

## EDITORIAL

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**W**E HAVE EDITED *BC Studies: The British Columbian Quarterly* through twenty-six issues over almost seven years. It is time to turn over the reins. We think we leave our successor, Bob McDonald, a healthy journal. Certainly, we leave him a considerable and pleasant opportunity. Editing a journal is a certain amount of work, but also, in this case, a creative opportunity coupled with a good deal of fun. No one looks very closely over our shoulders. No one has defined what this journal must be. A *BC Studies* editor, therefore, has a good deal of creative independence. The journal is always to be made afresh. And, as British Columbia is a fascinating and increasingly studied corner of the world, there is lots of scope for a lively editorial imagination. A more pleasant academic editorial opportunity is hard to imagine.

*BC Studies* has benefited, during our tenure, from the welcome assistance and sage advice of many persons. As co-editors one of our first tasks, and perhaps our most astute decision, was to hire Carlyn Craig to manage the journal on a day-to-day basis. Melva Dwyer and Gail Edwards have very efficiently kept the 'Bibliography of British Columbia' up-to-date, David Mattison created several excellent internet bibliographies, and Joanne Richardson has been a stalwart copyeditor. We have been supported by a fine editorial board and by many, many conscientious manuscript assessors. While the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the University of British Columbia provide the bulk of our financial support, the University of Victoria, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Northern British Columbia also help to make *BC Studies* possible. We thank you all.

*BC Studies* depends, most of all, on its authors and readers. Able scholars must want to publish in the journal. And they must want to do so, often in the face of disciplinary and institutional pressures to write for what are judged to be the 'major' journals. Fortunately, good manuscripts are submitted to *BC Studies* from young and senior scholars in many disciplines, a flow that validates and sustains the journal. A wide range of persons, including many of our subscribers, readily write book reviews and review essays.

There are several reasons for this commitment to *BC Studies*. The journal is situated where most of our contributors live, in the society

of which we are a part. For all our varied attachments to the world, many of us also have a commitment to this place, partly because the local is the immediate context of our lives, partly because it is where a raised voice is more likely to make a difference. If, for many of its citizens, British Columbia has been a blessed corner of the world, a place of opportunity and of relative social calm, for others it has not. It is not hard to imagine a better British Columbia, and the journal provides an outlet for a concerned commitment to the betterment of this place.

In more abstract terms, a regional journal such as *BC Studies* provides a point of academic intersection between placeless theorizing on the one hand and clogged empiricism on the other. Our post-modern times are skeptical of grand theorizing, while tending to conceive the local in ethereal terms detached from careful local scholarship. Such sophistry is not good enough. The pressing contemporary intellectual challenge is to bring both the local and the theoretical into rigorous focus. Because it is often easier to ground oneself in theory than in the complexities of place, and because authors and readers of international and national journals are often detached from place-specific knowledge, such journals are not promising sites for working out a more equivalent balance between general theory and local intricacies. Regional journals can do better – as long as they write from the local out into the world. This is one of the tantalizing opportunities that underlies the best of *BC Studies* and sustains interest in the journal.

We have attempted to offer a diverse fare appealing to our various constituencies, each of which we value highly. *BC Studies* goes to band offices, to hundreds of individual subscribers, and to some of the most eminent libraries in the world. In these circumstances, a measure of tolerance is required all round. We thank our readers: those of you who are not academics for tolerating the density (and sometimes the obscurity) of some of the writing, those of you who are academics for subscribing to the varied fare of an interdisciplinary journal.

We wish Bob McDonald exceedingly well, and will support him as we can. He will be much more supported by Carlyn Craig, the journal's managing editor. Above all, the editing of this journal requires the support of its authors and readers. Supply him with good manuscripts, and enjoy the published result. *BC Studies* seems to us a precious journal, the future of which is in all our hands.

*Jean Barman and Cole Harris*