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2  My Canada by Anita Rau Badami
6  The Man with the Wooden Wife by Marina Berube
8  Moments in a Century by Robert Fullford
14  Yesterday... by Wynne Thomas
20  Land of the Muskies by Wynne Thomas
26  An Eye on the Future by Gordon Wong
31  In Closing

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Anita Rau Badami's Canada
Early one morning in June last year, my family and I travelled from Vancouver to Tofino, a small town on the western coast of Vancouver Island. We had come in search of whales, particularly the magnificent orca. If we were lucky, we might even get to see a whole pod of them.

When I was growing up in India, nothing had seemed more remote and exotic to me than these great mammals. I had seen pictures of them in geography texts and wildlife magazines, but the depictions were extremely unsatisfactory. The creatures were generally obscured by water or captured in a dim, submarine shape by an underwater camera—sometimes there was merely a spout of water shooting upwards from a brief arc of grey that might well have been the shoulder of a wave. By the time I left India for Canada, the orca had assumed mythical proportions, and a huge desire had ballooned in me to see this whale in its natural habitat.

The trip to Tofino had been inspired by an advertisement for whale-watching tours in a Vancouver paper. ‘Let’s go this weekend,’ I had said to my husband and son. After several telephone calls to book a room in a hotel, we were on our way.

It was a grey morning when we left to catch the ferry to Victoria. But nothing could keep my hopes down; we were going to see these whales no matter what. The intensity of my longing, I was convinced, would keep the rain away from Tofino. The crossing to Victoria was rough and cold, and by the time we had driven across the island and reached the small coastal town, we could barely see the way through the rain to our hotel. I had encountered rain like this only in India during the monsoons and had come to expect nothing more in this country than the gentle drizzle that was so characteristic of Vancouver. This wild downpour, accompanied by the roar of thunder and the crackle of lightning, was a glimpse of a Canada that I had never seen before—the country had been doing a slow dance for me over the nine years that I had lived here, showing me tantalizing little bits of itself every now and then.

That first day, we were trapped inside our hotel room with nothing to do but gaze at the Pacific Ocean, which was hurrying itself furiously at the beach. But the next morning, to our delight, was bright and sunny, and we rushed down to the jetty where the whale-watching tours began. ‘Too tough to go out in the open sea,’ said the tour operator reluctantly. ‘I can take you on calmer waters between islands.’ A lane orca had been spotted grazing in those channels, and if we were lucky, we might catch a glimpse of it. We drifted in and out of that green fingers of water whose otherwise still surface was now poached by the ripples that had stirred again. We saw a black bear at the edge of a stand of pines on a tiny island, an eagle gliding on currents of air against the grey sky, otters and steller sea lions, but not a single whale. We started our journey home disappointed but determined to come back the next year.

And then it happened. On the ferry from Victoria, a cry went up from the crowd of people strolling the decks. There, cleaving the steely, restless ocean, was a large pod of orca whales—hulks, cows, calves—rolling and diving, sending up plumes of water. I had hoped to see one of these creatures, and here I was being treated to a whole family when I least expected it.

Looking for the Canada that has gently seeped into my bloodstream is like looking for those whales. I find her at unexpected moments: in the sudden kindness of a stranger’s smile; in the graceful flight of a hundred snow geese; in the cascading, indescribable shimmer of the aurora borealis lighting up the midnight sky. Several years ago, a friend asked me what I thought of this land of vast, empty spaces, of mountains and trees and snow and water, where almost every person claims ancestry in another culture, another land, and where a hundred different histories mingle to create a new set of memories. I had said that Canada reminded me of a beautiful, enigmatic woman who looks down demurely most of the

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unknownable, passed over the weird, moonlike surface of the Redlands at Drumheller, Alta., marveling at the skeletal remains of dinosaurs that had roamed there millions of years ago, skiing and ice-climbing on rock cliffs, ending up with little more than sore muscles. The more I looked, the less I seemed to see Canada. Until that afternoon on the deck of the ferry, when, as I watched the whales swimming in the ocean, it came to me: there was no point in trying to find one fixed image of this land. It would always be an accumula-
tion of events and experiences, smells, sights, and sounds. I was, after all, seeing it through so many different lenses: a writer's, a woman's, an immigrant's, a lover's, a mother's. It was at that moment that I began to think of Canada without reference to any other country, to love it on its own terms for what it was, rather than what it wasn't.

We came to Canada from India a little more than nine years ago. My husband had woken up one morning and decided that he wanted to reinvent himself. He was tired of his engineering degree and his job in a fast-food corporation. Our relatives were alarmed by this sudden decision. They couldn't understand why we wanted to live good jobs (I was a newspa-
paper journalist) and comfortable lives for an uncer-
tain future. And why Canada, all of places, they wanted to know. Wasn't that somewhere near the North Pole? Horrifying cold! With bears and wild ani-
mals that itch and bite people, too.

