one-page FAX to Robin Desser, senior editor, Knopf

Dear Ms. Desser--

Quite a lot got in the way between the time Judy Blunt asked me for some words for BREAKING CLEAN and now, but finally here are some:

“One’s own life into words is perhaps the most daunting geography a writer ever faces. But swooping into moments of her own past as if by sorcery, Judy Blunt in these harrowing pages of life as a young ranch wife on the Montana Highline memorably comes to terms with an old and hard horizon.”

--Ivan Doig, author of This House of Sky

Please pass my congrats to Judy for her Whiting Award, and best of luck for the success of the book.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
January 11, 2007

Dear Toni —

Congratulations on the Award to This House of Shoes (and its writer). It is well deserved. I hope you took the rest of the day off, which you earned.

I went on the web to look for the award, and couldn't find it. Could you let me know so I can mention it in Dear Friends?

Good luck with the new book.

[Signature]

100% post-consumer recycled paper / soy ink
Dear Ed--

Appreciated your editorial bloodhound interest in the honor to *This House of Sky*, and am enclosing all I have except effusive phone calls, the clipping from *The Missoulian*. As I savvy it, the Montana Historical Society journal--*Montana: The Magazine of Western History*--will ultimately carry a piece about this by Harry Fritz; at least they did so the last time he honchoed the list. The editor there now is Clark Whitehorn, and I don’t have his direct phone number, but the Historical Society’s is (406)444-2694. Harry, who no doubt would be glad to give you savory quotes, is at the U. of Montana history department.

So: Stephen Ambrose! And with the Lewis & Clark bicentennial hoopla coming up!! What think?

Hugs & tickles to Betsy,
November 10, 2002

Dear Ivan:

Thanks so much for the book return AND for the excerpt of your book.

I'm hooked! The Western stockman's view seems right on; and the Medieval connection is fascinating.

I remember the elderly black vet I found in Harlem for talking portraits of WW I survivors speaking about his memories of the trenches and of his tasks--collecting bodies, NOT fighting, you understand, but picking up; hauling supplies like a packhorse, and relying on his own instincts for survival. Others interviewed him after our story ran, (But he didn't tell them much about his memories, it would seem), and that "forgotten man" even had an obit in the NYT (or perhaps the Daily News) when he died six months after his appearance in LIFE.

I look forward to your book's publication.

My sister Sunny and I are working hard on proposals to foundations for the two organizations I've probably told you about in the past--AND, nice to note, in this year of sorry giving records, we've done quite well for both The Presby Memorial Iris Gardens Database Project AND for Pushcart Players—the local Equity company that takes original musicals into the schools of mid Atlantic states and as far west as Chicago. The musicals are what I call "slices of American history", mostly, but also a "Peter and the Wolf" adaptation, and for little kids, "Stone Soup and Other Stories". The company even had command performances (by invitation of the Czech Republic government) in Prague and at the concentration camp site at Terezin this past summer of their Holocaust play, "The Last...The Very Last...Butterfly"—based on drawings and writings of the children who died at Terezin. Sunny and I had seen that play given to a 99% WASP audience of school children in Saddle River or one of those NJ communities. And the questions the kids asked were very revealing. The lesson was not just one of the Holocaust, but rather as message about discrimination and its effects. As two old WASPs, we were very impressed with its power to get through to today's kids.

Albest to you and Carol.

As ever,

[Signature]

Mr. Ivan Doig
17277 15th Avenue, N.W.
Seattle, WA 98177
CORVALLIS-BENTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
645 N.W. MONROE AVENUE
CORVALLIS, OREGON 97330

OFFICE: (541) 766-6910

FAX: (541) 766-6915

CAROLYN RAWLES-HEISER
Library Director

carolyn.rawles-heiser@ci.corvallis.or.us
Corvallis schedule

April 14, arrive:

Take Rte 34 "to Corvallis" exit from I-5; follow Harrison to 9th, turn R.

Salbasgeon Inn, 1730 NW 9th, conf. # 67079

--6:30, dinner w/ Bill & Karla Robbins @ Big River Restaurant

April 15: early lunch for Ivan; Carol has brown-bag lunch ordered by library

--11:30, meet Mary Finnigan @ 2nd floor of library, 645 NW Monroe; park in library lot, go in and get parking permit; also get Jan & Joyce’s breakfast tix from Mary, and check with her about the night’s best route to LaSells Center. She will then drive us to:

--12-1, craft session @ Majestic Theater, 115 SW 2nd St.
   in upstairs conference room; general audience of perhaps 70-75
   (rehearse speech)
   early dinner, perhaps @ Grooving Tuesday’s, a Chili-like place N of motel, or
   McGrath’s @ 9th & Circle

--7, speech @ LaSells Center on OSU campus; park in loading dock area;
   book signing afterward

April 16: early breakfast for Ivan

--8:30 a.m. fund-raising breakfast @ library, reading from Prairie Nocturne; Jan
   and Joyce on hand; arrive about 8, sign donors’ books for Mary

early lunch for Ivan; Carol has brown-bag lunch ordered by library

--12-1, craft session w/ high school students @ library
Caroline Rawles-Heiser  
Director, Corvallis Public Library  
645 NW Monroe Ave.  
Corvallis OR 97330

Dear Caroline--

Since we talked on the phone a couple of things have conspired to busy up my schedule between now and the end of this year, so it dawned on me I’d do well to handle our remaining “community read” matters for you right now.

