RESEARCH  Why is MSU called Trout U?
IVAN DOIG  Place of the heart
OUTREACH  Gathering wool
FEATURES

DANCING TO THE SONG OF SHEARS
BY CAROL FLAHERTY
MSU’s sheep-shearing schools sustain age-old art of gathering wool

PLACE OF THE HEART
BY CAROL SCHMIDT
Montana remains the bedrock of Ivan Doig’s prose and thought

THE TROUT’S BEST FRIEND
BY KEITH MCCAFFERTY
Bud Lilly’s name is synonymous with Western fly-fishing

HAS WHIRLING DISEASE COME FULL CIRCLE?
BY EVELYN BOSWELL
MSU scientists ask why rainbow trout populations are on the rise in rivers once nearly decimated by the disease

MSU IS TROUT U
BY MELYNDA HARRISON
There are many reasons why Montana State is a school of fish

UNDERGROUND SCIENCE
BY MICHAEL BECKER
MSU scientists work to sequester carbon dioxide in the Earth beneath our feet

STANDING STRONG
BY ANNE PETTINGER
Elouise Cobell’s epic battle against the government for Indian rights

*ON THE COVER
Trout fry create a rainbow of light in a lab near the Aquatic Sciences Lab in Pony. The lab is one tool helping Montana State University scientists understand the mysteries of whirling disease, which once threatened fish in Montana’s wild streams and rivers. The project is just one of the reasons MSU has often been called Trout U. Read more on page 34. COVER PHOTO BY KELLY GORHAM.
More than 50 years ago Ivan Doig packed his bags, took a train from Dupuyer, on Montana's Front Range, and traveled to Chicago for college. He has never again lived in the Big Sky state. Yet Montana has never really left him, for the state is the source of most of Doig's writings. From his eloquent memoir, This House of Sky, his first book that was a finalist for a National Book Award, to his most recent novels, Montana remains the bedrock of his prose and thinking.

Doig returns to Montana for the source of The Eleventh Man, published last fall. In fact, the World War II period piece is inspired by the death of 11 players of Montana State College's football team. In Doig's words, while the novel is a work of fiction, there is a "breath of actuality to the plot premise of World War II's disproportionate toll on a given number of young men who had played football together: by the accounts available, eleven starting players of Montana State College in Bozeman did perish in that conflict."
Those of Us in What I Call the Montana Diaspora Stay Linked to Montana

Do you have any thoughts about how Montana universities can best prepare the state and its people for its future? Education is an investment. In my case, a college scholarship took me from being a 1940’s rural boy to a guy, as you said, who has put a million books into the commerce of the era, a lot of those through Montana bookstores. I’m not savvy enough about the future to know specifically what Montana’s universities ought to be focusing on, except to say those institutions absolutely must keep being the tickets for the state’s young people to get on in life. If it proves to be the ticket out of Montana for some of them, as it was for me, in the long run that is justifiable, I think. One way or another, those of us in what I call “the Montana Diaspora” (usually for job reasons) stay linked to Montana.

While most of your readers know of your connections to both White Sulphur Springs and Dupuyer, you also have a connection to Gallatin County, don’t you? Heart-deep, literally. I’ve told in Heart Earth, possibly my secret favorite among all my books, the story of my mother’s last months of life, when she and my father and I were herding sheep at the north end of the Bridger Mountains in the summer of 1944. “The Gallatin” was something like a valley of milk and honey to us, compared with the tough sagebrush country around Sixteen and Ringling. I cannot describe what a cloud of
pleasure it was in 1984 to come back to the Gallatin Valley and, no doubt by the fine hand of Mike Malone, receive an honorary doctorate from MSU.

The view from your office window is that of Seattle and Puget Sound. Does your separation from the state make it easier or more difficult to write about the state? Do you anticipate a permanent return to Montana?

The accidental goddess of writers like me is Greta Garbo, with that magnificently accented self-excul in the public world, "I want to be alone." Actually, I am to be alone, to get the writing done, is more like it. So in that sense, not being physically in Montana—or for that matter Chicago, which is also part of my past—does help with the books; the quiet of this same Puget Sound suburb has produced all dozen of them, from This House of Sky to The Eleventh Man, so I have to think it works. As to the permanent return to Montana, I can't resist making the answer James Joyce did when he was asked in Paris, after Ulysses, if he would ever be moving back to Dublin: "Have I ever left?"

Do you believe stories about Montana and the region will continue to appeal to an increasingly global readership and why?

My novel The Whirling Season, set in a one-room school in the Marias River homestead country in 1910, is just about to be published in Japanese, so from where I sit there is a readership out there in the greater globe interested in Montana matters. Again, I think it goes back to that quota of Stegner's: if the quality of the work is good enough, any place of the heart that you write about—the brilliant contemporary African and Australian novelists prove this—will find readers.

You write on a computer but are a reluctant e-mail user. Do you have thoughts about how electronic communications are changing literature and readers? Does the book have a future?

This very day my literary agent called me about a new deal with an audio company, which will record nearly all my books unabridged—not so much for audio cassettes or CDs but for digital downloads. This is an indicator of the kind of change that is going on, as more and more literature goes online one way or another. I do think that for as long as any of us are around, there will be books to some extent; reading books has always been an elite pursuit, in a sense, and it seems reasonable that there will continue to be an audience of intellect that will want to hold a 21st century book just as the earliest booklovers wanted to cradle that Gutenberg Bible.

Do you have any thoughts on the state of American literacy?

I think it's difficult to measure the literacy of this society right now, when everyone but me seems to be up to their ears in e-mail, until we have more perspective on what the online capacities do to people. I do believe, that the demise of newspapers is really bad news for us: all bloggers are not a substitute for the kind of painstaking and expensive investigations the best newspapers undertake.

You return frequently to Montana. What are the thoughts about the state today as opposed to the Montana you left many decades ago?

