

# World and Nation

## Pelt hunting causes strife on small Canadian island

### Fishermen, crusaders clash over seal killings

GROSSE ILE, Quebec (AP) — Christopher Clark works at a trade as demanding and as historically honorable as any a man could choose. He is a fisherman.

He trusts in the bounty of the sea and in his own hard labor, which is more reliable. He is gentle to his children and his pets, and he pays his bills on time. His neighbors on this tiny island off Canada's east coast know him as an upright man.

"Then why do Davies and those people call me a barbarian, a murderer," Clark asked.

"No," said Brian Davies, stung when he heard of the remark. "I have never thought of the Magdalen Islanders as murderers, only of the seal hunt as murderous."

The Magdalens are a cluster of nine islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence inhabited by 14,000 people. They are the closest points of land to the annual birthing grounds of one of two huge herds of harp seals.

For centuries, islanders took to the floating ice nursery every March to club to death tens of thousands of newborn seals, called "whitecoats," and skin them on the spot. Their downy pelts fetched, in most recent years, about \$35 each.

After 20 years of publicity generated by crusaders for animal rights, notably Brian Davies, the annual bloodletting ended. And so, of course, did a portion of the uncertain income of fishermen like Christopher Clark.

The differences between the fisherman and the crusader, then, are deeper than semantic.

"What would happen," Clark was asked one recent afternoon during a chat in his snug kitchen, "what would happen if Brian Davies were to pay a visit to the Magdalens Islands?"

"Nothing, probably," Clark said. "We are peaceful people." Then he

added, "But I would not advise Mr. Davies to do that."

Clark said he thinks the whitecoat hunt will be resumed.

"The hunt is still legal," he said. "It will be resumed for economic reasons. All we need is a market and the government is trying to develop one."

Davies' tactic in stopping the hunt, having despaired of getting it declared illegal, was to persuade the

*"I have never thought of the Magdalen Islanders as murderers, only of the seal hunt as murderous."*

— Brian Davies, International Fund for Animal Welfare head

European Economic Community to join the United States in banning imports of whitecoat pelts.

No more market, no more hunt. Almost.

The Canadian government this year authorized a 57,000-pelt hunt for "older" seals, specifying that the sealers use rifles instead of clubs. At least one company took advantage of it and sent a sealing ship to the second seal herd, off Labrador.

So confident, however, are the Magdalen Islanders that the pup hunt will be resumed in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Nearly all the 1,000 who engaged in it before the ban have continued to renew their licenses each year.

"We're not issuing any new licenses," said Jean-Yves Roy, the spokesman for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans assigned to the Magdalens. "To renew a license they have to have had a valid one for two of the past five years."

"But most of them are not even taking advantage of the grace period. About 900 renewed this year, same as last year and the year before, and it has been four years since the import ban. The license only costs \$5, but to a fisherman out of work, five dollars is five dollars."

When the hunt was in full swing, steel-hulled vessels representing big fur companies crunched through the ice to the sealing grounds of both herds to "harvest" a legal quota of 186,000 harp pups.

Fewer than 40,000 pelts, though, were taken by the Magdalen Islanders, some working off the big ships for salaries, but most of them working as individuals venturing onto the shifting ice floes dragging their own wooden dories.


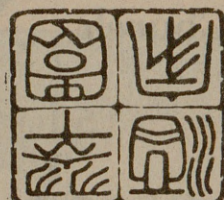
On the average, it meant about \$1 million a year to the islanders at a time when their fishing boats were still sitting on trailers in back yards waiting for spring.

Clark said, "That was the average, but the ice blows this way and that, and some years we made nothing because the ice stayed too far out to sea for us to reach it. Other years it blew the ice in close to shore and we might make as much as 1,500."

"So we never could really count on the seal hunt for steady income. It was always supplemental income. When it came our way it was a blessing. It meant new fishing equipment, things like that. Before the days of unemployment checks it meant even more."

It is now Brian Davies' aim to recompense that lost \$1 million by building a tourist trade that will bring at least that much to the islanders during their economic low point of the year.

Davies' organization, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), has put up \$1 million to get the business off the ground.