So, here’s the assortment of photos you should feel free to use in publicity, and the basic sponsor/speaker’s agreement I’ve used in the past. (The phrase in there about taxes I don’t think applies to Oregon, but I’ve had to standardly insert it since I discovered any fee paid to me in California was immediately nicked by California income tax deduction, even though I’m not a resident of there.) As the agreement indicates, the set of events you cited me on the phone sounds fine.

One detail for the book signing after the Tuesday-night talk did occur to me: we should make sure to have some copies of all my books—they’re all available in paperback—for sale, as well as House of Sky. I’ll give Cheryl Maze a call about this to make sure it can be done, but thought I’d mention it to you as well. The track record of sales at events like this is that we usually sell about an equal number of whatever book I’m talking about and the array of other ones.

On the matter of lodging, Carol and I will head on out to the coast when we’re done on Tuesday the 16th, so the motel room should be for just Monday and Tuesday, the 15th-16th. Unless you’ve heard raves about, say, the new Holiday Inn Express, we’d prefer the Salbasgeon again, a top-floor room, non-smoking, two beds if possible but a king-size if not, facing their back lot which we found quiet the last time we did this.

There! I hope that covers it, and of course call me about any further refining of details as we go along. We may be away the last half of January, but otherwise I think we’re here by the phone.

Sincerely,
Hi.

I attended a high school class discussion on *This House of Sky* this morning, & it made me really glad we selected it. The students were very impressive & they took the book to heart — you could tell they had really thought about it & put themselves in the character's shoes (or boots as the case may be!)*
P.S. I don't think the tax issue will come up - the Foundation will pay you as an independent contractor. California has an incredibly long tax arm - I learned a few yrs ago they have tax offices all over - like in Chicago!!

Looking forward to April!
Dear Caroline--

This is to confirm our agreement on my participation in the library-sponsored “community read” of my book *This House of Sky*, as per our phone conversations. The terms as they’ve evolved:

I will prepare and deliver a talk primarily about the origins of that particular book, although possibly with examples of the craft of writing drawn from any of my other works that may fit with the general theme, to be presented the evening of April 15, 2003. I’ll also do lunchtime “craft” sessions about writing, on April 15-16, and provide a brief reading or short talk, as we mutually decide, for your breakfast fund-raising event on April 16.

The fee shall be $8,000.00, to be received in full by me on April 16, 2003. The “community read” sponsors will also cover all expenses for my wife and me—lodging, meals, any usual incidentals—for Monday, Tuesday, and through luncheon on Wednesday, April 14-15-16 and mileage reimbursement to and from Seattle. If any state of Oregon taxes are withheld from the speaking fee or subsequently called due, the “community read” sponsors will reimburse me for that sum within thirty days of notification from me.

The speech is not to be re-used beyond the event—for instance, in published form, posted on the Internet, or in video or audio formats—without my written permission.

I hope this covers the contingencies. I’ll need a signed copy of this for my records, and I’m accordingly signing this one for yours. I very much look forward to the event.

Caroline Rawles-Heiser
Director, Corvallis Public Library
645 NW Monroe Ave.
Corvallis OR 97330

5 Oct 2002 (date)

Ivan Doig

Ivan Doig

29 Oct 2002 (date)
Caroline Rawles-Heiser  
Director, Corvallis Public Library  
645 NW Monroe Ave.  
Corvallis OR 97330

Dear Caroline--

Here's the bio sheet Cheryl Maze asked me to pass along to you, plus a couple of the more insightful articles about my work. Let me know if I can provide anything else. I'm certainly honored to have *This House of Sky* considered worthy to be read by the Benton County community, and I hope we can put the project together to the satisfaction of us all.

Sincerely,
3-12

Hi - here are some brochures about Corvallis and the promotional materials we’ve developed. We’re looking forward to your visit.

For the 2 brown bag lunches, we will order you something from a local deli. Do you want a sandwich, salad, or... What kind of sandwich - bread - mayo etc.

We all know good decisions are the most important!

Carroll

P.S. I assume your wife will want something too - so please let me know what she likes!

A Community that Honors Diversity
One County  
One Book  
Benton County Reads Together

Ivan Doig  
This House of Sky  
Presentation & Book Signing

April 15, 7:00pm  
LaSells Stewart Center  
26th & Western  
Oregon State University  
Free & Open to the Public

April 15  
Craft of the Writer  
Brown Bag lunch for aspiring writers. Majestic Theater Conference Room. 12-1pm. Free Tickets available at the Adult Reference Desk, Corvallis-Benton Co. Public Library.

April 16  
Breakfast with Ivan Doig Fundraiser  
Corvallis-Benton Co. Public Library, Main Meeting Room. 8:30am. Tickets in advance. $15 sold at the Adult Services Reference Desk.

April 16  
Craft of the Writer  
Brown Bag lunch with Ivan Doig. Corvallis-Benton Co. Public Library, Main Meeting Room. 12-1pm. High School students only.

Sponsored by the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library Foundation  
One County, One Book

Community Art Project

Share your creativity in a special display at the Corvallis—Benton County Public Library!

Create an art project as part of our “One County, One Book” program. Art works inspired by the themes of This House of Sky will be on display at the Public Library April 6-16. Art projects can be done by individuals, classes, families—anyone of any age who wants to participate. This is not a contest, just an opportunity to have fun and show off your work at the Library.