The great change that I've seen in Montana came a couple of generations ago now, as could be seen when I returned to the state in the late 1970s to gather the last of the research for This House of Sky. Carol (his wife) and I spent most of a summer going around to the places where I had lived and it was a different, less hidebound Montana than I had grown up in. An environmental movement had been born, the rattletrap state government that always seemed to be looking over its shoulder for the ghost of the Anaconda Company had been modernized with the new state constitution, progressive politicians were in the main state offices. Then, as we formed new friendships in Butte and Helena and Missoula as my books came out, there was a feeling of new blood. One example: Carol and I are deeply interested in the fate of the Rocky Mountain Front, the old, loved landscape of my teenage years that has come into my novels as the Two Medicine country, and we have been supporters of the Nature Conservancy's efforts along the Front. When I was a kid, around Dupuyer and Choteau, most of the hardhatted old ranchers there at the foot of the Rockies would have cursed at any notion of cooperating with an "outside" outfit like the Conservancy. The younger ranchers today have smartened up from that old blinded attitude and seen that their existence is tied to conservation of the Front as an unbroken ecological area.

You've now established yourself as a fiction writer, even though This House of Sky is masterful non-fiction. Do you have plans to write another non-fiction book?

A writer should never say never, so there is always the chance that I'll look up from my fingers one day and discover they're turning out non-fiction. For now, though, I'm busy delivering Morrie Morgan, the almost ribbibbingly popular schoolteacher from my novel The Whirling Season, into Butte in the tumultuous aftermath of World War I. That will keep me occupied the rest of this year. There's another novel set in the Two Medicine country, in my own growing-up time there in, as the old-timers used to say, "the middle of the last century," brewing after that.

Do you believe the themes that shaped Montana in the 19th and 20th century—those of the rugged individualist and the wilderness of the landscape and the soul—will still shape it in the 21st? If not, what do you think will form Montana's near future?

My Ph.D. is in history, so I'm only licensed to drive in the past. I would hope, though, that Montana never ceases to be a little rugged and ornery, a bit wild and soulful—a place with roaming room for the imagination.
December 5, 2006

Ivan Doig
17277 15th Avenue N. W.
Seattle, WA 98177

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Thank you ever so much.

I believe you knew Evelyne Cameron from Dogman (the queen who was most excellent a person), she used to Scottish dance with Evelyne.

Charles - they're still doing OK, I hear.

* P.O. Box 5630, Helena, Montana 59604 Phone 406/444-5100 FAX 406/443-5480 Ship to: 2222 Washington St., Helena, Montana 59601
Powering the West: Is Gov. Schweitzer’s Energy Plan Finally the Answer?

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Nearly three decades after the publication of *This House of Sky*, author Ivan Doig is still telling it like it is.

A Voice For Montana

BY MEGAN AULT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS LEE

SEATTLE — Three decades ago a man began writing a book about a difficult and memorable childhood growing up in rural Montana during the Depression. Nobody had heard of him, and 12 editors rejected his manuscript, many of them apologetically noting that it was a beautiful story, but they didn’t think they could make money on it. The 13th editor, from publishing giant Harcourt, accepted the book and changed the life of a man who had been the first to graduate from high school on either side of his ranch-hand family, the first to own and wear out a typewriter, the first to go to college, the first to earn a Ph.D.
Thank goodness that editor did agree to publish the memoir, because few of us who’ve read Ivan Doig’s *This House of Sky* can shake the opening lines:

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

“The remembering begins out of that new silence.”

Doig’s voice reading his own words in the audio version of *This House of Sky* is rich and deep. The photo of him inside the back cover of his latest novel, *The Whistling Season*, set in Eastern Montana, is stern and formidable, with the camera looking up past his white beard to defined cheekbones that meet a commanding gaze. Yet to meet 67-year-old Doig in his Seattle home with sweeping views of Puget Sound is to meet an ordinary man from unusually modest means, who has used diligence to make his life a work of art.

If plain old hard work and art seem an unlikely pair, then you haven’t met Doig.

“Inspiration is not the name of the game,” says Doig. “Detail and perspiration is. You don’t just wander around pretending you’re a lightning rod, that literature’s going to light you up at some point. You’ve got to work at it; you’ve got to be professional.”

For Doig, that means waking up every morning at 4:30 to start the day with the newspaper and a cup of coffee. He and Carol, his wife for 41 years, have for years walked the same two-mile loop in their suburban neighborhood, waved to the same neighbors as they head off to work. At around 6:30, Doig heads downstairs to his office. “I write about 400 words,” he says. “After lunch we always have a nap. We’ve had naps all our adult lives— it goes back to the Lyndon Johnson era—and gives me a chance to recuperate for the afternoon. If I don’t have the 400 words achieved by afternoon I’ll go back and do that. If I do, I’ll edit.”

Add up those steady words day in and day out and it’s a new book or novel every two to three years. This fall, Doig will have sold his millennium book when adding the sales of his 11 books, all of which are still in print. “Some people manage that selling a million copies in one book,” says Doig. But it isn’t easy to come up with many western authors who still have all of their books written over a 30-year span, still in print. *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, one of the novels in Doig’s trilogy that follows several families through Montana’s hundred years of statehood, has sold the most copies of any of his books, though he has been told that *This House of Sky* may surpass it this fall.

Undoubtedly, Doig is one of Montana’s most widely read and successful authors ever. Perhaps more than that, though, he has

Writer Ivan Doig sits at his desk in the basement of his home north of Seattle. Doig begins work most mornings by about 6:30 and writes about 400 words a day.
"Inspiration is not the name of the game. Detail and perspiration is. You don't just wander around pretending you're a lightning rod, that literature's going to light you up at some point. You've got to work at it; you've got to be professional."

with factual information about the times he's evoking.

In her book Earthlight, Wordfire: The Work of Ivan Doig, author Elizabeth Simpson writes, "Doig does impeccable research for all of his writing. In his files, for example, are letters to acquaintances in Montana requesting expertise on sheepshearing and forest fires ... Doig traveled to Scotland just to stand on the dock from which the protagonists in Dancing at the Rascal Fair embarked to America, to get a feel for the place and an ear for dialect."

In a 1987 "Wired for Books" radio interview with Don Swaim, Doig said he often "rummages" or "shops" for details and language, always keeping a small notebook with him for anything worth keeping. "In Rascal Fair, much of that comes from skimming old letters and diaries; scouting old Scottish joke books for turns of phrase and their dry humor," he says.

Many of those research trips have also been to Montana, because the majority of Doig's books are set there. He's been asked numerous times over the years why — if Montana figures so largely in his heart and imagination — he has chosen to settle in Seattle rather than in his home state.

