

Timmy and the Super Slide

Recently I spent an afternoon at the Buffalo Italian Festival, a five-day celebration of old country culture in which Rome met Cheektowaga and came second in a tournament of two.

Heritage? Try neon necklaces that light up in the dark. Ethnic custom? Try picking sausage out from between your toes with a stick as stray dogs lick your sandals. Art? "Try the beer tent....the last time I saw him he was putting 'em away by the pitcher."

Is it just me or have you also noticed that all fairs, festivals and carnivals these days have become a little low on enlightenment but high on hot sauce and deep in draft beer?

William J. Thomas

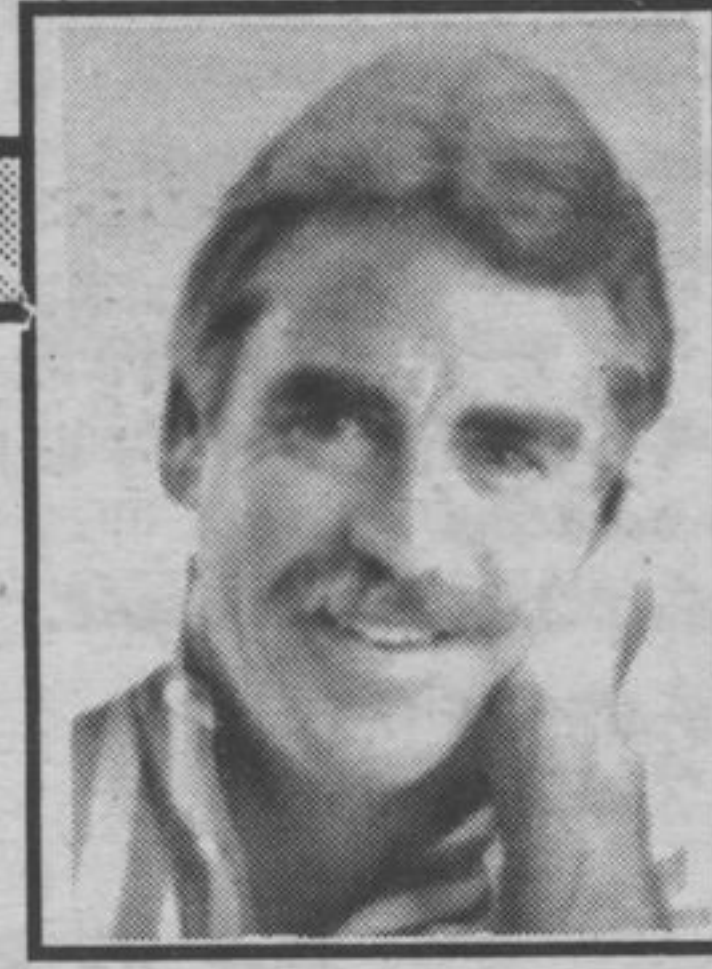
All The World's A Circus

The only thing cultured at today's public gatherings are those \$1.99 pearls that sit in a big bowl of water beside a living bivalve mollusk who is having his innards irritated by a grain of sand even as you look on horrified and helpless. And you wonder why oysters aren't always at their peak.

And of course you eat it - all of it - the grey sausage on a bun, the steak and dandelion sandwich, the sugar waffles, fries, freezes and elephant ears.

This, plus copious quantities of draft beer from a keg tapped earlier that same year gives you a form in indigestion in which gases are not readily forthcoming from blocked internal tracts but when they do come up you're pretty sure they'll be bringing some pretty impressive body parts with them.

This is the kind of indigestion that stays with you long enough for you to pass it on to future generations so that your grandchildren will actually surface on



Geraldo Junior - "Granddaughters of Dyspepsia - Born Without A Burp."

This is not to say you can't learn something at the modern day ethnic festival or town fair.

I learned, for instance, that

baby strollers when operated by young mothers who push their children through throngs of distracted, partially-drunk people rather than simply give them up for adoption, can be as dangerous as low-flying cruise missiles yet much more accurate. A baby stroller can hit you at precisely the spot where you had arthroscopic surgery four out of a possible five chances.

The baby stroller in a crowded street is only marginally less lethal than the grinning prancing Doberman Pincer who is always introduced to you by the zit-brained, walking insecurity known as his owner with the words: "Aw....he won't hurtcha."

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A political lesson to be learnt

It never ceases to amaze me how politicians constantly ignore the very people they are supposed to serve. For people supposedly elected to represent the ordinary Joe and Josephine out there in the streets, they seem to play a heck of a lot more Party politics than People politics.

This past provincial election in Ontario on September 6th is a fine example of just that. And defeated Premier Peterson paid the price of his, and his party advisors' arrogance, in ignoring this pure and simple principle - "You're supposed to look after the interests of the electorate, not just your own selfish political ones!"

Premier-designate Bob Rae, take heed.

Yeah man, the NDP upset of the Liberal apple cart sure was One Big Surprise to all parties concerned, but here's hoping the hard lesson has been learned by victorious and defeated alike - you ignore us out here at your political peril!

We're not as stupid and ignorant as you think, you know, you political animals. You may think

Olga Landiak

Life, According to Baba

you can pull a fast one, pull the wool over the eyes of us 'dumb beasts', or give us the quick shaft whilst your mandate still exists, but beware, we have sharp voting teeth that can put the bite on you at the voting booth.

Premier-designate Bob Rae, take heed.