By September 1990, my husband had arrived in India and was taking a master's degree in environ-
mental studies at the University of Calgary. By March 1991, he was offered a job as a research scientist in the bustling metropolitan city of Bangalore, sold all our fur-
niture and packed most of our other belongings in bones and trunks to store in my parents-in-law's home. No point taking everything with us—we would be back in a few years, I told myself and everybody else, resetting this move and quite certain that I would never want to live in India for as long as I lived. I had spent all my life in a
country where the seasons merge into one another. This drama of death and regeneration was something I had never witnessed. I was instantly captivated. I would remain another year, I told myself, for nothing other than to see the seasons change. Four years slipped by, and I was still in Canada. By now I had worked in a variety of places, including a china store, a book shop and a library. A few months after I arrived, I had signed up for a creative writing course at the Uni-
versity of Calgary and then began a master's degree in English literature. I'd had several stories published, and I'd begun to love the crisp winter evenings, the sudden excitement of a chinook, which seems to melt the snow in minutes and peel veils of cloud away from the distant snowcapped mountains. Now, every time I stepped out of my house, I jumped into a friend or someone I knew. It was a wonderful feeling to know so many people in the city. All my fear about leaving my writing career in India never materialized. In the past, I had always fancied myself a writer and I had brought the entire film in fiction writing and had finished the first draft of a novel. In 1995, my first novel was accepted for publica-
tion, and we moved to Vancouver. Once again I was filled with that wistful feeling of being torn from all that I previously admired, but I loved having left, except the heat and the photograph of my parents, my sisters and I sitting long silent streams and canals fields shimmering yellow under an endless blue sky.

In the years since I arrived here, I have travelled the length and breadth of this land and collected many different images of it. Now it somehow asks me what I think or feel about Canada, I tell all of the people and places, I have been here and have had a pattern in my heart. I tell stories about Shima and Mayo, who had come from Japan and shared with us a passion for spiritual practice, and Charlotte Chaplin, who arrived like Santa in the middle of our first winter with a bag full of toys for our kids, just, she explained, cheerfully, to make me feel at home. I talk about Sere-
na and her whiteลบ, and I talk about the chain of late-night movies after shared dinners and delicious fruit cakes created by Mike. Or about Grenet, who took us on a trip to Waterton Lakes National Park in a little boat and вари to look out over the middle of of the many lakes and hiked the paddles to my

husband and me. "If you want to be Canadian," he declaimed, grinning, "you will have to learn to row a little boat, and when you are rowing, you will have to keep your eyes on the sky, during which time we managed to describe tighter and tighter circles in the centre of the lake, decided that there were other ways of becoming Canadian. There were all those evenings with Santi and Ravi and Mayura and Ratna, celebrating Indian festivals just as winter was beginning to take hold, mudging and looking forward to the summer still days, and the many times that they took care of me while I tried to juggle work and school and home.

My Canada, I tell anyone who asks, is the driver who made sure that I was on the last bus out of Calgary's North Hill Centre when I was working the late shift there, even if it meant delaying the bus an extra 10 minutes. And the members of my creative writing group, who gave me their uncondit
tions and prepared me for a career as a novelist. "When your first book is out there being treasured by the reviewers," they told me, "you'll think twice about your thick skin." My Canada includes all those people who made me feel like a longed.

To my album of memories I will add an enchanted night spent lying on a sleeping bag in Calgary with a group of friends to watch a meteor shower streaking silver lines across the midnight sky. I will tell all who ask about the time I stood on Alberta's Athabasca Glacier surrounded by mountains, starry night, and fresh crystalline water from a deep spring so ancient, that time itself had no measure for it; of the moon full and golden, flooding up over the mountains with glowing Edie Louise, and a year's eyes gazing green at us before the creature stirred and vanished into the darkness, of the flood of people on Main Street, the lake with the white ducks, and the hill with the trees, and the trees with the lights and the snow and the windows, and the lights and the small, dark shed that was no more than a shack with a char-
acter that he told me, "men's good luck of writers"; and all over the country, where a medley of voices from many cultures was heard, and a café in a remote Yukon town where I met a man who believed that he was the reincarnation of Elvis Presley.

I visit India, very occasionally; the same time that I had gone back since 1991. When it was time to leave, I realizing with a small Jef that I felt none of the regret that I should have experienced on the previous trip. The needle of my emotional compass had swung around and set itself in a different direction. While I still cherished the brilliant colours of India, I was also beginning to rec-
note the small, teatable things, like the pot of tea and the Canadian fabric. And I knew that even though a part of me would always look with love towards hands of my birth, and deep inside I would forever be more connected to the world (or the West), my home was now here, in Canada.
The Man with the Wooden Wife

Big Wings was a most ambitious young hunter of the Tlingit nation in northern British Columbia. He was a great dreamer. His dream was to possess the best and most beautiful wife, to become the first trapper in his tribe and to rise to the front rank in his clan, that of the Beaver. Yet his marriage was a failure and his life became a nightmare. The lovely princess whom he wedded with great ceremony turned into a shrew; lazy, grasping and cantankerous. One evening he found his house empty and the fireplace in cold ashes. Where was his wife? Was she frolicking without him? Without a wink, he waited the whole night long, trying to control his temper. When she reappeared the next day, he lashed out at her. Terror-struck, bowling, she ran away, never to come back.

As for him ... he relapsed into dreams. In his solitude he struck upon an idea: he would bring to life the perfect wife. So he chose a piece of red cedar, fragrant and well-seasoned. With his sharp stone hatchet he cut and hewed it. Under his skilled hands the wood slowly assumed a human form, the graceful shape of the woman of his dreams.

Days after day he laboured. He chiseled the surface with beaver incisors. He polished the curves with the rough skin of a shark. His notions became crazier. From his hands grew a beautiful young woman who smiled at him with her alluring mask of a Haida stern. Her dark eyes were as round as the full moon, her eyebrows as gracefully arched as in her crescent. Her black hair in two thick tresses set off her youthful cheeks. And her delicately chiseled lips, painted with red ochre, seemed to whisper of love.