"I am a young person's world in Montana," explains Carol. "I grew up there, he put up with the weather there, and he says you have to devote so much time just to surviving that he can get more done here."

"Words seem to grow in the damp air," Doig told Swaim during the radio interview. "Seattle's grey climate with evergreen forests is a very congenial place for me to hole up."

But it seems there's more to it than that. Perhaps a place associated with memories of struggle doesn't evoke much longing to return. When asked about the romance of ranch life, Doig explains, "Our ranching roots were actually ranch-hand roots, so we were just wage hands trying to work our way up to becoming share croppers. Dad always told me, 'Get yourself an education so you don't end up doing this for these guys.'"

"Meagher County was a pretty tough venue for us. That's why I still prefer the northern part of the state, for a reason I still don't entirely understand. But Meagher County tended to have big ranches whereas Dupuyer (where he and his father and grandmother later moved) and the area around Chateau and Browning tended to have family ranches and so forth. And you know the bigger the ownership, the smaller the hired hand looks and is treated as, so Meagher was a pretty good place to think about getting out of ... Dupuyer country gave me a place to live with some measure of stability during high school, and it's there that I got my leg up on the ladder towards college."

From there Doig went to Illinois to attend Northwestern University, where he got his degree in broadcast journalism and worked in print journalism before moving west. His father never got to read This House of Sky. "He got to see an article I wrote for The Rotarian on rodeos," says Ivan. "He about wore that magazine out passing it around. And he did live to see me get the Ph.D; he came out here for the ceremony."

Besides the irony of the fact that Doig's mind still often resides in Montana while writing in Seattle, he is closely acquainted and
This House of Sky came to us in the Inland West as affirmation that we could in fact have an ongoing literature,” says Kittredge. “It just seemed like the whole scene in Montana was coming to life.”

I plan to tell a little anecdote while on stage just to give me a way to get through it... I don’t want to cry in front of a thousand people in the Wilma Theatre.”

“Jim’s loss was a big, big loss. It affected all of us,” explains Carol. “We wouldn’t see them for a year, then we’d take up same way we ever were. And those two were great travelers. Jim was just brilliant. So not only is a good man gone, but there’s no more work from him.”

A friend from Dog’s Dupuyer high school graduating class of 20 recently passed away as well.

“This guy was also a real loss because his family has been on that land since 1882. His grandfather came from Germany and homesteaded there. So there’s this continuing toll that you see,” says Doig.

“All this is like watching the last tree in the horizon fall over,” says Lois. “It makes you feel a little naked in the world. I think it’s that kind of feeling that Jim is dealing with. Death concentrates your mind wonderfully. In a way it makes you more interesting — you cut to the chase more often.”

While Doig isn’t slowing down any these days, he agrees that he is “cutting to the chase” more in terms of choosing how he spends his time so that he can focus on what matters most to him, which is and always has been getting good words on paper, telling stories.

“He’s got more ideas in his head than the normal lifetime can deal with,” says Carol. “I don’t know how many corners are in that mind of his, but it’s really endless. I know there are writers who say, ‘What’ll I do next?’... But Ivan’s problem is finding enough time.”

As winter rains begin to blanket Seattle, Doig is hunkering down with his next project, writing a book about a female pilot set in Great Falls during World War II. As is common practice for him, the novel is based on several kernels of truth and fact that he’s churning through his imagination.

Asked if he ever envisioned a day when he won’t write, Doig says, “It looks like I’m going to write until I drop. Carol points out that I don’t loaf worth a damn. What am I going to do, just arbitrarily sit around and fidget? I want to be writing.”

“Commonly associated with the big names that have put Montana on the western literary map, making it easy to understand why many book-loving Montanans claim them as their own. His relationship with the Montana literary crowd began, of course, with This House of Sky.”

University of Montana English professor and well-known author Bill Kittredge remembers, “Ivan really worked hard to get his first book out. He traveled around the West in his little car with boxes of books.”

“We would go around to Montana bookstores,” recalls Doig, “and walk in with long blue coverless galleries of This House of Sky and I would say, ‘This is my first book, it’s being published,’ and the eyes would roll — by Harcourt, and the eyes would roll less. If we could get them to crack the book, they were for it.”

When the owner of The Fine Print bookstore in Missoula read it she insisted on hosting a signing and even a party for Doig, introducing him to the Missoula writing crowd.

“This may have taken over my memory as the first signing of This House of Sky — that’s probably not right — but it’s certainly one of the most memorable signings,” Doig says. “Unfortunately, the owner of the bookstore had scheduled the signing head-on with the University of Montana homecoming game and she called me and said, ‘What are we gonna do?’ and I said, ‘Well, I’m set to come, so let’s see what happens.’ What happened was people began seeping out at halftime...The publisher of the Missoulian came down and a whole bunch of other people came down. In came this guy, build sort of like a 50-gallon drum. Came up and said, ‘Read your book and I just want to say, God, Damn.’ That was Kittredge.

“I didn’t know him, didn’t know anybody. At the party that night Dick Hughes was there, Jim and Lois Welch, (James) Crumley, and on and on. It was a very generous and gracious welcoming.”

“This House of Sky came to us in the Inland West an affirmation that we could in fact have an ongoing literature,” says Kittredge. “A River Runs Through It (by Norman Maclean) had been published, Hughes was big, and its just seemed like the whole scene in Montana was coming to life.”

A nearly 30-year friendship cemented for the Doigs and Welchses from these early days. Native American writer James Welch is the highly acclaimed author of many books, including Fools Crow and Winter in the Blood. When Doig agreed to speak at the 2006 Montana Festival of the Book this past September, Lois Welch introduced him and offered context for the couples’ friendship. “Our lives were arranged in a parallel fashion, it turned out. Carol taught college; I taught college; she had a five-minute commute; mine was seven. Our husbands stayed home and wrote. Both Jim and Ivan offered the same advice to aspiring writers wondering how to make a living at writing: Marry someone with a steady job.”

Asked the emotional impact that coming home to a changing Montana has had on him, Doig acknowledges the impact of development and the like, but says it’s witnessing generational passings that is most unsettling.

Doig grows quiet when speaking of the death of Jim, who died of a heart attack in 2003 after a 10-month battle with lung cancer.

