

12 to watch

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Quill & Quire

By Cheri Hanson and Derek Weiler

What does it take to stand out in the book business? Talent and hard work, of course. Not to mention professionalism, creativity, and a certain community-mindedness. Plus an ability to see the industry from different angles, understanding the needs of various players at the table.

This is the fourth survey of “Ones to Watch” (following features in 2004, 1999, and 1994). Our selections this year have all the above qualities, and they share one other: none of them have yet reached the age of 35.

Michael Guy-Haddock, 29

Sales director, national accounts, HarperCollins Canada, Toronto

Like many young English grads, Michael Guy-Haddock was drawn to books. Unlike many, he was also fascinated by the industry behind them: “There’s a business side to it that always intrigued me.” After finishing at McGill University in 2001 (with a minor in East Asian studies), Guy-Haddock worked some odd jobs, did an internship with a medical publisher in the U.K., completed the Centennial College publishing program, and worked briefly at the now-defunct Gutter Press. “It’s been a wild ride,” he says.

Things really started to gel when Guy-Haddock joined H.B. Fenn and Company in 2004. Working on Fenn’s international lines, he discovered a fondness for the sales side of the business, and colleagues noticed his professionalism. “Michael is a smart, hardworking guy who is driven to succeed – in everything that he does,” says Fenn’s Steve St. Amant. Two years ago HarperCollins hired him away. “At 26, he had the maturity level of someone in their forties,” says sales and marketing vice-president Leo MacDonald, who had worked with Guy-Haddock at Fenn. “He has earned the respect of a lot of people within the industry very quickly.”

Last spring, Guy-Haddock was promoted to sales director for national accounts, handling both the Hyperion U.S. list and the Canadian adult trade list. He cites his biggest satisfaction as “when you can take a book that you’re emotionally attached to ... and help in the process of making it work.” DW

Martha Magor, 31

Associate agent, Anne McDermid & Associates, Toronto

Talk about impressing the boss. After flying solo at her first Frankfurt Book Fair a couple of years ago, literary agent Martha Magor generated some serious buzz in the international industry. “I received literally dozens of e-mails congratulating me on having her on board,” says Anne McDermid.

Magor took publishing courses at Ryerson and interned at Knopf Canada before taking a position as McDermid’s assistant in 2005. She started with office management tasks, but McDermid says that after a few months, “it dawned on me that she was having much longer and more interesting editorial conversations with my authors than I was.” Martha Kanya-Forstner, editor-in-chief at Doubleday Canada, says Magor “has both eyes and instincts.... I really do think she’s going to be someone who pulls the publishing industry into the future.”

Magor goes on maternity leave in April, but will return next January to expand her growing list of authors, which currently includes Pasha Malla, Todd Babiak, Saleema Nawaz, and Russell Smith. When taking on books, she says, she’s learned to trust her instincts. “If it doesn’t have that spark from the beginning, no amount of editing on anyone’s part is really going to make it work.” CH

Rob Wheaton, 33

Inventory team manager, fiction & kids, Indigo Books & Music, Toronto

Rob Wheaton’s career at Indigo started small: he first joined the chain as a part-time worker at one of the Toronto stores. Four years later, he’s in inventory management at head office, handling the fiction and children’s categories and supervising six employees. It’s Wheaton’s job to ensure that stores are properly stocked, and he has a reputation as a skilled liaison. “His ability to communicate technical information that’s easily understood is very impressive,” says director of inventory management David Anderson, who also praises Wheaton’s leadership and energy.

For Wheaton, it’s been a circuitous route to Indigo. Raised in the U.K., he has two master’s degrees – one in historical research and one in literature and critical theory – and has also lived in California and the Netherlands. He moved to Canada in 2004 (his mother was born in Alberta) and joined Indigo as a holiday hire that year.

