

Jim Lang's My Day with the Cup and Everyday Hockey Heroes rocket up the Bestsellers charts in time for Christmas giving

2024 has been a great year for best-selling author Jim Lang.

The veteran broadcaster's latest publications, 'My Day with the Cup' and 'Everyday Hockey Heroes (Volume 3)', are firmly established as Non-Fiction Bestsellers in Canada.

Lang's popular books are ideal gifts this Christmas for the hockey fans on our shopping lists. As he noted humorously last week at Highland GM while signing copies of Everyday Hockey Heroes, 'It's cheaper than a six-pack of Stella.'

The amiable weekday morning radio host, who has been the voice of 105.5 The Region since the station launched in 2013, acknowledged that he learned the craft of writing sports copy while working as a television broadcaster at Sportsnet.

'I didn't start out as a writer. I was a broadcaster, and in 2003, Sportsnet was coming into being and there were opportunities to write on-air content. I thought writing would be a great skill to have. Twenty-one years later, it really worked out well.'

Drawing on his decades-long career as a television sports reporter and anchor, radio host, and author of eight hockey books, Lang posited reasons for the success of his two latest labors of love: 'My books are written to be accessible and readable. We also chose to publish them as trade paperbacks to make them less expensive. They're a collection of short stories so readers can pick up the book where they want, read the chapters in any order they want. The book can be put down and picked up again. They're meant for busy people who can't take a lot of time for reading, but they want to find some time to relax by reading.'

Lang expresses a high degree of gratitude during our chat, especially about the successes achieved in 2024: 'I have no complaints at all. I couldn't be more blessed. My support system—my wife, my kids, my team at Simon & Schuster, my friends—has allowed me to create these books for people to enjoy.'

It's evident that many Canadians have enjoyed the books that Lang has published in the last twelve months.

'My Day with the Cup' peaked at #2 on the Canadian Non-Fiction Bestsellers List and 'Everyday Hockey Heroes (Volume 3)' is rocketing up the chart as 2024 draws to a close.

Lang offered some reasons why 'My Day with the Cup' has been enjoyed by so many readers across the country.

'It's because of the people in the book. My main focus is the uniqueness of the sport—only the NHL allows a player and his family to spend a day with its championship trophy. We learn so much about the players, their families, their friendships. There's a really personal touch in the chapters. There's something very emotional about the Cup and in so many of the stories, the dads and moms are shedding tears of joy with their sons. There's also the melancholy that Sidney Crosby expressed when the Cup was being moved to its next destination after his celebration. They're moving stories, but it's also interesting to read about the logistics of moving the Cup around the world to the hometowns of NHL champions.'

'What's remarkable is these players live all over the globe, but they share so many things in common. One recurring theme I found is that they're all proud of where they're from.'

Both his 2024 publications top out at 234 pages in length. In this brevity, Lang has found a great formula to feed Canada's insatiable appetite for hockey-related anecdotes, especially as they relate to the greatest trophy in sports and the everyday heroes connected with the sport.

When asked Lang if one of the appeals of 'Everyday Hockey Heroes (Volume 3)' is our need for authentic heroes in a world

dominated currently by antiheroic behavior, he replied: "100%. We are inundated by social media?TikToks reign? and so many negative views of people are generated. We're getting lost in terms of the good deeds being done all around us. We have so many great people in our own backyard and across this country. I show this heroic behavior in the final chapter in the book called 'The Logan Boulet Effect.' Logan was a defenseman for the Humboldt Broncos junior hockey team who passed away with sixteen of his teammates in a tragic bus accident in 2018. Logan's decision to sign his organ donation card saved six lives when he died. What nobody could have known that day was that Logan's selfless act would go on to save thousands of lives after his passing. I interviewed Logan's parents and sister?some of the most incredible human beings I have ever had the privilege of speaking with?who started campaigns to raise awareness about organ donation across Canada. That is Logan's legacy."

Lang is clearly moved by these poignant experiences and describes in great detail the vignette entitled 'The Joy of Giving Back' in which Graham McWaters sees the need to help aspiring First Nations hockey players secure proper gear and equipment bags.

"The charity that was set up by Graham and his son from their days with the Richmond Hill Stars rep team has grown so much. They were able to gather up eight bags of equipment when it started, but by 2021, the charity received 1,000 bags in a twelve-month period with over 200 sets of goalie pads and over 800 sticks. What I found even more impressive were the high school kids who volunteered with the organization to sort and distribute the surplus equipment to needy hockey players. After they got their 40 hours of community service, they came back to give more help and wanted to know when more help was needed."

Lang's 15 vignettes?promoted by Simon & Schuster as "uplifting stories celebrating our great game"? are about much more than hockey. After reading about Angela James's reflections in 'The First Great Star' and Dean Barnes's unique card collection that traces the roots of black, mixed race, and aboriginal players in 'Hockey Card Collector, it's evident that Lang presents a refreshing view of humanity and restores one's faith that?as Kim McCullough maintains, 'We Can Do Hard Things?' in this country. Marian Jacko's 'Healing through Hockey', Rob Kerr's 'The Community Builder?', and 'In it for the Long Haul' by Jason Payne offer meaningful tales about our better angels moving us to do better and greater deeds.

Just in time for the magic of the Christmas season.

By Jim Stewart