

## **A gift of good reading**

Calgary writers share their favourite books of 2004  
Calgary Herald

Friday, December 24, 2004

*Kerry Longpre*

*Director Of Marketing And Communications, The Calgary Foundation, and former Bookseller*

### **What Casanova Told Me by Susan Swan (Knopf Canada)**

What Casanova Told Me is utterly seductive. Part travelogue, part exotic romance, and part sophisticated history, the novel chronicles a Mediterranean odyssey of renewal and celebrates the unexpected in life and travel. Or as Casanova says, "What you desire always awaits you if you are brave enough to recognize it. Go now and at once. Another world is possible."

What Casanova Told Me has two parallel stories. In 1797 Venice, Casanova persuades the female cousin of American President John Adams to set out with him on a romantic odyssey through post-Byzantine Athens and Istanbul, which she lovingly records in her travel journal. Her 21st-century descendent is traveling to Venice for her archeologist mother's memorial service. Venice and Athens, two of the most sensuous cities on the planet, are almost characters in themselves.

The best gift I could give my friends comes from the lessons learned in this book: the importance of the celebration of life, creativity, and the human spirit and the way we express it through passion, friendship and love.