

Lifestyle

Everyone gets to be a star on Cable 7, columnist Janice Stein writes about her trip "downunder" and artist Bernie Poulin has a theory about left and right

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Downey trains brain

Twelve weeks from now the right hemisphere of Peter Downey's brain will be a lot better. Peter Downey's self portrait may even look like Peter Downey.

So says Sudbury artist Bernie Poulin, who makes a living thanks to a right hemisphere that's about as good as you can get.

Early next month Poulin will offer drawing classes to Sudburians who harbour fantasies of being great artists, but can't draw a straight line. Downey, the news director at CBC Sudbury, is one of them.

Poulin's method of instruction is based on the theory that the two main parts of the brain - the right and left hemispheres - have distinct functions. The left hemisphere, the side that most people use, seems geared to the verbal-analytical skills, while the right hemisphere lends itself to perception that is more subjective and spatial.

"Most people," says Poulin, "don't draw beyond the 10 or 11 year old level. They're almost retarded in their ability to see."

Artists, on the other hand, are considered "kooky" because the relative inactivity of the left side of the brains makes them absent-minded and, generally, less pragmatic than the average person.

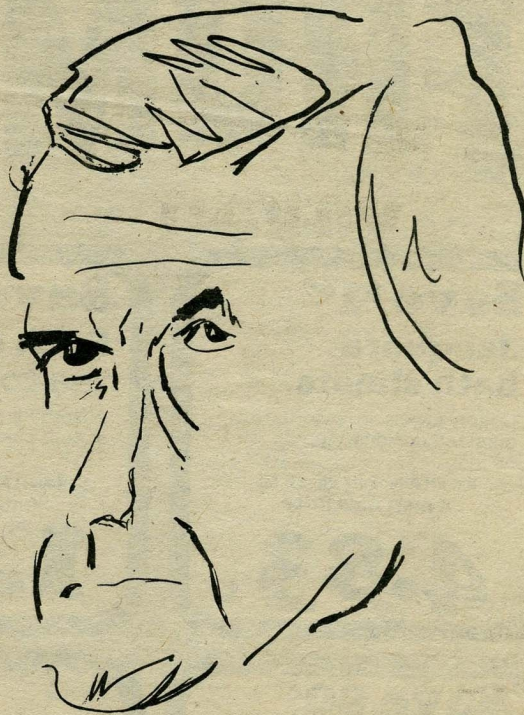
The drawing classes, which begin April 3 for adults and April 5 for children, hinge on exercises that force people to

explore the uncharted expanse of their right hemispheres, and thereby strike more of a balance between the two sides.

The cost for 36 hours of instruction is \$120 for adults and \$80 for children nine to 13 years of

age. Sceptics will have an opportunity to judge 12 weeks from now when Peter Downey's "talent," before and after, will be published for all to see.

For information, call 566-0646 or 566-4537.



Peter Downey: a self-portrait