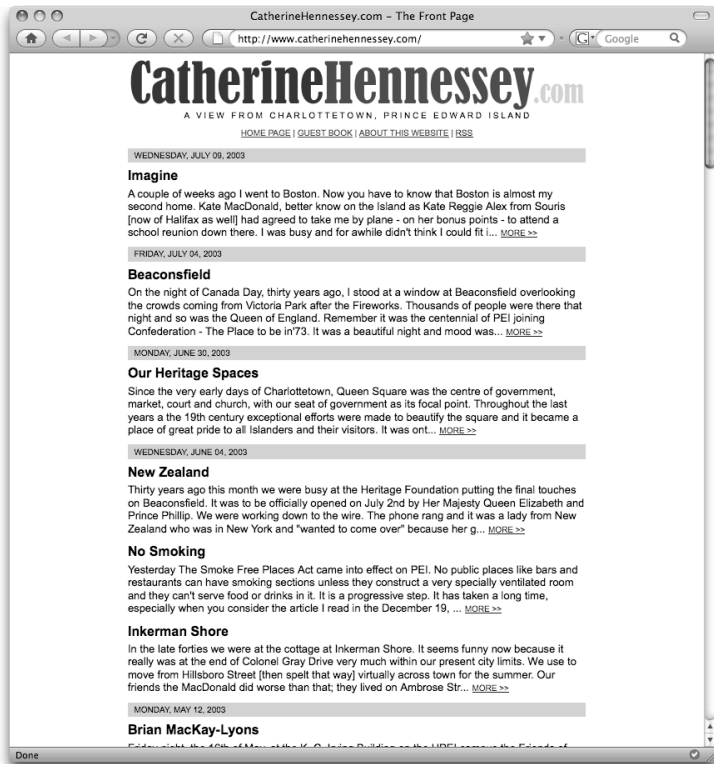


CatherineHennessey.com

February 29, 2000 to July 9, 2003



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Edited by Peter Rukavina.

This is a reproduction of posts on the CatherineHennessey.com weblog made from February 29, 2000 to July 9, 2003. Posts are reproduced in their entirety as they appeared online, with the exception of minor corrections to spelling and punctuation.

Posts related exclusively to the weblog itself, or consisting entirely of web links, have been removed.

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Editor's Note

In these pages you will find reproduced the entire contents of *CatherineHennessey.com*, the weblog my friend and neighbour Catherine Hennessey wrote over three years from 2000 to 2003.

While the archive of the weblog continues to live online, this is not an easy medium for contemplative reading and, as Catherine would tell you if you asked, it's liable to just up and disappear one day, electrons and computers being what they are.

So, if nothing else, in committing Catherine's words to paper I hope to provide them with a longer-lasting home.

With the exception of a few technical posts that I've removed (those consisting entirely of web-links, for example), the words in this book, save some minor editing, appear here exactly as they did online.

The notion of a "blog" was very new in 2000: Catherine was one of the first "bloggers," on PEI or anywhere. So what you read here, on top of everything else, is part of the shaping of a new medium. As such, recall that blogs tend to be, somewhat purposefully, more personal and less organized than formal writing.

It has been a joy to edit these words, which provide so much insight into Catherine and the Charlotte Town she loves so dearly.

– *Peter Rukavina, September 3, 2008*

This is an introduction

Tuesday, February 29, 2000

Peter Rukavina designed this beautiful, if not slightly ostentatious, website, but who am I to question HIM. So-o-o he now is insisting that I put something on it. I believe he is trying to avoid having me vent my causes on him directly – and do I have causes.

Downtown Residents Meeting

Saturday, March 11, 2000

On March 9, 2000, downtown residents gathered to share issues of common concern.

A Thought

Thursday, March 16, 2000

“When good people, with great energy, have shared vision, all the rest works out.” – Bill Clinton in Davos, Switzerland, February 19, 2000.

My main cause

Friday, March 17, 2000

Charlotte Town: As a Charlottetownian by birth and a deeply committed believer by study and research and an amateur urban planner in my heart this little capital city is of great concern to me. Being so blessed on this Island by natural attributes we are naturally a tourist

destination of great interest and our weakness might be that we might overdo the playing to that audience and forget our year around citizens.

Up until lately, as a prominent Charlottetownian once said, “we were so far behind we were ahead” and that somewhat explained our gentleness, I think. What I read is that you don’t do things for tourists – you do it for yourself and the bonus is that friends that visit enjoy your place more.

A great symposium held a few years ago in Calgary on Cultural Tourism had a keynote speaker that said it well. He was Robert McNulty, President of Partners for Livable Places in Washington, D.C.: “I don’t see cultural tourism as a product. I don’t see it as a separate item. I see it as the process of making your community more livable for yourself. If you like it, then someone is going to come as a visitor and find it enjoyable, too. Then your hardest problem is to manage it so that too many outsiders don’t come. It could then become uncomfortable for both you and the visitors and no longer a pleasant experience for anyone”

All this is something we’ve got to think about and talk about. In the meantime on the Charlotte Town study that I am doing: I have divided our city into 117 blocks of land and I am layering information on buildings, fires, industry and commerce, the arts, the residents – those kinds of things. In another place I am accumulating information on mayors and councillors,

prominent citizens and characters, special visitors and a lot of family trees. This is slow going. I spend a great deal of time reading old newspapers, land office records and wills. Recently I have been reading the 1940s, particularly about the post war development in our city – places like the Crestwood Drive development, the Birchwood area development and that temporary housing area at the airport called Maple Hills. Most of those Maple Hills buildings were bought and moved and we have to follow where they went. A few years ago you could identify them relatively easily, but it is getting more difficult. I need help here. I have really enjoyed reading this period, particularly since I remember a lot of things about it. I'll be sharing some of them with you. Charlotte Town is such a very special place – except maybe in March and April – it is so important that we treat it with respect.

The Furnishings of 19th Century Prince Edward Island

Friday, March 17, 2000

The Furnishings Of 19th Century Prince Edward Island is another deep interest of mine. Over thirty years ago Ruth MacKenzie, Irene Rogers and myself were coming home from Island Historian, George Leard's funeral in Souris and we decided we would continue HIS work in this area and we did. And we used that research at our

work at the Heritage Foundation, at Green Park, Orwell Corner and Government House. That research also helped build a very special collection for the Heritage Foundation – in a very short time. That heritage collection is very well document at the PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation Artifactory and, altho, not shared as much as we all would like, it is being well looked after and the day will come when its importance will be recognized and IT WILL BE SHARED.

Ruth, Irene and I always felt we were working on “a book” on Island Furniture, but it has so far not amounted to that and I am left to take it somewhere. Maybe it isn’t a book anymore, but it is a rich package of information that I am organizing and I someday look forward to sharing it with Islanders some way or other. I continue to find great things – not necessarily more marked furniture – but more background that I think will be very useful to collectors and museum people. If anyone has an ideas on this subject I would be most grateful to hear from you. In the meantime, I will continue to tighten up what I have.

Prince Edward Island Museum and Heritage Foundation

Saturday, March 18, 2000

The Prince Edward Island Museum and Heritage Foundation is never far from my heart or beliefs. These

days the board is busy talking about whether they should come under the wing of Dept. of Tourism rather than the Dept of Education.

We had that fight before and I don't think any differently about the issue than I did in October 1972.

Tourism is a marketing department. It moves people here and there. It deals with our commodities. It's trying to encourage cruise ships or bus tours or golfers. It's moving people and writing easily read promotional material and information. It's good graphics and it is certainly good web pages designed by special people.

I think if the truth was known I'd rather go to a cruise ship convention than to the Canadian Museums Associations meetings, but once I got there I might feel too guilty about having a good time on Government Budget to really, really enjoy it. And the question would be would I learn anything that would move My Island Causes along?

Cultural and heritage are subjects that are enriched by a deep intellectual base. It is not a world of Discovery Centres, Interpretative Centres or even Founders Halls. It is not pretty, catchy words, but messages that are not lightly shaped. They are messages that have to be presented for a contemporary audiences of course and therein lies the challenge. And that is not going to be met by getting into bed with Tourism. Maybe it will not be met by remaining in Education either. Maybe we have to establish a new department

that leads Islanders to understand how their history, their land, their customs, their stories, their roots are the most important matters to lead us forward on any issue that we must face.

It is our distinctiveness that is our most important attribute and it gives us our spirit. I hope this matter can be discussed cheerfully and if I had my druthers I would so quickly organize that GRAND PROVINCIAL CULTURAL EXHIBITION so Islanders can truly contemplate what these institutions mean to us and how we have to protect them and think creatively to preserve them.

The Downtown Meeting

Saturday, March 18, 2000

The Downtowners Meeting was a great success, but it has left us with the question: what next? And we must address that this week.

The concern for a good grocery store downtown is high on the priority list for many. The Coop owe us an explanation and, if they are going to stay, they must build our confidence that they know the demographics of those they serve and what we want to buy. I don't think they do now and they certainly are not acting in the manner of a *cooperative*.

Any suggestions will be gratefully received regarding any issues of concern for the downtown. We'll list the issues that the downtowners brought to the table as soon as we get to it.

Old Protestant Burying Ground

Saturday, March 18, 2000

The committee for The Old Protestant Burying Ground [1784-1873] on Elm Avenue now called University Avenue is busy. We have promised “To Restore, Remember and Reflect.”

Rev. Gordon Matheson is the chair and a lot of work has been done already. If you have the time you should drop in and see the wonderful job Joaquim Da Fonseca, our top masonry restoration man, has done on the two Jarvis sarcophagi. Committee member George Wright is organizing, in fine fashion, the information on those buried there. It is clear not all the stones remain by a long shot, but if we learn from church records and old newspapers we can always add names to the memorial list. This cemetery is one of the province’s most profound historical experiences.

A review of my causes

Saturday, March 18, 2000

Peter Rukavina said he set up this web site so that I could vent my causes – he got more than he bargained for. I want to say that I do reserve space in my head for my dear family and friends – and my little house at 222 and the farm at Cranberry Wharf both of which I preserve for their comfort.

Confederation Centre of The Arts

Sunday, March 19, 2000

No one who has cared about the Confederation Centre and has worked for it can be happy these days.

It is a sad time for that important place. The unique role it plays in our community and in the country offers an exciting challenge, but a difficult one. Board and staff are always playing the balancing act.

Curtis Barlow came to the Centre with an extensive background in cultural management, excellent connections across the country – and was a lawyer to boot. The Trust and Board felt privileged to have him join them. Together it is their responsibility to balance the needs of the community with the national mandate. It is especially the local board's responsibility to protect the Island's concern in its everyday operation and to have an understanding as to the cultural expectations of this island.

Missing in this present situation is the voice of the Dept. of Cultural. The Centre is under the wing of the Dept of Tourism. Nevertheless, I am distressed that any management/employment issue is being fought out in the open by people who are not privy to all the details. I am distressed that a former staff person puts himself before the institution, but then maybe I'm just old

fashioned. I am distressed at the level of name calling that has occurred in this matter. It is beneath our dignity.

The Art Gallery at the Confederation Centre is of major importance to our community. It continues the good intentions of the Fathers of Confederation Centre Trust who replaced that 1928 “Munificent Gift from the Harris Family” of a Library and Art Gallery [in addition to their gift of \$60,000 worth of paintings] in our Queen Square with the Confederation Centre. The confirmation that the Art Gallery plays an important role in the Centre Complex would be a comfort to the public at this moment.

On March the 4th, 1965 a group of caring women met in the upper Art Gallery to discuss the formation of a Women’s Committee and we did just that. We brought together women from the bridge tables, the curling rinks and the various church groups to work for a cause that ended up providing them with learning experiences *and* enjoyment.

Often called elitist by many who did not join the cause, we weren’t. No more than hockey mothers. We worked very hard with a belief that the Confederation Centre was the best thing that had ever happened in our community and indeed we believed it was. It was a wonderful mix of Island needs and Canadianism. It hurts me deeply to see the lack of impact on the part of that organization today. A few of us were made Honorary Life Members of it a number of years ago, but

personally I have not heard from them in two or three years. The impact of the Friends is not strong in the community and I think that is very sad. In difficult times like we're going through, they have a value.

Maybe if we had held The Grand Provincial Cultural Exhibition a few years ago we would all be in a better state of understanding of just how important our heritage and culture is and how we have to nurture it.

A Horse Story for John Cousins

Wednesday, March 22, 2000

DELIVERY HORSE DIES: A white horse which hauled a milk delivery vehicle in this city, winter and summer, for the past 17 years dropped dead yesterday on Prince Street. He was Jim, owned by the Garden City Dairy and was the first delivery horse the firm bought when it began business here in 1926. Jim knew his job thoroughly and knew every house and store where milk was delivered on his route. All he needed was someone to handle the bottles, he did the rest, turning around at the end of streets, stopping in front of doors and always keeping a watchful eye on his driver. If the latter was delayed Jim did not move on to the next place until the driver was ready. He reached a comparatively ripe old-age for a horse, being about 24. He started work as usual this morning but dropped dead before he finished the morning round. (*The Guardian*, March 3, 1944).

One wonderful January Sunday in the 40's my father went to Walker's Livery Stable on King Street and hired a horse and sleigh for the afternoon. He had three very excited little girls, Ruby who grew up on the Smith Road and knew about horses and himself "who couldn't even change a tire". I think we must have hired Jim. We wanted to go out on the river, but not Jim, he had his route and we had to follow it. It took all of Ruby's Smith Road training to even go around Victoria Park.

I wonder what happened on Prince Street that day in March and how the neighbourhood handled it.

Dark-Sky Association

Tuesday, April 4, 2000

I have just received my second newsletter from the International Dark-Sky Association and I very much recommend it to any of you who have the same concerns.

When I look at the new lighting on the renovated liquor store on University Avenue or the street lighting on my very own street it occurs to me that this Association needs a PEI branch.

"For most people on earth, the dark skies our ancestors had have disappeared ... the problem is urban glow, due mostly to too much bad lighting" This is a organization that concerns themselves with "trashy looking, confusing nighttime environment". Some of us have had the joy of sky watching in a dark country

setting and it is breathtaking – and spiritual. Lets shine the light down where it is needed and get rid of bad light design – save money and see more sky. You, too can become a member by sending \$30.00 to IDA, 3225 North First Avenue, Tucson, Az. 85719-2103 or just simply check their web site at www.darksky.org. Once you start thinking about this issue it begins to hit you and you can't let go.

Eighty-Six Years Old on the 4th

Tuesday, April 4, 2000

From the April 6th 1914 *Examiner* – “The new Gents Furnishings store ‘The Haberdashery’ Messrs Henderson and Cudmore, proprietors, opened for business on Saturday. Many people were attracted by the very handsome and tastily dressed window which reflected good judgment and skill of no small order of Mr. Cudmore. The goods in the store are well displayed from modern shelves and the prospective customer is enabled to see at a glance just what he requires. The Haberdashery had a very encouraging trade on Saturday night and will no doubt secure a fair share of the ever growing business in their line.” A good prediction. It is a firm that has been a leader in the retail business – and continues to be – and it has given much to our community.”

Peter Rukavina's Birthday

Wednesday, April 5, 2000

To celebrate this event I am cooking dinner for him and a few of his friends, since his Catherine left today to visit family in Ontario. His birthday cake is going to be a Chocolate Chip Chiffon Cake with Almond Crunch – how does that sound? It is right off the cover of “fine Cooking”. Worthy of someone who puts you in cyberspace, I’d say. You can send birthday messages here any time after 6 p.m. PEI time. Happy Birthday, Peter

An Art Rally For The Politicians

Friday, April 7, 2000

Last night I attended an Art Rally – a Meet your Provincial Candidate Evening – at the PEI Council of The Arts.

Don Mackinnon, Ken Bingham and Jacob Mal were there to represent their respective parties. There might have been 60 people in attendance. Although there was a lot of talk about not enough money for the arts, it became very clear – something I’ve recognized for a long time, that the Provincial Government does support the arts in a wide and varied way and to a very generous degree. Take those dollars and do a per capita on them and you see us up there with the best of them in the

country. However, the problem is that the dollars come out of various pots and the common denominator is hardly recognizable.

The money comes from the Dept of Education in charge of Culture, the Dept of Tourism in charge of – well they say marketing and the Dept of Economic Development. We could look further and we'd find some dollars coming out of the Dept of Community Development and, yes, even the Premier's office directly.

And this government is no different than any previous government. Add it all up and you have big bucks and they cover the gamut – fine arts, music, crafts, film, heritage, small museums, arts councils, Heritage Places Protection group, School of Piping and, of course the Confederation Centre of the Arts and I suppose you could add the Capital Commission and their flag ship Discovery Centre/Founders' Hall.

It would also be unfair not to include the Anne World, Institute of Island Studies, the Festivals and Bill Buell's community development business and separate French funding and now even go so far as separate schools. A nice little exercise would be to add up the number of executive directors, secretaries, board members and friends and patrons needed for them all. I think you'd find that culture and heritage is alive and well on PEI. There is a "but."

Rural Island

Monday, April 10, 2000

Here is a thoughtful quote: “Every rural community is heir to a unique identity formed in part by people, in part by geography ... The functional and harmonious relationship between early rural structures and their surroundings evolved over decades. To preserve this relationship, rural conservationists must concern themselves with protection of farmland, forests, wetlands and wildlife habitat as well as cultural resources. The interdisciplinary nature of rural conservation also requires careful attention to local economic, political and social factors.” (from *Rural Conservation* by Elizabeth Watson)

Another Poem

Tuesday, April 11, 2000

Brooke Astor lives in New York. She loves New York and has done many good things for it – like planting a “host of golden daffodils” and all kinds of other things to add beauty and encourage the arts. Here’s a poem I found in the *New Yorker* once; it is called *Discipline*.

*I am old and I have had more than my share of good
and bad
I’ve had love and sorrow, seen sudden death, been
left alone, of love bereft.*

*I thought I'd never love again and felt my life was
grief and pain.*

*Twixt life and death the edge was thin, then I
discovered discipline: I learned to take the good and
bad and smile whenever I felt sad.*

*I learned to care a great deal more for the world
about me than before, began to forget both "me" and
"I" and joined in life as it rolled by.*

*This may not mean sheer ecstasy but it's better far
than "I" and "me".*

Family Day versus Heritage Day

Thursday, April 13, 2000

Wayne Carew's last minute announcement on creating a holiday in February called Family Day was a bit of a slap on the face to all the effort that has gone into celebrating Heritage Day on this Island for the last twenty-five years.

Didn't someone on the Liberal team not remember? Begun as an initiation of Heritage Canada in 1975, the third Monday in February has grown to become an important annual event ... so much so that on this Island it is called Heritage Week with celebrations from one end of the Island to the other. It seems peculiar that the politicians of this land do not recognize how the roots of their people and the landscape that has been shaped over the years is one of our most distinctive tools to build pride and spirit – and to share with friends who come to visit. Family is heritage and with a little thoughtfulness

Mr. Carew could have tied them together. Pierre Berton as Heritage Canada Chairman tried very hard with his strong Canadian profile to create a holiday on the 3rd Monday of February and failed, but it hasn't stopped the celebrating.

Grand Provincial Cultural Exhibition

Thursday, April 13, 2000

The history of Exhibitions date back to the 18th century. The first National Exhibition of England was held in 1761 under the auspices of the Society of Arts. In 1789, France began her National Exhibition under the patronage of Napoleon. Other countries followed and it lead to the first International Exhibition at London in 1851. Then there was the one in Philadelphia in 1876.

It is said that these exhibitions haved “proved potent factors in the advancement of civilization”. It was not long before smaller places held there own exhibitions. PEI was holding exhibitions as early as 18... and here is what the newspapers of the day said:

“in our own Island Exhibitions have done much to educate the people in agriculture and other industries. Any person who has been witnessing our shows for the past twelve years must see the steady advance which has taken place, especially in the agricultural departments. Our Annual Exhibitions since they were held at Holland Grove are like milestones in the path of progress, showing clearly

our advance in the industrial arts, and in those agricultural pursuits, the successful prosecution of which is so essential to the prosperity of our country. We have no doubt that THE GRAND PROVINCIAL EXHIBITION of 1882 which is to take place in this city, will prove second to none of its predecessors in the excellence of its display, the numbers who will attend it, and benefits which it will yield both to the manufacturer, the agriculturist, and the public at large.”

Think of all of this as the Grand Provincial Cultural Exhibition and reread the above. What an asset it would be to us all and what a face it would put on the Cultural scene of Prince Edward Island! It would be the biggest Show and Tell event on this Island.

Attention David Mackenzie

Sunday, April 16, 2000

Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan – you know that wise senator from New York – wrote about Ada Louise Huxtable who is the famous architectural critic who lives in New York, that “she must love her country very much to be as little satisfied with it as she is.” It gave me some comfort about my critical position of my own beloved place.

NOTE Johanna and Jean Isabelle this David MacKenzie lives in the summer at The Ponds!

Another poem

Sunday, April 16, 2000

I promised I would add no more poems, but I could not resist this one by John of The Lilac who was John Robert Campbell from Graham's Road in 1940. So here it is. It is called *Charlottetown*.

*Here Nature etched indeed a place of beauty
With restful vistas, viewed on every hand;
With panoramic scences of sky and water
Of red, red cliffs, of trees and fertile land:
Nursed gently on the breast of gulf's blue waters,
Upon this Crescent Isle – this land of home,
Here is the wanderer's rest! The Artist's glory
This jewel radiant within the ocean's foam.
Historic buildings aging, grace our city.
Church steeples and cathedral's stately spires;
With sundrenched streets, a wealth of leafy shade -
Green foliage that flames with autumn fires.
Here parklands greet the whispering tides of ocean
With scent of leafy mould – of flower and fern;
The summer's fragrance – the autumn's fiery grandeur
All blend where thoughts' great pyre of memories burn.
Within time's loom in Charlottetown were woven
The robes of nationhood that gown our land!
The golden bonds of unity from North to South -
From East to West which nation's form have spanned!
This lullaby with ocean's ebb and flowing,
Sings of our Island dear where beauties blend!
For here within this peaceful cherished haven
Is Charlottetown – Her Capital – Your friend.*

April is Poetry Month

Sunday, April 16, 2000

Poetry has been part of our Island life since our ancestors began to gather here. Most of us remember our parents rhyming off “recitations” that would make our jaws drop. I don’t think kids have to do that anymore. We were on the edge. Mildred Harrington had quite a repertoire and so did Austie Trainor “Santa Claus” – so did our father. Whatever it was that stuck, I just can’t pass over something written in verse without spending a moment. Poetry has been in Island newspapers since they started printing them. Here’s one from the PEI Registre of September 1826, signed “Mc.” He[?] claimed it was written “on straying among the rural scenes on Hillsborough Bay” Here’s one verse:

*Still fair be thy flowers tho’ they blossom unseen,
By streams ever limpid – mid’ woods ever green!
When far from this isle and its beauties away
The dream of its loveliness ne’er shall decay;
But traced in this bosom still dear shall remain,
Till blest I may visit these lov’d haunts again,
A-ling’ring each lonely soft scene to renew,
Where light as Elysium my happy days flew.*

And then there was the one in The Examiner in May 1850 about Mayflowers:

*Far away o'er the heath, on the mossy hill side,
I cull'd thee, thou sweet one, for my garland of pride;
And no spot in this world to my heart would be dear,
If thou, the wilderness beauty, blossom'd not there.*

E.M. in 1842 wrote in the *Royal Gazette* about Mayflowers this way: “Welcome pretty floweret, Hardy little thing, Wintry storms before thee fly Thou herald of the spring.”

And then some else wrote “A home so dear. lies in the sea, An Island that we love Surrounded by great rocks and sand And clear blue sky above.”

We had more serious poets, too like John LePage [1813-1886] (who called himself The Island Minstrel), John Cavan, John Hunter Duvar, an Elizabeth S. MacLeod, Elizabeth Lockerby and of course Lucy Maud Montgomery. And there were others who had a natural bent. Once we had Margaret Furness MacLeod read at Beaconsfield. She was along in years then, but beautiful and gracious. She lived in Montreal, but she was born in Vernon, PEI. She wrote this one in memory of her father:

*Tomorrow will be Spring
Ah! no, my child, I cannot so with you.
Tomorrow will be spring.
Daily the sun is adding moments to the light,
And one week hence will set
Behind the Cavanagh house.
Lonely? Why yes, so many old friends gone,
But then there is the Vernon
Flowing by my door.*

*I love the crunching sound of ice in Spring
Leaving the brick red banks,
And clasping, lover-like, a willow
With your mother's name carved in the bark -
No, child I cannot go with you,
Tomorrow will be spring*

Islanders have a couple of very interesting connections with famous poets. Elizabeth Bishop [1927-1979] is a most celebrated. An American poet, she lived a long period of her life in Brazil, but she was born in Worchester of a PEI father or at least grandfather. He and his father were in the construction business. The Bishops had come from Murray River area. Her mother was from Nova Scotia and when her father died she went there for awhile and then went back and lived with her Bishop grandparents in Mass.. I love her poetry. My favourite is called One Art:

*The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.*

*Lose something every day,
Accept the fluster of lost door keys,
the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.*

*Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
places, and names, and where it was you meant to
travel. None of these will bring disaster.*

*I lost my mother's watch. and look! my last, or next-
to-last, of three loved houses went.*

The art of losing isn't hard to master.

*I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster, some
realms, I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.*

*Even losing you [the joking voice, a gesture I love] I
shan't have lied. It's evident the art of losing's not too
hard to master though it may look like [Write it!] like
disaster.*

Oh yes, the other Island connection is Mark Strand who was a few years ago U.S. Poet Laureate. He has been published everywhere. He was born in Summerside! It's true he left here when he was very young and as far as we know has never come back. It would be great to have him come for a reading.

Before April is over I'll share a John Betjamen poem and who by Booke Aster that is wonderful – in my mind. Go read a poem today.

Advertising works

Thursday, April 20, 2000

One of my “friends” decided that this web site should be publicized and publicized it was “Heritage Activist Goes on Internet...” appeared in the *Guardian* yesterday – you know, the newspaper “that covers the Island like the dew.” Well it appeared to have done just that since www.catherinehennessy.com had 1539 page views since the article came out. I was having fun... now there

is a heavy onus on me to do something serious. I'll try. You know you can read the *Guardian* on the web, too. Its address is www.theguardian.pe.ca. Thanks for the messages.

Good Friday Tradition

Friday, April 21, 2000

When we were young it was the custom for all the meat stores in town to put on a display of their Easter Beef. The shops would be all cleaned up with new sawdust on the floor and some crepe paper in Easter colours decorating the place. Our father would take us on Good Friday after church from one meat store to another – Mills on Hillsborough Street, Turpins on Prince, Queen Street Meat Market that was then on Queen Street [it is now on University/Elm Avenue] and of course to the Market where mostly all the meat men were Fords as far as I can remember. You wouldn't buy anything that day – only look. To this day I love the feeling of a good meat store, but unfortunately we don't have many left. Victoria has some beautiful ones.

John Steinbeck Has Gone Overseas For Guardian Readers

Friday, April 21, 2000

A headline like that draws your attention and it did when I was reading the *Guardians* of 1943. For almost two

months John Steinbeck reported the war: mostly dear poignant things: how the bagpipes greet the US Troops in Britain, about the names the Bombers put on their planes and about the dogs they owned that waited for their return... And about how minesweeper men hate to see blasts kill fish and about William the alcoholic goat. Almost every article was begun with the statement “Special to The New York Herald Tribune and Charlottetown Guardian” What does it mean? It is peculiar. There were many other war correspondents in the newspapers of the day and a number of syndicated articles that don’t note anything like that. We’re doing some research on the subject, but we need help.

Walter Jones’ Cows

Saturday, April 22, 2000

Walter Jones was one of our most colourful premiers. He was the farmers’ premier and he himself had a wonderful farm over in Bunbury.

It still shows signs of his touches. He landscaped that farm. The trees in the hedge rows were chosen ones, the lane up to the house[that is now gone], the tree shelter to the north and the protective planting along the river banks. Take a look quickly these touches will no doubt soon be gone.

Jones was famous for his herd of Holsteins. “Abegweit Milady” was the most famous one. She was world champion twice “...for 305 day production of

1,085 pounds of butterfat from 24,939 pounds milk” when she was a 4-year-old. That is production – and without any genically altered business.

In a *Guardian* article from December 1944 we learned of the death of another Abegweit – Abegweit Bluebell. She was old, but Grand Champion she had been “she bore nine calves, one of which died at birth and all of the others sold for \$6,060. One bull son heads a herd at a Trappist Monastery in Manitoba, Four of his daughters were sold for \$5,610 and one of the sons was sold last month for \$10,750. Another heads the Curtis Candy Company Chicago. Her grandsons and granddaughters will number a hundred within a year and the great granddaughters will soon number a thousand “ Those Abegweit genes might still be found if DNA testing checked out the Islands Holsteins today. What a sight that farm must have been in its hay day.

Earth Day Enjoy It

Saturday, April 22, 2000

Personally I’m going to think more about The International Dark Sky Association and try to do something about it close to home. Use the right amount of light for the task – don’t overkill – and use energy efficient light sources. Those are two of their suggestions for improving the situation. In the meantime I’m going to go to Cranberry Wharf and pick mayflowers. p.s. got the mayflowers. I don’t think they

are as plentiful full this year maybe the rain tomorrow will help. Is Earth day on the 20th of April or the 22nd? There seems to be a discrepancy in the promotional material.

Advice from the Eldest Sister

Saturday, April 22, 2000

A few days ago one of my sisters – the one that owns a piece of land on Saturna Island with the best architecturally-designed privy in the Gulf Islands and who does not want her name in cyberspace – called me to ask my advice on a cleaning matter since one of our other sisters is going to be visiting them over Easter.

Her question was whether I used Kleenex or a J-Cloth to do my serious cleaning.

I, of course, told her I use Kleenex generally but for serious times I use a damp J-cloth. And then I added if it was the floor, I sometimes used my sock foot and simply, carefully in Sally Brayely Bliss- ballet-style, move along the nooks and corners of the area that need to be addressed at the moment.

