

TCR EDITORS / Series 1 & 2: Talking History

Six out of eight past and present editors of *The Capilano Review* met on December 9, 2006 to mark the beginning of the third series of the magazine, to reflect on its 35 years, and to page through past issues—100 in all.

Editors and editorial terms: Pierre Coupey (1972-1976), Bill Schermbrucker (1976-1982), Ann Rosenberg (1982-1985), Dorothy Jantzen (1985-1988), Pierre Coupey (1989-1991), Bob Sherrin (1991-1999), Ryan Knighton (1999-2001), Sharon Thesen (2001-2005), Jenny Penberthy (2005-).

Jenny: Thank you very much everyone for gathering here, especially Sharon and Bill for coming from afar. I think, Pierre, it's your job as founding editor to start us off, tell us what started you off: the originary impulse, please!

Pierre: I wish I could say it was just a lark at first, though it turned out to be that. When I came to Cap College at Bill's invitation, Bill issued the challenge, "Make a contribution, man! Do something—you're not just here to teach." So Bill was the local kicker to get me going, but I'd already done *The Georgia Straight* and *The Western Gate*, and I was interested in publishing, period. At McGill we had two terrific publications: *Forge*, a literary magazine, and a monthly sheet called *The Page*, a little broadside—single person, single poem, two sides, and it generated a lot of interest. Both publications were important to me. At McGill I took creative writing workshops with Louis Dudek, who was a pioneer in Canadian publishing, with *CV2*, *Delta* and the *McGill Poetry Series*. That background gave me something to work from when Bill challenged me to do something. Well, let's do a magazine. And I suggested that to Bill, and he said, "Draw up a proposal." So I did and presented it to the English Department for approval, and then it was a question of getting the money, which is another story.

Bill: I believe \$500 was the total budget, and you also had to go and sell some advertising.

Pierre: Yes, it was all shoestring, \$250 from the Administration and \$250 from the Student Society, which was very generous of them at the time, and then I hit the bookstores, and sold advertising. Duthie Books and many other locals were supportive—it was amazing how many people were willing to support this crazy idea, even people from other areas of the College, like Bob Johnson.

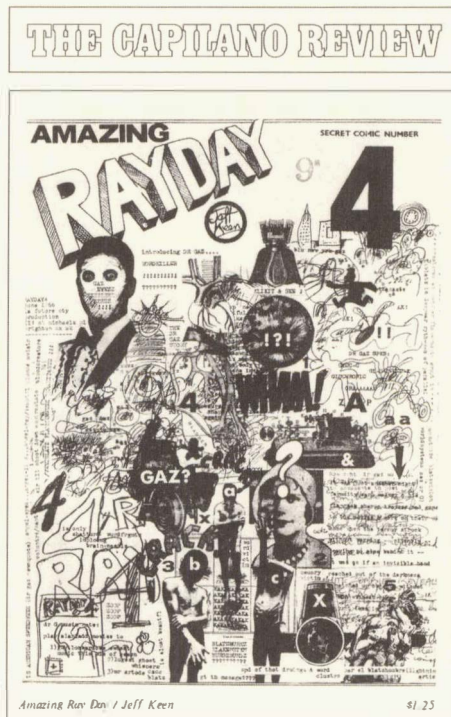
Jenny: Bob Johnson?

Pierre: Bob Johnson, yes, a very sweet man who taught in the Commercial Art Department at Cap College. He volunteered to do a complete design for *The Capilano Review*, so it was able to come out with a professional look and feel right from the beginning. And then Michael Morris of The Western Front gave me free access to his Image Bank where I found the “Amazing Ray Day” collage by the English artist Jeff Keen, and we thought that would make a great first cover. It matched my mood at the time... And it worked with our first visual art section, which was a selection of collage/concrete poetry works from a show put together by David UU.

Jenny: Did you have to use black and white?

Pierre: We couldn't afford colour, we couldn't afford much—maybe the whole budget was \$750, something like that. We even printed in-house at Capilano College to save money.

Jenny: That was Spring 1972?



Pierre: We started thinking about it in the fall of 1971.

Ryan: I was six months old! Sorry!

Pierre: And we never imagined it would last this long—never dreamed of that!

Jenny: Can you talk about the Russian contributors in the table of contents of the first issue? Those were cold war days...

