

# Teenage Lads Report On Northwest Mission

August 7, 1962 is the day we finally quit our 1500 mile river trip and flew inland to our destination Colville Lake. We made the final fifty miles from Fort Norman to Norman Wells in our freight canoe the day before and pitched our tent on the beach.

Now we found ourselves, Father Brown, Brian Martin and Frank Wratni, jammed into the small cabin of a Beaver aircraft between our seven sled dogs, fighting for enough altitude to clear the Mackenzie Mountains east of the Mighty Mackenzie River and using a king-sized frying pan to quell incipient fights among our dogs.

The other three members of our expedition: Frank McDermott, Barry Haeffel and Bob Haughwout were to fly into the Wells the same day and join Father Brown whom the pilot assured would be picked up later in the day and returned.

The welcome we received on the muskug shore of blue Colville Lake was tremendous, the entire population turned out to shake our hands, all twenty of them!

But their welcome was sincere and we felt at home from the start. They helped us unload the dogs from the plane and tie them to the short willows as there are no trees in the area. Then we were led to the logs they had cut during the winter and hauled with their sleds. The site was high and dry but too far back from the water. Father Brown quickly picked out a spot along the lake front just north of the settlement and decided the Mission was to be built there. The settlement consisted of three log cabins and eleven tents plus five new log cabins in the process of building. It was an up and coming town.

Father Brown was to be picked up later that afternoon after getting the dogs staked out and the big tent pitched, but as so often happens in the North, the four hours turned out to be four days. He had come in nothing but his cassock and had to borrow a sleeping bag from the Indians. They were very kind and considerate in bringing a stove and wood, ducks and fish all cleaned and ready to cook, bank (their bread) and even cut and laid a beautiful fragrant floor of spruce boughs in our tent. Those four days were put to good use; all the land right down to the lake, a seventy-two foot dock was built out into the lake so that planes carrying our building supplies

could land them near at hand, we had set up housekeeping in the big 16 x 20 tent.

In short a beach-head had been established and all was set for the major landing. On Friday afternoon the cry: "Ellakinareta!" went up around the settlement. "Airplane," an event, and a welcome one for Father Brown who pictured his missing three boys waiting patiently in the tent near the canoe at Norman Wells wondering when they would continue to Fort Good Hope. But bigger than the surprise of the plane itself was the first passenger to step down on the pontoon... Barry Haeffel, followed by the other two missing members, Frank McDermott and Bob Haughwout. They had caught a ride with the R.C.M.P. boat from the Wells to Good Hope and towed the canoe with them from there. They were doubly welcome and our party was again together after being separated at Fort Smith two weeks before.

But not for long. Father Brown boarded the returning plane and flew to Fort Good Hope where he spent the next few days receiving a boatload of supplies and storing them for the plane lift to Colville. During this time the great feast of August 15 arrived and with it the Bishop to confer Confirmation on the children of the Fort.

At the same time Father Leising flying the Mission's own Beaver aircraft was free to make a few trips into Colville Lake and he and Father Brown flew in with a load on the evening of August 14 and returned again the following morning before the boys were up with a half ton of canned food and cement. Following trips brought in lumber (cut to eight feet to fit in the cabin), a cast iron stove, two tons of roofing, fish nets, dog harness, chain saw etc.

The feast of the Assumption is not a holy day of obligation in Canada so as soon as the supplies were unloaded work got under way on the foundations of the new Mission. But that night Father said his first oration.

This huge plane grounded Mass at Colville Lake in the big tent with a case of powdered milk for a tabernacle and illumination from the candles. The tent was full and eleven of the natives received Holy Communion. The Church had at long last come to Colville Lake to stay.

August 16, 17 and 18 were spent hauling gravel on our backs to form a base for the cement footings of the log Mission. The idea is to insulate the permafrost a foot below the building so that the heat of the building will not melt it. During this backbreaking labour the black flies were most annoying but their days were now numbered. All the canoes on Colville Lake are homemade by the Indians and now one of them was pressed into service hauling rocks and sand and gravel from a small beach three miles away.

Father Leising returned from Aklavik and Inuvik on Friday and made four solo trips that day from Good Hope 100 miles south hauling in more of our building supplies. On the following day the women went out in their large canoe and came back with a load of spruce tops with which they wove a new floor for our large tent.

Sunday, August 19 — After the usual 9.30 a.m. "High" Mass during which Father preached to a full ten in their language, the five Rochester boys were invited by the local Indian boys for a fishing trip.