She seemed satisfied with my sisterly advice and I hung up very proud to have helped – and loving her dearly for asking.

By the way Saturna Island is were CBC Bill Richardson found his mascot for The Sad Goat. Yes Millie, or is it Sadie, the virtual sad goat was declared

official by Senator Pat Carney who also lives on that Island too.

Next time I visit Saturna Island with my Victoria family I must see that goat. In the meantime I will find out if Bill Richardson's dog Alice Jane is a West Highland Terrier like my Nellie. The dog that Harry Holman says 'looks like, acts like me' and suggests that we should both be on a lead and muzzled! Well, maybe that's a good idea. Love to all. P.S. I forgot to mention the usefulness of the subscription cards in the magazines for picking up dirt of the floor. I mentioned this to Betty on our discussion on cleaning. These cards have the right weight to do the trick. Just take two and scissor them and they work perfectly. And what a supply!

The Hillsborough River

Saturday, April 22, 2000

The Hillsborough River many times referred to as the East River [which isn't very distinctive] is our St. Lawrence. It was our main settlement river from the very first. The Acadian History is very rich on the river and then we have the Scotch, the English, the Irish and more recently The Dutch. If you recognize that Charlotte Town is also on the river [as you should] you immediately add all that government, custom port, Lebanese history, Fathers' of Confederation and market "stuff" to the story.

A few years ago the river was designated as a Canadian Heritage River and that confirms its importance. How we develop the land along its shores and protect its important resources are all part of moving along into the future. I hope we will be blessed by thoughtful planning – particularly since my place of solace over looks this gentle river and worries me.

Oh dear Dick Hurst pointed out to me that even though there likely was a lot of Scotch on the Hillsborough River It was the Scots who were one of the prime settlers there. It must have been close to the cocktail hour! By the way Hillsborough River Day will be held again this summer and also there will be a meeting sometime soon on the Railway Bridge there at Mount Stewart and how it should be dealt with. After that flood last winter it seems to be causing a lot of concern. My dear friend the Fishers from Cranberry Wharf and Scotchford are having a big family reunion this summer. Talk about history of the river!

Dog River House

Tuesday, April 25, 2000

Dora Atwell passed away the other day. She was a sister of Mary MacDonald from Ambrose Street and Philip MacDonald who was one of PEI's few Olympians and Ruth Hertz MacKenzies' first boyfriend.

When I first met Dora Atwell she had just bought that dear stone house with the eye-brow dormer in Clyde River. I was not prepared to “like” her [until I learned she was Mary’s sister] because had she snatched that little house from under our noses. It was the autumn of 1971 and I had convinced the PEI Heritage Foundation Board that they should buy the property [I had not become ex-director at that point] and had worked out a deal with Annie Boyle and we had shaken hands on it.

Irene Rogers and I went off to Cooperstown, NY to a preservation meeting and when we came back the word was out “The Dog River House was sold”.

We were disappointed and mad! Then I met Dora and I instantly knew that the house was in good hands and indeed it was – and what else mattered? Houses are far better lived in than becoming museums!

Dora and her husband treated it with all the love and respect that it deserved and after Jimmy died she stayed on with a door always open to anyone who had a curiosity about the house. They called it “Tich na Craig” – the “house of stone”. The house was published in many periodicals. Dora said “it was a lovely, lovely, lovely place to live”.

A year or two ago, with Dora in a nursing home, her son sold it to the Provincial Government. They were packaging land for the Trans-Canada Highway and By-Pass route around Charlottetown and because it wasn’t done all at the same time the complications were many.

Dora's 130 acres situated on the corner of the Trans-Canada Highway and the Bannockburn Road appears to be where the new by pass will meet the old Trans Canada. It's true they don't need all the land, but they have to have the freedom to manipulate the road in the best possible manner. And to make matters more complicated for them [the provincial government] the Old Dixon Farm and Mill site is just to the north of Dora's. That is where Ellen's diary was written for years, telling us about the day to day life on that spot.

Two very strong heritage properties with special houses on them. Roads have changed course before, but the political will has to be in place – or changed. The history of the Atwell house dates back to at least the 1830's. Names like Thomas Kickham Ambrose Lane, William Hyde, Mayhews and the Boyles to Atwell were connected with it and through that period of over 160 years the house has changed little – inside or out.

I took Dave Darby, an engineer and not a strong believer about old buildings, to say the least, out to look at it back in 1971 and he was astonished. At that point it had been vacant for a long time and used as a farm shed building. It was the foundation and basement that overwhelmed us. The stones in that eight/nine foot basement are 36 inches thick and of magnificent sizes. It is beautiful. Never think that this building can be moved and, please, never destroy its setting. It is one of very

few stone houses left on this Island and it is one of our most important architectural treasures.

There are people out there that want to pick up where Dora left off.

Wood Lots

Friday, April 28, 2000

Nothing is known under the sun and certainly not when it comes to our treatment of our wood lots. In the 1941 *Guardians* there have been a series of articles on woodlots by a man by the name of H.D. Long, Forester, Department of Agriculture – I presume it was the Provincial Department.

In his article on Selective Cutting versus Clear Cutting he writes: “When clear cutting is practiced many trees are cut that would have been worth twice as much if they had been allowed to grow a few more years. When selective cutting is practiced the trees are removed when they are most valuable and the smaller trees are allowed to remain until they have reached their greatest value. Thus it can be seen that the maximum value is obtained when selection cutting is practiced. Clear cutting on the other hand yields the minimum value. As long as clear cutting is practiced there can be no guarantee that the lumber industry will be permanent and the quality of number will always be inferior and of low value. A policy of selective cutting and thinning of

woodland would elevate the lumber industry to a place of importance in this Province”.

It sounds pretty basic. Go out today and buy a wood lot and be good to it. You will never regret it and it will give you great joy.

Canada Book Week

Friday, April 28, 2000

CBC has been loaded with talk this week about books: people’s favorite, most influential etc. You can’t help but think about it.

I remember books I read as a child that still influence me. Someone was talking one day about Nancy Drew Mystery Stories that my age group read. They suggested that they made girls think independently and made us think that we were more capable of solving problems than we thought.

Being of a family of girls and going to a girls-only school, and maybe reading too many Nancy Drew books, certainly didn’t help me to know my place when I got “out in the world” as many of my male colleagues can testify. I love books and could not live without them around and even if I don’t get to read them all it is like Winston Churchill said about sometimes not getting to read all of them, but just handling them, seeing them on the shelf or dusting them – something enters the soul and you are enriched.

A disoriented range light

Thursday, May 4, 2000

Good news today. The Coast Guard is going to save the Range Light at Brighton Shore. It had been pushed off its base by that peculiar surge tide we had in January or February.

When they first looked at it their inclination was to tear it down and put up one of those disinteresting steel beam ones that no artist worth his salt would ever paint. Their decision today gives one faith that hard-edged practical gov't departments can listen. I'd take a bet with them that they choose the route that will be less expensive and the MOST popular. Thank you, Thank you.

What would the Atlantic Coast – or any coast be without lighthouses. The exact date of this light has been hard to find. It isn't in the 1880 Atlas, it doesn't even look as if its on the 1922 Insurance Map. It is strange. I do have a note in a December 1910, *Examiner* about new vapor lights having been placed in the “two Brighton Ranges”.

The same article as notes that “...a signaling gun shall be placed on St. Peter's Island to be used on certain occasions during the winter when the steamers are combating heavy ice or thick weather. The ammunition for this gun will be gun-cotton and it will make a report to be heard a distance of nine or ten miles” Don't you like that. We should get after The Coast Guard to replace

that gun, too. Maps aren't going to solve this date problem obviously. We'll have to go after charts. You know we should do more planning of Charlotte Town out sitting on the Three Tides. It gives a whole different perspective.

Note: Took an architect friend of mind to have a look at the building and he commented that the north wall had in its disorientation a "truncated trapezoid" look about. Now if our Federal friends had known that they might have been discouraged. In the meantime I'm sure you join me in contemplating such a description for such a dear simple little building.

Sorry, Sorry, Sorry,

Thursday, May 18, 2000

Whew, what a couple of weeks. I have moved to the farm since I am renting the back part of 222 for seven weeks to people from the Centre. That meant I had to house clean and since I had to be serious about it, it was no kleenex/sock effort this.

Then the farm had to be tidied, too and grass cut so my world took a twister and of course outside world did not stop either so it was busy.

I promise more attention.

A Second Downtown Residents Meeting

Thursday, May 18, 2000

Circle June 1st for 7:30 pm at the PEI Council of The Arts at the old Royal Bank Building for another gathering of the Downtown Residents.

Peter Rukavina has agreed to be moderator and we have lined up four or five subjects for discussion. The format will be a presentation by an informed person and then a discussion. Soon, very soon, we'll have a report on the web page of the details. Look forward to seeing you there.

Curtain Up

Thursday, May 18, 2000

Thirty six years ago tonight May 18, 1964, the curtain went up for the first time in the theatre of the Confederation Centre of the Arts. What an exciting affair. It was the Dominion Drama Festival and the play that night was "Chips With Everything" by the PTA Theatre Wing from Kamloops under the direction of Tom Kerr. It was the first of eight plays that we'd see that week.

By the time the Beaux Arts Ball began following the Presentations of Awards on Saturday night, we were sold and committed to making the Centre work. We had laughed and cried together and we had, almost all of us,

seen Mrs. Keith Rogers walk out of “The Taste Of Honey” in disgust, because she perceived that the brass bed she had loaned for the performance was being sinned upon! Oh, the innocence of the time.

The local committee under the chairmanship of Randy Manning and Beth McGowan had worked so hard for months. Lillian Duchemin, as secretary, kept everyone in line. There were so many details. For instance Gwen Fichaud, who was in charge of tickets with the help of her group, sold that house out -in advance – for every performance! With Bill Hancoxs and Betty Large in charge of publicity it was assured that matter was well looked after.

There were accommodations to be found in the pre-Prince Edward Hotel days, and there were the props to find. So many more things than the brass bed. City Hall’s Mary McQuaid with the help of the Little Theatre Group looked after that.

Daphne MacKinnon and her crew looked after the registration and yours truly and Alf looked after Entertainment and Hospitality. Eileen McMillan, Art McInnis, Sterling Walker and others helped us there. We even hired Jim McNutt to take the delegates on a Island tour. I still remember them coming off the bus with minutes to spare to curtain time. If you think Jim is blustery now, you should have seen him then.

Now the building. It was no mean chore to have that theatre ready for that night. When the lights dimmed it was as much of a big show as the play itself. Even the concourse was not finished until the Saturday of the Ball. Gordon White had worked with the contractors etc. to hurry it along. It was exciting and the fashions were great. Mavor Moore was there, Mary Jolliffe, Bob Dubberly and, yes, Ron Irving. One wonders what happened to all the performers and how many stayed in theatre.

There were so many wonderful people. And we proved that when Islanders work together we can accomplish wonders. The budget for the week was \$17,901 less than was budgeted. That covered theatre rental, stage crew, competitors' allowances, adjudicator etc. Not bad, eh.

Not all Islanders looked at this building as a potential potato warehouse. It was a dream come true for a great many people ... people who had worked hard to maintain a presence for the arts through very difficult times – and whose ancestors had done likewise. The road had not been easy and it has not been easy since for those who have assumed the heavy cares of operating an edifice like this one. Let us use this important anniversary to rededicate ourselves to this wondrous community resource and gently nudge the present authorities to hold a review on the place of this Centre of

the Arts in our community. They don't have to carry all the weight themselves.

Arbor Day

Thursday, May 18, 2000

The third Friday of May has been declared to be Arbor Day on this Island and it is quite a tradition to follow. Charlottetown has been celebrating Arbor Day since 1884. Oh, how they celebrated it.

On that first Arbor Day there were over three hundred hardwood trees of 12 different species planted along streets and in the squares of this city.[There were 110 trees planted in Rochford Square alone]. They didn't just go and dig holes, they paraded to the sites and here and there stood horses and carts loaded with trees.Plans had been prepared and approved by the committee. Each member had to plant at least one tree.

The Lt. Governor was there, so was the Mayor and every other important person in town.It was a Grand Event. Even a few women participated. In a couple of years they even added a military band. Can you just imagine it.

Arbor Day was founded in Nebraska and was first celebrated in 1872. It didn't take us long to pick up the idea and we did celebrate it for years. Our town would never be as green if that had not happened. There was a gap and then when we began the Heritage Foundation we worked at bring it back and now it seems to be

instilled in our minds again and the Island Nature Trust keeps Islanders aware. So go out and plant a tree tomorrow to celebrate. It is a satisfying activity.

International Museum Day: Thoughts on the Art Gallery

Saturday, May 20, 2000

That was yesterday and knowing that got me thinking....

With a recent ad in the newspapers for a new director of the Confederation Centre Art Gallery I thought I'd fantasize as to what I hope for that gallery. I'm reasonably qualified to do that.

I have seen its thirty six years and I have watched pretty closely four directors. I've had good ones and they all brought something different to the place. As a member of the Collections Committee, I know its collection and I am painfully aware of the role of the Centre and the problems of operating the place. I was among the founding members of the Women's Committee of the Gallery that was established under the direction of Gwen Fichaud who believed in independence, making money and bring the community to the Centre with interesting events.

So-o-o-o-... I am going to address it from an Islander's point of view, after all that is where the place is. Now I believe if you do something good for yourself – your best – it will be appreciated by anyone who

comes along – flaws and all. I want the gallery to be a mix of past work and contemporary. I want a finger on the pulse of the art scene in the whole country. I want to go there for learning experiences, to meet artists and to meet people who are the pushers and shakers of the fine arts in the country. I want to know what’s happening in other galleries particularly at the National Gallery.

I think the artist in residence was a great program. I want the place to work with the theatre in a creative way but not to be beholding to their program. I want to be assured that we understand all arts can connect. I want the outreach program to improve. I want the excitement of the gallery to be shared with the community and particularly with the school kids, but I want the Rotarians etc. there, too.

And before we hire a new director I want to sit down with others interested in the fine arts in this province and discuss the direction of that place. I want to be sure that Islanders’ needs are met there and as the twelve-month users and that we feel a responsibility to making it work to fill its national mandate and bring Islanders along with that task. I want the place to sit down with UPEI and Holland College, Council of the Arts and Depts. of Development and Tourism to establish a “Banff School of the East” or something that will create a buzz in this town year around.

Surely after 36 years we should review mandates and directions with the public who work in the field and are its patrons. And, in the meantime, many would be comforted to know who the search committee will be if indeed they move ahead with a new director right now.

Our Co-op Store

Wednesday, May 24, 2000

On May the 9th the Annual Shareholders meeting was held for the Central Farmers Coop Assoc. It was continual bad news. They are in debit over \$1m and, altho' they didn't call it that, Co-Op Atlantic called their loan and it forced them to sell both Charlottetown buildings to them.

The discussion at the meeting was about that, the new Basic Store at Oak tree Place and about establishing a Members Relations Committee to come up with ideas for revitalization the shopping at the Coop.

Unfortunately we had to push to have them even discuss the downtown store and then the best that they could come up with is "business as usual". They waxed elegantly on how it is holding its own now since they are doing no outside of store advertizing, paying less for bags, buying better and trimming staff. Not reassuring.

There was no mention of service, quality of produce or understanding of the customer needs – at least by Board and Management. With some push from a couple of people in the audience , they suggested they might

give it a fresh coat of paint, but that was it. The offer is out for Member Relations Committee if anyone wants to try, but it was certainly a discouraging meeting.

By the way the price they got for the downtown store was not very impressive; I think it was \$165,800 or 125,000 [sorry about that], but less than I thought property downtown was worth. Harry O'Connell the chair of the new downtown Business Assoc. is going to speak at the Downtown Residents Meeting so if you have any suggestions for our commercial needs downtown this will be the time to vent them.

Our Downtown Liquor Store

Thursday, May 25, 2000

At the meeting of the Downtown Residents, a number of people pointed out the need for an upgraded liquor store in the downtown. It has always been said that sales are high in the existing store and it certainly is conveniently located for people who have a belief in pedestrian amenities. It is also an important summer asset for our friends who come to visit [I'm trying not to use the word tourist].

I spoke to the CEO of the PEI Liquor Commission, Wayne MacDougal and he has said that they are "looking" at that store and that our input would be useful. So we had better get our thoughts together and talk about our needs, the location, the design etc. Have you ever noticed the outlines of the old building, that

use to be there, are still showing on the walls of the adjacent buildings? Shape looks good to me. The Chair of the board is Mac MacDonald if you want to write directly. I think it is a case of the time being right.

A Streetscape Design

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Back in February 1999, The CADC and Capital Commission received a commissioned study from Ekistics Planning and Design in Dartmouth. In the study there are a number of fine suggestions for streetscape improvements, some toning down of street parking and generally, a direction for creating a more pedestrian friendly space.

The area addressed is from Queen to Prince Street, from Water to Grafton and then out University to Euston. I'd like to see this long overdue effort address the full 500 Lot area from Euston to the Waterfront. After all, we are really a small space and any fabricated lines of demarcation are meaningless in our context ... and there are so many fine streetscapes throughout the larger area, to say nothing of spaces around our four wonderful squares.

Someone from one of these organizations is coming to our residents' meeting to share their plan with us. I am sure we will all learn a great deal.

Traffic and Transportation

Saturday, May 27, 2000

For the last few months a small committee established by Mayor George MacDonald has been looking at transportation in the city. I don't know if you have been following this issue, but a number of people and groups have been contemplating the matter.

The Tipping Point, a best seller, written by Canadian (now New Yorker), Malcolm Gladwell talks about something that is very interesting: issues get discussed, sometimes for years, and then suddenly everyone is saying the same thing. That's when something good can happen.

I can't even remember when people began talking about making Charlottetown more pedestrian friendly. I do remember when the Women's Committee of the Confederation Centre talked about it away back. We thought of having fashion shows on friendly walking-fashion with market baskets etc., and the friendliness of streets with a lot of people on them. We didn't get it off the ground at the time, but we were on the right track.

It's time to bring it up again and a lot of people are now saying the same thing. The paper given by the Seniors recently to Premier Pat Binns had some startling data on demographics, for example the aging population, insurance companies with heavy hands – even the Motor Vehicle people are looking at we aging drivers in a different light.

As a province that has no public transportation system at all we have a problem! The Charlottetown Review on Transportation has been very interesting... as one point look at how our parking lots are expanding and ask how much farther we can go. Must we tear down more blocks for cars to accommodate the people who are coming to Charlottetown to work or to visit? What blocks would we choose?

European cities are keeping cars out and so are some North American ones – at least they are toning them down.

The last few days that I have been delivering the notices for the Downtown Residents Meeting, I have been hearing a lot about traffic and noise and dust and safety. It is an important issue to be discussed. it is on the agenda for June First.

Think about it and its impact on your Capital City. The Tipping Point may well have been reached!

Council Meeting

Saturday, May 27, 2000

At the May 8th meeting of Charlottetown City Council, considerable discussion occurred around an application for a 150-170 seat restaurant in the old Macdonald Rowe warehouse back of Peakes Quay.

The motion to go to yet another public meeting was rejected 6 to 3. The debate centred around impact on neighbourhood, numbers of applications coming forth, who the users are, number of policemen etc.

Councillor Mike Duffy, chair of Town planning and Councillor Kathleen Casey a member of same, both argued for the public meeting. Kathleen spoke on the beauty of the waterfront for development and asked for fairness for the developer and Mike Duffy argued for the same thing and for better policing and noted, in fairness to the developer, that “times are changing and I think an airing of the issue would satisfy a lot of folk”.

Councillor Clifford Lee stood for rejecting another public meeting. He said they had heard the views of the residents often enough to know what they wanted. “When the Zoning and Development By Law was written, it came to Council originally that we should take the whole area and rezone it all either commercial or office commercial and Council said no. It is a CDA Zone. We want to be able to maintain control of what happens ... We said there was a plan. The building is allowed to be used as a retail space. That is all I am asking Council to do is to stick with the plan that is in place”. So spoke Councillor Lee.

There is no doubt that an overall view of the waterfront has to be put forward again. As Kathleen Casey said there is a lot more land and the dreamers are out there and the applications are going to keep coming.

The overall vision must be shaped and we must all be part of it!

Question

Saturday, May 27, 2000

Have you ever seen anyone sitting in a gazebo?

Concerns from March 9th Residents Meeting

Monday, May 29, 2000

Shopping Concerns

- good grocery store like Taweels' used to be or like Brighton Grocery ... it was agreed that exceptional people were needed to run it. [buying power is a big problem]
- Farmers' Market maybe in Founder's Hall [question is how appealing will the waterfront be for the twelve-month users?]
- Co-op Grocery – more relevant – market/bistro model – suggest that people become member and go to meetings- Suggestion made that a meeting should be arranged with the board [almost too late and anyway they do not ask the opinion of the members] – suggest someone else be found to run it.
- Bakery – better liquor store

Entertainment

- too much noise
- smells from kitchen fans
- need non conforming solutions

Sidewalks

- better, improved,
- better snowplowing – ice and snow problems
- the roof drains throughout the downtown generally run right over the sidewalks
- some say that the side walk plow makes things worse
- Streetscapes
- Queen Street needs sprucing up [this matter will be discussed on June 1]
- Underground wiring – more of it
- Responsive civic infrastructure [should that be responsible?]
- Sympathetic in-fill
- City Garage moved and replaced with residential – [this zoning has occurred and when the garage goes we'll watch]

University Avenue

- Improved streetlighting ...
- More garbage pails [need them in winter, too]
- Trees
- More of them. maintained, pruned better planning....
- More care given to choosing the trees

- Crow problem -someone suggested culling

Traffic

- need to express ideas to traffic study
- More control on Water Street
- Noise, pollution, basic traffic code
- Good example from cabs and police and city trucks
- Public Transit – are there good examples?
- Traffic lights needed at corner of Prince and Water
- More Walking Lights. some lights too long for pedestrian particularly at Queen and Kent

Schools Downtown

- More people
- Incentive for restoration [there is a beginning on this]
- Responsible landlords and tenants
- Community Gardens [something already done about that call Kelly at 626-3908 or Lesley at 626-3385]

Parking

- more inside parking
- a through look at it – is residential parking working?

Animal Control

- enforced by-laws
- barking dogs

- Bootleggers too obvious

- More art, music sculpture
- Street front planning office
- Home base business tolerance [most of the 500 Lot area is sympathetic to this]
- Police – more foot patrol

We asked for people to give him things they liked about Charlottetown and here they are: Victoria Row, Galleries, restaurants, walk everywhere, lots to walk to, beautiful, history, public library, stabilized neighbourhoods, variety of churches, parks, vitality, sense of community, swimming, Confederation Centre, manageable size, relative safe, Delta Hotel, bookstores, City Cinema, lamp posts, visitors, bootleggers, landscaping...

Meeting Maurice Richard

Tuesday, May 30, 2000

This story from my friend Johanna Macdonald Williamson, formerly of Charlottetown and now living in The Pas, Manitoba:

When I was growing up, in the 40s and mostly the 50s, I remember listening to the hockey games on radio, and going to West Kent School or to work at the Experimental Farm Lab, and every morning the staff would be talking about “the game last night” and how great that Richard was (among others – but the Canadiens were always “the team.”) The “Rocket” was

of course, the greatest, and all talk would be of his person, and his ability.

Well, in 1989, at this rink in The Pas, the NHL old timers made an exhibition game for charity. We, of course, went early. Stan [Johanna's husband] got caught up in talk with some friends and so I went into the rink alone at ice level, and hardly any one there yet, but -- Mr. Maurice Richard, standing just inside the door.

I couldn't believe my eyes and my heart started to pound. Here was me and Maurice in the rink together, almost alone. I went over to him and held out my hand and said, "Mr. Richard?" He said "Yes," and I held out my hand and said "I am so pleased to see you and to meet you..." goo-goo gaga-gaga, etc. I was absolutely overwhelmed to be standing there, a foot away from that famous face, looking right into his eyes. He gave me this wonderful smile, and then Stan opened the door and come over to us and I said "Oh Stan, come and meet MY FRIEND MAURICE," (can you believe that) and without hesitation, Mr. Richard held out his hand and said, "Well Hello Stan, glad to meet you" -- he had such a presence and such class.

I will not forget that, and am still amazed -can you believe that I actually said that? Oh, dear! I am very much thinking of him today and all those memories.

Our Landscape

Thursday, June 1, 2000

This morning I was up by 6 o'clock and listening to the CBC.

I heard Barbara Bailey from North Lake speaking with concern about the building of a fish plant right in the middle of that wonderous North Lake Vista. My heart went sad.

People will say that she was crying about “her backyard” in the way they do when some of us bring up very deep landscape or development concerns *but* she is right.

Not nearly enough time, energy and wisdom get put in place when we are locating lasting buildings. The perfect example is the plant they build up on the Souris Bluff behind the Souris Lighthouse. Now when you come over the Souris West hill with your breath held waiting for that glorious view you have to squint to see the Lighthouse – its whiteness silhouettes now against a metal white potato chip plant instead of against the blue sky.

Yes we can plant trees and it would help, but thoughtfulness of landscape and that famous Island Vista would have been better. So Barbara go to work and try to convince your community that they do have something special that must be protected and we will all thank you.

P.S. After hearing the responses to the Public Meeting on this issue and on discussing it with a few people I recognize how quickly people jump to the conclusion that good design and job creation are in conflict or that we can put up with *bad* for the sake of jobs. That is the problem. We can have good design and careful placing of buildings and have *jobs* too. It just takes awareness and good planning.

News from Edinburgh

Friday, June 2, 2000

A new cyberspace friend from Edinburgh, Stuart Swanston, shares things he feels about his city; we can learn from them. He starts off...

“The great thing about the web is the way it facilitates ‘invisible academies’ such this one.”

Stuart continues, later in his note...

“I was discussing the recent changes to the City of Edinburgh and the Port of Leith with some friends as we enjoyed the public holiday and afternoon sun outside a cafe on the High Street on Monday. (The company included a Scots actor on holiday from London, an advocate, a Glaswegian writer, and an underemployed administrator – myself) We all said how much we appreciate the livelier more continental feeling the city has acquired in recent years. Planning permission for eating and drinking at pavement cafes was initially granted to make the city more tourist friendly but

residents now say that one of the main reasons they formerly travelled abroad was to enjoy just such cafe society and now we can take full advantage of the more relaxed atmosphere.”

“We regretted the fact that Hogmany in Edinburgh has now become a product to attract tourists to the city in the middle of winter. The street parties on Auld Year’s Night – for which passes are required and which are in very limited supply have made it impossible for to ‘first-foot’ friends who live in the cordoned-off city centre and the crowds of >270,000 on the High Street and Princes Street have driven indoors residents who used to visit their neighbours. There is something really sad about packaging the most popular tradition in Scotland as a product to attract visitors whose sheer numbers turns what was once a living tradition into a TV spectacle. So take care C’town.”

Thank you, Stuart, for your insights.

Advice from a Friend

Sunday, June 4, 2000

Here is advice from a friend “I read an article in the newspaper which opined that maybe email is too spontaneous and could be dangerous.

You know the situation I am sure. you read something that gets you steamed up and before you stop to reconsider you’ve dashed off an emotional response, clicked on send, and then its too late , isn’t it? You can’t

run out and bomb the mailbox or bribe the postman.
Always wait for a day before sending.”

The Boston States and Back

Sunday, July 2, 2000

Well after about 4000k my sister Mary Clair, dog Nellie and myself are back from our trip around New England.

We left in my car that Mary Claire had cleaned thoroughly and packed neatly. I continually apologized for not having air conditioning, that is until we got to the St. John area when the sun started to bother us and Mary Claire began working the vent buttons.

After various efforts to balance the air, she asked what the button with A/C on it meant. I said I didn't know and she said that on HER car it meant “Air Conditioning” well that's what it was.

I've had the car three years – how was I to know?

We visited many dear friends some I had not seen for some time – girls I lived at a dorm with in Boston in the 50's.

It is interesting to look at small town America and recognize that some towns do have more caring municipal governments than others. Generally there is more respect for older buildings and a lot more for trees. They are building the most fabulous suspension bridge in Boston that will be will worth a look when it is finished.

Traffic is no better and there is a lot of driving one-to-a-car. Where will it end? We returned on The Cat from Bar Harbor to Yarmouth and that was a good experience. Everthing at home was well, but the grass had not stopped growing of course. It's good to see new things.

Happy Canada Day

Sunday, July 2, 2000

Hope all of you sang O Canada today and thanked your lucky stars that we live in such peace and beauty and that we have issues to work on and inspire us that will make us even better. Their Excellencies, the Governor General and Mr. Saul were on Prince Edward Island for a number of days this week. Their interest and support for history, the arts and culture is very wonderful. Festival of the Lights is on at the Charlottetown Waterfront with buskers, music and fireworks. Summer truly begins. Have a good one.

The Royal Are Coming

Saturday, July 15, 2000

The Royals are coming, Oh yes, and this time it is the great, great, great, great grandson of our namesake Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent of Halifax fame.

Prince Edward and his bride, now the Earl and Countess of Wessex are arriving in town today. There is nothing like a pretty bride to add interest to a Royal Visit and there is nothing like a Royal Visit to speed up the beautification of our city. They paved, planted and painted for the last month and all last night and I bet you, with just an half hour to go, everything is done.

Charlottetown looks glorious. It's Sail Week at the Yacht Club so the harbour is full of sail boats, the Musical Ride is in town and the Summer Festival at the Centre adds its usual mood of activity. CBC and all the media surround Province House just now and the air is alive with the sound of Somewhere in The World, the young peoples' show that happens daily on the seats outside the centre.

You'd all be proud to see PEI's little capital city. This event is following on an one hundred and forty year history from the day when we celebrated our first Royal Visit in 1860. Each visit has moved our cause along just like having family come in the summer – we clean and paint and do things around our places that we usually let ride.

