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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Richard Hopkins

This is one of my favourite times of the year. When Autumn rolls around it means it is time for a veritable feast of writer's and reader's festivals.

Actually one of my favourite festivals took place about three months ago, the Sunshine Coast Festival of the Written Arts. This may not be the biggest festival but it is definitely one of the best. It takes place in a perfect garden setting, everyone who attends or serves as a volunteer is incredibly friendly, and the festival presents some of the very best writers in Canada. A pretty tough combination to beat.

The next festival to arrive in the southern corner of British Columbia was the annual Word on the Street celebration. This festival always takes place on the last Sunday in September and the venue is the Vancouver Public Library and its environs. This festival is advertised as a "National Book and Magazine Festival" and is truly a celebration of every aspect of books, magazines and reading. There is something for everyone from toddlers to seniors. Children can listen to storytellers, participate in crafts, and enjoy children's entertainers. For the adults there are many book and magazines to be purchased and literally dozens and dozens of writers of all sorts to listen to. The Alcuin Society is always there with a display of its award winning books representing excellence in Canadian book design.

The biggest local festival, the Vancouver International Writers and Readers Festival, hit Vancouver with a bang in mid-October. Writers from all over the world descended on Vancouver to delight their fans with readings, panel discussions, book signings, and celebrity spotting. Writers do come from literally all over the world including continental Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, and all points in between. This year the festival featured, among others, Susanna Clarke, Louis de Bernieres, Roddy Doyle, Jim Harrison, Patrick McGrath, Ian Rankin, Neal Stephenson, and Canadian superstar Richard B. Wright. Oh frabjous joy! Jim Harrison is one of my all-time favourite writers, and Susanna Clarke's *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Morrell* is definitely one of the "hottest" books of the current publishing season. (Please see Gary Sim's article in this issue retelling his experiences as a volunteer for the VIWF).

Last but not least was a new kid on the block, the Alcuin Society's own Wayzgoose celebration. There has been a wonderful Wayzgoose for some years in Grimsby, Ontario, but this was the first ever western Wayzgoose. It was a gathering and celebration of letterpress printers and printing. Represented were Barbarian Press, Charles van Sandwyk Fine Arts, Cotton Socks Press, Cowan & Tetley, De Walden Press, Les Éditions Lucie Lambert, Fox Run Press, Frog Hollow Press, Greenboathouse Books, Heavenly Monkey, High Ground Press, (m)Öthêr Tønguê Press, Pie Tree Press, and Robert R. Reid. There were also demonstrations on papermaking by Reg Lissel, letterpress printing by Stuart Isto, and bookbinding by the B.C. Book Arts Guild.