Tenderly, Big Wings held her perfect hands to render them skilled in a woman's work of weaving and embroidery. Her wrists and nimble fingers would spin the threads of the inner cedar bark and the wood of the mourning cap into a robe on the Chilkat loom. When not threading the cooking pot full of meat and dainties, he avowed, she would weave a gorgeous cape. He would dress her in the springtime festival, when chiefs would be elevated in the midst of dances and traditional chants. Thus, in time, he would be all things: a chief, a great trapper and a happily married man.

Every, in the woodsy body, clad now in tanned moose skins, seemed more and more to come to life under his warm breath. He felt himself inspired with a superhuman strength. He would explain, "Come along, look at me, my dear Sudahl! And she would turn our head slightly towards him with a faint smile. Each evening when the time came for the pot to boil, he asked, "My wife, is she asleep ready?" As she remained dumb, he answered for her, "Yes, my husband, she will soon be ready. A little patience, I pray!" Then he gazed at the gilded beaver tail, the well-rounded moon, the dried wild fruit soaked in lukewarm water, all sweetened with candlefat oil.

"Here is my dear!" the wooden wife seemed to say. "Is my husband? Thoughtful!"

Thus the disappointed with the woman of his creation. They were a perfect pair.

But the strange behavior of Big Wings puzzled his tribesmen. Never did he leave his lodge but for the forest, ever alone and silent. They wondered, "Will he ever return?" But the others listened outside his cabin and thought they heard voices inside.

Finally, two morose girls, who would have liked Big Wings for themselves, hid one evening in the bushes near his home. Soon he returned, heavily laden from the hunt. Hardly had he stepped inside when voices came to their ears. They tiptoed closer, peeked through a knothole in the plank wall, and beheld a strange sight: Big Wings talked to a woman at the loom. "Sudahl, my dear wife!" "My husband, supper is ready." "Who would believe it!"

After supper, the hunter sat on his couch in a corner. One of the two girls spied across the village to bring the news. But the other woman, her eyes to the knothole. Everything grew quiet inside, while the moon cast a pale light everywhere. Gently, cautiously, she entered the lodge and touched the young woman still sitting at the loom. Why? She was only wood! 

Vindictively she snatched the stone, hung it into the nearest corner and slipped away.

Meanwhile, the great dreamer had a vision. His wooden wife had come to life, and she was warm flesh and blood. She rested her head on his shoulder, and her red lips sought his. In a trance he yielded himself to her caresses. Here at last was his perfect life fulfilled.

The vision faded and daylight came. The hunter blinked and sat up happily.

But he was alone and his lodge was vacant. His dream wife had vanished. The threads of the loom were tangled and broken. The weaver of his dreams was crumpled in a corner, lifeless and disheveled.

With a cry he fell on his knees at her side and tried to lift her from the ground. With kisses and tears and words of love he tried to restore her to life. All in vain! The charm was broken. Already the feet of his beloved had driven roots into the soil and had changed into saplings — two young green oaks. Each day they grew until they were towering trees, the like of which the people of the Tlingit had never seen.

Around them, more oaks rose and became the West Coast forests that sheltered the Tlingit and people of many other tribes.

Big Wings, a broken man, was never quite the same. But his dream took root in him. Year after year, as the seasons cloaked the oaks in sunshine and snow, the hunter drifted among them, always alone, always searching for his dream.

Who knows, perhaps one day his loving Sudahl would return...
I Q U I C K L Y R E A L I Z E D W H E N I S A T T E M P T E D T O W R I T E A B O U T C A N A D I A N C U L T U R E, A N D H O W D E F I N E D, t o d e c i d e w h a t e x a c t l y w a s m e a n e d b y t h e t e r m. C a n a d i a n c u l t u r e m i g h t b e d e f i n e d a s c u l t u r e m a d e b y C a n a d i a n s, b u t t h a t w o u l d l e a d o u t s o m e e x c e l l e n t b o o k s w r i t t e n i n t h i s c o u n t r y b y p e o p l e w h o h a d n ' t b e e n a n a c t i v e C a n a d i a n s.

It could refer to culture made in Canada, but that would eliminate many of the works of writers like Morley Callaghan, a wonderful writer who for 50 years has written beautiful stories, many of them about Canada in Paris, publishing most of them in The New Yorker.

My favourite (though I'm not a historian) definition of culture that reflects some of the qualities of Canada or of a Canadian mind. This reflection can be unintentional, as with the Orange of Seven, whose implicit purpose was to show Canadians their own country, or Ollie Vignesh, who sets out to sum up in song the essence of Quebec. More often, though, it emerges subliminally, spontaneously, jumping out of a creator's mind before he or she knows it is there.

You don't need to read much of North by Northwest's magnificent prose before you discover that this world-famous scholar wrote in a language that was pure Canadian and reflected the special qualities of his own special Canada, as embedded in the United Church. The more you know of Glenn Gould, the more you understand that his music-making was deeply influenced by what he called, in the title of a famous broadcast, "The Idea of North." And there's another clue that can identify Canadian cultural works: if, for example, we're approaching something specifically Canadian when the artist (whether it be a film or a novel) begins to focus on geography. It's not necessary to be obsessed by geography in order to be a Canadian artist, but it's a characteristic that crops up again and again.