Now, he's hooked on the challenge of keeping the blockbusters in stock and moving – after *Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures* won the Giller in 2006, Wheaton “was just relentless in making sure every store had the quantity they needed,” says Anderson – while also keeping an eye out for potential sleeper hits. “There are so many books that customers don't know about,” says Wheaton. DW

Leah Fairbank, 33

Editor, John Wiley & Sons Canada, New York City

To say Leah Fairbank made a non-traditional leap into the book trade would be a massive understatement. Three years ago, she was shining shoes in downtown Toronto. Today, she's an acquisitions editor who signs non-fiction titles in the health, relationships, self-help, culinary, and parenting categories. “My work history is blackening up rich men's shoes underneath the Royal York Hotel,” says Fairbank, who works for Wiley Canada from the company's New York office.

Fairbank also worked in the Yukon as a singing waitress and played Anne of Green Gables at a Japanese theme park before taking a Ryerson publishing class with agent Sam Hiyate. She did a three-month internship with Hiyate and then nabbed a maternity leave position with Wiley. That evolved into her current gig: after moving to New York to be with her partner, Fairbank convinced Wiley to let her work for the Canadian division out of the NYC office. “It's the fastest rise I've seen in Canadian publishing in a long time,” says Hiyate.

Colleagues say Fairbank has exceptional writing skills and an uncanny instinct for the business. Several titles under her stewardship have sold more than 20,000 copies in Canada, including *The Canadian Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine*. “It's been quite the whirlwind and a pretty fantastic experience so far,” says Fairbank. CH

Jessica Sullivan, 30

Senior designer, D&M Publishers, Vancouver

If the Alcuin Society handed out gold statuettes, Jessica Sullivan would need a designated trophy case. The busy mother of two has won 20 Alcuin Awards for Excellence in Book Design in Canada since she joined D&M in 2003. Only four other designers have topped that total in the Alcuins' 26-year history. “I think she's probably one of the best designers

in the country,” says D&M art director Peter Cocking. “She has an ability to avoid the cliché.”

Sullivan met Cocking while studying at the Emily Carr University of Art & Design, where Cocking is an instructor, and he soon had her freelancing for D&M. The publishing house hired her immediately after graduation, and her first assignment, Ian Ferguson’s *Village of the Small Houses*, landed a second-place Alcuin. Two years later, Sullivan’s work on *Tree: A Life Story* by David Suzuki and Wayne Grady won a Libris Award for book design of the year.

Despite the accolades, Sullivan says she feels lucky simply to be working in her field. “I’ve been very, very fortunate, because especially in Vancouver, there aren’t many people who get a chance to do this full-time.” Currently on maternity leave, Sullivan is slated to return to the office next November. While she enjoys variety as a designer, her heart belongs to fiction. “It’s the most imaginative,” Sullivan says. “You get to use your creativity a lot more.” CH

Stephen Myers, 29

Senior publicist, Penguin Canada, Toronto

When Joseph Boyden accepted the Scotiabank Giller Prize for *Through Black Spruce* last fall, he made sure to thank Stephen Myers. Acknowledgment like that is common for editors but hardly a given for publicists, and it’s a measure of how closely Myers works with his authors. “I feel that I’m friends with them,” he says simply.

Myers has made plenty of friends on the business side, too. He’s spearheaded informal industry gatherings and helped promote events like the Giller Light; Yvonne Hunter, his boss at Penguin, calls him “one of the most collegial and innovative publicists in the industry.” More than any other publicist, he’s embraced Pages’ This Is Not a Reading Series aesthetic to redefine book launches in Canada, turning them into everything from rock concerts to, yes, boxing matches. “What excites me about him is that we’re working in this larger pop-cultural sphere, and he’s willing to take on those other elements as well,” says Richard Poplak, another of Myers’ authors.

Myers joined Penguin in 2006, after a three-year stint at the International Festival of Authors. He credits his success to targeting his pitches carefully and maintaining credibility. “I don’t spend a lot of time bullshitting people,” he says. “I don’t believe in the scattershot element to

it.” And while he says he’s perfectly happy in his present role, that doesn’t mean he’s not thinking big. Noting Margaret Atwood’s singular celebrity with Canadian media and the public, he says, “I’m interested in creating more people like Atwood.” DW

Genevieve Loughlin, 32

Owner, Genevieve Loughlin Agency, Halifax

There are calls you answer immediately and others you try to duck, but booksellers, colleagues, and customers say they never send Genevieve Loughlin to voice-mail. “She’s incredibly friendly and incredibly helpful,” says Michael Hamm, manager of Bookmark II in Halifax. “She has unbridled enthusiasm for everything she does.”

