

## Lantzville Author - Lyn Hancock

Kim Plumley the Lantzville Postie interviewed Lynn Hancock, a local writer, from her home in Lantzville.

After various other books on different places especially Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut, I returned to my first love, personal adventures with wildlife, and published Tabasco the Saucy Raccoon. This book ends rather miraculously in my Lantzville backyard.

*Tell us about your newest book.* The Ring: Memories of a Metis Grandmother, the pioneer Love story of Sam and Jane

Her latest book The Ring tells the tale of a Metis grandmother and brings her descendants, [who had not known each other till this book came out] together in a common bond of family.

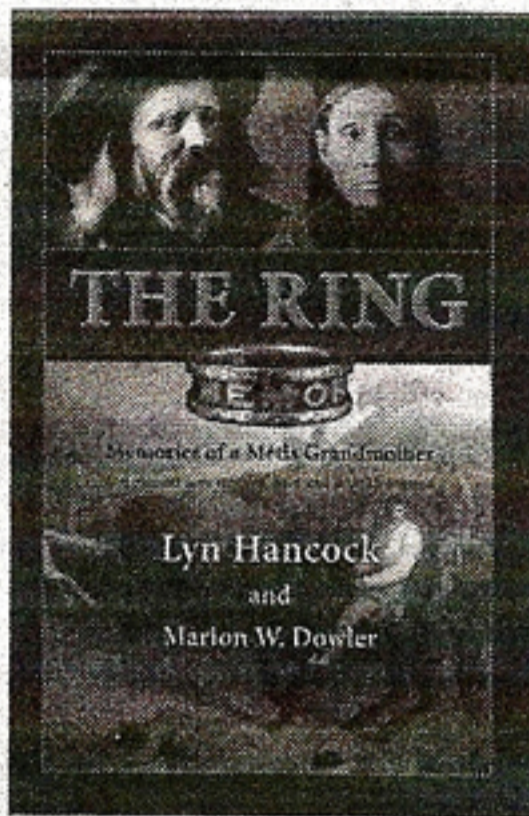
*How long have you resided in Lantzville?* In about 1995, while driving by before returning to my home in the Northwest Territories, I saw a "house for sale" sign on the highway "Artist's Dream Retreat". On a whim we drove down the steep winding driveway to Nanoose Bay and met the owners of the house. Twenty minutes later, with my husband's irresistible persuasion, we arranged to buy it. I left my precious north, move south, and then he left. What happened next is another book. I hope to live the rest of my life in Lantzville.

*What is it that you love about our town?* It's still small; a village with many houses that are more like cottages. Almost all you need is on the one tiny street. It has a sense of community like the communities where I lived in Canada's North. You meet people in the post office and next minute they are helping you lick stamps or stuff envelopes.

A customer hears you want a raccoon hat for a presentation and says, "Follow me. I've got one at home." You go to the municipal office to pay a bill and the friendly girls behind the counter know your name and smile. Lantzville has a tiny picturesque church, a reminder of long ago. Lantzville is by the sea which I need for my sanity. Here I can still gather clams and oysters, watch the seals and seabirds, and paddle to nearby islands to picnic. I can camp or watch the sunset on snow-capped mountains. It's a place where I have lain in bed and watched eagles mate in a tree in my backyard, where otters leave, still flipping fish at both front AND back doors, where the only raccoon I have seen in 15 years visits my pool at noon the minute after I have finished the last sentence of a book about another raccoon – and stays.

*What is your business?* I tell stories, write books and articles, take photographs, give illustrated talks, audiovisual presentations and workshops on whatever fascinates me and may fascinate others. My aim is to inspire people, especially children, to love reading, to learn about different cultures, and to write their own stories (I was a full time teacher in several countries for many years).

*What are the titles of your books?* I've written 20 books but people know me best by my first book There's a Seal in my Sleeping Bag commissioned by Sir William Collins. This was followed by There's a Raccoon in my Parka, Love Affair with a Cougar, and An Ape Came out of my Hatbox. My first book published the year I came to Lantzville was Winging it in the North and I chose a Lantzville publisher Oolican - Rhonda Bailey and Ursula Vaira are still my friends today.



Livingston. It's a family history for all ages but amazingly it begins with one of my animal friends Gypsy, an orphan gibbon ape, that spent a whole year in my grade six class. Who would think that Gypsy would lead to the family of two of my students asking me to help them write their family history. The book would be 40 years in production. Their great grandfather Sam was a charismatic Irish immigrant, an explorer, gold prospector, buffalo hunter, fur trader and early farmer. Their Metis grandmother Jane rode a Red River cart across the prairie and its rivers at 16. She raised 14 children, her 14th at the age of 50. She grew vegetables, dried buffalo meat, tanned buffalo hides, and decorated clothes and moccasins with beads and porcupine quills. This book also has a miraculous ending: Sam and Jane's grandson Sam Livingston 111, adopted out at two, was lost to the family for 64 years. He turned up in the Chemainus-Ladysmith area where he read an earlier version of The Ring called Tell me, Grandmother. This book led him to reunite with his dying sister who had been searching for her brother all her life. The Ring is written as a conversation between Grandmother Jane and one of her grandsons, the father of my two students. I hope it will encourage readers to write their own family histories, especially of differing cultures.

*What do you see/hope for the future in Lantzville?* I would like to see encouragement for writers, artists, musicians and craftspeople to come together to share their wares, develop a greater sense of community and re-establish an Arts Society. To work together with The Log to unify the artistic community. To have a Farmers' Market, not just for farm produce but for the products of the artists and artisans. To build a seniors' center so that one doesn't need to leave Lantzville to die. I would like to see conservation promoted so that our sea life and our land life are not decimated but are passed on to future generations.

*What can the people of Lantzville do to start telling their own stories?* Encourage dialogue between generations, writing of diaries and journals, taking and keeping photographs, school and community Heritage Fairs, inviting local writers into local schools to inspire students with a love of writing and telling stories, a love of history, their own and others. Encourage the Log or the Historical Society to receive, hold and/or print stories from Lantzvillians so more books on Lantzville are published.

*What is your website?* [www.lynhancock.com](http://www.lynhancock.com) - [www.lynhancock.ca](http://www.lynhancock.ca) - [www.grandmotherjanesring.com](http://www.grandmotherjanesring.com)

**Enter to win your copy of "The Ring" on our website  
[www.thelog.ca](http://www.thelog.ca)**