For the 1860 visit of the Prince of Wales [later Edward the VII] “Queen, Prince, Kent and Water Streets were adorned with eight beautiful arches ... the Colonial Building and Government House were renovated.” The Prince arrived on August 9th about 11 o'clock – he stayed at Government house, held a levee the next day at

the Colonial Building and then took a horse back ride along Kent Street out to the Royalty and then came in the Malpeque Road. There was a ball and banquet at the Colonial Building and then he was off on the 11th.

Islanders spent the next year fighting over how many dollars had been spent in preparation. There were many memories left behind and some say other 'things' too. Although we had Prince Alfred in 1861, Prince Arthur in 1869 and Prince Louise in 1878 it was the visit of the young Prince of Wales in 1919 that left hearts fluttering.

My friend Ruth Hertz MacKenzie was a little girl who went to the Afternoon Tea Dance at the Sullivan House on Brighton Road and she and her friends went through the Reception line twice!

(Got to run, they are coming. I'll add the rest later).

Okay, I'm back and everything when well. Great military display of red jacketed men [I didn't see one woman] and a Bagpipe group with black bushy hats and good legs. Sophie had a very large black hat and Edward carried his hands behind the back of his double split jacket.

So back to other royal visits. The next visit was in 1939 when King George and Queen Elizabeth came to visit. Hon. George DeBlois was Lieut. Governor and he had Government House decorated magnificently with

hundreds of red geraniums, but alas it rained and rained. It didn't matter much tho' because hundreds lined the streets and everything was just grand anyway. I stood on the same spot today as my uncle did in 1939 with me on his shoulders!

The Duke of Kent, who was later killed in an airplane crash, visited the Airforce Training Schools on PEI in the early 40's. Then we had Princess Elizabeth and Prince Phillip visit on a cold November day in 1951.

In 1959 when the Hyndmans' were in Government House Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip visited our Island and then came again to open Confederation Centre in 1964. The Queen Mother came in 1967 and charmed everyone. '73 saw the Queen and Prince Phillip here again to celebrate our centennial and it was at that time that she opened Beaconsfield for the Heritage Foundation. It was a lovely event and former Premier Walter Jones said it was one of the nicest Royal Visit events he had ever attended. Quite a complement.

Now we've moved to the next generation. Prince Charles and Diana came in 1983, Prince Edward made his first trip in 1987, Prince Andrew and Sarah in 1989 and now we have Edward back again. Charlottetown couldn't look better. I'm going to the State Dinner tomorrow night so I'll let you know about that latter. A Royal Salute!

Happy Birthday Pierre Berton

Wednesday, July 19, 2000

Pierre Berton is a large man with a big heart, a lot of arrogance with good reason and dedicated to a cause that he holds dear; that of caring deeply for this country and wanting all Canadians to feel emotional about it.

He is a shy man, with a funny sense of humor. He has a wife who is connected to Island MacLeods from down Belfast way and that has not hurt him at all. He has a close family and I am sure his birthday party was one great event.

He has an honorary degree from UPEI and for over ten years he was a governor of Heritage Canada. His reputation as a Canadian Icon held that organization in very good stead. When he feels emotional about anything he booms, he hits the table, he demands attention. It was generous of him to give that organization as much time as he did and I learned much the four years I spend on the board with him.

Happy Birthday Pierre!

A Suzie Knickerbooker report on the State Dinner

Wednesday, July 19, 2000

Well it was quite the event with over 600 people in attendance. The theme was “A Ray of Sunshine on Our Island”. In addition to the leaders of our Island,

prominent politicians of all stripes, both active and retired, attended, including former Lieutenant Governor Marion Read and Helen McPhail (who entertained the Prince in 1987 when her husband Lloyd was Lieutenant Governor), all the Honours of Canada people, and even a number of UPEI Doctors along with President Wade McLaughlin looking dashing in a kilt I suppose of McLaughlin plaid [with a good pair of legs to go with it].

There were farmers and mussel growers and lots of people who are good Island volunteers along with all the leading bureaucrats. The dress was described as black tie or business suit, long dress or cocktail dress so the dress watchers had lots to look at, but generally speaking Islanders came out in fine style.

Yours truly had on a fifteen year old cocktail dress that needed a bit of adjustment around the waist, but otherwise fit in perfectly alright until the sauce from the Beef Wellington landed on the front. The napkins were large and the water in the glasses perfectly clean and cold so I was able to deal with the matter fairly well.

The Delta Prince Edward put on a great show. 600 Beef Wellingtons would tax most kitchens but mine was fine and rare, so hats off to them. The decorations, menu and such things were planned by a communications firm in Montreal on contract with Canadian Heritage. They were good. They chose those wonderful Fathers of Confederation by folk artist Bradford Naugler [from the

Confederation Centre Art Gallery] for the background for the lectern. You have to be happy when they are around. The flowers were arranged by our friend Alan Preston. Roses of Island soil colour called Leonida, with blue monks hood yellow grebera daisies and white snapdragons – they were so pretty.

The menus were in an octagonal shaped folded case and the colours were Island and on the cover of the menu was a small Island red clay pottery disc with the Prince's coat of arms [I think] on it on gold ribbon on green cover. David Nicholson was the master of ceremonies and our Solicitor General was looking dashing and acted the part as well. The Count and Countess entered to the bagpipes played by our own Scott MacAulay.

Summertime and the Living is Easy

Wednesday, July 19, 2000

Oh it is hard to maintain an “entry level” on my web page in “Summertime on PEI”. The distractions are extraordinary.

There is the usual gardening , grass cutting, strawberry jam making and just being summer lazy ... but the most enjoyable distractions are those opportunities to visit with family and friends in their limited envelope of time. Last week I gave a paper on

Cultural Tourism to the Lucy Maud Montgomery Symposium – and preparing for that I was reminded that Islanders have been entertaining friends from “away” for five generations at least! Family and friends want to visit PEI in the summer and we like having them, but it does play havoc with your organized life and it does postpone goals.

At the same time our heads get broadened by the stories and experiences of our friends. During the “season” I do the odd tour of Charlottetown for conferences and things. It is a good thing to see your community thru the eyes of visitors. Your focus is sharper then.

Generally people like our little city a lot and enjoy our stories enough to encourage there telling, but more and more I am convinced we do things in our community for ourselves, because its those things that our visitors like best.

Here is a quote I used in my talk. It is from Robert McNulty of Parnters for Liviable Places in Washington “I don’t see cultural tourism as a product. I don’t see it as a separate item. I see it as a process of making your community more livable for yourself. if you like it, then someone is going to come as a visitor and find it enjoyable, too. Then your hardest problem is to manage it so that too many outsiders don’t come. It could then become uncomfortable for both you and the visitors – and no longer a pleasant experience for anyone”.

Is our tourist department listening? I put my sister on the plane early last Monday evening after a five week visit. I cried my way home and wished her holiday was starting all over again, but I'll get busy again and I'll soon be looking forward to her next visit. In the meantime more friends are coming and we must keep in touch with our twelve month friends. And the grass still grows.

The Fishers Are Coming

Thursday, July 27, 2000

It is not often in these days that one has the privilege to know five generations of one family, but my life has connected with the Fishers in that way.

My father's days at St. Dunstan's College with Dr. Bill MacLellan and Dr. Vince Fisher lead me, in my Boston days, to meet my generation of their families and we have been friends ever since.

But it was my move to Cranberry Wharf that rooted me into the midst of Fisher history. The Fishers and The Hennesseys relationship ties back about 170 years. The Fisher land was across the road to the east from the Hennesseys. By the 1960's the original 100 acres had grown to over 300 and had Lot 36 and Lot 37 meeting down the middle.

The original Joe Fisher came out from England and was a shipbuilder. The Hennesseys were blacksmiths. There is a tradition that ships were built down on the

river and there is a hollow in the bank near the wharf that could well have been a ship cradle.

A newspaper item on March 6, 1863 tells “...of the dwelling house of Joseph Fisher, shipbuilder, Ft. Augustus was consumed by fire together with all the household furniture contained therein”.

The house I remember, looked like an 1840’s house, which is hard to explain: one would have thought that after that 1863 fire they would have built a centre-gable house. Maybe they moved the house that I remember onto the site. Something to think about. The house I knew certainly did have a wonderful stone basement. When I first went there in the early 1960’s it was a lonely spot with old Joe – grandson of the first Joe – living by himself just setting on history. It was a step back for me and I wished I had made more use of it.

Now the house is gone, burnt as a Hallowe’en prank fifteen or so years after Joe had left it. I walked up the hill the next morning to view the ashes that were surrounded by the remains of the stone basement. An incredible pattern of hand wrought nails layed out in the ashes as if my an artists hand was all that remained and I cried.

Today I cry again, this time for the land. After Joe left he sold the propety to a Montreal lumber company who cut down more pine than they paid Joe for the land. Yes, they planted new trees and they had even left some, and the wood roads made great walking paths. Once we

even borrowed a snowmobile and went all over it. It was majestic. Too bad snowmobiles are so noisy, because they can take you into the most wonderful places.

Alas three years ago the property sold again and the true purge began: a Nova Scotia blueberry grower bought the land this time. He thrashed and burnt just about every square inch of the property; the county line that was never touched since Holland did the survey, the site of the old house where the orchard and the hops still grew, down to the river bank and on to the Cranberry Wharf Road, all the hedgerows and all the new trees that were just coming into maturity. Industrial farming cares not for the landscape.

The same has happened across the river and up the Afton Road where another generations of Fishers lived. Were the Fishers not good farmers or was the land just not good enough? Its hard to say, but they did produce energetic, smart people who have gone all over doing good work. I wish those who come together this weekend to celebrate their heritage a happy and thoughtful time.

Marc Gallant 1945 – 1994

Friday, July 28, 2000

Marc Gallant Before the anniversary of his death on July 21st I'll tell my story of him – anyone wishing to add theirs is welcome. Six years is a long time. We should have had that exhibition of him by this time!

Marc Gallant died in a convent in North Rustico six years ago. If he was angry about dying he didn't show it to most of us. He was sad because he had so much more to do. It was funny because I expected him to flail about at all of us, but he didn't – he was just sad. I expected him to be an awful patient, but he wasn't. He just went “gentle into the dark night.”

When Marc was a year and a half he “went through the wringer” as they use to say. That meant he fiddled around with those rollers on the old washing machines. One wash day Monday he put his fingers in the wringer and they grabbed him up to the shoulder. For awhile they thought he would lose his arm, but they saved it and he went on to make very good use of it, but he was left with a bad stammer. For those that met him later that would be hard to believe.

When I first met Marc he was about 7 or 8. He was handsome, stubborn and could hardly talk, but he could draw like the devil. He'd go down to the beach in North Rustico and draw for the tourist. He was of course sweet and they would “buy his paintings” and he learned very quickly to take advantage of them. It was amusing. Zeta, his mother must have learned quickly between the wringer event and his entrepreneurial activities that she had an unusual kid there. She and his father lived long enough to suffer the ups and downs of being a part of his life.

To know Marc was to brace yourself for anything – just anything, but oh dear, how we regale our friends with his antics. Here are some of them.

Zelda, his English Sheepdog, who once was seen in the middle of the St. Patrick’s Parade, nipping the heels of Irishmen and on another occasion eating pounds of smoked salmon.

His cooking skills were extraordinary, particularly the night he took over my critical path scheduled dinner party to add a soup course. He brought his own Cusinart and the basic mix for his coralline algae soup that he was sure was going to be patented, mass-produced and sold all over the world. He wanted to run a test on my guests while leaving his sticky mess all over everything.

On another occasion he took over my paella dinner and made the best paella that I’ve ever tasted.

Appearing in *People Magazine* with a three page spread on his book “More Fun with Dick and Jane”.

The production of the Anne of Green Gables’ Colouring Book and all the IOU’s after that. The most unlikely people were marketing colouring books!

COWS Anne Image All we heard of his signature tin can collection.

The plans for his wedding to Heather that was to take place on the beach somewhere in Brittany where he felt the Gallants came from, but the plans became so

excessive that the bride to be ran away. He always loved her, he thought.

The moving of the Simpson House from Cavendish to The Creek and the visit of his friend from Knoff's in New York. Only after she arrived did she realize there was no shower in the house and that it had a toilet that need a bucket of water to flush. After a year or two the "year around residents of Rustico" challenged him in a letter-to-the-editor "to clean up his own backyard"!

His car driving from the stories of him hitting "the Newfoundland Family" in Rustico to his going off the road in Thailand and landing, with a broken hip, at the feet of a very confused farmer.

The most hilarious story was the early December night he took the wrong road to Milltown Cross hitting a guy-rope of a telephone pole and knocking himself out. He came to with blood streaming now him face to find Santa Claus, a local dressed to go to a Christmas Party, looking in his car window. The kind man took liquor out of the car and drove Marc to Montague hospital to be stitched. That night Marc spent the night in jail, because he had left the scene the night of the "Newfoundland Family" incident.

Most of this driving was done with an international drivers licence that he had made himself – and could have fooled me and likely many others.

His beautiful camera case – every inch – explained to us in detail as it was being produced and ready just in

the nick of time for his flight to Paris and THEN him leaving it unattended in the airport while he made a phone call – with the results you’d expect.

His direct call to Premier Alex Campbell about ten o’clock on a Saturday night. That night his emotional concern was about the redesign of the fish shacks in The Creek [Rustico] in an unacceptable manner and he was right and our fishing villages kept the ambience they had.

The launching of his Cow book at Memorial Hall, with the live cow [a surprise to the Centre] and the borrowed piano that fell of the truck when it was being returned.

His moaning and groaning about our November light as he took off for winter in Santa Fe, Florence or Thailand!

His land use case on the tourist traps on PEI, particularly the castle that was to be built in Cavendish that would make us a “bargain basement Disney Land”. That happened about the time he coined the word “Tweelized” over Danny modernizing the Dawson Building at the corner of Kent and University Avenue.

His goals when he won the \$4000 Canada Council Grant in 1971. “There are a number of destructive processes taking place within this province and I would like to point these out in the form of a photographic essay”, he stated, but did we see the photos?

His infuriating lack of respect of financial matters to the constant discomfort of his friends can not be denied, but the inspiration that he gave this eclectic group came very close to making up for it all.

As Oscar Wilde “he was flippant about serious things and serious about apparently trivial ones”, but as we watched his taste being fine tuned and heard the stories that went with his creations and his acquisitions, we would never have believed it would end on a July day in a convent in North Rustico.

Neither did he.

The Rose Vaughan Trio whose music and song filled the air at a memorable funeral not far from Zeta’s house will always bring tears to our eyes.

*Stone and sand and sea and sky
Rest my heart and please my eye
I will go and not ask why
Stone and sand and sea and sky.*

*I am strengthened by the sea
Something broken mends in me
Hold me till the day I die
Stone and sand and sea and sky.*

Johnny Hatch Day

Friday, July 28, 2000

My friend Johanna in The Pas reminds me that I missed Johnny Hatch Day last week, so I have to make up for it:

Fire was the plague of 19th c. towns and Charlotte Town was no exception. My story today is about a fire that hit on a hot July 22nd night in 1883. It was at what is now the Bank of Commerce corner.

It started in a stable out back and before it was over J.D. McLeod's store had burnt, along with Dr. Jenkins house and stable, Archibald White's warehouse, the Police Station and Donald McKinnon's office and the apartment of John Hatch, our town crier, and his wife.

The activities of the Fire Department that night were reported in the *Daily Examiner* the next day: "The Silsby had taken position at Dawson's Tank, laid her hose in haste, and was speedily at work under command of Captain Hickey in the rear of Mr. Hutcheson's grocery store – unfortunately the length of hose burst shortly after she commenced operations replaced quickly and after a few minutes was again battling the devouring flames – Rollo Engine secured the tank at Market Square and under command of Capt. Wonnacott worked well. Old Tremont was also at the fore, under Capt. Beer – While the Hook and Ladder Co. under Capt. White worked like Trojan's during the fire." [You see, we had four fire companies in those days and four fire stations and the competition was heavy]

The next day in full optimistic style the editorial suggested that we use the fire site for a new City Hall with "a hall that will seat 2,500 to 3,000 persons our city would be want supplied"!!!! Remember our City Hall

was then in one end of the Old Wooden Market House which of course was located where our Confederation Centre Theatre was built 81 years later with ONLY 900 seats — and those hard enough to fill 100% making the ambitions of our 1883 friends admirable.

Anyway the story does not stop there. Before the week was up the newspaper had another tale to tell. “A Young Fire Fiend” was the headline. “A boy who would burn Charlottetown ‘for fun’, adopted son of John Hatch ... Johnny in his youth has manifested a great admiration for thrilling scenery. A sight of Mont Aetna or Vesuvius would make his heart rejoice, but as PEI cannot afford ‘grand blazes’ like those, Johnny contends himself with blazes more miniature. He is accused ... but this accusation the young fiend denies with youthful indignation while he cheerfully confesses to setting fire to the Police Station on Friday night and attempting to set fire to William Kennedy’s ice house the night before”.

Well talk about police interrogation, the newspaper went on to include The Confession. “I am nine years of age. A pretty good boy. Go to Kent Street School, can read a little. I am fond of setting fires...” and on it goes. Goody Hogan and Katie Allan were with Johnny that night and even though they were only 13 and 12 they were interrogated too. The results were that “... the boy Hatch has a mania for lighting fires and that it is highly probably that he started the fire at McLeods. The

magistrate decided to keep him in custody for the present and have him sent to the Home For Little Wanderers at Boston”.

*Poor Johnny Hatch that is where he went and we
have lost track of him after.
Say Johnny Hatch are you looking for a match?
Do you really want to scorch the city with a torch
Are you going to play the game called Set the Town
Aflame
And burn down Charlottetown this morning!*

That is the chorus of a song we had Oscar Brand write when he was performing at the Confederation Centre in the summer of 1967.

Royal Visit Picture Album

Friday, July 28, 2000

There is a story connected with the Ribbon Cutting at Beaconsfield that I must share with you. When we knew she was going to cutting a ribbon we wanted to make it quite beautiful and indeed the ribbon was ... the scissors were the problem.

It is very difficult to find beautiful scissors. I happened to be in Montreal a couple of months before the event and I searched all the antique shops along Sherbrooke Street etc. no luck, so I reviewed the issue. In one of the shops there were these beautiful looking scissor-like things with sterling handles that seemed

worthy. When I asked to examine them I was told they were grape scissors.

“Would they cut a ribbon?” I asked and she produced a piece a ribbon for us to try.

If you held them at a certain angle they’d work and I came proudly home with grape scissors.

In the picture you will notice Prince Philip bent over the Queen’s shoulder looking perplexed. He is actually mouthing the words “Grape Scissors, she can’t cut the ribbon with those!”

We mumbled something and she did cut the ribbon and on the show went. Beaconsfield looked lovely that day. There was not alot in it. It looked pristine and it had the most glorious flower arrangements all over. Mary Dolphin had done them and the flowers came from all the best gardens in town! It was a very special event.

Standard Of Living

Wednesday, August 9, 2000

Last week the media announced a news item released by Industry Canada. It was a grading of Standard of Living in the country and comparing it to the USA. All I can say is if our Country takes serious note of this item we are in trouble.

We are probably in trouble anyway, if we have ecomonists sitting somewhere collecting this data and making decisions based on it. The news item begs the question “What makes a Standard of Living”? Oh, I

forgot to say the the lead story on this issue was that Prince Edward Island has the lowest Standard of Living in all of Canada and The USA!!!! You can lose confidence in yourself with that kind of headline...if you believed it.

This summer Prince Edward Island looks magnificent. I have had the pleasure of touring some first visit-to-the-island people around and they simply can't believe it. Houses well maintained, gardens glorious, safe place, clean, friendly, rich in history, etc.,etc.. What more can you ask for and this from the place with lowest standard of living?

Lets look deeper and take for example someone who really takes advantage of all this little Island has to offer. Land that with little effort you can grow enough for a family to eat and preserve, wild things all around that add spice to life like chanterelles, blueberries as well as wild strawberries and raspberries, fiddleheads in the spring, fish in the brooks, wild apples and elderberry – need I go on?

And many, who no doubt put our stats down, can live in a house completely heated by wood they would cut in their own woodlot. Add value of life and beauty and quietness to that equation and you make those statisticians look even worst. Please God don't let Government and Hotshots make decisions based on news items like this and spoil what is truly a Standard Of Living.

Forty Years of Medicine

Thursday, August 10, 2000

Yesterday James L. Saunders' family celebrated his forty years of medical practice in Summerside. I didn't hear the stats of how many people he helped along life's irregular paths or how many babies "he brought into the world", but I do know that he is a dearly loved doctor and I'm not surprized. He got his love of people, his curiosity of our individualities and his compassion from caring parents whose home in Kensington instilled those features to all who passed through. And many passed through.

I first met James fifty years ago last week. It was at my father's wake. I had met James's father and mother many times before. His father had gone to St. Dunstan's with my father and his brothers, but that was the first time they had brought James along. It was the beginning of our long relationship. A family of four girls took on "a sort of brother" with enthusiasm and our Kensington family taught us much. How they put up with two Smith girls and Johanna "helping them farm" is beyond me, but that's what often happened. Cavendish Picnics, music and more music, all sustained with Modder's cooking made a period in our lives ever memorable.

So, yesterday, it was a special honour to be with James's family to celebrate his life's work. No more wonderful tribute could be made to a man and his wife,

Mary Claire than what I saw yesterday – a tribute by loving children and their children’s children. The grand daughters’ musical performance showed that the genes carry forth their talents to new levels. Children Susan, who lives in the house her father was born in, Billy from Calgary, Ann from St. Catherines and Special Paul, at home, all spoke of their love and it filled the room and I know must spread out from their lives, touching others, continuing that special world I first met fifty years ago.

Thank you dear Saunders for having me there and may life continue to keep you well and in service to your families and your communities. You all, and Summerside, were luck to have James.

End Of Summer

Sunday, September 3, 2000

When we were kids the Macdonalds, the Pickards and the Smiths had summer cottages at Inkerman and for a precious few weeks [and years] the Bissetts and the Lewis’ joined us. We were an enclave of bare footed girls and we enjoyed idyllic summers.

Our mothers seemed to ignore us except for feeding us at the proper times and making sure our feet were clean before we got onto bed at night. We rowed our boats and swam when the tide was high and dug clams when it was out. We sang alot. Sometimes we would go on peanut butter and jam picnics where Johanna would practice becoming a Helen Haszard painter. The picnic

would be about three fields away to the north, but we made it an adventure. We were intimately involved with Father of Confederation John Hamilton Gray because we were in and out of his old house, where the Lawson's lived and the Bissetts stayed, all the time. When we were there we were surrounded with things like his bed, etc. and we knew very well that he haunted the place.

By the time the end of August came we would be enjoying the corn from the Birt's market garden across the road and the apples from Percy Smallwood's orchard the other side of the woods and we would be planning Johanna's birthday.

Our biggest worry by this time of year would be how long after school opened could we stay at the cottage. We'd beg and cajole our parents in their water pump/privy cottages to stay on and on.

Now it wasn't that the town houses were far away. Inkerman Shore is where Colonel Grey Drive is now and the Macdonalds lived on Ambrose Street, the Pickards on Kent and we were the farthest because we lived away down east on Hillsborough Street, but when you moved in, you moved in and that ended our lives together until the next summer. HAPPY BIRTHDAY JOHANNA. I still remember the treats your Mother would put in your Birthday Cake. If one was lucky they might get a quarter? Was it that much?

P.S. It is Sunday the 3rd and I've just heard from Johanna in The Pas and she has reminded me of how we

sent the Little Kids [that's Jean Isabelle and Cathy Macdonald and my sister Mary Claire] to "steal" some corn for us from the Birts and when they came back we told them they had taken too much and must take some of it back! Such morals! The sad thing is that today each one of us is living in a different part of this country.

September Week

Sunday, September 3, 2000

One Hundred and six years ago today the Queen Victoria sailed into Charlottetown Harbour with John A. MacDonald and his colleagues from Canada. They joined the Maritime Delegates who had arrived the day before.

The Charlottetown Conference had opened officially at two o'clock in the Island's Colonial Building now know as Province House. It was a meeting to discuss Maritime Union, but when the Canadian deligation arrived it was decided that they become part of the meeting and as George Brown wrote to his wife: "The Conference was accordingly organized without us, but that being done we were formally invited to be present and were presented in great style to the Conference"

It was a busy week. The meetings were short and the social occasions long. This country was founded on good parties. That first day there was the Banquet at Government House. Can you imagine the people getting

ready for that banquet. There were twenty six delegates at the Conference! The rest of the week went thusly:

Friday, September 2 the conference continued until it was time to go to Ardgowan, the home of Willaim Pope who gave them a “grand Dejeuner a la fourchette – oysters, lobster and champagne and other Island luxuries ... this killed the day and we spent the beautiful moonlight evening walking, driving and boating as the mood was on us”.

Saturday saw them at the Colonial Building again and then in the afternoon The Canadians entertained on board The Queen Victoria with “luncheon in princely style ... eloquent speeches ... and whether as a result of our eloquence or the goodness of our champagne, the ice became completely broken, the tongues of the delegates wagged merrily and the bans of matrimony bewteen all the Provinces of British North America having been formally proclaimed and all manner of persons duly warned there and then to speak or forever after to hold their tongues .. no man appeared to forbid the bans and the union was thereupon formally completed and proclaimed!

In the evening the group were entertained by Colonel Gray at Inkerman House, a house I knew very well. It is unfortunaeely gone now and all that remains on the spot is the Colonel’s foot bath that is in Horace Carver’s garden.

Sunday was a day of rest and they were back to work on Monday morning until they went for a late lunch at George Cole's Stone Park Farm on the Brackley Point Road.

This year it seems that the house we thought long gone has been discovered, at least part of it, as an unsuspected treasure on our landscape.

Tuesday morning the 6th was when that famous photograph was taken on the steps of Government House. How lucky we are to have that and how amazing it was that it happened. although it is not the earliest photograph that we have taken on PEI, it is certainly an early one. That morning at the conference they began "earnestly discussing the several details of the scheme" until at four o'clock they went to Kent Street to Mr. Palmer's "a man of good sense and ability" for lunch.

As if that wasn't enough for one day they were invited back to Government House for a Grand Ball in the evening. On Wednesday the 7th the Maritimers gave the Canadians the answer they wanted "they were unanimous in regarding Federation of all the provinces to be highly desirable, if the terms of union could be made satisfactory"!

On Thursday the day was filled with official visits, drives in the country and generally getting ready for the Grand Ball at the Colonial Building. What a sight that affair must have been. Dusan Kadlec, a few years ago created a painting from what history has told us

and it is hard now to believe the event was anything else but what we see in his work. Maybe someone should paint the scene of the delegates with their friends escorting them down Great George Street to their ship in the wee small hours of the morning after much food, much drink and much merriment. It was a great way to begin a country.

*It all began without the sound of war, without the
clash of battle, without the cannon's roar
Without the outstretched sword, but with the
outstretched hand
They all sat down in Charlottetown and built
themselves a land.*

That is the song written by Johnny Wayne a few years ago. more later

Blue Fields

Tuesday, September 12, 2000

Although we have picked blueberries on this Island for generations and blueberry pies, muffins and pancakes are high on our culinary list, nothing could prepare us for the blue fields we are surrounded with in this first year of the new Millennium.

Last year they tell us 4.2 million pounds were harvested from the 10,000 acres that are in various stages of development. The prediction is that when these

farms have matured they could produce 7000 to 14,000 pounds per acre.

That is a long way from the report in the Guardian of 1921 on Mr. Johnston's plant in Mount Stewart. They expected that year to ship 50 tons – a lot less than the 140 tons they had shipped the year before. Packers were getting 5 cents a pound in 1921.

Last week Queen Street Meat Market [on University Avenue] were selling 10 pound boxes for \$17.95 for fan cleaned and \$25.00 for handpicked ones.

That is another thing handpicking is going out of style. There are now machines, some made by the Weatherbee's in Stratford PEI that do all the picking and other machines that worry about the cleaning. Funny thing about blueberries, they don't need to be planted. You just have to get land were they grow naturally, clean it up and spray the weeds and the blueberry becomes the finest ground cover you can imagine.

Of course there are issues that we have to think about. For one thing many of the acres that they are using have been clear cut from 12-20 year old tree plantations, then there is the degree of spraying and how that affects our drinking water and to say nothing of the moon-like landscape it has created on our Island. The biggest surprise to anyone near a blueberry patch when the berries become ripe is the repetitive sound of the propane cannon that goes on and on from dawn almost to dark scaring the birds away. One first thinks they are

near a battle field and it can be a bit disconcerting until it becomes downright annoying.

There is one thing tho' that seems very positive and that is the berries' antioxidant qualities. *Prevention Magazine* has been hailing the blueberry as the miracle berry . They and others claim that it can protect us from the effects of age-related deterioration of the brain such as short term memory.

So eat up and make the Wild Blueberry Assoc. of North America happy. The larger highbush cultivated blueberry is no comparison to the wild ones. Addendum; Back to that Weatherbee who is the manufacturer of the harvesters, that reminds me that as early as the 1840's we had an Elisha Weatherbie who was a blacksmith in Lot 49 and he was manufacturing "the best warranted cast steel axes" . Even tho' there is a slight difference in the spelling there just might be a connection.

Noise

Tuesday, September 12, 2000

The residents of Downtown Charlottetown have been complaining about noise late at night and traffic anytime especially wild drivers in cars or motorcycles. It appears we're not alone.

In a Maine newspaper this summer, I read about Portsmouth. They are attempting to pass a noise ordinance and they are trying to come to terms with what number of decibels makes sense. The Downtown

Residents Neighbourhood Assoc. is fighting to lower the noise levels. They are asking that all outdoor deck music be banned – except for events with a permit. They also want the police to invest in decibel meters. Council wants to allow 80 decibels until 11:30 p.m. so the Association is flying in a noise consultant to prove that such a level is far too high. Its comforting to know we're not alone.