## Jade Garden

LUNCH BUFFET Noon-2 p.m. Except Sat.  
SUNDAY NITE BUFFET 6-8 p.m.  
More Than 12 Items

**\$4.<sup>25</sup>** Senior Citizen & Children Under 12 **\$3.<sup>25</sup>**

**DAILY LUNCH SPECIAL \$2.<sup>99</sup>**  
**DINNER SPECIAL \$3.<sup>95</sup>**

Hours: Lunch 11:30-2 Dinner 5-10  
Closed Monday  
2322 Texas Ave. S./College Station/746-1121

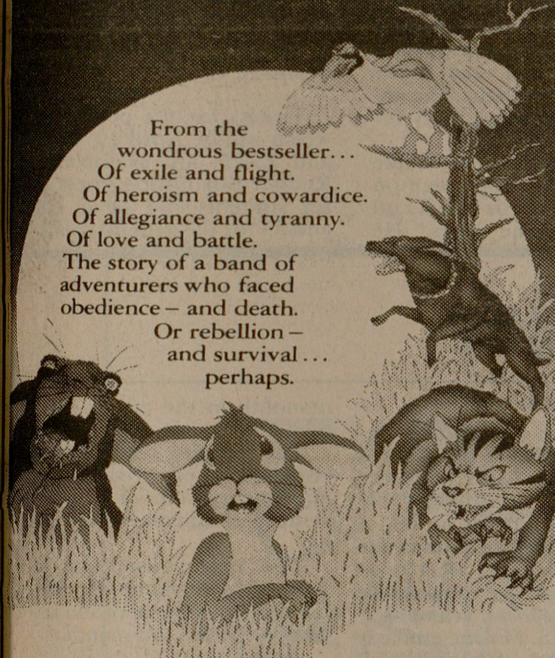



## hastings' records-tapes-video

Culpepper Plaza  
**happy hour**  
friday 2-6

movie rental over 2,000 titles <b>\$1.99</b>	all \$8.69 list cassettes or LP's <b>2 for \$13</b>	bestseller books <b>25% off</b>
--	---	------------------------------------

Open: Mon. - Thurs., 10-10 Fri. & Sat., 10-11 Sun. 12-10  
1631 Texas Ave., College Station 693-2619



From the wondrous bestseller...  
Of exile and flight.  
Of heroism and cowardice.  
Of allegiance and tyranny.  
Of love and battle.  
The story of a band of adventurers who faced obedience — and death.  
Or rebellion — and survival... perhaps.

## MSC CEPHEID VARIABLE presents Watership Down

THURSDAY APR. 9  
in 701 RUDDER \$1.50 ADMISSION  
7:30 & 9:45 p.m.

# ATTENTION

## COLLEGE SENIORS AND GRADUATES WHO NEED A CAR!

McDavid Oldsmobile has a special preferred financial plan for you.

- 90 Day deferral of the first payment
- Pre-approved credit with GMAC letter
- Only 5% down payment
- 3.9 annual percentage rate available
- No previous credit required

McDavid Suzuki has 4-wheel affordable fun.

- Over 100 new Samurais available.
- Convertible, hard tops, 4-wheel drive all available.



**\$124.<sup>50</sup> MO.**

\*48 payments with 10% down + TT&L. 11.9% apr financing with \$1,550 residual

Eligible Customers: Individuals who purchase or lease an eligible vehicle within six months prior to or one calendar year after the date of graduation from a four-year degree or graduate degree program; who are employed or have verifiable commitment for employment; and for whom there is no record of collection problems.

**McDavid Olds/Suzuki**  
641-8400  
OPEN TILL 9 PM MON.-SAT.  
6800 GULF FREEWAY-HOUSTON

## PARENTS WEEKEND SPECIAL

Texas Aggie Credit Union and Fred Brown Mazda-BMW introduce

# INSTANT FINANCING ON THE SPOT DELIVERY

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY ONLY!**

**SPECIAL CREDIT UNION RATES**

**GREAT DEALS AND GREAT TRADE-INS!**

Students, Former Students, Faculty, Staff or their families can get instant financing\* from the Texas Aggie Credit Union this Saturday and Sunday only!

**SPECIAL SELECT RX7's**

**\$1<sup>00</sup> OVER INVOICE**

While they last!



Aggies Helping Aggies  
**TEXAS AGGIE CREDIT UNION**  
\*To qualified buyers, must join Texas Aggie Credit Union (\$25 one time fee).

**mazda**  
**FRED BROWN**  
3100 Briarcrest Drive at the East Bypass 776-7600