Pierre: Oh yeah, Andrei Voznesensky and Evgenii Yevtushenko. Well, it was an interesting Spring—Voznesensky came to town to do some readings, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Robert Bly came up from the States to read with him at SFU, a reading I think I video and audio-taped. I was hanging out with Pat Lane at that time, and we went to all these wonderful parties with Voznesensky, Bly, Ferlinghetti and the KGB. We had a great time with the KGB. They were even more interesting than Voznesensky, tough guys but lots of fun. It seemed natural to ask Voznesensky for some work.

And then of course I just called people like Earl Birney and George Bowering, Phyllis Webb and John Newlove. And the visual poetry section was easy to pull together with the help of David UU and other people. At the time *The Capilano Review* started, the only other institutional magazines in town were *Prism International* and *Canadian Literature*, both from UBC, neither of which we wished to emulate. The other magazines available were *TISH*, *Talon*, and *Iron*, which I didn't know about at that time, and Bill Bissett's *blewointment*, and I can't remember if Gerry Gilbert was doing something then.

Bill: *BC Monthly*.

Pierre: *BC Monthly*, yeah. And neither *The Malahat Review* nor *Line* existed then, so the field was open for us, and none of those other magazines had the visual dimension I craved.

Jenny: There's a strong American presence in these early issues; far more so than the later generation of issues.

Bill: Pierre's a Montrealer, and in Montreal they think they're part of the States!

Pierre: I guess we were also influenced by Warren Tallman and the *TISH* group. This was the work I'd come to Vancouver to get close to, which was so different from the work in play in Montreal back then.

Sharon: I think *The Capilano Review* has always had a post-60s West Coast aesthetic. Especially the poetry. Maybe not so much the prose, but I think the Review happened inside the space of the *TISH* and the SFU English Department influence, also represented in *Boundary 2*. And there was the Buffalo connection, the San Francisco connection and the Black Mountain connection, and those poetics also had a kind of home at Coach House Press, hence Victor Coleman, Michael Ondaatje, bp Nichol, George Bowering, Fred Wah, Daphne Marlatt, Roy Kiyooka—a kind of meta-community of poetics at the time in the 70s that certainly was not represented in the prairie magazines and the Maritime and central Canadian magazines.

Pierre: Certainly not the Montreal magazines...

Sharon: ... and I think that trajectory and its tributaries has wound through all of our editorships, at least as far as the poetry goes, although overall we've published a wide range of poetics.

Pierre: We were bringing all those people in for readings—Margaret Atwood, bp Nichol, Michael Ondaatje, and *The Western Front* was doing that too, so there was a critical mass of events, especially in 1974, between what was happening here at Cap College and *The Western Front*. The presence of the Review at the College attracted alive and alert students, and many of them became the audience for readings in the rest of the city. It was really interesting that whenever you went to a reading somewhere else, especially at the Western Front, a large part of the audience was Cap College students.

Sharon: And then Daphne Marlatt became poetry editor, and then I became poetry editor, so for a while many of the people associated with the Vancouver poetry scene—Daphne, Gladys to some extent, yourself, people like David Phillips and John Pass—were either teaching here or were associated in some way with the Review. I think the Review has functioned as a sort of independent writing and arts institution within the larger community. The

writers-in-residence, the lecture series, the Writing Practices Program, the public readings sponsored by the Review such as the Robin Blaser and Robert Creeley reading two years ago, the festschrifts such as the one for bill bissett, and the special issues have all helped shape—and in some ways critique—the Vancouver writing and arts scene.

Jenny: What about the art—the visual sections? What was their relation to the poetry?

Pierre: Looking back at the first five issues I can see I must have been a bit of a magpie, grabbing what was at hand, especially with the student photography. I think I was looking for work that would reproduce well in black and white since we couldn't do colour initially, and I was looking for work that would be provocative as well as beautiful. I was interested in people who were trying out new things, people like Eric Metcalfe, aka Dr. Brute, Brian Fisher, Christos Dikeakos, and Darcy Henderson. An eclectic range of artists, but all of them interested in something more than the merely representational.

Jenny: Pierre, you did the first ten issues, then Bill took over. Bill did 10 to 25.

Bill: Pierre started the magazine with a real rush of creativity and energy. There was a great sense of youthful vitality about the College and the magazine, and Pierre quickly produced three issues, and by the end of the third issue he began to be fettered by the College. The magazine was starting to make a splash and Pierre was operating with whatever help he could get, and by the end of the third issue it was determined that Pierre needed to have an editorial board to work with. Partly that came out of the political accident that it was International Women's Year, and I believe it was Issue #3 that had the nude front cover. The feminist and pro-feminist groups on campus went up the wall because there was this nude woman on the cover with her face tilted back so you couldn't see it. It became a scandal. Nobody noticed that the photographer who had shot this cover was a Cap College student who had also shot at least one beautiful facial portrait of his girlfriend inside the magazine.

