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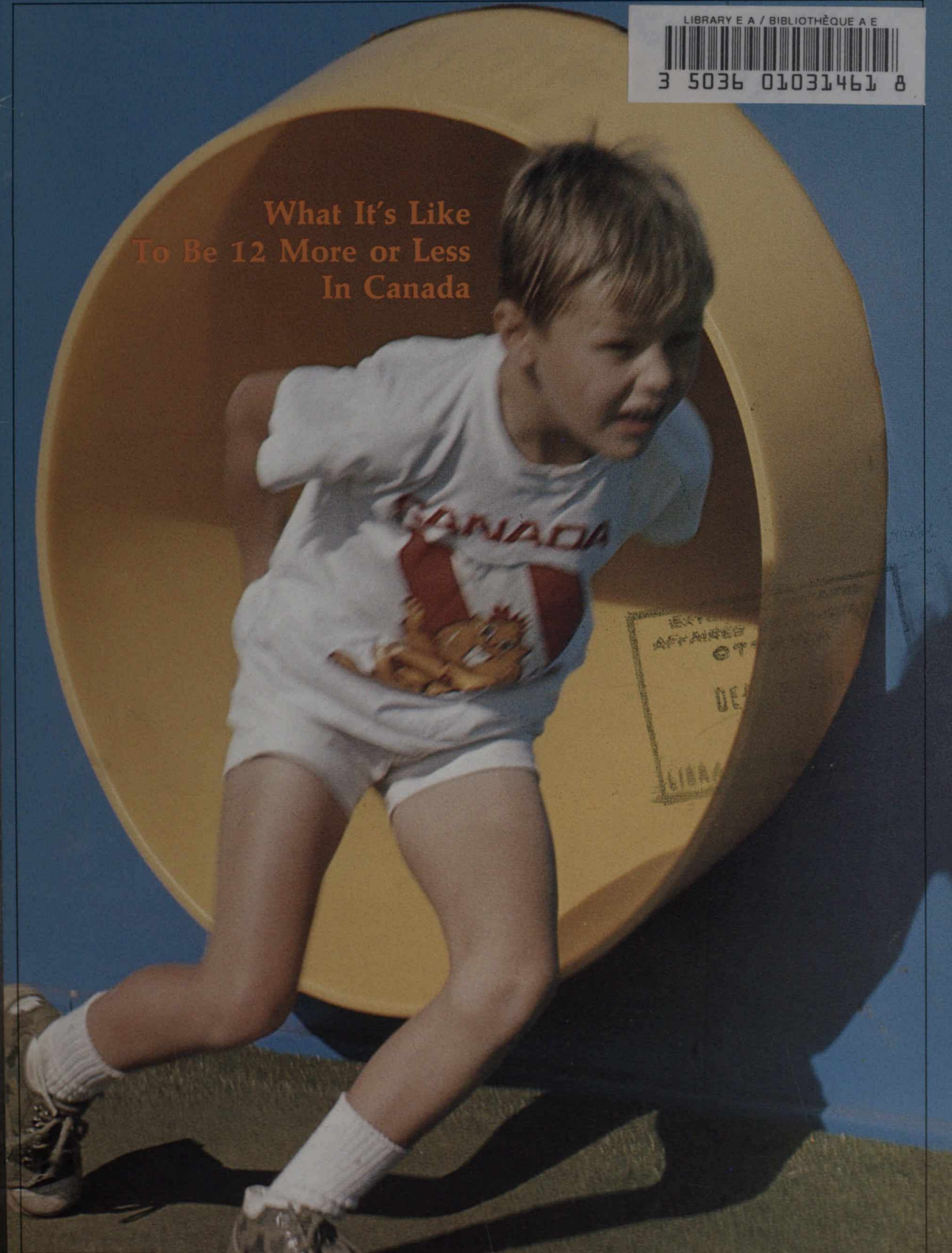
CANADA

TODAY / D'AUJOURD'HUI

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What It's Like
To Be 12 More or Less
In Canada





This is an age of statistics. They tell us, among other things, that today's average twelve-year-old Canadian boy and girl can jump 5 feet 7 inches (or 1.70 metres) and 5 feet 4 inches (or 1.62 metres) respectively.

Fortunately there are no average Canadian children — if there were, track meets would end in ties. Some boys jump six feet, and some four. Some girls jump farther than some boys. Some Canadian girls and boys speak French, some English, and some both. Some speak Gaelic, Japanese, Iroquois, Italian, Ukrainian or Portuguese. Some live on prairie farms, some in Montreal duplexes; and some are apprentice deck hands on Newfoundland fishing smacks.

In this issue of CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI we cannot look at them all, but we will look at some, present and past, and try to suggest how life can feel when one is young and living in North America, above the 49th parallel. Feelings are best seen from the corner of the eye; so we give you the Hanks of Manitoba, some pictures, some essays, a story, some recollections and a number of observations by people past the first glow of youth.

The Truth About Textbooks

[OR WHY CHILDREN IN CANADA HAVE SOMETIMES FELT SLIGHTLY OUT OF PLACE]

Satu Repo, a writer and former editor of *This Magazine*, summed up the past. "Canadian public-school readers," she said, "differ from public-school readers in most other countries in that they don't attempt to give children a sense of *patria*, either geographically or ideologically."*



For the first hundred years or so life was viewed in Canadian classrooms from the vantage point of London or Chicago or Mount Sinai.

The first official textbooks in Canada, *The Irish*

Readers, were introduced in 1846 by Egerton Ryerson, Upper Canada's Superintendent of Education; and they remained the authorized readers for twenty years. Designed to reduce tension in Ireland by stressing Old Testament biblical virtues and British *continued on page four*

* All direct quotations are from Satu Repo, "From Pilgrim's Progress to Sesame Street: 125 Years of Colonial Readers," in George Martell, ed., *The Politics of the Canadian Public School* (James Lorimer & Co., 1974), pp. 118-133.

In Saskatchewan It Is Impossible to be Kept Back in the Sixth Grade But in Ontario You Can Flunk Grade Thirteen

All Canadian children from six or seven to twelve, fifteen or sixteen (depending on the province or territory) must go to school. About 97.5 per cent of them go to publicly-controlled schools.