What follows are the 20 works and events that, to my mind, have most influenced our culture over the last century — and shaped what came after or defined the reality of our time. The selection is arbitrary, of course, other people might well make a different selection, and part of the pleasure for readers will no doubt be derived from disagreeing with my choices.
OTTAWA BREATHES LIFE INTO CULTURE

R.B. Bennett, the Conservative prime minis-
ter, is a believer in the power of the movie. He has advo-
cated national policies to support the film industry, which he sees as a means of bolstering the nation's cultural identity. Bennett's support for the film industry has helped to create a vibrant film industry in Canada, with many talented filmmakers emerging in recent years.

A new wave of Canadian filmmakers is emerging, including directors such as Atom Egoyan, who has received international acclaim for his films such as “The Sweet Hereafter” and “Ararat.” Egoyan's films are known for their intricate storytelling and powerful performances, and have helped to establish Canada's place on the global film stage.

The Canadian film industry is also benefitting from government support, such as the Canadian Film Development Corporation, which provides funding for film production. This support has helped to attract international filmmakers to Canada, and has contributed to the success of many Canadian films.

In addition to its film industry, Canada is also known for its vibrant music scene. The country has produced many renowned musicians, includingTool, Bryan Adams, and Alanis Morissette. These artists have helped to spread Canadian culture around the world, and have contributed to the country's reputation as a cultural powerhouse.

Canada's cultural diversity is also a major source of its cultural strength. The country is home to many different ethnic groups, each with their own unique customs and traditions. This diversity has helped to create a rich and vibrant cultural landscape, with many festivals and events that celebrate the country's multicultural heritage.

In conclusion, Canada's cultural landscape is a testament to the country's commitment to cultural diversity and creativity. From its film industry to its music scene, Canada is a cultural powerhouse that is constantly evolving and changing. With its rich heritage and vibrant present, Canada is sure to continue to be a source of cultural inspiration for generations to come.
Yesterday...

A look through Imperial Oil's archives brings the company's rich history to life

BY WINNIE THOMAS
other. In fact, business got to be so good that demand for oil began to exceed supply, and Imperial clearly needed to expand. So its founders started looking around for more money — what today we would call venture capital. They couldn't find any in Canada, but the Standard Oil group south of the border liked the look of the company and was happy to come up with the cash in return for a majority share of the greatly expanded enterprise. (Standard Oil subsequently became Exxon Corporation, now Exxon Mobil Corporation, which today owns nearly 20 percent of Imperial.)

And there, on a nearby table, sits a salesman's leather portfolio, illustrating a selection of candles from the company's own candle factory adjacent to its headquarters in Petrolia, Ont. Not for swears is an array of Imperial's mainstream products of those early days: floor waxes; a can of Eraedsaheum oil; another of Boston coach axle oil ("for oiling bugs, carriages, wagons and plows"); and — one of Imperial's best-selling turn-of-the-century products — a container of Ricca axle grease, whose splendid freeze-reducing qualities, according to an advertisement of the time, were bound to win the gratitude of horse and man alike.

These were the days, of course, when horses were expected to work for their living by pulling carriages, wagons and plows. The horseless carriage was yet to appear on the scene, but when it did, it arrived (often quite literally) with a bang. In 1903 there were 128 automobiles in the whole of Canada. By 1910 there were nearly 6,000, and the demand for what had up to then been a nuisance by-product of the refining process used mainly for cleaning ladies' gloves — gasoline — had skyrocketed.

The way in which you acquired gasoline for your car in those pioneer days was as simple as it was dangerous. You took a container down to your local grocery or hardware store and had it filled up. Then you poured it into your gas tank. One day in 1907, Imperial's Vancouver manager, Charles Robson, figured that there had to be a better and a safer way to fill motor vehicle gas tanks, and here in the archives is a photograph of the solution he dreamed up. Today we call it a service station. Sure, it was a somewhat makeshift affair — a garden hose dispensed gasoline from a converted hot-water tank — but it was a heck of an advance on carrying it home in a bucket. Imperial's Vancouver service station was the first in Canada and, quite possibly, in North America. The idea was quick to catch on — by 1912 there were 295 Imperial service stations, stretching from Vancouver to Halifax.

The burgeoning demand for gasoline, not only for automobiles but also for that other newfangled device, the farm tractor ("A gallon of gasoline can do as much work in an hour as a horse can do in a day," an article in the Imperial Oil Review claimed in 1917), put pressure on Imperial to increase its refining capacity, but the task of finding enough crude oil to feed its refineries was to prove an even tougher challenge. Supplies of oil from southern Ontario, which had been adequate to meet demand before the automobile appeared on the scene, were fast running out, and although a pipeline linking Canada with the midcontinental oilfields of the United States helped to alleviate the shortage, more supplies were urgently needed. In 1914, some oil was found in Turner Valley, near Calgary, but it wasn't enough, and Imperial started to look overseas.

That explains the two black leather briefcases that lie on a shelf in one corner. In stampled gold lettering, one declares its owner to be T.A. Link. The other, also belonging to Link, is covered with some of those lovely old stickers that were once the hallmark of exotic foreign labels ("Hotel Metropolitan, Ecuador," reads one label; "Canadian Pacific Air Lines," another). Ted Link was one of the most successful oil hunters in the business. He joined Imperial in 1919 as a geologist — at a time when Canada was importing four-fifths of the crude oil it needed — and ended up as the company's chief geologist. He had applied to Imperial for a job in South America, but his first assignment was in a considerably colder climate — that of the Northwest Territories, where he was sent to search for oil. And, at Fort Norman (now Norman Wells), just south of the Arctic Circle, he found lots of it.

