Tiger Tale

For years the tiger has lent Imperial Oil a hand. Now it is the tiger who needs help, and Imperial and other Esso companies around the world are rallying around this magnificent animal to help save it from extinction

by Russell Felton

It's early afternoon on a mild winter's day at the Toronto Zoo, and Tiksi, as beautiful in repose as she is graceful in motion, is taking her ease in her comfortable quarters. Tiksi is a Siberian tiger. She is one of three at the zoo, which is also home to one rare white tiger and two Sumatrans, making it one of the best places in North America to observe tigers, the largest of the predatory cats. In fact, if efforts to help the tiger aren't successful, zoos could be the only places to see tigers in the future. At the turn of the century, as many as 100,000 wild tigers prowled Asia, from Eastern Siberia to the Caspian Sea and from Kashmir to the island of Bali. Today, estimates of the wild tiger population range from 4,400 to 7,700, and their numbers continue to decline. Fortunately, people and organizations in many countries are rallying to the tiger's cause. In Canada, for example, Imperial Oil is giving $250,000 to the Toronto Zoo to help the tiger. Of that, $100,000 will be spent on renovating and expanding the zoo's Siberian tiger exhibit, making it one of the most spacious artificial habitats for tigers in the world, while the remainder of the money will finance the zoo's participation in an international breeding
Panthera tigris
All five remaining subspecies of tigers are on the endangered species list.

program for Siberian tigers and efforts to increase public awareness of the tiger's plight.

Imperial's donation to the zoo is part of a concerted effort by Esso companies around the world to help save the tiger. By the beginning of the millennium, these companies will together have contributed more than $16 million (U.S.) to the cause.

The initial impetus for the program came in 1995, when Imperial's major shareholder, Exxon Corporation, announced that it was giving $5.5 million (U.S.) over five years towards tiger conservation and to that end was joining with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in the United States to establish the Save the Tiger Fund. This is believed to be the largest single pledge ever designated by a corporation to help an endangered species. The fund, which is guided by an independent council of leading zoologists and conservationists, has three basic aims: to help ensure the survival of tigers in the wild; to support breeding programs for tigers in captivity; and to increase people's awareness of the fact that tigers are an endangered species.

One of the achievements of this fund to date has been its financial backing of the most comprehensive field census ever taken of the Siberian tiger population, conducted in eastern Russia by a joint Russian-American survey team under the auspices of the Hordecker Wildlife Institute. The many other initiatives include conservation projects in a variety of Asian countries and numerous educational efforts, ranging from supporting the renovation of the tiger exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., to funding a newsletter for those involved in breeding programs.

While the majority of Esso support is coming directly from corporate budgets, employees, too, have rallied to the cause. Imperial employees in Calgary, for example, hold an annual track meet to support various tiger-related projects at the city's zoo, and Esso UK has raised more than $200,000 (U.S.) through the sale of posters and T-shirts to support field studies and other programs in Russia, India and Indonesia.

Barbara Heydik, Imperial's manager of public affairs and president of the company's charitable foundation, says that Imperial's support for the tiger is a reflection of its environmental concern. "Over the years," says Heydik, "Imperial has supported a number of projects involving endangered species. Some years ago we played a significant role in the reintroduction of the species to Western Canada, and we have also supported the preservation of endangered reptiles. Not only are we delighted to be able to fund some of the major projects being undertaken by a Canadian zoo to save the tiger, but we are proud of the fact that Imperial is part of a worldwide rescue effort."

Indeed, adds Heydik, Imperial's involvement with the tiger is fitting, given that Esso products have long enjoyed a close association with the animal. "For many years the tiger has symbolized the power and performance of Esso products. It has served us well."

The tiger first became associated with Esso products early in the 20th century, and by the mid-1960s it had become, in the words of one observer, "the most famous animal in American advertising history."

It was then that the smiling cartoon image of the friendly Esso Tiger began promoting a new, premium grade of gasoline, Esso Extra, by exhorting motorists throughout the United States and Canada to "put a tiger in your tank."

It was a whimsical campaign remarkably attuned to the times. It was the decade of "happy motoring" in fin-tailed bobsomeths, and the slogan equating the power of the tiger with the gasoline struck an instant chord with motorists. And when Esso stations started giving away black-and-orange-striped tiger tails that could be attached to a car's gas cap, the promotion achieved a measure of popularity unprecedented in the history of corporate advertising.

But it was not only gas tanks that sprouted tiger tails. They were, it seemed, everywhere. Many motorists flew them, flaglike, on their radio aerials. Motorcyclists tied them to their handlebars. Children draped them to their scooters and tricycles. And teenagers wore them around their necks in place of ties. Esso retailers fostered their stations with all manner of tiger paraphernalia—many even donned tiger costumes to serve their customers.

Elsewhere in the world, Italian motorists were urged to "nutri tu tigre red mani," French and Belgians to "metter un tigre dans votre manteau," Venezuelans to "ponti un tigre en su manteau" and Finns to "tanka tikeri tanssii." And they did, by the thousands. Everywhere, sales of Esso gasoline jumped and kept rising — to the extent that some competitors were moved to mount campaigns aimed at ramming the tiger (one promised to remove tiger hair from customers' gas tanks).

Today, both cartoon and live tigers continue to symbolize Imperial and Esso products. There are the Tiger Express convenience stores at some service stations, the tiger appears on the Esso Extra card, and at a variety of community events sponsored by Imperial, the Esso Tiger mascot generally makes an appearance.

"I"
The Esso Tiger
Imperial and the tiger have been companions for many years

First associated with Esso products in the early 20th century, the tiger has appeared on a variety of imperial material over the years.

The Esso Tiger
Imperial and the tiger have been companions for many years

BUT, unfortunately, the tiger — the real tiger — is in serious trouble. While accurate population counts are difficult because of dense jungle habitats and a lack of interest or funds in some tiger-occupied territories, enough work has been done to verify that the total number of surviving tigers in the wild is in serious decline.