Jenny: Ah, but Pierre didn't put that on the cover.

Pierre: No, I didn't—and I enjoyed the scandal. I always wanted the magazine to be challenging and controversial. And in the end, the issue tested the resilience and tolerance within the College. *The Capilano Review* survived. I remember when the first issue came out, Tony Emery, who was then the Acting Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery, asked me if I was trying to get fired! Well. I wasn't trying to go that far with either cover, but *TCR* covers have almost always been compelling.

Bill: Anyway, an editorial board was formed, and for the rest of his period as editor, Pierre worked with the board which was sometimes easy and sometimes difficult. By the time we had gone through the fiasco of issue 8/9, which was supposed to be the special Quebec issue, and which ended in telegrams and anger...

Pierre: The Quebec issue wasn't going to be a double issue...

Bill: When I took over the editorship, I brought some creativity to it, I think, but not nearly the kind of stuff Pierre and others had brought. I was more of a managing editor, distributing the work of editing to the departments. My interest was to work more as a collective. Daphne Marlatt found it difficult because, as she said, "You can't run a magazine by a committee," and an editorial board seemed to be like a committee. I had one bad experience of this collective during Pierre's editorship. We did the first fiction special, and we were looking for up-and-coming writers who needed a boost. We had published a couple of Jack Hodgins's stories, but he hadn't yet published a book. So the student fiction editor, Wendy Pickell, and I decided we wanted to do Jack Hodgins. So we went over to Lantzville, interviewed him at his house, and ended up getting from him the manuscript of his first book *Spit Delaney's Island*. We brought it back, and we were just so ecstatic about this, we were going to do it as a special issue of the Review. But we got voted down by the editorial board. And that was very hard to take. But you kind of live with these things and go on. In that issue, we did a special of Audrey Thomas which was very successful.

Very soon after my taking over the editorship, I did two things. One was I moved it to four issues a year, and that's why the issues suddenly become

much smaller. The other thing I did was to try to move into the political scene a bit more. We had a situation with the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association (which has now become the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association [most recently, *Magazines Canada*]), where the distribution manager was trying to get rid of the literary and art magazines because they were a pain in the ass to him. He wanted to put all his money into distributing *Saturday Night* and larger distribution magazines like that. So we teamed up with *Room of One's Own* and *Event Magazine*, and we effected a kind of coup of the Board of the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association. So John Levin from *Event*, Eleanor Wachtel of *Room of One's Own*, and myself from *The Capilano Review*—we got on the Board of the Publishers' Association and changed the direction that it went for a while. So that was a big thing.

The other thing that I think of during my editorship was that we involved students a great deal. All of the departments had student editors. I was just looking at the list of them today. On the editorial collective, on the faculty we had Sharon, we had Ann Rosenberg, Jean Clifford, Penny Connell, Bob Sherrin, Reid Gilbert, Dorothy Jantzen—later on we had others, but those were the ones in my time. On the students we had Wendy Pickell; Steve Harris—I believe he's now at the University of Alberta; Marc Cote, who is now publisher of Cormorant Books; Janice Harris, who was the recent mayor of North Vancouver; Janet Cotgrave, I don't know what's happened to her; Deanna Leavis, who's gone on to teach creative writing and other things; Lois Redman, who became the curator of the Charles H. Scott Gallery—if I'm right, Pierre?

Pierre: Not curator, but she was working there.

Bill: Aaron Steele, I don't know what happened to him; Jim MacDonald, Stuart Morris, Pauline Nestor, who now teaches in a community college down in the States; Andrea Kumard; Diane Relke who worked as managing editor or—what did we call them in those days? Editorial Assistant or something like that—and who is now a full professor and founder of the Department of Women and Gender Studies at the University of Saskatchewan with a big string of publications to her credit; there was Joanne Foster, Susan Benton,

Christine Walford, Leslie Fenton, Michael O'Shea, Claire Guffey—I mean these people formed a kind of co-op pool.

Pierre: We also had student editors when the editorial board came into place after issue 3, a faculty editor and a student editor for each genre. That editorial board structure, even though it was more or less imposed upon me, was wonderful. We had a lot of fun. And learned so much about writing and editing. Those board meetings were always lively.

