

## THE CAPILANO REVIEW

# Reviewing the avant-garde

PICTURE A 75 year old woman packing her life's story into a manuscript box and mailing it off to the literary magazine she selected from the latest issue of Writer's Market. With untold effort she has pounded out a small book, and following in the footsteps of Hemingway, Atwood and other literary icons, has sent her precious bundle out for publication.

Now picture Ann Rosenberg, editor of the literary magazine The Capilano Review, poring through the manuscript, not because she plans to publish it, but because not to read it would be an insult to the woman who put so much work into it.

in the local and national artistic avant-garde, brought visual and written experimental works to the infrequently-published magazine.

When Coupey's enthusiasm and energy began to wane, Bill Schermbrucker, another English instructor, took over as editor. More

By ERIC EGGERTSON

Rosenberg calls a recent double issue of new works by Vancouver writer Daphne Marlatt and Toronto writer Michael Ondaatje "a great coming together of two interesting writers."

But with all the Review's accomplishments, it is not without its detractors. Bookseller William Hoffer is one.

"The Capilano Review is essentially unreadable, like every other literary magazine in Canada," says Hoffer.

"It is a dismal magazine, but it's probably pretty close

shows the literary community is still alive.

"Once a year we try to bring attention to someone who works at the college," says Rosenberg. The latest issue features past editor Bill Schermbrucker. In the past the Review has published works by English instructors Gladys Hindmarch, Robert Sherrin and Sharon Thesen, among others.

The Capilano Review has a subscription list, but it receives substantial funding from the Canada Council, along with a contribution of editors' paid time from the college.

Rosenberg feels the Review is good publicity for Cap College. "The Review is better known in academic circles than the college."



NEWS photo Eric Eggertson

SIFTING THROUGH some of the submissions the Capilano Review receives, associate editor Dorothy Jantzen and editor Ann Rosenberg look for the one per cent of unsolicited manuscripts that will make it into Cap College's literary magazine.

The contrast between Rosenberg's ambition to print new, experimental work, and the woman vainly searching for an outlet for her work is sad and very typical.

"Less than one per cent of what we receive is printed," says Rosenberg. "The majority of what we print is solicited." Yet Rosenberg, Associate Editor Dorothy Jantzen, and four other editors sift through a stack of mail, checking for something that's good but isn't too comfortable. Something avant-garde.

The Capilano Review is something of an oddity. At a college with 3,000 students one wouldn't expect to find such a stylish glossy magazine. At bookstores across Canada the Review's graphically appealing cover stares out at the literate, seductively whispering "buy me, I only cost three dollars."

Started ten years ago by English teacher Pierre Coupey, the Review looks about the same today, it's just a bit thicker and a bit glossier.

Coupey, with connections

connections and more avant-garde work followed, and a year and a half ago Rosenberg became editor. The issues come out on time now, and the visual arts — photography, sculpture, dance, even video — play an even more prominent part in the magazine's look.

Yet, for all the gloss there is something intangible about the Review. One follows the editors' hunches with works that are difficult to understand, sometimes boringly so. Interesting pieces stand out, but there is no strong artistic thread to follow through the good, the bad and the bizarre.

To Rosenberg the Review serves an academic and a literary purpose. Some special issues produced in the past have been on Vancouver sculptor Gathie Falk, author George Bowering, artist Barry Coughlan, and former editor Pierre Coupey. The Review has given each artist a forum to put across his or her intentions and accomplishments in an interview, and has reproduced representative portions of his or her work.

to the best we've got. It's founded on a corrupt understanding of what literature is," he says. "It is narcissistic, unrealistic, and spends all its time aggrandizing itself and its writers."

"But for all that, the people who put it out are sincere, they're just wrong."

Because the editors of the Review are friends with many of the avant-garde artists in the city, they are called incestuous when they publish their friends. But the Review tries to print what its editors think is new, and if their friends are breaking new ground, they feel that just