Possible Themes for Your Art Project:

*** What the West Means to You
*** What Makes a Family
*** Our Relationship to the Land

Ivan Doig, author of This House of Sky, will be here April 15th and 16th and will see what you have created!

Sizes/Media:

➢ Pieces will be hung on the walls, placed in a display case or on pedestals, or be freestanding.
➢ Freestanding items must be able to stand completely on their own.
➢ Wall items should be no wider than 30”, framed or on poster board; items for the display cases or pedestals should be no taller than 2 feet tall and 10 inches deep.
➢ Items should be appropriate for viewing by all ages.
➢ Any media is acceptable, although they should not include noise or require power to operate.
➢ No items may be placed at the Library for sale.

To Register:

Fill out the section on the back and return it to the Library by March 24th. Bring your project to the Library on April 4th or 5th and pick it up between April 17th and 19th. Anything not picked up by 6 p.m. April 19th will be disposed of by the Library. Volunteers from ArtCentric will hang the pieces. For more information, call Carolyn Rawles-Heiser at 766-6910.
Return this section to the box at the Ask Here desk at the Library, or by mail to: Carolyn Rawles-Heiser, Corvallis—Benton County Public Library, 645 NW Monroe Ave., Corvallis, OR 97330 by March 24th.

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I understand that placement of art items is at the discretion of the Library. I understand the Corvallis—Benton County Public Library is not responsible for any loss or damage to items placed on display at the Library and that items are not insured by the Library. I will bring my item to the Library on April 4th or 5th, 2003 and pick it up by 6 p.m. April 19th, 2003 or the Library may dispose of it at their discretion.

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One County, One Book
Benton County reads together!

This spring, citizens of Benton County are invited to read Ivan Doig’s *This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind*.

The aim of the One County, One Book project is to promote mutual understanding and common ground in our community. We’ll hear about and discuss *This House of Sky* - in coffee shops, workplaces, and libraries. In April, Ivan Doig will speak and share his book with us personally.

See the back page for Ivan Doig’s talks, book discussion groups and other exciting community events!
Ivan Doig: The making of a writer

In the last years of the 1960’s when this country was going through convulsive self-questioning, I was as usual out of step. It was becoming clearer and clearer to me what I was in life. I was a relic.

And the son of another relic. And the grandson of yet a third relic.

This clearheadedness came over me in a most unexpected place: graduate school. I was at the University of Washington working toward a doctorate in history and noticed that I seemed to have come out of a time warp that was surprisingly deep, given that not many years separated then and now. In my Montana upbringing, I had worked in a lambing shed, picked rock from grain fields, driven a power buckrake in haying time and a D-8 Cat pulling a harrow during summer fallowing and a grain truck at harvest, herded sheep, trailed sheep, cussed sheep—even dug a well by hand and whitewashed a barn—and now I didn’t seem to be finding other people who had done any of that.

Then during one of those winters of discontent in graduate school, my father and my grandmother—my mother’s mother—came to Seattle to live with my wife Carol and me for the sake of my father’s health, in our losing struggle against his emphysema. In almost all instances, I had done only enough of each of those Montana ranch jobs to convince me I did not want to do it every day the rest of my life. But here was a pair of persons who had gone on doing those tasks, and many more, until they simply could not, any longer.

The sight of these two people of the past who had raised me—Bessie Ringer, ranch cook, diehard Montanan since her early twenties when she stepped off a train in Three Forks with an infant daughter and a jobless husband; and Charlie Doig, ranch hand and rancher, born on a sagebrush homestead in the Big Belt Mountains south of Helena—the daily sight of these two in our Seattle living room, with a shopping center out the window below, very much made me aware of the relic-hood of the three of us. In the strictest dictionary
definition: "an object whose original cultural environment has disappeared."

It has been nearly a quarter of a century now since I finally put a period to
the 410th page of the manuscript built upon those musings. My hands still
sweat as I see the points at which the years of carpentry on This House of Sky
could have failed. Installments of the long work of
getting Sky's words into print are in my diary,
such as this entry from mid-January of 1975 after
I'd spent half a day reworking the opening
sentence of the manuscript and thought I had
managed to improve it by maybe two words:
"It would be magnificent to do the entire book
with this slow care, writing it all as highly charged
as poetry – but will I ever find the time?"

And another diary note, this one from mid-July
of 1975, seven full years after the genesis of this
writing effort:
"I began to look back through the Montana
book, and saw how poor some of it is. The raw
material is good, and there can be more, but my
writing so far doesn't click. Size of the job scares me, I suppose."

But the next morning I made myself pencil my way through the manuscript
again, and the morning after that, and after enough of those grindstone
mornings I thought the words were perking up a bit. By late 1977, after an
editor named Carol Hill at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich expressed interest in
the sample she had seen, I finished up the 100,000-word manuscript of This
House of Sky.

Away to New York went the stack of typed pages, and then, about six weeks
later on the 19th of January, 1978, as I was stepping onto the jogging track at
my wife's college, Carol drove up to the gate, told me Carol Hill had phoned
from Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, and I'd better scoot home and call her right
back.

There is a diary entry of what happened next, and it begins:
"Mark this day with a white stone."

Carol Hill in her first few sentences about the manuscript had said over the
telephone to me: "spectacular ... beautiful ... elegant ... wonderful" and
"beautiful" again.