Public Relief

Wednesday, September 13, 2000

That title is from a headline in a recent issue of the Boston Globe. The article addressed the subject of Public Toilets and it got me thinking about how Charlottetown scores on this matter.

I think we come out with a 90 on the subject. I just reviewed the downtown as it is my deep interest. Lets review: 1] Tourist Information Centre 2] Peakes Quay 3] Prince Edward Hotel 4] Confederation Centre and the Library 5] City Hall 6] The Coles Building 6] Province House 7] The Basilica Recreation Centre 8] Confederation Court Mall 9] The Polyclinic and 10] The Charlottetown Hotel in addition to restaurants and coffee shops and etc..

So you see I think my mark is right on. Now some of these I have to admit are not quite public, but if you behaved properly I don't think you would be turned away. So we have come a long way since the bus stop

was the only stop in town. My first thought was that we had done that at a lot less cost per unit than Boston is about to spend, but maybe we haven't.

For \$250,000 each, Boston is going to have city toilets that have “ doors that open automatically after 20 minutes; the toilet disinfects itself after each use; the floors move for washing and drying cycles; it is monitored electronically around the clock on a panel board at a central site like the war room in “Failsafe”.

And it sports toilet paper dispensers on both sides of the commode”. You have to admit they'll be classy. We remember places like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Pyramids and any number of other places in our travels or even closer to home like our old school washrooms, the old market or the basement of the Basilica that apparently were well used, but not so well cleaned.

Today as outdoor privies have become a thing of the past people expect available and improved washrooms everywhere they go. If this subject interests you further you might enjoy a couple of books to give you an idea as to how the subject is being addressed in another city: “Dear John, A Guide to Some of the Best Seats in New York City” and “ Where to Go, A Guide to Manhattan's Toilets” and, oh yes, try the Boston web site on the subject: www.boston-online.com/restrooms.html.

Andrew Collard

Wednesday, September 13, 2000

Last week Mr. Collard passed away. He was a fixture on the Montreal newspaper and heritage scene for many, many years.

His writings in the Montreal Gazette must surely have made the preservation of the old town so much easier. He was the one who wrote the only [I think] existing biography of Sir. William MacDonald. He did a lot of things. He was a very small man – small boned and small in stature, delicate I think, but he lived to be well along in his eighties. It was because of a time he spent researching in England that Canada got one of its most important books “19th Century Pottery and Porcelain in Canada”.

It was his wife who wrote that book [she was small, too] and she began her research in London when she was there with him.

We met them both when we [Irene Rogers and I] attended the 1973 Symposium “The Golden Age of France and England and Their Influence on Early Canada” in Toronto. Elizabeth Collard spoke at that and I don’t believe in all our travels that we heard anyone who was so good...that is on a subject in the social history field. I have always regreted that we were not able to bring them both to PEI to talk to us. We need more people like them.

Issues to think about Downtown Residents

Wednesday, September 20, 2000

Tree Cutting

Tree cutting is going on in high gear in the city right now. Last week two large trees were cut down in Hillsborough Square – one a linden and the other a 40 year, or so, maple. We were told that they were dying and might fall on someone. Are we convinced that the city is getting the best advice and if they are, should they not be sharing the information before they take out their saws. And what about trees on private property – like on front lawns or backyards. Is it right that we each have the right to diminish our tree cover without an explanation .

Charlottetown has been planting trees for almost 150 years. Our trees are an exceptional resource to our community – visually and ecological. Should we not be re-establishing the old Arbour Society? And should we not be demanding explanations and second opinions on every tree that has been marked with a “X”.

Christmas Lights

With December not so very far away should we be asking if the Christmas Light Show is coming back bigger and better than ever? More seriously should we be asking if last year was worth the effort and cost, at

all? Did the lights really bring anyone here to shop? And more seriously were they indigenous to our town?

Bootleggers

Saturday afternoon the 9th, a sting raid occurred on all the bootleggers that operate in the city – at least in the Dorchester Street area. It was once said that bootleggers “met a social need”, but the spin offs are annoying to say the least. Late hours, urinating on the streets and a complete disregard for the neighbourhood is not helpful.

Surely we can address the social and neighbourhood needs and still allow our bootlegger- users a way to get a drink. It is difficult to understand why we still need these facilities these days when have so many places to drink now. So lets put our heads together and if we combine our stories and their needs we might move this problem along.

The Co-op

The Central Farmers Co-op voted to join others in the Atlantic area and form one large co-op. They had little choice . They were in debit \$1.6M. For those from the downtown who attended the meetings there was no comfort that the Atlantic Co-op think urban, know their customer or care at all about our down town store. Those who have shopped on Queen Street thru the summer can attest to that. We still need a good up-to-date grocery and meat store to serve the downtown residents.

Bulldozed

A couple of weeks ago a house was bulldozed on Water Street across from the Tourist Information Office. This city block was a very early settled one and had a special scale to it. Now we have two gapping holes in it [the previous one from a fire a few years ago]. The city had no recourse but to issue a demolition permit. The house was not designated nor was it in the heritage area.

Until the 500 lots are designated as a special planning area this sudden removability of buildings can happen near you. A special study group could be established to review just how this issue impacts and should be addressed.

Streetscape Design Study

The special plan for The Heritage Area that we heard about at the last meeting has not gone anywhere that we can see yet.. It appears now as if it might be getting “ready” to go to a City Council meeting so the public process can begin, but it is slow. It puts the investors in the downtown in a limbo.

You will see in the newspapers soon that there was a public meeting on the Founders’ Hall Project on September 20th. At the same meeting there were two other matters in the downtown on the agenda: The Johnny Reid site on Weymouth Street and the property beside the Patterson Palmer Hunt Murphy Building.

City Garage

The new city garage on McAleer Drive is almost finished and the move to it is expected sometime in November. That leaves the old garage on the corner of Weymouth and Water Street to be dealt with. The land was zoned R3 a few years ago so I hope we will see a residential use of this site in the near future. AND the Public Works fleet of trucks etc. will no longer be blocking the water view on the south.

New Residents

Since our spring meeting, we have had a number of new residents move into the downtown or at least have changed their domicile to make a more serious commitment to this space. One is, of course, our well known chairman Peter Rukavina who purchased the old [certainly over 165 year old] Bill Reid House on Prince Street.

Many of us became missionaries in encouraging more residents for the downtown and, as we have said, we generally believe that the merit of living downtown is one of the city's great secrets.

Municipal Election

Just to state clearly, the city residents will be going to the polls on November 6th and those who decide they are going to throw their hat into the ring must do so by

October 13th. This is a fine time to make your vision of the community clear to our candidates. So get your thoughts clear and your causes well defined and have them ready at your door for your visitors. The Residents group will arrange another meeting before election day and we'll ask our candidates to come talk to us and share their vision of the downtown.

Liquor Store

On September 15th tenders closed on a new or renovated liquor store for the downtown. The liquor commission is stating its geographic area of interest is between Kent Street and the water. Word has it that CADC is looking to put it on the waterfront.

It doesn't take much of a change to move the centre of a community into another space. Are Charlottetown residents ready to give up Queen and Grafton as their town centre? Mercantile changes these days are major and hard to read. It is difficult to really see the true impact of each decision as it comes up, but we have to try. Sometimes you have to go with your gut feelings, common sense and conscience. One thing is clear if we don't use the downtown centre we will lose it!

The Festivals

The Festival of the Lights, The Festival of The Fathers and the Shellfish Festival are over for another year. It seems to us that a genuine effort was made to be more

considerate of the downtown neighbourhood. Your views both positive and negative would be helpful for the planners for next year.

The Car and Parking

If we are committed to living down town it seems likely that we are committed to “less-car”. Issues like public transportation, more parking garages, removal of parking meters, traffic patterns, noise and residential parking are all matters that impact on downtown residents more than is generally recognized. It would be a good subject for a meeting, all on its own.

Noise

Those who live anywhere south of Richmond Street can attest to the problem of noise from the waterfront bars on the weekends. It seems hard to imagine that our sleep must be disturbed until after 2 o'clock in the morning on Friday and Saturday nights. If anyone had a decibel reader we think think it would be “case closed”. Please add your voice to this issue.

Downtown Business Assoc.

Harry O'Connell who is the chair of the DBA spoke to us at our last get together and he and his group have been moving along. In a quote in the Guardian recently he noted “what we have to do is reinvigorate our area and capitalize on its strengths”. Sometime we don't

recognize the best attributes of our city and we certainly don't blow our own horn enough on our assets. What we desperately need is an understanding of who our year around audience is and what are their needs. We think we are an impressive group and a dependable one for a community to build on.

Rochford Square

The new garden in the square took some getting use to but haven't we notice how people are using it. When the perennial garden happens next summer and, hopefully, the Rhododendrons get planted we should have a most magnificent square.

Mandate (first draft)

To stabilize the residential area in downtown Charlottetown by supporting the people who invest their time, creative energies, money and spirit to improve the ambience and beauty of this very special capital city for the twelve month users. In addition, we wish to protect the heritage and rich architectural qualities, maintain the scale and encourage the preservation of the existing businesses and the establishment of new ones to enrich the life in the downtown.

Trudeau

Tuesday, October 10, 2000

No one of my generation has viewed the last few days without the emotion of memory playing on their hearts and minds. Long before I had even begun to wonder who would take the place of Lester Pearson, my mother and her friends had already made up their minds. Trudeauania hit them early.

It was true my mother was a dyed-in-the-wool Liberal, daughter of a Liberal MLA from 2nd Prince and, no doubt what she took very seriously, was Trudeau's French-Scottish background like her own. I didn't spend enough time then wondering just how deeply she reviewed his policies, but it was obvious that he struck a cord with her early and that has caused me to ponder – about my mother and the rest of we Canadians as I heard his life gone over and over in the past few days.

I think he said it himself: men who want very badly to lead a country should not be trusted. Mother would have liked that. And she would have liked his honesty and his joyfulness and his human exasperations. What I respected and envied was the base from which he formed his opinions. Classical education, a deep understanding of history and a belief that you don't "watch what direction the people are going and then go out and lead". It's called leadership. And "he lived under

his own hat”, as Lucy Maud Montgomery challenged us to do.

I met him, or at least was in his company a number of times. The first time I was introduced to him was by Alex Campbell in the halls of Province House. I remember his eyes. Another time was at Government House, arriving late because he was diving off a boat at Dalvay. Two other special events come to mind. I, for a time, served on the Visiting Committee of the National Gallery. The first meeting I attended was in November 1968 and that evening was the opening of the Jordaens Exhibition. Prime Minister Trudeau officially opened that exhibition.

It was a grand event. Jean Boggs, the director of the gallery at the time, had been at Harvard with Trudeau so it was a fine celebration for her to have him. It was less than a year later that Alf and I represented the Confederation Centre at the opening of the National Art Centre and there he was again this time with Carleton Professor Madeleine Gobeil. The arts were well served by the man. It was under his regime that Secretary of State Pelletier brought in the Museums 70’s Policies. [I’ll write about that some day soon. It has been on my mind lately] And who will forget the day of Danny Dan MacDonald, the Minister of Veterans Affairs’ funeral when Mr Trudeau escorted Pauline out of the Basilica. Trudeau liked Danny Dan.

I have a very soft spot for people who give time to serve in the political world ... the giving of self for the common good. It is hard and ones privacy has to be protected somehow. Trudeau did that with class and it seemed with a lot of impatience. The accolades that we heard this week should remind us that the press does not always paint the real man. Thank goodness. It was a time of wine and roses. And as Justin said “It’s all up to us, all of us, now.”

My Grandfather

Tuesday, October 10, 2000

My grandfather Benjamin Gallant died of Bright’s Disease on October 26, 1921. I never knew him. He was born in Bloomfield on the 11th of June 1873 to Ebenezer Gallant and Martha Arsenault. He attended for a questionable length of time The Charlottetown Business College [a place we should research because a lot of great people came out of there]. He went on to operate a store in Bloomfield and a lobster factory in Miminegash. He had a cottage there, too, and thats where my mother learned to swim, eat clams and drive a horse. He also farmed and manufactured bricks?!

He entered politics at the age of 27 and as they say died in harness. He was handsome and I wish I had known him. He married Annie Gallant. She was the first generation of my family to go to Notre Dame Academy. She took painting and music – and I knew her.

Unfortunately arthritis hit her when she was very young and when she lived with us of and on she was bed ridden. But did she love politics. She was the daughter of Dr. Isadore Gallant and Margaret Campbell. Dr Isadore went to school under Belcourt in South Rustico and went on to become the first Acadian to become a doctor. He graduated in the 1870's from U. of Penn. He was accomplished musician. He practiced first in Oyster Bay Bridge [later in Boston and Bloomfield] and he sang in St. Augustine Choir. The big news was that he married a singing teacher that came from Arglye Shore by the name of Margaret Campbell. She was a Scotch Presbyterian and the daughter of Sea Captain Hector Cambbell and Ann Darrach. What a union.

She became a Catholic, but her diffident statement everafter was that she read The Casket, the Scots' oracle from Antigonish faithfully. I grew up loving the fact that I had Campbell and Darrach blood in my veins. It has connected me to Shirley Beck, Ivan Darrach and Kitty Orford and heavens knows who else.

Now back to Hon. Benjamin Gallant and what brought me to elaborate on this subject. As I said Benjamin Gallant died on the 26th of October I would suspect his last speech in the Provincial Legislature was what I found the other day. What a speech. There is nothing new under the sun. Just read these words and be amused.

Since we have come into power to try, if possible, to put again our Province on a reasonable and decent financial basis. It is true we had to resort to taxes, the only possible way to do so. This of course as we all know is very unpopular. Could it have been done any other way, I am sure no member here would have followed another course instead of increasing taxes, and risk his political life. But unfortunately for the present at least there was no other way except to increase taxation. We found when we took charge that the conditions were 75 per cent worse than we really expected... they were collecting every cent from the farmers, but they were allowing the capitalists and the business men to go scot free and in the meantime allowing our bridges, culverts, roads and institutions to go into decay ... one great satisfaction is that the people have at their head a man who will hold a tight rein on the Treasury of the province. ... What should be the attitude to bring about better conditions? First, in my opinion to create better feelings between all creeds and nationalities, to broaden our views, let the narrow, bigoted man be told that the world today does not want him. Let us have more faith in one another.

So were parts of the speech given my my Grandfather in April 1921 in the Provincial Legislature. [Funny in my short term in Municipal politics, I argued for a small increase in taxes for the good of the whole, but it didn't work.]

Ottawa

Monday, October 16, 2000

I just had a glorious three days in Ottawa. I went to the meeting of The Canadian Society for The Decorative Arts. Marion Bradshaw made me. Marion was the editor of *The Canadian Collector* in days gone by and I met her first when I co-ordinated the Island Issue in 1972. She was and still is a strong women.

It was she who organized the three wonderful Symposiums that the McDonald Stewart Foundation funded in 19???. Irene Rogers and I went to them and we learned much and met many who helped us along our way. That part of my life made this trip rather a sentimental one since I renewed acquaintances that we had met back then.

The program included a behind the scenes tour of Rideau Hall, a visit to the Museum of Man, and a fine informed tour of the Silver Collection at the National Gallery. That visit was made all the more significant for me because we visited the gallery where the Valentine painting of Samuel Nelson was on display.

Samuel Nelson was the owner of this piece of land I live on now and was – it seems very sure – the builder of the first part of my little house. Valentine was an interient painter who came here from Halifax in the 1830's ... An ad from the Royal Gazette of August 13, 1833 reads “Mr Valentine. Portrait Painter intends to remain on the Island a few weeks and begs to inform the

ladies and gentlemen of Charlotte Town of his design to practice while here in the line of his Profession and confidently hopes to give satisfaction to those who may favour him with their patronage.

Profiles in oil colours 1.10 pounds, Portraits in do from 3 pounds to 7.10 pounds and full length portraits 100 pounds”!!!!

It was nice to see Samuel Nelson in such a prominent spot. Our friend Marion and her team had arranged three fine lectures – one by our old friend Donald Webster from the ROM. He spoke on Fakes and Forgeries in the Canadian Antique world and it was an eye opener and an issue we must think a lot more about.

We joined forces with Members of Canadian Fund part of the time. The Canadian Fund committee looks after the public rooms at the Official Residences in the Country; Rideau Hall, 24 Sussex, Harrington Lake, The Citadel etc. Our friend Willie Elliot is on the committee. It was very nice to see old friends and make some new ones.

To add to my pleasure I stayed with Gary Carroll at his Aunt Kay’s place and we had a wonderful time – even with me driving her car up to Meech Lake and coming back through Gatineau Park on an absolutely glorious autumn day. Islanders have to go away now and then or they get stale. Much inspired me on this trip so beware.

All Candidates Meeting

Wednesday, October 25, 2000

The meeting we had hoped to hold on October 26th had to be cancelled as it conflicted with the Mayoralty Debate on Channel Ten organized for the same evening. Since time is short and the campaigners are busy covering the area and with the Federal Election taking peoples time we have found it necessary to cancel our plans. We promise we will make every effort to bring together the Municipal, Provincial and Federal members for a good discussion sometime early in the year. Sorry about this BUT it does not stop you from contacting your candidates directly and bring up some of the issues we have been discussing. November 6th is Election Day make sure you vote and remind others to do likewise.

Seafaring Days

Friday, October 27, 2000

Mementoes of our seafaring days show up in many ways. All the talk last summer of tall ships has reminded me of that era that we have so almost lost contact with ... but sometimes we are reminded in such simple ways. There was, in the olden days, hardly an Island house that hadn't a conch shell somewhere or other; holding a door opened, on display in the garden or in the barn collecting dust. They were taken for granted, but they were not indigenous and they would all have arrived during our

days of sail usually from the West India's, I suppose. Sometimes you find coral and I have a brain coral in MY garden – at least that is what somebody told me it was.

Now these conch shells had another use. When we were tenant farmers and there were those among us hell bent on collecting rents, we needed a warning system and the conch came into great use. In a special way those conch shells could become horns, blown to warn the neighbours of impending trouble. In a book on Key West I found out how to make a conch shell horn – after you remove the conch “... use a electric saw or hacksaw, cut off the conical tip of the shell in a straight line and then with a screw driver pry out the inner spiral that blocks the cup-shaped opening. Discard it. The opening should be about an inch across. Sand paper the edges smooth and now the conch shell is ready to be blown like a trumpet. You can vary the pitch by inserting your hand at different depths; the deeper the hand the lower the tone. No two shells are identical, some are easier to play than others and still others have a greater musical range”. So when you come upon an conch shell on this Island, remember it did not originate here and it tells the story of another time.

Once when a group of us were sailing in the Virgin Islands, one of our crew dove down and recovered a conch shell with the conch still in it. We had never seen one with the inhabitant before. We put it in the cock-pit

and went to sleep. It wasn't long before we were all awakened by the bang bang of the conch travelling along the cock-pit in a despaired effort to get back to where it had come from. The muscular animal that occupies a conch shell is far more aggressive than we ever understood and there is a trick to removing them. You have to pierce the shell near the spiral tip to sever the muscle that binds the conch to its shell and then it is easy to get out.

In an article in the *National Post* this summer I was interested to read about the Bahamians' view on the conch these "muscular crustaceans" and their eatable qualities "... the flavour is a little hard to explain. I think it tastes, and consistency is, closest to an abalone clam. Ask five people what a conch tastes like and you would get five different answers. One would say clams, the other lobsters and the third guy claims 'the sea' and on it goes". From the conch you can make a chowder, a marinated salad, fritters or you can simply grill them. Whatever, the article says they can become an obsession. I'm not so sure, after a night with one pounding around in the cock pit, I'd rather leave them in the sea or go to a very special restaurant and have them prepared for me. The conch shells that I have found in PEI barns seem to be a far distant from all of that.

A Conundrum

Saturday, October 28, 2000

I have been reading the 1920's this week and this matter has come to my attention. What is the difference between an official opening and a formal opening. I'm going to check my collection of invitations and see just exactly what I was invited to....??!!

Politicians and The Arts

Saturday, November 25, 2000

It is amazing how we are half way along in the Federal Election process we have heard so little about the arts and the historical depth of this wonderful country. Even Environment is being ignored. I know its in the minds of some of these people so what bothers me is that it seems to them to be such an unpopular notion – an untouchable.

They know better, at least some of them do.

Health is important but for heaven sake music, literature, genealogy and the familiarity of our preserved communities keep a people comforted – and healthier. Think about it. I come from a family of three generations of health care workers – our own home always had somebody coming and going with some need or other, but maybe in spite of that or because of it I believe busy people caring for things outside themselves are healthier people. The arts are a perfect

distraction. May our politicians deeply understand that. Our paranoid selves have for years now hid behind “tourism” as an excuse for supporting the arts and history in our communities. Heaven forbid that we have to prostitute our cause under the guise of “health” to continue government support. It sounds that way in this election. Don’t forget to vote.(more later)

An apology

Saturday, November 25, 2000

I owe all my friends a most serious apology. It has been weeks since I added anything to my page and that’s not fair for those who have agreed to travel with me. Part of the reason, I think, is that we had over twenty days of drearier weather and it really did get a lot of Islanders down. I was one of them I think, but it did not stop me from being busy.

For one thing there has been work done on my house again and that is a good thing. People were complaining to the dilapidated premises people about my east side and the front door. Well I’m glad to announce things are improving. The east side was very interesting when they tore off the badly damaged siding. It was very clear, with the sheathing, the outline of the little house of circa 1800 and how it was expanded about 1840 to make a saltbox. It attracted a lot of attention. I have always said that when you begin working on an old house it starts talking to you and in this case it was screaming. Thanks

to my computer doula, Peter Rukavina, you can see what I am talking about.

The new exterior cladding had to be painted on all sides before it went on so I spent quite a few hours in John Rankin's warehouse doing that – with a little help from my friends. I say with gratitude, particularly to John for letting us be there.

We are, very much, reproducing exacting what the front door trim was about and that has produced many challenges. Fortunately there are a couple of people who will exactly reproduce profiles and that is being done at the moment. The little house looks prouder already.

All the elections have begun to get to people. We had an municipal election on the 6th and our friend George MacDonald is still Mayor with four of his former council with him and SIX new people. That is a big job for all; Mayor, council and staff and a concern for those of us who worry about our little capital city that needs such special care.

Monday we go to the polls for the Federal Election and by Tuesday morning the dust will have settle and sleeves will be rolled up all over. At least we hope we are not heading for an American scene repeat. We supposedly can prevent that by getting out to vote. No need to suggest that to MY friends – they'll be there.

Between house renovations and researching the elections, I have been reading the 1930 *Guardians*. I have about eleven hours behind me and about 100 more

to go. I read them on microfilm and I can only spend a max of four at it per day [old eyes]. I have the longer articles photocopied so it makes it go a little faster. It takes almost as long at home to clip and paste and file my readings.

Charlottetown has been chosen to be one of the Ten Smart Cities in Canada that means they will be spending money on seriously upgrading our virtual side! I want to be ready so we can impose a strong history layer over the land records' base map – our geographic-information-system. In other words have a historical tale connected with each property number in the city. It is a big order, but I feel it will be a very useful package of information.. My theory is know it , love it and protect it. My dream!

The November 6th *New Yorker* had an article on The Map for New York City, their geographic-information-system. They are very proud of it and it certainly must have been a big job. It covers sewer and power lines, paths in parks etc., etc. but they never mentioned history. I think Our Map can better [of course everything is relative].

So there you are. I hope you can see that I have some excuses for not making contact and now that I have started maybe I will be able to share with you some of the great things I have been reading lately about our fine city. Cheerio.

Fine Art Excitement

Monday, November 27, 2000

My friend Dental Don called me from New York today with a challenge to find about \$200,000 American so we could buy a Benjamin West work Death Of General Wolfe that is coming up for auction tomorrow at Phillips Auction House in New York. He'll be there we can be sure of that.

This is the popular work that has been reproduced many times. It would be a very exciting work to add it to the Confederation Centre Collection and that's what Don, a fellow Collection Committee person, was thinking of...and we both agreed it would be a more lasting addition to our community than the present Christmas light show that is costing a lot more than that. Our surveyor-general of the Island, Samuel Holland was with General Wolfe in the campaign against Quebec in 1759 and it has been said that The General gave Holland his set of pistols. Just a interesting link. Well maybe the National Gallery is following the sale and the painting may come to Canada one way or another

Oscar Wilde

Thursday, November 30, 2000

November the 30th is the one hundredth anniversary of Wilde's death and his popularity today proves that some people are even more popular dead than alive. I thought

it a good time to paint you the picture of his visit to Charlottetown. He did come you know.

The event was advertised in the Daily Examiner for October 11th at the Market Hall [that would be the so-called Butcher Market]. The year was 1882. The lecture by the “Leader of the Aesthetic Party” was to be on the Decorative Arts.

The accompanying article told about his father and mother and their accomplishments. For example they said his father was “indefatigable in antiquarian research” so that’s a warning to all our dedicated historians!

The report of the event can still make you squiggle: he began by apologizing for not being in evening dress. He had just arrived on the boat [that would be the] and came in his “travelling costume” instead; a light suit with knee breeches. In his talk he said “... we could get along very well without philosophy if we surrounded ourselves with beautiful things ... he said all good art is founded on honesty, sincerity and on telling the truth. Art is the perfect praise of God, being the exemplifications of his handiwork.”

He expressed his belief that his century had produced a prodigious amount of rubbish and much dishonest work. [He’d die if he visited Wal-Mart]. “The highest art...” he continued, ‘...was in the correct portrayal of the men and things of the age in which we live, instead of going back to the mis-called romantic ages ...’ [He would not like Gateway either].

He challenged that art schools should be devoting more time to make the common things beautiful and he thought, too, that at least an hour a day should be given in the schools to teach the young to use their hands in carving wood, working metal or some other decorative arts. Well that sounds pretty good and it reflects the thought of many of my friends today so I would have been happy to hear his lecture.

BUT, a couple of days later there was an editorial in the paper that presumed to look at us through his eyes. He arrive at night and so “...saw little of our architectural beauty. The Market Hall presented a study to beauty’s latest evangel. We saw him make his appearance from the back stair-case, we saw his intense look of pre-Raphaelistic wonder as he viewed the walls, gazed on the beauty of the platform and sniffed the redolent smells of stale butter, eggs and cabbage!... we saw a cloud gather over his face as he feasted on the beautiful view...we know for certain that he found it difficult to strike a beautiful pose in the midst of such surroundings. He was disheartened by the ridiculous chattering of some the young menbut the fair and beautiful forms of our ladies cheered the heart and enraptured the mind of the aesthete” There could be a different view of that today, looking back.

He came, he saw and in some ways he influenced our town. Whenever they did something that they were

especially proud off for quite a few years after, they would moan “If only Oscar could see us now”

Well look around and wonder, with me, what he would think of us today. We’ll end with the quote by William Morris, Wilde’s contemporary:

*Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?*

Two, Two, Two

Thursday, November 30, 2000

It occurred to me when I wrote about my house renovations that many of you had not even heard of my little house before and it is time for me to tell its story. I bought the house when it was in a very, very dilapidated state – I mean dilapidated!

Why would I do such a thing. I’ll tell you.

First it is one of the very few houses left in Charlottetown that was built before 1830 and it was in jeopardy. It was owned by who got it by default. He did not care about it and was in the awkward position of not being able to bulldoze it down before it was removed from the City Heritage List.

That would mean a public meeting where we would all be there [press included] trying to protect a heritage building and his wife did not know he owned it!!!!

We had many talks and it usually ended with him asking “How many apartments could I make out of that

place anyway?” That drove me foolish. So on September 17th, three days before my birthday in 1997 I bought the building.

What were its assets? The lot was a good, it was around the corner from the house I grew up in and up a block from Notre Dame Academy where I went to school all my life, and it was on a street, albeit a bootlegger street to quite an extent, that I travelled on when I went to church each Sunday and many other days as well.

It was downtown and that I liked. It was very near the archives. Then since I got involved in this “hysterical stuff” with my friends we have loved this little house and we pretty well knew its history. I tried to buy it back in 197.. before I bought Pidwell Lane, but could not find the owner and the next thing I knew a young man bought it with his dreams.

His dreams did not completely materialize and the house changed ownership until it landed on the lap of “my friend”.

OK, I own a house. It was not hard to read its attributes – they were all exposed. NO furnace, no wiring, no plumbing except a funny toilet in a closet upstairs and many holes in the roof – at the back at least. People asked if it cost more than I thought it would and I say no, because there were no surprizes and it was an open book. I had gotten my friends at Moveall to look the place over and see whether they would tackle it.

Stephen Baird and I had worked on moving and renovating buildings before – my barn at the farm, The Burnett Curley House and the big one was St Andrew’s Chapel that we took back up the Hillsborough from hence it came in 1864. I had confidence in Stephen and his crew of nephews.

We added an Icelander from next door [truly] and we were off and running. I devised the plan and I had a number of consultants – like my friend Dental Don. I knew that old houses talk to you as you begin to work on them and that did happen.

Surprises? There were many. But I had said I wanted in for Christmas and it almost happened. On New Year’s Day we had a reception in the kitchen and I spent my first night in the house. It has gotten better and better and people are always amazed as to how roomy it is when they come in. I want to tell you the history of the house, but that must wait for another time.

November the 30th

Thursday, November 30, 2000

Lucy Maud Montgomery and Marc Gallant share this birth day. My birthday book says of those born on this date “Humor, a vivacious, fun-loving nature, deep feelings and enthusiasm for doing everything well are the keynotes to people born on this day”. I’m not sure of LMM, but I know that one of Marc’s favorite statements was “It’s so good to laugh” And laugh we did, with him

and at him. Its time we began celebrating his birthday again. He would like that.

