Published in The Manitoulin Expositor: Bonnie Kogos’ ‘The Boat That Brings You Home’ launches in Kagawong

By Lori Thompson

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KAGAWONG – Bonnie Kogos launched her latest book, ‘The Boat That Brings You Home,’ at the Park Centre in Kagawong late last month. Fans came from across Manitoulin and even from Sudbury to celebrate the release and pick up a signed copy. Always charming and enthusiastic, Ms. Kogos smiled brightly for photos, greeting most guests with a hug. If they weren’t friends before the launch, they surely were after.

There is a strong autobiographical influence in all of Ms. Kogos’ writing, and this novel is no different. “It’s the young me and the old me,” she shared. “I spent almost two years on a boat in the Caribbean. That’s how I became a travel agent, you know.” She published a travel newsletter, The Zenith Traveller, for the agency she worked for but writing has always been a part of her life. Ms. Kogos’ father was a publisher in New York and she learned the
ropes from the ground up: sweeping floors, selling advertising and finally, writing stories. She’s been charming readers with tales of Manitoulin for 27 years through her column in the Sudbury Star.

“This book is doing so well, and I am grateful,” Ms. Kogos said. She’s had appearances on CBC Radio, CTV and Eastlink TV in Sudbury.

She thanked everyone for their support. “Thank you so much to each and every one of you for showing up,” she said before sharing one of the Manitoulin stories she tells so well. “I was at lace camp 15 years ago and a lady came up to me and asked if I was Bonnie Kogos. I said ‘yes’ and she asked, ‘who gave you permission to write about Manitoulin?’”

Ms. Kogos stood back and took a breath, she related. “It was a profound question. I’d been writing my column for 10 years.”

Bonnie Kogos, second from right, poses for a photo with her friends at the launch of her latest novel.

“Young lady,” she said to the stranger. “Only someone from a big, big city can see the joy in a church supper, in local artwork and music, in singing to the cows, and in listening to the amazing – really, I mean it – the amazing stories on Manitoulin. If you’re canoeing down the Kagawong River or sitting on the dock or swimming at Bridal Veil Falls, I share stories with each of you. I become friends with every one of you.”
The lady looked at her. ‘Carry on,’ she said.

‘The Boat That Brings You Home’ is a bit thriller, a bit adventure and a little bit romance. The novel tells the tale of “three sailboats that wend their way to the Caribbean,” Ms. Kogos explained. “The first is a 50 foot ketch named Zephyr. Captain Zeb sails from Gore Bay down to the Caribbean where he meets a lady from New York. We know who that is,” she grinned.

“The second sailboat is the Quadriga,” Ms. Kogos continued. “It becomes involved with drug dealers and the story is about how they save themselves. The third boat is a 30 footer. The husband and wife sail across the Panama Canal into the Pacific Ocean, where something really big happens. Now you’ll have to read the book.”

Ms. Kogos’ first book, ‘I Was Mistaken for a Rich, Red Ripe Tomato,’ was a very humorous collection of her columns. The second, ‘Manhattan Manitoulin’ was her first novel and shares some similarities with ‘The Boat That Brings You Home,’ though the former relates a challenging romance between a New York travel agent and a Manitoulin Islander and while this latest book also contains a romance between a New York travel agent and an Islander, in this Ms. Kogos weaves together three different story lines into an action packed race for survival.

A fourth book is already in the works, Ms. Kogos shared, tentatively titled ‘Romping Through the Rhubarb.’ It will be a compilation of columns from the last 15 years or so.

After two hours of telling stories and signing books, Ms. Kogos sighed. “I’m tired,” she said. “But it’s been the most amazing day.”

‘The Boat That Brings You Home’ is available online in digital or print format at Amazon, Barnes and Noble and Chapters and Indigo.

Ms. Kogos’ novel has sold out its first printing and is headed back to the press for another run.