Of the eight distinct subspecies of Panthera tigris known to exist in the 1940s, three — tigers of the Caspian Sea region and the Indonesian islands of Java and Bint — are now extinct, and the World Conservation Union has put all five remaining subspecies (the South China, Siberian, Bengal, Indochinese and Sumatran tigers) on its endangered list.

The few remaining South China tigers, scattered among disconnected patches of mountain forest, are unlikely to survive, and there may be as few as 400 Sumatran tigers left. As for the Siberian (or Amur) tiger, the recent Exxon-sponsored field census identified between 410 and 470 adults and cubs, about twice as many as had been previously estimated. While this is good news, it doesn’t mean that the Siberian tiger’s future is assured without further strong conservation efforts. Estimates suggest there are fewer than 3,000 Bengal tigers, the most populous subspecies.

The threats to tigers in the wild are formidable. Logging and deforestation not only have reduced their natural habitats in virtually every region in which they are found, but have cut the populations of wildlife on which tigers must prey in order to survive. An ever greater threat comes from poaching.

While most governments try hard to prevent poaching, the value of tiger bones and organs — for which a whole range of medicinal properties — is so high in some parts of the world that many poachers are willing to run extremely high risks in their efforts to secure a carcass. In mainland China, where the Exxon-sponsored Save the Tiger Fund is supporting a major educational program for a veterinary staff, a tiger carcass can reportedly fetch as much as $10,000 (U.S.). According to a recent issue of National Geographic, more than 200 tigers are known to have been killed by poachers in 1994 and 1995 in India alone, but since most poaching goes undetected, the real numbers are undoubtedly much higher.

If the long-term prospects for the survival of tigers in the wild are bleak, the outlook for the animals in captivity is somewhat brighter, thanks to captive breeding programs such as the one in which the Toronto Zoo is participating. "Up to this point, an international breeding program only exists for one subspecies, the Siberian tiger," says Karen Goodrowe, who heads the zoo’s reproductive physiology program. "But the knowledge we have gained from Siberian tigers over the past 10 years can be applied to other subspecies, especially with the kind of support being provided by Imperial."

In her cramped laboratory office at the headquarters of the Zoological Society of Metropolitan Toronto within the zoo grounds, Goodrowe explains some of the technicalities of captive breeding. "Tigers, unlike some species, mate and breed quite readily in captivity," she says, "so simply producing tiger cubs is not really a problem. However, the objective of a systematic breeding program is to preserve the genetic diversity of the species over the long term. One must avoid excessive inbreeding, which perpetuates genetic defects, including susceptibility to disease. This, in turn, requires mating the right males and females, according to a long-range international plan."

For the Siberian tiger, this plan looks ahead fully 200 years, says Goodrowe, and involves the participation of zoos and other facilities with captive tigers around the world. At the core of the program is an international stud book that lists more than 600 animals — believed to represent almost all the pure-blooded Siberian tigers in captivity — and determines which specific animals should breed and when. "For example, one of our female Siberians, Kira, is scheduled to breed with a male from the Calgary Zoo in 1998 or 1999. Our male, Tongphas, will breed with a Calgary female sometime after that, and Tiksi, later still, with a male at the Hogle Zoo in Salt Lake City, Utah."

To date, the Toronto Zoo’s captive breeding program has been highly successful. Since the first successful breeding in 1974, 23 Siberian tiger cubs have been born at the zoo.

Another important aspect of the zoo’s work is a program designed to ensure the survival of many endangered species by maintaining a genebank, or "frozen zoo," where frozen sperm can be kept indefinitely for future in vitro fertilization or artificial insemination. "However," notes Goodrowe, "this involves a great deal more than simply freezing sperm. Every animal is different — its hormonal make-up, fertility cycle and so on are unique. So the program is a complex one, involving many professional disciplines and a variety of techniques for genetic management."

In the meantime, Tiksi has emerged from her den and is prowling the perimeter of her outdoor habitat. The techniques being developed here and at other zoos will likely mean that she, at least, will live a productive life, perpetuating her line for at least the two centuries contemplated by the breeding program and providing hope that the image of a creature that is the tiger will remain a part of our world.

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Falling in love is sometimes improbable. When a writing assignment dropped me and my wife, Peavy, in the troubled heart of Montreal, the last thing we expected was that, a year later, we'd drive home to Nova Scotia with tears in our eyes. We were such unlikely candidates for a heart-wrenching love affair with this city. Our French was a joke. Born, bred and married in Toronto, we'd grown up hearing that Montreal had exquisite restaurants and a certain vivacity at night, but also suspecting it really was a place of French people who openly mocked unilingual Anglos like us. We'd never dreamt of visiting such a place for pleasure. So here we were, in our early sixties, and except for on our way to somewhere else, we'd rarely spent a night in what has been called the Paris of North America.

And why should we now? From everything we'd read, the city was writhing with language conflict, rolling into a dark cloud of economic gloom and physical decay, and generally becoming so unromantic that tens of thousands of its brighter Anglos, and even some French, had already fled westward. Montreal columnists, of all people, admitted in print that Toronto now boasted the chicest bars, the best art and even the intellectuals who made Montreal seem dull. Older Montrealers seemed constantly to be lamenting the passing of the city's golden age and the collapse of its status as "a world-class city." So it wasn't any hope of discovering the charms of Montreal that drew us there; it was simply the call of work.

People watching is at its best on St. Catherine Street (above), a vibrant and fascinating thoroughfare.

In the heart of the city, Dorchester Square (left) speaks of the stately elegance of Montreal.
On our arrival in midsummer, we took up lodgings in a furnished apartment on Atwater Avenue, across from the Old Montreal Forum, the former home of the Montreal Canadiens. (As a 12-year-old worshipper of the Toronto Maple Leafs half a century earlier, I had feasted the Canadians.) Seventeen short blocks east, near the most famous intersection in Canada, Peel and St. Catherine streets, I also had an office.