Bill: It's interesting that when Don Winkler was making the NFB film of Earl Birney's life, he asked Birney where he would like to be photographed doing the reading for the end of the film, and Birney had had Pierre as a student, and he knew about Pierre and *The Cap Review*, and he gave an answer which was something like "I'd like to be filmed in an important cultural energy centre in Canada—Capilano College." And so he was filmed here. That was a tribute, I think, to Pierre's contribution and to *The Capilano Review*

I found in my own contribution to the Review, both when I was editor and at other times, what interested me the most was doing interviews. I think those interviews are very interesting in terms of information within the cultural community. Ann Rosenberg, in her interviews, stripped out all the extraneous material, and you just got an artist's statement boiled down out of the interview. In some of the early poetry interviews every um and ah and snuffle were included. I was particularly interested, looking through the magazine last night, in the interviews with Kim Echlin and Joan McLeod, Cathy Ford, Brenda Riches, Audrey Thomas and Brian Fawcett—you remember that one [to Sharon]. That was an interesting dynamic. Then it came time for me to depart, and Ann Rosenberg took over.

Jenny: Any recollections of Ann's term?

Pierre: Ann shifted the focus more to visual art, as one would expect, and she developed special issues, something Bill had done as well, but focusing on individual talents like Arthur Erickson or Gathie Falk. Those issues are some of the most memorable *The Capilano Review* has done. They offer a critical look at a particular individual, something the cultural tradition in Canada lacks, especially when it comes to visual art. We don't have many monographs on

individual artists. *The Capilano Review* has made a bit of a contribution towards that.

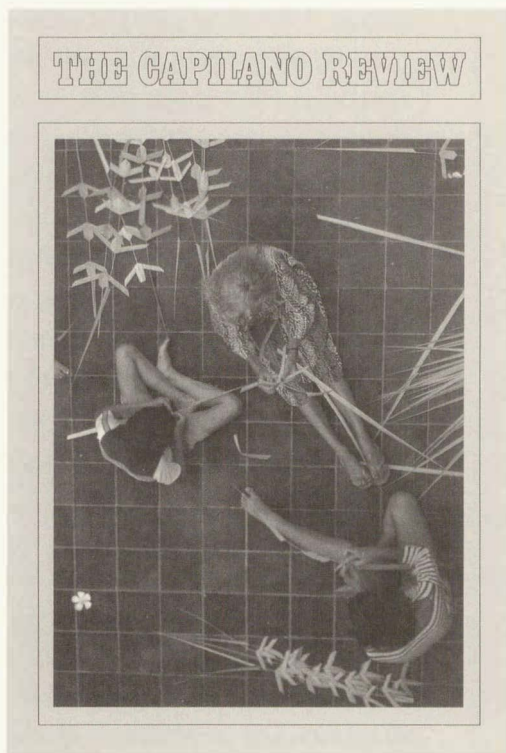
Jenny: Sharon, there was a special issue that you did under Bill's editorship—the Ondaatje and Marlatt...

Pierre: ... that was beautiful...

Sharon: I remember having dinner with Daphne and Michael at an African curry place in Gastown and talking about the issue. Daphne had a little studio nearby, and so we went up there and we continued talking about the manuscripts and Michael was—I think he'd given me the manuscript and I'd marked it up a bit—it seems implausible now. I wrote a little introduction to that issue, and of course Michael's piece was later republished as *Running in the Family*.

Jenny: There's a great cover for that issue as well.

Sharon: That was a photograph of Kim Ondaatje at Michael's family home in Sri Lanka—weaving palm fronds. And of course Daphne's gorgeous piece, *In the Month of Hungry Ghosts*, began a new phase in her writing, didn't it, when she started moving into those novels and longer narratives about the childhood in Malaysia. So the Asian connection between Daphne and Michael, or the one that they shared, was evident in this book, and I think that's something really quite West Coast—



connected with the West Coast geographically and aesthetically. That was a great issue.

Jenny: There are so many precious issues on the shelves of the TCR office.

Bill: That was 16/17, one of the best issues that *The Cap Review* ever did. I've used it many times as a text book in literature courses. Sharon got this together. We had asked Michael for some stuff. We wanted to do a special on him. We held a special editorial meeting to meet with him. He showed up, had the scones, said he didn't have anything for us, and left. And I remember this student editor, Jim MacDonald, just about going up the wall. A few months later Sharon reported that she had now got the material for this issue. It's incredibly lovely because what you have is these two people—I'm just paraphrasing Sharon's introduction—you have these two artists going back to their countries of birth.

