

412WTT11

DEVANEY DOAK & GARRETT BOOKSELLERS

Home Reviews and Features Contact Services Ordering Center Weekly Top 2 Events Parodies

The Weekly Top 2

April 12, 2011

Two weeks we ago [we reported](#) that a wonderful book had been produced up north. When a book as uniquely charming as *A is For Allagash* appears on the scene our duty here is clear: we need to provide a peek behind the curtains. I'm happy to report that our request for more information has fared much better than *Oliver Twist's* request for more soup. This week we're featuring an interview with Cathie and Louis Pelletier!

Kenny: It's obvious that the creation of *A is for Allagash* involved a father daughter team up that was fun and dynamic. What were some of your favorite outcomes of this collaboration?

Cathie: We loved talking about the stopping blood charm, under U IS FOR UNCLE. My father believes in it fully having seen it used on a horse, as we describe in the book. I'm the "daughter" that my great uncle taught the charm to before he died. So I cherish that sort of "oral family heirloom." I also had fun finding the poem about the outhouse. And I relived my own childhood memories of Jack Frost. But who can resist the sight of a glowing lamp in a cabin window on a cold winter's night? T IS FOR TEA brought back special memories of my French grandmother, too, and the times she read my fortune in the tealeaves. By the way, those are my hands holding the cup in that illustration.

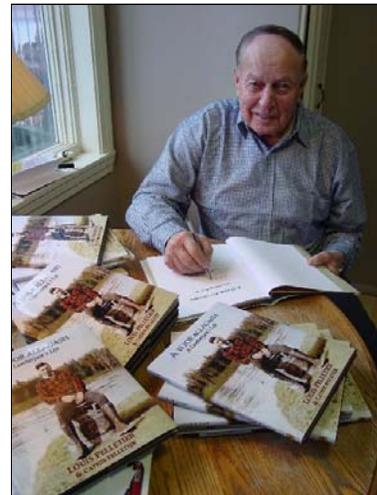
Lou: I was happy to let young people know what it was like for us to live back then. It wasn't an easy way of life. There are so many machines now in the woods that I would hate for people to forget the days when we worked with horses and axes. Those winter days in the woods were freezing cold. Now, machines are heated and you can even listen to music as you operate them. But more than that, I liked telling people about my parents and grandparents, so they won't be forgotten.

Kenny: When reading a good ABC book adult readers always get that pleasant anticipation towards the end as they prepare to find out how the author will handle the tricky letters like X and Z. I loved your use of ZZZZZ for sleeping. Was that original? I don't recall seeing that before.

Cathie: That's original as far as I know. It popped into my head in a moment of desperation. I had written a short piece twenty years ago for a recording, imagining the sounds in the woods back then, bells on horse harnesses, axes ringing against stumps. I ended with the sound of fires crackling in the stoves as men slept in their bunks. So maybe I pulled that thought from the past. I knew that ADZE had that precious Z, but snoring won out. Now I intend to use it again if I ever do another alphabet book, so consider it copyrighted!

Kenny: Were there any second place entries for letters which were a wrench not to include?

Cathie: Well, darn it, why didn't we put "wrench" at the bottom of the W page? Yes, we thought of many words we'd like to use. Take R, for instance. Imagine a rainbow over the river, as a raven glides! That would have been a triple whammy. But we had to remember our artist, Lulu Pelletier, and what would be best for her to



take on. She was still in school at the time. Nature is such a prevalent theme in this isolated area that we could have easily written a book of just flora and fauna. It was important to me that we not make it just a "lumberjack" book. So the "homey" images that I personally chose are closer to what my mother might have written, had she been asked for input. That made it more special. And flora and fauna, teapots and gardens are part of a lumberjack's life, too.

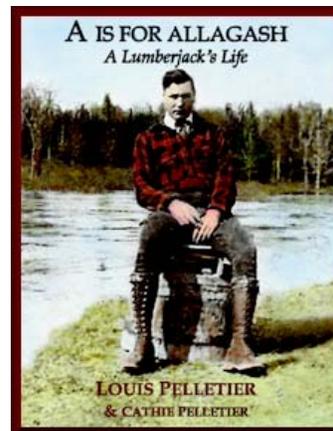
Kenny: Let's talk about one of the cornerstones of the book, Ethel's Mustard Pickle Recipe. I admire her calling for "4 Heaping Tablespoons of Corn Starch" rather than 1 third of a cup or something more precise. Was that emblematic of Ethel?

Cathie: Oh, my gosh. That's so funny. I wish Daddy or I were the best ones to answer this. I'm not the cook my mother was, but I'll tell you a story and it may answer your question. Before I became vegan (and yes, Mama learned to cook with soy milk) I called from Tennessee to ask her a question. I was making her buttermilk pancakes for the first time and, even more hopeless as a cook back then, I wanted to know how much buttermilk I should add. To my horror she said, "Just keep pouring until it has the consistency of pancake batter." On another note about that recipe, my sister Joan emailed me and asked, "Do you realize that all these years we've been saying "tumeric" and it's really "turmeric?" I hadn't known. Now I do.

Daddy said to tell you this: "I miss Ethel's good cooking every day, but not near as much as I miss Ethel."

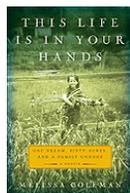
Kenny: Thanks so much!

Team Pelletier: It was our pleasure. Thank you!



Let us know if you'd like to [order a copy](#) of A is for Allagash. In other news Week Nine of the Quote Quilt is up now. You can see the winner and submit your entry either at [The Daily Bulldog](#) or on our [Quilt page](#). Fame, Prizes, and some literary fun await you!

Here they are! Our weekly picks for the two best: two hardcover, two paperback, and two children's books. The very best new arrivals to leap out of the box and onto our shelves this week. Call or email us if you want more information on any of these titles, or to have us hold you a copy. Or stop in and check them out in person. We'd love to see you. Thanks as always for sharing your reading with us!



This Life Is in Your Hands: One Dream, Sixty Acres, and a Family Undone

By *Coleman, Melissa*
2011-04 - Harper
9780061958328 - Hardcover
Your Price: \$25.99

[Order](#)

Availability: [Available To Order](#)

Melissa Coleman, the daughter of Maine four season gardening guru, Eliot Coleman, has written a memoir of her 1970s back-to-the-land childhood. Her parents moved to sixty acres they purchased from Helen and Scott Nearing to farm and pursue the good life. But when a terrible accident occurs, the dream goes awry. The book is getting lots of national attention with her writing being compared to the likes of Jeanette Walls. Best of all - Coleman will be making [an appearance](#) here at DDG on Tuesday, April 26th!

[...More](#)



Into the Unknown: How Great Explorers Found Their Way by Land, Sea, and Air

By *Ross, Stewart*
2011-04 - Candlewick Press (MA)
9780763649487 - Hardcover
Your Price: \$19.99

[Order](#)