Although it was not exactly planned this way I got a very fine LMM birthday gift today from my friend Deirdre Kessler; their CD-ROM on Montgomery called “The Bend In The Road”. I will be a proud owner. So to celebrate LMM’s birthday Islanders, here and there, should join in singing The Island Hymn:

*Fair Island of the sea, We raise our songs to thee The
bright and blest; Loyally now we stand As brothers,
hand in hand, And sing God save the land We love
the best*

*Upon our princely Isle May kindest fortune smile In
coming years; Peace and prosperity In all her
borders be, From every evil free. And weakling fears.*

*Prince Edward Isle, to thee Our hearts shall faithful
be Where'er we dwell; Forever may we stand As
brothers, hand in hand, And sing God save the land
We love so well.*

Elizabeth Bishop Connection

Sunday, December 3, 2000

As a fan of the writings of Elizabeth Bishop I am continually on the watch as to how our local newspapers covered her Island links and this fall I found one.

It was her grandfather’s obit.. Patriot October 30, 1923. “John Wilson Bishop was born in White Sands on May 29, 1846, the son of William and

Sarah[Hooper]Bishop. When he was eleven the family moved to Rhode Island... A few years after he took up the carpenter trade and soon was working with a building concern in Providence. He went on to work in Worcester for various builders until 1874 when he began his own business... Some times on his own and for awhile with a partner, he became one of the foremost builders in the state of Massachusetts. By the time he passed away his firm had offices in Boston, New York, Providence and New Bedford.

The article on him states “He gave his business affairs constant attention and its success was due not only to his knowledge of his trade, but also to his remarkable endurance and tireless industry”

What a nice tribute.

In the introductory remarks of one of Elizabeth’s books, it reports that J.W.Bishop Company had built halls of learning at Harvard, Princeton and Andover, libraries at Boston and Providence and palatial residences in Newport, Lenox and New York. He had married an American lady and they had two sons and two daughters. William Thomas Jr., Elizabeth’s father, died eight months after she was born. Her Nova Scotia mother took her back there and there she remained until she was six.. Her mother[A Bulmer from Great Village, N.S.] was institutionalized and the US grandparents brought her back to live with them. It did not work. As she wrote “ I had been brought back unconsulted and

against my wishes to the house my father had been born in, to be saved from a life of poverty and provincialism, bare feet, suet pudding, unsanitary school slates, perhaps even from the inverted r's of my mother's family".

Soon her maternal aunt in South Boston came to the rescue and she was taken to an atmosphere that suited her better. She did benefit financially from the success of the Bishops tho' for she attended fine schools and colleges. She graduated in 1934 from Vassar where she met Marianne Moore who was for her a life long influence.

Elizabeth died in October 1979. I don't think she ever visited PEI, but she did return to Nova Scotia and when she could not get there she missed it. A great writer.

Our Government House

Sunday, December 3, 2000

I attended a gathering at Government House the other night – the guest of their Honours. The house was beautifully decorated for the Christmas season and any one there would agree it is one wonderful house to decorate.

Over the years for one reason or another I have visited each of our Provincial Government Houses that remain. You might be surprized that not all provinces still have government houses and one at least has become a museum/convention centre. We are lucky and

I, biased as I am, believe we have the best. [Nova Scotia is beginning to work on theirs and they certainly have a fine building to work on].

But we almost lost ours – it came seriously close. I was reading this week an article from a 1922 newspaper and here is the description of our dear historic building: “The old Government House, itself a standing memento of the good old times and manners, now past and gone forever,[!] might with very little expense, be converted into a receptacle, for the things that would go to make up an attractive museum.”[At that point the House had been a hospital for returning veterans and later a School of Agriculture and Trades and had nearly become the site for the CNR Hotel. The Lieut-Governor was certainly not living there in 1922, having vacated the house in 1917 to provide for the “comfort” of returning veterans and it was not re-occupied officially again until 1933.]

Anyway on with the article “ ...The present condition of Government House property cannot be said to reflect any credit upon the Lieut-Governor or the Government of the Province for the time being, or the citizens of Charlottetown or the people of the country at large. That it should be tenantless and neglected with the fences about it in a state of wreck and ruin, is from every point of view deplorable. Contrast the well kept lawns of private citizens on one side of Brighton Road with the uncultivated fields, the brushwood and fence wreckage

on the other! Is it not evident that something must be done for the improvement of Government House property if the province and its people are to escape ineffable disgrace. The wonder is that the ladies of Charlottetown as well as the men, do not protest against the offensive unkempt appearance of this fine old property and demand that the fields north of Government House from Government Pond westward shall form part of Victoria Park and be kept in decent and presentable condition for the benefit and credit of the province at large and for the enjoyment of summer visitors.

Well the ladies of Charlottetown – and the men, obviously spoke and the pride that Islanders felt on Friday night would be of great comfort to them who stood their ground, if only they could hear.

My E-Mail Address

Wednesday, December 6, 2000

For a time when I first began to use this glorious machine my e-mail address was catherine@islandidentity.pe.ca. That address has gone somewhere into cyberspace and my e-mail address is now, only, me@catherinehennessy.com. I hope I don't lose any of my friends with this change.

Weather

Wednesday, December 6, 2000

Like good Christians anywhere people are saying that this winter we are going to pay for the last two easy ones even tho' that seems to be against the grain of the Greenhouse Groupies.

Even though weather isn't high on my priority list as I do my research, it is naturally difficult to read Island newspapers without "running into it".

December 10th 1941 the newspaper was reporting that snow plows were bucking nine foot drifts of snow on the Charlottetown-Summerside highway and a hundred years before there had hardly been a day in December without a fall of snow and "never in the recollection of the oldest inhabitant has there been so much on the ground so early in the season ... and the harbour is now completely frozen over" that was from a December 20th 1842 newspaper.

But just in case you think ah-ha Global Warming on January 18, 1932 the signs of spring were so strong that there was fresh green grass, daisies and mayflowers around and the S.S.Hillsboro was still running to Southport – later than only one exception and that was in 1892 when she ran until February 4th!!!! Oh well, lets wait to see whats a head.

Happy Christmas

Wednesday, December 13, 2000

Will be spending the holiday with my sister Betty and her husband in Victoria and Mary Claire from Calgary will join us. Mona, our niece lives in Victoria, also, so she will be with us off and on.

Wanted to write about the Forum on Fitzroy Street coming down and tell you about the Notre Dame Choir – which I was in – singing with Gracie Fields there. It was in the spring of 1950, I think. Altho' I didn't grow up to be much of a hockey fan, I still can remember the excitement when Howard Glover, Orin Carver, Keith Dalziel [and was there someone else?] were on the ice. And by the way, you remember that Benjamin West painting that Don Stewart wanted to buy at Phillips in New York. It was estimated to sell at \$180.00 - \$200.000. It sold for \$2.6 million.

How is that for an estimate? Love to all. I'll be in contact in the New Year, unless I learn to use those public computers here or there.

Billboards

Monday, January 15, 2001

Signage is a confusing topic. Personally I have blanked out on it to a great extent and to advertising, too. I'm still thinking about it so I want some feedback. Lets think about billboards [and include trucks with billboard

sides as you contemplate]. Do they impact you? Would you shop in a particular place because of them? stay at a certain hotel? eat at a particular restaurant?

And then the big question anyway is, can you absorb all the information they offer as you travel along the highways? Do you want to interrupt your thinking to bother? Or like me just ignore them. Or do I? Am I getting it subliminally and therefore do I really seek out the hotel, restaurant or what every unbeknownst as to exactly why I'm drawn there? I can't believe it. More seriously, I believe the "Empire has no clothes" and our friends that advertize thistle are just trying to keep up with the other guys and have never really asked for an up to date assessment of their impact. They haven't thought it out and they are scared to be the first to stop. Ask us. Do a survey. Stop and lets talk it out. Just don't accept what the advertizing world is selling you.

A number of things have caused be to ponder this matter recently. Our friend in Summerside that is trying to bring the Provincial Government to its knees on our bill signage laws. He parks a truck of some sort or other on the Trans Canada Highway outside of Summerside advertizing his restaurant in town. A definite off-premise sign. Would it encourage you to go to his restaurant? It just makes me mad. Are we not lucky to be able to look at landscape on this Island rather than being over-dozed by personal [selfish] advertizing?! How dare he interfere with our peace. Recently as some of you

know I was in Victoria BC. A beautiful God gifted Island, without a question. Pretty little airport in a nice space. Then you drive along the highway to town and about five miles along you come upon wall to wall billboards. Ugly. Actually it is an Indian Reservation with different rules, but so many of the Victoria businesses play the game. Is it possible that they get more business because of it? That is the debate. I cannot believe they do. It is so awful. We had a touch of it on the way to the bridge in NB. Answer me, did it give any of you more business?

Montague has taken the “bull by the horns” and said no to flashy signs and I applaud them and I can not believe that our Provincial Government will go soft on the provincial legislation either. Please pray that they don’t – if you agree with any of my concerns talk about it, let me know or tell people in positions to do something or debate it at least. .

Winter Evening

Wednesday, January 17, 2001

There is nothing like the rural landscape from which to view the sky – particularly when you don’t crowd it with yard lights. Something that you become very aware of are the phases of the moon. We hear much of moonlight nights, new moons, waxing and waning. That waning is the interesting time. It leads to almost pitch black. Old timers tell us that during the dark of the moon “plants

orient themselves toward their roots and sap rushes downward”. Well I got oriented toward my roots tonight for it certainly was the dark of the moon.

I had to go to the farm about 5:30. I must get the lane ploughed and some oil in. My neighbour, Barry started to plough this afternoon and because of the incredible amount of snow he sheared a pin and the was the end of the exercise for today. He was only half way down. Did I have enough oil? I was not sure and the nights are cold. So out I go with snow shoes and Nellie in tow. It was quite a trek, with my heart pounding, and it was so dark. You can run into things like fence posts or bushes or snow drifts when it is the dark of the moon, but the whiteness does help somewhat. . But, peace on earth, my furnace was on and I have enough oil to do for a few days.

It was a stressful trip out, but once my problems turned out to be less serious than they could have been and I took in the beauty of the land, my snow shoeing back to the road – helped by the lights of David Weale’s truck on the road – I was joyful. It would be hard for you, who visit in the summer, to imagine Cranberry Wharf as it appeared this evening.

Another Dark-Sky Newsletter

Sunday, January 21, 2001

I got my newsletter from the International Dark-Sky Association today and it seemed so appropriate after my

trek last night. I know what dark skies are about and under normal conditions, I love them dearly ... because they are hardly ever really dark. They are either full of storm or full of stars.

I get little sympathy when I complain about a yard light that shines in my bedroom window at the farm that is at least six fields away from me or the street lights that over-light the Indian community of Scotchford across the river and to the east of me.

So lets see what the Dark-sky newsletter has to say: They mentioned the article that was in MacLeans in May called “Let There Be Dark” and mentioned, too the article in Time magazine last January called “Bag Those Beams” and other titles on the subject like “The Dark Side Of Light” or “Going, Going, Nearly Gone”. You have to admit they are attention seeking titles and that is good – because the subject needs our attention. The Illuminating Engineers are talking about the problems of glare, energy waste, sky glow and light trespass! Don’t you just love those issues.

A few points other points from the newsletter: They write about people worrying that “conversion to astronomy-friendly lighting will result in dark, dangerous communities. Actually, quality fixtures put just the right amount of light exactly where it’s needed. Poorly designed fixtures produce unwanted glare that makes communities more dangerous.” At the Olympic’s in Australia they made a very serious effort to follow

ridged standards for sports lighting [tennis courts, etc.] and Rome has passed a law against light pollution! They claim that “ good lighting enhances vision, preserves the nighttime ambiance of that city with its historic roots” and Moab, Utah has an ordinance that includes light curfews, footcandle limits and prohibition of mercury vapours. So you see the interest in the subject is growing.

There is a Canadian proposal for a Dark-Sky Sanctuary on Manitoulin Island. We on PEI where “spectacular night skies” are part of our life, too, should be watching their progress. Lets plan for “stars up – lights down”. The e-mail address for Dark-Sky is <http://www.darksky.org> and our Canadian friend is Mark Oldfield at greatmanitou@hotmail.com.

Anniversary of the Death of King George the 5th

Sunday, January 21, 2001

That note in the newspaper reminded me of a story from my childhood. There was a big church parade in Charlottetown to pay respect to the late King. My father was busy getting into his military uniform and buttons were being shined and his wonder high boots smelt like the good leather they were. The house was in a big hum. I was very young and a big nuisance – a really big nuisance. Mother was desperate. The previous

Christmas friends of my parents from New York had given me a glorious doll; long blonde ringlets, movable arms and legs and with a very fine dress.

It had been decided that it should be put away until I was older and more worthy of such a gift. I got the doll that day and promptly called her “King George”. It was my most favourite. I lugged it around everywhere. Soon the dress was gone and the hair was no more, but I still loved it mightly. It was pretty amusing for my parents and their friends to hear me crying for “King George” when I misplaced her.

She lasted until I was about seven or eight when my sister, Betty decided that she should have a bath and submerged my composite treasure into the tub. I tried to love her after that, but she just wasn’t the same. God rest the King.

Exodus

Monday, January 29, 2001

For many years a local paper would report on “Successful Islanders Abroad” with great pride. They had much to crow about.

We had Islanders all over the world making a name for themselves. It is not surprising to find so many success stories, because we had Islanders leaving by the hundreds in the late 1800’s until the Second World War “the break”, as David Weale calls it.

It was often referred to as the exodus. You can understand the reasons when you think of those large families that we were famous for, the small amount of land most farmers had and the end to any industry that we had by that time. We sent Islanders out with strong muscles, a fine work ethic, good morals and in most cases a belief in improving themselves.

The Boston States was the big attraction – only a few went to western Canada in that period. They instead went to the Maine woods, the mills of Lowell and Fall River, to work as cooks and maids in fine houses and they certainly helped build, and then run, the subway in Boston. That was the first line.

The next line went to the Boston States to train for nursing and they went to become dentists, doctors, clergymen and even college professors and presidents! And they went into the construction trades and they ended up constructing buildings all over. Remember Elizabeth Bishop's grandfather in Worcester.

Recently I heard of Solomon Cameron who left Cape Traverse and ended up building in California, Seattle, Alaska, Prince George, Victoria etc. They are writing a book about him now! I have a number of really good stories of successful Islanders aboard that I'll share with you in the next little while. In the meantime here is a poem for you to contemplate:

*Prince Edward Isle,
I meet your sons An daughters by the score;*

*In and around Boston,
As they've left their native shore
Your stalwart sons so noble,
And your lovely daughters, too;*

*Have forsaken their nativity,
And blame it most on you.
It grieves my heart to hear it,
Yes, it makes me feel so sad
To learn that you are failing
To keep your girls and lads.*

I venture, economics Is the fundamental cause, Of this
exodus of workers, To a land of other laws. Too bad
your sons and daughters, From their native land must
roam, To a new land of adoption – And establish there a
home For it's sad to leave the old home, Yes, it's sad to
lose that smile – Of the loved ones who caressed us, In
our own Prince Edward Isle

Return from the West

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

It is always an extraordinary privilege to travel from one side of this country to another and I did that again just over forty eight hours ago with my dog Nellie.

Christmas with family is very special but there is an added touch when you must travel to do it *and* when you can, in another part of this country, bring together friends to share your special time. That is what happened to me in the last four weeks. It was a holiday

that I will not forget easily, nor do I ever want to. I'll share more with you later, but right now Nellie and I are becoming accustomed to a dramatic change in climate.

To leave snowdrops and merging cherry blossoms in Victoria to come home to a yard full of snow – and I mean a yard full of snow – is quite extraordinary. Poor Nellie has been seen on Charlottetown streets with her new coat on – a very embarrassing position for both of us.

The problem is that Nellie did come home “different”. One day, one sister took her to be groomed and that ended in her being shorn [mainly because I was not brushing her like I should have been] and having then to acquire a coat to keep her warm even in the Victoria climate and, as if that was not enough, another sister took her to be spayed. They also got my hair cut. At that point I said that was it!

It is amazing that when you are as old as I am, that you can have so many wonderful contacts in a city so far away from your daily life. Victoria offered that opportunity to the enjoyment of all of us – Ex-Islanders, friends from Heritage Canada days and The Confederation Centre Of The Arts and my sisters friends that I enjoy so much. Special, too, were the two Macdonald girls – Jean Isabelle and Kathy – from Inkerman days that came for an overnight to our great enjoyment. Also I attended a Newfoundland Picnic – that was fifteen dogs in number! – and enjoyed every day a glorious view of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and all

that means in shipping. Those things only added to the specialness of it all as if it needed more. Happy New Year to all.

Culture in Our City

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

In the Globe and Mail today they are reporting on an exhibit that is opening this week at London's Tate: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis. "The show is based on the thesis that at different times and places, the energy of the modern metropolis peaked to produce a cultural explosion in which art, architecture, cinema, dance, fashion, music and theatre flourished" The cities they are covering are Paris, Vienna, Moscow, Rio de Janerio, Lagos, New York, Bombay, Tokyo and London. It would be a great show to see, but even without seeing it one can ponder over when our turn might come.

In the next couple of weeks we, in this community, are going to have a Winter Carnival, The Mikado on at Confederation Centre, and the East Coast Music Awards . For February that is a lot of culture, but when you look at the issues that the show at the Tate is covering we have a long way to go. AND we are not going to make it until we begin to recognize what rich resources we have to work with AND we begin working together. I am prompted to begin holding my dream of "A Grand Provincial Cultural Exhibition" on the net. There is much to be shared.

Wendell Boyle 1940s–2001

Thursday, February 1, 2001

To preserve the heritage of a precious space like ours takes dedicated people who have in their very veins the very “stuff” that makes up this space. Back in 1972 when we were struggling through the shaping of the heritage sites, we met for many long hours at Orwell Corner. High on our priority was to create a gentle place – a rural cross roads – where the activities of another time could be relived. Landscape and buildings, and the way they are treated, are so important, but they are only the setting. Without people heritage house, sites, villages etc are meaningless. They are just frozen settings.

Orwell Corner opened in the summer of 1973. It was a more abstract site than Basin Head or Green Park that were both anchored on a specific issue: fishing and ship building. At Orwell we were talking about a rural cross roads. A site that had to commemorate rural life of another time. The board understood and were patient while we struggled to make it work.

Enter Wendell Boyle in 1981 and in the last 20 years he brought to Orwell Corner the very essence of what that rural cross roads was about. He looked the part and he acted the part. A Ceilidh under his direction brought out, and together, the roots of that community for the enjoyment of many. Wendell’s vision for the site blended with the very soul of the community. It did not

lose its dignity to tourism but welcomed its visitors on the community's terms. He gave his all to achieve that.

Wendell died at his home in Charlottetown this week and I join the heritage community in offering my sympathy to his family and friends. He was a great worker for the cause. We remember him dearly.

Don Stacey

Sunday, February 4, 2001

Yesterday was Don Stacey's birthday. He was a man of many sides. Terribly connected with his Charlottetown days; Prince of Wales College, Model School and West Kent and the friends that he had there. It was almost as if nothing he did after that really mattered.

And he did lots.

Went to McGill, was a Fisheries Inspector, then went to Dal for Medicine and then became a psychologist, but he never got PEI out of his head. His father, Les, came here in the 1920's to become manager of Woolworths'.

As a matter of fact Don went to his grave believing he was responsible for the store burning that December 27, 1941. He had been sent up to stook the furnace the night before and by 8 o'clock the next morning the firemen were fighting "a major conflagration". His father didn't blame him, but he always felt guilty. He loved cars, especially BMW's, and he loved poetry. I'm

sorry I didn't get over to Halifax to visit him more often. He passed away early last summer.

Saving Small Old Buildings

Wednesday, February 7, 2001

The other day a person was telling about the effort that is being made in Winsloe to preserve the little brick United Church out there. It was “retired” among others, when the new United Church opened out that way last year. It is an emotional effort. Little buildings like this one are scattered all over the Island. They are churches, halls, schools and sometimes stores and then we have lost so many of them, too. They identified communities. They were supported by communities and for a time many of them were ignored by communities, but when the chips are down someone always comes to the front and recognizes their responsibility and tries to save them.

Today with school consolidation, closing of grocery stores and service stations we have so few buildings to mark a community's centre and its distinctiveness. To all that add the demographic shifts in our rural communities where the numbers of people “born” in a community are changing every day. So we are forced to ask, who cares about our landmarks?

We do know for certain that those old buildings were built with the hard work and the dedication of our ancestors. We so often treat that effort with disrespect,

but I have seen many Islanders rise to the challenge. Time and time again, too, I have seen new Islanders, new residents, often care more than we do ourselves about our landmarks.

So what does a community do to save an old building in their midst? Fortunately, most of these buildings aren't large. They are easy to put into a state of repair and are not difficult to keep that way. A new use might be less clear, but maybe that is something that doesn't have to be worried about quite so much – and so early. “If you build it they will come” could well be the answer to the problem. Even if it isn't, some buildings preserved on their landscape could be consider as a piece of public art waiting quietly for someone to love them.

We have many examples with those projects where all the questions were not answered at the beginning and their success today proves everyone right. Orwell Corner Hall is a good example. Indian River Church is another. The school house in Montecello is another example. The Pleasant Valley Church is another. I think if you spoke to the people connected with those project they would all say how surprised they were as to how things worked out and as to where the support came from.

Government make-work projects still help a great deal and every now and then there are some dollars from somewhere or other that can help. The additional bonus

of taking on a project to preserve a special building is that it teaches you so much and gives you a cause that you will never regret. You grow.

It was comforting to hear the Speech From The Throne last week making, a mild I agree, reference to preserving our communities and heritage. That was, never the less, a first and we must not let them off the hook. Go to your MP and share your problem with him. Then seek some experienced people who have worked on old buildings. Your going to find that there is a lot of bad advice out there so you have to moving carefully. Go after the province, too, and convince them that they have a responsibility here, after all they market our heritage and our culture and it works. People enjoy the landmarks on our landscape. They'd lose so much if it wasn't for the likes of you caring people who take on these projects with their hearts on their sleeves; projects that have far more honesty than the like of Gateway Village , that is simply "The Geography of Nowhere". Why do people take comfort in building pretent-old when for so much less we can save the real thing and there is a story conected with it every time.

So my friends from Winsloe, don't give up. You have a treasure on our landscape,preserve it, enjoy it and they will come. Now I must go and help save The Hertz Hall in East Royalty.

New Federal Government Building

Thursday, February 8, 2001

While I was in Victoria the big announcement was made about a new federal building in Charlottetown. What a gift to the city. It will be located on the block between Euston and Fitzroy Streets and University [once Great George Street] Avenue. It is one of the best corners in the city with an exceptional vista of Province House. So once we say hurrah, we must then ask quickly, what will they put there? What will the site backs be , the scale, the building material and the relationship to the streetscape. It is an exciting design project and we must watch careingly.

The block is an interesting one and has a long history, if for no other reason that my sister Betty was born on that block. We lived for a few years on Queen Street , next to Cutcliffe's in a fine double tenement house that was torn down about 30-40 years ago. There is not much left of the block, and it does have that terrible swath of a parking lot through the middle, but in its day it was a pretty lively block. It seems as if it began to be built on about the 1830's and it is very possible that the houses that were along Euston Street might have been the early ones. We should look at what is left carefully.

I remember a very old house on the middle of the Queen Street side. Little Ruby lived there. What was her last name? On Fitzroy Street the Haszard's had a fine house with chickens in the back yard and there was next door a real three tenement – Boston style – where the Wilson's moved after they left King Street. There was another house I don't remember very well and then the Halloran house that is still there that dates back to the 1850's. It has beautiful lines but it has suffered a lot lately. It would be interesting if someone could find a place to move it.

The history of the block from this house around to Great George is all tied in with Carriage makers – Peter Halloran, Robert Scott and, further around the corner, the Larges. Carriage making was a noble trade and very busy one. The corner we remember as The Flower Cart had been a grocery store for many years: McQuaid's and then McCabe's. After the 30's a good part of this block was taken over by the automobile businesses; Ives, Ralph Jenkins and later David Stewart. The Dominion Hotel, with a livery stable out back, was an important landmark on Great George Street until it was torn down in 1959. It was a handsome balanced building built in the 1850's by Henry Bovyer Smith as a public inn and tavern. It was perfectly located for that. A.N.Large operated for awhile after Smith and then Harry Murphy took it over. Proud and Moreside's were in the centre of the block for years and so was Long – later Pickard's –

Tannery. Esso Service Station was a landmark for years until it closed last year. Dear Art Roper and then Bobby Taylor carried on very busy service stations there. Other businesses tied to this block were Cutcliffe's Funeral Home and Martin's Garage. Tiddles Howatt, Leo and the rest lived for a long time on the Euston Street side. It is a proud block and has far more history than I remember, so if any one can add more, please do so.

Successful Islanders Abroad

Wednesday, February 28, 2001

Recently I told you we had many – in all walks of life – Islanders that truly could be called Successful Islanders Abroad. There are so many that it will take we a while to cover them, but just to be devilish I want to tell you of a couple tonight.

There was for instance, William Nelson LePage, who went to Gloucester Mass. when he was young – he manufactured a glue from fish oil or some special mucilage material from a fish gland or somewhere – but you got it – it ended up as LePage's Glue. He went to town and had an advertizing campaign of extraordinary dimension. It didn't end perfectly, but what the heck, when you look at Lepage's Glue today you can salute William Nelson and recognized that he's rooted on this little Island.

Then would you believe Buffalo Bill Cody ! This one is less clear, but for years there was a group of Islanders who swear that the gentleman was born on PEI – even tho’ there is a “birthplace” to visit in Iowa. There was one Islander who caught the Buffalo Bill show in England, who claimed that after the show when Buffalo Bill was asking where people were from, claimed to the man who said PEI “That’s where I was born, too”

The story is that Buffalo Bill was born in Albion Bay down near Sturgeon on a farm owned by Dick Creed. It is said that he left with his parents when he was 18 months old. Supporters of this theory, in addition to people in Albion, were George Leard of Souris and John Cairns from Dunstaffnage. “Tiny” Matheson wrote many articles on this subject.

I have others that interest me – men who were active in the construction business, for instance. One I want to learn more about is William Weeks who had left here about 1880. He was the son of Richard builder/architect and who influenced his son into the same field. He settled in San Francisco and became very successful. He designed so many of the largest and “most costly buildings” in the state. Some day we must get that list together and arrange a “cultural exchange” so we can really understand this “successful Islander abroad”. More about this another time.

An Island Get Together

Wednesday, February 28, 2001

Not that any Islander worth his salt would want to leave this glorious winter and go to Florida, but just in case you did and you don't know about this get together I have permission to tell you. Alec Campbell [yes, the Honourable] and Con Zaat are planning an Islanders Day in Fort DeSoto on March the 11th and the welcome is out for any Islander in the area to join in. It starts at 11 a.m. and your asked to bring food, lawn chairs and musical instruments – if you are so inclined. Not, of course, would I want to leave this glorious winter, but if I did I would certainly enjoy being with you all for that event. Have fun and don't forget to sing The Island Hymn and O Canada!!!

Gaelyne Craig Gabora

Wednesday, February 28, 2001

I noticed in the Guardian the other day that Gaelyne had passed away in White Rock, B.C. on February 1. She is survived by her husband Taras and three sisters and two brothers. In the late forties, Gaelyne appeared at Notre Dame, I think just to take music. She was very good. She and Maureen Blake could sing like angels. Gaelyn might have been one, but not Maureen! Gaelyn was a “star” of the Music Festival many times and went on to

make a career of music. We lost track of her and that's too bad. Anyway, think on her.

Roller Coaster Ride

Wednesday, February 28, 2001

As much as I truly prize the contacts I'm making with this adventurous web site, when I must talk about what happens to me personally I get pretty up tight and that is truly what has happened to me in the last couple of weeks and it froze me. But as each day passes and I received your messages by web, e-mail, mail and telephone, I am overwhelmed by your support and love. Because of all of you I can now say out loud – that I am going to receive the Order of Canada [in late May, I think] and I did have Her Excellency Adrienne Clarkson come to see my house on Sunday the 11th.

I did know about the Order of Canada since the day I went to Victoria for Christmas. I opened the letter [that I thought was a Christmas Card from Rideau Hall] somewhere over Manitoba. Honestly I had stuffed my mail into my pocketbook at the last minute and thought somewhere over the country that I should get it organized. Oh what a Canadian happening – and I could not even tell the person next to me! I have always felt that flying over Canada is a most Canadian thing to do – but to open up a letter re O of C was almost more than I could absorb.

The envelope had “confidential” written out strong so I had to wait until Valentines Day [what a Valentine] when the public announcement was made , to tell most of you. I did tell my sisters, Mary Liz, Hon. Gilbert, Curtis, Johanna and very few others, but some of you I simply couldn't trust. I am not being inducted in February, but likely in late May, altho' it's still written in pencil. Curtis Barlow has promised a party in Ottawa. I'm bring the lobster and my family, and we are going to have a wonderful time – so if you're in Ottawa around that time be sure to let us know. I can't of course get you into Rideau Hall, but I'll have some pull with that party.

It is very important to remember that many of you – and some very dear people no longer with us – had a big part to play in this. “If it hadn't been for you, if it hadn't been for me, if it hadn't been for all of us, I wonder where we'd be...” so I say thank you from the bottom of my heart and let us hope that this recognition for heritage will help move our causes along.

Now I have to tell you about Her Excellency, The Governor General's visit to my house . She had mentioned last summer that she wanted to see the house, but the day it was convenient for her I had to conduct an Elderhostel Tour. I told her I'd be most honoured, but it would have to be next time. When she was coming down to the East Coast Music Awards, she had her aide call to see if it could happen this time. The aide and an RCMP gentleman came to call and we discussed it – all

the time me stressing “it is a work in progress”. A couple of weeks later it was confirmed that she would arrive after church service at St. Peter’s on Sunday, the 11th. Perfect, but then I had to clean the house. This was going to be a four kleenex job plus a few buckets. The elements have been playing havoc with a lot of houses around this winter and mine was no exception. Snow on the roof is more than 30 inches thick and the ice build up around the edges is scary . For the GG I got a lot chopped off and it dealt with the leak in the laundry room etc. When she arrived the house looked pretty presentable. It was nice when I had the two fireplaces going and fresh bread out of the oven – thse things can cover a multitude.

