

## 07/08 NHL PREVIEW

# team by team: from first to worst

Our hardcore hockey expert  
breaks down the 30 contenders  
for Lord Stanley's silver.

Exclusively in the  
calgary herald

BY DAVE BIDINI



ILLUSTRATION:  
"WATCHING THE GAME ON THE BACK OF OUR EYELIDS"  
BY PETER WYSE

# PIPE DREAMS

**Our hardcore hockey expert expertly runs down the 30 teams contending for Lord Stanley's Cup, from north to south. And then there's the Leafs.**

BY DAVE BIDINI

**M**e and Ozzie got into it bad, and now we can't stop. Fantasy hockey. Just the name evokes damage. Sports fans spend enough time suspended in their dreams that any further illusory impulse can't help but distort an already troubling relationship with the real world. That me and Ozzie are three-time defending champions of the ACHU Hockey League—the American-Canadian Hockey Union, comprised of similarly afflicted writers, editors and professors across North America—hasn't calmed our pretensions. During annual draft sessions, we command our make-believe team, the DP Millionaires, like some sort of Clarence Campbell-Conn Smythe-Bill Wirtz monstrosity, with coffee cups, old newspapers, xeroxed stat sheets, assorted dinner plates, beer steins, pens, hi-lighters and cigarette packs stacked on the table. But our threeppeat didn't happen through casual commitment and occasional perusing of the real hockey world. Following the league day in and day out has become an obsession. In fact, I've spent many good hours of my life wondering how Comrie-for-Ozolinsh might improve the Millionaires' roster, or whether J.M. Liles would fulfill his potential or languish in the Avalanche depth charts like so many busted Jeff Jillsons.

With the new NHL season about to begin, Ozzie and I will once again get to handicapping the league and its players for our annual draft. What follows are my general thoughts and prognostications on the 07/08 season, though having to study, examine and arrive at a conclusion about teams I've never really cared about—and from whom the Millionaires have no fantasy players—proved to be worthy of my writer's stipend. Evaluating the Los Angeles Kings' or Phoenix Coyotes' goaltending dilemmas, for instance, was enough to test my fan's mettle; really, there are easier mysteries waiting to be solved on ancient sarcophagi buried in gilded pyramids hidden at the Earth's core. One of the perils of the prediction game is that, no matter how empowered the fantasy-goer feels after a taste of success, there will always be an overlooked skater—Andrew Brunnette, Jason Blake, Chris Kunitz—to make you feel as dumb as you are. Because of what I've written here, I'm sure that Boston will win the Stanley Cup and Mike Zigomanis will be crowned winner of the Hart Trophy. People across Canada will suddenly start caring about Tampa Bay's third-line centre issues and a "Save-the-Thrashers" campaign will erupt in Northern Saskatchewan. Don Cherry will call Kristian Huselius "cuddly" and Jochen Hecht will win *The Hockey News*' "Player of the Decade." And the Millionaires will finally lose their first ACHU title after four years of fantasy-league supremacy.



## DAVE'S TOP FIVE FINISHERS

- 1) Pittsburgh Penguins
- 2) Anaheim Ducks
- 3) Detroit Red Wings
- 4) Ottawa Senators
- 5) Colorado Avalanche



## DAVE'S BOTTOM 5 BOTTOM-FEEDERS

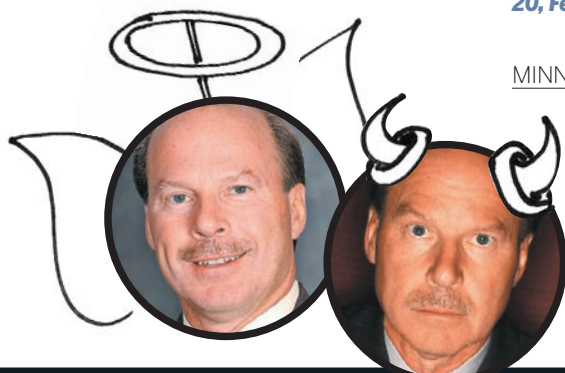
- 26) Chicago Blackhawks
- 27) Boston Bruins
- 28) Edmonton Oilers
- 29) Columbus Blue Jackets
- 30) Phoenix Coyotes