Yer ole Baba often wonders what on earth happens to these elected representatives of ours - be they provincial or federal - once the euphoria of the campaign is over, the champagne bubbles have gone flat and the partying headaches have finally subsided. They pack up their little bags and, with the stars of victory still gleaming in their individual eyes, head for Ought-Wawa-on-the-Reed-O or Tarrana the Terrible, get their individual offices, re-decorate the joint, collect their staff, load up with the paper and the pens, make sure the

telephone, computer and fax machines are working, find their way to the cut-rate restaurant and the barbershop (or hair salons now, I guess), all this at our expense, and then proceed to gaily forget about us.

Well, that's what it looks and sounds like to us out here, even if they vehemently protest with hands over their 'patriotic' hearts that 'taint so. What appears to happen is that the Party and the Party Pundits take over, those great (?) master minds of the smokey back rooms and caucuses, who figure because they've been in the arena longer than anybody else, that they know it all.

Well, this surprise victory of the NDP over the Liberals - along with all the other 'surprises' which have happened in the political years - should prove once and for all that they don't know it all. But do you think it's going to make an



iota of difference with any new party in power? I have grave doubts.

Power seems to do something to political heads. They seem to get detached from the political bodies which vowed fervently during the campaign to look after our common interests; and then these vows get lost in the political shuffle to keep the Party in power.

Premier-designate Bob Rae, take heed.

But it sure gives one heart as a lowly citizen to see that we really do have an awesome power in the vote when we are determined to exercise it, even if it's only an

anti-vote sometimes and not a positive one. For one brief moment at least it gives me - I don't know about you - the feeling that I'm in control of my Canadian future and not just a pawn of all those conniving, manipulating pols in either the federal or provincial Houses of Parliament. Maybe democracy really does work at times.

Will our provincial government be any different this time around? We can only hope that this Party will not become so arrogant and power-hungry as any party in power eventually does, that they will forget the power-hungry piranhas in the back rooms, and keep a diligent ear bent in the direction of the streets where we, the populace, are.

Don't get us mad, don't ignore us, or, like angry, hungry lions we'll eat you up at the next election. We proved it this time, we've proved it many times in the past. You ignore us and our concerns about issues, at your political peril.

Premier-designate Bob Rae, take careful heed.

Four-letter forest management

Saturday, September 8th was hot and very windy. I spent the day in the forest, on a tour organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources, in the Beardmore area. We travelled in a convoy of vans and four-wheel drive trucks into what is known as the Auden Forest - a huge stretch of bush between highway 11 and the eastern shore of Lake Nipigon.

The day was organized by the MNR, but they didn't do it willingly. The Beardmore-Lake Nipigon Watchdog Society, a gritty group of environmentalists from communities on the east side of Lake Nipigon, had requested the tour last February. As hunters, naturalists, and "outdoorsy" people, they had found several questionable forest practices in the Auden Forest. The original idea was to have the members of the Watchdog Society take the MNR out in the bush to see the problems first hand. Instead, the MNR changed the day into their own public relations tour - showing sites that the MNR wanted to show off as well.

Quentin Day, the acting MNR district manager, said it was orga-



NORTHERN INSIGHTS

by Larry Sanders

nized that way so the tour participants would receive a "balanced view" of what is happening in the forest, "not just the negative things". The "positive" sites included stream crossings where culverts or bridges had been constructed under stricter guidelines, and areas that had been selectively cut, in strips, where the trees were restocking themselves quite nicely.

As we arrived at each location along the dusty bush road, the truck leading the convoy would stop, and all the other trucks would stop in behind. Mr. Day would get out, leaf through his notes, then give us a brief lecture on what we were looking at. One of the members of the Watchdog Society, Helen Marek, called it "a

not-so-nice stops on the tour, picked by the Watchdog Society, this format made the tour into a travelling seminar on forestry - with experts taking conflicting views on the health of the forest.

One of the main issues discussed was spraying of herbicides. The MNR uses herbicides on a young forest, after its replanted, to try to knock back the less desirable hardwood trees, especially poplar. At one of the sites, the contractor doing the spraying (or someone, we were never told exactly who) must have goofed, and either used too much spray, or the humidity was too high at the time, or something, and had killed several young jack pine trees. The needles were completely brown. When I looked them in the eye,

they crumbled off on to the ground. Other jack pines were not completely dead, but didn't look healthy, with several brown branches mixed in with the green ones.

Quentin Day insisted that the dead jack pine trees are only an exception - "about one to five per cent of the trees". Day insisted that, had the spraying not been done, the poplar would take over, and "we would not get the desired result of a healthy mixed-wood forest." George Marek, the forestry consultant working for the Watchdog Society, took a different view. Grabbing the top of a young poplar sapling, and shaking it violently, he said to Day, "Is this what you want? Look at this! If you spray, the poplar is knocked back above ground, but

suckers are sent out more under ground, and you will have a poplar forest here in ten years, I guarantee it!"

Day replied, "this area will be re-evaluated in a few years, and it may have to be sprayed again." Marek retorted that with repeated spraying, the forest ecosystem was being undermined - with mosses, blueberries, and the soil itself being robbed of nutrients by repeatedly killing everything except the jack pine trees.

At another site, Buchanan Forest Products had left piles of pulp wood beside the skidway, they had been left because there wasn't a market for the smaller pulp logs, after Buchanan cut the larger logs and hauled them off to their sawmills. Buchanan's representative on the tour, Al Heber, insisted that the logs had been cut only two years ago, and could still be salvaged and hauled into a pulp mill, "once we have a market". Harold Hein, who video taped the day for the Watchdog Society, claimed the wood had been left there longer than two years ago, since he had video

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