Daniel Boone's character awakens in college professor's debut novel

Special to The Daily Courier

In her recently released debut novel, All True Not A Lie In It, Kelowna-based author Dr. Alix Hawley recounts the poignant adventures of American pioneer Daniel Boone, who attempted to settle Kentucky and was famously held captive — yet adopted — by a Shawnee Chief.

A striking image she saw in a National Geographic magazine when only 10 years old inspired Hawley to conjure up the adventurous and historical world of Boone, and tell his tale from his perspective.

"It was a labour of love, one that was six years in the making," said Hawley. "In the end, I chose to write the novel long-hand, which was a challenge, but I think it helped me connect more deeply with Daniel, his life, and his story."

Hawley wrote each moment, chapter, phrase and word of the 371-page novel in longhand, rewriting the story as needed. This was not an easy feat, but it gave Hawley a sense of freedom and allowed her writing to be less inhibited.

Initially, she drafted the story from several other perspectives, but felt the voice wasn't quite right. She wanted to take the time to explore how and what perspective was best suited to tell the adventures of this great man.

"I felt lucky nobody had written a contemporary tale about Daniel Boone's life, and I had a blank canvas to tell this intensely powerful story of finding new worlds and the sacrifices made for this discovery, including murder and kidnapping," said Hawley.

Hawley a professor with the Okanagan College's English Department, is currently on a sabbatical leave. The novel is her second published work, following the collection of short stories, The Old Familiar, which received accolades of its own.

She holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree and a Master of Studies in Research Methods in English from Oxford University, and a Master of Arts in Creative Writing from the University of East Anglia.

Hawley will read passages from her novel and share insights and anecdotes about her writing process at The Bohemian Cafe on Thursday, Feb. 19, at 7 p.m.

Books will be for sale and a book signing will follow.

The cafe is located at 524 Bernard Ave.

All True Not A Lie In It, Knopf Canada's New Face of Fiction pick for 2015, is now available in stores, including Mosaic Books locally for $29.95 (hardcover) and $12.99 (e-book).