## WESTERN

### NORTHWEST

#### CALGARY FLAMES

**The Team That Still Thinks It's the Late-1980s and Considers Mike Keenan Its Potential Saviour:** It's been a long time since Mike Keenan was pinned to the wall by Dave Manson in the Blackhawks dressing room after the rearguard decided he'd suffered enough of his coach's verbal abuse. But whether or not Calgary is getting itself the fearsome—yet hugely successful—firebrand version of the old University of Toronto alumnus is worthy of suspicion. With recent stops in Florida and Boston having ended badly with an air of defeatedness, it's possible that this lack of success might send Keenan searching for his older, meaner self. And watching Randy Carlyle terrorize his team all the way to Stanley Cup victory might have rekindled thoughts of treating players as if they were 18th-century moat-builders to get them to play harder. But like much of the Flames' older crew—Owen Nolan, Craig Conroy and Adrian Aucoin—it remains to be seen whether or not returning to past glories by time-worn means is possible, or whether it's even wise for any modern NHL team to move forward while gazing into the rear-view mirror. But for all of these permutations, Keenan's job is simple: get Miikka the Goalie, Dion the D Man, and Iggy the Captain to play to their potential. With that kind of organizational clarity, there's probably no excuse should the coach turn out to be a weakened version of his former self.



#### VANCOUVER CANUCKS

**The Team That Plays Most Unlike the Image on Their Sweater:** The latest in a series of unfortunate Canuck sweater redesigns features a killer whale chomping at felt letters spelling out the town's name. But the sea creature that Van more closely resembles is the prehistoric trilobite, who rolls in a ball and sludges unhurriedly through time. Banner seasons by snake-bit forwards Ryan Kesler and Matt Cooke will go a long way towards energizing the 'Nux laden attack—so will an assured second season by folk hero Kevin Biekse—but as long as the universal goalie, Bobby Luongo, does his thing, there will be no consideration given to style, and for good reason. **Visit Calgary Oct. 6, Nov. 8, Dec. 31 and March 25.**



#### COLORADO AVALANCHE

**The Team For Whom Don Cherry Once Suffered and Bled Plaid:** On paper, the Avalanche look like top Western Conference competitors. Superior drafting has yielded players named Stastny, Liles and Wolski, and now a guy named Smyth has been hired to toil alongside a player named Sakic. All of these names possess a certain allure until one gets to Budaj, the 'keeper whom the Avs have entrusted to carry them forward. The other name is Theodore, also known as that which must not be spoken. **Visit Calgary Oct. 26, Nov. 20, Feb. 26 and March 20.**

#### MINNESOTA WILD

**The Team That Wasn't There:** Apologies to Barry MacKenzie, but is there any team in the NHL worth giving less of a damn about than the Wild? **Visit Calgary Oct. 24, Nov. 13, Jan. 22 and March 22.**

#### EDMONTON OILERS

**The Team That Nobody Except Mark Messier Could Love:** While Edmonton is silly with the upside of youth, an old saw continues to be played in the background: unless Cogliano, Stoll, Schremp, Penner, Nilsson, Hemsy and Pitkanen can go big fast, the city's reputation as anathema to free agents suggests that Oilerians won't get to watch these players blossom, having moved on like so many Doug Weights. Lacking a proven offensive gunner, the Oilers' heart and soul will only get them so far in a Conference laden with grit and intensity. Even though it's hard not to wish good things for Kevin Lowe, the glories of 2006 are feeling mesozoic. **Visit Calgary Oct. 20, Nov. 10, Feb. 9 and March 29.**

### CENTRAL

#### DETROIT RED WINGS

**The Team Most Likely to Realize Greatness and Disappointment in One Fell Swoop:** Both the best and worst news for Red Wing fans going into the 07/08 campaign is that Scooter Datsyuk, Hank Zetterberg and the Dominator are still paragons on a team that leads the league in unrequited love. Though blissful skaters to a fault, the Wings were unable to handle the dark things conjured by Anaheim in the Conference Final. The Dominator tipping over like a wonky table lamp versus Teemu Selanne in OT was a symbolic end to the Wings' post-season. And yet Kronwall, Lebda, Hudler, Grigorenko and the excellently named Valtteri Filppula dare locals to still dream big. **Visit Calgary Nov. 1 and Feb. 22.**