Father stayed home to work on the plans of the Mission. Instead he found himself entertaining the people who came all day long to visit. The boys returned late with some beautiful fish weighing up to ten pounds. It was the last warm day we had. Even the mosquitos seemed warm, although there was permanent ice just a foot below the surface.

The big bell Father Leising brought from Arctic Red River sounded again in the evening to call the people to the evening Rosary. Of course they all come because they like this devotion and there are no distractions we associate with "civilization" such as radios and television. These people didn't even have a piano or violin, no magazines or newspapers. They know nothing of the great bomb threat that worries the outside world nor of international tensions. There are no ulcers at Colville Lake.

Father Brown bears the first name of the great Doctor of Clairvaux, Bernard, and so August 20 was his Feast of "Names Day" as it is known in the Mackenzie Vicariate.

This called for something special but what? We had nothing with which to celebrate. No holiday could be called because the work of pouring the cement of the footings had to be done before freeze-up. Then suddenly out of the blue came an unexpected plane bearing four Mounties and the mail including several boxes of sweets from the Sisters in the States.



### Trophy Winner

Paul Haney, son of Mr. and Mrs. William F. Haney, and a member of Holy Rosary parish, is congratulated by Bishop Kearney after winning two trophies at the Gannett Debate Tournament held at the University of Rochester on Dec. 7 and 8. One of the awards was for the best debater and the other for the best negative debater. Mr. Haney is president of the Fisher Forum at St. John Fisher College and was among debaters from 36 colleges of New York State and out of State.

The R.C.M.P. had come to vaccinate the sled dogs for rabies. They brought fifty shots with them but ran short when they found that the dog population at Colville Lake was sixty-six!

That evening after Mass the men of the camp stayed on to smoke cigars (found in a parcel of sweets from Sister Mary Timothy, R.S.M.). The women and children ate candy on their way back to their tents. It was the first feast day we had celebrated at our new home.

August 21—Work continued under clear skies and a moderate S-E wind. Father taught Brian Martin how to handle the chain saw when he and Barry Haeffel began building the privy. Isadore Cochon and Frank Codzie were peeling logs. Bob Haughwout, Frank McDermott, Martin Oudrie, and Joe Codzie were packing dirt and moss on their backs to cover the gravel with cement pads (21 of them) were cast on. Frank Wratni crossed the Lake with Paul Colchile, Alfred Maszumi and Louis Oudzie to try to find some trees 32 feet high which are needed under the Mission as foundation for the log walls. They found a few eight miles along the shore, cut them and towed them back.

And then again that magic cry of "Ellakinareta!" echoed round the settlement as a plane was spotted coming from the south. No sound was heard as yet, just a tiny pin point on the southern horizon. The plane turned out to be a big one as far as our watery airport was concerned. It was an "Otter" piloted by Bob Inglis of North West Territorial Airways carrying a ton of gas from Norman Wells to fuel our future generator which would enable us to go on the "air" when we got some twenty feet off the end of our dock and some of the boys had to jump into the cool water and help unload the ten gallon kegs until the pontoons were off the bottom and the plane could be pulled into the dock. This plane made two more trips to Fort Good Hope hauling more of the freight that had arrived there by river boat from Waterways a thousand miles south.

That night we were entertained by a brilliant display of Northern Lights rivaling the fireworks at Charlotte on the Feast of St. Anthony. The boys were particularly impressed by the vivid greens. They sat outside the tent until midnight as the temperature fell to 45.

Wednesday, August 22 — We can now stay in our sleeping bags an extra hour as we have acquired a cook! She is Sarah and she comes at six, builds a huge fire in our cast iron heater and cooks a wonderful breakfast of oatmeal and coffee. The Otter returns early carrying our eighteen canoes on its pontoon. Now we can put out our nets. Six of the men cross the Lake again, this time to cut fire-killed dry spruce for our ceiling and roof rafters. The continuing S-E wind keeps the black flies away and we can work in peace at last.

The pilot and his mechanic come up to the tent for lunch and tell us of the gold rush now in progress east of us at Conyto Lake. They have been flying prospectors in there in droves 250 miles north of their base in Yellowknife. They say the gold runs 3 ounces to the ton and was discovered by a geologist working from an aircraft for one of the big mining companies. It is the first major gold strike in the Territories in the past fifteen years.

