



VOICES OF SATURDAY AFTERNOON TV

“THE THRILL OF VICTORY”

A typical Saturday afternoon during the late 1960s and early 1970s was watching the family’s backup TV in the basement while sprawled on the floor or slouched in a comfy sofa. It was a black and white set topped with adjustable ‘bunny ears’. Years of repeatedly twisting the dial had likely caused it to break and be replaced by a pair of pliers.

The wrestling show started around noon. A variety of regional promotions presented different grapplers, including Stampede Wrestling in Calgary and Maple Leaf Wrestling in Toronto. Though babyfaces stood for all that was good and just in the world, the antics of the villainous heels were much more fun.

One of the most beloved bad guys was bald, front teeth deprived Maurice ‘Mad Dog’ Vachon, whom you booed for biting his opponents and finishing them off with his signature ‘pile driver’ move. “I did everything I could so the people would hate me,” he once joked during a promotional tour for a documentary in 1999. “I failed miserably!”

Whatever you watched on Saturday afternoon – wrestling, fishing or sports shows – sprinkled throughout were plenty of public service announcements. One of the most enduring, and most imitated by comedy series such as *SCTV* and *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, was *Hinterland Who’s Who*. Created by the Canadian Wildlife Service (“Ottawa”) in 1963, anyone who ever saw it could hum its signature music, John Cacavas’s *Flute Poem* or imitate John Livingston’s serious monotone narration.

You might also have seen a Unitarian Service Committee of Canada’s appeal to assist its international aid projects, which made Ottawa’s “56 Sparks Street” one of the country’s most famous addresses. The ads were narrated by USC Canada founder Lotta Hitschmanova, herself a war refugee. Her trademark uniform was assembled from a surplus American army nurse outfit. The homemade ribbons were later supplemented by awards recognizing her humanitarian efforts.



TOP: Maurice ‘Mad Dog’ Vachon and NDP leader Ed Broadbent campaigning in Montreal. Brother, and fellow wrestler Paul ‘The Butcher’ Vachon, was a three-time federal NDP candidate – twice in the riding of Brome-Missisquoi. (1988)

LEFT: Lotta Hitschmanova in South Korea. Her uniform is preserved in the Canadian War Museum. (1970)

RIGHT: The Grizzly: “A distinguishing hump of neck muscle rises from its shoulders.”

📺 Watch these PSAs on the web (visit friends.ca/2019calendar) to see how two Ottawa addresses became iconic signoffs.