#### ST. LOUIS BLUES

**The Team For Whom the Evocation of Sad Music Has Become a Beautiful Thing:** With rainmaking coach Andy Murray as their guiding light, St. Louis is the trendy pick to vault into the Western Conference's elite. This may indeed come to pass, but high expectations can do strange things to teams. Because of last year's emergence, rival clubs will no longer be surprised by the Blues, and it remains to be seen whether Manny Legace can excel throughout an entire year. But their young defence is worthy of envy, and there are a lot worse things than having a confident team that believes it can win every game. **Visit Calgary Dec. 4 and March 10.**

#### NASHVILLE PREDATORS

**The Team Most Likely to Never Move to Hamilton. Ever. Never Ever:** With bright new ownership settling into place (slight chortling), a motivated hockey public (guffaw), Paul Kariya's veteran leadership (until he signed with St. Louis), the complimentary scoring of Peter Forsberg (currently in hiding), Kimmo Timmonen's unlikely offence (a boon for his new team, the Flyers) and Tom Vokoun's always reliable goaltending presence (gone to Florida), the Preds will surely be a Western League force (or bottom-scraper) for years to come (in Kansas City!). **Visit Calgary Oct. 30 and March 7.**

#### CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS

**The Team With the Worst Owner But Best Possible Future:** Ever since Duran Duran broke, the 'Hawks have been the league's most depressing franchise. Once a storied team that played in the greatest of all arenas, Chicago Stadium, the 'Hawks have suffered in modern times. A lot of pain was self-inflicted. First, they built what feels like a dead zone of a rink, and then "Dollar Bill" Wirtz pay-per-viewed all of his team's games. But because a broken

clock is right at least twice a day, Chicago finds itself in possession of the next great Canadian folk hero—rookie Jon Toews—a Mennonite superstar from Manitoba who, as an 18-year-old, won gold with Canada's senior men's team, finishing the tourney with the best face-off percentage of any player. Supported by Martin Havlat, Robert Lang and Tuomo Ruutu, the 'Hawks should hang in hockey games long enough to win their share, and if Nikolai Khabibulin has one of his "good" years, they could be the dark horse of 07/08. **Visit Calgary Nov. 22 and Feb. 7.**

#### COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS

**The Team That Your Author Nearly Forgot About While Preparing This List of 30 NHL Teams:** Really, that says it all. Despite a broadcast crew, management staff and coaching department comprised almost entirely of P.E.I.ers, the Jackets have lacked form or personality since their inception, although one figures that coach Ken Hitchcock is eager to re-establish himself as hockey's foremost modern thinker. **Visit Calgary Dec. 1 and March 4.**

## PACIFIC

#### DALLAS STARS

**The Team Most Likely to Hear "Mr. Spaceman" by The Byrds Played in Their Home Rink:** Superior in-game '70s country-rock soundtrack aside, Dallas hangs their greatcoat on a garment tree of sneaky-fast Finns, an able defence, a mensch for a head coach and the remains of Mike Modano and Stu Barnes. With their youth-hockey programs paying local dividends and a plethora of die-hard fans in their pocket, the Stars could be Habitant South if they weren't embattled in hockey's scariest conference and relying on more than just aging youngster Brenden Morrow to carry the mantle of possible greatness. **Visit Calgary Dec. 21 and Feb. 2.**

#### SAN JOSE SHARKS

**The Team That Neil Young Likes the Best:** Because a lot of people are sitting around waiting for this team to win the Stanley Cup, you get the feeling that it might only happen if everyone just turned away. But because the Sharks are stacked with talent, it's hard not to notice them. In plain terms, if Joe Thornton stays healthy and continues scoring into the playoffs, and if Pat Marleau contributes offensively, the Sharks' ascent could come at any moment. But while some teams learn quick and fast about winning at all costs, others find themselves lost on the learning curve. Eastern cousin: Ottawa. No less than a Stanley Cup birth will absolve both franchises from being painted as chokers who couldn't win when it counted. **Visit Calgary Oct. 22 and Jan. 30.**

