

# The 12 Who Shared

*Forum members found common interests behind widely divergent views*



*They were chosen not for the common ground they shared, but because they disagreed. The 12 participants in the Maclean's national unity forum were scientifically selected by the magazine and Decima Research to represent and articulate the sweep of the country's divergent*

*views about the current unity crisis, from committed federalist to hard-line Quebec separatist and autonomy-seeking native Canadian. All of the participants underwent at least some change in their opinions over the course of the weekend at a lakeside retreat in Ontario. They also spoke about their new appreciation for one another's interests—and a shared sense that everyone has a role to play in solving Canada's problems.*

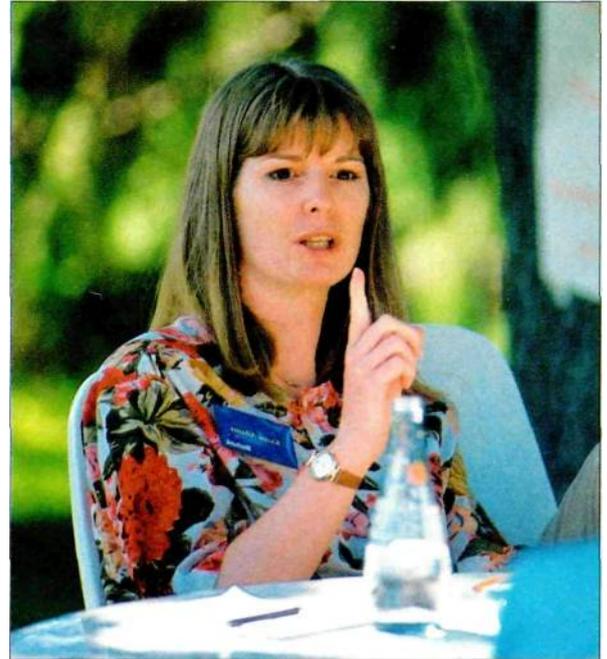
## **KAREN ADAMS** Toronto

Karen Adams sat by herself under the protective cover of 80-foot black-locust trees, carefully reviewing the 16-page document that she and the 11 other participants had just drafted during the *Maclean's* weekend forum on the future of Canada. Later, in an interview, the 34-year-old knitwear designer and consultant from Toronto said that the quiet reflection near the end of an intense weekend was essential. "I needed the time to digest it," she said. Like several other participants, Adams began the retreat heavily influenced by her life in business. "I felt very capitalistic coming from Toronto," she said. "But then, I realized that is why we are the strongest province financially and that what we do is important to the rest of Canada. Someone has to pay the bills." The more important discovery, she added, was realizing how much the weekend had changed her and the other participants. "When the meeting started, we were divided by geography, economics and emotions," she said. "Now, I am confident in the Canadian people. I was a bit nervous about the country, but my faith has been renourished."

Born in Oakville, Ont., Adams was educated at Burlington's Lord Elgin High School, then graduated from nearby Sheridan Community College with a diploma in fashion design in 1977. A year earlier, she had married; her husband, Ken Adams, 40, is a Toronto freelance data processor and software marketer. Adams began her own career after graduation, working for established knitwear makers for 12 years. In 1989, she started her own business. "I was nervous about going out on my own at such a time in the knitwear industry," she said. "About 50 per cent of Canada's knitting mills have closed down." That fact, she said, prompted her to participate in a subcommittee of the forum dealing with the national economy. "I see my industry crumbling," she said. "I wonder where we'll be in the next five to 10 years."

As the owner of her own fashion studio, K.A.S., Adams oversees design, stitching, styling and marketing of knitwear lines sold to retail chains and department stores. "I develop color, sizing and shape, and work with Canadian manufacturers, either domestically or abroad," she explained. She returned from a two-week visit to knitting and embroidery facilities in China only a week before the gathering. "We still try to support the domestic knitting plants, but imports are at such amazingly low prices," she said. "Other countries have the labor to do a lot of hand knitting at low wages."

She works out of a bright, cluttered second-floor office, surrounded by



colorful fabric samples, overlooking Spadina Avenue in Toronto's fashion district. Away from the office, she is a fan of the movies and ethnic cuisine. She and her husband recently bought a two-storey brick house in the leafy suburb of Leaside. Her work takes her to Montreal once a month, but Adams does not agree with Quebec separatists—Decima identified her as a Firm Federalist. During the forum weekend, she dismissed narrow definitions of citizenship as irrelevant. "When I travel abroad, I never say I am from Ontario. I almost always say I am Canadian," she said. And afterwards, she observed that the experience had confirmed her confidence in "the human spirit to nurture," adding: "If we could just draw that out, we would unite as a country."