Link's diaries for 1919 and 1920, which describe exactly how he went about looking for oil on a day-to-day basis, are among the most interesting documents in the archives. Today, Norman Wells is still a significant source of oil for Imperial, producing about 30,000 barrels a day. Link had his wish granted and went to South America. There he spent more than three years with an Imperial subsidiary, the Tropical Oil Company. It was during this time that he emerged not only as an exceptionally gifted field geologist but also as a geological scholar, writing widely for professional journals. Returning to North America in 1926, he earned a doctorate in structural geology from the University of Chicago before rejoining Imperial.

For the 25 years or so following the discovery of oil at Norman Wells, Canada's oil explorers were to endure a long dry spell, but the drought ended with a vengeance when Imperial made its great discovery at Leduc just south of Edmonton in 1947. And, once again, Link was at the forefront of the action. As the company's chief geologist, he played a major role in deciding where to drill Imperial's famous "last chance" well.

Imperial's Leduc discovery was to change the
course of the Canadian oil industry. It marked Canada's emergence as a major oil-producing nation and, with the string of other major oil discoveries it triggered in quick succession, revolutionized Alberta's economy. These discoveries alone added about seven billion barrels to Western Canada's oil reserves between 1947 and 1957. Clearly, Canada was going to enjoy plentiful supplies of its own crude oil for many years to come.

And that was just as well, for Canadians' postwar love affair with the automobile was in full swing. Vehicle registrations went from less than a million and a half cars in 1945 to more than five million in 1960. Those were the carefree decades of happy motoring, and the advertisements of the time on view in Imperial's archives attest to the fact. Open convertibles of almost unimaginable size and power wafted happy families down sunlit and empty highways, tigers lurked in every trunkful of Imperial gasoline, and savvy motorists knew that they could "always look to Imperial for the best."

No wonder that face peering down from the picture on one of the wall looks so familiar: it's Mr. Happy Motoring himself, actor Murray Westgate, whose first appearance as your neighborhood Esso dealer came in 1951, when Imperial-sponsored Hockey Night in Canada made its television debut after running on radio since 1936. (Westgate's Quebec counterpart, Philippe Robert, became equally well known in that province.) And no reference to Hockey Night in Canada, the event that dominated Imperial's advertising activities for so many years, can be complete without mention of Foster Hewitt, whose dry, tenor voice provided the radio play-by-play reports for many of those years.

By the late 1960s, however, the era of the early postwar years was beginning to wear off, and a more cost-conscious motorist, growing tired of promotions and giveaways, was looking for ways to offset higher gasoline prices (the inevitable result of more expensive crude oil). Imperial responded by opening its first self-serve stations in 1970. Judging from their photographs in the archives, they were pretty modest affairs compared with today's versions, which feature self-serve and full-serve lanes, car washers, Tigermarket and Tiger Express minisupermarkets and other on-the-stop shopping conveniences, but they proved to be an instant success with the consumer.

And as the service stations themselves underwent steady change, so did the products they sold — as the variety of gas-pump globes and advertising signage tacked away in various corners of the archives illustrates. Like its competitors, Imperial has never felt the urge for undue modesty when it comes to extolling the virtues of its products. Its first major brand, Premier gasoline, introduced during the First World War, was described as "absolutely the best and most reliable gasoline you can find." Imperial Ethyl gasoline made its appearance in the 1920s, followed, amid a flurry of advertising claims, by 1 Star and Esso Ethyl in the 1930s and Esso and Esso Extra gasolines in the 1940s.

In 1970, the company introduced its first low-lead gasoline and eight years later became the first Canadian oil company to introduce unleaded gasoline. By mid-1990 the company had phased out leaded gasoline altogether.

Beyond question, Imperial's toughest refining challenge, formulating gasolines that meet the exacting demands of today's high-technology engines, have come in recent years. Lubricating products, too, have undergone similar improvements.

As Imperial's products have been modified over the years, so has its approach to marketing, and it's interesting to spend some time digging in the archives to see how the company's slogans have kept pace with the changing times. During the 1920s and 1930s, Imperial was "everywhere in Canada" — a claim that no competitor could make in those early days. By the 1940s, with competition heating up, motorists were urged to "buy at the Imperial sign," and the 1950s saw the introduction of the strong and confident "Always look to Imperial for the best." However, this was eclipsed during the 1960s with the most popular slogan of all: the invitation to Canadians to "put a tiger in your tank." (In the past few years, the tiger has made a strong comeback not only in Canada but also throughout the Esso world.) During the 1970s motorists were encouraged to "explore Canada with Esso," which was succeeded in the 1980s by "You make us better." Most recently, "You're on your way with Esso" was introduced.

Whether it has to do with finding the crude oil from which to refine gasoline and other products or with the manufacture and sale of those products, every aspect of the company's activities is represented in one way or another in its archives. For example, hanging on the walls are a number of plaques and awards recognizing Imperial's long history of support for the arts. Here on a wall is a citation that goes all the way back to 1948, when The Loon's Necklace, a short film sponsored by Imperial, was chosen as Canada's best film at the Canadian Film Awards. The following year it won the silver medal at the Venice Film Festival and went on to garner a dozen other prizes throughout Europe and North America. The Newscomet, a series of films about the Canadian experience produced by the company to mark its centenary in 1986, collected another score of Canadian and international prizes.