Every morning, I’d walk past the Forum. Locked, silent, gathering dust in its dark and cavernous interior, it had been closed in 1996, when the Canadiens moved to the Molson Centre, and was now a depressing hulk. Around the corner, among the abandoned, boarded-up and graffiti-smothered quarters of failed shops, bars and restaurants on St. Catherine, I couldn’t help but notice the decrepit Seville Theatre. It had bad breath. Every time I ambled past it, a puff of cold, fetid air enveloped me, and pigeons scurried in the rotten marquee above my head. Another depressing hulk. Further east, right in the middle of downtown Montreal, sits the eight-storey Simpsons building, closed and dead for nearly a decade. Its ragged, locked doors, dark grey walls and vaguely Gothic architecture give it a menacing look. It might have been headquarters for the evil Joker in a Batman movie. Yet another depressing hulk.

The Simpsons building and the boarded-out look of St. Catherine farther west were every existing journalist’s symbol of Montreal’s downfall, but after a while, during my twice-daily strolls between Atwater and Peel, I no longer noticed them. I was too busy evening the people. Pierre and I have walked all over London, Lisbon, Paris, Rome, Boston and Manhattan but have never found better people-watching than on St. Catherine Street.}

Hurry to their jobs in the morning sunlight that promised yet another steaming hotsummer day, young women wore clothes so daring and stylish and walked with such confidence and innocence that the street sometimes looked like an outdoor fashion show. Middle-aged women dressed as though they were 20-year-old models. When men who hadn’t seen one another for a long time met, they didn’t just shake hands, they hugged. Youth and older men one another. Shouting belly-to-belly in a small park one morning, a young man and woman kissed each other full on the lips while traffic rushed by.

A man wearing a bowler hat and one of those long coats cowboys wear in movies played "Summertime" on his cornet. A Persian qanun, with drums, guitar and assorted flutes, whistles and pipes, rendered haunting tunes from the high Andes. A wiry, deeply tanned man in a shiny purple singlet and baggy pants of a Turkish cut played the sax. He was dancing, too – on stilts. Even some of the pan-handlers on St. Catherine had a certain style. A New Yorker told a local reporter they were no more counterculture than Manhattan’s beggars.

One afternoon shortly after we arrived in Montreal, we sat with friends at a tiny bar at the back of the Bombardier Palace restaurants on St. Catherine. Staff and customers gathered before a television screen to watch the Canadian men’s relay team win the Yanks to win an Olympic gold medal. We all footed and bought, but none were more ecstatic than the cooks and waiters with thick East Indian accents. It began to dawn on us that the months to come might be among the most interesting in our lives.

We worried, however, about our appalling incompetence in French. Every day, the Gazette carried stories about the language wars, the language policy or cracksdowns on merchants who were breaking the language laws, and we nervously awaited some brutal insult from a militant francophone. It never came. Speaking English, we asked a dozen francophones questions about how to get from here to there and never experienced a whiff of rudeness. Even in the tough working-class neighbourhoods in Verdun, even in the Plateau – a quintessentially French part of the city that’s famous for its wrought-iron stairways that curve up the faces of its dwellings – we endured no rebuff for blunting questions in English.

While waiting to buy tickets for Fever Tango at Place des Arts, I noted that everyone in the lines and all the ticket sellers were talking nothing but French, I would have to try. There’d be no escape. When I reached the counter, I slowly said to the young woman serving me: "Je suis de Noa". "Je regrette que je ne parlais pas le français," My accent must have been excusable, but she flashed a dazzling smile and chirped, "Okay, sir. What can I do for you?" No matter what the stories about language tension, Montreal remains a smiling city.

We bought cheap, second-hand books. Montreal offers an enormous network of pricey trails, but our favourite weekend route took us down Atwater, over a freeway that crossed the Lachine Canal and then – among the trees and grass that flanked the old waterway – all the way downtown to the cobblestones, ancient stone buildings and sidewalk cafes of the bustling and beautifully renovated Old Port. One Sunday, on the flat land that separates spotty warehous from modern shops and parks, we breathed stuck into a huge mob of people on in-line skates. So many we burst out laughing – thousands upon thousands. There were kids, lovers, grannies and greybeards. Some hobbled around comically, shrieking with laughter. Others, wearing gleaming Spandex in colours one associates with tropical birds, zoomed along so smoothly we thought they must be professionals. But all of them, in our memory, wore grins a mile wide.

No other city in its size in the world boasts so many festivals. Every year, Montreal issues no fewer than 15,000 permits that allow people to ban cars and trucks from streets for the sake of events as small as a flea market on behalf of a corner library and as big as the Montreal World Film Festival. While we were there, 400 movies from 63 nations were seen by 350,000 people at the festival, and it was typical of the have walked all over London, Lisbon, Paris, Rome, Boston and Manhattan but have never found better people-watching than on St. Catherine Street.

In March 1996, fans watched the final hockey game at the Montreal Forum.
top of Mount Royal. A dark green lump that dominates the city below from every angle, it is, in the words of the poet Al Purdy, “the wild high courting yard of the mountain.” This, however, was not a day for courting. Ice covered every footpath. Sheets of water covered the ice. A vicious wind stung our faces and increased the treachery underfoot. Sensible Torontonians tend to stay indoors on Sundays like this. Yet the park was dotted with tobogganers, skaters and cross-country skiers. Big, amiable, coiling dogs checked one another out. Hundreds of families and couples, hand in hand, gingerly picked their way along the slippery and winding paths. Bonjour! Bonjour! This was their mountain, and they loved it.

Exactly one year later, Montrealers were enduring the most destructive ice storm since the invention of electricity. Night after night after night, we watched television footage of the unhinged downtown streets, cold and black, of police and soldiers virtually arresting old people at their freezing houses, for their own good, and herding them into evacuation centers; of murdered trees and mangled transmission towers. We felt as though a dear friend had fallen gravely ill. What had Montreal done to deserve this? At the same time, however, the television news brought us stories of Montrealers delivering extraordinary and unexpected acts of kindness to their most devastated neighbors. Even in its agony, the city remained true to its generous and graceful nature. It would be back on its feet long before St. Patrick’s Day and the parade that has been entertaining Montrealers since shortly after the Battle of Waterloo.