Before the Montana Festival of the Book Doig said, “Jim’s wife, Lois Welch, is going to introduce me and that is emotional.
Dear Ivan,

Thanks so much for giving the magazine a look & considering spending some time with our writer & photographer for a Winter profile.

I'll be in touch.

Best Wishes,

Megan Ault

(406) 582-2680
MT Grey
Megan Aulet
406 581-2680
Thomas Lauer
Megan@DailyChronicle.com
Megan Aulet
Tri-Cities Newspaper/MT Grey
Recession brings both ups and downs to local bibliophiles

The Recession edition of Seattle Times book editor Mary Ann Gwinn’s weekly Lit Life column. In Seattle, free readings are going gangbusters, but at least one more bookstore — Horizon Books — has closed.

By Mary Ann Gwinn
Seattle Times book editor

This week’s Lit Life is the Recession edition. The matter at hand: How is the economic downturn affecting Seattle’s lit life?

Exhibit A — There’s no question that author readings are one of the best deals in town — they’re mostly free, and the company is tops. Sure enough, some local bookstores are reporting substantial increases in attendance.

The March 12 reading by radio personality Tavis Smiley at Seattle Public Library, reading from his book “Accountable: Making America as Good as Its Promise,” was SRO: The crowd of 425 exceeded the 375-person capacity of the Microsoft auditorium. Book vendor Elliott Bay Book Co. brought 100 books for sale and ran out (those who missed out can still get a book at Elliott Bay).

Elliott Bay’s Karen Maeda Allman says more than 100 people turned out for a March 15 reading of “Slow Money” by Woody Tasch, a book dedicated to investing locally. The University Book Store has also enjoyed an attendance uptick, as has Third Place Books in Lake Forest Park. Meanwhile, bookseller newsletter Shelf Awareness reports that bookstore sales were up $1 million in January 2009, to $2.3 billion, compared to a 9.8 percent drop in all retail (the book stats include only new books purchased from stores, not used books or online sales).

Exhibit B — The news isn’t all good; another used bookstore has closed. Capitol Hill’s Horizon Books, which billed itself as the city’s oldest used bookstore (38 years), closed its doors on March 15 (the Ides of March, natch). The bookstore plans to continue Internet operations, and will occupy a “browsing space” at 1423 10th Ave., shared with Recollection Books in a basement located directly below Atlas Clothing (206-523-4217). Still, it was soooh sad to walk by the old house that was Horizon Books’ home and see a row of hope-springs-eternal daffodils nodding in front of its picket fence.

Exhibit C — More sad news: Last Tuesday saw the last column of John Marshall, the book critic at the Seattle P-I. Some critics fear and loathe their competition — I mostly felt relief that John was there to share in covering the immense range of Seattle literary offerings. His to-the-point farewell (Ivan Doig really is the “grand gentleman of Northwest letters”) is at www.seattlpi.com/books/403654_marshall17.html.

Reading of the week

George Akerlof, who won the 2001 Nobel Prize for economics, is in town tonight to promote his new book, “Animal Spirits: How Human Psychology Drives the Economy, and Why It Matters for Global Capitalism.” See him at 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall Seattle ($5; 1119 Eighth Ave., Seattle) — it’s your chance...
Weston-McEwen High School's big spring production: "Little Women"

"Sneaker Wars" is a history of the brothers who founded Adidas and Puma and how their competition changed sports and retail

Walla Walla Community College Theatre Arts program will present "Da," a comedy-infused Irish drama

Christian music performers Downhere and Shawn McDonald will play at Walla Walla University

Artist Jeffrey Hill's 12-foot mobile makes its debut at Cougar Crest Winery

Dear Ivan -
I have been meaning to send this to you for several months. I happened to be in Walla Walla — had to go to prison, so I mean I had to go to the prison —

I'm gong how odd it is that one article changes the whole meaning —

and happened to pick up this nice little supplement.

And here you are on p. 20 in the "Booker's" section —

Perhaps you have already seen this, but if not...
Doig proves himself to be best living writer of the West

LINDA MOATS
BOOK NOTES

In 1999 the San Francisco Chronicle polled readers for a list of the 100 best 20th Century fiction and nonfiction books written about the Western United States by an author from the West. At least 600 readers submitted their opinions — each author needed several votes to make the list of the "Best in the West."

Two authors made the top 15 of both the Best Fiction and Nonfiction lists. Wallace Stegner’s "Angle of Repose" was voted No. 1 for the best fiction and his biography of John Wesley Powell, "Beyond the Hundredth Meridian" was voted No. 2 for best nonfiction book.

Ivan Doig, 68, was the only living writer on both lists. "This House of Sky," written in 1978, was voted No. 3 for best Western nonfiction. His novel, "English Creek" was voted #12 for best fiction by Chronicle readers. This novel was also the winner of the Western Heritage Award as best novel of 1984.

Ivan Doig is a great storyteller and exceptionally descriptive writer. His body of work includes eight novels and three nonfiction books.

Doig was born on June 27, 1939, in White Sulphur Springs, Mont. On his sixth birthday, Ivan’s mother, Bernita Ringer Doig died from asthma. As a result of her death, Ivan was raised by his father, Charlie Doig, and his grandmother, Bessie Ringer. They made their living working as a hired hand and cook on ranches around White Sulphur Springs.

When Ivan started high school the family moved 200 miles north to an area near Glacier Park. Ivan boarded with a family in Dupuyer, about nine miles from the family ranch. He attended high school in Valier, Mont. It was during the summer of his junior year in high school that Ivan decided he did not want to work in the ranching business like his father. Ivan graduated from high school in 1957. He was accepted at Northwestern University where he majored in journalism. In 1965 Ivan married Carol Muller, a fellow Northwestern student, who was also a journalism major. In 1966 they relocated to Seattle, where they live today. Ivan writes and Carol is a noted photographer and teacher.

His first book, "This House of Sky," published in 1978, is a memoir of growing up in Montana in the 1940s and 50s. If you read this book before starting his fictional works, you will gain insight in how Doig incorporates various events in his own family’s history into his story plots. A companion memoir, "Heart Earth," (1993) was written as a tribute to his mother and details the life of the family before her death in 1945.

Doig’s most popular books are his Montana trilogy about the McCaskill clan — a family of red-haired Scots who settled in Montana. The three books cover the first centennial of Montana’s statehood from 1889-1899.

