



Beaver Bob

Hunting the giant frogs of the Castor

With a twist of the paddle I eased my canoe deeper into the bullrushes fringing the turgid stretch of the Castor River. The giant bullfrog from his position on a log marooned in the green Sargasso of weeds and algae, fixed me with his beady, obsidian eyes as though daring me to advance further.

I was aware, of course, that a hunting season had been established for frogs, placing them in the same big game category as mountain sheep, deer and other fauna. I was also aware - and this had come as a surprise - that there were some thirty recognized professional frog hunters in the area between Ottawa and the Seaway. I wasn't sure whether the frog had these impressive statistics at the tips of his webbed fingers but judging by the look of supreme contempt in his glassy yellow eyes, it was quite conceivable.

What professional frog hunter has not heard of the giant frogs of the Castor? As I regarded my putative victim, or opponent, my heart beat faster, thinking of the tales I had heard of frog hunters being rendered hors de combat, or frog de combat by one kick from those mighty muscled legs;

of frog hunters being pulled from their boats and dragged down in the murky depths, never to reappear; of boats being overturned by a single thrust from one of the mighty frogs of the Castor, upborne from the green depths.

These feelings raced through my mind as I confronted the green monster on the logs, almost petrified by his glassy stare. I raised my paddle, knowing full well that the frog season was over, but determined to give an account of myself. If the monster launched himself at my throat, I would plead self defence.

Perhaps, at this moment, while my reader shares with me the state of suspense in which I found myself, it might be useful to describe in some detail the creature by which I was confronted. It was indeed a creature from another world, bearing little or no resemblance to animals normally covered by the description of bull frog, whose legs delight gastronomes around the world.

This was a creature of curious yellow colour, with only a tinge of green. Its enormous body placed it rather in the category of a Nile crocodile or hippo emerging from some African river, than a mere

frog. Its legs drawn up in position for an instant spring, were muscled and massive as those of a dray horse or an ox.

But it was the peculiarity of its expression, more than anything else which filled me with a kind of stupefied amaze. Instead of the familiar vacuous look of the ordinary or garden frog, this great yellow creature was garnished, set off, personified, by a kind of sinister leer, deriving partly from the shape of his snout which was long and pointed and quite distinctly reptilian, rather than frog-like. Truly an off-putting spectacle.

This was a magnificent specimen of the creature for which the mouths of gourmets watered around the world. The great Castor frog, captured, killed, butchered and frozen and sent to the world's markets in such quantities that at last the Government was forced to step in and call a halt. An endangered species.

As I braced myself for the forthcoming attack, the mighty creature with an almost contemptuous shrug, slid off the log into the turbid green flood, leaving me alone with my thoughts.

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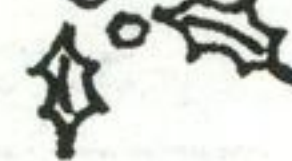
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Library News

During October, children of the Russell primary schools participated in a contest organized by the Russell Public Library.

The younger children drew a picture of a library while the older ones made a book illustration of their own design. We had a great number of participants and had a very difficult time choosing the winners.

We see Mrs. Kinkaid, our Librarian, giving the winners a

gift certificate toward the purchase of books. The drawings are now on display in the library.

The winners are: from grade 1 & 2, Nicole Ouellette; grades 3 & 4, Linda Paquette; grades 5 & 6, France Perras; grades 7 & 8, Yves Seguin.

Nous sommes fiers d'annoncer les gagnants d'un concours organisé par la bibliothèque publique de Russell. Nous voyons sur la photo Mrs. Kinkaid remettant des certificats d'achat

à la librairie Dussault d'Ottawa.

Les gagnants sont: pour la 1ère et 2ème année, Nicole Ouellette; pour la 3ème année, Linda Paquette. Les enfants de cet âge illustrent à leur façon leur bibliothèque: pour la 5ème année, France Perras; pour la 7ème et 8ème année, Yves Seguin.

Les plus vieux étaient invités à illustrer une couverture de livre avec le titre et le nom de l'auteur.

Félicitation encore une fois à nos gagnants.

Leo Marion

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