## **CYRIL ALLEYNE** Montreal

An ardent golfer, Cyril Alleyne gazed wistfully at the green fairways of the Lake Simcoe resort where the 12-member *Maclean's* forum had met to discuss Canada's future. "I would have brought my clubs," he said with a sigh, "but they told me I wouldn't have time for a round." The 51-year-old manager of Montreal's MGM Security, a manufacturer of vaults, safes and other equipment, said that he approached the weekend gathering with curiosity—and a little wariness. "I did not know what to expect," he said. But by the end of Sunday's groundbreaking session, Alleyne said that he was surprised at how productive the discussions had been. "I would never have thought we could do this in only three days,"

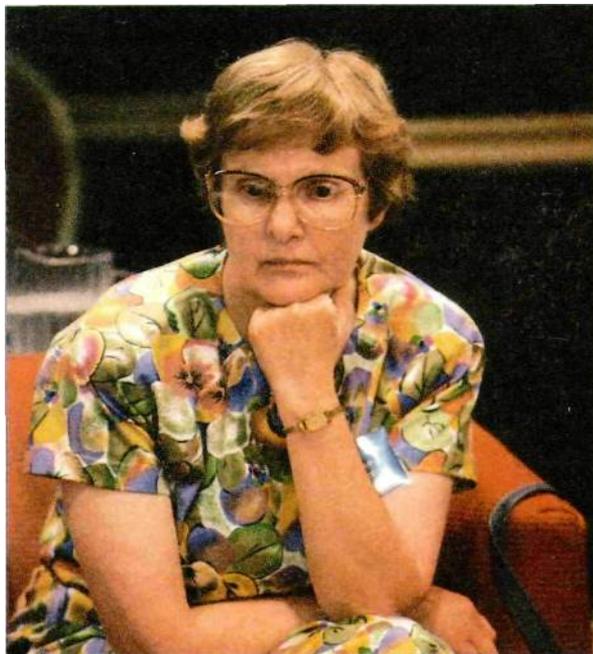
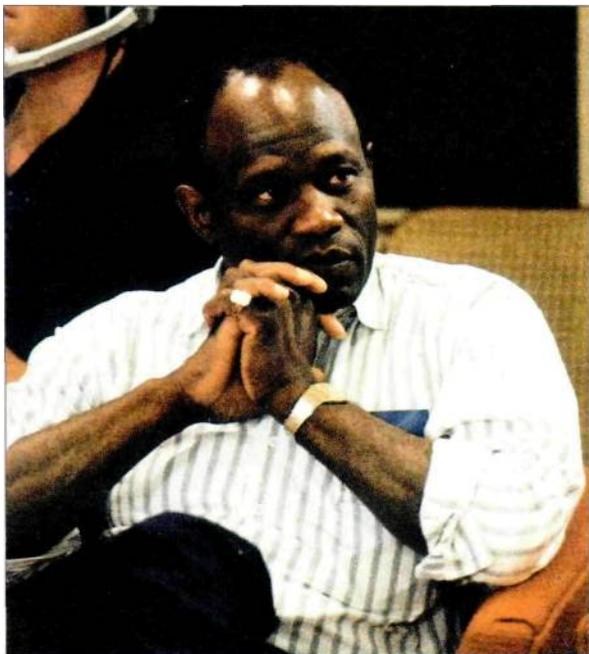
he said, shaking his head. And in the end, after the agreement on a joint statement, Alleyne did manage to sneak in five holes of golf with a set of rented clubs.

In his role as a manager, Alleyne says that he believes in delegating work and building a sense of responsibility in employees. His constitutional vision seems to take those practices into account: although he calls himself a federalist, he says that more power should flow to the provinces. Decima's analysis identified him as a Quebec Moderate. He was critical, however, of what he called the "inward-looking mentality" of people in his own province. Quebecers generally do not bother to travel, he said, or to learn enough about the outside world before making decisions about their role in it. He added: "Even when they do go outside the country, it's usually to Florida, where they stay in Hollywood—with all the other French-Canadians."

Overall, Alleyne said, he is optimistic about the future of Canada, principally because he has detected some changing attitudes among his francophone acquaintances who favor sovereignty. Said Alleyne: "A lot of the people I talk to are suddenly beginning to question the whole idea of separatism."

Alleyne immigrated to Canada from Barbados with his family in 1947, when he was 8. He grew up in the east end of Montreal, and says that his was the first black family ever to live in the immediate neighborhood. Neighbors "used to stare a lot," he said, "but we soon settled in." He served three years in the Royal Canadian Navy as a radar plotter and married a French-Canadian woman. Now divorced and living in the east Montreal suburb of Anjou, he has one daughter—Claudine, 26—a granddaughter two years old and twin month-old grandsons. A competitive sportsman, he plays Softball in a merchants' league, hockey and tennis, as well as his favorite, golf. He also enjoys music and reading.

Alleyne was one of the quieter participants during the *Maclean's* weekend, something that he himself remarked on and that he said puzzled him. "I am normally very outspoken," he said on Saturday evening, "but I seem to be very quiet now." As he left the weekend gathering, he mused: "I wondered last night, after we came up with the recommendations, about whether I spoke up enough as someone who represented English Quebecers. I guess I am a thinker before I am a talker." Clearly, Cyril Alleyne was not the only participant in the forum on Canada's future who left the sessions with a lot to think about.