The first book chronologically of the trilogy is "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" (1987). The book opens with the migration of two friends, Angus McCaskill and Rob Barkley, from Scotland in 1889 and follows them through their homesteading years in Montana. The second book, "English Creek" (1984) is set in 1939 at the end of the Depression and centers on the coming of age of Jack McCaskill, Angus McCaskill’s grandson. The third book, "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana," (1990) takes place in 1989 during the Montana Centennial. Jack McCaskill is now 65, a widower and the father of two daughters, Mariah and Lexa. His daughter, Mariah, is a photographer who is doing a series of articles on changes in Montana during the past century.

A fourth book, considered by critics to be the final ending of the series, "Mountain Time" tells the story of Lexa McCaskill and her “significant other,” Mitch Rozier, who now live in Seattle but return to their Montana roots to nurse Mitch’s dying father in a town called Twin Sulphur Springs.

As "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana" closes it is evident to Jack McCaskill that his lineage has come to an end of the line — he has no heirs to the ranch that he received from his uncle, Pete Reese. The same dilemma faces Mitch Rozier in "Mountain Time" — what to do with his father’s home in Twin Sulphur Springs since his roots are now in Seattle. Ivan and Carol Doig have no children to carry on their lineage either.

According to the acknowledgements in "English Creek," the fictional town of Gros Ventre, which is mentioned in all three books, is where the actual town of Dupuyer is located. Two Medicine Country is also fictional, but some of the geography is actual — such as Valier, Conrad, Choteau, Heart Butte, Two Medicine River, and the Rocky Mountain Front, west of the town of Dupuyer, Montana.

One of the themes in Doig’s books is the continuous intertwining of individual lives with major political, cultural and economic events. "Rascal Fair" deals with the life of a homesteader — the contrast between the idealistic hopes that brought people to Montana and the reality of life there. In "English Creek" Montana is recovering from the depression, and World War II looms on the horizon. In "Mariah Montana" Doig analyzes the changes that 100 years have brought to Montana — the effect of large, corporate ranches on the small farmers and ranchers and the environmental damage mining has caused. "Mountain Time" is set in both Seattle and Montana and chronicles the modern lifestyle of Jack’s daughters as they leave behind their Montana roots.

Doig has written three other novels set in Montana. "Bucking the Sun" (1996) tells about the life and adventures of the Duff family who helped build Fort Peck Dam during the Depression. Singing teacher, Susan Duff and cattle baron, Wesley Williamson, have relocated from the Two Medicine Country to Helena during the 1920s and are featured in "Prairie Nocturne" (2003). His latest novel, "The Whistling Season" (2006) is narrated by an aging Montana State Superintendent of Schools, Paul Milliron who recalls the autumn of 1909, when he was 13 and attending a one-room school.

Doig has also written two other books that are set in the Pacific Northwest. His nonfiction "Winter Brothers: A Season on the Edge of America" (1980) describes Doig’s adventures as he compares the travels of James Swan in 1850 with his own modern day observations of the same area. "The Sea Runners" (1982) novel recounts the journey of four Swedes who escape from Russian Alaska in 1853 and make their way down the coast to freedom in Astoria, Ore.
The Dowagiac Dogwood Fine Arts Festival Visiting Authors Committee Proudly Presents

IVAN DOIG

Author of This House of Sky and The Whistling Season

IVAN DOIG
THIS HOUSE OF SKY

IVAN DOIG
The Whistling Season

[Images of book covers]
Ivan Doig
Author of *This House of Sky* and *The Whistling Season*

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Much of Ivan Doig's writings are set in the Montana country of his youth. As the western landscape and people play an important role in his fiction, he has been hailed as the new dean of western literature, a "worthy successor to Wallace Stegner." His work includes the best-selling memoir and National Book Award nominee, House of Sky. The Landscape of a Western Mind and over ten novels and works of non-fiction. His most recent novel, The Whistling Season, was greeted with rave reviews and a spot on the best-seller list.

Recently, Mr. Doig was named to the list of Montana's most influential people of the previous century.

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‘No regrets, just great memories’ of teaching

After 38 years, Kerstetter takes her curtain call

BY ERIC COOK
Special to the Gazette

KALAMAZOO — After 38 years of teaching and hundreds of theater productions, Loy Norrix High School’s Marie Kerstetter is retiring.

“I’ve always said to myself that when it wasn’t fun anymore I would retire, but that is not the case,” said Kerstetter, who won the Community Medal of Arts in 2002. “I love teaching — I love it! I’ve always and will always love it. I couldn’t have imagined doing anything else with my life.”

Kerstetter said her reason for retiring is her health.

“I am addicted to musicals and teaching, but my body will no longer cooperate,” she said. “I will miss it, but my body won’t.”

Kerstetter began her career in Kalamazoo as a music teacher at the former South Middle School in 1973.

“I came to town because a friend of mine was going to attend Western,” said Kerstetter, a Massachusetts native. “I went to the Kalamazoo Public Schools Administration Building looking for a substitute teacher job, and the next thing you knew, I signed a paper, was fingerprinted and had a full-time job.”

Soon after she began teaching at KPS, Kerstetter caught the eye of then Kalamazoo Civic Theatre head Jim Carver.

“About two years after I began teaching, I got hooked up with the Civic and Jim Carver,” said Kerstetter, who was an accompanist and later a music director for musicals and the summer theater program, directing three musicals per summer.

“That was a lot of work but a lot of fun, too. I would have summers off being a teacher, but I spent the entire time working on a different musical each month,” she said. “It was a lot of hard and fun work. I did that for 15 years and loved every minute of it.”

Kerstetter also began working at the Kindelberger Summer Festival in Parchment.

“This was very similar to the summer program at the Civic, but instead of taking up the entire summer with three different shows, it was just one month and one show,” Kerstetter said. “It was a treat for the entire 10 years I did it.”

Kerstetter said the best part of being a teacher has been watching students change.

“Looking back, my favorite part of teaching is seeing a student come in knowing absolutely nothing about theater or music and, over the course of four years, introducing them to new things and seeing them grow as an artist,” Kerstetter said. “I love to see someone who is quiet and shy turn into a strong and secure person. Those are my most precious memories.”

