

EDITORIAL

SOME SIX AND A HALF YEARS AGO, Bob McDonald took the helm of *BC Studies* with “pride and anxiety.” His predecessors, Jean Barman and Cole Harris, had acknowledged that editing the journal was “a certain amount of work” and identified the central challenge (and responsibility) of *BC Studies* as bringing “both the local and the theoretical into rigorous focus.” Taking responsibility for book reviews as well as articles, and attending to the everyday operations of the journal (with the invaluable assistance of successive managing editors Carlyn Craig and Leanne Coughlin), Bob worked hard and skilfully to ensure that *BC Studies* presented “serious work in a lively and accessible manner” and continued to appeal to readers from a variety of constituencies. He should be proud of the accomplishments of his editorship. Through some twenty-six issues of the journal (the three substantive papers in this issue were edited by Bob, and others in which he has had a hand will appear in future issues), Bob brought approximately a hundred articles and countless book reviews into print. Some of them were in theme issues, to which guest editors contributed their assistance, but Bob’s guiding influence was always an important element of the publication process. In sum, the articles and reviews in issues 134 to 159 offer a rich feast of interesting and accessible scholarship focused on British Columbia.

Theme issues have ranged across Aboriginal culture, Native geographies, theatre, domestic spaces, aquaculture, being young, Pacific Canada, the emergent past, and the environment. And others in which Bob has been involved are forthcoming. Articles bring readers to think about “Writing Here,” twentieth-century representations of Kelowna, “Situating Vancouver Island in the British World,” and the challenges facing provincial businesswomen advised to “Think Like a Man and Act Like a Lady.” All of this speaks to the diversity and vitality of scholarship in and on British Columbia early in the twenty-first century. Contributors to the journal through this period include well-established scholars with national and international reputations, newly minted PhDs, students in graduate programs, public historians, and private scholars; most but by no means all are BC residents or have spent extended periods of time here – among the exceptions are contributors from Alberta, Australia, Finland, and Ontario. Together, these twenty-six issues offer a wonderful encapsulation of the mul-

tifaceted, multidisciplinary focus of *BC Studies* and demonstrate the journal's capacity to engage local and global, provincial and national, and empirical and theoretical interests and perspectives.

Yet *BC Studies* and hundreds of other publications devoted to scholarly communication now exist in "interesting times." The digital revolution has wrought major changes on many facets of academic practice. It has transformed libraries into learning centres and fostered a form of oligopoly as control over more and more journals has been concentrated in the hands of a few major publishing companies (or their availability has been shaped by "aggregator services" such as Ingenta), and it has raised crucial questions about intellectual property rights and copyright. At the same time, and in response to some of these developments, some scholarly societies and the granting councils that support Canadian academic research as well as many journals in this country have urged scholars and editors to provide open (i.e., digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright/licensing restrictions) access to research results. By one recent count, there are over 3,650 free, full-text, quality-controlled scientific and scholarly journals currently available to all with internet access. And at least one Canadian university press (Athabasca) has begun to publish entire monographs on an open-access basis. In the US, the Faculty of Arts and Science at Harvard University voted, in 2008, to place scholarly articles produced by its members in an open-access repository, thus making them available worldwide free of charge, and the US National Library of Medicine operates PubMed central as an open-access repository for full-text biomedical literature. In this rapidly changing publishing environment, it is incumbent upon the editors of journals such as *BC Studies* to explore the potential benefits and possible perils of adapting to the new order of things by adopting an end-to-end electronic and online journal management system and/or by making the contents of the journal available through a publicly accessible repository. Neither seamless nor costless, changes such as these may be inescapable. At some point, the cost and value of continuing to publish hard copies of the journal will also need to be considered. All of these issues are on the agenda for 2008-09, during which I have agreed to serve as editor pro tem of *BC Studies*. Readers are invited to offer their thoughts on these matters by e-mailing us at info@bcstudies.com.

In the meantime, the work of carrying the journal into its fortieth year of publication lies ahead. We will continue to serve the important niche that earlier editors have cultivated, with the usual mix of scholarly articles, special issues, and lively book reviews. I am delighted to have

the assistance of Jean Wilson (who will handle book reviews and help in other ways) during this interesting and challenging year, and to encourage new initiatives that will, I hope, serve to make *BC Studies* an even livelier and more engaging journal. Beginning with this issue we inaugurate, with David Brownstein's piece on botanist John Davidson, what we foresee as an irregular series of photo essays on topics of broad interest to our readership. And we hope to encourage short, lively commentaries, in the vein of that provided by Dorothee Schreiber, on an ongoing basis. In addition, I am very pleased that Douglas Harris of the Faculty of Law at UBC has agreed to serve as an associate editor with specific responsibility for an occasional series of "case commentaries" that will seek to interpret, in relatively few words and clear prose, the significance for British Columbians of recent, important legal decisions pertaining to First Nations and other issues in the province. I look forward to your feedback on these plans and to other suggestions that you may have about the content and emphases of the journal. These may be sent to me at the above e-mail address.

Graeme Wynn