Then her best words of all, the ones I really needed to hear:
"And we'll publish it this fall."

Thanks to Ivan Doig for permission to reprint this material.
Discussion Tool Kit

These questions will help get your discussion started. They were prepared by Penny Fulton, Crescent Valley High School, from www.ivandoig.com, and adapted by Corvallis-Benton County Public Library staff.

1. How would you describe this book? Would you call this a man's book or a woman's book? Were you fearful it might be too rural? Too western? Is it just a story of a boy growing up, finding his talent, and working toward his dream? Or a story of shepherding in rural Montana? Or is it something grander and deeper?

2. Take a look at the full title of the book. What are the ways in which the land and the weather shaped the lives of the people, their characters, and their values?

3. The "vaulted symmetry in the mountain peaks," the "walls of high country," and the "windswept floor where shadows accent deep valleys," all these provide the dimensions in the "house of sky" which would become part of Doig's heart and soul. How does the landscape shape Doig's recollective voice?

4. *This House of Sky* offers an opportunity to think about and discuss the many steps it takes to, first, find one's talent and life's work, and then to work through the steps to achieve a goal. How does Ivan get onto the idea of writing? How does his hardscrabble life contribute to his development as a writer? Do you believe an incremental approach has validity in all walks of life? Your life?

5. Does Bessie break free from the rigid expectations for women of her time? Describe her personality and compare it to some of our classical notions of women on the plains.
6. *This House of Sky* is also about the rewards and costs of living an isolated, vagabond life. How does this lifestyle affect the characters of Charlie? Berneta? Ruth? Bessie? Ivan? Could they have become who they were if they had lived in the same place, the same house, year 'round for years at a time?

7. *This House of Sky* describes a non-traditional family - father, son, and grandmother - that evolves into a closely-knit unit. Doig contemplates what makes a family and how we become a family. What is your definition of family? How is Ivan's family like other families about whom you have known or read?

8. *This House of Sky* is about leaving home. By the end of the book, Doig has left Montana for Seattle to become a writer. Some see this choice of lifestyle as a rejection of his roots in ranching, whereas others see it as consistent with what he learned as a child on the ranch: life is full of risks and hardships to be faced. How do you feel about Doig's leaving Montana?

9. Was this memoir similar in its construction to others you've read? What do you think of the memoir genre? Do you think it might be difficult to write a memoir that is interesting to readers? Did you find the "plot" of *This House of Sky* compelling?

10. Ivan dedicates his book, "To Carol. Westward we go free." Why do you think he chose Carol, his wife, in his dedication? What do you make of "Westward we go free"?
Further reading

Biographical Sources

Contemporary Authors, Volume 81-84, page 129.
R920 CONTEMPO (CBCPL- Main Library); PS129 .C61 (Valley Library, OSU)

Contemporary Authors, New Revision Series, Volume 24, pages 155-157;
R920 CONTEMPO (CBCPL- Main Library); PS129 .C631 (Valley Library, OSU)

Critical Sources

At Field's End: Interviews with 22 Pacific Northwest Writers, by Nicholas
O'Connell. (University of Washington Press, 1998)
810.9979 O'CONNEL (CBCPL- Main Library); PS282 .O26 1998 (Valley Library, OSU)

(University of Idaho Press, 1992)

New Ground: Western American Narrative and the Literary Canon, by A.
PS271 .B74 1989 (Valley Library, OSU)

Talking Up a Storm: Voices of the New West, by Gregory L. Morris.
(University of Nebraska Press, 1994)
813.5409 MORRIS (CBCPL- Main Library)

Inside This House of Sky: Photographs of a Western Landscape,
photographs by Duncan Kelso; text by Ivan Doig. (Atheneum, 1983)
F737.M4 K44 1983 (Valley Library, OSU)

Writers of the Purple Sage, by Russell Martin. (Viking, 1984)
813.874 (CBCPL- Main Library)
PS561 .W74 1984 (Valley Library, OSU)

Internet Sites

Ivan Doig's site- www.ivandoig.com

Wyoming Council for the Humanities-www.uwyo.edu/wch/bdpwths.htm

Corvallis-Benton County Public Library-www.thebestlibrary.net
Check this library home page for One County, One Book news!
Books by Ivan Doig

Ride with Me, Maria Montana. Atheneum, 1990.

This House of Sky - 921 DOIG, IVAN - can be checked out at any Corvallis-Benton County Public Library location. It is available for purchase at any Corvallis bookstore.

Thanks, partners!
Corvallis-Benton County Public Library
OSU Valley Library
OSU Bookstore
Staff of OSU English Department
Grass Roots Bookstore
Borders Books Music & Café
The Book Bin
ArtCentric
Linn-Benton Community College
Corvallis School District 509J
Corvallis Gazette-Times
Salbasgeon Suites

Printing was funded by-
Friends of the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library
Ivan Doig's visit is courtesy of-
Corvallis-Benton County Public Library Foundation
One County, One Book Events

March 12  Random Reviews: *This House of Sky*
Wednesday  Reviewed by Bill Robbins, OSU History Department
12-1 pm  Corvallis-Benton County Public Library, Main Meeting Room

April 15  "The Craft of the Writer," Ivan Doig
Tuesday  Brown Bag lunch for aspiring writers
12-1 pm  Majestic Theatre, Conference Room. Limited seating.
          Free tickets available after April 1 at the Adult Reference Desk

April 15  Ivan Doig presentation and book signing
Tuesday  LaSells Stewart Center, 26th & Western,
7 pm  Oregon State University

April 16  Ivan Doig - Breakfast fund-raiser
Wednesday  Corvallis-Benton County Public Library, Main Meeting Room
8:30 am  Tickets $15, in advance, Main Library Adult Reference Desk

April 16  "The Craft of the Writer," Ivan Doig
Wednesday  Brown Bag lunch. High School students only.
12-1 pm  Corvallis-Benton County Public Library, Main Meeting Room

March-April  Students' Art Inspired by *This House of Sky*

Corvallis-Benton County Public Library - Main Meeting Room

April 6-16  Participate in our Community Art Project!