A publicly-controlled school in Canada is not always the same as a public school in the United States. In most provinces there are "public" schools without affiliation, but in some, "separate" schools may be organized on denominational or linguistic bases. When Newfoundland consolidated its three-hundred-odd denominational school boards to thirty-five in 1971, it ended up with twelve Roman Catholic districts, twenty-one integrated Protestant, one Pentecostal and one Seventh Day Adventist. In Quebec most children go to the publicly supported Catholic schools, and most of the remaining children to schools with Protestant school boards. Most Jewish children are part of the Protestant school system.

At present there are about 460,000 Canadian twelve-year-olds in school. If they go to school in Saskatchewan, their elementary school has a continuous progress plan. The first six years are divided into two divisions, each the equivalent of three grades. Within each division the pupil

moves at his own best pace in each subject. So far the plan has been implemented in Divisions I and II, and soon a twelve-year-old may enter Division III instead of the seventh grade.

High schools also differ from province to province. Ontario youngsters can go through grade thirteen and receive a Secondary Honour Graduation Diploma. Those who finish grade thirteen need only three years at university for a B.A. Quebec secondary schooling ends at grade eleven, and those seeking a university education must first go to regional colleges called *Collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel*, or CEGEPs, which offer both university preparatory courses and complete three-year technical courses in such fields as business administration, auto mechanics and secretarial sciences.

Canada's provincial governments run the schools. Local school boards (*commissions scolaires* in Quebec) build buildings, hire teachers and prepare budgets. The provincial ministers of education select curricula and textbooks, but local boards have been assuming greater responsibilities in these areas. Nearly 97 per cent of the money spent by public school boards comes from local or provincial taxation.

continued from page three

unity, the books were used throughout the nineteenth-century Empire. Religion dominated their selections:

Then let me always watch my lips,
Lest I be struck to death and hell,
Since God a book of reckoning keeps
For every lie that children tell.

The second official textbooks, *The Ontario Readers*, were published in 1909 and remained in use through 1936. Though compiled by Canadians, they gave less emphasis to Old Testament morality than to Imperial British sentiments:

"The Canadian"

J. C. Middleton

I never saw the cliffs of snow,
The Channel billows tipped with cream,
The restless, eddy tides that flow
About the Island of my dream.
I never saw the English downs
Upon an April day.
The quiet, old Cathedral towns.
The hedgerows white with May.

*And still the name of England,
Which tyrants laugh to scorn
Can thrill my soul. It is to me
A very bugle-horn.*

The *Ontario Readers* were scrapped in 1937. In the next four decades there was a new emphasis, which was not officially sponsored. Its success was incidental to other profound changes in the world

and the Western Hemisphere. It came from the United States and reflected the homogeneity of a continental market economy.

Most recently there has been an attempt to fashion a competitive set of books, the *Nelson Readers*, with a distinct, if usually subtle, Canadian flavour. In the following poem by Emily Hearn, the Canadian flavour, the reference to skating, is authentic, though brief:

Courage is when you're
allergic to cats and
your new friend says, can
you come to her house to
play after school and
stay for dinner then
maybe go skating and
sleep overnight? And,
she adds, you can pet
her small kittens! Oh,
how you ache to. It
takes courage to
say 'no' to all that.

Ms. Repo concluded that editors find it difficult to create a strong sense of national identity in a country that has accepted satellite relationships with more powerful nations. She said, "In 125 years of public education in Ontario we have moved from the vision of being Christian soldiers and empire builders to the goal of becoming happy individualists in pursuit of excitement."

The Four Young Hanks Would Rather Live in Baldur

Dr. Edward Hanks and Mrs. Hanks and their children — Arthur, Sarah, Timothy and Robert, ages nine to thirteen — live in a two-story wooden house in Baldur, a town of four hundred in south-east Manitoba. Sarah's best friend, Sidney Beaufoy, lives a house and a road away.

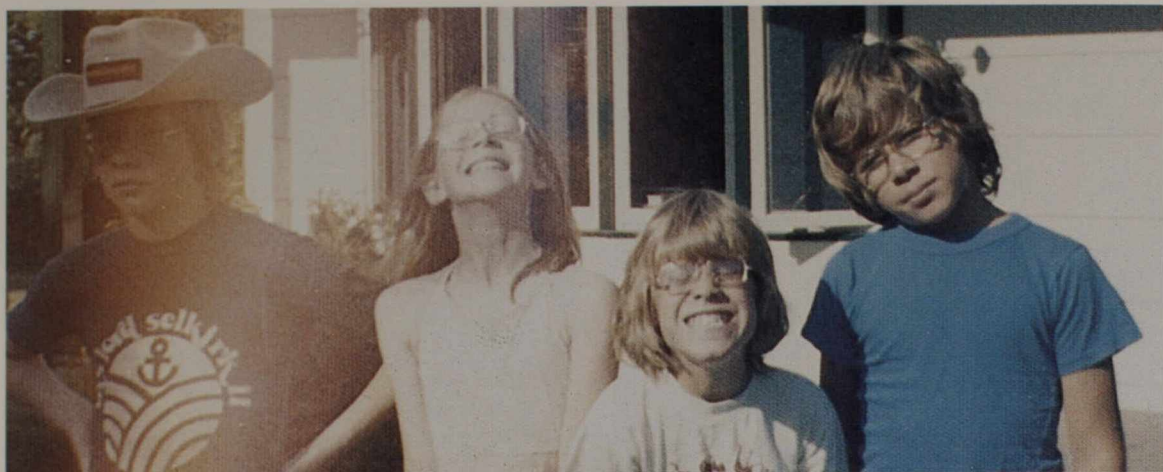
If you live in Baldur, your physical world is large: Dr. Hanks drives 150 miles to Winnipeg every Tuesday or Wednesday, in a little over two hours, on straight uncrowded roads. Your personal world is small: everyone in Baldur knows a lot about everyone else.

If you are young, you probably know your brothers and sisters very well, better perhaps, or at least differently, than you would know them if you lived together in the city. Also you may read more. All of the Hanks children read regularly.

Arthur is called "The Bookworm." He prefers

history, but he is often kidded by his older sister and brothers about his enchantment with a book called *The Love Story of a Spanish Princess*. Timothy says, "When Arthur finishes a book, he starts a new book right away. If there isn't another he starts the same book over." Sarah likes mysteries. In the last year she has read twenty-nine different Nancy Drew books.