On the second trip of the aircraft came two young Indian boys who hitch-hiked on the promise that they would pay their passage by working to help build the Mission! This brings our crew to 13. Now it becomes a problem every morning for Father to place his workers and get the work underway.

Thursday, August 23 — This morning the Mission took a

# Campus Dateline

## Toronto Priest

Rev. David Belyea, C.S.B., noted scholar and professor of philosophy at St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto, will address the Forum club of Aquinas Institute on Dec. 18 in the school library.

The Forum, which provides opportunity for free discussion of national and international problems in relation to Christian thinking, is open to all students of the school.

Subject of Father Belyea's talk will be "Modern Literature and the Need for God."

The Basilian priest has received wide acclaim for his contemporary philosophy course at which he uses the writings of the University of Toronto in such moderns as J. D. Salinger as a starting point in dealing with the problem of evil in the world.

Father Belyea, a native of New Brunswick, received his doctorate in Theology from the Angelicum in Rome. He served on the staff of St. John Fisher College in Rochester for a short time before being appointed professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto. He is well known for his work with youth.

According to Rev. John M. Sheehan, C.S.B., moderator of the Forum, Father Belyea's lecture will be open to the public.

## Persian Choir

The Persian Choir of Nazareth Academy will present a cantata, "The Song of Christmas," in the school auditorium Friday, Dec. 21, at 10 a.m.

Narrator will be Mary Catherine Burke. Soloists will be Helen Conway, Paula Petrarca, and Gale Ewanow.

We started work an hour earlier and fumbled around in heavy mits and jackets. But little by little we warmed to the work. Six of the men crossed the lake to cut spruce with which to build our fish house. Father and Louis spent the day levelling the floor joices, always the hardest job of building a log building. Using a level and axes they cut here and there, levelling as they went until at sundown the thousand square foot floor of the main building was dead level and ready for flooring.

Gale Ewanow, and Virginia Panalone. A small ensemble will include Jean Marie Rotondo, Paula Petrarca, Janice Satter, Helen Conway, and Dorothy Koster.

The choir will preface their program with a candlelight procession accompanied by the Nazareth Orchestra. Accompanist for the choir will be Jo Ann Weiss.

The Glee Club will present their program at 1:35 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 17. This group, made up of freshmen and sophomores, will present the "Christmas Crib," the story of Bethlehem in song form.

Narrator will be Virginia Salerno. Soloist is Bonnie Tandoi, accompanied by Carol Le Frois. Helen Conway will be student director. Sister Rose Teresa is the regular director of the Persians and of the Glee Club.

## Christmas Play

The students of Nazareth Academy will present the Christmas play, "Always With You," Wednesday, Dec. 19, at 8:30 p.m.

Written and directed by Sister St. Gertrude, the play portrays a modern girl upset by the problem of finding help for the poor of the world.

Characters include: Mary Ellen Moran, "Marge"; Anne Jacumo, "Nancy"; Susan Mooney, "Barbara"; Mary Attinasi, "May Alice"; Anne Schubert, "Ellen"; Rita Liotta, "Ruth Ann"; Marilyn Casaceli, "Lynn"; Barbara Kerr, "Jane"; Marilyn Sadler, "Fran"; and Catherine Hiler, "the nun."

The chorus will include: Patricia Binazeki, Marilyn Kalaska, Virginia Mannion, Susan Masello, Marilyn Metherell, Carolyn Pettis, Aldona Sabolis, Audrey Spivan, Rosemary Tom-Baker, Jeanne Brinkman, Linda Letta, Ellen Metzger, Mary Jane Roney, Janet Cleau, Elizabeth Anderson, Joan Arioli, Janice Corletta, Anne Auberger, Francine Bellusio, Colleen Cleary, Carol Christoff, Margaret Fitzpatrick, Ellen Gutmann, Bonnie Hoch, Marilyn Krolak, and Linda Schneider.

Mary Anne Giovannini and Bernadette Casaceli.

Jo Ann Weiss will accompany the group on the piano.

## Italian Music

Two students of the Italian III class at Nazareth Academy, invited by the Italian Civic League of Rochester, will present a program on the Italian Music Hour on Sunday, Dec. 16, from 10:05 - 10:30 a.m. over station WHEC.

Clare Anne Stefanucci will be the English narrator and Julie Ciaccia will be the Italian narrator. The girls have planned the entire program, and are dedicating it to four great Italian tenors: Caruso, Martinelli, Schipa and Geggli.

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