

Authors? Night Friday at the Orangeville Opera House

By Constance Scrafield

Once again, BookLore is bringing three fine authors to Orangeville tomorrow (Friday) evening for its annual Authors' Night. The evening is to be moderated by Nicola Ross, who is well-known in her own right for her books about Caledon, and will feature Giller Prize winner Elizabeth Hay with her new novel *His Whole Life*; Bruce McDougall, whose new book, *Every Minute is Suicide*, is published by The Porcupine's Quill; and from the U.S.A., the first international guest at the Authors' Night, Paula McLain with her latest novel *Circling the Sun*.

McLain's last novel *The Paris Wife* was about Hemingway's first wife. She researched it thoroughly through Hemingway's letters at the time. This new book tells about aviator Beryl Markham, from her youth living in Kenya to the time when she became the first woman to fly from Africa to the U.S. Both these novels take the 1920s for their staging, the particular time in the lives of these two strong women that clearly enthralled the author. Her preference is for writing historical fiction of actual people, keeping the facts accurate. As part of her tour of Canada with this publication, McLain wanted to include Orangeville and participation in this literary event.

Hay brings her latest work *His Whole Life*, a story of the 1970s at the time of the Quebec referendum, when the country feared losing la belle Provence. This is the backdrop behind the tale of a boy from his early days primarily at the family cottage in northern Ontario. The novel deals with the pains of separation within a family and a country, following the formative years of this young man's coming of age.

Born in Owen Sound and, at age 14, moving for a year with her family to London, England, Hay has travelled widely across this land, collecting experiences and characters that fill her books.

Although McDougall is a Toronto-based journalist, his latest book is published by local publisher The Porcupine's Quill. Following his first book, *The Last Hockey Game*, which was shortlisted for the Toronto Book Awards, McDougall's new book is actually a collection of linked short stories about a young man's life from youth into middle age after his father mysteriously disappears. As McDougall declared, "I write for people who like to read," doing so by bringing his skills, honed by writing for some of the most prestigious magazines in North America.

"We try to get people with interesting stories," observed Nancy Frater, owner of BookLore and host of the Authors' Night. "You want to champion your local author. Sometimes, we go after a writer, but in the case of Bruce McDougall, we were asked by Random House."

Bringing the evening to the Opera House makes for an excellent change of venue and includes, on the walls of the lobby upstairs, paintings of the juried artists whose work is hanging on display at the Alton Mill. This gives continuity with the Headwaters Arts Festival and the Authors' Night, as a whole.

This year's Authors' Night is tomorrow at the Opera House at 7 p.m. Tickets for the evening and reception afterwards may be purchased at BookLore at 519-942-3830 or at the Orangeville Town Hall Box Office at 519-942-3423.