



**This class picture dates back to 1919**

Here's a dandy photo flash-back. It was provided to us by Grace Bowen of Midland. It shows the Grade 2 class of Miss Fox. The

picture dates back to 1919. The class attended class at the old Manly Street School in Midland. Do you have a picture you'd like us

to publish? They will be returned to you upon publication. For more information please contact the editor at 526-2283.

## And now gang, here come de judge

### Shirley Whittington

There is a favourite old record -- produced I think by the Beyond the Fringe lunatics -- which features an antique coalminer who denounces his line of work as "borin'."

He says wistfully that he'd much rather have been a judge instead. Judging, according to this old chap, is infinitely more interesting than coal mining.

Lately, I have been doing quite a bit of judging - the contest kind, not the court kind -- and I must agree that it is far from boring.

With the help of fellow judges, I have adjudicated talent shows, public speaking competitions, essay contests, and lately -- a science fair.

I have lost track of the number of queens--of Maple Syrup, of Winter Carnivals and Fall Fairs--that I have given points to on the basis of their congeniality, poise, community involvement, talent, and personal appearance.

So the old mining bird was right. Contest judging is not boring.

It can be horrendously challenging, especially when it comes time to add up the points which have been awarded in the five or six different categories.

Usually I sit computing furiously, while the next contestant waits and the audience stirs restlessly and the other judges exude grace and calm.

Nobody knows that I am approaching nervous collapse because I cannot remember what eight and nine add up to.

The last time I went through this mathematical agony, I was seated at the back of the auditorium, widely spaced from the other two judges.

A young person had just given his all to the story of Helen Keller, and I was furiously trying to add 17, 15, 9, 6, 19, 7 and 6.

When I added it up, I got 81. When I added it down, I got 79.

This happened several times, and I longed

for a pocket calculator. As it was, I was using my fingers jammed in my pocket, to carry.

Suddenly a heavily set man in the back row turned around and glared at me. "You a judge?" he growled softly.

"Yes," I said, carrying three in my pocket. "You a teacher?" More low growls.

"I used to be," I said, my voice shaking. "You all alone?" he rumbled.

"O golly no," I said in what I hoped was an ingratiating whisper. And I pointed to the other corners of the room where my two fellow judges were patiently waiting so they could get on with things.

This is the sort of thing that can happen when judges are not introduced as harmless, pleasant, infinitely fair and lovable people before the contest begins. And yet, sometimes, it's better to remain anonymous.

Last week a friend and I judged 28 Grade 2 and 3 entries in a junior science fair. The little scientists -- all bright, adorable, articulate and well informed -- were there, waiting to answer questions about their creations.

Their parents were there too -- about four dozen of them.

There were four prizes.

My fellow judge and I walked around the collections, the models (working and non-working) the experiments and demonstrations. We finally reached a decision about the top four exhibits, but we both felt awful about the other 24.

They were all so food and the competitors all so charming that all I can do is dedicate the following verses (which I think are based on scientific principles) to all the entrants in the Area Three Science Fair.

First: "Aha!" muttered bearded Copernicus. "The earth on its axis doth turnicus. I won't blab that around where the clergy abounds. If I do, I will probably burnicus."

Next: Archimedes, inventor invincible in his bathtub sat lathered and rinseable. "Eureka!" he cried and then dashed outside slushing back displaced water on principle.

Finally: An astronomer named Galileo with telescopes he liked to play-o. He also dropped weights on Italian pates and was jailed for a year and a day-o.

Use these in your science projects if you will. But don't ask me to judge them.

From now on, I'm only accepting bake-offs.

## Are you ready for more about the North?

### Bill Smiley

THERE ARE three ways of getting to Moosonee.

You can fly, which is expensive. You can walk, which is lengthy, or you can take the train, which is something else.

I took the train because I was a bit broke after a major decorating job, because my gout was acting up and I couldn't have made it walking in two years, and because I wanted the experience.

It was an experience I will never forget or repeat. When I think that my daughter made the same trip two years ago, with two small boys, my heart bleeds for her.

It's almost 24 hours from Toronto, and she refused to get sleeping berths, against my advice.

But she's a very adaptable, strong-hearted and generally clear-headed young woman, and has made not only a go of it, but a success of coping with a frontier town, if there's such a thing left in Canada.

At Cochrane, you change from a fast transCanada train to the self-styled Polar Bear Express, somewhat of a misnomer, as it has nothing to do, even peripherally, with polar bears, and is the exact opposite of an express.

It stops whenever it feels like it, backs up for a while, sits for a while, then jogs off again.

Sitting in a coach surrounded by fat, middleaged ladies who chuckled and gossiped in Cree, I felt much like a Russian aristocrat who had been banished to Siberia for supposedly plotting against the Czar.

The train rolled on hour after hour through the taiga, skinny evergreens too useless even for pulpwood, burnt-out patches every so often, snow out both windows, and no sign of human life.

All we needed was a samovar at the end of the coach, and the Siberian image would have been complete.

But a warm welcome, with some hugs and kisses from grandboys dispelled the first impressions.

There seems little real reason for Moosonee to exist, except that it is the end of steel.

Yet it's a thriving little town, with all the requisites: liquor store, post office, police station, churches.

The Bay store, with a monopoly on most food and clothing, a meat market, two hardware stores, one garage, a Mac's Milk sort of place, a Chinese restaurant, magnificent schools, a really splendid, small art gallery featuring the works of Indian artists, and three taxis.

What more could a man want? Well, maybe a poolroom. Or a massage parlor.

Or a movie house. But these are sybaritic southern frills. No violent movie could take the place of a dash across the mighty Moose River just before break-up, with the water flying as though you were a ship in a stiff gale.

It's an odd community, geographically. It looks as though God or somebody had flown over the place, dumped out a few handfuls of buildings, and let them fall where they might.

I can find my way around in most major cities, but I was constantly getting lost in Moosonee.

Something else that made me wonder was what people did for a living. There is no industry, yet everybody seems to have money. Nobody looks even vaguely hungry. Perhaps it's a matter of taking in each other's washing.

But I have a suspicion that if all the government money, railway, liquor store, schools, police, welfare, old age pensions, baby bonuses and so on were suddenly withdrawn, the place would collapse, and be remembered as a sort of rough-hewn Camelot.

There is, of course, the tourist industry, but that's pretty negligible except for a couple of months in summer, and during goose-hunting season.

On the other hand, the government was left with a pretty sizable investment, and has used it with some common sense. The town used to be an army base, and many of the buildings have been put to use as schools, housing, administrative offices. Better than leaving them to rot.

For example, the houses on the base are now rented to teachers and other officials. The barracks are used to house the Indian kids from Moose Factory, across the river, in spring and fall, when it's unsafe to cross the river.

The recreation building is used for school-rooms. It still has a bowling alley. There is a curling rink, where kids also learn to skate.

At the school there is a fine cafeteria, with food that would make the habitues of our school cafeteria drool.

But this is beginning to sound like a travelogue, not my intention.

I had a grand visit with my only daughter, without the constant interruptions of her mother.

I played chess with my grandson, seven, and barely escaped with my hide.

Twice he forced me to stalemate, a humiliating experience.

And I played without mercy, regardless of age.

Most days I picked up the other little guy, five, at his daycare, and he gave me directions for home when I got lost.

I got through six novels in six days, and didn't mark a single exam paper.

That's what I call a holiday.

We had music, and read poetry, and played dominoes, and ate like kings.

I ripped off three graceful Moosonee geese, handcrafted by the natives.

And I came home with a better sunburn than confreres who's gone south for their holiday.