

Portland Book Review

www.portlandbookreview.com

FREE

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3
September - November 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

Key Character: The Typewriter

Article by Ivan Doig
Page 2

Wordstock

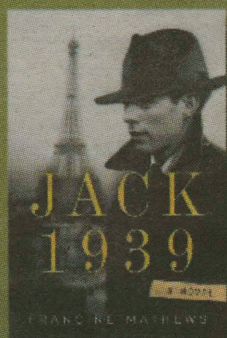
Booth 407
Page 7

Maryglenn McCombs Biography

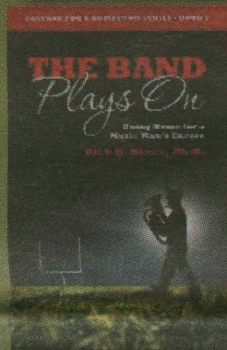
Meet A Publisher!
Page 9

Images of America: McMinnville Book

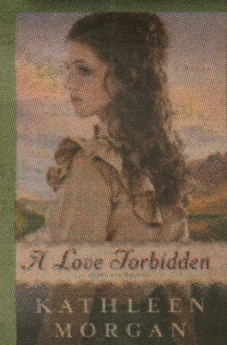
Page 10



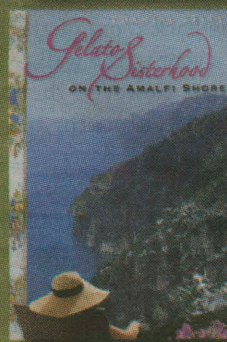
6



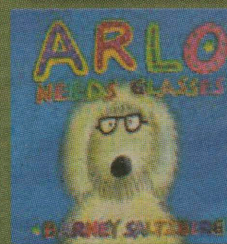
11



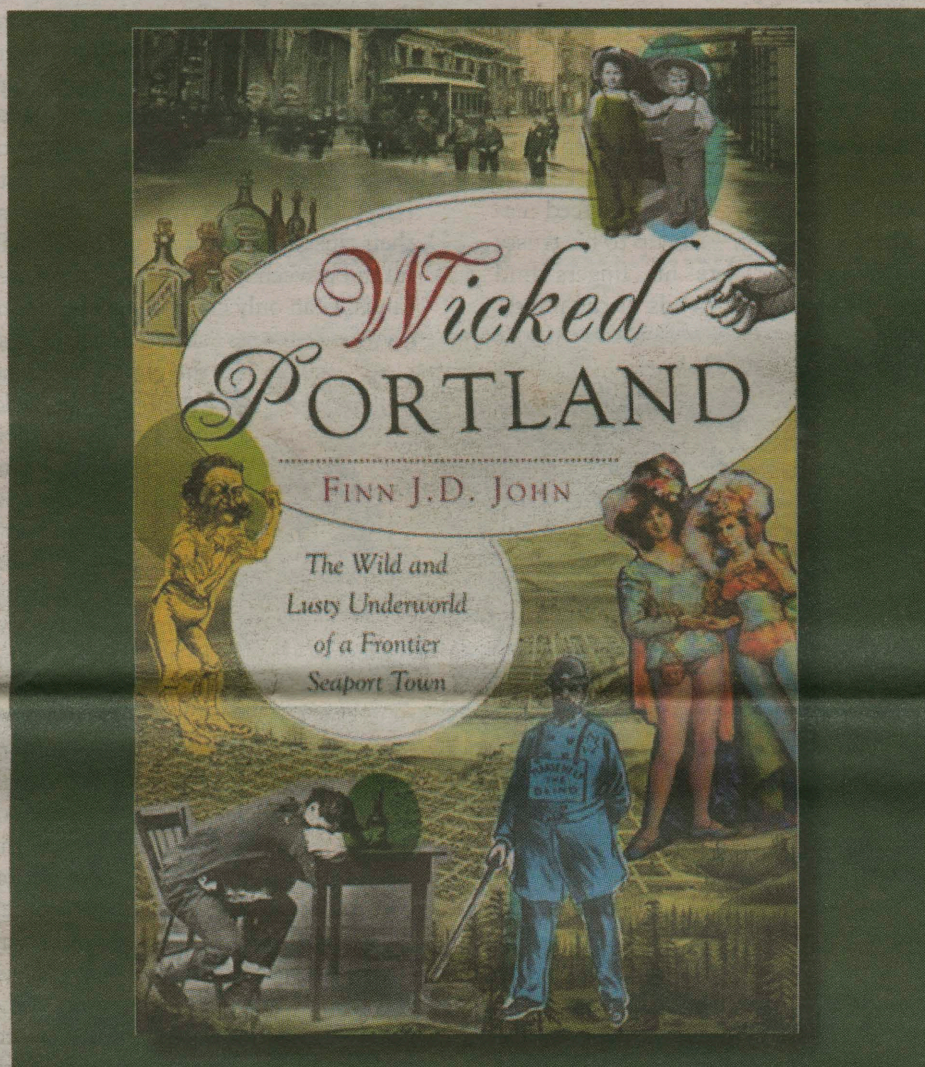
11



12



15



By Finn J.D. John
The History Press, \$19.99, 144 pages

Imagine a frontier town full of prostitution, crooked law enforcement, shady politics, kidnapping, drug smuggling, murder, and mayhem. No, we are not talking about Deadwood or Dodge City. We are talking about Portland, Oregon, a town whose wild-west infancy wasn't as sweet smelly as its Rose City inhabitants of today might think. In his book, *Wicked Portland*, syndicated columnist and author Finn J.D. John exposes the wild side of Stumptown, a city divided into areas where the rules were enforced, and where — for the right price — the rules were treated as friendly suggestions.

John also provides insight into how the inevitable convergence of different social classes in Portland (the New England business men; the Midwestern pioneers; the transient sailors, loggers, and miners; and the immigrant populations) allowed