Comprehensive though they are as a repository of Imperial's history, the archives remain, by definition, a work in progress. At the turn of the millennium, one cannot but wonder what this place will look like in another 50 years' time, what new artefacts will have joined the current collection to reflect, for future researchers, the changing face of Canada's oldest oil company.

Stay tuned.
On Nunavut’s ruggedly beautiful Baffin Island, a writer finds that despite many changes, the old Inuit values and traditions are at the heart of the new territory.

By Wynne Thomas

As our plane leveled out for a landing on what was to be the longest runway in the whole of Canada, I peered out of the window to catch a glimpse, through the scudding rain clouds, of the little town looming at the shore at the end of an immense inlet. “The last time I was here,” I said to my companion, “this place didn’t exist.”

It was a fairly silly conversational idle. The settlement had existed. But my remark had some merit. During the 10 years or so that had elapsed since my last visit, it had changed not only in its name but its political status and, as I was to discover, its personality as well.

Then, this community, the major centre of Baffin Island, was known as Frobisher Bay. It had been named for Martin Frobisher, the English explorer who in 1576, while searching for the Northwest Passage, “discovered” the bay on which the town now stands. (The local Inuit heartily disliked Frobisher, and one of them stuck him in the buttocks with an arrow, earning the anglophone explorer the distinction of being the first Englishman known to have been wounded by an Inuit.) At that time it was a collection of summer hunting camps. The permanent community itself came into existence only in 1942, when an airfield was built to refuel military aircraft flying between North America and the European war zone. Inuit from the surrounding camps were recruited as construction workers, and they soon established a little village near the Frobisher Bay airfield on the beaches of Koopaq Inlet. They called it Igloolik—the plural of “Iglu” in Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit—after the arctic char that abound in the local waters. And Igloolik became once again a respite in 1987.

For many years of negotiation, the Inuit, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the Government of Canada agreed that the Northwest Territories should be divided into two, with its central and eastern portions forming the new territory of Nunavut (“our land”). Two years later, 60 percent of voters chose Igloolik over Rankin Inlet as their new capital. The new territory officially came into being on April 1, 1999. With the Inuit making up more than 85 percent of its population, Nunavut—the stretching from west of the Coppermine River to the eastern shore of Baffin Island, and from the Manitoba border to the northern tip of Ellesmere Island—is covers approximately two million square kilometres, a fifth of Canada’s total landmass.

I wanted to visit Nunavut early in its life. And who wouldn’t? It has been a long time since we had a new province or territory, and I wanted to see something of the birthing process first hand, to witness a bit of Canadian history in the making. But Nunavut was no more than my excuse for getting back to the North, and specifically to Baffin Island— to the land of the Inuk, the humilistic stone markers that are a symbol of the Inuit way of life. On previous visits I had grown fond of this austere, boomerang-shaped island that sits between continental Canada and Greenland, fond of its spectacular scenery, its widely scattered hamlets and warm and hospitable people.

I had been to Baffin Island three times before. My first couple of visits were in the 1980s, when a handful of companies, including Imperial Oil, were exploring for oil in Davis Strait. As a result of this exploration activity, Frobisher Bay, much like Igloolik in the western Arctic, was enjoying a miniboom. There were plenty of jobs available, the only two bonds in town were permanently booked, and the airfield buzzed with activity day and night. There was a bustling frontier atmosphere about the place.

And, indeed, the frontier itself was never far away. Once, I recall, I had flown from Frobisher Bay to Inuvik, a silver of rock lying off Baffin Island’s east coast, where, near the site of a former military communications base, Imperial had established a base camp to support its offshore drilling operations. At breakfast one morning I said to the engineer in charge, “I think I’ll take a look around the old communications base.”

“Not without a bear monitor, you won’t,” he said.

“We don’t want you to provide lunch for a hungry polar bear.”

On another occasion, I recall returning to Frobisher Bay from a deep-sea drilling rig and checking into the Frobisher Inn. “I’m certainly looking forward to a hot shower,” I said feelingly to the desk clerk. “We haven’t had any water two days,” he told me. “They’re repairing the utilidor[s] the system that carries water and sewage in Arctic communities.”

“When will the water be restored?”

“Maybe in a few days, maybe longer,” replied the desk clerk casually. It was a common enough happening. In the North, one had to learn to take such things in stride.

More recently I’d been lucky enough to get a look at Baffin Island from another vantage point—the Arctic Ocean. Three years ago I was a passenger on an Imperial tanker that was carrying a cargo of aviation fuel and diesel oil to Resolute, Canada’s second most northerly community, located on the south shore of Cornwallis Island. We sailed north past Igloolik and for the best part of four days paralleled Baffin Island’s rugged northeast coast.
posing the communities of Broughton Island (now called Qik Kagitsjuk), Clyde River and Pond Inlet. Then, between the towering mountains of Bylot Island to the north and the bog- and shrub-dominated promontory of Cape Warrender on Devon Island to the north, we turned west into Lancaster Sound to follow the route of the explorers seeking the Northwest Passage. It was a journey that lent a new perspective to the remarkable land, transforming the map's flat tracery of Baffin Island's complex coastline into an imposing series of jagged mountains, vast glaciers and hanging valleys—all rendered in the mother-of-pearl panels of the Arctic's muted palette.