It was a perfect visit. She was so easy and so were her staff of five. We sat around the kitchen/dining room, picked at food and talked about old houses, the crazy condition of the house when I bought it, about bootlegging and scrips, Nellie my dog, Curtis in Ottawa and about leaks [Rideau Hall, too] and about the ECMA. She and her entourage had been to the Old Dublin Pub until 2 o’clock the night before! I would love to have had a picture of her car with the official flag flying parked outside of my house. I am sure that morning with security etc around, my neighbours must have thought I was being raided.

I was honoured, of course, by her visit, but I was especially pleased that all of us who work for the heritage cause were recognized by her visit to the house.

The Forum

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

Driving down Fitzroy Street the other day I was taken back to see the vacant lot where the Charlottetown Forum once stood. I was reminded that I had promised to write about it and its memories. So here goes, but remember the memories will be mine and belong to my generation and, of course, except for a few figure skating lessons and some skates – around and around – I never really did know the life inside of the forum very well.

At its prime , it was a wonderful Art Deco building. Officially opened in December 1931, the interior was alive with excitement and the feeling of having arrived. It was advertized as the “outstanding model of modern artificial rink architecture”. Imagine! The Gyro Club had brought in an ice show that they promised to be “the nearest thing to a continuous crescendo of joy even in this unretrospective age” It sounded erotic.

Altho’ the newspaper coverage mentioned all the details of the building and all the contractors that provided the various services, the architects were never mentioned. It was just as if all the sub contractors had brought together the parts for a big pot luck supper.

James Harris and Bone Blanchard have an ad in the newspaper congratulating everyone and telling us that they were the associate architects, but that's as far as it goes.

Each generation has its own flood of memories, but I well remember that place that seated over 3000 people being full to capacity for many events. It could have been Ice Follies under the direction of Wallie Scantlebury, school ice sports or those competitive hockey games between West Kent and Queen Square or Prince of Wales and St. Dunstan's or all of us against Summerside. Lots of names come to mind that made those events work: Coach Art Perry, Pius Callaghan, referee Jackie Kane [grandfather to Lorie] Billie Archie and Bill Reid, Spy and Charlie Ready, the Kennedys' and Luker Burke or Don Large in the nets – even Alf Hennessey played that position and well, too, but that was just a little ahead of me. My heros were the line of Keith Dalziel, Howard Glover and Orin Carver.

Hockey has all changed, but maybe I'm just disconnected with it now altho I do know a young man of about 10 who is a very proud goalie and those father drives him all over the Island to play in BIG competitions. I also know Alan Andrew who has been holding great hockey schools on this Island and has created around that an tourist industry all by himself. The three guys I know who came from Centre Island, New York and kept bring their friends are playing and

teaching hockey all over North America – so it can't be all wrong now.

I want you to read this Guardian report of a West Kent/Queen Square game in February 1949 : “...in a wide open pulsating battle that reached its highest pitch in a thrill packed third period West Kent School team last night retained their City School title and won the C F Archer Trophy....” Can't you just feel the tension? Who was writing those reports and has he followed his calling??

As I said each generation gathers its own memories – so I've been pretty personal with the names I've mentioned, but I remember one night that all generations came together and that was for the performance of figure skater, Barbara Ann Scott in February 1950. Still fresh from the 1947 Olympics and still the pride of Canada, she made that Forum electric that night and, yes, it is true that the Notre Dame Choir did do the warm up for Gracie Fields on June 21, 1950 and after that whether it was David MacDonald Stewart in his racoon coat at the Brier, those hockey games or just a plain skate – The Forum offers memories to so many of us.

An Anniversary

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

It is almost two weeks since I passed the anniversary of my launch into cyberspace and I should have taken that opportunity to say Thank You to my doula, Peter

Rukavina for introducing me to the 21st Century and being patient with me through my ever-learning time. I've let him down many times especially with my long pauses. It isn't that I don't think of it and him and you a lot of the time and I do find – or stumble upon – so many great tales [or causes] that I want to share, but I am busy and rather focused on my dream of layering the history of Charlottetown in a way that can be used on a Geographic Information System whenever the City gets really equipped.

And I do have my little house to look after and cook a bit and talk to friends and laugh and I do try to go to the archives every day for a few hours. I am reading the 1930's now and it is getting very close to our real memory days, but it is the depression days and things were really slow here in town and I read a lot before I find something that excites me. There weren't really any good fires or murders just the hum drum of life and in 1936 they were still having snow in April. Oh Gad!

Back to this Cyper Space. It is peculiar. Peter tells me I have had over 70,000 hits this year! He can break it down to country and subject-of-interest so it is rather readable. For instance, I know that my tale about Trudeau was the most popular and that my mention of Pierre Berton brought in 39 hits! Curtis Barlow brought in 7 hits and my sad story of Wendell Boyle, 4. I can't even remember mentioning leonida roses that had four hits. I'm glad patriotism had 10 hits, but why would

Maurice Richard have 27? It all seems illogical to me on the big picture, but I am very driven by you my dear friend who contact me regularly and obviously make up in some peculiar way 70,000 hits. Oh yes, Peter said there was that interest in Hennessey Cognac!

My promise is to do better in the next year – and did I tell you I was going to get a scanner and that will be fun. There are so many Island stories. Thank you, thank you, Peter and all of you.

A Post Office Delivered My Post

Wednesday, March 14, 2001

This is a talk I gave on Heritage Week to the Lucy Maude Montgomery Lecture Series. It is a little long and a bit peculiar because it was written as a speech.

The Little House That was Delivered By Post (And the mysterious Stan of Green Gables)

I am going to talk about Stan first, since your curiosity about him probably brought you here tonight.

Stan was the only child of a Gravenhurst, Ontario dentist and he studied Architecture at U of T, graduating in 1948. The friends that graduated with him remember him as rather eccentric even then. Those were the days of post-Bauhaus architecture and most students there were interested in modern architecture. As a matter of

fact, they got very little on their own history of North American architecture. A situation that we have suffered from greatly. There was an exception on the faculty at U. of T however: Prof. Eric Arthur was a believer and a supporter of the architecture that surrounded him.

Arthur would send his students off to measure and draw the old buildings in Toronto. He generally steered them towards Classical and Georgian Revival styles as a way of teaching them an appreciation of proportion. Stan was an apt pupil in these courses. As a matter of fact his wife became one of Eric Arthur's research assistants so Arthur continued on as an influence and as a friend. Today Stan White would be looking closely at the Peter Halloran House at 95 Fitzroy Street and Public Works Canada would be listening.

Stan worked for over 25 years for Public Works Canada. He was a rare bird there, too. They generally let him look after "interiors", but his influence was felt in many directions. His beliefs led to the establishment of FHBRO, that is The Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office. It is the department that reviews, protects and forces a second look at the federally-owned heritage building stock. And that is no mean stock. Stan affected that on the coat tails of the loss of so many wonderful public buildings through-out our land; like our own old post office building in Queen Square. He talked adaptive re-use and rehabilitation. He saved the Georgetown Post Office and he played a major role in restoration of the

East Block on Parliament Hill. He also was part of the generifaction of the market area in Ottawa. He moved in and worked from the inside. And what I care about deeply is, that he was the instigator of Tin House Square just off Sussex Drive. Look at it the next time you go to Ottawa. Its focal point is the 1905 tin facade that had decorated the house of a local tinsmith. When the house was demolished Stan saved and storied the facade and found it the perfect piece to hang on a large bare brick wall in the square – a piece of public art. I spent many enjoyable hours at the Whites’ over looking that space.

But the first time I met Stan White I was ready to “tweak his nose”. It was the summer of 1972. I was one of the two paid staff at the PEIHF and we were very busy. ‘73 Centennial Year was around the corner and we had just acquired Beaconsfield and also had a responsibility at Green Park, Orwell Corner and Basin Head – among other things. It was late on a Friday afternoon in August and I walked into the office we had up on Kent Street to be stopped by this person who put his both hands on my shoulders [he had been trying all day to catch me] and he said “I need a building in Cavendish by Monday”. There were no spare buildings in Cavendish, but as the story unfolded I knew we had to give it some effort.

Public Works Canada had been commissioned to build a Post Office in Cavendish. Stan had gone out and surveyed the situation. He was not impressed. That

intersection drove him crazy – how was he going to add to it in any appropriate way? He decided it had to reflect somehow the Green Gables story and that gentleness, but what to do? He was pretty theatrical about things – weak on details, but creative. He was in “a part of his life” a set designer and he did wonderful sets... so he liked theatre.

I went out on the weekend to see Dr. Bolger who confirmed that there were no spare buildings in Cavendish and at the same time he bemoaned the fact that the MacNeill House had been torn down. Lights went on. I hadn't remembered at that moment the post office connection with LMM and certainly Stan did not even know about it. I remembered we had recently been given a wood-cut of the house and I knew, architecturally, it was a familiar design on the Island. What they call today Maritime Vernacular. We got a copy of the wood-cut and sent it off to Stan – who at this time was going mad over the post office connection – and we sent him off Barbara Humphreys and to test the newly established Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings. With all its faults and incompleteness it came out with 110% for what we needed. It spit out so many examples of similar houses from all over the Island that Stan was ecstatic. In a second Stan made his choice and pointed one of his weirdly shaped fingers to a house that was at Rocky Point.

Stu Veale, who was the director of Public Works here in town, took off to look at the house. It was right down on the Rocky Point Wharf, half over the bank, shuttered up and FOR SALE. That was it – the building would be moved.

There was a funny story there, too. Walter Shaw , former premier and not long out of politics, was on the board of the HF and of course Rocky Point was in his district. He got up on his high horse about the Feds taking an historic building out of Rocky Point and you can just hear him. Well, that cause did frizzle out and the house started on its way – around 40 miles to Cavendish. It was moved in one piece with Alexis McQuaid at the helm.

All I know is that it was an adventure that involved a slip or two, the taking down of one side of a bridge and things like that.

When it arrived at the Cavendish intersection the holler went up – raised by the business community – wax museum etc. about this wreck of a building that had been moved into their midst. That in itself was ironic since Stan felt their buildings were far more ugly than his newly found treasure.

It was, and is, a dear little house and Stan's theatrical background snapped into play when he began to address it. The outside he restored lovingly and then turned his attention on the interior. The Post Office – at the time – wanted a place to exhibit and market their

numismatic paraphernalia. So they wanted a setting for that and they wanted a seasonal post office. Stan designed an addition for their practical needs and then set to work on the house.

Wallpaper was a big thing and William Morris who in his day would have had no impact what so ever on the little house was called on for the parlour, the hall and the post office room. The house had many nice details, the stairs for instance. So it was papered and painted and Irene Rogers and I laughed about the electrical and heating intrusions. Stan wouldn't mind then at all.

Now the place was ready for furnishing. Stan wanted mailboxes for the “pretend” post office. We were all at a meeting in Stu Veales's office and I mused that the post office that I remembered, and loved, was the one in Victoria By The Sea – it had little boxes with windows and lots of brass. Stan said perfect “We want that”. I reminded him that my memory was at least 30 years old, but he didn't hear or listen. They'd go to Victoria [that's PEI] and they did that very afternoon. They found it – up in a barn covered with straw and bought it right then and there. It turned out to be the one that had been in Cape Traverse in the ice boat time. What a treasure!

Other things that Stan wanted were a Franklin Stove for the parlour, a stove for the Post Office, spittoons, lamps, carpet, a ticking clock, an “In God We Trust”, etc AND a set of parlour furniture covered with horse hair!

And he expected us to find it for him. A “set of furniture covered in horse hair”, I said, “No way, Stan, I’ve not seen a full set in years and if we could find one the horsehair would be gone or torn”. He didn’t listen.

It was such a busy summer Green Park, Basin Head, Orwell Corner were opening and we were all over the place. George Mullally from Souris called me one day to say that John Milton Dingwell’s house in Fortune was going to be sold and we should come up and see if there was anything that the Foundation might need. So on my way up to Basin Head one day I met George and John Francis, who was looking after things, and we went into the house. There in the first room we went into – the parlour – was a complete set of parlour furniture covered in horsehair – in perfect condition!

This whole project was peppered with serendipity events. I forget where we got the stoves and the ticking clock, but I know it all came together for a grand opening on August 25, 1973. The Post Master General was there and so was Dr. Stuart MacDonald and his family. Stan had insisted that the MacNeil post office genealogy be hung on the wall and, of course, he also insisted that it be done in needlework. Marjorie Wylie in Summerside did a most beautiful job of that.

Stan, had also, put great emphasis on the landscaping creating a setting that was perfect for a little house of its time. He did not get the privy that he wanted and that he was hoping to talk the telephone company

into using as a pay telephone booth! But what ever, Stan did become for ever after to be know as Stan of Green Gables to us and a lot his friends.

Was it a good project – it’s hard to say. It was a new experience for the Post Office and I’m sure moved their adaptive re-use program along. Did the Wax Museum and the Motel across the road come to terms with the little building. I never heard anything more on that. The project did add a tender little touch to the roadscape. The church next door have done little landscaping and Cavendish still has a lot of growing pains that are hard to understand. The street lights that I found there on my visit last week appear pretty incongruous to me and I’m sure they would to Stan. Rather urban for such a rural setting.

I know the house and its similarities to the McNeill house has probably been a problem to Jeannie and John McNeill, but we’ll ask them to speak to that. But in Stan’s mind it was never to be the MacNeill House. His concerns were more landscape directed and he certainly was the stage designer through out.

I never was there much after it opened to know how the public responded, and now it is all changed inside anyway, The flair is gone, so is the horsehair set and the embroidered family tree. The post office boxes remain but they are in an unfriendly corner that doesn’t make sense and the rest is simply a hard edged display on colourless walls of information that must be read to be

experienced. Fashions change, history will have to decide which was best, but my friend Stan who before he died moved back to Gravenhurst “Gravey”, [he called it] with his wife Huguette whom he called Pussie and, who use to cut his hair herself, I always said with the help of a bowl, continued to care and carry his message to all who would listen. He received the Gabrielle Leger Medal from Heritage Canada in 1983 – a medal he greatly deserved and Canada is still benefitting from his time on earth.

I think tomorrow in his memory we should call up Public Works Canada and tell them of the beautiful proportions of the Halloran House on Fitzroy Street and how every effort should be made to preserve it. There would be no better way to say Thank You to Stan of Green Gables.

The Cummiskeys

Wednesday, March 14, 2001

Dan Driscoll, a P.E. Islander now in India, has caused me to contemplate on the Cummiskeys’ at Webster’s Corner on the outskirts of Fort Augustus. He had thought that I had bought that wonderful old mansard roof house, but I never did, but I do have some stories.

The Hon. James H. Cummiskey was one of our more colourful politicians. Elected first in 1897, he went on to win again and again, ending his career as Speaker of the House and I think dying in saddle about 1912.

His term as Commission of Public Works [we'd call him Minister, now] is full of stories and great speeches. One of them has to do with him almost drowning at Cranberry Wharf. He was getting into a punt to cross the river when he was plunged into the water, heavy overcoat, brief case and all. It was November, and I'm sure to the surprise of many, the close call in the cold waters, took his voice away for many days.

He was also a merchant and had his store at the Corner where he build "a beautiful new mansion " in 1883. It was in this beautiful mansion that I found the Speaker's Chair that obviously had belonged to the Upper House, when we had one before 1873. It was an almost match to the one in the Legislative Council Chamber that would have then been the Lower House.

It was about 1970 when I dropped in to visit his daughter Kate MacKenzie, after many invitations. She wanted me to see the Speaker's Chair that her father had been given, as she said that was the custom when the Speaker left the position. I had seen many arm chairs like the ones in Province House all over the Island; picked up, I always thought, by "self-appointed" preservers when chairs would be needing repair or whatever. I certainly thought I was going to see just another arm chair as Kate opened the parlour door. No, what I saw was a real Speaker's Chair and it took my breath away! I was able to buy that chair from her for

the Heritage Foundation and we had it in storage when Parks Canada did the fine job of renovations on Province House. We gave them the chair and they had it beautifully restored. When you visit the Confederation Chamber you will see it and just say a little prayer for The Hon. J. H. Cummisky for being a “self-appointed” preserver.

Beware the Ides Of March

Friday, March 16, 2001

Beware. Remember I mentioned that we had all this snow and build up of ice and the cost of getting rid of same. Well yesterday for me it took on a whole different perspective. Three of us were enjoying a late lunch in my dining room/kitchen when we heard a gad awful noise. Investigation found my car that was parked in my very narrow driveway covered with the snow and ice from my dear neighbour’s roof. Not only was it covered, but it was penetrated by both.

What a mess; broken windshield, very badly dented engine hood and a very intended roof in more than one place. Jill, my neighbour and I had worked out a very civilized agreement worthy of we down-town-livers that share driveways [1/3 – 2/3’s], but we never thought to cover this kind of thing. Her insurance person is talking to my insurance persons, so they’ll work it out, but what a shock.

Today I was working in the kitchen when I heard a similiar sound. Dashing to the front door I found my ice on the front had slipped and landed on the sidewalk in front. Fortunately no one was passing and the car parked in front received no damage. Just luck. As I've said "Beware The Ides Of March"

Happy Saint Patrick's Day

Saturday, March 17, 2001

You know I am only a block and a half from the old Wellington Hotel on the corner of Great George Street and Sydney where from the 1820's the Feast of Saint Patrick's was celebrated in great style.

It was there in April 1825 that the Benevolent Irish Society of PEI was founded and where they continued to meet for at least 20 years and where they toasted and toasted on March 17th. Just read the toasts they gave in 1840 — The Queen, the Day, the Army and Navy, the Land we live in, the Native Benevolent Society, Lady Mary Fitzroy, the Lieut-Governor's wife, the Ladies Benevolent Society, our Loyal Fellow Subjects in the colony, Agriculture, Commerce and Fisheries, and Land of Our Forefathers – Erin go bragh. Now as if that wasn't enough they continued with a toast to the Press, the Members for Charlottetown, The Irish Emigrant, Daniel O'Connell, The Stewarts [?], The Governor General of British North America, The Chief Justice and The Bar of Prince Edward Island, the president of the

Benevolent Irish Society who was then Francis Longworth and the evening continued. I wonder if the Old Dublin Pub, just a half a block further up. will do as well tonight.

Tribute to Poetry

Wednesday, March 21, 2001

Now special days are coming around again as I pass my first year on the Web and today I find it is once again National Poetry Day and I like poetry. I particularly like to investigate Islanders who wrote poetry. It is amazing how many we had. As a matter of fact the Poet Laureate for the USA a few years ago was born in Summerside. His name was Mark Strand. His father was in the Air Force, I think. You can, or at least could, find him many times in the New Yorker over the last couple of decades. I'd like to bring him back for a reading some day. Here's Number XIX from Dark Harbour : I go out and sit on my roof, hoping

*That a creature from another planet will see me
And say, "There's life on earth, definitely life;
"See that earthling on top of his house,
His manifold possessions under him,
Let's name him after our planet," Whoa!*

I was part of a group who brought another former Islander home to read her poetry. It was at Beaconsfield and it was a special night [even if she almost did fall off

the platform]. She was Margaret Furness MacLeod. One of the poems she read I should have shared with you a couple of days ago when spring was about to happen [is that true, we have a storm warming out for tomorrow!]. It is called Tomorrow will Be Spring and it was inspired when she was trying to talk her father into going to visit her in Montreal – after a long winter in Vernon -

*Ah, no, my child, I cannot go with you,
Tomorrow will be Spring.
Daily the sun is adding moments to the light
and one week hence will set
behind the Cavanaugh house.
Lonely? Why yes, so many friends gone,
but then there is the Vernon
flowing by my door.
I love the crunching sound of ice in Spring
leaving the brick-red banks
And clasping, lover-like, a willow
with your mother's name carved on the bark
No child, I cannot go with you.
Tomorrow will be spring.*

The night she read at Beaconsfield I brought her supper over to the motel and she had a gentle meal and read over for me the poems she wanted to perform that night. It was very special and tears flowed down my eyes as I sat on floor at her feet.

She was a beautiful woman and intense in her belief of this Island.

Margaret Furness MacLeod was born at Vernon Bridge – it's over a hundred years ago because she was

born in 1886. She lived most of her life off the island, but she came home as often as she could. She loved the island and taught many of her family and neighbours how special we were.

Orwell Corner likely wouldn't have happened if her influence had not been felt. She was a great supporter of the Heritage Foundation and understood how hard we must work to preserve for another generation. Lets end with a Haiku of hers:

*Angry winds howling
Over a leafless forest
with nothing to blow.*

International Theatre Week

Friday, March 30, 2001

This being International Theatre Week, it causes one to ponder this community's history of theatre. It is a long one.

I recall a 1818 newspaper advertizing The Charlottetown Amateur Theatre and by 1827 a call for proposals for building "the new intended theatre in this town". It is not clear whether they managed to build at that time, but it is obvious that the interest was here. In 1854 The Temperance Hall, at the NE corner of Prince and Grafton Street, was built and many fine cultural events were held there. The changes in its name confirm the interest ; Philharmonic Hall, The Athenaeum, Gospel

Army Hall to name a few. That building had certainly encouraged the community.

After the Johnny Hatch fire in 1883, that destroyed what is now the Bank of Commerce corner, the community was gungho enough to consider the need to build a 2500-3000 seat hall. When the Masons build their Temple [a portion of which was later to become The Prince Edward Theatre] in 1890 on Grafton Street, Charlottetown had it's first official theatre altho' it was a long way from 2500 seats. The Strand Theatre in the stone Market Building and the Lyceum in the old Bible Christian Church on Prince Street entered the scene about this time, too.

They were not of the same league. As the years went by those building did not meet the needs of the community either. When the new Prince of Wales College was being built in 1931 the lobbying was strong to include a "suitable entertainment hall" for the community. They sited as their main reason the fact that The Prince Edward charged too much making it "practically impossible to come through with anything more than a meagre balance..." So we saw, in our day, PWC being the location for Community Concerts, Music Festivals and many theatrical presentations. It was never as fine as the Prince Edward, of course, and it continued to be the location where Easter Monday or Saint Patrick's Plays were held and Red Glove Revues and the like. When the Little Theatre Guild was begun in

1936 they could be found performing anywhere there was a stage; The Old Lyceum, Hertz Hall at Trinity Church, and for really big shows the Prince Edward, until finally they found their permanent home on Willow Street.

There were other places like church halls and the Holy Name Hall and later there were the school auditoriums. The point is that amateur theatre, supported by the occasional travelling professional group, was alive and well in this community for many, many years. Theatre was held for the enjoyment of the audience and the performers not for the Bus Tours, a problem that plagues us today.

The Silent Balloon Protest

Saturday, March 31, 2001

[Note: this is Peter here; Catherine will no doubt come and edit this description sometime soon; for now, the words are only mine] This afternoon, a rag-tag group of downtown residents (okay, it was just two of us) staged a small silent demonstration of the height of a new condominium development proposed for the area south of Founders' Hall on Charlottetown's waterfront off Prince Street. As proposed by a private developer, the development would be 5 stories, or 76' tall, towering over the old machine shed which is becoming Founders' Hall. We raised our three giant yellow balloons to 76 feet in the air to demonstrate just how out of proportion

this development would be. A good time was had by all. City Hall has scheduled a public meeting for Tuesday, April 3 to discuss the issue.

I'm [CGH] back and is it not great to have a doula who has a digital camera and the ability to orgnaize a page so well. Just thought I'd add that none of us are against having good up-scale apartments/condos added to our downtown. We need them and because we really believe we are living in the best part of town – BUT – there is a scale issue and to deprive that great building the Old Machine Shed with all its new and expensive windows of all southern light shows simply poor planning. Our waterfront is precious and deserves the most talented planning heads to be put together for all our benefits. Spaces between buildings are as important as the buildings themselves. Please contemplate this issue carefully and come to the meeting on Tuesday and be heard. Let us drink to City Beautiful.

Joy of Music

Monday, April 2, 2001

March 21st was Johann Sebastian Bach's 316th birthday and we still can be lulled into a dreamy state by his music. As someone wrote "inscrutable, but unspeakably wonderful". Lets move closer to home. The great jazz player Moe Koffman who passed away this week, Murray Adaskin recently celebrated his 90 plus birthday to name two. I met Murray Adaskin at the Lieut-

Governor's levee in Victoria at New Years. I felt honoured, but the event that touched my sisters and myself most closely this week was the death of Boris Berlin. Boris Berlin taught at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and his tasks included arranging and composing many of the pieces of music that we learned when we were taking piano lessons. He came to Notre Dame to hear our music exams on a couple of occasions. He was the one who when he tested my sister Betty, gave her a silver medal for her performance. It was no wonder that when the Order of Canada list came out in February and his name was on it, that the Smith sisters were as excited about him being there as they were me. We truly hoped that we would see him at the installation. It came too late.

Connections

Monday, April 2, 2001

Having lived in Charlottetown all my life [well almost] and, then add to that, my parent's life in the city before I was born and we, my family, cover almost all of the 20th century.

My father came to town to go to Prince of Wales and then Saint Dunstan's. He peppered those years with an irregular career in teaching at Stanchel and in North Wiltshire before establishing himself at Queen Square School where he seriously committed himself to saving money to go on to finish at SDU and then on to McGill

to study medicine. Things must have been tough when you review the salaries of those days. I'm sure he had help from his uncles Dr. John B. Trainor in Fall River, Mass. and Fr. Tom Trainor in New Bedford , Mass and Fr. Mat Smith in Kinkora. Peter Trainor, too, helped his sister, my grandmother, by giving her work in his store on Pownal Street [where he was murdered in 1941 fortunately after she was gone!!] .

That little Irish grandmother became a widow in 1899 when she was 36 years old and was left with 5 boys and two girls. Before the first quarter of the twentieth century had passed, and two generations away from Ireland, she had two priests, two doctors, a dentist and two nuns to love her. She certainly must have had help from extended family and I know the brothers and sisters helped one another.

UPEI President Wade MacLauchlan last week talked about entrepreneurial spirit in the educational system and I think Maplewood – a suburb of Kelly's Cross, had to have very special teachers. I remember my father and uncles getting together and talking about the teachers at SDU, too.

This wasn't exactly what I had intended to write about. I wanted to point out how all this background and roots effect my walk down a Charlottetown street today and how it drives my friends who have recently moved here crazy. It is a small community, you know.

But before I go there, it would be unfair to continue my story without pulling my mother into it. She, as a 3/4 Acadian and the other quarter Scotch Presbyterian, came to Charlottetown from Bloomfield and Summerside. She came to train in 1922 at the Charlottetown Hospital. [Well she had gone earlier to Notre Dame Academy like her mother and us]. After she graduated she went to work for Dr. S. R. Jenkins in his lovely little office at 55 Grafton Street. You probably have gathered that my mother and father met at the City Hospital. They were married in 1929. So you can see that over the years they shaped the community for me that I move in every time I leave my house.

Like the last few days, I met David McInnis. His grandfather and my father were such good friends. My father almost married Art McInnis Sr.'s sister until my mother intervened. My father was a pall bearer for Dr. Collins in Vernon River – David's great-grand-father and best man for his grand father.

The other day I had Jack Campbell here. We are on the Mayor's Arbor Society together. My dear little grandmother and my father had rented one of Tom Campbell's houses in the early 1920's – the one on the corner of Grafton and Pownal. Jack and his siblings were in and out to visit my grandmother all the time.

On Saturday, Bennett Carr came to my door. He is presently chair of CADC. I met Bennett first fifty years ago on March 26th. We double dated to the Garrison

Ball at the Charlottetown Hotel in 1951. It was my first formal dance and I went with Sydney Campbell and Bennett went with one of his cousins. We have come a long way. At that dance, we spent most of the time in a suite upstairs where the men could have their drinks. There would be no bar down stairs! I was really appalled because I wanted to go to a dance and dance! Anyway it has been interesting to know Bennett for that long and I somehow or other I don't think our time is over yet.

Well I think I mentioned to you that I am overwhelmed with the responsive I've had from my O of C. I imagine I am the only recipient to be warmly congratulated by a murderer, a paedophile, the bottle man and a cat lady all in one week. It is a small town.

The Palace

Monday, May 14, 2001

Palace in the dictionary means "the official residence of a king, emperor, bishop etc.," so when we were kids and referred to the building at 45 Great George Street as The Palace we were quite correct. A little ostentatious, but still strengthened by tradition. Certain frills and efforts add to a story and the importance and prestige of an institution and that's what the people of the Diocese of Charlottetown apparently wanted for their Bishop [and likely what the Bishop wanted for himself] back in 1868. They choose to build a magnificent structure on the best street in Charlottetown. What surprised me was

that the Palace predated the first stone Cathedral by over 28 years. In 1868, across Dorchester Street with its door facing south, stood the grand wooden church that had been built in 1843. At the time it was considered quite wonderful and it did have the only clock in town in its tower...

*How oft as a boy, when learning the time
And trying to decipher the ten from the nine,
Would its hands help me out in a friendly way.
At least I believe so—to this very day.*

*Like the oak and the ivy
My thoughts they entwine
Round the old Chapel Clock
And the men of its time
A lesson we learn from inanimate things
As the trees that we look at
From its embryo spring.*

(from a poem by A.W.Reddin)

The Diocese was firmly established with a centre piece on Great George Street and supported intellectually by the college at the edge of town. There is no question that the needs of the Diocese were quite different when those buildings were built. To begin with travel was more complex, visits were generally more extended and overnight guests were very common. Is its role so different today? Is this complex of church and house still not the

centre of the Diocese ? If not why is it still called a Basilica?

About three weeks ago a letter was distributed to the parishioners of St Dunstan's. The point of concern was The Palace and its future. It appears as if this Bishop has cut the ties with the official residence and it has landed on the lap of the parishioners of Saint. Dunstan's. Maybe I missed an act or two, but I don't remember hearing that this was ever officially done, so I would have thought that such a letter should have gone out to the entire Diocese and that the opinion of all would be important.