If you are eleven, soon to be twelve, as Timothy is, you may be inclined to make a little fun of Arthur and Sarah. You are more cautious with Robert, who is thirteen. "I'm the first one to get up in the morning," Timothy says. "I make my own breakfast; these three have to wait for Mom to get their breakfast. I'm creative. Sometimes I go up-town about nine. There's this guy called Oscar; his store is open any time — he opens about 8:30 and he closes whenever he wants to."



Robert, Sarah, Arthur and Timothy

The principal place for hanging around in Baldur is the hotel. There are also a beer parlour, two gas stations, two groceries (one of which sells clothes), a high school with playing fields, a winter skating rink and a bank. There is a hospital with sixteen beds and a staff consisting of Dr. Hanks, a blood technician and some nurses. There are five churches—Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, United and Lutheran. Many people of Belgian ancestry attend the first, and many whose parents and grandparents came from Iceland fill the last. There was once a barber shop.

There is no movie house in Baldur, but there is one in Somerset, thirty miles away. There is also one in Glenboro; but the young Hanks do not think much of its films, and Sarah says, "The popcorn tastes like soap."

In summer the days are long; the sun does not set until ten or eleven at night. The sky is enormous and distances are deceptive. It gets very hot but the heat is dry. Rock Lake, a favourite fishing spot, is nearby, left behind eons ago when the Pembina River changed its course. Robert was a devoted fisherman until he lost his rod and twenty dollars' worth of tackle on a school outing. He was so mad that he hasn't fished since.

Baldur has a hardball baseball team called the Jets, and according to Timothy there is "a fourteen-and-under girls' softball team which is hopeless." Baseball is not particularly popular in Baldur; Belgian bowling—an outdoor game played with flattened balls and pegs—is.

In the autumn the interest of the young turns to Halloween. Last Halloween, when one man failed to provide candy for trick-or-treaters, the younger kids put snow all over his sidewalks. The high school kids put farm machinery in the middle of the road and pipes on the bridge across the creek. "Everybody does things like that when they're in high school," Timothy says.

Ice for hockey comes in November and sometimes lasts until March. All the Hanks boys play

on organized teams. At season's end each group has a banquet. Winter has other advantages. It gets very cold—sometimes down to 40°F below (-40°C), with winds which give a chill factor of -95° (-84.8°C)—but it is a healthy time of the year. No one gets colds or viral infections.

The Hanks like to visit Winnipeg, which has a population of over 600,000, but they wouldn't like to live there. They would not like to live in a place smaller than Baldur either—Beanway, for example. Beanway was a railroad town until Canadian National switched to diesels. It now has a winter population of one, a Mr. Todd, and a summer population of two when a lady who vacations there arrives in June.



Steve Laurie, twelve, lives in an apartment in Ste. Foy, part of greater Quebec City. He has one brother, two sisters and a cat named Tigress. He speaks French and English and can, therefore, enjoy the cinema in both. He intends to be either a hockey or baseball player when he grows up. That may be difficult; Phil Esposito recalls "falling like a tree" so often at the age of fourteen that "the trainer sewed sponges into my pants to protect my hips."

A Camp Without Canoes, Trophies or Fireside Songs

*When Shizuye Takashima was twelve, in 1941, she and her family and some twenty-two thousand other Japanese living in British Columbia were stripped of their civil rights and sent to retention camps. The Allied war with Japan, which followed the attack on Pearl Harbor, caused an intense reaction in both the United States and Canada against residents and citizens of Japanese ancestry. Families were uprooted; and businesses, farms and even homes expropriated. Shizuye and her parents and sister were sent to a primitive camp in a beautiful mountain valley. Shizuye is now an established artist. Her recently published book, *A Child in Prison Camp*, recalls the hardships of her imprisonment, but it also recounts her natural twelve-year-old exuberance.**

David sends Yuki and me a wallet each. Mine is made of black leather with a shining zipper which closes all around the wallet. I am so happy, the day I receive it, I put it by my pillow before going to sleep. Father sees me and says, "You're an old woman, taking your gold to bed! . . ." He laughs. I pretend not to hear and put the black treasure under my pillow. Yuki laughs too, "You're so funny. Honestly, my God," she sighs.

Early in the morning while everyone is asleep, I take out my wallet, slowly open it. The small picture of my brother is still there; he had put it in * [Shizuye] Takashima, *A Child in Prison Camp* (Montreal and New York: Tundra Books, 1971), n.p.

before sending it to us. I open the change section. I have forty cents, money mother has given me for helping with chores. Everything is in place. I zip the zipper back in its place, smell the leather. It smells fresh and nice. I whisper, "Thank you, David," and slowly, I feel myself drifting off to another world. My arms and legs seem to grow large, large. They go beyond the room, through the walls, across the road, through the trees beyond the lake and even touch the mountains. I feel as if I am a giant. Then I go very quickly into space and see different coloured spots of light. They are very beautiful. And now my body is gone.

I leave it behind, and I go faster and faster at a great speed. The coloured spots of light are gone, and I am in a pale blue, lovely space, very airy and magiclike! This happens so often, I am used to it now. But when I was younger, I used to get scared and force myself to wake up. Now I love the feeling of flying! And I love the colour dreams, where I see all my old friends, and David. Even my dead grandma comes to see me, or I go to see her. We have tea together. It is fun. She still wears long, black shoes with laces past her ankles, just the way she always did, and narrow, dark dresses.

I tell mother the next day. She had told us that bad dreams should be told to someone immediately and treasured dreams kept, like found money, to oneself. But this one we all feel happy about, to know grandma is well and is looked after.

Paradise Denied

*Alden Nowlan, a poet of the maritime provinces, writes a regular column called "Notebook" for The Atlantic Advocate. Below is an excerpt from one on childhood.**

The myth of childhood as a lost Eden is perpetuated by adults who have blotted their own early years from their minds. . . .

Being a kid is a mug's game even in prosperous and peaceful Canada.

When I was five I experienced a prolonged terror worse than any other I've known.

An idiot somewhere had predicted that the world would end on such and such a date. It must have been reported in the newspapers and

* Alden Nowlan, "Notebook," *The Atlantic Advocate*, vol. 65, no. 5 (Jan. 1975), p. 63.

on the radio. The big kids joked about it, but I was deathly afraid.

And mine was a very practical fear. I asked myself what means God would use to destroy life on earth and decided at last that he would cause the clouds to fall.

