



MEDIA RELEASE

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8th Annual George Ryga Award Shortlist Announced

There's no shortage of talented writers who are grappling with the social issues of the day, as the judges for the eighth annual George Ryga Award for Social Awareness in B.C. writing and publishing have learned.

The George Ryga Centre, BC BookWorld, CBC Radio One and Okanagan College have announced the shortlist for this year's George Ryga Award for Social Awareness in BC writing and publishing. In alphabetical order (writer's last name), the top three books submitted for the award are: *God Of Missed Connections*, by Elizabeth Bachinsky (Nightwood Editions), *A Thousand Dreams*, by Larry Campbell, Neil Boyd & Lori Culbert (Greystone), and *Where The Blood Mixes*, by Kevin Loring (Talonbooks).

"Once again, we received a large field of well-written submissions this year," observed Okanagan College's John Lent, who is among the readers assessing the submissions. The other readers are Reg Kienast, Jane Maskell, Ken Smedley and Liz Wallberg. "It's maybe a sign of these times that this award draws such strength from the writing community, so many strong responses. If anyone ever thought writers weren't engaging in the issues of our times, the books submitted for this award would convince them otherwise. In the end, these three books – a piece of non-fiction, a book of poems and a play – were the books that kept insisting themselves forward."

This year's Ryga Award's final judge will be distinguished poet, play-write and journalist, Greg Simison, of Moose Jaw.

Simison has published three books of poetry, the last called *What The Wound Remembers*, hundreds of newspaper columns, and his work has appeared in numerous North American literary journals and periodicals. Currently, Simison has just completed another volume of poetry and a volume of humorous columns from his career as a journalist.

This year's winner will be announced in the Centre Stage Theatre in Summerland at a gala celebration of The Ryga Award at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 6, the last day of George Ryga Week. Summerland is the home of The George Ryga House and Centre and is where Ryga wrote most of his plays and novels. Excerpts from Bachinsky, Campbell and Loring's works will be broadcast on CBC Radio One before the final winner is announced.

Last year's winner was Steven Galloway for his novel *The Cellist of Sarajevo*.

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