## VIOLA CERZKE-SCHOOLER Edmonton

Edmonton nurse and social worker Viola (Vi) Cerezke-Schooler, 54, says that she took a passionate concern about the rising rate of poverty to the *Maclean's* forum on Canada's future. "I am in horror at the events that are dismantling Canada's social safety net," she said, "and about what will happen to children and many Canadian adults." Cerezke-Schooler, a Fed-up Federalist according to Decima's analysis, added that she believes that Quebec has legitimate complaints caused by rising hunger and poverty rates, but that its best chance to retain its French culture is to stay in Confederation. Acknowledging that an independent Quebec would need to maintain its trading relationship with the United States, she declared: "The United States won't give a hoot about the French fact." She added: "English has emerged as the language of trade and commerce. Quebec cannot escape that." Still, as Cerezke-Schooler prepared to leave for Edmonton at the end of the three-day conference, she noted that many western Canadians share the sense of isolation that Quebecers feel. "If Quebec feels mistreated," she said, "it is normal to pull in. But when it understands that there are creative ways to stay together, then the province could change."

Cerezke-Schooler was born in Moose Wallow, 120 km northwest of Edmonton, and is the granddaughter of pioneer Alberta homesteaders. She graduated in psychiatric and general nursing at the Alberta Hospital in Ponoka in 1959. After working for the Alberta Social Services' child welfare department, she completed her bachelor of nursing degree at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. In 1965, she earned her bachelor of social work at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and then worked for 14 years in family counselling in Edmonton and Calgary. Since obtaining a master's degree in sociology at the University of Calgary in 1979, she has lectured in social work at Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton.

An avid book collector, gardener and globe-trotter who has twice visited China—and who travelled to Guatemala the week after the *Maclean's* forum ended—Cerezke-Schooler says that her favorite Canadian city is Montreal. "I could live on St-Denis Street in one of those little walk-up apartments," she said. As well, Cerezke-Schooler says that she enjoys a wide spectrum of music, including opera. She is married to

## THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT

Herbert Cerezke, an entomologist with the federal department of forestry in Edmonton, and they have two bilingual children. Daughter Jill, 24, is a graduate of the University of Alberta in anthropology and English, and son Mark, 21, is about to begin studies at an Edmonton community college.

After the *Maclean's* forum adjourned, Cerezke-Schooler, a strong Canadian nationalist, had high praise for the conflict resolution skills that a three-member team from the Harvard-related Conflict Management Group exercised in helping the 12 participants develop their final statement. "What is clear," she said, "is that you can have strangers with no idea of Canadians, who use a process to have us say honestly what we think and are afraid of. And they allow us to suspend judgment and show us how to pick out the common ground between us." Recalling her visits to China, she added: "The Chinese interpretation of the word 'crisis' means an opportunity on the tail of the dragon. Danger also means opportunity, and we have an opportunity to create something remarkable here."



### KARREN COLLINGS Fenwick, Ont.

Karren Collings lives close to the earth at her home in Fenwick, Ont., a rural community that sits high on the Niagara Escarpment among orchards and vineyards. The slender 43-year-old nurse, who now works on a casual part-time basis at the Welland County General Hospital, 10 km southeast of Fenwick, devotes a good deal of her energy to the cultivation of flowers on the one-third of an acre of land where the home sits. But when she rises from that work to relax on the deck attached to her house, Collings's view expands—on a clear day, as far as the hills of Pennsylvania, more than 150 km to the south. In a sense, her view of her country underwent a similar expansion of horizons as Collings participated in the *Maclean's* forum on Canada's future. From an opinion beforehand that the nation seemed to be heading for a breakup, she says, her outlook changed. "I realized issues are not cut-and-dried," she said. "I realized that it is not over for Quebec, that they are still ready to listen."

The impression of Quebec that Collings carried to the forum was based partly on memories of a visit 25 years ago, when she found the

people "friendly—they spoke English." Her visit as a teenager was her latest to Quebec. Although she and her husband of 21 years, Benjamin, have travelled as far afield as Florida, Mexico and Colombia on winter vacations, and from time to time make the 110-km car trip to Toronto to watch the Blue Jays play baseball, the focus of their lives is the Niagara Peninsula. He works as an industrial engineer with General Motors of Canada in St. Catharines, about 20 km northeast of Fenwick, and their only child, Christopher, 15, has just completed Grade 10 at E. L. Crossley Secondary School in nearby Fonthill.

Karren Collings's more recent impression of Quebecers, she said before taking part in the forum, is that "they are hurting—obviously from what they say about themselves and the rest of Canada." She said before the forum that she was uncomfortable with the public funding of bilingual services at the expense of other programs, even though 23 per cent of the 44,570 people who live in Welland are francophones. She also balked at the idea of an economic association between a politically independent Quebec and the rest of Canada. "To me," she said then, "that is not being part of Canada." Still, Collings, whom Decima's cluster analysis identified as a Peacemaker (compromise seeker), added: "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all agreed, Quebecers came out happy and the politicians did what we asked?"