“I don’t care if anyone remembers my name. I just hope that some of my students throughout the years will remember what we’ve learned together. I don’t have children of my own, but I have a whole lot of surrogate kids, which I care deeply about.”

See ‘NO REGRETS’, D2

‘Cosmic mechanic’ Doig coming to Dogwood

BY KURT ANTHONY KRUG
Special to the Gazette

DOWAGIAC — For novelist Ivan Doig, the triumph of language on a page is what fascinates and inspires him.

“I enjoy working with language. The language is the alpha and omega and all between. I’m fascinated by trying to say things as they’ve not been said before,” said Doig, 68, of Seattle, who will be the visiting author at this year’s Dogwood Fine Arts Festival in Dowagiac.

The festival previously has hosted such notable authors as Dave Barry, Amy Tan, Joseph Heller, Margaret Atwood, Frank McCourt, Norman Mailer, John Updike, Joyce Carol Oates, Kurt Vonnegut, Jim Harrison, Ted Kooser and Sara Paretsky.

Doig will discuss “The Whistling Season,” his latest novel, at 7:30 p.m. Friday at the Dowagiac Middle School Performing Arts Center.

“I feel a writer has to be a cosmic mechanic of the language,” Doig said. “I take the best of what exists and what people say in a given profession or in a given way of life. ... I’ve been living in World War II for the past couple of years, reading soldiers’ old memoirs to catch how people talk.”

He was referring to his next novel, “The Eleventh Man,” which is set during the war.

“I’ll be talking some in Dowa-giac about the craft of writing — the magic stuff that goes onto the page — as well as creating characters,” he said.

Many of the prolific author’s works take place in Montana, where he was born.

“Growing up on the ranches in Montana and looking for something that paid a lot better” helped inspire
Doig comes to Dogwood

"The Whistling Season" is his 11th novel.
"It's a book about the magic of learning set in a one-room school," Doig said. "To me, gaining knowledge is about something generally a lot like magic. At some point, you have this abracadabra moment and you get it. My narrator, Paul Milliron, is hungry to learn, loves abracadabra magic and seeing how the Latin word is the root of the English word."

While Doig's personal experiences living in Montana don't usually make it into his books — other than the setting, he made an exception with this one.

"Paul Milliron is the closest to a kid like I was. He loves to read, he's crazy about language, he comes from no kind of fancy circumstances at all," he said. "He eavesdrops with his eyes, always watching what's going on around him, which is what I have to do as a writer. He's his own person. He has siblings unlike me.

"He has some of my mental fingerprints. When picking us out of a lineup, you have to look twice."
Doig brings ‘Big Sky’ to Dogwood

By KAREN RIVERS
 Tribune Correspondent

For writer Ivan Doig, novels are things of shady, indeterminate origins, born quietly and suddenly in some strange corner of the mind.

With a chuckle, he describes the nature of those fledgling inspirations that eventually turn into books.

“They just show up,” he says. “They don’t introduce themselves.”

His most recent offering, “The Whistling Season,” emerged in just such a fashion when a five-word phrase — “Can’t cook but doesn’t bite” — presented itself to him.

On Friday, Doig will appear at the Dogwood Fine Arts Festival in Dowagiac, where he will read from that work and speak about the craft of writing.

Doig has written 11 books, primarily novels but also memoirs and essays. Much of his work explores life where he grew up: the “Big Sky Country” of Montana.

Right now, he is on the phone from his home in Seattle, sharing a little more about “The Whistling Season” and how it came to be.

That little muse’s whisper, “Can’t cook but doesn’t bite,” has become something of a “tagline” among his fans, Doig says. In addition to having a compelling ring, it plays an important role in the story.

Onstage

Ivan Doig will appear at 7:30 p.m. Friday at the Dogwood Fine Arts Festival at Dowagiac Middle School Performing Arts Center, 57028 Riverside Drive, Dowagiac. Tickets are $60-$20. For more information, call (269) 782-1115 or visit www.dogwoodfinearts.org.

See DOGWOOD/D5

INSIDE

Pop redux

Heath Yenna mines yesteryear for ‘Wax Nostalgic’ at The Spurious Fugitive.

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Ramblin’ man

Road still holds allure for Americana singer-songwriter Dana Cooper after 35 years.

Page D3
Dogwood

The phrase serves as the headline on a classified advertisement for a housekeeper. The year is 1910, and a widowed father of three living on a homestead farm in Montana answers that ad, changing life quite drastically for him and his three sons.

This is not the first time Doig has written about those pioneers who took part in the Homestead Act — an 1862 law that provided free undeveloped land in the West to those who were willing to live on and improve it. It always has been a compelling part of history for him, particularly because his grandparents were a part of it. "I come from a homestead family," he says. "They came from Scotland to take up land in the American West. That background is part of me."

The last American frontier is in my DNA."

Doig adds that as significant an event as this migration was, it never seems to get adequate attention.

"About a quarter of a million people came (west to be homesteaders)," he says, "and because they came by train and Model T Fords and so forth, instead of covered wagons, it has been overlooked."

As for setting the story in time, Doig had a very specific reason for picking 1910 — it was the year of an important astronomical event, one he longed to write about.

"I wanted to use Halley's comet. A couple of decades ago, I heard the wonderful nature writer Loren Eiseley speak here in Seattle. (He spoke about) the experience of being a child in his father's arms as Halley's comet went over," Doig says. "I can still hear him. He had a voice like God's older brother."

Here, Doig chuckles again and goes into a rumbling impression of Eiseley recalling the comet, which he called "the star dragon," streaking across the sky.

From there, Doig asked himself what else up in the heavens might be a compelling piece of the plot. "(I do write about things in the sky quite a bit. Constellations, people who are looking up — as I think we all ought to do every so often.

Doig says.) Sputnik came to mind, and then he had himself a story stretched between two eras.

"The Whistling Season" takes back and forth between 13-year-old Paul Milliron (oldest of the three sons) and Paul as an adult. Young Paul is navigating adolescence on his homestead farm and life at his one-room schoolhouse. Grown-up Paul, meanwhile, is superintendent of the Montana schools, and he is watching with a troubled heart the attempted takedown of all one-room schools, which are seen as incompatible with the momentum of the all-important space race and the escalating Cold War.

