

Learning to grow up the hard way

WHEN I WAS FOURTEEN I WAS VERY naive, very innocent, and well actually maybe just stupid. My excuses are (some would call them copouts), that I was new in the area, my mother was a closet alcoholic, and that shortly before grade ten I had been sexually abused by the man sitting next to me on the greyhound bus. I think these are the reasons for the problems I encountered in grade ten, but some people tell me I'm just trying to put the blame on other people, maybe I am. But I don't think so. When I started grade ten I had a boyfriend, he was about four years older than I was so I thought I was pretty special. Yeah right, he only wanted one thing and guess what I gave to him. Yes, ladies and gentlemen I lost my virginity in grade ten at the tender age of 14. I regret it, of course I regret it, if I could change the events that happened after that night I could, but I can't so I have to live with the pain and the regret. Well, the relationship didn't last long and when he dumped me, I was hurt and confused, so I turned to the next guy in line. He only wanted me for sex, which for a while I gave willingly hoping that he would love me and protect me from those people around me. But he didn't and when I became pregnant with his child he told me I was a slut, that it wasn't his baby and then he was gone. My parents were devastated, it ripped my family apart and to this day they still don't trust me (I'm twenty-one). The decision was long and thought out, all the options were laid on the table. I decided I would have an abortion. Abortion is a very controversial issue, believe me I know, and don't think it was an easy decision to make. I have carefully chosen the few people I have told my dark secret to, and I

know a few of them think I made the wrong decision, but they weren't there, they weren't in my shoes. How would you react if your best friend told you she had had an abortion when she was fifteen. Would it affect your friendship? Guys what if your girlfriend told you she had had an abortion? I bet you would think twice before you had sex again, if you stayed with her that is. I recently told my best friend from high school about it, she couldn't believe it. She said she had no idea that all this was going on. But the words that stung most were from the conversation we had earlier in the night when I had asked her what she thought about abortion, and she told me it was wrong that under no circumstances was it the right thing to do. Well, how do you react to something like that? Those words hurt and I don't think our friendship will ever be the same. I figure that every time my friend looks at me she is saying to herself "how could you have done that? How could you have killed your baby?"

If it makes anyone feel any better, the abortion ruined my life. There has not been a single day when I haven't thought about it and regretted it, or seen a baby on the street and wondered what my baby would have looked like. I can't change the past, but I can think ahead and try to change people's opinions about abortion. I don't think abortion is wrong, of course it is not always right either, but the option should be there. You should accept the decision if someone you know is in this situation, don't criticize or tell them its wrong. Do you think that this is an easy decision for them to make? If you do I have two words for you GROW UP. I did.

By Patricia Cousins

Book Review:

*Wildlife of Atlantic Canada and New England
Photography by Wayne Barrett;
Text by Gary Saunders* Nimbus Publishing

THE PIERCING ENIGMATIC GAZE OF A bobcat transfixes you. You're not in the wilderness, nor is this within the pages of *National Geographic* (though it could be). You're looking at the cover to *Wildlife of Atlantic Canada and New England*, a book by naturalist Gary Saunders and photographer Wayne Barrett, and it's a peach of a coffee table book.

A hardcover exercise in local wildlife appreciation, this book is a treasure trove of natural photography courtesy of PEI's own Wayne Barrett, nicely complemented by Gary Saunders' informative text captions. Saunders' text, informative and often evocative prose, reveals a genuine affection for wild creatures, though the photographs are the star of the show. At press time I haven't finished reading all the text entries, but the pictures alone make for a pleasurable browsing experience.

The book is organized into three sections (mammals, birds, and amphibians & reptiles) and provides an excellent primer in all northeastern creatures great and small. Expect

to see familiar faces like squirrels, raccoons, and hummingbirds up-close-and-personal, providing a new perspective on old friends. The book also showcases more exotic and elusive animals like bobcats, whales, and the pine marten. From wolves to moose to snakes, it's an all-star cast of natural beauties and curiosities.

Also noteworthy herein is the concern for the gradual erosion of our wilderness areas and the resultant disappearance of their inhabitants. Books like these (though no substitute for personal experience) help put a tangible face on the wilderness in our own backyards, and drive home for the reader the urgent need to appreciate and preserve these beautiful but fragile creatures.

The photographs are alternately amusing, arresting, and touching, from the comically candid to the unexpectedly inspirational. A colourfully diverse slice of nature offering a feast for both the eyes and the mind, this book is an excellent choice for any student or lover of nature, or any lover of beautiful pictures for that matter.

Sean McQuaid

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QUESTIONNAIRE:

This is a questionnaire. Your job is to answer the following questions. Our job is to obey your wishes, or choose to ignore them (whichever suits our needs). But seriously we care about you and your needs, you are our friends, we love you.

Please try your best

Questions:

1) What year are you in? 1 2 3 4 Other
2) What have you liked about the paper over the years?

3) What have you disliked about the paper?

4) What would you like to see added to the paper?

5) Do you have any story ideas or issues that you would like us to address?

Now that was easy wasn't it! Now try and answer these questions:

(6) Who was the first Canadian in space?

(7) How many Jellybeans are in this jar? _____

(8) Why do we accept American money in Canadian stores?

O.K., so you've made it this far, now try these ones:

(9) Do you know anyone involved in the production of the X-PRESS?

You do!
Who? _____
You don't? Are you a loser? _____ (Yes you are you liar!!!)
(10) Is Madonna your favorite X-Press contributor? _____ YES??? Boy are you stupid! Madonna doesn't write for the X-PRESS!!!

Well, that's all the questions for now, but don't go far because there will likely be another set of similiar questions for you to answer next week. Until then don't think too hard.

P.S. I will leave you with a special treat a picture of a bowler!!! ENJOY!!!