After the forum at the Briars, Collings said that she was surprised how easily, in the end, the 12 participants "agreed to listen to one another and talk things out." In those discussions, she suggested that understanding between Canadians should be fostered among young people in the classroom and in their communities. "We will talk to the local media and the schools," she said later. For her part, Collings said that her family had been planning a summer vacation in Myrtle Beach, S.C. After her experience at the forum, however, the family now plans instead to travel to Quebec and Canada's East Coast. "That is starting small, but it is at the grassroots," she said. For a woman accustomed to working close to the earth and taking a longer view of the world around her, that is an approach that holds the promise of satisfying results in the Me of Canada.

### CHARLES DUPUIS Ste-Therese, Que.

Charles Dupuis, a young Montreal lawyer who has worked actively for a sovereign Quebec, was an outspoken advocate for that cause at the *Maclean's* forum on Canada's future—and a Hard Separatist according to Decima's advance analysis. A resident of suburban Ste-Therese, Dupuis, 33, is a specialist in civil law, the junior partner in a two-man law firm that operates out of a modest suite of offices above a *caisse populaire* in Ahuntsic, on Montreal's north side. "I am a typical litigation lawyer," he says. "I love to fight." But as a participant at the *Maclean's* sessions, his weapons were as often a clear respect for the democratic process—and a fertile sense of humor—as a readiness to press deeply held convictions.

Noting that his wife, Nancy de Courval, is an archeologist—they met as teenagers but married only four years ago after he was established in law and she had graduated—Dupuis quoted Agatha Christie's jest that marrying an archeologist is reassuring because "the older you get, the more fascinating you become to them." He himself is interested in the more recent past, collecting books of 20th-century history. He sings bass in a local choir and plays golf and softball. He says that he also likes to cook, and enjoys looking after their three young children.

But during the three-day encounter, Dupuis did not shrink from cataloguing for his fellow participants his views on the differences between French- and English-Canadians and his concerns that francophone culture is threatened within Canada. Dupuis was a member of the Parti Quebecois from 1976 to 1982, but resigned from the party after its commitment to sovereignty-association weakened in the wake of the defeat of that choice in the 1980 Quebec referendum. He campaigned actively for the "yes" side in that poll. And he said that he had been concerned that the discussion with English-Canadians about the future of



## CAROL GEDDES Whitehorse, Yukon

Like several of the participants in the *Maclean's* forum on the future of Canada, 45-year-old film-maker and writer Carol Geddes arrived with a relatively limited agenda. She grew up in a Tlingit Indian family of nine children in the Yukon, where she witnessed discrimination firsthand, and her priority was entrenching the rights of aboriginal people within the Canadian federation. But she said that during the three-day conference, her perspective widened. "I quickly opened up to other issues," she said, "especially an increased awareness and more feeling about Canada as a whole. The experience strengthened my First Nations vision and enlarged my faith in Canada." Geddes also said that another important aspect of the forum was its inclusion of small-group workshops. Said Geddes: "That's where things really happened for me. The first night, it seemed very awkward. We were all very shy. But the small groups really brought it out." As well, Geddes said that she renewed her sympathies for Quebec sovereignty. "I had separatist friends when I lived in Montreal in the early 1980s," she said. "I understood them then, but I had forgotten the issues until this conference."

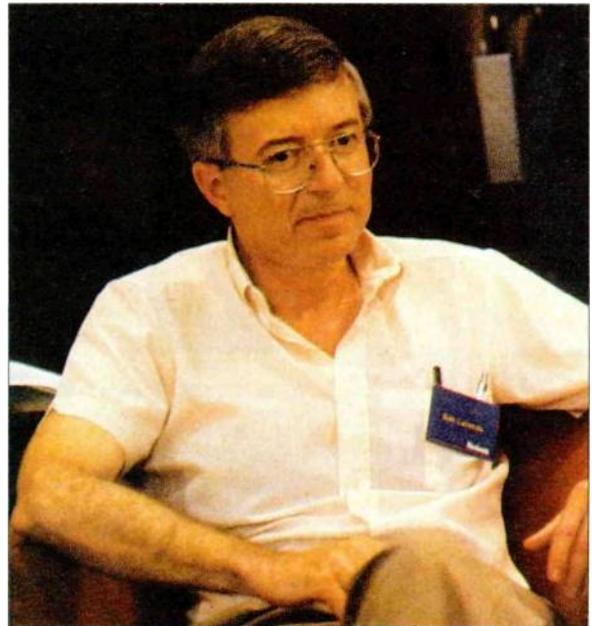
Born in a remote native community near the southern Yukon village of Teslin (population 300), Geddes is a member of the Tlingit nation's Wolf clan. She says that her roots in the northern bush allowed her "to appreciate the richness of the heritage and traditions of a culture most North Americans have never been lucky enough to share." When Geddes was 12, however, her family moved to Whitehorse, where she finished elementary school but dropped out of high school without completing Grade 9. Through most of the 1960s, Geddes recalls, she "kicked around at odd jobs" in the Yukon and northern Alberta, at first working mostly as a waitress and later as a nurse's aide. In 1970, after moving with her boyfriend of the time to Ottawa, Geddes took three months away from work to travel through Europe.

