

Writer has deep interest in North, and in children

Award-winning writer, filmmaker not exactly the stuffy type

An ear well-tuned to both the cadences and concerns of youth. A ham's delight in strutting "the boards".

An abiding respect for northerners.

And above all, the expertise and self-confidence that allows him — scarcely three weeks from starting a brand-new job — to hop on a motorcycle and set off on a 700-km journey through the Arctic, with no companions but his camera, a notebook and God.

That combination is what Rod MacIntyre will bring to La Ronge this fall, when he begins work as the Northern Lights School Division's first-ever artist-in-residence.

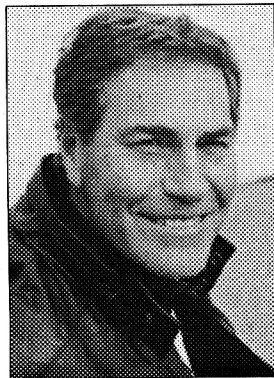
While he is an acclaimed fiction writer, playwright and filmmaker whose resume includes numerous references to "best" (children's drama, educational

documentary, educational book) and "book of the year", MacIntyre is neither stuffy nor grandiose.

An article published by the Saskatchewan Playwrights Centre two years ago makes gleeful reference to "the treat of seeing past-president Rod MacIntyre strut around as a tough biker" as part of a staged reading of a new play. MacIntyre also conducts regular writing workshops for all ages, drawing on what he calls "the MacIntyre Idiot's Guide to Story Making". "The Guide" acknowledges that "it takes a certain kind of stupidity to be a writer — and I've been blessed with lots of that — a willingness to make mistakes. And the patience to fix them."

This is also someone who listens to kids, who both respects what they have to say and takes pleasure in the hearing. The writing of MacIntyre's first (and so far, only) novel, "Yuletide

Blues", began with a line from his main character, a fictional teenager who started "yattering in the back of my skull" one day. "I have this theory that parents



Rod MacIntyre, the NLSD's first artist-in-residence, had several other careers in mind before he finally realized, at the age of 35, that he was a writer. Since then, he has won numerous provincial and national awards.

are from another planet," the character said, "some place long ago and far. The proof is this: look in their eyes. See anything there?"

Born in Saskatoon, MacIntyre grew up in a working-class home where "books did not abound". Childhood ambitions included being a fireman, a clarinet player (he'd just seen a film about Benny Goodman), a hockey player and

a priest, and he actually attended seminary for a couple of years. Becoming a writer was not a conscious choice, he says — in fact, it wasn't until he was 35

that he admitted he was one. According to his personal biography, in 1983, he "quit driving cab, bought a computer and began writing full-time."

Since then, MacIntyre has produced six books of fiction, four plays and three films. He has also had his work anthologized in several story collections and served as an editor on other collections, including "Takes: Stories for Young Adults",

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which won the 1996 Saskatchewan Book Award for Publishing in Education and the Canadian Library Association's 1997 Young Adult Award. His biography notes that his free time is shared with his partner, Sharyn, and his grandchildren, and that he is "a jock by inclination; a devotee of golf and hockey."

At present, home base for MacIntyre is Candle Lake, but that didn't stop him from following Sharyn up north this summer to Inuvik, in the Northwest Territories. On July 29, he climbed onto his motorcycle (alone, this time) and set off on a journey he hopes will be his inspiration for 10 months of writing — the Dempster Highway, a 700-km stretch of "incredible road" between Inuvik and Dawson City, Yukon.

"There's one service station in the middle, and that's it," MacIntyre exults. "There's nothing else, besides mountains, tundra, bears and mosquitoes. It's quite spectacular."