And I feel very connected to it because the Review was out of money, producing this, and so my son David and I laid it out, and as we were laying it out we were getting directives from Michael. He wanted, for example, the two mangoes, or papayas or whatever they were, he wanted those there as a kind of prelude to the picture of his two parents. The only picture he's ever found of his parents together. Then I got an emergency postcard from Michael in Sri Lanka saying, "No, no, not egg yolk, egg white!" He'd used the wrong part of the egg in describing plaster-making. And then the slide of the cover picture disintegrated, and we didn't have PhotoShop in those days. We tried to patch it together, but we couldn't quite get rid of a little nick in the slide here with the light showing through. I think it was Michael or Sharon who said "Nobody will ever notice it—they'll think it's a palm frond."

Jenny: Then there's Dorothy's term as editor which started with issue #34.

Bill: I think what Dorothy contributed to the magazine more than anything else was a kind of straightening-out of the books and the regularization after it had got into some disarray. She asked me at the time if I thought she could be the editor since she didn't know writers, and I said that my experience had been that you left it to the departmental editors to find the material, and

your work was really that of running the magazine, and I think she did that well.

Jenny: Dorothy's role with the review extended far beyond her three-year term as editor. She was a presence on the masthead from series 1 issue 10 through series 2 issue 32. That's about 70 issues. Her contribution has been immense.

Sharon: This is #31, and Dorothy was involved with this issue—the sound poetry issue.

Jenny: Yes—31 had guest editors—Richard Truhlar and Stephen Smith—and then assistant editors, and Sharon, you were also one of the assistant editors.

Sharon: I was, and at the time I knew the fellow who took the photographs—of bp Nichol and Steve McCaffery—that were in the issue, a French photographer by the name of Denis Ruon. He took many photographs of poets in Vancouver, then came to this reading and photographed McCaffery and bp in a kind of low-key way. They are wonderful photographs. It was snowing out and a couple of the photos show Steve and bp horsing around in the parking lot afterward.

Jenny: So Dorothy did 34 through 49. Ann special-edited the Robson Square issue.

Bill: In Ann's case, I think she felt somewhat diffident to use her own taste as long as she was working with Pierre because she was so conscious of Pierre's strong sense of visual media. I think when Pierre wasn't editor any more, she felt free to experiment with all kinds of stuff, some of it great and some of it not so great. She brought an enormous amount of energy to the Review, and I wish she'd been here to be able to talk about it a little.

Jenny: And then Pierre, you came back on board.

Pierre: Yes, it looked like *The Capilano Review* might go under because there was no one else ready to take it on just then, so I agreed to come back as editor—not something I'd anticipated doing—but I wanted to keep the magazine going. I thought it was important that it continue. One thing we haven't spoken of yet is just how much support the magazine has had from Capilano College, and I think that's something exceptional and rare, especially for relatively small

institutions like this. Obviously we always wanted more support and still could use more, but by and large they have been there for the magazine, and have treated it fairly and well.

Sharon: Admirably hands off and arms length.

Pierre: Yes, they've never interfered with editorial content, ever. However, I knew I couldn't come back and do the magazine if we didn't have a managing editor.

Pierre: The magazine had grown, and obviously no one person could handle it all, both the business side and the editorial side. It would have been too much. I wasn't going to take it back on those terms. So the College did come through and funded the Managing Editor's position, and that made it possible for me to come back. It was also time to redesign the magazine.

Jenny: Talk about the redesign, Pierre.

Pierre: Redesign, as you now know, always produces some anxiety. I called up David Robinson, ex of Talonbooks, to ask him for some help, and consulted a few others, but basically realized I was going to be on my own on this one, given our timelines and budget. But then I realized the design was right under my nose, as it were. We had produced a number of posters to announce issues of the Review, so I took the new cover design from them. The rectangle, the framing line, was a motif in the Review from the beginning, so in the end it was an easy thing to put together. It fell into place. Then the inside of the magazine had to be simplified. The hairline outline on every page had become a restriction and a distraction so it had to go.

I also wanted the magazine to become substantial and I thought a two-year period would get it on a refreshed track, and started with a special issue on what I called West Coast Assemblage, featuring artists who worked with the basic idea of collage in an expanded way, people like Jerry Pethick and Al Neil and Carole Itter. So it was a pleasure to come back and give it another life in the hope some young blood in the department would take it on.

