

Bolton author publishing quartet of books

By **ALYSSA PARKHILL**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Local author Glenn Carley strikes again with a new and unique book coming out this spring.

Around this time last year, we sat down with Glenn to talk about his then new book, 'Good Enough from Here?', which told the story of a young man's journey and experiences posted in the High Arctic at Canadian Forces Station ALERT.

Glenn spent two summers working on an environmental clean-up crew on the northern tip of Ellesmere Island in the 1970s.

Additionally, he grew up alongside Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Trenton as his father worked as a chief inspection officer as a civilian, where Glenn was introduced at a young age to military culture and an understanding of the work the Canadian Armed Forces did. This experience provided the inspiration to publish the book.

Since then, Glenn has been working on not one, not two, not three, but four new books that are being published this year, with another one planned for 2022.

His newest book is titled 'Il Vagabondo: An Urban Opera.'

'Il Vagabondo' is an extension of Carley's first memoir, 'Polenta at Midnight' that was published back in 2007.

'It's a different book right from the start,' explained Carley. 'The form itself is like an opera. It has six acts, with three scenes in each act and there's a couple intermissions, there's curtain calls and I close with a glossary of surtitles 'spoken in the dialect of love' at the end. That's what I wanted to get across to the readership, that this is a different way to look at a story and literature. It's called a libretto.'

In the simplest of terms, a libretto is a text of work for musical theater. But, to Carley, Il Vagabondo is piece of art that allows readers to interact and participate with the book itself.

'You can read it in four ways. The traditional way would be to read it silently or out loud. But in an installation art opera, this is written so, if you want to, you could actually chant or sing this out loud,' either solo or in an ensemble of your friends and family, he said.

This is meant to be a community installation art, something where the reader can participate and interact with the story on their own or over Zoom and push the isolation of COVID back to the outer limits.

'Il Vagabondo' is a story about a young Canadian man who falls in love and marries into another culture, specifically an Italian Canadian family who immigrated from Castropignano, Italy in 1957. It tells the story of love, joy, the good parts and the bad, and is, in fact, a true story.

'My vision of the preferred future for Vagabondo, either a modern opera company or traditional opera company will perform it on stage, as well, either in parts or as a whole,' said Carley. 'I want to take this really, into a beautiful place. I envision it performed in small neighbourhoods with an open garage acting as neighbourhood stage.'

?Il Vagabondo? is titled as an urban opera. But what exactly is an urban opera?

?It has some elements that I think are really easy to identify. It's a true story, it's a story about cultures meetings; it's pan cultural. It really focuses on the simple dramas of family,? Carley said. ?All of life isn't always beautiful. There's drama, there's beauty, there's joy. An urban opera to me is just simply a beautiful way to talk about the simple growth and cycles of family.?

Carley's work doesn't stop there. Alongside Il Vagabondo: An Urban Opera, he has three other books planned to be released in 2021.

These include two children's books co-written with his son, Nick Carley, who also illustrated the books, The Long Story of Mount Pester, and the sequel, The Long Story of Mount Pootzah, which are aimed to come out in the fall. (Rock's Mills Press)

Titled Jimmy Crack Corn: a novel in C Minor is also set to be released in the fall this year. And to top it all off, we can look forward to his fifth new book coming out next year called ?In the Days Before APPS when Boys Roamed the Earth.?

?This is my time as a writer,? said Carley. ?You put in so much hard work and nothing happens for frankly months and years, and then all of a sudden everything's coming together. It's like climbing a mountain, like Everest. You get to the top and by the time you get there, you're so tired. You have little oxygen left, but you're so happy.?

He added, ?the advice for all of us writers is to be tenacious and just get out there and work hard at it and believe in your writing.

?Il Vagabondo: An Urban Opera? is set for an April 1 release and can be pre-ordered from the beloved local bookstore Forsters Book Garden.

It will also be available from Guernica Editions at guernicaeditions.com and on amazon.ca. Carley's arctic memoir, Good Enough From Here, is also available for order at Foster's Book Garden, amazon.ca and Rock's Mills Press.