

## All The World's A Circus

# Kids speak up again

Ah, sweet youth - that fleeting, star-struck stage between your first real kiss and cracking up the old man's car.

In our last episode of Meet The Kids From McKay, Mrs. Claudette Froude had made the mistake of having me speak to her french-immersion students, and I was responding to their follow-up letters with some career counselling torn from personal pages of experience which have made me the miserable and disillusioned human being my own mother avoids in the supermarket.

About my presentation, Jennifer said: "For my opinion, you handled it very well." This is the big left-handed compliment which sees Jennifer breaking with the general consensus that I botched it very badly. I've heard it before: "I don't give a rip what everybody else thinks - I like ya!"

Larry showed great sensitivity when he wrote: "I found it hard to believe that most writers in Canada do not make much money, especially you!" Ah Larry, that's not the way I recall putting it but I appreciate your pity. He goes on to say: "...I want to be a lawyer or race in the C.A.R.T. circuit." Well Larry if you're determined to go around in circles, spinning your wheels for the rest of your life, remember, lawyers make more money than C.A.R.T. drivers.

And Heather's concerns were deep - "...what gave you the inspiration to become a writer?" Well Heather, the truth is, I was too dumb to realize that politicians get paid huge sums of cash in brown bags from contractors or that anybody who could get a union card was guaranteed \$178.57 an hour and a day off

to go drinking when their wife delivers a baby.

Sean was blunt: "You don't look like an author, you look more like someone taken out of the track-and-field section of Sports Illustrated, if there is such a section." A lot of people say that Sean, especially after they find out there is no such section.

Carrie's career goal is "...a toss-up between being a writer or an interpreter."

You know, Carrie, you might be able to do both. For instance you might try writing in a language that nobody understands like on the far off island of Newfoundland.

Tracy writes: "When I grow up I would like to be a veterinarian so I have been learning a lot about animals (especially cats)". That's great Tracy but let's remember veterinary surgery is not a self-taught skill.

Untie Fluffy immediately and leave her alone!

Julie in her P.S. said: "I am the one who made the funny noise that you said could be the first line of Lauren's short story. Do you remember?" I certainly do Julie. In fact I looked it up when I got home and still couldn't figure out where a noise like that could possibly originate. Have you seen an exorcist?

Amy states: "I'm thinking of being a doctor or a lawyer because I want to do something that helps people." Obviously Amy, you've come to that great fork in the road of your career and you must make a clear choice - do you want to become a doctor or a lawyer, or do you want to help people?

Jason allowed as to how "...writers like

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William J. Thomas

## Life, According To "Baba"

# Ukrainian Christmas

One Christmas may be one too many for most people, but imagine having the excuse to celebrate two of them. That's what those of us of Slavic or Greek origin do who still adhere to the old Julian calendar which puts this festive and holy occasion on the 7th. of January.

As children, we thought it was great to have this extra day away from school, and all our W.A.S.P. friends looked at us with green eyes of envy. And well they might, for our Ukrainian Christmases were something to be envious of.

They began on the night before, when we solemnly observed the Holy Night supper (Svyata Vechera) consisting of the symbolic twelve Lenten dishes. No meat since we were still fasting but, never mind, the dishes dear Mum prepared were most delicious. On a table covered with her very best Ukrainian tablecloth over a sprinkling of hay, she set out borscht, jellied fish, several kinds of perehe and cabbage rolls, cooked mushrooms, and various stewed or fresh fruits.

All this was preceded by the most traditional dish of all, kutya, made of cooked wheat, honey and ground poppy seed. Delicious! The head of the household always raised the first spoonful asking God's grace, and then greeted the rest of the family with the traditional 'Khrystos Rodyvaya' (Christ is born), to which all replied in turn, 'Slavim Yoho' (Let Us Glorify Him).

Then up early, and I do mean early, on Christmas Day to make the long, cold trek to church sans any breakfast (oh woe to us young 'uns!). There we partook of the long service, full of mysteries to our

young minds but thrilling in the sonorous chanting and singing. I still get chills up and down my spine when I hear this traditional music.

Then back home to the family farm just outside Thunder Bay, where Mum hurriedly got the fire going in the old wood stove to heat up all the goodies she'd been preparing for a whole week. The rest of us got things ready in the combined dining/living room for the horde of family relations about to descend upon us. We were a Very Large Group when we gathered together!

We sat at the groaning board all day and well into the evening, eating, drinking, catching up on family affairs, telling jokes, and singing. Oh, how we sang! Dad and Streh (his brother) with their marvellous bass and baritone and Mum and Stryna with

their clear sopranos leading the rest of us in the old familiar carols. Lovely, lovely Ukrainian carols! More thrills up and down the old spine at the sound of them today, together with some good old Ukrainian tears as they recall to me those wonderful Christmas family get-togethers of old.