A magazine like this couldn't survive without the kind of institutional support we've had, but neither could it survive without the kind of English Department we have. This Department crawls with talent, and you couldn't

produce this magazine without that depth. So for me it was just a question of keeping it going until the next talent emerged, and the next talent did emerge, in the form of Bob Sherrin.

Bob: I took over from Pierre—I think he was eager to move on, and I think he might have asked me more than once. When I started to work here, Bill was editing. I think at various times I was part of the editorial group and I did some photographic work on different issues. So when I took over, I kind of followed in their footsteps in the sense that I felt I had a fair degree of *carte blanche* to do what I wanted to do. At that time the Review didn't have a lot of money and funding was going down from the other sources, so we were caught again in a financial bind. The first number of issues I did used black and white imagery, all photography, and because my visual background is essentially photographic, it was ultimately my choice to focus the visual aspect of the magazine on the photographic.

Pierre: I didn't leave you a great financial picture. I was quite extravagant. Both the Roy Kiyooka *Pacific Windows* issue, which took close to a year to develop, and the Robert Keziere photography issue were very expensive to produce.

Bob: That's just the way it was. We had to work with that. We also went through the process at that time—I think Pierre initiated it—of becoming a non-profit society so that we would eventually gain access to casino money.

Pierre: Yes, that was one of the main things that we did, and we didn't get the money until you took over. That was very helpful.

Bob: We weren't lucky in terms of the casinos until maybe the third one. We had a casino in Chinatown which coincided with the PNE and happened on a night when the casino at the PNE had to close because of a fire and everyone rushed down to Chinatown to spend their money! We walked away with a lot of money that night, saved by the fire bell! Once we started to get better revenue, you can see the change in the magazine in terms of colour becoming part of it, and we were able to be a bit more adventurous in that way.

A lot of the stuff I published was by submission. In some cases good writers submitted, writers I didn't know of before, for example Elizabeth Hay

and others, so we got lucky that way. I think that's also when the magazine awards started to become more accessible to small literary magazines. We regularly applied for those and managed to get a couple.

The other thing I liked about the period when I was involved is that we did some special issues. One on Robin Blaser, one on Bill Bissett—those were tied into public events which again made the Review seem to be more than just a magazine. Those were some of the more invigorating times when you had a sense that you could do those things because you had some revenue that came through the Gaming Commission. I thought we might have been heading into a golden period in terms of having money to do what we wanted to do.

Doing those special issues was a lot of fun, particularly when Bill was around. Bill Bissett was here as writer-in-residence, so he was a presence in the office, and I had the opportunity to get to know these writers better than I had known them before.

I wanted to try to change the look of the cover. I approached the board about renaming it just TCR, but they didn't go ahead with that at that time. It was Sharon who re-branded it!

I guess that's the other thing I liked about the Review on looking back at it. It has had the ability, because of the way it's evolved, to change with each editor and to respect those new boundaries and still have about it a sense of historical integrity. I met Ryan at a reading—Sharon was there—the Vancouver International Writers Festival. I think I had just read his poetry because that was a point when Ryan, Wayne Compton and others were submitting poetry to the Review. By chance and good fortune Ryan came to work here. I think it was very soon after he arrived here, maybe a year or two, I asked if Ryan would be interested, and I was delighted when he said he would be. And he took over.

Jenny: I think we're going to have to shuffle the chronology a bit, and put Sharon in now and go back to Ryan.

Sharon: It's a hard act to follow to come into the Review after all these years with so many editors, and when I came on board I thought, "Well, OK, we might as well do something..." I wanted to revamp the whole magazine and do

reviews and change the format and all of that. I was fortunately talked out of that because I could not have known how much work that would have been, to change the whole complexion of the magazine to that extent. Anyway, I took over from Ryan and he had set up a really good system with Carol Hamshaw managing the grant applications and organizing the mail-outs and the office. So we decided to put out a 9/11 issue. We put out a call for submissions and got them from all over the continent. The cover had a bright September blue sky background, with sculptural work by Carole Itter and Al Neil. We also ran an interview that Bob did with Esta Spalding that I still use in my creative writing classes. Then we did a couple of special issues. One featured Phyllis Webb as a painter rather than as a poet. Another was Gerry Shikatani's book *Three Gardens of Andalusia* in which he writes about the Moorish gardens as representations of harmony and friendship among the ideas and aesthetics of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The issue was partly a statement about the current mess and partly a vision of hope. Maybe my focus was a little more topical than Ryan's or Bob's had been.