activities such as police-fixing, drug use in the opium dens, shanghaiing innocent saloon patrons, and the operation of harems to take place within the city limits.

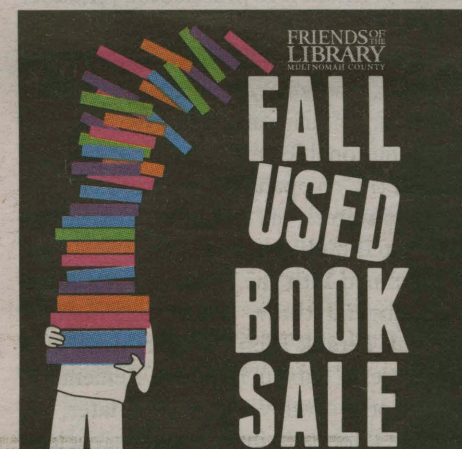
In addition to the amusing stories and character profiles, the print copy of the

Wicked Portland Exposed!

book includes QR codes. These codes, when scanned, provide further information, pictures, maps and video on the topic being discussed in a particular chapter. This clever use of technology is a bonus!

CHERI WOODS-EDWIN

65 Reviews
INSIDE!



AT THE
Lloyd Center Doubletree Exhibit Hall
1000 NE Multnomah St. Portland, Or 97232

OCTOBER 12 13 14 15

FRIDAY 6-9PM Members only night You May Join at the Sale!	SAT 9AM-6PM	SUN 11AM-5PM	MONDAY 9AM-3PM 50% Off Discount Day!
---	-----------------------	------------------------	---

WWW.FRIENDS-LIBRARY.ORG
PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY

Key Character: The Typewriter

By Ivan Doig

As it must to any writer born under the star of good fortune, the Author Interview came calling early in my career, and across more than three decades and fourteen books, it has been a generally pleasant experience. I like journalists, having been one. But starting some years ago, I found I absolutely had to take a drastic step before ever letting any interviewer into the room. I needed to hide my typewriter.