Then, in 1971, when she was 25 and working as a waitress in Ottawa, friends encouraged her to enter Carleton University as a mature student. Five years later, she graduated with distinction in English and philosophy and later went on to earn a postgraduate diploma in communications from Montreal's Concordia University. Now based in Whitehorse, Geddes is a freelance film-maker and writer. She also

served on the Canada Council's jury for general arts grants for two years and is a member of the Yukon Arts Centre Board and the territory's Development Corporation Board.

Geddes was the only participant not chosen for the *Maclean's* forum by random polling conducted by Decima Research. Decima and *Maclean's* determined early in the process that, because traditional telephone polling methods do not produce a representative sampling of Canada's widely dispersed native population, *Maclean's* would select a participant to bring a native perspective to the discussions. Geddes was chosen for her ability to articulate native concerns while not being affiliated with any specific First Nations lobby group. Her subsequent answers to the same detailed questionnaire that the other 11 participants completed, however, showed that she shared many of the views of the Fed-up Federalist cluster of thinking—looking for significant changes within the existing system.

Still close to her roots, Geddes often fishes with her relatives on ancestral lands, hooking whitefish, salmon and lake trout. She also likes to swim and hike. Much of Geddes's writing and film-making concerns her cultural links to the North and its native people. "I am totally against the melting-pot idea," she said, "where we should evolve some new image of a general multicultural person." Her first major film, *Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief*, chronicled the lives of native women who won careers over great odds. Geddes lives with general practitioner Dr. David Skinner, whom she describes simply as her "partner." Although she has supported the New Democratic Party in the past—helping to manage Yukon MP and now NDP Leader Audrey McLaughlin's first federal campaign in 1987—she left no doubt about her current priority. "Politically," she declared, "the First Nations are first."



## ROBERT LALANDE Gatineau, Que.

Forty-nine-year-old Robert Lalande says that when he arrived at Lake Simcoe from Gatineau, Que., to join the other 11 members of the *Maclean's* forum on Canada's future, he felt "a little bit lost. I didn't know what I was getting into." But he added: "I didn't feel threatened." With his easygoing style and quiet, co-operative manner, Lalande fit easily into the group's discussion about emotions and relationships. A committed Quebec Federalist in Decima's analysis, he said that he was

amazed at how similar all the participants sounded after they had stripped away their political views and started talking about real human concerns. Said Lalande: "Once you remove barriers, borders and labels and you get down to the basic human core, you find out we're all the same." And at the end of the working weekend, Lalande declared: "I have more faith than I ever did before in Canada."

Lalande describes his family's heritage as "Heinz 57" because of the mix of French and Irish culture and blood. His father, John, now 76, was raised in an English-speaking family and married a francophone, Lucienne. They sent their four children, including "Bob," to French schools. Lalande met his own wife, Lise, in 1970, while both were skiing near Rouyn-Noranda, Que. The couple and their two children, Melanie, 15, and Martin, 11, speak French at home. But Lalande insists that it is in Quebec's interest to remain an integral part of Canada. "I think we need a strong central government," he said, "and that the provinces' attempts to acquire more power could be detrimental to the country as a whole."

A technical-support specialist for Xerox of Canada Ltd., where he has worked for 26 years, Lalande plays piano, skis cross-country, cycles and enjoys the family's swimming pool in his spare time. Lalande, who clearly treasures his family life, says that Canada faces the same challenges any household does: "There is the same sort of relationship between the parts of a family and the parts of Canada."

Indeed, during many of the group discussions, Lalande stressed the importance of strengthening emotional relationships and played down political arguments. One of the most crucial elements of change in Canada would be heightened "empathy," Lalande said during a Saturday morning workshop. "If you could transplant everybody's brain," he said, "if you accept the other person, you would solve a lot of these problems automatically." He also criticized media coverage of the constitutional crisis, saying that television, newspapers and magazines tend to emphasize conflict at the expense of good news. Issues that might unite Canadians receive short shrift, he added, while divisive issues are often front-page news. And Lalande, who also worked for two years in Saint John, N.B., in the 1960s, was also a strong proponent of the idea of Canadians travelling more to learn about one another's cultures and regions. In addition, although Lalande said that the *Maclean's* forum had done little to change his views, he acknowledged that the time spent with other Canadians had impressed him. Said Lalande: "I am amazed that we were able to agree on a document."

## MARIE LeBEAU Hull, Que.

Marie LeBeau lifted her suitcase wearily and moved towards the airline ticket counter. After a long weekend discussing the issues of Canadian unity, the 47-year-old federal civil servant looked exhausted. Declared LeBeau: "I have only been this tired once before in my life, when I gave birth to my daughter, Annie, 20 years ago. Then, like now, I was too tired to sleep afterwards." For LeBeau, who as the weekend began was described by both Decima and herself as a Hard Separatist, the discussions among 12 Canadians left her drained and, to her surprise,