"You'll find the new Iqaluit very different from the old Frobisher Bay," a flight attendant told me on the three-hour trip from Ottawa, and I was looking forward to that discovery. The makeshift airport terminal I recalled had been replaced; there was now a modern, cheerful lounge full of interesting displays. Other changes were soon apparent. The Frobisher Inn was still in business but had undergone a major renovation. Its rooms had been recently refurbished, and management was in the process of adding two new floors. The time was there copious supplies of butter, milk and cold cuts were, as usual, available for pre-breakfast beverages in the dining room. The town was assigned fast food, but two bathrooms. I took a leisurely shower and then went for a stroll around town. To me, Iqaluit was clearly in the midst of a major building boom. There were a number of handsome new government buildings to house Nunavut's emerging public service. Construction workers were putting the final touches to the new legislative assembly building, an attractive, but far from extravagant, structure in wood. Nunavut's new government—consisting of a premier, a premier's chief of staff, a cabinet and 12 other members—had been elected eight months earlier. Within the space of little more than a year, the public service had become Iqaluit's biggest employer, and the changes that had brought the community to life were everywhere in evidence. It wasn't just the amount of construction taking place; there was a new sense of the town's economic vitality that remained unaffected. Every government department had offices. It seemed, a dozen or more job titles were advertised. In its notice board, and the local newspaper had its columns to offer the legislative assembly was looking for candidates for the seat of the town's economy. National, indeed, what sets Nunavut apart from other jurisdictions is the fact that it specifically improved residents' lives. It is, in other words, an economic system. There is, for example, a government minister's department, in its notice board. I dropped by the local sales office in the Department of Education, Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. I dropped by the local sales office in the Department of Education, Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. One bitterly cold night, I popped in on the flight attendant's surprise. Once Iqaluit (the most northerly of all Canadian communities), Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Resolute, Kaministiquia, Cape Dorset, Pangnirtung, Clyde River, Hall Beach, Igloolik, Coral Harbour. Initially, I chose Cape Dorset as my destination. I had never visited this community, which lies some 400 kilometres west of Iqaluit, and has for many years been famous for the quality of its Inuit sculpture. After, I had not reckoned on the variety of the Arctic weather. At 9:45 P.M., our scheduled flight to Cape Dorset was cancelled. In the flight was postponed an hour, then two, then cancelled. My second choice had been the village of Pangnirtung, 297 kilometres east-northeast of Iqaluit. It flew there the next morning in brilliant sunshine. My companions, a family of eight, who shot a documentary on the seals, and in the back of a transport packed with supplies of food and building material. Our course took us first across high, snow-covered mountains pierced by bright blue fjords, and then across the iceberg-topped waters of Cumberland Sound. The town's community, which has been a traditional haunt of the Inuit and their ancestors for several thousand years. I visited Pangnirtung before I had the opportunity to live in the place, which is not difficult to do. It's one of the most scenic of all the communities in this part of the world, being located on a coastal plain at the edge of a fjord, against the magnificent backdrop of mountains that reach as high as 2,200 metres. The last time I was in Pangnirtung it was lucky enough to stumble upon the remnant of a centuries-old tradition. A party of Inuit was leaving to spend the summer camp out on the shore of Cumberland Sound. Including children, perhaps 15 or 16 people were setting out in three canoes with a couple of freight canoes in tow. It was around 10 o'clock at night, but the light would linger for several more hours, and it seemed that the whole community had come down to the little harbour to see them off. The group would, I was told, paddle for two or three days before reaching the camp site where they would spend the next couple of months gathering their winter food reserves, fishing, hunting and picking berries. Our arrival in Pangnirtung (whose population now stands at 1,320) on this occasion was accompanied by a different brand of excitement. As soon

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as the aircraft door was opened, even before we'd begun to disembark, the airline agent appeared to warn that there was a "polar bear alert" in effect. It seemed that at about an hour prior to the flight, a bear had swum all the way from the harbor up the river to the airport (a rare occurrence as polar bears nearly always keep to the sea ice at the mouth of the sound) and appeared determined to come ashore. Bears are not welcome on the streets of Pangnirtung, and four intrepid volunteers in two open boats had gone out to discourage it from coming ashore.

I walked down the road from the airstrip to the hamlet office, which command's a fine view of the bay, and found the community's senior administrative officer, Ian Milne, with some of his staff, watching the proceedings from her office window. The boat would close in on the bear, trying to herd it out to sea. In turn, the bear would dive under the boats and emerge to threaten them from the other side. The game went on for a long time, but suddenly the bear grew tired of it, turned and made for the sound. The volunteers then rowed their boats towards the shore. The emergency over, Mike could return to his job of running the hamlet.

It is a demanding job, he said, involving many tasks, including the Nunavut government, implementing policies, setting community priorities, being responsible for the general health of the community, and looking after public safety (the last, he added, with a smile, is not only the finding of polar bears, which was a territorial responsibility).

Pangnirtung had been chosen by the new Nunavut government as one of the homes for the decentralized departments, and the pole of building material stacked a short distance down the road would soon be transformed into government offices.

Mike welcomed the promotion as a way of providing additional and much-needed employment for the people of Pangnirtung, but she didn't try to hide how big a wrench it was going to be. "This is still a very traditional community, very committed to the traditional way of life. We're heavily dependent on hunting and fishing for our food supplies. We hunt seal, caribou, and seal in Pangnirtung means "the place of the bull caribou," and there's a hill called all that, there's a walrus hunt in the summer and we catch arctic char year round. All of these species are critical to our food supply. And, nationally, in the Cana dian Arctic, every hunter shares his catch with the less fortunate."

The other staples of the local economy remain the traditional ones: serpentine and whalebone carving, net-mending, weaving, and the making of winter clothes. However, some things are changing; the city has a public library, and the downtown area has a supermarket.