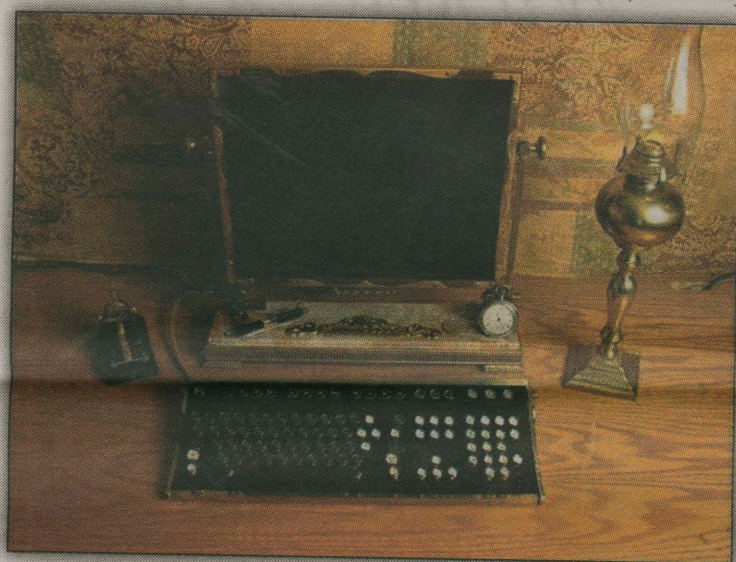
If I didn't, invariably the visiting reporter homed in on my Royal manual as if it were cheese in a mousetrap, except I was the one then snapped up into cliché, the Luddite Writer. It mattered not one whit that the computer I use for rewriting and editing sat in plain sight ten feet away; the story angle never budged from under the interviewer's technophobe-scenting nose and thus came the pat questions, including the inevitable "Where do you even find ribbons for a typewriter these days, Mr. Doig?" ("On the Internet, stupid," I had to keep myself from saying.)

Surprisingly, what was almost never asked was the key question: why use a manual typewriter in this day and age? Too bad, because it would have drawn from me a pair of answers more incisive than most: to sculpt on paper, and loyalty to the best friends my fingers have ever had. Let's take those in reverse order.

When my folks presented me with a mail-order Olympia portable for my 18th birthday, the typewriter became for me what the saddle horse was for my father at that age – the means of getting somewhere in life. Almost as if it were already creating sentences, the gift bespoke that I was on my way out of our lariat proletariat life as hired hands on Montana livestock ranches, and off I went, with the Olympia snug in its leatherette traveling case, to Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. Without it to practice on, I shudder to think how I would have fared in writing courses taught by 100-word-a-minute ex-newsmen. Not only was the doughty Olympia instrumental in earning me two degrees, proficiency on it led me to a wife. Carol and I met in the company of some 100 clattering typewriters, as summer instructors for selected high school journalists, whom we crammed into the J School's hothouse news lab and threw crazy story assignments at. (Frank Rich? Walter Mossberg? Dick Teresi? Babalu Mandel? Remember, guys?) Forty-seven wedded years later, her Royal sits opposite mine on our capacious desk, a discreet distance from her iMac.

Those typing skills ushered me to newspaper and magazine jobs, and eventually a successful Ph.D. exam for which – get this, youngsters – I had to obtain special permission to type rather than handwrite. Several years of freelance magazine work found me pounding out articles on a succession

of sturdy manual Royals, and when I turned to books and fiction, the typewriter was always right there, often in the story itself. I invented a resounding oversized office machine called a Blickensderfer for Rosellen Duff to turn out paychecks for Fort Peck dam workers and her short story efforts, both in *Bucking the Sun*. I sent Ben Reinking through World War II as a reluctant military combat correspondent trusting only his typewriter, in *The Eleventh Man*. And it is one of my continuing characters, the unstoppable Morrie Morgan, who has convinced me to be loyal to my Royal and quit hiding it. In the novel I am working on now, Morrie – in his new role as impassioned editorial writer caught up in the struggle between Montana miners and the Anaconda Copper Mining Company, corporate greed machine 1921 version – sits up to his trusty typewriter and lets his fingers find the keys "like old friends of the mind."



Those keys are truly "old friends" in my case for a couple million words in type. The upstart machine – the computer – that has taken over the world, I have mostly made peace with, beholden offspring that it is of the archaic QWERTY keyboard. But my wrist and hand are convinced that its innovative feature, the mouse, is an instrument of the devil. Diligent exercises have thus far kept me from carpal tunnel woes. Have I ever had to do calisthenics for my finger-friendly typewriters? You know the answer.