Issues do tend to form themselves, just through your contacts, coincidences, accidents—people you know—one thing and another—an issue will begin to materialize. An odd thing happens, where it seems not only to materialize but to suggest a theme or an overarching idea.

Jenny: One thing that I think characterizes your term is the practice of hiring writers-in-residence whose interviews would be featured in the Review.

Sharon: Yes, though I must say I lost some sleep over the August Kleinzahler interview. As times have gone by, one's nervousness about issues—the degree to which they are “correct”—the degree to which they reflect a certain type of avant-gardism—the degree to which they may annoy certain schools of thought—is always a problem. I was very nervous about the Kleinzahler interview because it was so bold and provocative. Then I thought “OK, it's provocative.”

Ryan: You took off your flak jacket about six months later! Then it was fine.

Sharon: It was and it wasn't. There were a lot of pained glances. People were saying it gave them a bad feeling and so on, and that we couldn't expect certain kinds

of writers to contribute to the magazine after hearing them denounced by Kleinzahler!

Jenny: Another memorable moment in your tenure was the Robin Blaser-Robert Creeley reading at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre in September 2004. I think somebody in the audience was heard to say that Capilano College is the centre of literary culture in the city, particularly with respect to poetry, which is kind of interesting given what you were saying about the origin of the Review.

Pierre: I think that's another thing to emphasize about *The Capilano Review*. It has a connection to the "community"—it isn't an ivory tower publication. It isn't disembodied. It feeds from and draws from the community, and also returns energy to it. It shapes things that happen.

Ryan: That's why Jason and I did the double issue about 'zines, because they were the stepping stones that brought me to *The Capilano Review* to begin with. I remember when I was a student reading a lot of those 'zines and recognizing the poetics of *The Cap Review* through those 'zines, but not recognizing it in a lot of the other journals necessarily. There always was that sense even from the outside. You didn't have to be here to see that attachment to the community.

Jenny: Ryan, do you want to talk more about those two special issues—2.33 and 34?

Ryan: We actually started working on those two issues fairly early on, then it got put on the back burner for a while, and I needed help with it. That's why I brought in Jason LeHeup to guest-edit and co-edit for me. It was a lot of work finding the people, getting them to agree to resurrect the issues. The premise was that they would resurrect some of the 'zines they'd done years before and put to bed and to see what they would do now if they were given space to do a new issue. We wanted to be more of a theatre for a number of 'zines to come back for a moment and to say what they have to say about where they've been and what's happened and how things have changed. Jason had been a student at Cap too, and he had been doing a 'zine called *Judy*, which was his take-off on *Jeudi*, which was his take-off on *Thursday*, which was a take-off on *The Liar*

and... So there always was the sense of people picking up and translating and carrying on. He seemed to be the natural fit and he was interested in the idea of trying to figure out how to design multiple magazines inside one. It was our version of homage to the things that brought us to...

You know, *The Cap Review* is an institutional magazine but it never had an institutional feel to it. It somehow ducked that problem. I remember it was very close to that time that *The Vancouver Sun* had put out a very large issue in the Mix supplement about the ten most vaunted, which were the ten up-and-coming fiction writers in town, and they were all UBC MFA students. I remember seeing it and thinking it was a Gap ad! A head-to-toe photo of each with a small little bit of writing underneath. There was this big buzz going on about students coming out of creative writing programs and UBC being the epicenter for that kind of creativity. It was not the place that my friends and I, coming out of SFU, who had studied with Bowering and met George Stanley and others—that wasn't our sense of the world, and we had much more sense of what had happened at *The Cap Review* over the years. We had been reading that as undergraduate students, and saw that as the real energy source in the city. It was far less commercial than the way the UBC program was being presented. I bring this up only because that 'zine issue was, I think, speaking back to those roots that we recognized in *The Cap Review*, that it had always been attached to that kind of do-it-yourself production from the beginning. That's also why we started the Writing Practices program around that time, as a kind of counterpoint to continue more of the traditions of things that had been happening here, which wasn't necessarily as market-driven—commercial fiction and all that kind of stuff. There was a sense of trying to do other things with the forms that we had inherited. I think those things couldn't be separated—the 'zine issue and the writing practices program were born out of a similar spot. They had their pains, definitely.

