

Give the Gift of Yukon Music

Every year it comes down to it.

Patient planning and careful listing is shattered by the dreaded last-minute gift.

For us in the Yukon this can be double trouble, as the good graces of Canada Post, even in this, the most wonderful time of the year, will not extend "Yukon Time" privileges to parcels leaving the territory.

Yes, the dreaded last-minute gift can be a bother mainly due to the fact that, like animals smell

A Carcross Christmas

BY ANNE-MARIE LAPOINTE
TRANSLATION BY
JEAN-FRANCOIS ROLDAN

While she was growing up, Ida Calmegane spent every Christmas on her father's trap lines like her aboriginal ancestors did. Very far from the closest village, Mr. Calmegane had to travel many kilometres to bring presents to his kids for Christmas.

Ida and her parents then moved to Carcross when she was 5. She remembers one particular Christmas where her mother had invited all the families from the village. She had made some candy bags for all the kids with some window screen in which she had put peanuts, oranges and candies.

Ida's older brother was dressed up as Santa Claus and gave presents to the kids who were overexcited. Ida recognized her brother under the costume because he was still wearing a ring on his finger. She got a doll that she carried with her everywhere from that moment on.

Her Mom had cooked a stuffed turkey along with the classic smoked salmon and moose pot roast. At the end of the evening, she served tea and bannock, the traditional aboriginal bread. Of course, Christmas didn't exist in the First Nations culture before the arrival in the Yukon of the first coureurs des bois, however the celebration stays true to the traditional aboriginal values of family, sharing and respect.

A few years later, Ida went to residential school with her older sister. Each year she would go back to her family for Christmas until the New Year's.

In her mother tongue, Tlingit, mainly passed on orally, Christmas means 'birthday of the son of our father who is in heaven'.

Reunited with her family, Ida had to go to the Anglican Church for the midnight mass.

Today, she still decorates a tree that she places in the window and invites her family to come to her house, in the true tradition of Christmas. Of course, there is always a festive meal and a gift exchange. Like many people her age, she doesn't go to church anymore, but keeps on believing that there is a divine essence within each of us, wherever we are.

This column is courtesy of
l'Association franco-yukonnaise.
Please visit the news section
of www.immigrationyukon.com
for more articles.



DISCOURSE

with Bill Polonsky

fear, a relative can smell the last-minute gift for what it is: A failure to care, an unspoken wound to ego and possibly the family structure itself.

To bypass this hurt, this minefield of choice, I offer, humbly, an alternative to the dreaded sock, tie or chocolate box (all in my mind a sure sign of general slack and blatant procrastination). In fact, this non-dietary substitute I recommend could be the beginning of family reconciliation.

I suggest you rework your list and head down to one of our fine local music stores and give the gift of Yukon music.

I am of course biased in this thinking as I have exposed myself to this bounty, to find untold joys in reviewing local music for this paper. Still, the gift of Yukon music could show your family down south or across town that

you hold them in more esteem than they truly deserve.

"Gee, that sounds like a great idea, Bill. But how can I choose the right gift of music for the people on my last-minute list with dwindling time, not to mention precious money being spent on mandarin oranges and queer seasonal cheeses?"

Honestly, for the price of a tin of smoked mollusks and some funky liver paste you can get some dandy local music and save yourself from the inevitable gastric overload that will keep you lying about your resolution diet for the New Year.

Get your boots and socks on people and head downtown.

My regular hunting grounds for Yukon music are Mac's Fireweed Books, Triple Js Music and Rose Music. Within the walls of these establishments is a veritable

plethora of local music and Yukon-oriented films.

Of course the beauty of shopping local is that the owners of these stores have intimate knowledge of the artists and their works so any question about the type of music or particular artist is answered by a knowledgeable source.

Another advantage is that if you ask nicely you may be able to preview a CD prior to purchase.

Thirdly, and in my mind most importantly, by buying local you keep the business owners in business and local artists get fed and watered.

Keeping the music alive is what we have the power to do with our discretionary Christmas spending.

Think about making your purchases local this season and the rewards will be a continuing vibrant artistic scene in our communities ... and that, my friend, is priceless.

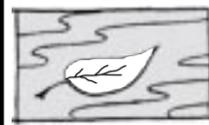
Bill Polonsky is available for tough personal shopping assignments and for opening stubborn pickle jars this holiday season. Check out the Yukon Artist link on his website at strangethingsdone.com.

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