

## How Do You Spell Relief? N-O

by Christopher Michaud

The votes are in, the count has been made, and a decision rendered. Canada is still one country, one whole piece, but just as uncertain today of its future as it was before the referendum.

Well, the No side has won, but barely. How long did most of us stay glued to our TV sets that Monday night in October? I know I barely blinked away from the bottom right-hand side of my friend's TV. The only time my view did shift was when the No side gained ground and reached the 50% mark and moved to the left side of the screen. Even then, the No side fell back four times before claiming the 50% mark and not giving it up.

Here are a few facts and figures on the poll results. The No side did not reach the 50% mark until after 70% of the votes had been tabulated. The highest mark it reached was when it closed finally at 50.67%. A numerical victory was called by the No once 96% of the votes had come in. How close did the Yes side come to winning it? VERY CLOSE!!!

When a map of Quebec was displayed, almost the whole of the province was covered in blue, except for one little area. Considering that area has a population of over 1.2 million, it was the area that won it for the No side. The Island of Montreal won the referendum for the No side. I could almost say "so did the ethnic vote", but Parizeau already put his foot in his mouth on that one, thank you.

Okay, so where do we go from here? The fat lady has sung, but the whole thing is far from over. It is now time to talk. All right, so most of us are tired of hearing about talks. Meech Lake and Charlottetown didn't solve anything. However, this time we have no choice. Canada and Quebec must sit down and talk. Personally, I don't think my nerves could handle another referendum.

The future of Canada rests, once again, in the hands of politicians. Remember, we put those people there, so they have to finish the job. Scary thought, isn't it? Canada and Quebec must look before they leap on the question of granting powers to anybody. Especially since if Quebec gets something, won't the rest of the provinces want the same benefits in return?

It is now time to turn out the lights and pull down the shades on the latest episode in Canadian politics. Carefully, though, because that blind could go rolling right back up in a snap if this question is not solved once and for all.

## Referendum

# Finding A Voice

by Yvonne MacKean

The Pro-Canada rally at Province House on October 27 was organized by two UPEI students. Ross Williams and Chris Burns were willing to discuss the rally.

The idea for the rally came from a discussion on how depressed both were about not having a voice in the Quebec issue. The two had feelings of helplessness. They shortly thereafter saw coverage of a rally in Toronto, when "the golden hammer of inspiration" intervened said Williams. They decided to organize a rally. That same Tuesday evening each promised to get up the next morning and do something. Burns was in charge of contacting the Premier's Office and Williams was to talk to a professor about some contact names. Later in the morning than he had planned, Burns got a permit and spoke to the Premier's Office. Williams said "when he told me Wednesday morning that he had the permit, there was no turning back". Both gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Premier's Office in actually getting things together.

In all, planning took about two days. The two went "like madmen" Burns observed, until about 6:00 pm on Friday. Burns, over the two days of organizing, had

pictured what he wanted to achieve at the rally. Firstly, he wanted to attract people. The rally was attended by around three hundred people. Secondly, Burns wanted a diverse group. He said there were people of all ages and walks of life there. Thirdly, he wanted to get a message to the people. The national and local news coverage helped accomplish this goal. Both Williams and Burns were displeased with the low student support. Burns added that those who were there did a great job, but he had hoped for more support from the students. However, had the event been advertised as strictly a student event, the popular support may not have been as great.

Both agreed that if there was an issue they felt as strongly about they would do it again. Williams added that he learned more about some processes through the rally than he had learned in classes. Williams only regret is the haste in preparation, and next time he would plan further ahead. Both agreed on this, citing the fact that until 2:00 pm on Friday, they didn't know of Lennie Gallant's appearance. Williams also added that they learned if you gave skateboarders free stuff, they will help you out.

Thanks to the success of this rally and others across the nation, Williams said

he could literally "feel something in the air, something wonderful would happen". Williams believed the feeling went from coast to coast and resulted in a sound message being delivered to the people of Quebec.

In general, both were satisfied with the response they received from people they contacted. The Premier's Office's help was enormous. They provided flags, balloons, pins and a major attraction point. Williams added that Professor David Milne of the Political Studies department is not getting the credit he deserves. He provided advice, names and even did some calling himself. "Once people knew what we were doing," Williams relayed, "they couldn't be helpful enough". As well, if someone couldn't help out, they explained why and gave a name of someone else who could. Burns pointed to Robert Arseneault, who was not sure if he supported the rally, but gave a very moving speech.

The CBC described the pair as a short haired, well dressed guy with a cell phone (Burns), and a jean clad, "messy haired" guy (Williams). Regardless of how the two are described, their initiative and hard work shows that all students are not apathetic, and with some effort students can have a voice in issues that affect them.

## Montreal Rally Worth The Trip

by Christopher Michaud

Spending two hours at the airport in Halifax is not my idea of fun, but spending an afternoon in my hometown of Montreal with 150,000 fellow Canadians and Montrealers cheering and waving Canadian flags brought a tear of joy to my eye.

The trip to Montreal was uneventful except for two incidents. Aside from the presence of Catherine Callbeck and George Proud on our plane (I think he was there), we had an entertainer from Newfoundland "serenade" us on the way to Montreal. After our Newfoundland friend finished his repertoire, I decided I had to say something. So, mustering all the courage I could, I said a few things from my heart over the aircraft's intercom system. I said how I considered myself lucky to be able to go on this trip, and how much this trip meant to me, and how much the whole referendum meant as well.

The fact that I received a round of applause from some 200 strangers as me and my shaky knees took my seat wasn't

want grabbed me. I had only said a few things that I cared about, and shared my feelings with a few fellow Canadians. What surprised me was the number of people who followed me, and took their turns at the intercom system, and expressed their feelings and love for Canada.

As we rode on the bus from the airport to downtown and la Place du Canada in the heart of Montreal, a car drove beside the bus. The passenger on the right side looked up. Our eyes met through the slightly tinted windows. I put my little Canadian flag in the window so he could see. He saw, and raised his hand to give me a thumbs-up. But there was no smile on his face. It seemed as though my little expression of patriotism was for him nothing more than a reminder of what he, and the rest of Quebec, faced on October 30, 1995.

At the rally, we yelled and shouted. We cheered and jeered. We waved our little flags and our big flags. We waved our signs and our arms. We cried tears of joy, tears of hope and tears of fear.

The few Montrealers I spoke to expressed not deep concern but downright fear over the state of their province. Many were concerned where they would go; they had grown up in la Belle Province, and were not sure what would happen next after the vote. My friend Shannon, whom I spoke to the Wednesday before the rally, summed it all up best. "Chris, I'm scared".

Canada will be forever changed by the events of the past year and a half, ever since the election of the Bloc Quebecois as the official opposition. The scars will remain on both sides, and they will be deep.

For me, it was a return home during a difficult and frightening period in my province. I landed in Montreal with mixed feelings. A feeling of coming home, finally. A feeling of anxiousness towards the rally. A feeling of fear and concern, for my friends, my family, my province, my country.

I just hope the next time I go home I won't need a passport.