The majority of the book follows the triumphs and tribulations of precocious young Paul, from his struggles to master Latin under the private tutoring of an exciting new teacher to his thrilling backward horse race against the dreaded schoolyard bully.

Doig never rode a horse backward (he tactfully explains he is the wrong gender to actually pull that off), but he and Paul certainly have some other things in common. They were both bright kids who grew up in rural Montana, nursing a passion for language and words.

Doig's father was a ranch hand, his mother was a ranch cook, and Doig did some ranch work himself before getting a degree in journalism, working at newspapers and magazines and earning a doctorate in history. He worked for six years on his first memoir, "This House of Sky," which debuted to much acclaim in 1980. Doig later came to fiction in a rather roundabout way (or what he refers to as "a flat-footed way."). He wanted to write about a historical incident in which four Swedes escaped their indentured servitude to a Russian fur company by piloting a canoe more than a thousand miles from Alaska to Oregon. When he couldn't find enough information about the 1853 event, he wrote a fictionalized account instead (1982's "Sea Runners.")

He has followed that effort with a number of successful novels, all with entirely fictitious characters set in very accurate historical contexts. His next book, due out after Labor Day, takes place during World War II.

For now, though, audience members can expect to hear from "The Whistling Season" on Friday, and to learn more about the author's methods and practices as a writer. In his polite, playful manner, Doig says he does enjoy readings and finds them quite valuable. Charles Dickens, he points out, toured all over the United States to share his work, so it certainly seems like a worthy practice.

"I think that it's a good idea for writers and readers to get a look at each other," Doig says, "and see what's on each other's minds."
Parents raise concerns over books’ content

BY MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
Staff writer

It started with a couple of books. Mary Jo Finney saw what her children and their cousins were reading in their high school and middle school English classes. She said the sex and violence shocked her.

“Falling Angels” by Walter Dean Myers and “Dancing at the Rascal Fair” by Ivan Doig. In response, the School Board placed parental permission restrictions on the titles.

Finney continued looking over the class book lists hoping to see titles that her children brought home and read. She decided the problem was more widespread.

“Falling Angels” and “Dancing at the Rascal Fair” were two books. Teachers read the titles as part of their English curriculum. So Finney filed complaints with the Cœur d’Alene School Board about the two books. “Falling Angels” by Walter Dean Myers and “Dancing at the Rascal Fair” by Ivan Doig. In response, the School Board placed parental permission restrictions on the titles.

Finney filed complaints with the Cœur d’Alene School Board about the two books. “Falling Angels” by Walter Dean Myers and “Dancing at the Rascal Fair” by Ivan Doig. In response, the School Board placed parental permission restrictions on the titles.

Finney said, “I don’t want to put barriers in the way of the system. I just simply want to hold them accountable to the best of their ability to the concerns of the parent.”

Not a new phenomenon

In 2003, a parent decided that one of the most challenging books in the country, “The Chocolate War” by Robert Cormier, was too sexually explicit for his sixth-grade son and initiated a yearlong committee review that ended with the School Board adding a parental permission requirement to the book in middle school libraries.

In the late 1980s, the board removed an entire reading series from the schools after a “huge outcry” from parents and other community members, said Hazel Baum, assistant superintendent.

“Parents may want to prevent their children from accessing the book. It’s not a new phenomenon,” Baum said.

Until last summer, “The Chocolate War” was the only school library book with any restrictions. In June 2006, the board put a parental permission requirement on “Falling Angels” in middle school and “Dancing at the Rascal Fair” at the high schools.

That was the first high school library book regulated in the district, said Ann Burgess, librarian at Cœur d’Alene High School.

“Then it was a battle of numbers as whether it happened than I ever have before,” Burgess said. “I get the kinds of books in cycles.”

Now “The Chocolate War” and “Falling Angels” are under review again – this time to determine if they should be restricted for high school students. Also under review are “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” by Maya Angelou, “Snow Falling on Cedars” by David Guterson and “Beloved” by Toni Morrison.

Five have been challenged repeatedly in school districts across the country and are available in Cœur d’Alene’s high school libraries. None is required reading, said Jim Facco, the district’s curriculum director.

Finney, a fellow Cœur d’Alene resident, said her children have testified about their concerns at School Board meetings.

“They read excerpts from the book and submitted papers documenting passages they find offensive, including paragraphs about child rape and sentences laced with profanity and racial slurs,” she said.

Parental complaints and inquiries about the readability of the books are increasing.

“Schools shouldn’t have to have to pay back any more money than we’re already exposed to, plus the five percent (possible federal penalty),” she said.

Parents as Teachers is a great program. This isn’t a judgment about its value,” Armstrong said.

But he said he was convinced Idaho could spend its money better. In 2005, the state received federal funding for its Child Development Program, a Head Start for children.

The program targets those well below the poverty line. In 1999, the federal government said it would give Idaho $5.2 million over five years at the “ready to read” level on a nationally recognized reading readiness test, while the national norm for five-year-olds is 35 percent. Reading readiness is a key indicator for later success in school. Of the same Idaho kids, only 18 percent scored at the “ready to read” level when they were 4. That shows the gains they made while enrolled in the program.

“We feel like that’s pretty darn exciting,” said Harriet Shackle, a University of Idaho professor and family development specialist for the UI Extension.

Finney said it was important to keep an eye on the books.

“Some parents will say they’re ready. Another family would say absolutely not.”

As a librarian, Burgess leans on the side of no restrictions. “I believe that parents can definitely decide, and help their children decide, what they’re reading. But if I think books need to be available to anyone and everyone, she said.”

Burgess serves on the committee that’s reviewing the books. It doesn’t make the final decision. That’s up to the School Board. And its members don’t always agree.
Northwest Schools of Literature

V9. Ivan Doig, 1939—

Ivan Doig illustrates one of the reasons why categorizing writers according to place can be so troublesome. Since the mid-1960s he has resided in Seattle and written a good deal about the Northwest Coast area. He earned a Ph.D. from the University of Washington with a dissertation about a prominent attorney and businessman in nineteenth-century Seattle. Yet virtually all of Doig's most enthusiastic fans know him as a Montana writer, in part because the majority of his books are set in that state and in part because he grew up there and memorialized his childhood in the widely popular *This House of Sky* (1978). Doig's best known novels include *English Creek* (1984), *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* (1987), and *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana* (1990)—the so-called Montana Trilogy. While being identified with his native state, Doig is also viewed as a possible successor to Wallace Stegner as the leading light among Western American writers. Yet readers almost never refer to him as a Washington or Puget Sound or Seattle writer (although those seeking interviews on "Pacific Northwest literature" do not hesitate to throw him into the mix, his Montana roots notwithstanding).