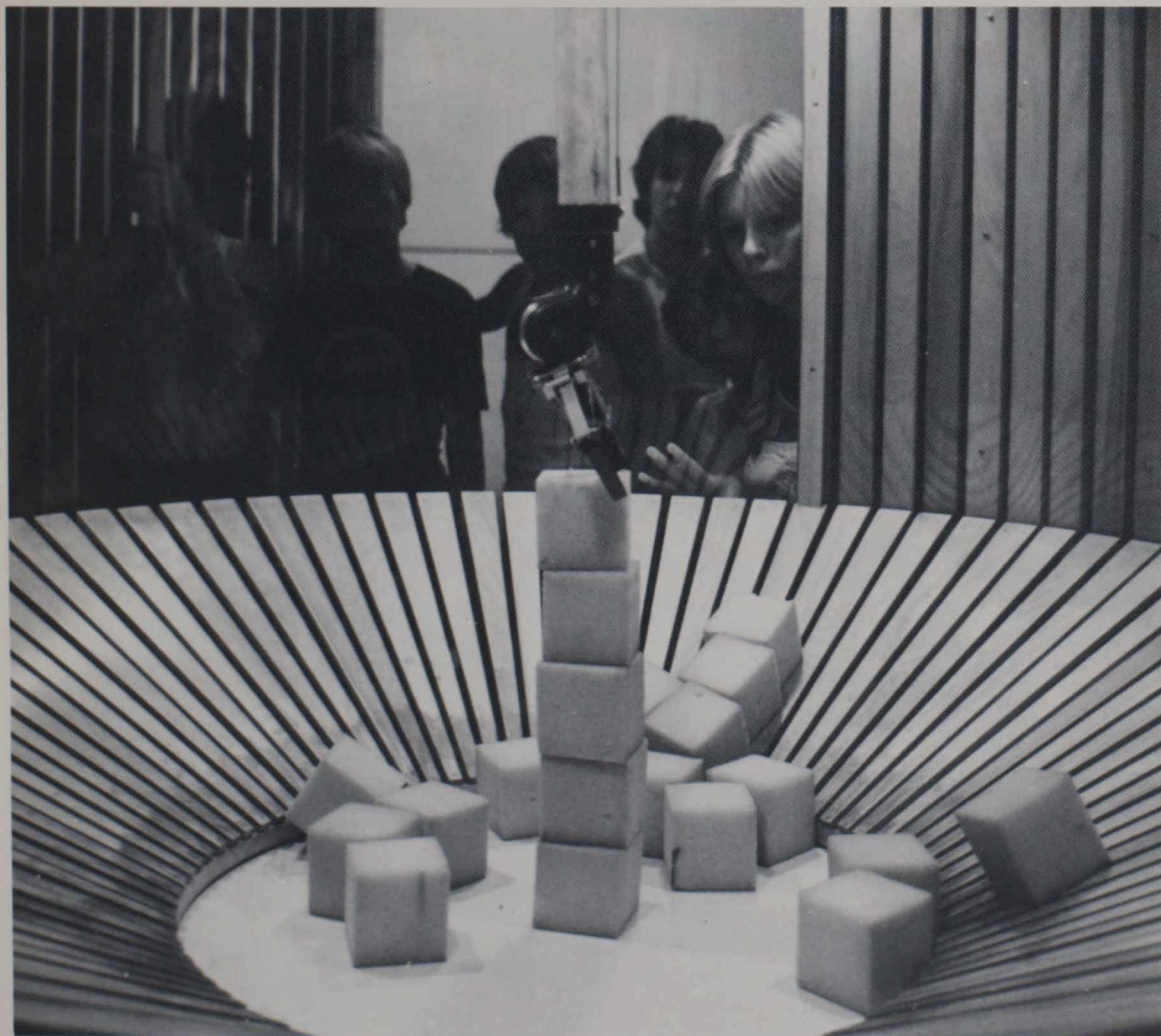
I supposed the clouds were made from enormously heavy substance. I don't remember what gave me that idea.

On days when the sky was clear I was calm and even happy. But the moment a cloud appeared I became terrified and if it seemed to be drifting toward me I went almost insane.

How long did that last? Probably only a day or so, but in retrospect it seems that it must have gone on for weeks.



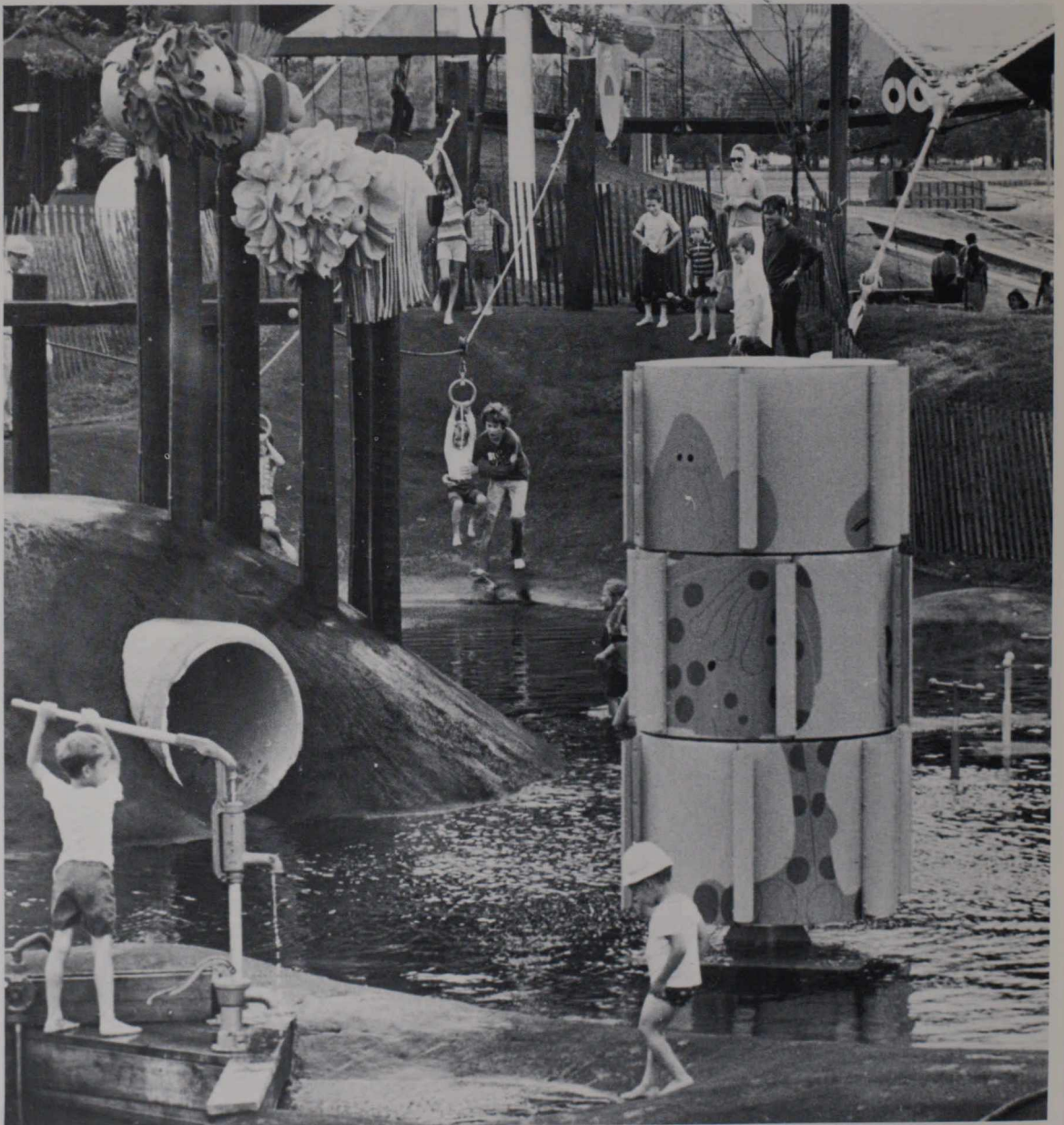
The Ontario Science Centre was designed for curious young people. Eighty per cent of its exhibits concern science, and young visitors can be directly involved in most of them. They can operate pumps; generate electricity by riding a stationary bicycle; play tic-tac-toe on a computer; zoom, pan and focus a remote-control TV camera; and stack cubes with mechanical hands.