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*This House of Sky* Discussion Groups

Drop in and enjoy *This House of Sky* with others-

March 20, Thursday, 7 pm  The Beanery, 500 SW 2nd Street
March 26, Wednesday, 9 am  Corvallis-Benton County Public Library, Board Room

April 1, Tuesday, 7 pm  New Morning Bakery, 219 SW 2nd St.
April 2, Wednesday, 1 pm  Sam's Station, 1210 NW 29th St.
April 3, Thursday, 7 pm  Monroe Community Library,
                          668 Commercial St.
April 4, Friday, 5 pm  Interzone, 1563 NW Monroe Ave.
April 8, Tuesday, 3 pm  Borders Books Music & Café,
                        777 NW 9th St.
April 9, Friday, 3 pm  New Morning Bakery, 219 SW 2nd St.
April 10, Thursday, 7 pm  Java Connection,
                          1640 Main St., Philomath

Corvallis-Benton County Public Library
"Bringing People and Information Together"
766-6793
21 April '03

Carolyn Rawles-Heiser  
Director, Corvallis Public Library  
645 NW Monroe Ave.  
Corvallis OR 97330

Dear Carolyn--

Needless to say, you were mightily missed at the doings, last week. I hope it is some emotional recompense, however, that your staff could step in so ably. They were all terrific. Carol and I thought all the events were superbly handled, and we congratulate you and the rest of the library and the community on kicking off the “community read” notion so well. We wish you equal luck in the future.

Enclosed are my expenses: $90.10 for meals during our trip, and whatever standard mileage you can come up with for our total of 574 miles, Seattle to Corvallis and back.

We’ll hope to cross paths with you in Corvallis yet. The book signing after my OSU talk went so well, and the audience was so big that night, that Cheryl Maze and I are agreed that I should come to the OSU bookstore on my tour this fall if at all possible. So, maybe then.

Until whenever, thanks again.
Mary, hi--

Good to hear from you. The happy emanations from our couple of days in Corvallis are still perking in the two of us, too. The Boulder event also went well enough, but without Oregonian pizazz—they didn’t manage to get any high school kids in on the action, for instance. Next on the route for this “House of Sky” road tour will be Missoula, where I’m to talk to high school teachers involved in “heritage” projects. I had a fine letter of appreciation from Penny Fulton, along with a set of the literary journal her students publish in, so the Montana bunch will get some show-and-tell from me based on how you library folks and Penny went about things.

As to the “best of” readings lists you asked about: I’m enclosing them, results of a pair of polls the savvy book editor of the San Francisco Chronicle, David Kipen, did when the New York-run lists of best books of the twentieth century barely looked west of the Hudson River. The summary phrase, which you’re welcome to, that I’ve been using in my vita is “in the century’s-end San Francisco Chronicle polls to name the best Western novels and works of non-fiction, he is the only living writer with books in the top dozen of both lists: English Creek in fiction and This House of Sky in non-fiction.”

Am hoping we or at least I will get back to Corvallis on this autumn’s bookstore tour for my new book; I’m about to call Cheryl Maze and get her notions of when to try for, then will try to tack it into the schedule with my publisher. Will hope to cross paths with all of you then. In the meantime, suppose you could nudge Carolyn on my not overwhelming but still significant expenses check? I imagine she’s had a ferocious amount of catching up to do since she got back, but Carol and I start traveling ourselves in mid-June and I’d like to close the financial books before then. Until we catch up with you to say so in person again, we really had a superb time in Corvallis and indebted to you all for making it happen.

Sincerely,
Dear Ivan and Carol,  

May 17, 2003

Hello from Corvallis. This is a belated note to say thanks again for giving us such a wonderful “One County One Book” program. We continue to receive thanks from the community for offering such a fine event. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

I’ve received several e-mails from individuals who attended the brown bag for writers. They encouraged me to include a spot just for writers in the next program. Your talk at LaSells was excellent. I’ve had many people comment on how much they enjoyed it. At breakfast, we all felt that we were given such a treat to hear part of your upcoming novel. And, we are still amazed at how many high school students showed up to hear you talk. The art show just went down and I was sad to see it go. That work kept your presence alive.

You were a perfect choice for our first event. Everyone is asking us about the next one already, but Carolyn and I are still catching our breath. Benton County has asked us to partner with them for a reading program based on the book Pay It Forward by Catherine Ryan Hyde for this Fall, but it won’t be quite the same thing.

I hope your time in Boulder was just as successful.

Carolyn may have already asked you this, but somewhere along the line we heard about your name being on two different reading lists of the best authors who were writing about the west. What lists were those? I’d like to share them with our library patrons if possible.