Pierre: The changes in editorships give different and very personal tangents of connection to the community. So *The Capilano Review* has been able to cover this growing community from different angles and different generations.

Bob: I'm not sure—it might well be true of a lot of literary magazines, but all the editors of the Review are active writers, so therefore each of us has connec-

tions into our part of the community. Those relationships overlap with other editors, but you always find new people through them. That's also what I've enjoyed in looking at the Review—you discover the people whom a particular editor is aware of. It has that very personal quality.

Ryan: I only edited two years because my eyes were shifting at the time and by the end I couldn't deal with the slush pile any more. I was really relying on commissioning work as a survival strategy. I remember now looking back at the issues that they operate the same way as an O'Hara Lunch Poem. You can take a Lunch Poem and just go and do it. It's his autobiographical moment. When I looked back I always felt embarrassed that I didn't have a focus, but the focus was that it was just a manic autobiographical account of who I came across by having taken over that position and having to go and find work. People referred me to other people. That's how I met Lorna Brown at Artspeak, who curated a section for me for the visual arts. I met her through Michael Turner, who introduced me to Clint Burnham and all these other writers. There really is a kind of snake eating its tail when you're editing that way.

Bill: Sharon has to go. What's your last word?

Sharon: We could sit around all afternoon talking about readership alone, the way a readership is in a way invented and how you think people are reading but they're not—the philosophy of editing, the degree of control, to what degree do you nurture a piece as opposed to simply publishing it as is. Both Jenny and I, and I dread to think of the gender implications, tend to be nurturing editors. We work on pieces with the writer. Bill would say, "If it's not ready, it's not ready. It comes ready to be published or it doesn't."

Pierre: Bill also nurtured!

Sharon: The conversation with other magazines... the way it becomes territorial. There's *West Coast Line*, there's us, there's *Raddle Moon*. To what degree are the poetics we represent mine personally? What are we trying to prove? Literally, a magazine as an instance of proof about some aesthetic matter of the day. There's just so much. This is really a lovely conversation about the

history of the Review seen through its various editors. But there are other interesting things to talk about when you're talking about editing a magazine. Another time! I have to go! [Sharon leaves]

Pierre: Jenny, what interested you in taking over *The Capilano Review* as editor?

Jenny: It's a very appealing project. My background is not as a writer of fiction or poetry, despite the fact that I won the poetry contest a number of years ago! I come to it as a textual scholar—another species of editor—typically a very dry academic area, but I had the good fortune to have been drawn to a lively corner of American poetry and scholarship. Through my academic editing, I've made a lot of connections with writers and I was keen to be able to draw on those. A lot of my connections are American. I would love to do a special issue on the American-Canadian connection 40 years on.

Pierre: When Sharon took over as editor she wanted to focus more on public discourse. She wanted the magazine to become more thematically coherent, that each issue would take up some issue or idea. She brought a new energy to the magazine, and you're bringing that as well. You're working hard to redesign, to reshape, and to take the magazine in new directions.

Jenny: There were a number of poetry submissions around the time I took over that had very long lines, so redesign seemed to be a real priority. Colin Browne's 4-line stanzas had to be modified to 4 ½ lines of reduced size font! Colin was very intrigued by the results, very gracious about the altered poem! As for the cover redesign, a lot of credit goes to Pierre and Jan Westendorp for the successful new look. A key feature of *TCR* redesign is the new website. We were fortunate to secure the help of a student in the IDEA program at the college. James Thomson took on the website as his graduating project. We now have an archive of all the tables of contents of past issues, we have online subscription purchases, and a very appealing showcase for our new and upcoming issues. The Art & Technology issue that Andrew Klobucar has guest-edited has a parallel web existence in the form of an RSS feed.

As for ideas for issues, much as Sharon was saying, new ideas are constantly suggesting themselves. We have the upcoming Cap College issue that seemed the natural thing to do at the start of the third series: a celebration

of the writers and artists that the College and *TCR* have nurtured over the years. There'll be a collaborations issue, Tom Cone's idea. Tom is the *TCR* Writer-in-Residence in Feb-March 2007. There'll be a North Shore issue in collaboration with Presentation House.

When I took over from Sharon, I thought a few years in the position would be great, but already those few years are over, and I still have issues I'd like to see into print.

Time's running out on us here today.

Pierre: Perhaps in the next go around we should talk less about the history of *The Capilano Review* and more about the critical issues a magazine like this faces.

Jenny: We'll reconvene for the start of the fourth series...

Capilano College, December 9, 2006.