Ontario Place is located on three man-made islands in Lake Ontario. It has a staggering combination of things, from a motion picture theatre with eight hundred seats and a screen six stories high, to picnic areas and a Children's Village which is open only to those between four and fourteen years old.

The Bicycle Cannons give the sappy flavour of the Water Play section. The young visitor pumps bike pedals and builds up water pressure inside his cannon. He can then shoot a jet at a target or a friend. The best part is that everybody gets wet. The second best part is that everybody then leaves through a giant dryer, shaped like a bird, and gets dry.





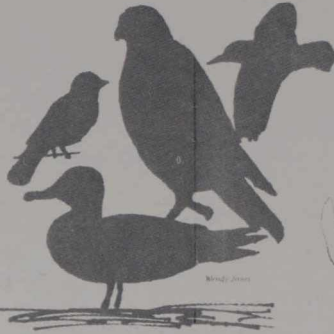
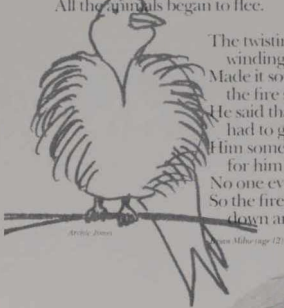
Owl is a new "Canadian Outdoor and Wild Life Magazine for Children." It is handsomely and intelligently illustrated and well written. It assumes, soundly, that no one need talk, write or draw down to the young. It is published by the Young Naturalist Foundation, 59 Front Street East, Toronto, Ontario M5E 1B3.

All your own

The red enemy

Our campfire started high as our knees,
But before it was finished it was high as the trees.
As that racing red enemy devoured every tree
All the animals began to flee.

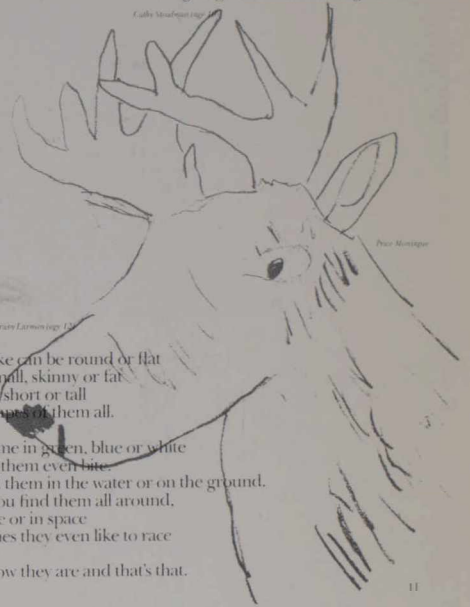
The twisting, twirling winding smoke,
Made it sound like the fire spoke.
He said that someone had to give
Him some more food for him to live
No one even ever tried,
So the fire just lay down and died.



The iron monster

The snow fell, lightly at first then getting stronger.
It piled a thick white sheet on the ground.
The iron monster came through the street
Piling huge white drifts along the side.

Colin Strickland (age 12)



Snakes

The snake can be round or flat
Big or small, skinny or fat
It can be short or tall
Or in shapes of them all.

They come in green, blue or white
Some of them even bite.
You find them in the water or on the ground.
In fact you find them all around.
On a tree or in space
Sometimes they even like to race

That's how they are and that's that.

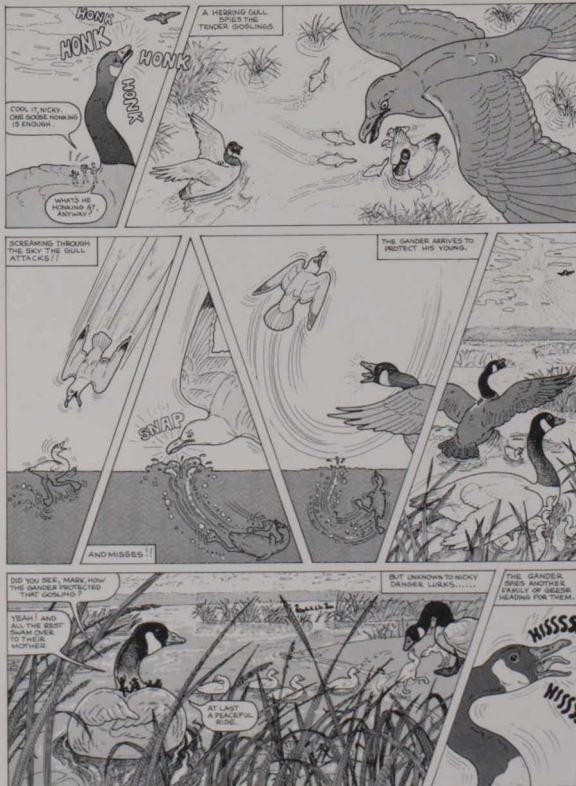
I am writing to tell you what I would like in OWL. I like stories about animals and trees (not too scary). I also like poems, mazes, crosswords and wordfinds.