#### LOS ANGELES KINGS

**The Team That Not Even Sylvester Stallone Could Love:** God bless all of those hearty L.A. Kings fans, but is there any reason this team exists other than the Board of Governor's starry-eyed delusions? The idea of hockey in L.A. is fair enough, but after 40 years, there's barely any legacy short of Rogie Vachon, the Triple Crown line, Bob Berry and a hundred other hockey cards you never really wanted. The post-Marcel Dionne Kings could be summed up in two and a half words: Bruce McNall. Since they've been perennially faceless and mediocre in most years—Anze Kopitar and Alex Frolov aside—the prediction for this Kings' campaign is really no different from any other. **Visit Calgary Oct. 18 and Jan. 18.**



#### PHOENIX COYOTES

**The Team Coached by That Guy Who Once Played with Kevin McClelland:** Kyle Turris might be the best young player outside of Toews and Eric Johnson, but he probably won't arrive in Arizona until '09, which means another year of sorry desert hockey. The 'Yotes roster reads like an expansion lineup. Their projected top three centres are Steven Reinprecht, Mike Zigomanis and rookie Peter Mueller; their defence is fronted by Keith Ballard and a fading Ed Jovanovski; and David Aebischer is their projected number-one goalie. The best thing that could happen to Phoenix would be a new start in a city that cares, instead of having to play in an arena that affluent zombies visit on their way to the mall. **Visit Calgary Jan. 8 and Feb. 5.**

#### ANAHEIM DUCKS

**The Team Most Likely to Inspire the Return of Reg Dunlop to Hockey:**

When a friend of mine was studying law, Anaheim GM Brian Burke came to speak at his college. His advice to students who found themselves in contract negotiations was to swear as much as humanly possible. The Ducks play the way Burke speaks: confrontationally and always just a little pissed-off. That Selanne and Scott Niedermayer may rest at home until Christmas, then rejoin the silver and green in the new year, should be a red flag for other teams. While bearded thug Todd Bertuzzi is still a reclamation project, if anyone can squeeze 40 goals out of him, it should be Burke and coach Randy Carlyle. The presence of Matt Schneider—despite a recent broken foot—thickens a leather-tough defence. Yoiks and double yoiks. **Visit Calgary Nov. 29 and Dec. 29.**

## EASTERN

### ATLANTIC

#### NEW YORK RANGERS

**The Team That Exposed the New Fiscally Responsible NHL for the Pot of Hooey That It Is:** That the Rangers laid out thoroughfares of gold for two fair-to-middling free-agent forwards—Scott Gomez and Chris Drury—was bad news for most teams, and possibly worse news for the Rangers themselves. For two seasons, they've been a delightful league presence, producing small stars—Sean Avery, Peter Prucha, Marcel Hossa, Fedor Tyutin—and a goaltender who plays lead guitar, Henry Lundqvist. But with Drury and Gomez playing for great bags of money, it's uncertain how this will affect Jagr, the mercurial Czech, Avery, the maverick winger, or Brendan Shanahan, the team's conscience. How coach Tom Renney deals with these dressing-room machinations will be the Rangers' barometer of success. Still, their Top-8 players are jaw-droppingly good, and if they score enough goals to neutralize a wafer-thin defence, a long Cup run is not beyond their means. **Visit Calgary Jan. 2.**

#### NEW YORK ISLANDERS

**The Most Improbably Cool Team in the NHL Despite a Recent History of Uncool:** With the hiring of assistant coach John Chabot in the off-season, the New York Islanders became the first NHL team to employ two First Nations people on their coaching staff. If you can't get behind the work of Ted Nolan and his staff, you're cheering for the refs. **Visit Calgary Jan. 11.**

#### PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

**The Team That Was Once Universally Reviled and Who, like Halloween II and Black Christmas, Might Be Ready For Their Lesser 21st-Century Remake:** This year, the Flyers could get back on everyone's shortlist by being good, as opposed to tough, mean and rude—

## EASTERN

although with young pistols Mike Richards and Steve Downie in their lineup, fans can expect the occasional hellacious evening of old-tyme wilding. Martin Biron should stabilize the Flyers in net and both Kimmo Timmonen and Jason Smith will help steady a defence once burdened by so many Dan McGillises. John Stevens might be hockey's most underrated coach, and while it's hard to admit, ex-Broad Street Bullie and former Leaf puncher Paul Holmgren has improved his team more than any other executive. **Visit Calgary Oct. 4—the Flames' home opener.**

### NEW JERSEY DEVILS

**The Team That Won All of Those Stanley Cup Games that Nobody Watched:** Boredom refined, the Devs have turned to Albertan Brent Sutter to steer their franchise in the direction of renewed success after years riding Martin Brodeur for all he's worth. But 2007 isn't 1994, and the Devs—despite Sutters' genius and a gathering of fine, young and mostly American talent—will be hard-pressed to execute their exquisitely tedious defensive systems against high-flying Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Ottawa, et al. **Visit Calgary Dec. 23.**

### PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

**The Team That Is Helmed by Sidney, For He Is the Chosen One Who Will Lead the Mighty Pens to Valhalla:** With Backstrom, Semin, Ovechkin, Carter, Richards and two Staals (Marc and Eric) playing elsewhere in the Eastern Conference, the Pens' Crosby, Malkin, Whitney, Staal (Jordan) and Fleury will only get better faster having to battle their audacious young peers. With Crosby as their hood ornament, they could

realize a combination of Patrick Division snarl and Smythe Division finesse, and while Evgeni Malkin is the Pen's current counterpunch, Jordan Staal may outlast him as Pittsburgh's other great star. Coach Michel Therrien is still a wild card in terms of whether or not he's capable of guiding his team to the top of the table, but when the prognosticator finds himself nitpicking over a team's coaching pedigree, it's easy to see that the only thing that the Penguins have to fear is fear itself. **Visit Calgary Dec. 6.**

## SOUTHEAST

### WASHINGTON CAPITALS

**The Team That Could Reinvent Modern Attack Hockey, but Probably Will Not:** It shows you how little chickens.t Glen Sather and John Muckler had in them when they reinvented '80s firewagon hockey—especially when one notices how much speed and talent there is in the 21st-century NHL, and how few coaching regimes exploit their gifted skaters. Defence might win hockey games, but defence is boring, and Alex Ovechkin's good-but-not-great 06/07 year was the result of coach Glen Hanlon putting the defensive harness on the young Muscovite. With blue-chipper Nick Backstrom joining Mike Nylander and Alex Semin in the lineup, the Caps might break land-speed records if pro hockey wasn't so over-coached and over-thought. It's like what Red Dutton once said: "Never mind the damn puck—let's start the game." **No Calgary visit.**

### TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING

**The Team That Will Forever Be Known Throughout the Hockey Universe as**

**Florida's Team:** "Go Tampa!" is a phrase rarely exhorted by hockey fans outside of South Florida. "Beware Tampa!" is yet another unpopular phrase, because while the 'Ning possess three top shooters—St. Louis, Lecavalier and Richards—and an ensemble of good players, their goaltending is riotously average. The old L.A. Kings had this kind of problem, and their Cup dreams were only ever that. If the Oilers run of '06 feels like ancient history, the unlikely Tampa Bay title of '04 seems like an aberration. **No Calgary visit.**

### FLORIDA PANTHERS

**The Team That Will Forever Be Known Throughout the Hockey Universe as Florida's Other Team:** Really, this should be the Panthers' year to make the great leap forward. They've stockpiled promising boys-to-men—Nate Horton, Steve Weiss, Mr. Bouwmeester and Raddy Olesz—and with the arrival of The Velvet Wall—Tom Vokoun—in goal, their free-flowing goals-against pipeline should get plugged. Although they cancelled their popular Hispanic hockey radio broadcasts, there's still lots for local fans to cheer about, which isn't to say that they will. Late last year, crowds were so dismal that season-ticket holders were rewarded with prizes—cars, holidays, and other large gifts—for simply honouring their remaining seats. **No Calgary visit.**

