

B9**Cool Season**

It's time to start thinking about 'cool season' veggies

VOL 12 NO. 14

COMOX VALLEY RECORD SECTION B**the Arts**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1997

B11**Pagan Power**

Locals tie for top spot in Rugby Union play

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Hermit-priest finds peace in nature

Meditations from the *Wilderness* is a slim volume of inspirational quotations, emphasizing the connection between spirituality and nature.

by Paula Wild

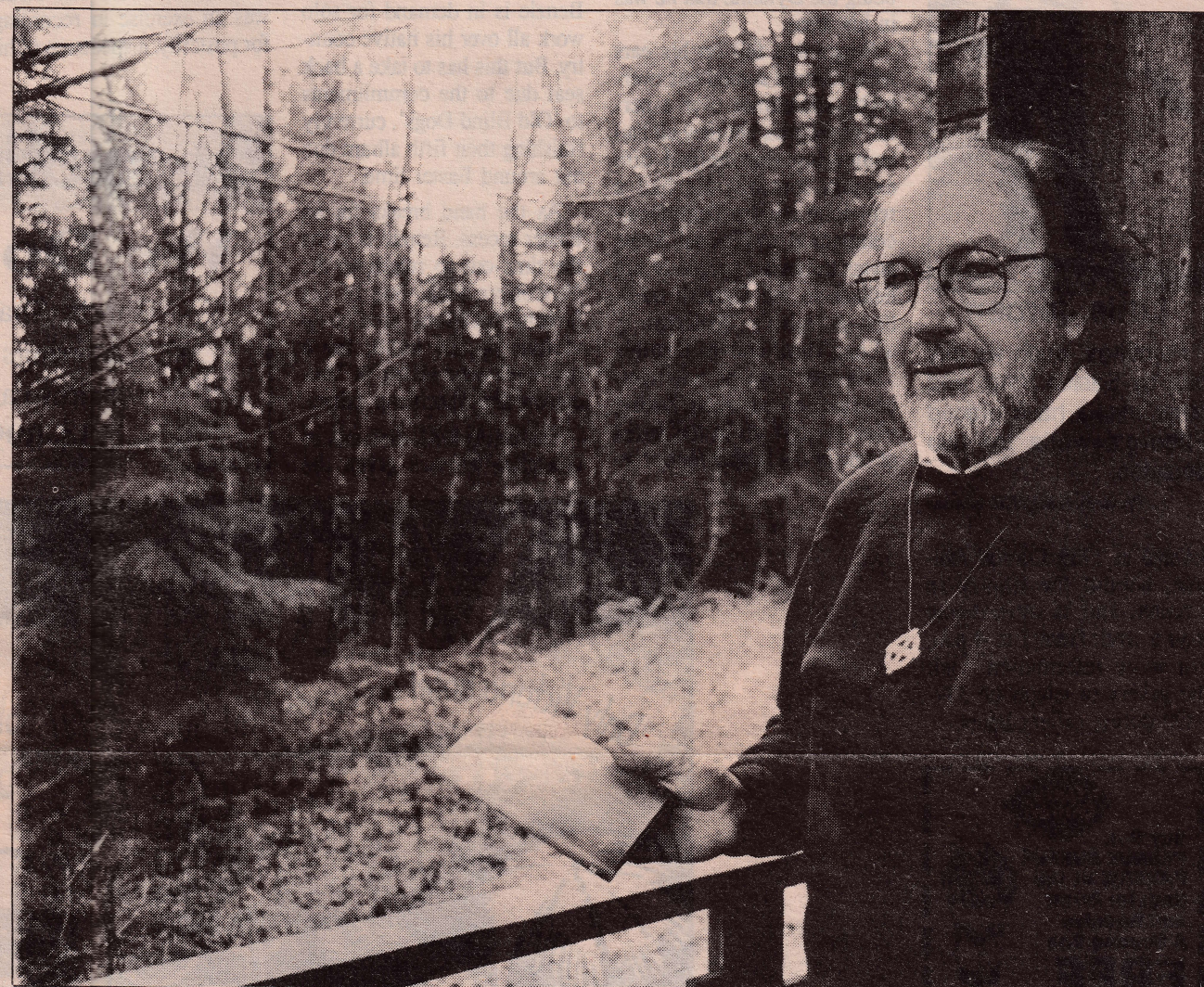
Father Charles Brandt compiled the anthology and wrote the introduction at the request of Harper Collins, a Toronto publishing company.

"Harper Collins originally asked me to write my autobiography," Brandt said in a recent telephone interview. "While I was considering that, they asked me to compile a book containing some of my favorite quotations."

Publishing houses do not call many people and request an autobiography, but Charles Brandt of Black Creek has not lived an ordinary life.

Brandt was born on a small farm near Kansas City, Missouri in 1923. He grew up with a keen appreciation and affection for the outdoors.

Following a stint as a pilot in the U.S. Air Force during World War II, Brandt attended Cornell University, where he



Publishing company sought out Brandt to write his autobiography — a rare honor

Photo by Gerry Fairbrother

obtained a degree in ornithology and later studied wildlife conservation at the University of Missouri.

It was after university that

Brandt began to seriously develop the spiritual side of his life. He moved to England where he was ordained as an Anglican priest, then

eventually returned to the U.S., converted to Catholicism and became a Cistercian monk.

While Brandt was studying

for the priesthood and improving his bookbinding skills, he heard about a hermitage on Vancouver Island. He obtained

permission to visit the colony, and in 1966 was ordained as a hermit-priest, the first priest to receive that designation in 200 years.

When the original hermitage disbanded, Brandt built his own on the Oyster River. The hermit-priest is now 74 years old. He makes his living as a professional bookbinder and paper conservator, and is actively involved with the environmental reclaiming of the Tsolum River.

He devotes several hours each day to prayer and meditation, and believes: "There is no spiritual practice that leads us into communion with the natural world more effectively than the practice of contemplation."

Meditations from the Wilderness (100 pages, hardcover) retails for \$14 and is illustrated with seven black and white photographs taken by Brandt.

As well as over 150 quotations from such well-known writers as Thomas Merton, Chief Seattle, Thoreau and Chang Tsai, the book also contains a comprehensive list of sources for additional reading.

Father Charles Brandt will sign copies of *Meditations from the Wilderness* at Blue Heron Books in Comox on Saturday, March 1, noon to 4 p.m.