I would also like some information that could be useful for school projects. I think all ages would like scientific facts.

I can't wait until I get it!

*Suzanne,
Cuba (age 10)*

This is my drawing of a snake, but it would be a better drawing if I had put the eyes lower down. — Jani MacIver



Must children's books always be written by adults? An organization called Books By Kids decided, not necessarily. The result is a book called *Wordsandwich*. Below are excerpts from it — some fiction, "cylinder steve," by Susie Donahue and a memoir, "Thirteen," by Paula Pepper.*

Cylinder Steve

Steve was an ordinary every-day kid. He liked playing hockey and he adored, for some unknown reason, rolling on the floor, ground or even on his bed.

One day, during his usual rolling exercises, Steve started rolling down a very big hill. He could not stop. His younger brother Andy rode his bicycle along beside Steve, waiting patiently for him to stop rolling. Well, he rolled and rolled. He rolled right through a traffic light, in and around many cars. . . .

You see, he lived in Montreal, a very hilly place. His mother had warned him about his rolling, but he didn't listen.

He rolled for hours. Finally, he stopped in a small town called Bala, population 35.

"Steve!!!" shouted Andy in terror, "You're, you're, um, like a telephone pole. You're a cylinder!!!"

"Not to worry," Steve said, looking at himself, "I'll fix it." . . .

So they rode home on Andy's bicycle. Andy peddled and Steve, after great difficulty, was lying in the basket up front.

They arrived home three hours later. His mother was appalled.

"Steve and Andy, where have you been? STEVEN!" she screamed, "You're, you're, you're!"

"Cylinder shaped," Steve put in.

"You're cylinder shaped!!! What happened?"

They explained. His mother listened intently.

"What am I going to do?" she cried, "Our bridge club will be here tonight, and they always want to see how the children have grown."

Well, evening came and despite their efforts, Steve was still a cylinder.

"Well," his mother said, "just act normally."

When the time came Steve and Andy were ready. . . .

"Well, hello Lois!" exclaimed one fat lady, "you're looking good." She sniffed. "Do you have a cat?"

When she entered she hung her coat on the hall tree. The only problem was, the Jacksons did not have one . . . it was Steve!!! His mother rushed over, zapped the coat off Steve and said,

"Excuse me!!! This is my son, Steven, and this is my other son, Andrew!"

The lady was very embarrassed. She said her apologies, and as soon as the other ladies arrived they started to play. It was a long, boring game.

When M*A*S*H was over, Steve decided to have a bath. It was rather awkward, but he managed. . . .

"Mom! Mom!" came a scream from the bathroom, "I'm UNCYLINDERING!"

"Oh! Uh, um, excuse me, ladies!" his mother stuttered as she ran towards the bathroom.

"Mommy," said five-year-old Andy, "Steve ain't like a . . ."

"Steve isn't," corrected the ex-English teacher.

"Mom!" came a voice from the bathroom, "I'm normal!!!"

"Now my dear boy is not a hall tree!" she cried.

Steve stepped out of the bathroom into the living room, to model himself. His only problem was that in the excitement he forgot to pick up his towel.

"Oh Steve, you're, you're, you're naked!"

Steve rushed into the bathroom. He was blushing. He grabbed a towel and stepped back out with a smile going from one ear to the other. The ladies stood up and cheered. Andy was so happy he tore his Spiderman comic in two. Mrs. Jackson and Steve danced around the room. . . .

Thirteen

Thirteen is a really bad age to be. You are too old to be a baby about most things, including dolls, and making loud noises, and behaving rudely in company, or at the table, but you are

* *Wordsandwich* (Toronto: Books by Kids, 1975), pp. 70-74, 15-16.

too young to be with adults for a lot of things you would like to do.

Some days at thirteen you feel like being a tomboy, and running around in old clothes, jumping fences, stealing apples, tripping the postman, picking someone's flowers, and getting really dirty.

Other days you feel very grown-up, and enjoy getting dressed up, using some of mother's make-up, wearing white gloves, and behaving like a lady. The problem seems to be that adults expect this to go on all the time, and, after all, at thirteen a girl is not ready to settle down and begin behaving every day, and every hour.

Another thing, girls of thirteen are expected to be able to do more things around the house, run errands without complaining, do a lot of things without being told, not harassing their brothers, and not being saucy to their parents. It just seems that neither the thirteen-year-old nor the parents know which way to go at the age of thirteen.

I can remember going to a wedding at that age, two years ago, when a relative of ours was married, and everyone there could do things like dance, and I couldn't, and drink wine, which I couldn't, and speak in groups, which I couldn't, and I found the whole event, to which I had looked forward with such anticipation, to be a terrible drag.

I hope I can remember what it was like at thirteen because I want to be able to tell my daughter to expect it to be a trying experience. They aren't kidding when they say it is the 'awkward age', and I think it is especially painful for a girl.

Perhaps boys have the same trouble, but it appears that they are allowed to stay tomboys longer than girls, and a boy of thirteen isn't expected to be all grown up all at once. They can have fun and get fairly dirty because they play sports and no one minds, but a girl just has a very bad time of it!

School Bus in the Dark

Chris Watts was twelve years old more than a decade ago. He was born in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, but by the time he was twelve, he was in Whitehorse in the Yukon. He is now a Foreign Service Officer with the Canadian Department of External Affairs.

Whitehorse had about twelve thousand people and was a very mixed bag. There were public servants, an army base (where I lived) and an air force base. It was the administrative centre of the territory and head office for mining companies, transportation companies and service industries.

Our school came under the British Columbia school system. The Yukon wasn't populous enough to have its own system. There was one great big school right in the centre of town. The army base was up on a hill, a two-mile hill, and we drove down to school in buses. Everyone went to that school which went from zero to grade twelve.

The summer in Whitehorse — what there was of it — was the most fun, if one could forget the mosquitoes. I think my greatest joy was exploring the countryside. I'm an inveterate tourist and the whole family loved to travel.