The fingers also tell the most about sculpting on paper, because I regard my rough drafts as a way of feeling the shape each sentence aspires to be, just as sculptors ever since Michelangelo have run an inquiring hand over a promising piece of stone to find the form waiting within. For me, employing typewriter keys and ragged lines instead of hammer and chisel is not so much mystical as merely practical, although there is a touch of mystery to the process. "Getting it in the fingers," as a jazz musician friend

calls his noodling with the notes until they arrange themselves with automatic fluency, and as a sculptor friend has described, in virtually the same words, how he cups a hand to stone's texture to find the direction for his next chisel stroke – and as I rely on my questing digits for combinations of words I didn't know I knew until they are coaxed up onto the white field of paper in front of me.

There is a word for this seemingly unaccountable instantaneous leap of ideas from the forehead out to the very ends of the arms – the Germans are good with these triple-deckers: *fingerspitzengefühl*, roughly "intuition in the fingertips." Great generals and explorers are said to have it when they trace across a map and translate the flow of battle or an uncharted river; the great pianists tell their students to concentrate at their tips and their tops and music will fill in between. Down here in the lesser ranks, I can only claim some kind of in-

stinctive deftness at the end of the hand when my whacking keys feel their way along the language. My current novel, *The Bartender's Tale*, shows such fingerwork right away. Tom Harry, "the best bartender who ever lived," needed a distinctive look to go with his unforgettable skills, and down the page of my first draft, the groping exploration

goes on like a haiku run wild or a crazy crossword puzzle: *His black hair, undercut by pompadour, then was graying gives way to a wordpile of gray, white, had a streak, and below those, the key word in this tippety-typetty search, frost.* From that, his appearance and much else about him became clear to me as a sculpted bust: *the bachelor saloonkeeper with a streak of frost in his black pompadour.*

And while I know such shades of phrasing can be retained on a computer screen, this is a line I wanted to keep and consider for days, weeks, maybe months until it ended up as the reader's first good look at my leading man. Paper does it best. I wish I were inventing a hybrid art form here, *literasculpture* or some such, but actually authors used to do it this way a lot. The vintage *Paris Review* "Writers at Work" interviews always showed a manuscript sample right at the start, and there we can see the typed-and-penciled-through stretches of Eudora Welty, John Updike, Ralph Ellison, Mary McCarthy, Jack Kerouac (that scroll!), Norman Mailer

and others, finding the keys – Royal as likely as not – to magic on the page.

~~~~~  
*Either write something worth  
reading or do something  
worth writing.*

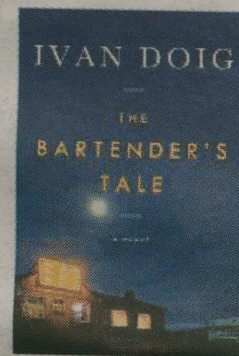
~~~~~  
— Benjamin Franklin

The Bartender's Tale: A Novel

By Ivan Doig

Riverhead Books, \$27.95, 387 pages

"As the father who was doing his bachelor best to raise me would have said, I didn't lack imagination in the first place, and I certainly had no shortage of it as the clandestine eye-



witness -- or -- earwitness -- to the variety of life as it passed through the Medicine Lodge." Tom Harry is the father, and the narrator is his son Russell or Rusty to his friends and family. Medicine Lodge is the "legendary" family bar that sits in the town of Gros Ventre, Montana, and is the anchor for most of the action in this book. *The Bartender's Tale* begins when "Pop" rescues Rusty from his Aunt Marge's charge in Phoenix, where he's lived with his two cousins since he was a baby. Together they head back to Medicine Lodge where life is rich with fishing, sheep herding, and hanging out in the back room of the bar listening through a vent in the wall to patrons sharing stories. However, the early circumstances of Rusty's youth, including the fact that his mother deserted him, makes him a nervous boy, especially when his father disappears mysteriously to Canada for days at a time. Most of the story takes place in the summer of 1960, when Rusty turns 12. He meets his soulmate Zoe and a few other newcomers who turn his world on end and deepen the mysteries that surround his family.

Doig is a master of Americana details, and he layers this old-fashioned family saga with considerable nostalgic charm.

DIANE PROKOP

Copyright 2012 by Ivan Doig.