Everyone loves the St. Patrick’s Day parade, it seems. During the week, the temperature hovered around 36 C. As a bone-chilling wind lashed the kilned Black Watch pipe band and costumed girls pranced to Irish jigs, the parade, complete with teenage marching bands, stacks of cheering youngsters and market-ring soldiers in period uniforms, bravely made its way along St. Catherine Street West and through the heart of the city. Thousand lined the street. A dozen Montreal mounted policemen and men kept waving and greeting spectators by name. Indeed, everyone in the parade seemed to know someone on the sidewalk, and Montreal, on that icy afternoon, became the biggest village we’d ever known. Organizers and riders, anglophones and francophones and Montrealers of Chinese, Middle Eastern, East Asian, Italian, Greek and African descent—all wore a touch of the green. That night, the taverns roared. They had roared the night before, too. For many Montrealers, St. Patrick’s Day is actually a three-day festival.

We thought that was the last Montreal parade we’d ever see. We’d be gone within two weeks, and in a sorrowful newspaper column I said it just as well as we were getting out in time of Hizeroz. “If we had waited, the first fringe of pale green would have been opening on the trees, umbrellas would have pranced over the tables and chairs outside the bistros and cafés, and we’d have donned off our old bikes, put on our sunglasses and joined the lovers and Rolliefluers down in the Old Port. That’s when it would have been really palatable to leave.”

After we endured a typically dreary April at our coastal home in Nova Scotia, however, a miracle descended on us. Our angel, the friend that had insisted us in Montreal, offered it as a second assignment. Would we be so kind as to mash back to Montreal, to the same furnished apartment, to work for two more months? Although we love our East Coast home, we were thrilled to have this extra chance and threw a couple of suitcases into our Jeep Cherokee, sped north on the Trans-Canada and, at noon on a soft, sunny May Day, crossed the St. Lawrence River on the Champlain Bridge, dipped down to Amurte Avenue and stopped at a red light on good old St. Catherine, Montreal had already pounced on springtime.

Once crossing that Saturday in late June, a parade of Montrealers of Caribbean descent—marching, skipping and dancing in costumes as feathery, skimpy and glitzy as you’d see during the Mardi Gras in Rio de Janeiro—made its grandiose way along René-Lévesque Boulevard and down to the Old Port. Riding on farm and bikers, the steel and saloon bands and reggae singers bounced their music off the walls of the office towers, and for kilometer after kilometer, people left the sidewalks to dance down the street behind the performers.

We watched this show for an hour and then wandered over to the Montreal International Jazz Festival, which occupied eight outdoor stages in four closed-off city blocks in the Place des Arts neighbourhood. Montreal’s eclectic jazz bash.” Jim Merod had written for Jazz Times magazine, “may well be the best, and most beautifully presented musical offering of its kind anywhere.” During the four days it last, the festival attracted crowds of more than a million and a half people, Cecking for lost dogs and keeping Lauln Birne among the happy throngs, we watched gospel singers, guitarists, saxophonists, trumpeters, a wild cheerful klezmer sextet from Winnipeg, a Czech group performing Gypsy music with an Afro-Brazilian flavour and, from Cape Verde, an island 600 kilometers west of Senegal, the magnificent Maris Alice. She sang Portuguese-influenced African music and Blues with a hint of fak. We could have listened to her all night.

Night, however, found us down on a waterfront lawn near the Old Port, marveling at one of the fireworks displays that take place on Saturdays in midsummer. The day had been blistering, and now, in the darkness and dewiness beside the St. Lawrence, we were surrounded by families who had fled their scorching dwellings. They sat out by the fireworks clusters all along the riverbank and, as each great blossoming explosion of coloured light hit the black sky, uttered gentle cheers, gasps of surprise and murmurs of wonderment.

Back in Nova Scotia, we remember that day of the Canheto parade, the jazz festival and the fireworks as we threw a couple of suitcases into our Jeep Cherokee, sped north on the Trans-Canada and, at noon on a soft, sunny, lazy Mary Day, crossed the St. Lawrence.
Jean Baird
Publisher

Jean Baird loves to read and always has. But as a teenager she found that much of what she was reading didn't speak to her. Young-adult books were too juvenile, teen magazines too superficial, and adult literature too consumed with issues that had little relevance for her. At the same time, she knew that young people like herself had a great deal to say but there were few places where their voices mattered.

A generation later, Baird resolved to change that situation. The result is In 2 Pm, a glossy, high-quality literary and art magazine for and by young Canadians. All the short stories, poetry, illustrations, photos, cartoons, interviews, reviews and editorial staff are supplied by paid contributors aged 12 to 21. Now in its third year, the 48-page quarterly publication has print runs of 25,000 copies, the largest of any arts magazine in the country. Last spring it won an honourable mention in the best new magazine category at the National Magazine Awards. "In 2 Pm is a celebration of creativity," says Baird. "It's also a labour of love. Baird, who works out of her book-lined home office in Port Colborne, Ont., acts as the magazine's publisher, editor-in-chief, advertising director and secretary, all of it unpaid.

For years Baird, who grew up in Collingwood, Ont., alternated between the academic and publishing worlds. She spent a year as assistant editor on a magazine called Computer News for Dentics ("It gave new meaning to the word bored," she quips). While completing her PhD in modern British literature and Shakespeare, she taught English at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont. Later, she became managing editor of a publication on brain injuries. After she left the position in December 1994, her husband, Bill Roberts, suggested that she start a magazine of her own.

Baird attacked the idea with the thoroughness of an academic researcher, reading 1,100 publications from around the world and surveying almost 1,500 young people. Using her own savings, along with a loan from the Port Colborne-Wentworth Community Development Corporation, Baird contacted hundreds of schools, requesting submissions. When they started to pour in, she sent them, minus the names and ages of the contributors, to student editorial groups from across the country for blind judging. Those submissions that made the short list were then passed to a volunteer advisory committee comprising arts professionals and educators, including the writer Susan Magniette, the cartoonist Lynn Johnston, the novelist Howard Engel and the poet Michael Horovitz.

Involving professionals was a wonderful idea, says Horovitz: "I remember being a bit sad as a teenager, showing my poems to friends and family, who didn't understand them. I was a very shy chap, and it would have been splendid to have had the opportunity to show my work anonymously to somebody who understood the craft."