In the winter we left for school in the dark and came home in the dark. Because of the dark it always seemed so much colder. I used to deliver papers (always in the darkness in the dead of winter). The paper came out every second week, and you collected your money when you delivered your paper. Having to stand outdoors in the middle

of winter you just froze. I don't know now how I managed to keep it up.

Winter lasted a long time. Snow came in October and didn't disappear until May. Occasionally you'd get a Chinook wind from British Columbia which was very pleasant, but because the mountains were very close it brought with it plenty of snow. The Chinook could come any time and would warm things up for a couple of days, in the winter up to 10° or 20°F [-12.2° or -6.6°C]. There was one day when Whitehorse was the warmest spot in North America — one freak winter day when even Miami was colder than Whitehorse. The temperature that day was probably in the forties.

Things were expensive in Whitehorse. Food was very expensive. We didn't buy fresh milk; we had powdered milk and I hated it.

In the wintertime my parents used to go curling. You couldn't go skating very much; it was just too cold. We just played outside the way kids do.

We were told to bring our TV with us from Winnipeg, but you had to buy a special connection to hook it up. We never did, so we lived without it. Radio became a very large part of our lives. For some reason the station was very big on British programs, so we were brought up on a lot of those.

There were quite a few kids my own age around, but as a kid I was pretty much of a loner. Being in the army you were always moving around, and

by the time you made a friend, you were just leaving. Few of the kids I went to school with lived on the base, so I didn't see friends outside of school. I read a lot.

When I was twelve we moved back to Winnipeg. I was going back to the class I had left two years earlier. By that time they were a cohesive group. They had taken French, whereas I had never

done so. I felt behind them in certain respects and never did feel a part of the class.

Whitehorse was a different society because you had to depend on yourself for entertainment. It was small and without all the modern conveniences, but I enjoyed my time there as much as any other time in my life.

An Irish Town in Quebec



Paula Irby grew up in Chelsea, Quebec, a village near Ottawa, with houses on the highway and farms behind them. When she was small,

Chelsea was an English-speaking enclave in the French-speaking province, without a movie house and with a single, small general store. Today it is nearly sixty per cent French speaking and has almost merged with Hull, the French-speaking city which lies across the river from Ottawa. Many things have changed in a decade and a half. The differences between Catholic and Protestant people of Irish descent have faded. Here Mrs. Irby, now a secretary living in Springfield, Virginia, remembers her early adolescence.

We're all pretty much Irish — some Scots but mostly Irish. In Old Chelsea everything was built around the Catholic church and in New Chelsea we had a really small Protestant church. Old Chelsea was larger and older.

We were never allowed to go out with Catholics, but I was very animal oriented so I didn't care much about going out with boys anyway. I kept my horse at a farm in New Chelsea, although I did buy him from somebody from Old Chelsea. But the disassociation was very real. When I was eleven, I would sneak up across the field to Old Chelsea and play with my Catholic friends. If my parents ever caught me coming back across the field, they would be upset. But I remember my parents would go to the bingo games in Old Chelsea at the Catholic church.

As I said, I was more interested in animals. I started off with a snake when I was six. I went from there to a rabbit, and I always had dogs. I got my horse when I was about thirteen. I had to work to get it. I paid something like \$25 a month to pay off the horse. He cost about \$200. That was very cheap. I didn't know how to ride that well, but he was a good horse. When I got up in the morning, I would go down and clean out the stable and brush him off and take him for his exercise.

When I was five, in grade one, I went to a one-room school house with a pot-bellied stove. Then when I was in grade two, they built a school in the field behind our house, and it held one hundred students for seven grades. I did alright in school. French was a compulsory language. If you failed French you failed your year.

The summer and fall were lovely. The winter was cold. I was about ten; we didn't have plumbing, but we had a backhouse. In the wintertime you wouldn't spend any time out there. You had to go tramping through the snow.

I used to ski to school in the wintertime. It was only across a field, but it was nice to ski to school. We always used to wear a scarf around our mouths because it would get down to forty below, and if you breathed in through your mouth you would get this terrible pain in your chest.

When you were in Chelsea during the winter months, unless you had a boyfriend, you didn't really get out because there wasn't anywhere to go. Church dances were the biggest thing. People would come from Wakefield. Dances were held at the Protestant church, which was a three-minute walk from my house. The English community would come around, and the Catholics too. And they would go to our little white church. Saturday night was the big night out. I think I only had one dress and I'd wear that all the time. My cousin would come and she would curl my hair and it was really exciting. And that's where we would meet the other young people.

We didn't get to Ottawa very often when I was young, because we didn't have very much money. It was always a big thing to go in to the Exhibition every fall. I used to look forward to that. They have a fair with the pigs and the cows and the horses, and they have the amusements. We would get to go one day in the week. The candy floss, that's what I liked to eat. When I was fourteen, the boys would ask us to go out somewhere in the summertime, and I would say, "Let's go to the Ottawa Exhibition," because that was the most exciting thing I could think of at the time.

La belle époque pour Mary et la crise pour Jacques

Approximately one Canadian child in four is French speaking. A youngster in Quebec grows up in a culture which, though identifiably Canadian, is distinct from the culture of Toronto or Vancouver. There can be no such thing as an All-Canadian Boy or Girl. In the following recollections we view the French fact from somewhat different perspectives.

Ms. Mary de Bellefeuille is one of the fortunate Canadians who can, without straining emotion, feel part of two cultures — she has been fluent from childhood in both of Canada's official languages. Since attending Ottawa University, a bilingual school, she has taught French and worked in broadcasting.

We lived outside of Hull, Quebec, in a big old house on four and a half acres. My mother was French Canadian; my father spoke only English, and that's what we spoke at home. I had one little playmate who lived across the highway — Hélène Hupé. She was six, I was five, and at first we played together through sign language.

The closest school was French, and my mother wanted me to go to school with Hélène, so I wouldn't have to walk by myself on the highway. September came and my mother went up to the school — a little, red-brick place, four rooms on a hill — and she said, "I want to enroll my daughter." They said, "Non, non, non." They would not accept me because I would not be six until January. The parish priest, le curé Trudeau, was my grandmother's cousin, and my mother phoned him and said, "Je veux que Mary commence l'école tout de suite au mois de septembre." He said, "Quel âge a-t-elle?" and my mother said, "Five," and he said, "Well no, you can't do that." My mother said, "Well then, M. le Curé, I'll send her to the Protestant school!" So I was registered in the French school — the Catholic one — the very next day.