And, I have a quick story to share with you. I remember you talking about how excited you were to find your old diary that you kept in high school, only to find that it was full of football scores. I was talking to someone recently and she found her diary from high school and was terribly let down to find that the main event she had recorded was how many rows she had knitted each day! Your point to students about getting thoughts and events down now is well taken.

I hope your anniversary week-end at the beach was a good one. I have some nice digital photos of you, including one taken by Carol. These will help me remember a very special time. Thanks again for coming to Corvallis.

Best wishes,

Mary Finnegan
December 19, 2002

Ivan Doig, PhD
17277 15th Avenue NW
Seattle, WA  98177-3846

Dear Ivan:

The Literary Salon held by the University of Washington Libraries was by all accounts a glorious evening graced by stimulating conversation, good wine and favorite books. As a representative of the writers present, your remarks were both eloquent and pertinent. We heard no murmur of dissent from our special guests, writers and donors included, when you remarked, “Every book is a rare book.” We at the University Libraries believe that without reservation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for attending and lending your support to the mission of the University Libraries. As stewards for the future, we have an important assignment of preserving the literary legacy of the Pacific Northwest, and we hope that over time you will consider donating your original manuscripts and papers to our Manuscripts Collection, which focuses on the Pacific Northwest.

Please find enclosed the card of Carla Rickerson, Head, Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives, whom I briefly introduced during the evening. Feel free to contact her should you have any questions about such unique and important contributions.

Thank you again for sharing a memorable evening of appreciation for our donors. May I wish you and your family a happy and festive holiday season!

Sincerely,

Betsy

Lizabeth (Betsy) Wilson
Director of University Libraries

P.S. Thanks for the copy of your grand remarks. They are just as exquisite reading them as hearing them!
Free at last, at least enough to finally answer your wonderfully welcome note of late last summer, Mary. Damn it, yeah, we miss you guys, too. Let’s try to do better in getting together; we’ll see if we can get in the habit of checking with you when we wander through Portland, on the chance that you’ll be swanning in your townhouse there. And you should feel free to pop in here whenever you’re hauling horses through Seattle.

Appreciated the movie clippings you sent, Mary. *The Sea Runners* actually is the one book of mine that putative movie guys have bought the rights to—so in 1988! The buyers were a small outfit, I don’t know that they’ve ever made a movie, and they show no signs of making this one. But Carol and I have had the money snugly in the bank. There was one other set of negotiations, for *This House of Sky*. Fred probably remembers Marshall Nelson of the Davis Wright law firm, who’s been our longtime lawyer and just about a lifelong friend as well. Marshall and I wrestled for weeks with the Beverly Hills law firm representing a third-rank director/producer who claimed to “love” *Sky*. The nub of the deadlock was that the pair of Beverly Hills lawyers insisted on a clause giving the director full artistic control and simultaneously on another clause by which I would indemnify the director against any lawsuits brought against the film. The Beverly Hills slickers played “good cop/bad cop” so blatantly that they must have thought Marshall and I just fell off the turnip truck; when the “bad” lawyer overturned weeks of negotiation on those two clauses we couldn’t swallow and insisted on both of them, the “good” lawyer—a woman—cried on the phone when she pleaded with us to accept them! It reached the point where I said, “Marshall, please get them on the phone together and tell them to go to hell.” Thus endeth any would-be movie deals in recent times, but who knows what’s ahead.

I’d like to report that we’ll come in the direction of Bend when I’m on the bookstore trail late next fall, but I don’t think it’s likely, with the book’s publication date so late in the year. We are intending to be at the Oregon Historical Society’s annual authors’ bash, though, so put that on your calendar if you come Xmas-shopping in Portland.

Hey, we went to Ashland for some Shakespeare, and that old moose of a hotel is up and running! Although not running full spate with guests, so far as we could see in through the windows. (This was September.) The plays were terrific, and so was the backstage tour, if you’ve never done that.

And that’s about the news from here, I guess. The world is going to hell so self-evidently I don’t see that it needs any reiterating from me. Here in our own molecule of universe all is well. I’m laying back to see how things eventuate with the book, not to mention catching my breath after the three-year marathon of writing it. Carol and I are both dandy; we have a rather pleasant spring coming with both Corvallis and Boulder, Colorado, doing books of mine as “community reads,” in April and some other tinkering around the West throughout the year. As we learned to say on a New Zealand reading tour years ago, we hope both of you are well and to the fore.
Dear Evan and Carol,

August 6, 2002

I have been thinking about you two a lot lately and miss you! Life in Bend is good although we bought a townhome in Portland to "hedge our bet" — Fred is practicing more law again since I have not returned to a big job since Broken Top. I have a few select clients for consulting and that's it. The "scene" in business these days is not very appealing.

I’ve gone off several Boars' Boards of Directors, now cherish my private, friends and free time. enclosed is an article that I found interesting. I’ve always thought Sea Rurmers would make a good film (as well as many of the other books.) But with Nat'l Geo's Passion and Belief in science and history (see K-19 Widowmaker) Seal Runners could be a fit. I know Jean Auel a bit. She got very upset with the films of her books but Nat'l Geo is so reputable and then a Peanuts comic for fun also.