Sueal Mosher-Williams of Edmonton, who at age 13 sent in some cartoons, was thrilled to receive a written personal critique from Lynn Johnston, who draws the internationally popular comic strip For Better or for Worse. "You always think of these people as inaccessible," says Sarah, now 16. Using Johnston's suggestions, Sarah redid her cartoons and In 2 Pm bought two of them.

The magazine was a success critically but not financially. The family savings quickly vanished, especially after Baird's husband, a brain injury rehabilitation specialist, was laid off. Baird, mother of Bronwyn, 14, and Sebastian, eight, says, "There were days I was so down that I couldn't do anything but sit at the desk."

Since its inception, the magazine has published the work of about 300 young authors and artists and involved hundreds of local students as junior editors. "Jean Baird has had a big impact on the youth of Port Colborne," says Neil Schoon, who until December was the city's mayor. "We've always had to do programs for sports, but there's been a lack of opportunity for those interested in the arts. In 2 Pm has been a fabulous vehicle for them."

One young man whose paintings were found in his suitcase during a several of his works. A young woman who started doing theatre reviews for the magazine landed a job as a summer intern with Policy in Review magazine in New York.

Baird may work on In 2 Pm until midnight, but she's careful that the magazine not be a reflection of herself. Every issue, with its fresh, original material, is unique. "Each is one like an adolescent self," she says, "with a mind of its own."

— Marcus Kaye

"There were days I was so down that I couldn't do anything but sit at the desk."

In 2 Pm was wait for the mail. Inevitably, uplifting letters arrived from young people saying, "Finally! A magazine for me," or "Here's my poem— I've never shown my work to anyone before," or "You didn't publish my story, but thanks anyway for taking my work seriously."

Large cosmetics companies offered to advertise in the magazine if Baird would run a beauty column; she refused, because that's not what readers wanted. Despite the lack of funds (she dubbed the magazine In 2 Debt), she continued to pay contributors at least $50 for each published work. "To offer that much money for the work of beginning poets is a really nice incentive to keep writing," says Terry Truax, a 16-year-old poet from Beamsville, Ont., whose work was published in the magazine. Baird managed to turn even disasters into opportunities. When two pages were mistakenly switched, Baird ran a "Great Excuse" contest.

Slowly, the money crunched, corporate sponsors increased, and Baird's husband started his own brain injury rehabilitation business. To help support the magazine, Baird took on another job, doing programming for a local community centre. Finally, with the winter 1998 issue, In 2 Pm began to pay for itself.

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— Marcus Kaye
**Koren's Cause**

A talented paediatrician, musician, researcher and writer, Gideon Koren is the founder of the internationally renowned Mothershik

BY MARCIA KAYE

Gideon Koren is not just a paediatrician. He's a perennial scholar -- some might say a medical detective -- who observes problems, asks "Why?" and seeks answers. Shortly after coming to Canada from Israel in 1982, Koren was working for a summer as a paediatrician at a children's camp near Perth, Ont., and found himself treating a steady stream of strep throat cases. The illness is not unusual among children, but what puzzled Koren was that all those affected were boys, even though it was a mixed camp, with all the children engaged in the same activities. Many doctors, if they noticed the gender factor at all, might have let the matter drop. But not Koren. "I had to understand what was going on," he says now.

A visit to the campers' bunkhouse gave him the answer: the girls' quarters were orderly, with, for the
most part, each girl's personal belongings by her own bunk, while the boys were choiced, with clothes, toothbrushes and towels stowed everywhere. It was immediately apparent to Koren why the strip infection was spreading so quickly among the boys: possession were being shared, and that, coupled with the lack of hygiene, had created the perfect environment. "It was almost like a controlled trial demonstrating a simple lesson in public health," says Koren, who at summer's end wrote a paper on the subject for the Canadian Journal of Public Health.

Koren, 50, a father of four and a specialist in clinical pharmacology and toxicology, is still asking questions, searching for answers and sharing his findings. In the nearly 16 years that he has been in Canada, he has continued to bring together his three loves—child, research and communication. This pursuit has culminated, most significantly, in the Motherisk Program, the best known of his accomplishments. Motherisk, which Koren founded in 1985, is unique in Canada and is one of the largest programs of its kind in the world. A counselling and research organization located in the clinical pharmacology division of Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, Motherisk advises women, their families and health professionals on the safety or risk of exposure to various substances during pregnancy or breast-feeding. During its 13-year history, the organization has counselled more than 100,000 women, undertaken dozens of research projects and published 200 papers in such professional periodicals as the Lancet, the Journal of the American Medical Association, the New England Journal of Medicine and the Canadian Medical Association Journal, with many of the articles being picked up by the popular press. "Motherisk is one of the leaders internationally," says Lynn Mutter, program manager of the Pregnancy RiskLine in Salt Lake City, Utah, an organization that has collaborated with Motherisk on some research projects. "A lot of times Motherisk has taken the lead into areas of research about which there had been little information."

Under Koren's directorship, Motherisk has consistently challenged assumptions and turned conventional medical wisdom on its head. For example, in the wake of the thalidomide scare of the 1960s, there was a widespread belief that pregnant women should avoid all drugs, but Motherisk has found that many drugs pose no increased risk of miscarriage or birth defects. Conversely, it has discovered that many common substances, such as second-hand smoke, are harmful (Motherisk was the first organization to show, using hair analysis, that the toxins from second-hand smoke accumulate in the fetus). Among Motherisk's recent findings: Prozac and other antidepressants of its type taken during pregnancy do not increase the risk of miscarriage or fetal malformations; a safe, effective medication for severe morning sickness is available (Dilectin), and the common acne drug Accutane can cause major malformations. Koren was a major force in determining the importance of taking folic acid before conception to prevent problems such as spina bifida. And it was the first to show that infant boys who are circumcised without being anesthetized not only feel pain but, judging from their reactions to later vaccinations, remain more sensitive to pain later in life.