One of the most interesting aspects of the community is the large number of artists who have come to Pangnirtung in recent years. In 1999, 26 artists participated in the program and, said Beattie, it is hoped that the project will be continued. "It think that the project could stimulate a whole new wave of carving in the North."

When I left Iqaluit to fly south to Ottawa, I was lucky enough to find myself seated next to a federal civil servant who, over a period of many months, had had a close involvement with the negotiations leading to the establishment of the new territory. He told me something of the history of the negotiations and of how his frequent visits over the past couple of years had changed his own views of the North.

"The first time I came to Baffin Island," he said, "I couldn't wait to get out again. I found the landscape barren beyond belief and, quite frankly, I missed my own culture and the comforts of home. But by the time I had visited some of the northern communities, I began to glimpse for the first time what an incredibly interesting culture the Inuit have. Now I've grown to love the place - coming here changes your perspective about a lot of things."

We were crossing the coastline and, to our left, the great sweep of Hudson Strait opened out into the ice-stormed North Atlantic. My acquaintance gave a long last look at the receding land. "I hope I get back here soon," he said.

An Eye on the Future

Each year, Imperial visits a number of Canadian universities as part of its campus recruitment program. The graduates it hires enjoy challenging opportunities and are key to the company's future.

BY GORDON WONG

AJAY JYOTI CAN CLEARLY RECALL THE MOMENT HE WAS OFFERED A JOB WITH IMPERIAL OIL.

"It was right after my second interview with the company," the 29-year-old engineer tells me as we chat in his bright office one day. "One of the people who initially interviewed me called and said, 'Well, you must have done something right; they want you — congratulations.'"

Jyoti first started to think seriously about working for Imperial when the company made a presentation at the University of Toronto as part of its campus recruitment program. "I was amazed — and extremely impressed — by the wide variety of really interesting opportunities in the company," explains Jyoti, one of 300 university graduates from a variety of disciplines hired by Imperial through the program over the last three years.

He was also impressed with the company's early professional development program, which ensures that the university recruits experience a diverse variety of jobs during their early years with Imperial, provides them with extensive feedback on their work and, in many cases, sets them up with mentors, who help them learn about the company and generally offer advice, friendship and a good ear. "Imperial pays a lot of attention to its university recruits," says Jyoti.

"The success of this company is highly dependent on the success of its employees," states Rob Lipsert, Imperial's vice-president of human resources, "so it only makes sense for us to put a great deal of effort into attracting, training and retaining people with outstanding abilities and potential."

In hiring university graduates, explains Lipsert, Imperial selects high achievers who are looking for a challenging and varied career, who will contribute to the company and who have the potential to provide leadership. "Hiring high-quality people and devoting a great deal of attention to their development is the best way to ensure that Imperial will continue to be a dynamic, forward-thinking, premier company," says Lipsert.

Here are the stories of Ajay Jyoti and seven of the many talented employees who have embarked on careers with Imperial during the last five years.

AJAY Jyoti, 29, is currently a price transfer coordinator with Imperial's pricing and supply department. He holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Montreal's McGill University and a master's in applied sciences from the University of Toronto. Punching in Wayne Grecky wasn't something Ajay Jyoti imagined would be part of his job when he joined Imperial. But it was.

At the time, Jyoti was working with the marketing department's customer communications group, which was producing a commercial in which Grecky was appearing. "I didn't actually work on the ad, but my manager suggested I go to the filming for the experience," says Jyoti, who joined Grecky and other crew members for lunch on the set. "It was great to see all that went into the making of that ad."

Jyoti's primary responsibility in the department was to develop and write the initial draft of the rules and regulations for the Buy, Earn, Win & Earn program, which offers customers the opportunity to win contests and earn points that can be redeemed for rewards.

"When I initially joined Imperial, I was an analyst in the distribution group and worked on various projects including a study of how to optimize the company's network of distribution terminals and mother pipelines," explains Jyoti.

"I wanted to try marketing because I felt it would
When the poet AL POEM was in April,
I was deeply saddened. Canada had lost
a man whose work captured the soul
of this country, portraying it boldly as
a land of staggering beauty with a rich
and proud history and people of character.
As Lorna Crozier, a poet and professor
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And also wrote a number of very fine
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I admired this gentleman among Canadian
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And then, a few days after his death,
I opened up the Globe and Mail to find
the last poem AI wrote, "Her Gates Both
East and West." And I knew then what I
would write: the story of that last, lovely
poem.

It begins in May of last year. I was
planning the content of the millennium
issues of the Review and thought how
splendid it would be if AI would write a
poem for the first of these to mark the
coming of 2000—"a gift to the nation,"
as I put it to him when I called to ask
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And then, one morning last August,
I walked into my office to find a fat enve-
lope on my desk. Inside was the poem. I
read its poignant opening:

Wanderings in Canada in the century
before the millennium...

This is where I come to
where my body left its body
and my spirit stayed
in its spiritual home.

And on to those final lines:
and if chance we are not alone
some wanderer on another plane
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Eventually, AI was content with this
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the country.

And so I come to the end of this story
of the writing of "Her Gates Both
East and West" by a remarkable Canadian
whose generosity and love of his craft led
him to use the final months of his life
to write this beautiful poem as a great gift
to the nation. — Small Laxeway

A Poet's Gift

When the poet Al POEM died in April,
I was deeply saddened. Canada had lost
a man whose work captured the soul
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