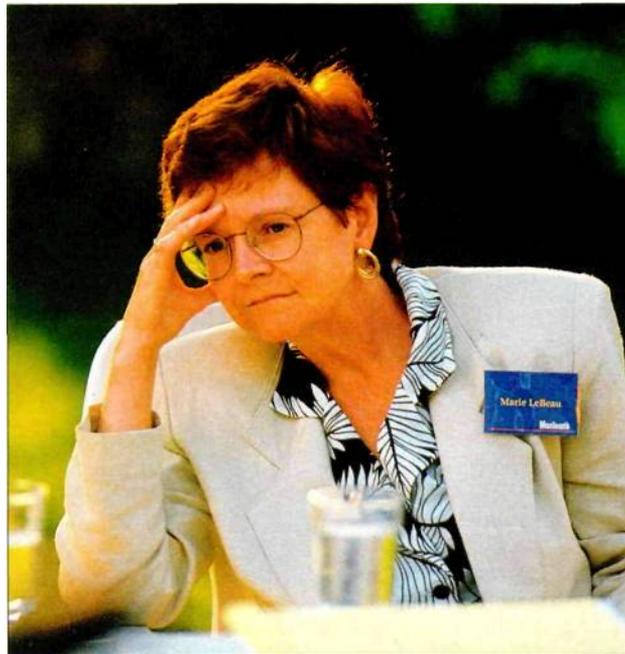
uncertain whether there is any political need for Quebec's independence.

At the outset, LeBeau had compared Canada to an unhappy marriage that would be better ended in a civil fashion. "But I also worry that that will not be possible and that we will have to talk to each other to work out some solution," she added. As the *Maclean's* forum came to a close, she seemed less certain of what she wanted for Quebec, and said: "I was decided before. I am not now. I think I lack 95 per cent of the information I need to make up my mind."

LeBeau, who is divorced and lives in Hull, on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River, decided 10 years ago to end her career as a teacher of French as a second language and to train instead to be a computer programmer. She now works for the department of supply and services, programming the massive payrolls for which Ottawa is responsible. In her spare time, LeBeau is a voracious reader of newspapers and critically compares coverage of events by Quebec-based media and their Ontario counterparts. She enjoys movies and television—in particular the series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, which she watches in English. Another

"passion" of hers is the painstaking reproduction of historical clothing in miniature, which she sews by hand for 18-inch dolls. Each dress requires up to 100 hours of labor.

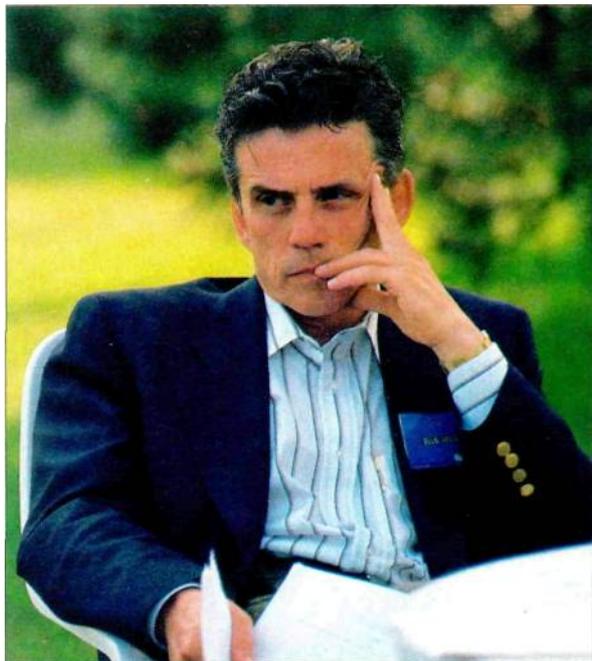
Soft-spoken and articulate in both English and French, LeBeau spent much of the weekend discussing her intense personal feelings with participants from other parts of the country and with fellow Quebecers. Indeed, for LeBeau, feelings and emotions often took precedence over any sense of specific conflict between English and French. LeBeau, who said that her family has lived in Quebec for generations, spoke several times during the weekend of the pain of rejection that she feels as part of Canada's francophone minority. And she said afterwards that talking about that pain was liberating, and that she was surprised at how sympathetic other Canadians were to her feelings. She added: "It has not gone at all the



way I expected. I thought we were going to be 12 angry people."

At a particularly emotional moment, during dinner on the Saturday night, the slim, quiet LeBeau told her companions that Canadians are like "children crying out for love," adding that "this country needs honesty." And she continued: "We are not talking separate, we are talking getting together. This is Canada, according to me. I think that this is what Canada is all about, and we have lost sight of that." Shortly after arriving at the Briars resort for the weekend, LeBeau had declared: "I left Canada a long time ago." But on Saturday night when fellow participant Karren Collings commented that both English- and French-Canadians needed to listen to each other, despite any risks they might perceive in doing that, LeBeau replied: "It is a question of survival."

Still, even LeBeau acknowledged that her readiness to consider a federalist solution may be short-lived. As the plane carrying her back home from Toronto began its descent into Ottawa on Monday evening, LeBeau sighed and shook her head. "Let us see how I feel in one month," she said. "Perhaps, with some distance, I will feel once again that there is no other solution for Quebec but some sort of independence." But at least for almost as many hours as it takes her to create a reminder of the past in a doll's costume, Marie LeBeau held the belief that Quebec and the rest of Canada should share the future together.