As founder and director of Motherisk, Koren was the 1997 recipient of the Rawls-Palmer Progress in Medicine Lecture Award, one of the most prestigious awards in the field of clinical pharmacology. Given by the American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, it recognizes a person who is at the peak of his or her career and is continuing to make major contributions to the field, as judged by peers. Koren is only the second Canadian ever to win the award. "He won it hands down," says Lesl Matters, a professor of pharmacology at Dalhousie University in Halifax, who nominated Koren for the award. Gray recalls the first time she saw Koren give a presentation. He showed a slide of his young son peering through a goldfish bowl. "He made the point very effectively that there are different ways of looking at things," she says, "which prepared us to re-examine some of our established ideas in medicine."

Koren says that Motherisk was a logical out- come of his work in the early 1980s. Having completed his residency in pediatrics at Tel Hashomer Hospital in Tel Aviv, he decided to do a postdoctoral subspecialty in clinical pharmacology. He chose the area not because he felt he had a particular grasp of it but because he realized how little he knew about drugs. "Physicians' knowledge of drugs is very rudimentary, very superficial, and that bothered me," he says. There were many programs available in adult pharmacology, but it wasn't until 1979 that Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children established one of the world's first programs in paediatric pharmacology.

Koren entered the program, excited to be on the cutting edge of the new discipline. He had planned to stay in Canada for only one year and then return to Israel, but he soon realized that he could make a greater contribution working at the Hospital for Sick Children, one of the five largest paediatric research institutions in the world. "For me it was clear that the power to move and do things here was huge." Koren began working under Stuart MacLeod, now the director of the clinical pharmacology division. "Anyone studying drugs in children is called upon to talk about the effect of drugs on the fetus, in breast milk and so on," says MacLeod, now the director of the Father Sean O'Sullivan Research Centre at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, Ont. "So we started doing that sort of thing, and people would call with questions from around the country." But MacLeod says that Koren was the one to see the potential of an organized service for helping women and educating their doctors. "He said, 'Let's gather the data in a more formalized fashion.' It was his idea entirely."

With funding from Ontario's Ministry of Health, Koren was able to hire telephone counselors to provide information based on the latest literature from around the world to people who called the hotline (enonymously, if they wished). At first Koren thought that Motherisk's most important objective would be to prevent fetal malformations, but he soon realized that the organization was also serving to prevent unnecessary terminations of pregnancies. He saw that the anxiety among pregnant women was so acute that a number, fearing birth defects, were prepared to terminate wanted pregnancies if they had so much as underwent a dental x-ray or had a single glass of wine. It became Motherisk's task to give women the correct information (for instance, a dental x-ray delivers only one-thousandth of the radiation that could cause fetal harm). Koren estimates that Motherisk prevents at least 500 terminations a year simply by providing pregnant mothers with current data.

When people call the Motherisk line, they speak to one of several trained counselors, who include physicians, nurses and graduate students who have completed a specialist's program in toxicology at the University of Toronto. If callers' questions require more expertise than these counselors can provide, they are referred to the second line of counselors, which comprises medical trainees specializing in paediatrics, obstetrics or genetics with a subspecialty in clinical pharmacology or toxicology. The third line is Koren himself, who is also a professor at the University of Toronto's medical school, and fellow faculty members. Women who have been exposed to a harmful substance (such as lead from glazing ceramics or working in a battery plant) who are on long-term medication, who are taking a drug about which little is known or who are simply very anxious are invited to the Motherisk offices for a personal consultation with a physician.

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In his zeal to communicate, last year he self-published a book (he calls his company The Kid in Us, Ltd.) titled The Children of Neverland about the poverty, illness and drugs that afflict millions of children worldwide.

Motherisk is a justifiable source of pride for Koren, but the world of medicine is not his only love, nor even his first. As a child growing up in Israel, "Gidi"—as he was, and still is, known by his friends—"didn’t want to be a doctor at all. He wanted to be a musician. His mother, a teacher, and his father, an engineer, had always seen that Gidi took music lessons. The French horn was his main instrument, but with his interest in piano, guitar and several other instruments, he started doing arrangements as a hobby. Then, during his compulsory service in the Israeli army, where he had little patience with the military training, he took a medic’s course that included three weeks’ internship in a hospital and found he was fascinated. It was then that he decided to pursue a medical career. But he didn’t abandon music—in fact, to help pay for his medical training at Tel Aviv University, Koren wrote and produced music. He made the first of a series of albums of music for children and appeared on television. Eventually he had his own children’s show, Between Us, in which he discussed medical issues in a way that children could understand. His face and name soon became well known throughout Israel—and still are, as Adrienne Enns says, the assistant director of Motherisk, founded: "When I visited Israel a few years ago and told people who my boss was, they said, 'Oh, the singing doctor.'"

By the time he reached his late twenties Koren had also built a family life, with a wife who was pursuing her doctorate in dance therapy and two young daughters, yet he continued to pursue both a medical career at Tel Aviv Hospital and music. He was commissioned by the Disney copyright holder in Israel to produce several Disney records, including Aladdin and Dumbo, in Hebrew. He wrote plays and musicals, three of them commercial successes in Israel. In fact, he made more money from show business than from medicine. As his interest in children grew—and by age 30 he had three children—and was headed towards a specialty in pediatrics—he started writing children’s books, 30 of which have been published.

After coming to Canada and abandoning his show business career to focus on medicine, Koren missed the stage so much that he decided to put on a play for the young patients at the Hospital for Sick Children. He had no trouble recruiting dozens of frustrated performers from the hospital staff. Thanks to Koren’s efforts, the musical production Tails: A Fairy Tale on Fairy Tails has been staged every Thursday evening for the past five years. Koren wrote the play, which deals with the advantages of being different, and most Thursday evenings he can be seen on stage, costuming in an animal costume. "My endorphin levels are so high after the show that I can absorb almost any bad news," he says. When he attended the funeral of a boy who had seen the show dozens of times, he was moved to tears on hearing the music from Tails being played—music the boy had loved.