### CAROLINA HURRICANES

**The Other Team That Wasn't There:** Apologies to Jim Rutherford, but is there any other team in the East worth giving less of a damn about than the 'Canes? **No Calgary visit.**

### ATLANTA THRASHERS

**The Team on Which At Least No Player Has Been Arrested for Dog-Fighting:** The Thrashers teased fans last year by sallying into the playoffs, only to

get whupped by the Rangers of New York. Looking back, however, this result wasn't unexpected. Led by a dour Russian (Ilya Kovalchuk), an enigmatic Slovak (Marian Hossa), a crazy old American (Keith Tkachuk; now a Blue again) and a badly fading Czech (Bobby Holik), the Thrashers are mostly window dressing, with no real totem to support them. Would-be phenom Kari Lehtonen's okay year came after having the dreams of the franchise pinned on him. Unless he can transform himself into Luongo, Brodeur or Ryan Miller, Atlanta could fall as far south as the northern climes they so fleetingly tickled. **No Calgary visit.**

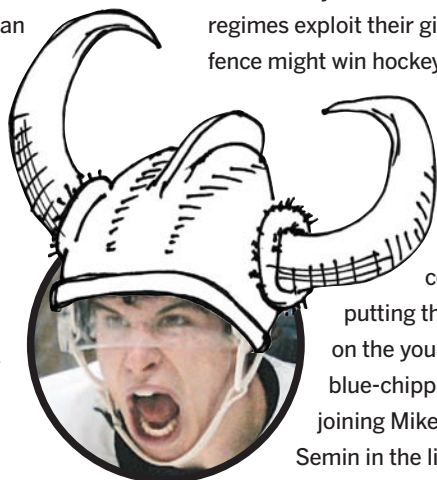
## NORTHEAST

### MONTREAL CANADIENS

**The Team For Whom Nostalgia Is Looking More Like a Shotgun with the Barrel Pointed Backwards:** The Canadiens' recent announcement that they will retire two more sweaters in the upcoming season is an ill-advised move by a club that usually makes good ones. Choosing to hang Larry Robinson and current GM Bob Gainey's threads from the rafters in a floundering year (the Habs enter the season with the league's largest group of unproven forwards) can only besmirch the team's supposedly grand tradition. Evoking one's ghosts as a way of underlining a franchise's eminence is one thing, but drawing attention to how far they've fallen from their glory days is another. It's a tired routine. **No Calgary visit.**

### BUFFALO SABRES

**The Team Never to Be Confused With Any Team Other Than Themselves:** Rarely do the Sabres get credit for surviving—thriving, even—while playing in a small market haunted by near-misses and never-weres. This past summer, their two best players, Drury and Danny Briere,



couldn't get out of town quickly enough, leaving one of the best teams of the decade to rebuild with youth despite reaching the Conference Final in each of the last two years. The good news is that the kids—Derek Roy, Drew Stafford and plus-minus monster Tom Vanek—can play, and Sabres fans deserve more than disloyal stars hungering after top-dollar money. Still, fortune in sports is rarely fair, with or without 'tender Miller. **No Calgary visit.**

#### BOSTON BRUINS

##### **The Team That Bobby Orr Used to Play For:**

Like Chicago, the Bruins have suffered greatly from the post-modern blues. A carousel of head coaches (welcome Claude Julien) and ill-fated draft picks (hello Jonathan Girard) have mired the once fearsome Bruins in the depths of mediocrity. With the sorry state of at least half of the Original Six franchises, the NHL has lost its historic anchor, and by allowing teams to build glassy monstrosities like the Fleet Centre where there once existed the smoky and intimate Boston Garden, teams steeped in tradition suddenly appear no different than Sun Belt start-ups. While it's hard to cheer for any club that rests its hopes on Marc Savard and Zdeno Chara, success in Boston would affect the greater good of the game. But expecting a team owned by Jeremy Jacobs to rediscover its eminence is another thing entirely. **No Calgary visit.**

