

Charlie's in the House

Former HighGrader editor now Heritage critic

BY WILLIAM SHIELDS

Ticked off by rising postal costs? Troubled by a federal government that's short on answers? So is Charlie Angus, founder of *HighGrader* magazine, covering Ontario's Northland. These days, however, Angus is in a much better position to do something about it. Last June he was elected in the hinterland federal riding of Timmins-James Bay on the New Democrat ticket; he serves as Heritage and Agriculture critic in the party's shadow cabinet. Of course, he's no longer affiliated with the crusading bimonthly that he launched with his wife, Brit Griffin, in 1995 from their home in Cobalt, Ont., some 600 kilometres north of Toronto. While the couple sold the title following his election, he's still in tune with the needs of magazine publishers.

Part of his mission is to sensitize Heritage minister Liza Frulla to a postal subsidy that is being undermined by the post office. "The Publications Assistance Program is one thing, but it seems that everything that's been put in from the federal government to support Canadian magazines is being taken away by Canada Post in rate increases," he says, before pointing to a bigger issue. "One of the problems we're facing with this government is that they do not have a large policy framework for the arts. They continue



Many know Charlie Angus as leader of The Grievous Angels, a folk band that's given voice to the North's quiet desperation. The MP for Timmins-James Bay is shown here on bass performing in Elk Lake, Ont., last summer

to deal with funding plans in a very fragmented way. It seems when a crisis arises, [individual] cultural organizations will put on a lot of heat and the government responds somewhat with a one-year plan or an emergency plan. But what it does is continually destabilize cultural organizations. We need a long-term commitment and a very clear policy."

Angus, 42, is no stranger to opposition. Witness his over-my-dead-body battle a few

years ago with the City of Toronto's plan to dump its garbage in Adams Mine near the northern community of Kirkland Lake—an initiative supported by dodgy environmental assessments and deemed by one geologist familiar with the site as a potential "disaster" since the mine's fractured bedrock might not contain the waste thus putting 300 million litres of groundwater at risk.

Angus helped orchestrate various acts of civil disobedience, including roadblocks, to protest that and other, more toxic schemes. *HighGrader* under his editorship was as rousing a voice as you would expect from a one-time punk rocker. Listen to him describe the city muckamucks eyeing his backyard as a dump. "Like a mouthy, drunk rich kid in a blue collar bar, Toronto City Council is walking smack dab into a haymaker," Angus wrote in 2000. "And like a kid who's never taken a real punch, the City fathers have totally underestimated the resolve of their opposition."

The garbage ended up going to Michigan. "Adams Mine wasn't an environmental battle," says Angus, born and raised in nearby Timmins. "It was a rural uprising."

Bill Enouy, the pro-dump mayor of Kirkland Lake, was often parodied in the pages of Angus's magazine. Says dump fighter and area entrepreneur Pierre Bélanger, "Bill would have to eat Roloids by the handful when he was reading the *HighGrader*." Not true, says the right-leaning mayor, who praises his new MP for his "tireless" work ethic, protection of Northern interests and for his intellectual honesty. Adams Mine is water under the bridge now, he says, and he's come to respect Angus, his old foe. "I'd probably vote for him right now, which is kinda scary."

"[Angus] isn't some grim socialist reformer," says Bélanger. "He's an unusual mix. He's ideological but not dull. People relate to Chuck. He has a feel for the common man. He's a great guy to crack a beer open with."

Reflecting on his days at the *HighGrader*, Angus shares what is perhaps the secret to any successful magazine. "At the end of the day, as much as we crusaded, our main emphasis was to put out an enjoyable read. And a lot of people who read us faithfully," he says, bursting into laughter, "had an extremely different political viewpoint than we did, and we enjoyed that, we enjoyed mixing it up and allowing debate." **M**

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE RUSSELL, TORONTO STAR

TRANSITIONS

with files from *MastheadOnline.com*

St. Joseph Media's move into one location last September has resulted in some redundancies, says group president **Greg MacNeil**. Consequently, IT manager **Gino Del Re** and production director **Anne Edwards**—both of whom had logged about 18 years of service—are no longer with the firm.

Saturday Night editor **Gary Ross** is building his staff as former acting managing editor **Patricia Holtz** has left the magazine and is succeeded by **Adrienne Guthrie**, who worked with Ross as managing editor at now-defunct book publisher Macfarlane Walter & Ross.

Mark Pupo, former associate editor at *Toronto Life*, comes aboard as senior editor; **Ben Leszcz**, former assistant editor, is now associate editor.

Former *Toronto Life* publisher **Marina Glogovac** is now

senior vice-president with Lavalife Corp.'s Global Web division.

In the design world, Spafax Canada, publisher of *enRoute*, has hired **Roland-**

Yves Carignan to occupy the newly created position of creative director. For Carignan's redesigned *enRoute*, look for the May issue. Also at the inflight title, **Jennifer Edwards** climbs aboard as associate



Adrienne Guthrie



Roland-Yves Carignan



Rolf Dinsdale

muter paper *Dose*. And **Tara Pain Rowlands** has joined *On The Bay* as art director. She succeeds founding AD **Susan Meingast**, who is pursuing other projects.

Rolf Dinsdale has been appointed associate publisher, advertising, at *The Walrus*. Dinsdale was previously director of advertising at Kontent Publishing's *Inside Entertainment*.

editor. **Lisa Walker** joins 2, the lifestyle mag for couples, as art director. She was formerly contributing AD at *Toronto Life*. 2's founding art director **Jaspal Riyait** is now creative director of CanWest's new daily com-