I do know, of course that the present, and previous, Bishop have been living in York Point. I was told that the house and property was a gift to Bishop James from this sisters and came on stream with no cost to the diocese. It is an expensive property assessed at \$322,600. The Palace is assessed at \$328,000. But, as I say, maybe the whole diocese have agreed that our Bishop should be living by himself in a country place overlooking the West River. I certainly agree that a person with the responsibilities of the Bishop of The Diocese of Charlottetown needs a gentle place of contemplation to go to now and then – often really, but I do not believe that the Bishop should not be a presence on Great George Street.

But back to the letter! It is the future of The Palace that is under discussion. It is clear that the needs as they

were first perceived have changed and a discussion at this time is a worthy one. Here are the options as they are listed in the letter:

1. Renovate for parish use as it is or make the building smaller – now does that mean lowering the roof or taking off the wing?
2. Renovate for alternate use like into office space or condominiums [does that mean the Diocese is going into the development business or, as they mention almost as a after thought, that it could be made into a retirement home for priests of the Diocese.]
3. Sell the building and investing the money in the church and/or build or buy a smaller house for the priests.
4. Tear down the rectory and build a new Parish House on the land. Well. Well. That simply does not make sense and is an insult to those who have worked to maintain a vibrant community in the downtown first and foremost for Charlottetownians and only down the list for tourists. We are talking about the church's congregation here.

So, with these four points, I see a number of issues suddenly opened up for discussion and they did ask for openness.

First what strikes me is the deep traditions of the church and the role of Saint Dunstons as the Basilica and seat of the diocese. This is the seat of the Bishop and where he resides. That was the basis behind the effort of our forefathers when the buildings were constructed. That tradition should be recognized.

Secondly, the priests in the Diocese ... who have given their life to the church should be provided for in their retirement in some building and likely in the city as many of them would wish. There are a number of options within existing facilities or in newly designed accommodations, but why not leave them with the familiar and the intellectually and spiritual stimulation of the activities of the Diocese. If the building is so excessive in size, is the addressing of a solution for this problem not simply a design one.

Thirdly, the parish itself must be served by having comfortable accommodations for its priests who work there – that is a given.

These three needs would more than fill the the square footage space of that building and the renovation costs could well be justified.

In the Charlottetown area are a number of pieces of land belonging to the Diocese that are not used or certainly under utilized. In addition they add nothing

visually to the community. I refer to the Rochford Square School site [assessment \$172,000.], the parking lots at the Queen Square School site [assessment \$172,000] and the Duffy site on the corner of Richmond and Prince [assessment \$63,000.] and the vacant lot on Sydney Street behind the Recreation Centre. There is also a vacant lot on King Street behind the Palace [assessment at \$30,000.]. One could add the Recreation Centre itself to that list since its activities offer little to the spiritual live of the parish. Its assessment that includes the lot on Sydney Street is about 1.8 million. The sale of these properties would offer an opportunity for the city to improve its streetscapes and provide dollars for the church to seriously address the problems with the keystone of the diocese [ie. church and Palace] . Until those issues are addressed you cannot cry poor.

One can regard the heritage designation of buildings of importance as a hinderance if that is the mind set, but I suggest it would be difficult to find the descendants of the people who put those buildings there in the first place who would not find comfort from that protection. Others might argue that these buildings are being kept up to satisfy the appearance of the community with tourism and such. But no, a place and its history and the comfort of its streetscape make up the ambience that people want to live in or they don't. Churches are stakeholders in the community in which their

congregations live and they must recognize their spiritual contribution to the landscape.

The challenge of being a downtown church is a difficult one as our cities undergo their evolutionary change. In Charlottetown we have eight churches below Euston Street – a number of them making a rich architectural contribution to our landscape. All of them in one degree or another with parking problems, preservation problems and certainly various congregational problems. We do not want to lose any of the downtown churches, but we recognize the incredible complexity of maintaining them. Before we take drastic measures, and lose what our forefathers left us, we must call together people to sit down with wisdom and discuss the issues. None of you are alone – or should be, to answer the problems by your lonesome. It is a community problem.

As for the Queen Square School site it should be acquired by the Province and become a building to fulfil a public need and on top of a two storey underground garage to be shared by “church and state”!!!! As far as use of such a building is concerned I’d suggest that it would be an ideal site for a Provincial Museum space with Public Archives and office related to the preservation and promotion of our distinct Island heritage.

Ponder carefully.

Museum Day and Arbor Day

Friday, May 18, 2001

This is International Museum Day and it is also Arbor Day on PEI. Some how in my mind the two events blend into one. Planting a tree or saving some thing for the next generation ties together. So today I must go out and do both. I hope some of you join me.

William Cobbett

Monday, May 21, 2001

One of the early descriptions of PEI, often quoted and very early was that of William Cobbett from his book *The Emigrant's Guide* [London 1829-30]. And here is what he said:

“The English colonies in North America consist of Lower and Upper Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Prince Edward’s Island the whole is wretchedly poor: heaps of rocks covered chiefly with fir trees. These countries are the offal of North America; they are the head, the shins, the shanks and the hoofs of that part of the world; while the United States are the sir-loins, the well covered ribs and the suet From Glasgow the sensible Scots are pouring out amain. Those that are poor and cannot pay their passage or can rake together only a trifle, are going to a rascally heap of sand, rock and swamp called Prince Edward Island, in the horrible Gulph of St. Lawrence ... that lump of worthlessness ... bears nothing but potatoes....”

The English Gardener So there that is how we were perceived my our friend Mr. Cobbett. Now who was Mr. Cobbett? I just happened to find out recently having purchased a reprint of his work *The English Gardener*; published the same year as the *Emigrant Guide*. In the introduction of the reprint he is described as a man – blunt, full of common sense, able to write with great clarity and yet with humor ... with amazing self-confidence.

William Cobbett Cobbett was born in 1762 and at age 21 he enlisted in the army, and rose to the rank of Sergeant major. He served in North America, bought his discharge and went to France. In 1792 he sailed for North America where he became a political publisher. He returned to England in 1800 and bought a farm and continued his writing. He ran into trouble of some sort and took off to America again and ended up farming in Long Island. He was back in England by 1819 running a seed farm , writing and at some point became a Member of Parliament. He published about 50 books and was died by 1835.

No record that I have ever seem tells us of his visit to PEI other than what is recorded in his book. A.H.Clark in *Three Centuries and The Island* thinks that that he visited about thirty years before the book was published and I would suggested he never made it to the south side of the Island, but just saw a few of our wonderful sand dunes.

I like this quote of his “It is far better to be in the greenhouse than to be blubbering over a stupid novel or, worse still, to be trapped in the injurious enjoyments of the card table”

Dr. John H. Maloney 1918-2001

Sunday, May 27, 2001

John H. Maloney came to Charlottetown in 1949 as an obstetrician and gynecologist for the newly formed Charlottetown Clinic. He is in the photography of the Medical Staff at the opening of the newly expanded Charlottetown Hospital in the spring of 1950. Fifty two years and there are few areas on this Island that have not been touched by his progressive thinking... not even to mention the 5000 babies [plus or minus] that he delivered. He gave we Islanders the support – oh maybe the nerve – to say what we were suppressing or was it simply the challenge to expand our thinking to another level.

The subjects he tackled were not easy. Even beginning with his hobby – archeology. We were still talking about who was married to who and he came along and to say the least dug deeper. He brought archeology into the 21st century on PEI. I don't know when he, Margarite and Byron Burns and Art Gallant got together, but I know to have a discussion on PEI about some 13,000 years ago was quite an evening. I

remember falling asleep on the floor one night as he and my brother-in-law talked about all of that.

Another time I remember walking the shores of Panmure Island looking for glass shards – blown ones – and having John pick up, right in front of me, a most beautiful arrowhead – and later, more of that glass we'd gone to find. Read his article in Canada's Smallest Province entitled "And in the beginning...." and you'd get an idea.

About the same time the PEI Historical Society who had been promised by Frank MacKinnon a solution to their exhibition problems at Confederation Centre, were realizing that it was not to be. John was the president of the Historical Society and everyone was discouraged. Most of us had given up, but not John. He had the sympathetic ear of Premier Alex Campbell and John had pretty well led the re-shaping of the Historical Society into the PEI Heritage Foundation [1970]. It was during the same time he and Dr. Gordon Lea and St. Clair Trainor and group of progressive city school board members took education in Charlottetown into modern times.

Bucking tradition is tough, but without question the biggest battle of the 20th Century on PEI, in my mind, was the PWC/Saint Dunstan's showdown. Dr. Mac Beck, John Eldon Green, John and a number of others took the high road and government under a very supportative Alex Campbell declared the almost

unbelievable – one university. We would not have had one hospital if it hadn't been for that.

Another thing – the Charlottetown Waterfront! The Charlottetown Area Development Corporation came on stream under John's Ministry of Development, when cities across the land were building highways across their waterfronts and regretting it. Not us. Under John Maloney that first CADC board stretched and grew and we have the bases of something we MUST work harder at shaping. And on it goes. As John would say etc., etc. and etc..

I never knew what the H stood for in the John H. Maloney until today. It was Henry. Those were not the kind of things you talked to John Maloney about. With John you talked ideas and hear stories and you could move from one subject to another in rapid succession. Last Monday night Margarite, John and I went to Sirenella's for dinner and I came home busily making up an agenda for the next time. We had no time to cover all the subjects that needed his input and we had been busy all winter and were behind. Now there is no next time. Even today as I read the National Post I wondered about John's input on such headings as "too posh to push", "Zula poison can destroy cancer cells" and about the conference about to begin "on the future of the left in Canada". And I certainly wanted his view point on the fate of The Palace. Any of those subjects could be a

great discussion interspersed with stories of his cat called “Churchill”.

How many of us said the last few days how he inspired us and helped us grow – gave us creditability. What a gift from a friend and how we will miss him. Sympathy and love to Margarite and his family and to his friends.

Ottawa Here We Come

Tuesday, May 29, 2001

The day of honours is at hand – Thursday. If you wish to see it you can watch CPAC on Saturday at either 3 or 8 Atlantic Daylight Saving Time. Those who have gone before say it is quite a wonderful event. I shall report next week.

The very joyful part is that my sisters, Betty from Victoria and Mary Claire from Calgary, niece Mona from Victoria, also, and friend Kate MacDonald from Halifax are coming to share the time with me.[Only one can come to the installation, of course]

Gary Carroll, already in Ottawa, will join us and then many other friends and professional colleagues are coming to a drop in that we are planning for Wednesday 4 to 8. Visits to the museums, the market, Tin House Square to pay tribute to my late friend Stan White and to Parliament Hill for lunch are on our schedule. We will have a wonderful reunion. Dog Nellie is being carried for by the Rogerson sisters so what more can we ask for. So

to all who helped along the way I say a profound thank you and I hope I represent our cause in a manner that satisfies you all. Keep your fingers crossed.

New Proposal for Waterfront [from Ottawa]

Wednesday, May 30, 2001

[Catherine emailed this letter to Counsellor Casey, chair of Town Planning, from Ottawa where she's preparing to be OofC'd. She's responding to the latest proposal for the site which was the subject of the Silent Balloon Protest in late March – Peter]

Again we have been asked to take time to contemplate and make comment on a project that does not have all the “i’s” dotted and the “t’s” crossed. This time it is a proposed building that has been moved from the northeast corner of a site to the southwest corner. To placate us Mr. Doucette has reduced the height of the building by eleven feet – eleven feet from a building, that if you follow Mr. Doucette’s figures given at the public meeting – is still a massive structure, towering over Founders Hall.

In the new position, we will have almost all of the water vista at the foot of Prince Street blocked. Please WALK down Prince Street from Sydney and image the proposed building on its new site just to the east of the

continually (it appears) expanding MacKinnons Lobster Pound.

Since the last public meeting public opinion seems to have confirmed a direction for this property – people generally want it to remain an open space and for many reasons they are probably right; the breathing room necessary for Founders Hall, traffic concerns, the water-rising issue, the activity of the only remaining working waterfront in Charlottetown, etc. etc. All these issues deserve more consideration and discussion.

There is no question that we need more living accomodation in the downtown and although space may at first glance to be scarce, it is likely that we will soon have the oiltank site on Grafton to be opened for development. Likely Notre Dame will be available in the not too distant future. We have the former City Garage site available immediatly. So if a housing committee could be struck, I believe we could have our waterfront protected and the east end revitalized all at the same time.

If Mr. Doucette has addressed all the complicated aspects of this site and could still construct an apartment complex for a saleable price per unit to a scale that does not offend this important site , I will go to that meeting with a more positive attitude. in the meanwhile, I think all our precious time is being trifled with. There is no doubt in my mind that the beautiful restored machine shed will long outlive the tourist directed Founders Hall

and someday we will be able to enjoy the extraordinary effect of those grand windows giving light to a great community space e.g. market/deli/agera for the benefit of our people who will “crowd” the east end.

I say challenge some of our great patrons to purchase the site in front of Founders hall – downzone it to a park; design it well and then let’s get on with populating the east end and do it just a bit further back from the water.

Fred Hyndman on Catherine

Thursday, May 31, 2001

While Catherine is away, the mice must play. It’s Peter here, pointing you all to the CBC interview with Fred Hyndman about Catherine on the occasion of her investiture. You’ll leave a speaker and RealAudio-equipped computer to click on the link here and listen.

Happy Canada Day

Sunday, July 1, 2001

From Saturna Inland where sister Betty and husband, Claude and Claude’s sister Grace [from Ottawa]are celebrating Canada Day at that wonderful lamb barbecue that has been happening on that Island every July first for years and years, to Banff where Mary Claire and her friends are camping, to Charlottetown waterfront where The Rukavinas and the Dental Don Stewarts and myself

will be celebrating and watching fireworks and drinking and dining ... [and we might even have Gary Carrol with us] ... we are all – all over this country celebrating another year of peace and love. Blessings to all on this great Canadian Day. I'm going to begin the day making Eggs Benedict for Kate Macdonald and her friends in Souris and I am going to surprise her by sticking a flag in each of them. That will look good, won't it? Today is Nellie, my West Highland Terrier's second birthday and the both of us just returned from a trip to Boston where we had just a wonderful time with all our Boston friends. I'll write more about that later – in the meantime – Happy, Happy Canada Day.

Eaton's on Kent Street

Tuesday, July 10, 2001

Eatons on Kent Street was torn down today by Bulldog Demolition with Richard MacGuigan at the helm. It cost of \$65,000 to do the dirty deed. To me, he calls his firm Heritage Demolition!!! And he has good reason to, since he has torn down more of MY buildings than I dare to think about. It is so easy for people who don't pay the cost of the building in the first place to make a decision to demolish. Poor Eatons. They build such substantial buildings from Day One, buildings that contributed to our urban landscape. They get no thanks. How would you like to be facing the Winnipeg issue. A 1905 building that was so important on the Canadian

mercantile scene – let alone the Portage Avenue one – and to build an arena, yet?!! Our Eatons was built in 1950 and it was a fine store that made a major contribution to our community. I believe it had another life.

For those who have not been in Charlottetown lately , it would be a shock for you to see what has happened north of Kent Street on both sides of Great George Street. The block, between Fitzroy and Euston, on the west of Great George Street is more than 3/4 demolished and waiting patiently for the Dept of Public Works to decide on size, use and architect for a new Federal Building there. It is scary to think of the options on such an important site.

To support that federal building, it was necessary for the city to address the parking problem. Now rather than address transportation problems in the bigger sense [we're likely not ready – even tho' we are the place that fought cars up until 1919] we have scummed to address parking of cars as the most obvious answer ... and maybe that is the best we can do right now. What a complicated issue!

Alright lets continue with the matter on hand. To address the parking problem the Eaton's site with its parking lot on Fitzroy Street was zeroed in on and that is why, today, it came under the bulldozer . I forgot to say that the service station activity that had been on the corner of Great George and Fitzroy since 1939 has also

been puffed and we are waiting for a very special building to be located there. That site will home of the \$20-million Atlantic Technology Centre that is already designed and has the input of Toronto architect Jack Diamond. It is contemporary, but it fits the block in scale. So it was all this development that lead to the reuse of the Eaton's site. So get the picture???

We are in for a major change what ever way you look at it and the Upper Great George Street [now called University Avenue] that you remember will be gone. There is no question that Upper Great George Street has suffered seriously in the last few years. I believe it actually stems from the day they changed its name to University Avenue. Where were we when that happened? Big mistake!

Remember the Fashion Shop, Dr. Corrigan's dental office, the Two Macs, and Rexall Drug. Stanley, Shaw and Peardon's ? Craswell Photo Studio? The Great White Hunter? The Pure Milk Ice Cream with the special smell of the place? David Stewart's car show room, the Salvation Army and the Liquor Store where you had to have a permit to buy, and always Tweels and Lambros's too. Then too, there was Tanton's and Small's, the tinsmiths, where your mother got her Christmas cake pans made. Oh dear, this is simple too nostalgic and even with that I haven't mentioned Sunter's Ladies Wear, The Bike Shop with the Chandler twins fixing bikes in the backyard etc., etc.. Guess what

tho', Hambly McInnis's is still there and so of course is Tweels.

Suffice it to say, the area is changing and there are not enough fingers to fill the holes in the dikes of future change. Of course, the possibility exists that we may be moving toward a great improvement, but oh that nostalgia holds us back from being too excited.

A Wedding

Tuesday, July 10, 2001

Back in the first decade of the 20th century at Saint Dunstan's University some young men came together whose relationship still is meaningful in my life today.

Can you imagine a young man maybe 13 or maybe 18 leaving the rural PEI of the day and going to study and board on SDC campus. They'd likely come by train and they would be committed to that place from September until Christmas and New Years until June. At some point they began to have Thursday afternoons off campus, but I'm not sure when and off campus wasn't a big thing. Saturday nights, are you kidding! Dormitory life, study hall every night and Saturday and Sundays, too, was what their world turn around on: Mass every morning and lots of Benedictions. Oh they played sports, but Latin and Shakespeare, Religion and Philosophy were certainly more important. Their aim in life was – in most cases – to study for the priesthood or to teach, but a few had other ambitions. Some tried their

hand at those things and then went onto other goals. Why am I telling you all this? Because my recent visit to Boston started back there. Bill McLellan Class of 1915, Vincent Fisher Class of 1912, Linus Smith Class of 1913 and James Saunders Class of 1912 all were linked.

Don't think for a moment that they went in as freshman and came out four years later as seniors. No. Their college years were sporadic. I know my father taught over those years in Stanchel, North Whitshire and one of the Bedeques. I know that the tuition was not high in today's terms and I am sure The Owen Connolly Trust was paying a lot of the tuitions – and some successful uncles who had already made it in the Boston States – but never-the-less it was a sacrifice in the days when few bothered to make it. But back to the links. Bill McLellan went on to study dentistry at Tufts in Boston, Vincent Fisher went to Boston University to study medicine and my father, Linus Smith went to McGill and studied medicine. Jim Saunders, a chemistry whiz, decided to farm.

They all remained connected. Their kids did their own thing and never knew one another until the Saunders, the catalyst for many relationships, introduced them all in the early 1950's. We have never looked back. And so I went to Boston – drove by myself with my dog to attend the wedding of Bill McLellan's grand daughter – and quite the grand daughter she is. Needless to say "our links" have all passed on, but when we get together

we do them proud. I had the joy of sharing the trip with Jamie Saunders today and relived with pleasure the whole thing. I now know four generations of McLellans and five generations of Fishers. That's a privilege. And think of all those wonderful people who have married into our flock. Next week I have a crew of them arriving on PEI. It will be one of the sons-in-law's first trip to PEI. The responsibility lies heavily on my shoulders. After all his two sons are so deeply rooted on this Island that they are truly coming home. It is now my true determination to get the bride and the groom here – remember that Mary-ann and Dan. [An aside: this man and his friends came to Toronto to watch the Blue Jays play the Red Sox for his “stag” party, not bad eh?]

I'm Number 2522

Friday, July 13, 2001

Well it was quite the week in Ottawa and it took another week to get caught up in work and rest. I miss the constant company after a session like that. Ottawa is a wonderful city that can make a Canadian proud. We visited the National Art Gallery and The Museum of Civilization and as an extra bonus we had lunch in the Parliamentary Restaurant as guests of Senator Catherine Calbeck and followed that with a visit to the House of Commons for question period and then a short visit to the Senate. The market district is wonderful and the market particularly appealing this time of year. It was

great to visit Tin House Square and remember Stan White , better known around here as Stan of Green Gables.

And now to the very special part where as our father would say “I was the best girl of her age in the house” ... on May 31st we dressed up in our finery [promoting my friend David Campbell to say “you clean up good”] and took off for Rideau Hall. They have a very strict rule that you can only take one guest, but there were a few extra seats for the installation ceremony only and so I was allowed to take Betty to the whole show and, very fortunately, Mary Claire to the installation – which was really a very important part. Those girls looked good and they would have done our parents proud...and they are dears, too. That left our niece Mona, friend Kate MacDonald and Gary Carrol to look after themselves that night. BUT when we got home we opened the Mumm’s champagne that was sent me by Charlottetown friends – along with orchids – and we toasted “history, heritage and the arts” and promised to work harder for the causes in the future.

The Minto was a great place to stay. We had a suite with kitchen, living room/dining and two bedrooms and baths so the five of us and all the quests we entertained were very comfortable. The night before the BIG DAY we invited a number of our friends from various times in our lives and it was so very nice to have them ... Heritage Canada days, Canadian Museum Assoc., some

great cousins by marriage, Confederation Centre friends, our MPs and Senators, etc. To serve on national boards is a very special privilege and makes one feel so very Canadian ... and I have been blessed that way because I now have friends all over this great country.

Fifty-two other Canadians were installed in Orders Of Canada that evening. “Desiderantes meliorem patriam – proclaims the aspirations of its members who, in their lives and work, have shown that ‘they desire a better country’ “ and as you sat there and watched each individual approach Her Excellency you were overwhelmed by the efforts of such great Canadians and wondered what you can do now to justify you being included. Watch, I’m going to work hard. Check out the Governor Generals web site and you can read up on the list. The Website is www.gg.ca.

Rideau Hall, although architecturally it is a peculiarity, is very special and these incumbents have made it so warm and welcoming. Works of arts, Canadian books and furniture abound. And they have a very good chef, too.

Such an event – and the many, many wonderful letters and calls I have received here at home has made me shake my head and wonder how it all came about. My thanks to you all.

Vic Runtz 1922-2001

Friday, July 13, 2001

Over the years the Island has been blessed with people choosing us and coming in a positive mode to help shape our communities. I've been fortunate to know a number of such people. Some have been transferred here with their work, some have applied for advertised positions. They have come and actually stayed – or at least have stayed long enough to make a difference. And then, we have some who have married into our community. The topic of my treatise today is that kind of person. Vic Runtz met Aletha “Lee” Saunders when he served a short stint in the Navy here during WW2. Lee lived on Upper Hillsborough Street and is a sister of Freddie's who use to go with our friend Hilda Pickard.

After the war Vic, who had been drawing pictures as long as he could remember, went on to further his studies on illustrating and cartooning. It was that marriage to a Charlottetownian, no doubt, that led him to accept the role of “cartoonist-in-residence at the Guardian in the early summer of 1948. Island readers had the joy of his work almost every morning for ten years. His subjects covered all subjects; politics, the arts, healthy teeth, the crows in Victoria Park, the tourists, the railway etc., etc.. The subjects covered such a wide variety of matters – important matters. The matters, that in Vic's view, that aimed at enriching the lives of Islanders. A gentle, quite man whose eyes missed little

and whose fingers produced a documentary of a decade of Island history that speaks of the soul of the place.

Vic himself put it best “Cartoons like the newspapers which carry them, are ‘here today’. They are destined to wrap tomorrow’s fish. Yet, looking back, we discover that much of yesterday and the yesterdays before remains here today.” He couldn’t be more right. Anyone who spends time on historical research finds, that, over and over again.

Vic left us in 1958 and went to work at the Bangor Daily News as their cartoonist. After he had spent 25 years there, the University of Maine produced a book on his cartoons called “Here today ...”. I’m not sure how many years after that he stayed in Bangor, but he did come back to PEI and on his mailbox out in Brackely Beach you can still see the Vic Runtz cat.

Vic was joined sometime in the 49’s by The Cat, his “fellow traveller” as he called him and Vic goes on to describe him in the forward of the U of M book as “... a spry little cat in a sporty bow tie. At 35 he keeps up best he can, always putting in an appearance...”.

To Lee and his sons and their families I express my sympathy and love. I add a special thank you to the Burnetts of the Guardian for recognizing Vic Runtz’s talent.

I’m going to collect his cartoons so I’m looking for more Vic Runtz stories to go with them. We must

document this man's time with us – it would be the best tribute we could pay him.

The Mayor is in Gloucester, Mass.

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Since the settlement of the eastern seaboard the relationship between New England and Prince Edward Island has been strong and family ties have moved back and forth across the borders. The fishermen from New England, many of them out of Gloucester, came by the hundreds into Atlantic waters. By the mid eighteenth hundreds it wasn't uncommon to see as many as 600 sailing ships of the north side of the Island at once. One of the saddest occurrences, related to this part of our history, was the Yankee Gale that occurred in October 1851. A terrible storm hit the north shore of the Island. The barometer that day fell over 1.2 inches. On the Sunday morning the shorelines were strewn with wrecked boats, torn sails and bodies. Gloucester had 140 fishing vessels in the gulf that night. Nine were lost. I am sure their names are on that wonderful Sailors' Monument that stands as a beacon on the Gloucester Waterfront.

You will note that this October will be the 150th Anniversary of that sad event. Ed MacDonald wrote an excellent article on this subject in the Island Magazine

[Winter 1995]. He was helped by Thomas Schley of Gloucester and I hope between them they will continue to provide us with more information.

Another great connection with Gloucester is the LePage Glue Company story. William Nelson Lepage, formerly of Charlottetown developed that product from fish oil and established his business in Gloucester in 1876. “He gathered up hake sounds and made glue out of them” an old Islander reported.

So like so many Islanders LePage left in the middle of The Exodus when Islanders were leaving by the hundreds. In 1887 there were 399 Islanders living in Gloucester, 2712 in Boston proper, 135 in Lowell, 10 in Beverly etc.. Islanders could sail right out of Charlottetown Harbour for Boston or in later years they could go by train to St. John and take a boat ride that lasted nineteen hours for a price of \$10.00.

Islanders liked that land so well that at one point “The Prince Edward Islanders’ Association” in Boston passed a resolution in favour of an annexation of this province to the United States!

There is much that ties us together and I do hope Mayor George and Arlene enjoy their visit with Atlantic Seaboard Mayors in Since the settlement of the eastern seaboard the relationship between New England and Prince Edward Island has been strong and family ties have moved back and forth across the borders. The fishermen from New England, many of them out of

Gloucester, came by the hundreds into Atlantic waters. By the mid eighteen hundreds it wasn't uncommon to see as many as 600 sailing ships of the north side of the Island at once. One of the saddest occurrences, related to this part of our history, was the Yankee Gale that occurred in October 1851. A terrible storm hit with the barometer falling within twenty four hours over 1.2 inches. Gloucester had 140 fishing vessels in the gulf that night. Nine were lost. I am sure their names are on that wonderful Sailors' Monument that stands as a beacon on the Gloucester Waterfront.

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There is much that ties us together and I do hope Mayor George and Arlene enjoy their visit with Atlantic Seaboard Mayors in that very wonderful place.that very wonderful place.

The Old Saint Dunstan’s Gym

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Many of my contemporaries will have many memories of the Old Gym on the UPEI Campus – exams, basketball games, Father Adrien’s plays, dances and of course, graduations. Well yesterday it burnt! They were in the middle of a major redesign project and the old building was to have become the centre/ heart of a new Students’ Union Building. It was a good design and an excellent location for that new bulding and its use. It is comforting to know that most of the details they intended to save had already been removed and they were busy “cutting with torches” when everything seemed to get away on them. It was very lucky that the wind was blowing from the north/east or we might well have had a sadder tale to tell.

The Gym, financed by the SDU Alumini with some very special funds from Louie Levesque etc., was designed by Jim Harris and opened in 1951.

The Sanatorium

Thursday, August 30, 2001

Tonight – the 29th of August, there was a public meeting held to discuss a proposal to zone the Sanatorium Land from institutional to a R1 to allow for the demolishing of the building and the building of 19 single family homes. The proposal was brought forth by Tim Banks Inc.. Another proposal by the Martin boys was presented that allowed for the renovation of the Old San into a Senior Citizens Apartment complex.

The meeting was full of potential residents for such a complex and even some who appeared willing to pay \$250,000 for the preciousness of living in the other proposal. Everything was going well – back and forth – until Stella Newman stood up to deliver her usual 30 minute condescending interpretation of the “By-laws and dangers according to Stella” to council and audience. Tiresome.

People lose interest and the meeting is virtually aborted. What was sad is the council did not hear the voices of many at the meeting because of the whole thing. Contrary to Stella’s view point, Council is hardly

able behind our backs to contemplate major changes and development, nor would it be wise for them to do so.

At the beginning of this meeting, it was clear that the majority of the audience were there because they wanted to save a familiar old building – that they clearly saw another use for and they felt in the picture. If you have view points on this matter share them with your councillor... the decision is in their camp.

I wrote the following on this issue back in April. In case you did not see it then, I've brought it forward for your consideration. I see the Sanatorium not as a neighbourhood issue. This building does not belong to the people of McGill Avenue, but very much to the people of this community – and Island.

For over a year now the fate of the Old Provincial Sanatorium has been in the hands of the Gods – well at least the hands of the Provincial Government. Proposals have come forth and elections have been run and public meetings held to discuss the future of the site and that of the neighbourhood. In the Official Plan for the city, completed such a short time ago, the property was designated as a Comprehensive Development Area leaving its future somewhat up for grabs...and grabbed it was. Last summer a high density proposal came forth and raised the ire of most of the residents in the area. The plan proposed a complete demolition of the entire site – nurses' home and all – and the building of a remarkable out of scale apartment house on the corner of

North River Road and McGill and a number of town houses to the east on McGill. It did not please the residents.