## **RICHARD MILLER** Richmond, B.C.

One wall of Crown prosecutor Richard (Rick) Miller's office in New Westminster, B.C., bears a photograph of one of his heroes, federalist standard-bearer Pierre Trudeau. And Miller, a Firm Federalist according to Decima's analysis, says that when he arrived at the *Maclean's* conference, he was determined to convince other participants of the value of his own deep commitment to a strong central government in a united Canada. Three days later, he reported that his vision of Canada remained "pretty much intact." But he added that conversations with other participants, notably Montreal lawyer Charles Dupuis, who supports sovereignty for Quebec, led him to accept the possibility of "a third option." Said Miller: "I changed from trying to convince the rest of the group to buy as much of my ideas as possible to reaching an agreement that would make all of us satisfied. I went from 'me' to 'us.'" Miller also said that before the conference, as a "typical" white British Columbian, he viewed native land claims "as being taken at our expense." But after a long conversation with fellow participant Carol Geddes, a member of the Tlingit nation from the Yukon, Miller reported that he had become more sympathetic to her position.

Miller's strong views drew quick responses from other participants. His firm statement that "geographically and historically, we are the luckiest people ever" prompted Geddes to remind him of the high incidence of infant mortality and relatively short life-spans among natives. At another point, Miller displayed his wit—and needled Dupuis—with *his* definition of sovereignty-association: "My vision would be provinces sovereign in language policy, culture and civil rights. The association would look to uniformity of criminal law, the deliverability of social programs." He added mischievously: "I am describing what exists under the British North America Act."

Miller, 44, dropped out of school after Grade 10 in 1963, and worked for six years as a sawmill laborer in Vancouver's False Creek area before returning to university in 1969 as a mature student. In 1976, he graduated with a law degree from the University of British Columbia. He and his wife, Patricia, 39, a former secretary, have a son, Paul, 9, and a daughter, Samantha, six months. In his spare time, "outside of changing

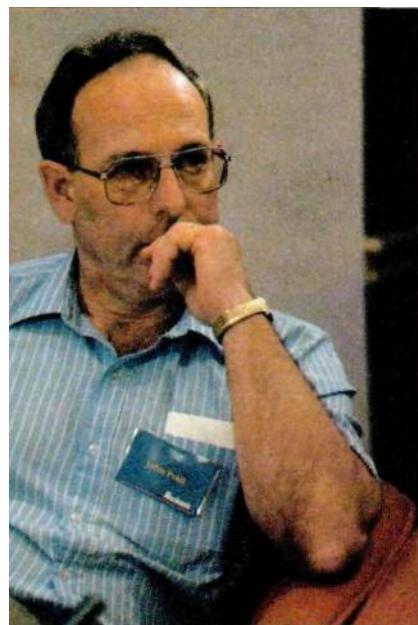
diapers," he lifts weights in a gym near his home, takes photographs and skis on the mountains that gird the region. "I have no cabin," he said with a smile. "You have to be in private practice for that." Miller also enjoys music and contributes his time to the annual du Maurier Jazz Festival in Vancouver. A former five-pack-a-day smoker, he now neither smokes nor drinks, and is currently reading Tom Robbins's novel *Skinny Legs and All* and John Keegan's *The Second World War*.

Miller says that he is angry because Canada's leaders have failed to solve the country's constitutional problems. "When I review how our politicians discussed these issues," he said, "it is almost as if they designed it to fail. There almost seemed sinister processes at work to prevent agreement among the First Ministers." He added that he emerged from the *Maclean's* conference, if not optimistic, at least "less pessimistic." Said Miller: "I am a federalist, a member of the Liberal party, but I never go to meetings. I vote—that is about all." But he says that he now counts Dupuis, who favors Quebec independence, as a friend. Miller said that later this summer, he intends to search Vancouver bookstores for French translations of some of his favorite authors to send to Dupuis. "I can't imagine where I'll find a French edition of W. O. Mitchell in Vancouver," said Miller. "But I will."

## **JOHN PRALL** Berwick, N.S.

John Prall, 52, is a Nova Scotia-bom high-school biology teacher who grew up in the verdant Annapolis Valley, where he lives in the small community of Berwick. He came to the *Maclean's* conference as a strong federalist, confident that "Canada should not give up on itself." Three days later, in an interview on the return bus ride to Toronto's Pearson International Airport, he reflected on how much he had learned from three days of intense dialogue with 11 Canadians with widely different viewpoints. "Education is one way of getting ideas across, of changing our ideas and attitudes that Canadians have formed towards one another," said Prall, who teaches at Central Kings Rural High School in Cambridge, near Kentville, N.S. A Peacemaker (or compromise seeker) according to Decima's cluster analysis, Prall added: "I had a preconceived idea of what I would run into on a panel with Canadians from all parts of the country. But even on the bus on our way to the forum, after talking to a separatist from Quebec, we found that we were quite similar."