Koren’s office at Motherisk, at the end of a rabbit warren of rooms, reflects both the scientific and the artistic sides of his personality. His desk is stacked with papers and the floor crowded with knee-high piles of file folders and slide carousels and a briefcase too bulging to close. There is a bouquet of large paper sunflowers, a colourful windsock and three prints of the original illustrations for Alice in Wonderland. "It’s the child in me," Koren says, waving an arm at the decor. "I spend more time here than in any other room in the world, so I try to create a good feeling about it." He’s in his office every morning by seven and rarely leaves before six in the evening.

Since part of Motherisk’s mandate is to educate physicians, Koren and his team contribute a regular feature to Canadian Family Physician based on a real caller’s question to the Motherisk line, usually about a specific drug. Koren also helps produce a twice-yearly newsletter and has overseen the launch of a web site (www.motherisk.org). In his

Over the years Motherisk has expanded its database to include information on prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, herbal preparations, drugs of abuse, alcohol, radiation, infections such as chickenpox or HIV, and environmental factors such as video display terminals and substances to which people are exposed at the workplace. Increasingly, the organization is doing its own research, funded by the Medical Research Council of Canada, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada and individual companies.

Imperial Oil has been associated with Koren since 1995 and has called upon him to provide advice to both employees and customers. As well, the company has sponsored research conducted by Koren. Says Arnold Katz, a medical doctor and Imperial’s director of occupational health: "People we have referred to Motherisk say they receive excellent advice, presented with understanding and compassion. To be able to draw on the knowledge and research capabilities of Gideon Koren and his staff has been extremely valuable to me in my work at Imperial. It is difficult to put into words the enormous contribution that Motherisk is making."

Currently Motherisk is investigating two areas of serious concern: the use of alcohol and of cocaine during pregnancy. The organization was one of the first in the world to thoroughly document fetal alcohol syndrome and is now doing the first ever study of binge drinking by expectant mothers. Motherisk also carried out Canada’s only study on cocaine exposure, finding that one in 16 babies in greater Toronto is born to a cocaine-addicted mother. By following 30 such babies who had been adopted into nurturing families, the organization found that while the children seemed to be doing well, their IQ scores were at least 12 points below those of a rightly matched control group. Peter Selby, a medical doctor and consultant at the Addiction Research Foundation in Toronto who provides care to pregnant women using street drugs, says, "Because of Motherisk’s study I can safely tell women, ‘Cocaine won’t cause you to have a deformed baby, but it may cause you to have a baby who won’t reach his or her full potential.” For some women, it’s enough to help them make the decision to stop using cocaine."

20 Springs 1998
SURELY THROUGH IT MAY SEEM, THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY OVER CLIMATE CHANGE IS ONE REASON WHY THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY ARCHIVES ARE ATTRACTING A LOT OF ATTENTION IN THESE DAYS. IT TURNS OUT THAT THE ARCHIVES, HOUSED AT THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF MANITOBA IN WINNIPEG, ARE THE REPOSITORY OF THE MOST ACCURATE WEATHER STATISTICS COLLECTED FOR THE LONGEST PERIOD FOR MOST OF CANADA — SOME DATE BACK MORE THAN 300 YEARS.

"HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY EMPLOYEES KEPT METEOROLOGICAL RECORDS," SAYS JUDITH HEARTIE, THE KEEP-ER OF THE ARCHIVES. "THEY ROUTINELY RECORDED WEATHER CONDITIONS SEVERAL TIMES A DAY, AND THERE WERE SO MANY COMPANY TRADING POSTS IN NORTHERN MANITOBA AND THE NORTHWEST THAT A VERY ACCURATE METEOROLOGICAL HISTORY WAS COMPILED OF THE ENTIRE REGION. THIS IS PROVING INVALUABLE TO SCIENTISTS TODAY WHO ARE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND LONG-TERM CLIMATOLOGICAL CHANGE."

Tim Ball, a climatologist and former professor at the University of Winnipeg, has used the company's journals (the records kept of day-to-day activities at each post) from the northern Manitoba trading posts of York Factory and Churchill — compiled from 1714 to 1850 — to create a database of weather variations in the region. Other scientists have used logs from ships, trading posts, and summer sea-ice conditions in Hudson Bay in the 18th and 19th centuries. The archives have yielded information showing that the years following the great volcanic eruption on the Indonesian island of Tambora in 1815 were much colder than usual in Hudson Bay, a result of the fact that volcanic dust particles in the atmosphere obscured sunlight. But it's not only climatologists who are calling on Judith Heartie and her 11-member staff for help these days. Increasingly, legal researchers are consulting the archives when compiling material relevant to aboriginal land-claim cases. The archives constitute one of the very few sources of written information about the conditions and status of particular tracts of land more than two centuries ago. And because the good quality of the detailed employment records the Hudson's Bay Company kept, genealogists are also regular users of the archives.

In fact, the archives, which in a magnificent tribute to corporate generosity the Hudson's Bay Company presented to the Province of Manitoba in 1994, represent a unique record of Canadian history and are a veritable treasure trove for scholars and researchers from many disciplines. The historian Michael Bliss has called them "one of the world's greatest corporate archives," predicting that they will shed light on "many aspects of native-white relations — not only in the fur trade but in many areas of daily life." Indeed, according to Peter Bower, Manitoba's provincial archivist, they are said to be second only to the Vatican archives in significance, longevity and completeness.

Nothing short of a meticulous and minutely detailed history of Canada, the Hudson's Bay Company Archives include personal diaries, letters home, ships' logs, inventories of trade goods, something like 12,000 maps and architectural records, 5,000 or so published books and papers, more than 100,000 pho-
Above: Hunting buffalo, painted in the Red River area during the early 1800s by Peter Rindisbacher.

Left: A beaver hat that belonged to Donald A. Smith, who became governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1889.

Above: The first page of the Hudson's Bay Company charter, which was signed in May 1670 by Charles II.

Right: A painting, by an unknown artist, of the signing of the charter.

Above: A travel kit belonging to a company officer in the late 1800s. Below: A European-manufactured jewellery box that was decorated in the late 1800s by aboriginal people from the upper Great Lakes region.

Above: An illustration of an inland trading post in the 1860s. Below: Trade tokens, which were introduced to posts in the western Arctic in 1866.

