

DAVID PEYTO's
THE BLUE JAY WAY: Zoo Station to Hanson Ranch

by Kim Hanson
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As Albertans, **we're** all being encouraged to explore our own backyard. . . to discover and take the roads less travelled. A local author and history buff has taken that idea to heart. He's been on a mission; walking his way through Calgary communities. Along the road, he has documented his route, photographed hidden gems of nature, and written mini history lessons on everything he has encountered. These “urban ramblings” can be found in his brand new book, a long distance walking guide called, *The Blue Jay Way*.

David Peyto (pronounced pea-toe) is an adventurer, a wanderer, a man who is deeply curious about all his city has to offer. While venturing off the beaten path, his love of walking, his keen interest in local history and his affinity for exploration have meshed together to inspire, providing the perfect backdrop for his new book.

A former Calgary public school elementary teacher, David often organized walking tours after school for his students. He says,

“I have always enjoyed walking. As a physical education teacher I wanted to pass on the enjoyment and benefits of walking to the children I taught.”

And pass it on he did! His walking tours were well-attended. The kids who joined in found joy

in nature, exercise and discovery.

David comes by his proclivity for exploration naturally, His grandfather, Walter, immigrated to Canada from England, eventually settling here in the province of Alberta. Walter became the town warden for Banff, documenting his daily adventures, his experiences with wildlife and his musings in four journals spanning the time period of 1914 to 1941.

The journals were discovered many years after Walter's death by David's sister, in an old box in the attic. They spawned a four-book series by David called, *Banff Town Warden*. (All of David's books are listed on his website - <https://peytolakebooks.com/>) So as to retain copyright to his grandfather's journals, David chose the self-publishing route. It worked so well for him that he self publishes all his books.

The Blue Jay Way, (named for the popular Alberta bird species), takes its reader/walker on a 233 kilometre history-lesson hike through 40 communities in Calgary, focusing mainly on the north west sector of the city. David has divided his book into walking sections or **stations**, as he calls them. There are 21 stations in all, each averaging a bite-sized hiking distance of 11 kilometres. Stations routinely begin or end near C-Trains for ease of travel. Not only does the book efficiently guide the reader/walker through each station with both text and maps, it also lists available washrooms and cafes for coffee breaks. (*The Blue Jay Way* is the second book in David's long distance walking guide series. *The Chickadee Way*: Griffith Woods to Zoo Station is the first book in the series).

If you decide to walk the steps of David's journey, you will come upon some of the best that nature has to offer. . . waterfalls, ponds and forests. Like Waterfall Valley in the community of Silver Springs, Ravines Wetlands in the neighbourhood of Edgemont and Wood's Douglas Fir Tree Sanctuary

located on the south bank of the Bow River.

When he's not walking, David is writing. He considers his work to be a “hobby”, but it's so much more than that. His books serve as a living legacy to both himself and to his family. His work inspires reader/walkers to cultivate their own love of walking and embark on their own journey of exploration and discovery.

In addition to David's website, his books can be found at these Calgary independent book sellers: Pages on Kensington, Shelf Life Books, Owls Nest Books, Map Town, The Military Museums, Spirit West and Steeling Home.