While completing the SFU Master of Publishing program several years ago, the PEI-born Loughlin interned at Raincoast Books, where she worked her way up to marketing manager in three years. When a job as an Atlantic rep at Hornblower Books opened up in 2004, she jumped at the chance to move back to the Maritimes – and to switch her focus a bit. “I liked marketing, but I didn’t feel close to the books,” says Loughlin. “It just didn’t seem as hands-on as sales.”

Two years ago, internal restructuring at Hornblower made Loughlin an independent, repping the agency’s titles as well as other lines, including Anansi, Kids Can, and Ten Speed. The Atlantic territory is geographically large, with significant travel demands, but Loughlin balances her accounts with intelligence and pragmatism, colleagues say. Indeed, she was named sales rep of the year at the 2007 Libris Awards. Still, Loughlin is working to expand her lines, despite the prevailing economic turbulence. “Look how far she’s come so fast,” says Quebec Hornblower rep Karen Stacey. “That’s what makes her a dynamo.” CH

Becky Toyne, 30

Communications co-ordinator, Authors at Harbourfront Centre

Those who follow Toronto’s International Festival of Authors may have noticed some new features in last fall’s annual fest. The online presence was bigger than ever, with regular blog updates throughout, and there was an ambitious giveaway of free books on the streets of Toronto, promoting the 2008 author roster.

Those are two ways in which Becky Toyne has been tweaking the standard publicity model since joining Harbourfront in 2007. “I’ve

watched her work, and she knows how to create something out of nothing, for which a PR pro must have natural instincts in order to succeed today,” says HarperCollins publicity director Rob Firing. “Becky’s done a wonderful job, particularly with the Web,” says former IFOAer (and fellow One to Watch) Stephen Myers.

A British transplant, Toyne arrived in Canada in 2006, driven by “itchy feet.” But she’d already worked for years as an editor at Random House U.K. “I wasn’t fixated on getting another job as an editor,” she says, “but I knew I wanted to work in the book industry.” She started at Type Books before joining Harbourfront, and notes with appreciation that she’s dealt with at least one author from multiple angles – she worked on Henning Mankell’s books as an editor in the U.K., sold them to customers at Type, and hosted a Mankell event at the IFOA in 2007. “In this industry I’ve always enjoyed coming to work every day,” says Toyne. DW

Silas White, 31

Publisher, Nightwood Editions, Gibsons, B.C.

Few people can say they were first published at age seven – but then, Silas White has always been precocious. White is the son of Harbour Publishing owners Howard and Mary White, and when the pair needed illustrators for *What Are Uncles For?* by John Lane, they hired young Silas and Jeremy Twigg (son of B.C. Bookworld publisher Alan Twigg). By the age of 16, White had also co-authored *Local Heroes: A History of the Western Hockey League* with Richard Lapp and was spending ink-stained summers working in the family business. But Harbour’s neglected Nightwood Editions imprint had captured his imagination. White moved to Toronto in 2000 with two dreams: rock and roll stardom, and rebuilding the small literary press.

Rock and roll didn’t work out, but Nightwood did. White returned to the Sunshine Coast in 2005 and now publishes a growing list of critically acclaimed writers both new and established, including Matt Rader, Rita Wong, Tim Bowling, and Elizabeth Bachinsky. “I’m especially dedicated to publishing that next generation of great Canadian authors,” he says. Colleagues marvel at White’s drive: besides publishing duties at Nightwood, he’s serving a second term as chair of the Sunshine Coast school board, putting in two years on the Association of Canadian Publishers executive committee, and raising a young daughter with his wife. “Silas is just really dedicated and disciplined,” says Harbour marketing manager Marisa Alps. “He cares so passionately about Canadian literature.” CH

Jennifer Notman, 29

Associate editor, Penguin Canada, Toronto

The Potter era may be over, but children's editor Jennifer Notman says the boy wizard has left millions of Canadian kids hungry for juicy new books. "It's quite an amazing time for children's and YA publishing." With fresh titles in the works from Carrie Mac, Hiromi Goto, and a three-book series from Kathy Kacer and Sharon McKay, Notman is hoping to satisfy their young appetites.

