

BOOKS

Summerland raccoon friend captured in book

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News Staff Reporter

A furry critter which caught the attention of the Summerland community in the '70s has been immortalized in a new children's book.

Tabasco the Saucy Raccoon, written by naturalist Lyn Hancock, tells of the friendly raccoon Tabasco's adventures in the Summerland community.

The raccoon was originally part of a litter born in a Kerrisdale (Vancouver) attic.

The home owner was searching for ways to encourage the young family to move out and a local newspaper held a contest for readers to suggest the best ways to get raccoons out.

Some readers suggested spreading the spicy accoutrement Tabasco on the roof to discourage the animals from staying, and it worked.

The raccoons were captured.

Some were given to the zoo and one kit was given to Hancock and her husband, a wildlife biologist and naturalist, who were known for raising a variety of baby animals including a seal, porcupines, bald eagles and other fowl.

The 167-page book includes nine illustrations by Kelowna illustrator Loraine Kemp.

"It's a story about how a wild animal touched so many lives," said Kemp.

The illustrator, who visited a Kelowna school and used students and administrators as models, said she was chosen to illustrate the book because of her ability to capture life realistically in her drawings.

Tabasco captured the attention and affection of local citizens by spending time playing with orchardists, going for overnight stays with locals and entertaining at parties, said Kemp who researched the life of the raccoon.

It took Hancock several tries to release Tabasco into the wild after moving to a location in Coquitlam she couldn't keep the raccoon at.

Tabasco's story does have a sad ending, which is documented in the book,



Photo submitted

Saucy story — The children's book *Tabasco the Saucy Raccoon* documents the story of a raccoon that enchanted Summerland in the 1970s.

"It's a story about how a wild animal touched so many lives."

— Illustrator Loraine Kemp

said Kemp.

A man who encountered the over-friendly raccoon misinterpreted his affection for rabies and killed him.

"There was a huge uproar over it because everyone knew Tabasco — this man didn't ... he had children (to protect) so he shot it," explained Kemp.

"It's not completely sad because a lot of people came to know the raccoon and it was very much a part of people's lives and it really increased people's awareness about raccoons."

Hancock has written a variety of books about her encounters with different animals including *There's A Seal in My Sleeping Bag*, *Love Affair With A Cougar*,

There's An Ape in My Hatbox and *There's a Raccoon in My Parka*.

She currently lives in the Lower Mainland and spends time as a travel writer, photographer, article writer, lecturer and tours Canada.

Kemp and Hancock will be visiting Wiltse and Parkway elementary schools April 26 and Summerland middle school May 1.

The duo will be discussing *Tabasco the Saucy Raccoon* and the raccoon's life story as well as conducting writing and drawing workshops.

Tabasco the Saucy Raccoon will be released Tuesday and is going to be available at Okanagan Books.

Author alert

If you know of a local writer call 492-3636, e-mail <events@pentictonwesternnews.com> or fax 492-9843.



Illustrations by Loraine Kemp

Art imitating life — Kelowna author Loraine Kemp was chosen to illustrate *Tabasco the Saucy Raccoon* because of her realistic drawings.



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