I started not knowing a word of French. By Christmas I was third in the class. To this day I cannot do multiplication tables in English. I have to do them in French and translate.

It was the best way to learn French — to be five years old in a totally French environment. The only way I could survive was to learn French.

There were very few English speakers. I would speak French with Hélène, the little girl across the highway, and her family would kid me. "What is this?" the father would say pointing to a tooth pick. I thought about it and said, "Pick-dents." They all laughed and I learned a tooth

pick was "un cure-dents."

My name was Sheehan, and that was a barrier, but everyone was very nice. We always had to wear the long lisle stockings to school, with long black dresses and little white collars and cuffs. It used to get very warm toward the end of June, and one day, when I was ten, my mother said, "You're going to wear knee socks tomorrow." So I did. I walked around with my knees bent, but at recess we were playing ball and I thought the principal couldn't see me. Suddenly I saw her looking at me and saying all the things I expected her to say. She sent me home and told me to come back tomorrow in my lisle stockings. My mother was furious and said, "No teacher is going to tell me what to put my daughter in." So I wore the knee socks the next day with a note from my mother saying, "My daughter finds it too warm for long stockings."

Later at the English school, I had the worst time going to confession because I knew all my prayers in French. So I'd say to the priest in the confessional, "Do you understand French?" And if he did not, all the better. . . .

When I was nine or ten, my father developed a love for animals. He started with goats. He came home one day in a rickety old truck with a goat in tow — a nanny, and we had that goat for years. We used to stake her, and she'd eat everything within reach; and then we'd move her. My brothers used to love it because they didn't have to mow the lawn.

At the Connaught Race Track, there was a horse called Prince Canter who was very fast at the start but never quite made it to the end. They were going to shoot him, and my father said, "Don't, I'll buy him."

After that came the pigs. We had an electrified wire enclosure, but they used to get out regularly and run down the highway. There'd be three boys and my father trying to catch them. It was very embarrassing.

To finish the story of Nanny — one day Nanny got loose and ate all the turkey feed and blew up, literally exploded. We found out later

that had we taken anything sharp and just let the air out, she'd have lived.

My father was a very fair, honest man, and I loved him dearly; but I knew his limits. I was not allowed to date until the last year in high school, and never in cars. Whenever anyone asked me out, he had to take the bus all the way from wherever he was, maybe Ottawa, and walk a mile and a half from Hull to our place. I didn't date very much.

My grandfather was the head shipper at Connors Washers in Hull. The factory was not too far from my English-language school. On Fridays I'd walk down to the factory, and he'd take me to this old greasy spoon for lunch. We always had fish and chips and ice cream. All his friends would be there. There I was this little girl and all these nice old men. It was always a treat.

M. Jacques Cousineau, a Canadian diplomat in Washington, DC, grew up in Montreal during World War II, when tension over the conscription of young men for overseas service was at a peak. (In general, English-speaking Canadians favoured conscription and French-speaking Canadians did not.)

It was thirty years ago. I grew up in the part of Montreal called the North (it is very central now). There were houses near mine where you could go up to the third floor by outside stairs. In ice and snow it was quite nice for the young children to see people going down faster than they wanted.

There was nobody there who spoke English; there were some Italians, but they spoke French too. When I was younger I had lived in the western part, where there was a majority of English-speaking people, but we didn't talk much to them. They were a great mystery to us and we were a great mystery to them.

My father died when I was nine, and every summer my mother visited her parents in the country. I helped with the haymaking which I enjoyed — a little, not too much, because I was more the bookworm.

I read the prize books my father and mother had won in school. About two-thirds were from France and had no reference to Canada, and one-third were Canadian. They were mostly adventures — where the good guy always won — and that was what I wanted. They had very little to do with the North American urban life I was living, but I enjoyed them very much.

When I was young there were movie houses, but you couldn't go there until you were seventeen. Each year there were four or five films shown for children, mostly American, often

silent. We enjoyed them, but they were rather rare.

I started my secondary school, the classical college [a preparatory school] at twelve. It was about two miles away, and I had to take the streetcar every day for eight years (except summers of course). On Sundays we had mass followed by a class.

I started Latin when I was twelve — a very different language — you had to learn to express yourself in a different form. It was useful. Years later, when I went to Italy, I switched to Italian very quickly. Now when I try to speak Latin I go into Italian.

Today they have more girls than boys at my old college — back then it would have been unthinkable. No girls could approach within a quarter of a mile. Even at the junior schools, there was a building for the boys and a building for the girls. You were not supposed to meet — which was no problem, I presume, for people who had plenty of sisters. But as I was alone I never met girls. I have remained shy ever since.

When I was twelve, English-speaking Canada was another world. To me it was Westmount, perhaps Ottawa. I knew there was such a place as Toronto. The only way we heard of the rest of Canada was by radio or by the press, and these were not very faithful — to use a French word, *fidèle* — reflections of the other world. It was far away, but not too far because of the conscription crisis. It was a major crisis. People were worried and generally dissatisfied.

I was very conformist when I was twelve, which meant I was in favour of what I read in the papers and what my relatives said. It just happened that on conscription they weren't the same thing, so I was very much in favour of winning the war but not in favour of conscription.

French Canada was too weak at the time to threaten the rest of the country — it could have voted against the government, but it could not have mattered too much otherwise. There was certainly no possibility of separation.

The conscription crisis marked each generation very much. The young ones were the rebels; they hated the way their views were ignored in Ottawa — or so they thought. The older ones were just worried and thus glad to get back to quieter times when the war was over.

Montreal is different now. It is a pluralistic world. When I was young everyone in my part of town was Catholic and everyone went to church. There was no question. My children go to church, but they have next to them in the same schoolroom people who don't, so they realize the differences of convictions. Now nothing seems impossible to a child. I remember

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waking my children in the middle of the night to show them people on television walking on the moon. They didn't seem to think this was extraordinary. Why wake them for that?

When I finished my first university, I went to complete my studies in the United States, at

Syracuse University. I knew that Syracuse was very far from Montreal; but when I told a young and pretty girl that my strange accent was because I was a French Canadian, she told me that that was not possible because she had read in school that the last one had died two centuries before.

First-grade children in Edmonton, Alberta, are given Blue Spruce saplings on Arbor Day. David Barry, eleven, planted his five years ago; his sister, Jocelyn, planted hers in 1959. Ms. Barry is now a high school teacher.



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