In an interview (O'Connell 1998:328), Doig himself seemed to distinguish between Northwestern and Western writers. When asked what distinguished Pacific Northwest authors, he placed himself in the company of people from Washington and Oregon—Ursula LeGuin, Frank Herbert, Tom Robbins, Ernest Gann, Ken Kesey—but primarily by referring to work habits, not themes or topics. When asked out of what literary tradition he emerged, by contrast, Doig mentioned a "family tree of Western writers," the majority of whom hailed from Montana—A.B. Guthrie, James Welch, William Kittredge, Mary Clearman Blew, Norman Maclean—and none of whom ever spent much time west of the Cascades. And Doig's dedication to *Winter Brothers*—"This one is for the Missoula Gang, when we owned the West!"—lists a who's who of Montana authors, historians, and critics. There remains a powerful inclination to imagine two different places—a Montana that is part of the authentic American West, and a Pacific Northwest that is (paraphrasing Jean Barman [1996]) "west of the West." Ivan Doig has spent his life negotiating between them. His career—like that of Richard Hugo, the poet from Seattle who studied with Roethke at the University of Washington and then spent his teaching career at the University of Montana—tells us about the distinctions between two places as well as the linkages. Seattle and Missoula stand as endpoints for one axis bisecting twentieth-century regional literature. Their respective universities—and their affiliated writers—give them much in common, but each community's view of itself in relation to place is different.

Ivan Doig's youth in northern Montana is best traced in the unforgettable reconstruction of *This House of Sky*. After high school he went to college at Northwestern University where he earned a B.S. (1961) and M.S. (1962) in journalism, and then worked on newspapers and magazines. With his wife Carol, also a journalist, he moved to Seattle. Ivan Doig enrolled as a graduate student at the University of Washington, studying western history with Vernon Carkensen and taking his doctorate in 1969. With Carol he published *News, A Consumer's Guide* in 1972; he edited two textbook anthologies, on literature of the city and on American utopias; and he wrote *Early Forestry Research: A History of the Pacific Northwest Forest & Range Experiment Station, 1926-1975* (1976) for the U.S. Forest Service. Meanwhile, he turned himself into a creative writer.

*This House of Sky* grew out of conversations Doig had with his aging father, additional interviews, and substantial archival research around Montana. By the time the memoir appeared and won a nomination for the National Book Award, he was launched as an important literary figure, and entered into a period of tremendous productivity. Doig next published *Winter Brothers: A Season at the Edge of America* (1980), a book that paired his own musings about life on Washington's Olympic Peninsula with those of James Swan, a prolific diarist who had lived and written about the same place during the later nineteenth century. In the course of research for *Winter Brothers*, Doig came across a brief newspaper story about some fur traders who had escaped from indentured servitude at New Archangel (Sitka) in Russian America in 1853, making their way in an Indian canoe down almost the entire Northwest Coast to Willapa Bay, Washington Territory. From this germ, and from a great deal of the historical research that informs almost all of the author's fiction, grew *The Sea Runners* (1982), Doig's first novel. *The Sea Runners* is, to date, Doig's last novel situated primarily west of the Cascades (part of *Mountain Time* [1999] takes place in Seattle). Since *The Sea Runners* Doig has focused on his home state, continued his considerable archival research, and produced the Montana Trilogy. *Heart Earth* (1993), another book of family history, offered a break from fiction, before the novels *Bucking the Sun* (1996), *Mountain Time* (1999), *Prairie Nocturne* (2003), and *The Whistling Season* (2006) elaborated Doig's themes of families in a changing Montana. As *Mountain Time* introduced Big-Sky family members to the wonders of e-mail, Doig himself has joined the Internet generation, building a website that offers synopsis, background information, and discussion questions for his major titles (www.IvanDoig.com).

Ivan Doig's work is well suited to a project on "history and literature" because few have accomplished more by weaving together the historical and the literary. Doig writes particularly about the past—most of his fiction has taken the form of the historical novel, and even his nonfiction focuses primarily on the past. Not surprisingly, then, the historian William G. Robbins admires in Dr. Doig's style "the historian's fetish for facts." Readers quickly recognize that Doig's stories are grounded firmly in historical research—so much so that Robbins views *English Creek* as a "historical documentary" on Montana during the late 1930s. And the author himself "admits to being 'literally minded'; even when he is writing fiction, his 'imagination works off the facts, by and large'" (Robbins 1987:135, 139, 137). Ivan Doig reminds us how permeable are the boundaries between fact and fiction, history and literature.
TIMOTHY EGAN, '81, IVAN DOIG, '69, AND CHARLES CROSS, '81
Seattle is a famously literate city, and here are three reasons why. Cross (right) is the best-selling biographer of Jimi Hendrix and Kurt Cobain. Doig (center), whose books include *The Whistling Season* and *Prairie Nocturne*, is perhaps the dean of Northwest novelists. Egan took home the National Book Award in nonfiction for his Dust-Bowl chronicle *The Worst Hard Time*.

EDWIN GUTHMAN, '41, '44
Guthman found it—the guest registry that proved UW Professor Melvin Rader had spent his summer at a resort in the Cascades, not at a communist training school. Guthman's series of articles for the *Seattle Times* cleared Rader's name and received a 1950 Pulitzer Prize.

JULIA SWEENEY, '82
Who's that? That's Pat, though you wouldn't know by looking at the sparkling Sweeney. Best known as the androgynous Pat on *Saturday Night Live*, Sweeney is responsible for the acclaimed one-person shows "God Said, 'Ha!'" and "In The Family Way." Her *Letting Go of God* hits the big screen this summer.

BRYAN MONROE, '87
It took Monroe three tries to get into the then-School of Communications at the UW. His tenacity paid off then, and has continued to—he received a Pulitzer Prize in 2006 for his team's Hurricane Katrina coverage in *The Sun Herald* (Biloxi, Miss.). Monroe is now vice president and editorial director of *Ebony* and *jet* magazines.