

In praise a good rant

Laura Penny takes no prisoners in skewering the education system

MORE MONEY THAN BRAINS

by Laura Penny (McClelland & Stewart, 278 pages, \$29.99 hardcover)

By Bill Bean, Record staff

Oh, there's nothing as satisfying as a good rant.

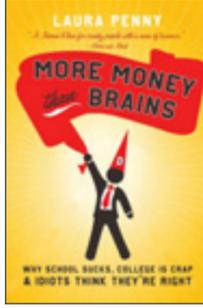
Be it Rick Mercer or Rex Murphy or Ron James, there is nothing quite as soul-purgingly pleasurable as a lung-evacuating, mind-clearing, larynx-tingling verbal vivisection.

Add Laura Penny to the League of Ranters.

Penny is a native Nova Scotian and English prof at Halifax's Mount St. Vincent University. The title of her first book, *Your Call is Important to Us: The Truth About Bullshit*, is really all you need to know about which way the wind is blowing if you should walk into the faculty lunch room when Penny is under full sail.



Laura Penny is a university professor in Halifax.



Her latest attempt to put down in words the torrent of opinions that must swirl through her head like a maelstrom is fully titled: *More Money Than Brains: Why School Sucks, College is Crap and Idiots Think They're Right*.

She doesn't mince words. In 278 pages (including footnotes), Penny argues that North America is in the midst of a titanic battle of values, between those who believe that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and those who just want their part.

As evidence, she cites the shift in education to training over thinking, such that government funding is skewed to products rather than ideas, and our schools are pre-

paring to crank out graduates capable of doing little more than sweeping up the shavings of the rest of the world.

She cites the belittling of thought, where Harvard-educated Republicans criticize a Democratic president cuz he thinks he's smart, an approach mirrored by Conservative attacks on such Liberal leaders as Stéphane Dion. She fears a North America where the polity is being splintered, where the "we" that makes a nation is being parsed into "us" and "them," and where privatizing, government downloading and the user-pay philosophy, "once hallmarks of the old and discredited 'common sense revolution'" are regaining ascendancy.

That *More Money Than Brains* peters out with tired old chestnuts about the need for more attention (a.k.a. funding) for the humanities as the logical defence against ill-advised action, hardly matters.

As far as rants go, there are no ups and downs here, no roller-coaster ride of ideas. This is one screaming free-fall thrill ride from the upper atmosphere to just short of impact.

I'd expect Penny's next book to bore a hole through the centre of the Earth.

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WHAT THEY'RE READING



Jose Molina is a violinist and the concertmaster of the Guelph Symphony Orchestra. He recently read:

MOZART IN THE JUNGLE: SEX, DRUGS, AND CLASSICAL MUSIC

by Blair Tindall (Grove Press, 336 pages, \$17.95 softcover)

"I was drawn to this book for its discussion of the changing trends in classical music.

"Tindall's behind-the-scenes look at the day to day struggles of a freelance musician in New York is riveting — especially her encounters with musical greats Itzhak Perlman and Sam Sanders."

COOKBOOKS

Recipes for healthy eating

LIGHTHEARTED AT HOME THE VERY BEST OF ANNE LINDSAY

by Anne Lindsay (Wiley, 486 pages, \$38.95 hardcover)

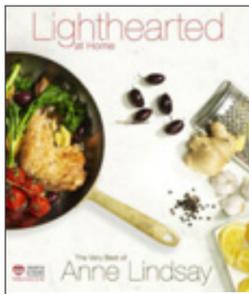
By Cindy Matthews

Anne Lindsay is no stranger to cookbook writing. She has already published five that have been bestsellers. Now she and the Heart and Stroke Foundation have partnered to produce a book that is packed with terrific, and healthy, recipes.

Each comes with a nutritional analysis and there are tips for healthy eating, preparation and ingredient substitutions.

Lindsay admits her own journey to eating properly was evolutionary, but suggests that switching to healthy foods needn't be a chore. The recipes in this book include all the basic meat and vegetarian fare you can imagine, including ethnic choices. There are also dessert choices for cookies, squares, bars and muffins.

At the end of many chapters, Lindsay shares specific advice for different foods. For example, at the end of the fish and seafood section, there are



pointers on how on buy, store, clean and cook both mussels and shrimp.

In my own home we tried the book's recipes for Meat Loaf with Herbs and for Roasted Sesame-Chili French Fries. Both were tasty, economical, nutritious and easy to

prepare.

Lindsay's recipes are super simple to follow. Many are suitable for everyday meals and some are elegant enough for dinner parties. Near the end of the book is a menus section, organized by seasons and by different kinds of events. As well, there's a glossary explaining recipe terms, an index and a breakdown of each chapter's contents.

For healthy cooking, this book has it all — and everything is in an easy-to-follow format.

Cindy Matthews is a Wilmot Township resident.

Remembering David Foster Wallace

ALTHOUGH OF COURSE YOU END UP BECOMING YOURSELF: A ROAD TRIP WITH DAVID FOSTER WALLACE

by David Lipsky (Broadway, 352 pages, \$19.99 softcover)

By John Pender

The U.S. writer David Foster Wallace first drew high-profile accolades following the release of his 1997 novel

Infinite Jest, a sprawling, 1,000-page fiction about competitive tennis, addiction and America's obsession with entertainment.

Wallace was acclaimed as an entertaining, erudite and morally conscious new voice in American letters.