Notman was born and raised on a farm near Nestleton, Ontario, and completed an English degree at Queen's and a publishing certificate from Centennial College. After an editorial internship at Harper-Collins Canada, she was hired by Penguin Canada in 2005 as an editorial assistant. Last year, she was promoted to associate editor for children's and YA in both the fiction and non-fiction categories, and colleagues at Penguin say they are anticipating great things.

Born into a family of avid readers, Notman says she always wanted to work in children's publishing and spent her own childhood escaping into books – a background that gives her an extraordinary knowledge of children's titles, says Suzanne Brandreth, subsidiary rights director for The Cooke Agency. Notman's professionalism, warmth, commitment to her authors, and wicked sense of humour "make working with [her] a joy," says Brandreth. "These qualities also make me want to clone her."
CH

Teresa Bubela, 33

Director of art and production, Orca Book Publishers, Victoria

On a recent bus ride, Teresa Bubela spotted a teenager devouring a glossy magazine and found herself straining to see the cover. She knew the magazine (Nylon, as it turned out) might contain fashion trends, ideas, and graphics that influence Orca's juvenile and teenage customers. "Those two demographics are becoming so sophisticated, so quickly," Bubela explains. "I'm always trying to put myself in that mindframe."

Bubela has applied the same focus to her career. She landed at Vancouver's now-defunct Beach Holme Publishing during an SFU co-op study term and stayed at the press until graduation, then began taking night classes in advertising and graphic design. From Beach Holme,

Bubela moved to Raincoast Books and spent nearly eight years working as a production assistant, co-ordinator, and ultimately, designer. From there she moved to Orca – “a company that attracts good people and keeps good people,” she says, and one that gave her the opportunity to deepen her passion for children’s and YA books.

“One of the great things about Teresa is that she isn’t territorial,” says Orca editor Sarah Harvey. “She thrives on the give and take of discussions with editors, marketing staff, management, and sales reps. She is open, flexible, and a gifted designer.” Indeed, Bubela recently snagged a first-place Alcuin award for a project she describes as highly collaborative: Chris Tougas’s *Mechanimals*. To be publicly recognized, Bubela admits, is “very, very gratifying as a designer.” CH

Patricia Ocampo, 28

Marketing co-ordinator, Hachette Book Group Canada, Toronto

The future was all planned out for Patricia Ocampo: she would be an obstetrician, and she’d even convinced a family friend to let her observe two Caesarean sections. Then she discovered the English department at the University of Toronto at Scarborough. A stint at the school paper led her to Ryerson’s journalism program and an internship at ABC News in New York. But Ocampo soon realized that she loved polishing other people’s stories and ideas far more than writing or reporting her own: “Editing is like sculpting.”

Ocampo took a children’s publishing class at Ryerson, and in fall 2005 she landed an editorial assistant job with Susan Rich at HarperCollins. “I will never forget what she said to end the phone call,” says Ocampo. “‘Welcome home.’”

Though Rich works for Harper U.S., she does so in the Canadian office, and soon Ocampo was splitting her time between the two divisions. She “lived and breathed children’s publishing” from both the editorial and sales side (switching to the latter in June 2008) until she joined Hachette Book Group’s new Canadian marketing arm last fall. “I saw this as an opportunity to learn about other sides of the publishing industry,” says Ocampo.

Hachette marketing manager Terri Harker says her new recruit “has proved invaluable.... There seems to be nothing that she cannot untangle, decipher, seek out, and organize.” This spring, Ocampo will also start two terms as vice-president of the International Board on Books

for Young People Canada, where Annick Press's Susan Shipton says Ocampo is an impressive force. "Patricia has the raw talent, the passion, and the drive to make a big impact on Canadian publishing." CH

(Note: Ages listed in the profiles are as of the end of March 2009.)