**Kitchissippi Book Club – from May 11, 2021 - Reviews**

**BOOK ONE: *UMIMGMAK by Stuart Hodgson and the birth of the modern Arctic*** by Larry Audlaluk’s

By Jake Ootes (2020) Director of the NWT Department of Education

With his tribute to Claire M. Barney of Vanier, Ontario “The greatest Northerner of all of them” Stuart Hodgson was the 1 st resident commissioner of the NWT. He was appointed by PM Pearson in 1967 as the NWT capital moved from Ottawa to Yellowknife. The NWT formed one-third of geographical Canada; 50 isolated communities scattered over 1,300,000 square miles and primarily populated with “Eskimos, Indians, and Métis”; (the nomenclature at the time).

From 1967 to 1979 Hodgson oversaw the development of, and laid the foundation, for responsible local government. During Hodgson’s time in office, Northerners took an increasing role in making decisions that affected them. The Council of NWT transitioned from federally appointed bureaucrats to a fully-elected Legislative Assembly. In doing so Hodgson developed the infrastructure and he secured the equipment needed to support the newly formed local and territorial governments.

Hodgson left a legacy that turned administrative and political power over to the people of the North. He created a northern modern territory that: included scheduled airlines; radio, telephone, and TV service; where children were no longer sent away for primary schooling, improved housing, water, and sanitary services; where perishable food was available in most communities. With the cooperation of the Yukon, Hodgson developed and organized the Arctic Winter Games as a lasting tribute to sport in the Canadian Arctic.

Hodgson balanced the aspirations of the Dene; Inuit; Métis; and the non-Indigenous residents:. He fundamentally shaped the NWT and Nunavut. Hodgson was made an Officer of the Order of Canada.

As a follow up to Larry Audlaluk’s book on Inuit settlements in the 1950s, Mike Lawlor will review a recent book on Stuart Hodgson, the first resident Commissioner of the NWT. Mike worked in Yellowknife when Hodgson was there in the late 1970s (as did I).

*Doug Patriquin*

**BOOK TWO: *The Slough House novels*, by Mick Herron, reviewed by Doug P.**

Mick Herron is an Oxford-educated writer of crime fiction. In the Slough House novels he focuses on rejects from Britain's MI5 spy service. These folks have all screwed up one way or another in their careers, and have been sent off to a scruffy building in North London, with meaningless assignments, to either persuade them to leave the service (and thus avoid any publicity associated with disasters with which they may have been involved) or serve out their time.

The author claims he knew nothing about the spy business before he started writing these books. Apparently he got his inspiration for the subject from his own experiences in office work. He started writing the series in 2010 and included scenes based on the rise of right wing extremists in Britain, at a time when most people thought this was an unlikely possibility, and he has a thinly disguised Boris Johnson character to boot.

There is superb character development at the beginning of each book, followed by shocking action. Their lives and problems are described empathetically, and at the same time Herron has his tongue firmly in his cheek when talking about "The Service". He is funny, to the extent the books are described as a comic crime series. A large, almost cult following of readers.

I have read the first one, Slow Horses, and the sixth, Joe Country. It's worthwhile starting with the first, which is a little more accessible. By the time you get to the sixth, the characters are so well known to each other they practically speak in code, which took me re-readings of numerous passages to get the point. Or maybe it was just my addled brain.

Recommended for late night reading, when you aren't ready to or can't sleep.

*Doug Patriquin*