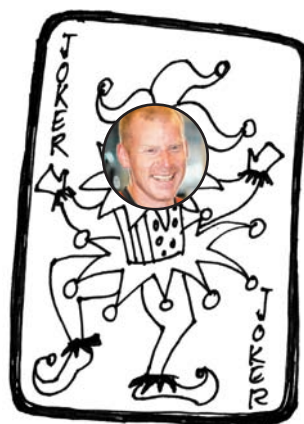
#### OTTAWA SENATORS

##### **The Team That Couldn't Shoot**

**Straight:** With a fractious dressing room; a cantankerous, cockroach-eating goalie who, this past summer, threatened a retired postal worker from the window of his Hummer; and three superstars still


reeling from the oblivion of their Stanley Cup close-ups, it should be an interesting year in Ottawa. Weird karma can affect frail clubs—see Toronto and Chicago—and there's a chance that last year's abysmal Cup Final performance will stunt further growth of this current lineup. Last year, Ottawa was one of hockey's most disappointing teams going into the all-

star break, but they rode a torrid second half into a date with Anaheim. John Paddock is their new coach after Bryan Murray kicked himself upstairs; John Muckler was deposed. But no matter how well you shuffle a deck, you're still playing with the same cards. **No Calgary visit.**



#### TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS

##### **The Team To Whom This Author Is Devoted Unconditionally Even Though He Is Aware of Their Chronic Shortcomings and the Unsavouriness of Their Bay Street Owners:**

With Vesa Toskala signed to stand between the pipes, Toronto will be better this year. Injuries decimated a flailing young team throughout 06/07, yet the Leafs came within a shoot-out OT goal of missing the playoffs. It's hard to say whether or not this overachievement will translate into greater confidence or self-satisfaction, but one trusts that the wise and wholly likable Paul Maurice will make sure the Leafs' ship remains steady in what could be hockey's most winnable division. It's a good thing that no one outside of the GTA expects much from Toronto. In a way, this team—quietly good and almost facelessly effective—is as unlike its city as any other Leaf team before it. **No Calgary visit.** 

# The Art of the Game

**A new exhibit gets back to the roots of hockey: kids, frozen ponds, post-game hot chocolate. Not an NHLer in sight.**

**F**or true fans—the kind who are, as artist Peter Wyse puts it, “branded at birth”—the good ol' hockey game is less about draft picks and scoresheets than it is about, for instance, anticipating a cup of hot cocoa after a game of pickup on a pond or watching your four-year-old, decked out in helmet and shin pads, make snow angels on an uncleared rink. Wyse (whose work adorns our cover as well as Page 22) along with six other artists from across the West and Quebec, are part of an exhibit entitled HockeyTime, opening Saturday, September 29 at Canada House Gallery in Banff.

While their work represents a variety of styles and media, all the

artists capture hockey-related moments of what Wyse calls “blissful innocence.” “For me, hockey is a place to separate yourself from the trials of regular life,” says the Abbotsford-based artist. “You can be a child.”

Calgary painter Bill Brownridge (who designed uniforms for the Calgary Flames in 1993) echoes Wyse's sentiments, and adds that the game is also an arena for kids to learn “loyalty, teamwork, how to win and how to lose.” Due to a lifelong disability that makes it impossible for him to skate or to walk without crutches, Brownridge (who, in his artist's photo, is literally hugging a hockey stick) grew up not playing but watching his brother play in small-town Saskatchewan. “He got sent to New

York in 1939 to play for a farm team. He

was my hero.” Brownridge has remained a devoted spectator of the sport, and has turned his love of the game into four illustrated children's books.

Other artists featured in the show include Rod Charlesworth, Robert Roy, Allen Sapp, Peter Shostak and K. Neil Swanson. Visit [canadahouse.com](http://canadahouse.com) for more information. —**Jacquie Moore**



Bill Brownridge “Starlit Night-Vawn Station”



Allen Sapp “The Three Lil Fellows Playing Together”