

LESLEY CHOYCE : A MAN AND HIS EGO



The guru attended by groupies: Mary Jo Anderson, Lesley Choyce and Susan Kerslake. Photo by Ariella Pahlke

by ERIN GOODMAN

The Choyce is clear. True literary buffs are escaping the confines of good taste and flocking to join the Lesley Choyce No-Frills, Fuss-Free Avid Fan Club.

The local author, who teaches at Dalhousie, is making waves on the Halifax scene with what may be the first literary fan club in North America.

For a token 50 cents, Choyce groupies will receive hand-crafted, high-quality Lesley Choyce bookmarks, a striking poster of the man of many words, and a list of his literary masterpieces. But all this pales in comparison with the possibility of owning a genuine Lesley Choyce "I'm a modest guy" T-shirt, guaranteed to turn heads. With Lesley's profile emblazoned across your chest, your appreciation of fine literature will never again be questioned. (Although your taste in T-shirts may become an issue of hot debate.)

What devious mind initiated Lesley-Mania? Will these PR prodigies please step forward?

Mary Jo Anderson, Manager of the Canadian Book Information Centre, and writer Susan Kerslake, confessed their sins while

handling the Choyce Fan Club Booth at the 11th Annual Nova Scotia Literary Salon, held at the Lord Nelson Hotel on October 24th. They formed the fan club last spring to express their appreciation of Choyce's commitment as a volunteer host on the Channel 10 television show, "East Coast Authors". The two avid fans gleefully reveal that, "People thought he started his own fan club!"

Describing themselves as "aging groupies", Ms. Kerslake and Ms. Anderson are planning more insanity for club members, which include radio personality Peter Gzowski, and Bill French of the Globe and Mail. A regular newsletter, a distinctive Choyce hand wave and an anthem are several relatively tame innovations, and the future holds a line of Best Choyce hair-care products, a diet plan and an anti-Rambo Choyce doll.

"We have found a wonderful reception to this," comments Kerslake. "Lesley was acutely embarrassed, initially, (but) he has taken it in the spirit in which it was originated."

Choyce has adjusted to fame

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very quickly, and proudly proclaims; "Now it's going to my head... I'm perfectly comfortable with the situation." He feels that Canadian authors should make more aggressive attempts to gain national recognition, and has some encouraging words for struggling artists.

"You should lower yourself to the lowest common denominator..." The remainder of Choyce's uplifting advice was garbled as his wife attempted to extract his tongue from his cheek.

The light-hearted spirit of the Club gently recognizes the very real problem of national exposure among East Coast authors, according to Ms. Anderson:

"Literature has a very sombre profile... We want Canadian literary figures to be household names."

Choyce sees the future of his club in the same positive light. His eyes take on a fanatical brilliance and he grits his teeth into a teen-idol smile as he states, "It's going to change the world."

Graduation Portraits

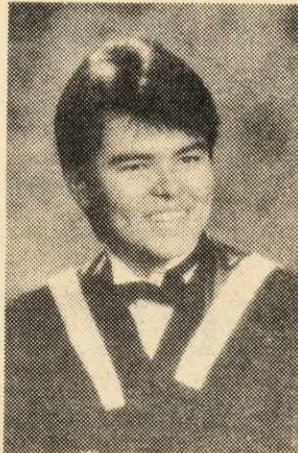
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