Had a very difficult summer last year — my beautiful mare died in a barn fire, Fred was hospitalized — critical care — with a ruptured appendix and I produced (for one year) the Cascade Festival of Magic — which was badly in debt. We put it straight.

Great success artistically and financially but at a big personal toll...
So I'm spoiling myself this summer. Have a new horse (Härmák - Hungarian Warmblood - very mysterious guy - enigmatic - & can really jump) Heading for Canada 8/12-26 for final horse shows in BC. Then we'll buckle down this fall to earn our keep.

We would love to hear your news. 

"The Echo of a Traveller's Song"

The Friends of the Performing Arts Center have accepted a Mural by Portland artist Henk Pander on behalf of the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. Painted on the outer east 55' x 86' wall of "the Schnitz", the mural, commissioned and donated by The Heathman Hotel was completed in the Autumn of 1994.

Celebrating a decade together:

The Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, Oregon Symphony within "the Schnitz" and The Heathman Hotel.
Oct 18, 2002

Ivan,

We received this request. I have asked several old timers from Valier and Jack Skuye from Dupuyer. Jack thought I should forward it on to you so if you see fit you can answer it. I will send a note to Mr. Davin telling him that I didn't find any information on the Kelly family.

Harvest is real late this year. Spring planting was late because of the 10" of snow the end of May. It was either very hot or very cool so the plants grew slowly. When it was time to harvest the showers came every few days. The grain would just get dry enough & another shower would appear. It was a bad year for barley as most of the melting splattered in the heads. Enough of our woes.

Our newly established book club read 'This House of Sky' and everyone seemed to enjoy it. There was a good discussion.

Valier is struggling as you are probably aware. The Co-op just closed its doors. The two bars on Main Street are long closed & there are only 3 children in Kindergarten. The Panther's Cafe is still going strong. The road west of Valier is being redone with a new bridge over Dupuyer Creek. They just started on it late this summer. The road east of town is very nice now.

Hope all is going well with you. We see your picture in the paper every once in a while.

Sincerely,

Duane Shell
Dear Duane--

Sorry it's taken me a while to respond to your letter about the "Cast-Iron Kelly" inquiry, but I've been finishing up my next book, and nothing else gets done.

And actually I'm no help whatsoever. The Kelly name doesn't ring a bell with me, and I'm pretty sure I didn't change any names of ranch folk in the Dupuyer area in THIS HOUSE OF SKY. Worse yet, I've signed thousands of books, many with inscription phrases requested by people, and the one the letter cites doesn't nudge my memory at all. I think the gentleman who wrote you has a book annotated by someone who thought I was disguising a name when I wasn't--could the annotator have thought John McTaggart was actually Cast-Iron Kelly, I wonder? the only possibility I can think of--and I don't think there's any way of sorting it out for him. Feel free to pass along this portion of the letter to him if you'd like.

As to Valier and how things go in life, I've coincidentally been sorting some materials which included file cards from my interview with Jim's dad, all those years ago. What a help he was, and for that matter, what a good memory I have of the summer I worked for the Shebles. Last summer Carol and I got as far as Dupuyer and the Meriwether Lewis-Blackfeet fight site on the Two Medicine, but alas, not over to Valier. We did visit Wayne and Genise Arnst on that trip, so there was considerable Valier talk. Thanks for being in touch, and I hope you and yours are doing well.

Best wishes,
To Whom It May Concern,

I recently purchased a used book that has numerous footnotes written by the original owner. The woman refers to her father as "cast-iron" Kelly, and her upbringing on the Diamond Spring Ranch. This family lived in Valier, and later in Dupuyer.

The book in question is Ivan Doig's "This House of Sky." I got the impression from the many footnotes that Doig referred to members of this woman's family, without actually mentioning them by name. Who was "cast-iron" Kelly? A rancher? A ranch-hand? Is the Kelly family prominent in Pondera Co.? If so, does the family go back to frontier days in Montana? The book was a birthday gift Michael "the dancer," as Doig inscribed it. What this refers to, I do not know.

I have been in contact with the Montana Historical Society, too. But I think that whatever you can add to my quest for information will be a fine supplement. Thank you very much for your assistance and attention.

Sincerely,

Mr. Marc Slavin
1324 East Cotati Ave, #202
Rohnert Park, Ca 94928
July 16, 2002

Mr. Ivan Doig
17277 15th Ave. NW
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Ivan:

It was great to see you and Carol some time ago – what a delightful dinner you both hosted. Your home is beautiful and the views spectacular. As discussed that evening, I have asked Linda Bierds to write a poem for the Suzzallo rededication scheduled for November 14, 2002. I’m delighted to report she has agreed! It will be elegant and pertinent to the occasion. I noted your quote about her in the Seattle Times article a few weeks ago.

Congratulations on receiving the 2002 Achievement Award from the Pacific Northwest Writers Association. Readers everywhere delight in your wonderful accomplishments.

As an active writer, you are well versed in the services and resources the University Libraries makes available, and I ask your consideration of joining a group of library advocates. Despite the Libraries’ current leadership in many fields, it will fall behind if it does not evolve to meet the varied needs of the University community and all of the people it serves. Our constituencies and their expectations are changing. To meet these needs, we are seeking input from a select group called the “Council of Advocates.” I think you would be a wonderful addition to this group, which so far includes Faye Allen, Janet Schraegle Jones, Jack Faris and Willem Scholten.