Above: A clerk, Victor Pearson, conducts trade at a Hudson's Bay post in 1899.

Above: An illustration of a beaver tail that appears in James Isham's Observations on Hudson Bay, 1743.

Photography, and thousands of account books and daily journals from the trading posts (sometimes known as factories). Apart from valuable comments on the relationship between company employees and the local aboriginal population and on weather statistics, these journals include information on the local flora and fauna (the journals have been used to estimate the size of stocks of whales and other species before they were depleted) and on day-to-day matters such as food, clothing, and social life. Every poetry occasionally crept into the journals. Indeed, company employees took very seriously the instructions sent by head office in London, England, to keep "journals of what hath been done in the respective factories and of all occurrences." As Christopher Dowie, former editor of the Beaver (a magazine founded by the Hudson's Bay Company), has written: "The volume of fur that passed between the Bay and London was rivaled by the tons of paper that moved back and forth in both directions." Indeed, when they were moved from the United Kingdom to Manitoba, the archives filled six 20-tonne containers and now occupy more than two kilometres of shelf-space. The largest volume, a ledger from the North West Company (a rival firm that the Hudson's Bay Company eventually absorbed) recording the financial accounts of employees from 1811 to 1821, weighs more than 30 kilograms.

The archives date back to 1671, one year after Charles II of England granted to the "Governer and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay" the territory known as Rupert's Land, which included much of present-day Western Canada, northern Quebec and Ontario and parts of what is now the northern United States. In time, the company's sphere of influence was to extend eastwards to Labrador and into the Arctic. The archives are particularly precious because in many cases they constitute the only historical record of vast regions of this land.

Each year, Beatrice and her staff assist some 1,000 visitors to the archives and respond to about 1,500 written inquiries. Last January, the archives introduced a web-site, which, during its first year of operation, received 12,000 on-line visits— a third from Canada, another third from the United States and the remainder from 33 other countries.

But the archival material was not the only gift given by the Hudson's Bay Company. It also presented Manitoba with its collection of artefacts from the daily lives of the company's traders and fur buyers and from the aboriginal population with whom they dealt. Officially known as the Hudson's Bay Company Museum Collection, the artefacts had once been stored in the basement of the company's department store in Winnipeg.

The collection was presented specifically to the relatively unknown Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature in Winnipeg. "A large and well-funded museum would have made an obvious home for the collection," Doug Leonard, the museum's former director of curatorial services, said when the gift was given. "But Manitoba has been the recent home of the company, so there was logic to its choosing to place the collection here. It goes with-
Left: An early 18th-century coat, decorated with porcupine quills, from the Red River area.

Left: A 1962 photograph of women unloading fur from a ship at Cape Dorset, N.W.T.

Right: A quillwork panel collected by a Hudson's Bay Company surveyor in the early 1820s.

Above: An illustration of a rail bird that appeared in Observations on Hudson Bay, 1742.

Right: Sir John Franklin.
Below: A silver chronometer used by Franklin on his Arctic expedition of 1815 to 1827.

Above: A detail from a 19th-century Johnstone muzzle loader trade gun, featuring a brass serpentine side plate typical of Hudson's Bay Company trade guns.

Above: A rosette that is thought to have belonged to a member of the ill-fated Franklin expedition of 1845.

Below: A beadwork version of the Hudson's Bay Company corporate crest.
Safe Haven

Set amid the rich agricultural land of southwestern Ontario, the small town of Dresden was for many former slaves the last stop on the Underground Railroad

BY SIONA MCKAY

The main street of Dresden, Ont., seems all but asleep on this early morning. Home to about 2,500 people, the town is situated on the Sydenham River in the midst of some of the richest and most productive farmland in Canada. Today's blue sky brings into stark relief the vast flatness that is characteristic of Dresden's surrounding landscape. Even though spring is in the air, there is little colour; the fields still bear the dun-brown detritus of last year's corn crops. It seems a world away from summer, when, under a warmer, more nurturing light, the land will be alive once more with crops of corn, tomatoes, sugar beets and sunflowers.

In many respects, Dresden has not altered a great deal since the community was incorporated, first as a village in 1872 and then as a town 10 years later. While shop signs speak of the community's busy and modern commercial life, one need only look past the façade to perceive the backdrops of Victorian architecture. In pride of place at Dresden's main intersection – St. George and Main streets – sits a stately 1913 red-brick building with an imposing clock tower. During its life, the three-storey edifice has housed a post office and municipal offices. A short half-block north on St. George is an impressive building with a crenellated roof and a frieze bearing an inscription that identifies the structure as the Odd Fellows Hall.

In the pages of the Dresden edition of the Counter Esquimaux, a reader will come across stories of local interest and announcements about upcoming social events. Although much of it is particular to this town, the contents of the weekly publication offer a reflection of life that is probably typical of many small towns in rural Ontario. Yet, while ordinary in many respects, Dresden is also strangely exceptional.

And the reason that it is has everything to do with Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site, a small but handsome museum located on the outskirts of town.

As most North American schoolchildren know, Uncle Tom's Cabin is the name of the famous story written by the Connecticut native and staunch antislavery advocate Harriet Beecher Stowe. The novel tells the story of a man named Uncle Tom, who was born into slavery in the American South. It chronicles a life full of adversity and humiliation, a life that ends when Tom is beaten to death by his cruel owner, the infamous Simon Legree.

Today, certain historians credit Stowe's emotionally powerful book – which became immensely popular, with 300,000 copies being sold in the United States during the first year after it was published in March 1852 – as being one of the triggers of the American Civil War.

The fame of Stowe's book has endured, and Uncle Tom's Cabin continues to be known around the world. What's less well known, however, is that, to a significant degree, the American author based the character of Uncle Tom on the real-life figure of Josiah Henson, a remarkable man who was born into slavery in Maryland in 1789. In 1830, with the help of antislavery activists, Henson and his family escaped, making the perilous journey to Upper Canada, which had abolished
Each year, we get thousands of visitors from all around the world. I have seen people cry as they read Josiah's writings.

“I...”