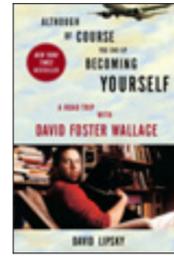
David Lipsky's book is based on interviews he conducted for a 1996 Rolling Stone feature about Wallace, whose 2008 suicide sparked fresh interest in his life and work. The book takes the most straightforward possible approach to the material; apart from a brief introduction and afterward, the whole text is a transcript of the extended and in-depth Q and A session between Lipsky and Wallace.

This approach gives us some valuable and fascinating insights into the everyday details of Wallace's personality. We learn that he's jealous of writer William T. Vollmann, that he considers Stephen King to be critically underrated, that he cried at the end of *Braveheart*, and that he typed the drafts of *Infinite Jest* with one "really fast" finger.

The conversation also touches on Wallace's personal history, his creative process and the problems attending his growing fame.

Although any fan of Wallace will be interested in the unguarded and casual portrait of the author that these interviews offer, those unfamiliar with Wallace's work would be better off starting with the author's fiction or journalism.

John Pender is a Kitchener resident.



Hungarian dishes will delight

TREASURED HUNGARIAN FAMILY RECIPES

by Helen M. Radics (Self-published, 203 pages, \$25 softcover)

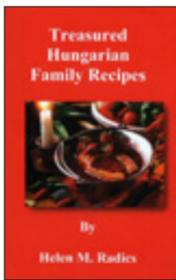
Helen Radics of Waterloo has been cooking since she was a girl in her native Hungary.

She credits that country's spicy dishes, rich stews and sauces, hearty soups and mesmerizing deserts for influencing her food tastes. And she credits her family for the zeal she shows in the kitchen.

Her father, she writes in the introduction to this simple but lovingly prepared cookbook, instilled in her the pleasure of achievement. His mother and her own mother are responsible for her love of cooking. And her husband and daughter, she adds, share her passion for food.

Her mother was "lovingly instructive, but extremely strict" about cooking.

"I always had to be very careful of the way I chopped onion. It had to be as tiny as mini pearls and equal in size. I have per-



fecting chopping onions and other vegetable early on."

Radics' book includes dozens of recipes for appetizers, soups, main dishes and side dishes, plus breads, biscuits and deserts, including two recipes for chocolate truffles.

The traditional Hungarian dishes are all here, but the author is quick to credit influences from other countries. She loves to cook with smoked red paprika, for example.

"It is not Hungarian, but adds a wonderful character to your dishes. Especially my cabbage rolls."

Radics says she usually cooks with extra virgin olive oil and grape seed oil and finishes pasta and meat dishes with chipotle olive oil, basil oil or truffle oil.

"I like to use Greek extra virgin olive oil on salads because of its crisp, clean fruity flavour."

She notes that she prefers not to cook with lard, even though it's still used in many Hungarian households.

Two pages are devoted to Hungarian wines. And the book has many colour photographs.

You can buy this book at the Kitchener Farmers Meat Market & Deli at 1575 Victoria St. N., Kitchener and Stemmler Meats & Cheese, 3031 Lobsinger Line, Heidelberg. Contact the author by phone at 519-208-9434 or by email at treasuredhungarianfamilyrecipes@rogers.com. Or you can purchase the book online through the author's website (with a discount) at <http://treasuredhungarianfamilyrecipes.food.officelive.com>.

— Jon Fear

RAVENOUS

Waterloo market has a grassroots flavour

By Dinah Murdoch

We live in an intelligent community, or so we've been told.

So why, Jay Carnahan wondered, wouldn't an intelligent community like Waterloo have its own farmers' market?

Yes, there's the St. Jacobs Farmers' Market, and yes, there's the Kitchener Market. But Waterloo, reasoned Carnahan, a long-time food grower and activist, needed something of its own.

"Intelligent communities don't just line up for hotdogs," says Carnahan. "They have farmers' markets. They make sure farmers are held on a podium. Most of us don't grow food or know how to do it, so we need to show our support for those who do."

Carnahan decided to see if a

true farmers' market — one that features food grown by the farmers themselves — would fly in the new Waterloo Public Square.

Things got started last October with a handful of vendors selling fruits, vegetables, herbs, plants, crafts and other delights on Thursday afternoons on the square, in front of the Waterloo Town Square mall at King Street South and Willis Way. The market shut down for the winter, but began running again last month. The plan is to keep things going every Thursday from 3 to 7 p.m. through October.

The Waterloo Farmers' and Crafters' Market Cooperative can be thought of as a neighbourhood market, Carnahan says.

"Walk your dog, get some vegetables, meet some neighbours. It should be a fun thing to do."

Among the dozen or so vendors are organic farmers from Mapleton (Reroot Organics) and Crosshill (Unfactory Farm). There's also honey from Inverhaugh (Doug's Honey), various seedlings and plants, lamb and cheese from the Arthur area (Shepherd's Watch) and, soon, cheese from Stratford's re-risen Monforte Dairy, which until now has had trouble finding a selling venue in the region.

Carnahan hopes the number of vendors will continue to grow, though he does hope it will happen slowly.

"We're looking for a backyard baker," he says, "and we're looking for a flower vendor, also."

Carnahan adds that they'd love to see some community gardeners come together to sell produce.



MELISSA TAIT, RECORD STAFF

The Thursday market in the Waterloo Public Square is open 3 to 7 p.m.

Several things make the civic square different from the St. Jacobs market. For starters, it's non-profit. Vendors rent a booth for \$15 compared with \$70 per day at St. Jacobs.

Also different: products, which must be produced locally, must be sold by their producer.

What Carnahan likes about

this Waterloo model is its grassroots, community-based approach.

"Local people want groceries from local farmers. A neighbourhood market like this is a good place to get them."

Dinah Murdoch is a Kitchener food writer. Reach her at: dinahmurdoch@yahoo.com