

Outlook on Lifestyle

Heroine is 6 foot tall Caprice

By B.R. CORNWELL
Halton Hills Library

Caprice, a novel by George Bowering, Penguin Books Canada, 1987.

Caprice is a romp of a novel and George Bowering, one of the genuine CanLit luminaries, obviously had a wild and wacky time writing it. You could loosely describe it as a Canadian Western.

Bowering cleaves to all the best traditional elements of the western genre, but at the same time turns them on their heads. He inserts manically scatty dialogue between sly satire, finely honed poetic passages and purest Hollywood action and leaves you breathless and scrambling for footing among his shifting perspectives.

His heroine is six foot tall Caprice, a unique Fury, armed with a black bull whip, whose odyssey is the search for the desperado who murdered her



brother. Caprice is also a poet - as are several other people in Bowering's post gold rush British Columbia interior. All his characters have mythic proportions, all represent some aspect of the "civilizing" of the West, but all are quirky human beings, momentarily given the glorious gift of self expression through their author's genius.

Two of the best characters, a pair of nameless Indian observers function rather like the Greek Chorus; offering their unsolicited but apposite commentary on the action of the story, however indirect that commentary might appear to be. The first Indian is the aged mentor, second Indian is his acolyte and their Socratic dialogue frequently elicits gems like this:

"When the western man of action sees an Indian sitting perfectly still for a while, he assumes that he is engaged in deep contemplative thought," said the first Indian. "This is what makes him dislike the Indian."

"You mean he might like us more if we were western men of action instead of sitting still from time to time?"

"Especially if he could get us to work for him like crazy for fifty cents a day," said the first Indian.

Within the framework of this lush and perfectly crafted western saga, however, there are embedded layers of story-telling laden with riches more satisfying than Cariboo gold. This is a tale that bears several readings. One for the action, one for the humour, one for thought, another for sorrow. At the bottom of it all is the universal human search for meaning and the ability to connect. Bowering puts his point into the mouth of a frustrated Indian student, struggling with the white man's literalness. "This," said the boy, holding the pencil incorrectly in his fist. "This thing. It does not understand my words."

It is a measure of a western's success to think of it as a hit movie. Caprice fits that mold - but it would take a mythical director to do it justice.

Looking for volunteers

There are a number of openings for people who wish to help volunteer with the North Halton Association for the Developmentally Handicapped.

The organization is looking for ways of transporting developmentally handicapped adults who are employed in the workforce. If you are interested in helping out, or if you have any creative ideas about how to get these transportation needs met, contact Jaki Martin at 878-2336.

Volunteers are required in several programs such as Tinker Bell Nursery and Saturday Centre, plus clerical duties are available for someone to try.

Halton Respite Services provides period of relief for families that have a developmentally handicapped child or adult living at home. This program offers a family a safe environment as well as caring and well-trained host families, babysitters or in-home workers to take care of their child for a specific period of time.

If you would like to become a part of this special group of families, contact 849-9977.

The Association is looking for volunteers for its publicity and membership committee.

One of the goals of the committee is to inform the community of the NHAID's services. The first meeting of the new year is Feb. 4. If anyone is interested in getting involved, call 877-5557.



Lucky Venturer

Craig Totten of the Glen Williams' Venturers pack left last week for Australia where he will participate in the 16th World Jamboree. His first stop in Australia was Brisbane, where he was treated to 'Home Hospitality'. (Photo by Jean Layman)

In the hills

Dr. Kumar speaks to UW club women

The public is welcome to attend the next general meeting of the University Women's Club of Georgetown Tuesday Jan. 5, at Centennial Public School, 8:30 p.m.

Guest speaker for the evening is local physician Dr. Valerie Kumar. The presentation is titled 'Ethical Dilemmas in Obstetrics and Gynecology.' This should be an interesting and educational discussion and everyone is invited to attend.

Lupus meeting

Jan. 10 is the date of the Lupus Society of Hamilton's monthly meeting starting at 2 p.m.

The meeting will be held at All Saints Anglican Church Parish Hall at the corner of King and Queen Streets in Hamilton.

Following the meeting there will be a "rap session". All interested persons are welcome. For more information call 527-2252.

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A certificate of appreciation and a thank you from Unit Guides was presented to the following for giving leadership to the girls: Lorraine Hollywell, Phyllis Gibson and Joyce

Elson. Acton District Commissioner Wendy Van Vliet made the presentation to the Guides. (Photo submitted)



The following are Guides from 2nd Acton enrolled from the Guide Company: (front left) Tricia Bailey, Lisa

Chumley, Melanie Brownlow, Stephanie Farewik, Stacey West, Natalie Tuitman and Dawn Gordon. (Photo submitted)

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Apartment blaze

Dec. 27 at 2:22 p.m. three trucks and 14 firefighters sped to the Royal Bank at 83 Main St. S. to put out a small lobby fire.

A two by four wood frame holding a heater assembly ignited due to pyrolysis. When wood gets old and dry it burns much easier.

There was no damage and firefighters had no difficulty putting out the fire.

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