The purpose of the Council is to develop a timeline and strategy for established funding priorities. I will be an active participant in the Council, and meetings will be held on an as needed basis. The University Libraries has several significant projects planned over the next few years, including a proposed Fine Arts Library.

We hope you will consider filling a great need on behalf of the University Libraries, and would be most pleased to include you as a member of this very important and distinctive council. Your insight and guidance would be invaluable. As you are aware, no one graduates from a library, but no one can graduate without one.

Perhaps we can discuss over coffee or lunch? I will be in touch in the near future to get your feedback.

Sincerely,

Betsy

Lizabeth (Betsy) Wilson
Director of University Libraries

cc: Marjan Petty, Director of Development

452 Allen Library  Box 352900  Seattle, Washington 98195-2900  206-543-1760  FAX: 206-685-8727
Ivan Doig  
17277 - 15th Ave. NW  
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

I am pleased to inform you that the Board of Directors of the Pacific Northwest Writers Association has selected you to be the recipient of our 2002 PNWA Achievement Award. Now in our 47th year, with more than 1,000 members, PNWA has given this award annually “for distinguished professional achievement and for enhancing the stature of Northwest literature.” Recent past winners include Jack Olsen, Shawn Wong, Aaron Elkins and Charles Johnson.

It gives me pleasure to officially acknowledge, on behalf of the board, your considerable achievements. From your first book, you have given voice to a piece of the Northwest with clarity, with grace and with insight. Writing with equal facility in novel or memoir, you have demonstrated a mastery of both craft and art that must serve as a joy to readers and an inspiration to writers everywhere.

We hope you can be present to receive this award at our annual Awards Ceremony during the 2002 Summer Conference. The ceremony will take place Friday, July 12, 7 p.m., at the Hilton Seattle Airport & Conference Center. You are welcome to attend the conference that day and you and a guest are invited to join us for dinner at 5 p.m., prior to the ceremony. You will receive specifics about the arrangements in late June. If you have questions or concerns, please do call me at (206) 524-7374, or e-mail asamp98768@aol.com.

I look forward to hearing from you that you are able to attend the ceremony.

Sincerely,

Albert L. Sampson  
President

[Signature]
30 July 2002

Albert L. Sampson  
Past President  
Pacific Northwest Writers Association  
PO Box 2016  
Edmonds WA 98020-9516

Dear Al--

Please convey to the current PNWA administration how pleased I was to receive the Achievement Award; you’re all pros at the performing of the ceremony, and I particularly thank you and Pete for your comments.

Sincerely,
February 25, 2002

Mr. Ivan Doig
17277 15th Ave, NW
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Ivan Doig:

I am terribly late in acknowledging your kind reply (November 1) to my “out of the blue” letter to you of last summer about my family sheep ranch letters/records from the 1930s. You didn’t have to take the time to do so but did, and I appreciate it very much.

I will seriously follow your advice to ultimately archive the collection with one of your suggested choices. I probably should be frank with myself and throw in the towel about writing a book/story from them, but I’m not quite to that point yet.

My wife and I have read about five of your books, have one to go, and look forward to more. With my working for the Bureau of Land Management for almost 30 years I have seen the landscapes and met a few rancher characters, so I particularly identify with and enjoyed your trilogy and Land of Sky. I didn’t think to relate to you in my previous letter the following small story about how much we have enjoyed your writing. My wife and I married 7 years ago and decided on a Montana outfitted pack trip for our honeymoon. As we had just read a couple of your books, and were driving the car, I suggested that we include White Sulfur Springs in the wandering trip. When we arrived in your little town and settled into the motel with the natural hot spring swimming pool (the lady manager said you and her daughter - niece? -were in school together), we headed to the Stockman’s to salute your health. I was so taken with your description of your being there as a young boy with your dad - and especially the attraction of the girly calendar - that I just had to take see it. I am sure that our modern-day experience that August night was pretty tame and contrasts sharply with what it was like when you were young.

I thank you for your taking the career path that you did and enriching my life...and I will place your letter inside one of my (your) books in my library!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Richard E. Crowe
2666 Jessica Rd
Riverside, CA 92506
January 13

Dear Ivan:

Thanks for the kind words about the Pinchot Diaries. It was a long, and at times tedious, project, but it is a good thing that the diaries are now accessible. The roster of names at the back about did me in; Pinchot’s habit of listing everyone in the room was basically a good thing to do, but many of them left a faint historical trail.

I’ve already been scooped on a full biography, as Char Miller’s very-long-in-the-works biography was due out from Island Press in December. I don’t know if it is out yet. Char and I don’t see eye-to-eye on just who the Man really was, so I’ll let history judge our interpretations.

I am deeply involved in editing—aka cutting by 75 percent—the Jack Ward Thomas journals. Lots of good stuff; he is a very good writer and captures the dark side of presidential politics [ala Al Gore] very well. The moral will probably turn out to be: Never appoint a bench scientist as a bureau chief—they will constantly point to truth and justice, instead of reelection priorities. Island Press has agreed to consider it, and I aim to have a draft in their hands by late spring.

Gail and I had a worthwhile time on camera safari in Zimbabwe/Botswana (not great, but worthwhile). We learned about ourselves that after we have seen 100 elephants, 500 zebras, 99 giraffes, and on down a very long list of critters, we begin to lose interest. So, three days instead of twenty would have been enough. Have we lost touch with the land, or what?

Best to Carol.