Alas, as the years went rolling inexorably by, the empty places around the table grew, family and relations scattered all over the country, and there seemed less and less initiative to carry on with the old traditions. Now, I have only nostalgic memories of a time that used to be. But still the spirit lingers on.

So, to all Ukrainians who will still be celebrating the 'Old' Christmas on the 7th. of January, yer ole Baba says a very warm and hearty, "Khrystos Rodyvaya."



Olga Landiak

# Ontario's newest government

We're used to hearing about Canada's "three levels of government". In the past, this phrase has referred to the federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government. But at a news conference in Thunder Bay November 28th, the phrase was used in a very different context, with a whole new meaning.

The news conference was held to commemorate the signing of an "Interim Measures Agreement" between the federal government, the provincial government, and the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN). The Grand Chief of NAN, Bentley Cheechoo, made the most important comment in his first sentence at the news conference, when he indicated his pleasure at being able to "execute an agreement with the *THREE* levels of government (my emphasis added)." That statement, unchallenged by the other governments' representatives present, raised the signing ceremony from yet another exercise in government horn-blowing to a truly unique historical moment: the renewed formal recognition by the governments of Ontario and Canada of NAN as a distinct, sovereign state. NAN achieved that recognition originally when the 1929 Treaties were signed, but the recognition wasn't renewed until November 28th.

On the surface, the agreement only gives NAN the right to be informed whenever some development is proposed in the NAN area (roughly, the top half of the province) while negotiations on a comprehensive agreement on self-

government are going on. This applies to *anything* (such as a mine, a mill, a tourist establishment, a hydro dam) proposed by the federal or provincial governments, or the private sector. This "notice period" of 30 days will not give NAN the right to veto any proposed development. It only gives NAN special rights, over and above the notice any other member of Ontario society receives, when some development is under consideration.

Harry La-Forme, Ontario's Indian Commissioner, said at the news conference, "I don't want anyone to minimize the importance and significance of this agreement. The agreement is very much in keeping with...the evolution of the new relationship that must take place in Canada when governments deal with First Nations issues."

Bud Wildman, the new NDP Minister of Natural Resources, and the federal minister at the news conference Shirley Martin, both made it clear that "aboriginal self-government" has yet to be clearly defined. Bentley Cheechoo added that self-government would be defined "through a very extensive community consultation process, so that our communities will support whatever we negotiate in the end. It's no use for NAN, as the representative of the people, to negotiate something and then go home and

tell the people here's what self-government's going to look like."

Nonetheless, in any negotiations between sovereign states, the first step is recognition. Then, embassies are opened, and ambassadors are appointed. In this case, Ontario has appointed Dr. Bob Rosehart as its ambassador to NAN. Rosehart, the President of Lakehead University, has become well known for his extra-curricular activities: chairing the

provincial committee that studied single-industry towns, trying (unsuccessfully) to mediate the union-management dispute that led to the closure of Thunder Bay's wafer board plant, handing out intervener funding from Ontario Hydro to groups in favour and opposed to the Little Jackfish Hydro dam, and for leading a study of how trees are utilized in Ontario. The media has nicknamed him "Super-Bob" as a result - a name he resents, given his rather low-key, pragmatic approach.

"Super-Bob" has some fine government rhetoric behind him, as he starts his work. At a banquet the evening after the signing ceremony, Wildman raised the stakes high. "It is time to get rid of the uncertainty (over the meaning of aboriginal rights, and the meaning of self-government). Time to clarify your (NAN's) rights, and spell out our (government's) obligations...When our

government makes a commitment to improve the lives of aboriginal peoples, we mean what we say. We propose to do it by giving aboriginal people the power to change their own lives, and to control their own future."

That might be the position of the new government, but it might not be the will of northwestern Ontario's non-native people. I have witnessed too many incidents of racism and bigotry to make me confident about Rosehart's chances of success. During the public debate over the Indian fishing rights for example, non-native groups lined up by the dozen to demand a seat at the negotiating table, when these three levels of government discuss aboriginal fishing rights. The non-native groups made it clear they would not accept the concept of any "special rights" for aboriginal people.

Wildman and the NDP government, on the other hand, accept the principle of aboriginal self-government as a starting point in these negotiations - negotiations which, if successful, will conclude agreements on policing, courts, education, health, recreation and social services - not to mention the basics of land and resources. Wildman said "the signing in effect recognizes the inherent right of the NAN peoples to have a say on what happens to the land and resources and territory they've inhabited for centuries."

Rosehart said part of his job is to

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## NORTHERN INSIGHTS

by Larry Sanders

