at Auntie's with our knowledgeable staff and great books.)