In 1961, Prall married another teacher, Elaine Marshall, now 49, and



later continued his own studies, graduating in physical education from the University of New Brunswick in 1971. His wife still teaches mathematics part time at Berwick Junior High School. They have five children: Craig, 29, is a chartered accountant in Bermuda; Jill, 27, is a computer specialist with a trucking firm; Roger, 24, has a degree in physical education; twin sons Ian and Paul, 21, are, respectively, students in physical education at Acadia University in Wolfville, N.S., and of business at the University College of Cape Breton in Sydney, N.S. A former centre-ice hockey player in local intermediate hockey, Prall is a Conservative and community activist now serving the final year of a three-year term as Berwick town councillor. He said that he plans to seek re-election in October. He is also chairman of the local hockey rink, coaches a minor-league hockey team and operates a swimming-pool installation business during the summer school holidays. In his remaining few hours of free time, he does woodworking and reads historical essays.



After hearing participants criticize the lack of authoritative Canadian-history texts, Prall expressed concern about the way history is taught in Canada. "I was not fully aware of the inequalities within our education system, the different histories taught in Quebec and across the country," he said. "We must get rid of the nonsense that exists now between Canadians. Part of that is due to what we teach—or do not teach—one another about Canada."

Frail's three days at the Lake Simcoe forum also made him realize how little Canadians know about one another. "We are going to have to do some touring," he told other participants shortly before the conference ended. More importantly, he added, was the need for all citizens "to see with the other person's eyes."

## **SHEILA SIMPSON** **St. Andrews, N.B.**

Sheila Simpson, an energetic single mother of two teenagers who is also a teacher, community activist and store owner in St. Andrews, N.B., set out with mixed feelings to take part in the *Maclean's* forum on Canada's future. Apart from her regular responsibilities, the 46-year-old Simpson had been organizing an aquaculture trade fair in St. Andrews—the resort town on Passamaquoddy Bay, at the entrance to the Bay of Fundy, where she has lived for the past 14 years. "Just getting things settled enough so I could leave for a few days was exhausting," she recounted later. And as she flew to her native province—she was born in Simcoe, Ont.—she was excited about the challenge, Simpson recalled, but also apprehensive. She left the session expressing renewed optimism about Canada's future, and with an unmistakable sense of confidence.

During the initial discussion on the state of the nation, Simpson declared: "There is less tolerance and more discrimination as the economy worsens—increasing discrimination based on race or religion, or whatever the difference might be." She added that "people feel threatened individually; their own survival is at stake. They lash out at each other—or the guy lower down."

Those concerns reflected Simpson's emphasis on the importance of

the human element in Canada's efforts to surmount its political and economic problems. Indeed, although she graduated from Toronto's York University with a bachelor's degree majoring in economics, she turned to other interests because economists, she says, "were always building models and not factoring in the human beings." Instead, the compact five-foot, 1 1/2-inch graduate taught physical education for 11 years in Ontario, and "loved it." Now, in addition to running her main-street shop, Boutique La Baleine, which stocks "a little of everything" from clothing and toys to souvenirs, she teaches a St. Andrews community college class in entrepreneurship and serves on the local planning advisory committee. Simpson is also a tireless promoter of her community's attractions: during one break in discussions about the country's future, she dug into her handbag and pulled out a fistful of St. Andrews lapel pins and tourist

brochures, which she handed out to the other participants.

Simpson, flashing her good-humored grin, says that she ended up in St. Andrews "by mistake." She said that she and her husband moved there in 1977 from Kanata, Ont., in what proved to be a vain attempt to save their foundering marriage. Since the divorce, she has raised their children, James, now 17, and Naomi, 15. But Simpson is a proud advocate of many of the ideas that have taken root in her adopted province and in the Maritimes. She extolled New Brunswick's official bilingualism and the current attempts of the Maritime provinces to forge a closer economic union. But she also expressed concern about what she termed "abuse of the unemployment insurance system"—especially in regions where reliance on unemployment benefits has become entrenched—and the drag of Canadian taxes on economic performance. Declared Simpson: "The tax structure is obviously one of the factors behind cross-border shopping. We've got to become more efficient."

As the forum discussions progressed, the apprehension that Simpson experienced beforehand evaporated quickly. "I felt immediately positive about the Harvard team we were going to work with, their abilities and empathy," she said. Indeed, she added that she plans to use some of the negotiating techniques that she learned during the weekend in her community college course and on the St. Andrews planning committee, which often has fierce debates about zoning questions. And overall, the forum "certainly renewed my optimism about the country," she said afterwards.

Simpson, a Fed-up Federalist according to Decima's pre-forum analysis, said before the discussions that she felt that all regions of the country should have equal power. Afterwards, however, she said that she was pleased with the agreement that she and her fellow participants reached on a more generous and understanding approach to the country's problems. "I think my friends and family will be amazed at what we accomplished," she said. "I think one of the most important things this weekend brought home to me is that the more responsibility you give people, the better they perform." And for Sheila Simpson, that belief clearly means that Canadians, faced with the responsibility of dealing with challenges to their country's very survival, may in the end perform better than many people expected.

**JOHN HOWSE and NANCY WOOD**