As usual when the fate of buildings are in the hands of a generation who didn't spend the money to build them, few stop to analysis whether the building has another life. The pressure of the construction industry generally pushes for new and, of course, committees or developers like to build their own monuments.

Fortunately, there often appears those who believe a redesigned monument makes some sense and with daringness and creativity tackle the renovation projects that save the familiarity of our landscapes. At the end of the day everyone wins. I have so often quoted John Kenneth Galbraith on this matter. "The preservation movement has a great curiosity. There is never any retrospective controversy or regret. Preservationists are the only people in the world who are invariably confirmed in their wisdom after the fact....".

On Tuesday we are told the Provincial Cabinet will decide what is to become of the site. There is one very good re-cycling proposal in that we know of for sure, but there might be others in the wings and of course our friend the demolition man has his engines rivited up.

Lets have a look at the histroy of the place. It is hard today to imagine the impact of tuberculosis. It so often hit people when they were young and apparently healthy and it was do debilitating. It hit rural and urban

and sometimes it was very fast and they'd be gone. The island had been given a sanatorium by Sir Charles Dalton in 1913. A progressive move – and a handsome building that was built in Emyvale. I remember the water tank of to the right of the road to Kelly's Cross. We never went there, but it was a landmark that we always watched for. Years later I visited the Coadys across the road from the now picked-apart and reshaped buildings and discovered how far off the main drag and how hilly the roads were to get there. Its history is a great story of its own, complete with all the political game playing we are sometimes famous at. The Dalton Sanatorium closed in the early 1920's even tho' the need was growing every day. It wasn't until the mid 1920's that the Canadian Red Cross and the Maritime Tuberculosis Education Committee moved in to address the issue again. The Provincial government supported the move and in recognition, Dr. Preston Creelman was appointed as a full time medical officer. It was his work, with the support of a sanatorium committee, that pushed to build another sanatorium. A remarkable campaign was undertaken and \$77,000 was raised by the Women's Institute [who had just lost their secretary, Evelyn Windsor to TB] and many service clubs. Hon. George DeBlois led the way with a personal donation of \$10,000. !!! AND those were the days when a building could be built for around the \$100,000. mark and we were in the midst of a depression. The western

part of the building for design by E.S.Blanchard and built by the Lowes. It opened on June 8, 1931 and many dear people that we knew in later life worked there. Dr. Creelman was the superintendent, Hazel Stern was dietitian, Kay MacLennan worked there, so did my Aunt Gert, Marjorie Cox, Gertie Arsenault, Fanny Kemp and many many more. It was a home away from home for the incumbents. The patients were treated and entertained, but they had to sleep and sleep. They had those verandahs on the west end of the building. Fresh air was a big factor in the treatment. As a matter of fact I think TB had a major impact on architectural design as be found at that period upstairs sleeping verandahs appearing on so many buildings!

The building was always so well looked after and with nice grounds. By the 1940's expansion was necessary and they added a large wing to the east and blocked our route from school to the cottage in September. It was an annoyance. It was no sooner added than they seemed to conquer in some way that TB bug. Was it penicillin? I know by the 40's my father had a VD clinic in the basement of the building [but I know penicillin helped that!] and by the mid 50's the polio epidemic had hit and a whole section was taken over by many that we hold dear. Isn't it interesting that it became an alcoholic treatment centre in its last years. Fashions change.

So today we have a building that means a great deal to many Islanders and has been a presence on our landscape for seventy years. I'll let you know what happens next – lets hope it will be a question of “the devil you know rather than the devil you don't know”.

Happy Christmas to All

Tuesday, December 25, 2001

My little house at 222 is a busy, happy spot this Christmas Season with my sister Mary Claire here from Calgary and Betty with her husband Claude here from Victoria. The house is working very well for all of us and Nellie the dog and Rosie and Ruby the cats. They really think they have “died and gone to heaven” with all the attention, food and walks they are getting. Even the kitchen is working well and the production level is truly exceptional with three sisters competing for culinary accolades.

It is hard to believe that such a cozy little house could have been so neglected for so many years and so we are happy to have it aglow for this wonderous season... and to think it is just around the corner from where we spent so many of our childhood Christmas. We have been musing at the Christmas mornings of our youth when we were not allowed near the tree/into the parlor until our father came home from making his calls and depending on how many sick people there would be, we might not get in to see our gifts until nearly noon...

and often Santa Clause would come to take the key from above the parlor door so we could get in. Santa Clause was the famous Austie Trainor, a close friend of our families altho' we didn't know they were one and same until we "got older" [I wouldn't dare say how old I was} We just blissfully felt Santa went to everyones house!!!! Anyway we have been thinking of many friends and many times and greatly enjoying our first Christmas on PEI together for many, many years. Love to all and my promise is that I shall get back in the swing of communicating again ... something I will look forward to.

Happy New Year Everyone

Thursday, January 3, 2002

The year has a great sound – 2002 – and as one of my friend's said you can write it either forward or backwards and it says the same thing! My Crowd did the levees on New Years Day and it was a wonderful experience...and so tradional. We've been holding levees on this Island for years and years. All our early Lieut-Governors were welcomed to this Island by the Upper Echelon holding levees as a welcome to the colony. Now they are generally held only on New Years Day. Needless to say it was always just the men...that is until our friend Janet Dale broke the tradtion in Lieut-Governor Gordon Bennet's time...about 1976 or so It shocked us all, but since then we have not looked back

and New Year's Day has become a busy day of activities for all. We always start the day at Fanningbank, the residence of the Lieut-Governor and then, in more recent years as the custom expands, we stop at Beaconsfield to pay our respects to the board of the PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation, then we stop at the Charlottetown Hotel to greet the UPEI President, Chairman of the Board and the Chairman of the Alumini. Then we go to City Hall.

It is wonderful. Everyone is so happy – shaking hands, kissing and generally wishing everyone well. There is music and cake and drinks and if you want to keep going you can go to Queen Charlotte Navy Barrack for clam chowder and moose milk, visit the army, the RC bishop, the Legion etc, etc, ending your day at the Premier's reception that takes place at Confederation Centre in the late afternoon. Now if you are expected to cook a fine New Years Day Dinner you have to stop somewhere along the way and get home to work, but to tell the truth manys the fine dinner has been missed by those who just spent too much time leveeing. For us at 222 it was different because New Years Day is also sister Betty's birthday so we stopped early to prepare a fine roast beef dinner for Betty and Claude, sister Mary Claire and Claude's sister Grace who joined us for the week after Christmas from Ottawa. We were also joined by Beth and Brian Cudmore. It was a very fine evening with the added addition of oysters, champagne and

birthday cake. We have all dedicated ourselves to do our best in 2002 and we begin by offering our special blessings to all.

Autumn 2001

Saturday, January 12, 2002

Well I finished what I set out to do and it has taken hours and hours. Today [that is December 7th] I completed the Guardians of 1900-1920. That means that I have read at least one Island newspaper from 1787 to 1950.

In the early days they were a simple four pages and were weekly, then some became semi-weekly and finally by the late 1870's we were beginning to have a daily paper [but never on Sunday]. We had a number of different publishers over the years with affiliations with different political parties, communities or religions. When we were growing up we had The Guardian that was known to be Conservative and The Patriot that was known to be Liberal. There was also the Journal Pioneer in Summerside. My tasks over the years that I've been reading the old newspapers have varied. When I began I was looking mainly for Island Furniture and Island Pottery, but it is difficult not to spread your interest so architecture some became an important concern. These last few years I have concentrated mainly on Charlottetown, but I've included almost everything I can

find on the place even the people so I have amassed a tremendous package of material.

You might well asked what I am going to do with it. Well first of all it must be organized for recovery . I have created 118 blocks of land in the Charlottetown area. I've got 83 blocks in the town below Euston Street and I have created fifteen blocks in the Common and 20 in the Royalty. So in these 118 blocks I place the appropriate material and to that I have added photographs, articles from magazines and things and even the people. The material covers architecture, fires, murders... anything that will add to the story of the blocks. I, needless to say, have files on Mayors and Councillors, Fire Department, the arts, etc. etc.. Now what do I do next? Well Charlottetown has been chosen to be one of Canada's "Smart Cities" !

That means we are going high tech and we should have a very complete geographic information system on computer. My vision is that with each property number we should be able to include an historic review of the property back to the days when Charlottetown was laid out and settlement began, in the very late 1760's.

It is a dream and I think if we can manage some of it will add greatly to the understanding – and therefore appreciation – of our community.

Public Transit

Sunday, January 13, 2002

The City is in the throws of doing a feasibility study on a public transit study. A group from Ontario are directing the exercise. A public meeting is being held on Thursday, January 17 at the Charlottetown Hotel at 7:00pm.

It is an important issue. Prince Edward Island has NO Public Transportation. The city has one bus [OK, maybe two] that travels “around”, but we all know that one bus does not a Transportation System make. For a province who fought furiously to keep cars out, once we got hold of the idea we took them on lock-stock-and barrel! There is hardly a yard in rural PEI that does not have at least three, four, even five cars in the yard. If you watch traffic coming to town each morning you will find that explained. It is the exception to see a car with more than one person in it. If you ask rural Islanders about Charlottetown they will tell you in no uncertain terms that the city is a mess – there is NO parking in downtown Charlottetown.

Translate that and it means that they can not find a place in front of the door that they want to enter, they have to feed parking meters and they get tickets! The same sad tale of woe is heard from Charlottetownians themselves. If we provided the square feet necessary to park all their cars we’d have no city left. There would be “no here, here”. The Government Parking Lot was

expanded last year and almost paved to the edges of what is left of Government Pond; breaking their own rules of protecting waterways. Malls have provided the answer for shoppers who never do measure the distance they walk in those lots in terms of city blocks. Among such a clearly dedicated group, if a transportation system was created would anyone use it? That is the dilemma and now we are looking at these Ontario people to provide us with a solution..

For a couple of years a small group of us met to discuss this issue. We went in circles, but we did produce a draft document. It was clear to us that we desperately needed transportation specialists AND that we should be involving the surrounding communities. It was also clear that there were many things we could do to begin changing the mind set. For instance improve our pedestrian walkways – the Routes For Nature and Health said that a long time ago. Can you believe that we do not have a walkway to our hospital that is just at the edge of downtown? Encourage travelling together. Talk walking – and biking. Money must be spent on educating and marketing the ideas. Learn from the non-smoking and littering campaigns. It is possible to change the mind set. We also wanted to reduce truck traffic or at least enforce the laws that exist at the moment. We really believed that if we beautified our streets and walkways they would be used more. Victoria Park is a perfect example. Get out to the meeting and put your

minds to this problem and help solve it. AND if Pat Binns wants to preserve rural PEI he must, too, be a major player.

Happy Birthday Ole

Wednesday, January 16, 2002

What a party. Great music with Scott Parsons, Schurman, Mike Mooney, Joey Weale etc, etc... nice space altho' you couldn't hear yourself think ... food and more food and, of course, the bar. It was at Keir's Gallery on Victoria Row. Above where Reddin's use to be and likely where the V Club was in the 40's. Anyway the people were there from one end of the Island, almost, to the other, at least from Abraham's Village to Launching and Woodville Mills, Lower Montaque, Hunter River ... and Rice Point and Summerside and Primrose.

There were back-to-the-landers, retired lawyers, a dentist, lots of writers and a conservator – and those architects! I even met someone from Kalamazoo, Michigan who lives here now because his mother was an Acorn from down east – you know the ones who had the great draft horses!!!! And, of course, there were lots of people from Upper Prince Street, Water Street, Sydney and even Brighton. Then there were Ole's two litters. The first group from Phillie, Martha, Vineyard, Salt Lake City and Western Mass who joined Lief [with mother Karen Lipps] from PEI. Those siblings truly must be an inspiration to him altho' I bet they don't

speaking french. I left early [well after 11 o'clock] because I knew if I stayed any longer I would go over the top. The dancing was great. Everything was great.

Now you might well ask how a man from Denmark with clogs and the name of Hammarlund came to PEI. It is not exactly an Island name. In the mid 1970's there was an ark built at Spry Point, PEI. It represented the energy efficient trend of the times. The "live lightly on the land" as Pierre Trudeau described it. The small-is-beautiful era. The Ark, a self-sufficient unit that should have been declared a Heritage Site was allowed, by the province, to be torn down a few years ago. What a shame. Anyway Ole and David Bergmark followed John Todd's dream soon after they had graduated in architecture from MIT.

Todd an interesting cat was one of the New Alchemy group at Wood's Hole on Cape Cod that described themselves as dedicated to "seeking solutions that can be adopted by individuals and small groups who are trying to create a greener, kinder world". Doesn't that sound nice and shouldn't we be re-dedicating ourselves to such a cause every day of our lives. Anyway that is what brought Ole Hammarlund to PEI, along with his present partner David Bergmark, and both have stayed on and are part of an architectural firm doing very good work on this Island. Ole and I meet often at various public meetings [and social occasions, too] and I must say there have been very few

times that we are not on the same wave length and that is saying something for me. Happy, happy 60's Ole.

Rudyard Kipling **1865-January 18, 1936**

Saturday, January 19, 2002

I was first introduced to Rudyard Kipling by my father who was a big fan and could recite passages of his poems likely from The Barrack Room Ballads and by Roy Smallman or Raoul Reymond who would sing The Road to Mandalay. Years ago I walked around Kipling's house outside Brattleboro Vermont and thought how my father would have enjoyed that experience. Later I wondered whether his days at McGill in the late teens, when Stephen Leacock [1869-194..] and Sir Andrew McPhail[1864-1938] must have been a strong presence, would be some influence.

Only last winter did I learn a connection between Sir Andrew and Kipling. A March 1908 Toronto News announced that Kipling " was going to spend the coming summer on the red soil of PEI." with Andrew McPhail, but the March 31st Daily Examiner stated that altho' McPhail was a close friend of Kiplings, the rumour hadn't started with him and he didn't expect it to happen. He went on to say how shy Kipling was and how he needed time to himself.... Anyway that was a

couple of years before Kipling won the Nobel Prize for Literature so wouldn't we have enjoyed having him.

Peter Gzowski [1934-2002]

Friday, January 25, 2002

It just has to be our age or all the things that have happened in the last few months – September 11th, Henderson and Cudmores closing, the fact that they are going to f... up our Victoria Park – and now Peter Gzowski has died.

We grew up and strengthened our Canadianism with that man and I am very sad...very sad. He connected us with all our friends across this country. So tonight I have turned on all of the SIX [poor] radios that I have in this house – loud – and I am listening his tribute. His Hymn Sing that was so memorabilla with Michael Bruggess, Molly Johnson and everyone that we all sang along with so many years ago on a cold Canadian morning. So I know we are all joining with them tonight and singing How Great Thou Art and, now, it's I Am Weak And You Are Strong ... A Closer Walk with Thee..... and now When the Trumpet Sounds Up Yonder... etc., etc.. What a program. What a tribute. I am sure we are all joined together with great sadness on the loss of this great Canadian. I hope CBC is up to continuing the quality that has been set.

Victoria Park

Tuesday, February 5, 2002

Just recently another public meeting was held to discuss a new venture in Victoria Park. This time it was a proposed 10,000 square feet skateboard park. Four sites were proposed: between the Canteen and the Park Keeper's house, to the right of the road to the tennis court, to the left of the road that once went through the park to Brighton Road or along by the playground that is to the west side of the park. The sites, or the use, for that matter are immaterial, because we should not be adding anything more to Victoria Park as a matter of fact we should have a long term plan toward toning it down. AND we are not the first people to say that.

I should begin with the history of the park. It is long and perplexing. When the city was laid out by Holland/Patterson/Wright in the 1768-71 the land that is the park was part of the Common. It was in 1793 [the deed dates May 16th 1789] that our second Lieut-Governor, Edmund Fanning, set aside the land for the use of the Administrator of the Government [ie. himself and those that would follow him.]. It was referred to as The Government House Farm or, often, by the name of Fanning Bank.

The farm was the natural site for Government House when tenders were called in September 1832. It was also the natural area to move and reconstruct the Prince Edward Battery in 1805. It also was a very fine

site for the meridional lines to regulate surveyors with the survey stones when they needed “a home” in 1820.

For over the first half of the 19th century it was truly a farm, the site of our fine Government House and the major defence centre for our town. The place was accessed by Christian’s Bridge that crossed over Spring Park Brook at the end of Kent Street. In the 1860’s there began a effort to create a public park out there. The Islander newspaper on September 1, 1865 encourage that one half the farm should be restored to the inhabitants of Charlottetown as it would “....supply a place of retreat from the dust and filth of the town”. This idea was not looked on favourable by the incumbents of Government House at the time and so the debate continued...and continued.

When we joined Confederation in 1873 the Government Farm lands came under a different jurisdiction. During the negotiation that led up to our July 1st. an act was shaped “to vest a certain portion of Government House Farm in the City of Charlottetown... for the sole purpose of a Park, Promenade and Pleasure Ground”. The City was to create by-laws for the management of the park.

Over the years this act has caused much legal pondering and the park has evolved sometimes following the aspirations of the community and sometimes not and sometimes bending the laws and other times fighting furiously to protect them. The one

thing that is sure, Victoria Park has always been a place of deep pride and concern to the citizens of this community.

Over the years the park has been threatened by cows and horses, nude bathers [particularly men], horse races, by automobiles and an excessive amount of construction and very, very bright lights. Some of the things that we did miss were The Charlottetown Hotel being placed there in the 1927 and Queen Charlotte Armories being located in the field west of Government House in the 1940's . . . so we did win some battles.

In an legal debate regarding Beacon Hill Park, on the very other side of our country, a judge pointed out even in the early 1900's that "...contemporary standards of appropriate public recreation and enjoyment are not necessarily the same as those held in the 1880's" and I think that is exactly what we are up against here in regard to Victoria Park. Another issue is that the Mission Statement of the City's Department of Parks and Recreation. It is very, very much geared toward active team recreation and not at all directed toward Greenways and passive recreation. So there is no question that we need a review of the departments mission statement. Hockey teams, baseball teams and any other team sport present an automatic advocacy group and, if I am pardoned an opinion, they have more experienced at hollering than the average nature lover, birdwatcher, star gazer, swimmer, kite flyer or hiker.

So Victoria Park is under scrutiny again. I loved a letter that I found in the Guardian of May 23, 1936 from Observer where it writes that “ citizens must be blind indeed if they fail to see that [the park] is now in danger of being utterly degraded ... death of trees . . . violated by the artificial construction for sports and games . . .” and in 1903 the editorials were suggesting that the park be reserved for pedestrians only on Sunday afternoon.

Yes there is no doubt that Victoria Park has had its watchdogs over the years and they constitute a large caring body of our citizens.

A Liberal Story

Wednesday, February 6, 2002

I have a friend who, working for the Public Archives of Canada, is cataloguing the MacKenzie King papers. That is a nice project because in addition to all the material his position would have produced he was a diary keeper. I love diary keepers. At Christmas I mentioned to her that I was sure she would be discovering shortly that King had run in Prince County, PEI for his first seat in Parliament and that she just might find something about my grandfather in his papers. Now my grandfather, Benjamin Gallant, was an MLA for years in the first district of Prince so he was in a good position to be around and he certainly was a dyed-in-the-wool Liberal. I was right. Recently Grace

sent a package of correspondence between MacKenzie King and my grandfather. What a surprise, and an insight into my grandfather's time.

The first letter was from King to my grandfather. It was a gracious thank you to my grandfather "for speaking in support of my nomination at the convention of the Liberals of Prince held in Summerside on the 4th of this month". That was September 1919. He went on to write "Your willingness to relinquish in my favor a claim which you were generally recognized to have . . . is something I shall always remember with feelings of both gratitude and pride." Then there was a letter back from my grandfather thanking him and then a copy of a telegram congratulating King on his election in October 1919 and then a reply of thanks. Now who else might have been in a position to run in Prince County I'm not sure, but likely Maclean, Albert Saunders and Creelman McArthur, at least. There was no guarantee that my grandfather would have received the nomination altho' he had recently been re-elected as a MLA.

The next letter was from my grandfather again. It was handwritten and dated September 9, 1921. It was apparent that King was giving some consideration of again running in the Prince County seat and a group had met in Summerside to discuss that issue. The letter reported that the men at the meeting "all expressed themselves of being willing to give way for you if you should want it." – and here is where it becomes poignant

– ‘. . . but I regret I could not express myself in that way. I have been in local politics 22 years and always very successful, at times it was pretty hard, of course. So I have made up my mind this time to take the opportunity of my good chances of getting the convention and being elected. Therefore you can understand that if I gave way for anyone else at this particular time I would be making a tremendous sacrifice as my friends will be losing all faith in me’. He goes to apologize and hints at “circumstances “ that he would not state in the letter. MacKenzie wrote back his understanding and his hesitance to run again in Prince County if any of his friends should be opposed.

The next page Grace sent presents diary entries and they are dated a mere month later and MacKenzie King was in Summerside. He was staying at the Clifton House having lobster, getting caught up on his correspondence and hobnobbing with friends. In the October 10th entry he notes “ After lunch I called on Ben Gallant, who is a dying man, I fear. Bright’s disease, they say. He wrote me only a month ago that he would not care to stand aside for me in the riding, having been long in active politics. Now he is aside forever. How little we know, how little we should boast or plan beyond the immediate present. Poor fellow, all his friends speak kindly of him . I feel deeply for him and his wife and little one”

Yes, he was right, Benjamin Gallant died on October 27th. 1921. The editorial in the Guardian – that Conservative paper – called him a “...a man of most pleasing personality, a man who was the soul of honour” etc etc. They also noted that he would no doubt have been selected as the federal candidate in the forthcoming election. So “ What ever will be, will be..... “

Charlottetown Experimental Station

Friday, February 8, 2002

Back in 1995 a group of us got together to discuss The Experimental Farm around Ravenwood just up the hill from St. Avars. The Federal people were gradually moving their operation out to Harrington and it was apparent that The Home Farm would some day be considered surplus. We met for over a year and we came up with a vision for the place. It included an arboretum, a botanical garden, protection of the early 19th century house and even many of the out buildings, the Royal Grove and many of the other trees, hedges and small wood lots on the property and of course the Lily Pond. We spent a lot of time talking about vistas and green spaces. We shared the plan with the officials of the day and then things seemed to come to a stand still. The Federal people seemed in no hurry to vacate the space

and they were concentrating their time vacating the Upton Farm out on the North River.

Entry a city committee hell bent on building a swimming pool and some rinks. A good committee and anxious to get going because there are dreams of holding the summer games here in 2009 [?]. Remember we have no public indoor pool in town – and our rinks are getting very old and overloaded, they tell us. They did a review of needs and possible locations. Long story/short story they worked a deal with the Federal Public Works people – ultimate owners they say of all federal lands [before they pass unwanted parts over to Canada Land Corporation] to acquire 20 acres of the Exxperimental Farm. Most of the summer we heard hints of the location being at the corner of University and Belvedere and most of us never believed that we could save that corner anyway. When the announcement was made the 20 acres that were being discussed were somewhat in the middle of the farm – in from Pottery Lane , east of the rail line, but pretty well north of the lily pond, house etc. and not on the corner at all.

It's not a bad site, but there are issues of concern. With the parking and the building they would probably be using around 6 acres of the twenty and as they say they would give it the college campus look. They do very much like the idea that there is room for expansion in the future and they mention curling rink, bowling alleys and things like that. They would most likely build

through a design/build/lease arrangement and that is always a worry . First what will the place look like after the pencils are sharpened and then how much will the public pay for using what most people consider a public building that just isn't exactly so. And then we have the school of thought that the farm offers an exceptional opportunity for a magnificent park in the middle of our city. And it IS in the middle of our new amalgamated city. Not often in this day and age does such a magnificent green space become available. When the farm – minus the 20 acres and the heritage component: Ravenwood, Lily Pond and Royal Grove – goes over to the Canada Land Corp. all the land will be regarded as a straight business deal. Real estate values are being worked out as we speak. Canada Land Corp tells us they will do nothing without public input and they have also had planners look at the space, and the town, and will develop criteria and even design guidelines to direct the development. They said they don't skimp on that part of the exercise. In the meantime the rumour mill is in a panic and the very worst scenario are being batted about.

As I mentioned in my tale on Victoria Park, the City does not have a parks' policy – they have a recreation policy. There is a difference. The city does have some parks. They have our four city squares, The Confederation Landing on the waterfront and they have the new Joe Ghiz Park that was recently developed, in co-operation with the IODE, at the east end of Grafton

Street. They also have a number of other green spaces that they have acquired through the development policy that states that 10% of any new development must be given over to park land. They will be getting close to 30 acres when the Upton Farm is developed. So it certainly is the time for the city to add a very well thought out mission statement for their park lands and begin to budget an equal number of dollars for passive green as they do for active sports properties.

Tonight a meeting was held by concerned groups that included residents from an adjacent residential area, supporters of All Green and a number of other concerned citizens. It was a good meeting and a lot of emotional feelings were expressed in the best possible way for the good of the farm. There will be more meetings no doubt. The Friends of The Farm are holding a meeting on February 20th at 7:30 at Colonel Gray High School. Circle that date and I'll let you know more about it later.

Griswold, a civil servant

Sunday, February 10, 2002

Working as a higher level civil servant is a learning experience; frustrating, challenging and above all a sociological and psychological experience. A person can react by developing an incredible degree of patience, compassion, conform to those around you, grow shifty eyes, fight uselessly or laugh. If you are apolitical, moral

and out to change the world for the greater good, you will last awhile, but somewhere in your life you must have a secure spot where you can run, and a partner who understands – and you have to use that humour a lot. It helps if you become intellectual or can pull out a quotation that is appropriate for the occasions that become tight at times.

I was to a memorial service today for Sandy Griswold. The church – St Peter’s – was packed. Sandy has been a civil servant for a long time. He came over from Nova Scotia [even tho’ he had Elm Avenue roots] back in the days of the Economic Development Plan – that was in the 1970’s. Since then he has worked and answered to different politicians on all levels. He worked with ACOA the last few years.

Sandy was the kind of person you could take an abstract dream to and he’d talk it out and you’d come away believing he had been researching the subject. too. It is hard for one on the outside to say what role he played in the improvements in our community, but I think quite a big one and obviously a church full of people did, too. I wish I remembered his quotes, but I do remember his dog stories and that’s good enough for me. I’m going to go and have tea with Heather and she will remind me.

A Christmas Treat

Sunday, February 10, 2002

In our Christmas Stockings, my sisters and I very given each a small bottle of Grey Goose Vodka from Pat Petrie in Calgary. The National Post last fall rated it as the very best vodka. Well my brother-in-law, Claude, made martinis with them and they were something else. Go try some and let me know if I'm right because it could have been the mixer of the martini or the grand company at the time.

The Summerside Saunders gave us an elegant bottle of Cave Spring Indian Summer – a sweet dessert wine. Their daughter works with those people in Jordon, Ontario. My sisters, knowing about those things, went out and bought a mixture of fine fruits and Betty, from Victoria, had taken home a big hunk of Rogers chocolate as a special treat. After our dinner one night we had the wine, the fruit and curls of chocolate. What a delectable way to end a meal. About that wine, I think you have to go to Jordon to get it, but I'd say it would be worth the trip.

Victoria Park again

Sunday, February 10, 2002

Oh Charlie Hine you know about necking in the park – don't be so pompous. I'm going to tell Jeannie Tweedy about you. You can't believe it, but the by-law of today

reads that you can NOT park in an area “except in an area disignated for such use’ if I had been on Council at the time I would have spoken against that. Oh well things were different in our day. CGH

A Tribute To Princess Margaret Rose

Tuesday, February 12, 2002

I wonder how many of you will remember this event, so I’m testing you. In July 1941 there was an exhibition of The Princesses’ Dolls at Holman’s. It was held in the space where we use to go to see Santa Clause, I think. The exhibit was on a tour of Canada and was sponsored here by the Hillsborough Chapter of the IODE. Mrs. Thane Campbell opened the exhibit. The dolls had been presented to the King and Queen when they had visited France in 1938 and were “. . . loaned by Gracious Permission of Her Majesty The Queen.

The proceedings in aid of The Canadian National Committee on Refugees”. They were Juneau dolls and were about four feet tall. They were called France and Marianne and they travelled with a complete wardrobe ... everything. I will never forget walking into that space and seeing those cases with the dolls and all the clothes – clothes for every occasion. I didn’t know it at the time, but the clothes had been designed by the leading fashion designers of the day in France: Worth,

Patou, Piquet and the like. As a paper doll fan this display was everything in 3-D that I could have imaged.

The Dear Confederation Centre

Friday, February 15, 2002

Tuesday I was at an announcement of support by the Federal Government to Confederation Centre. It was a commitment of \$5 million for “overdue repairs for the building”. Poor dear Confederation Centre. Officially opened with “pomp and circumstance by Her Majesty The Queen’ in October 1964 it was a building landed in our midst with much hope and promise. The important issues were that if the city and the Province packaged the land and deeded it over to this new and glorious complex, all would be looked after by the other Provinces and the Federal Government.

In those days when it was taking shape there were no middle men in Ottawa. Issues were discussed directly with the Prime Minister himself – starting with Diefenbaker and moving on to Pearson. The calls would be made directly to the PM office from the board room at Confederation Centre. Oh, those were glorious days.

The Trust was made up of VERY important people from each of the Provinces. The artistic people were on side with the likes of Mavor Moore and they had vision. Everyone was optimistic. Now it didn’t exactly work as

promised for the Islanders. When it was shaping up Frank MacKinnon had attended all the meetings of the important groups in town : Little Theatre, Arts Society, Historical Society and promised them the moon. We'd have an art gallery , a museum and a stage with the best of facilities for our local productions.

Alas, all that didn't happen, but other things did and for quite awhile a number of us, through the newly formed Women's Committee, supported the belief and direction of the place. We were connected with the art scene in the rest of the country. One day I had Jack Shadbolt out for a ride in the country, another time taking dear Norman MacKenize and his wife on a trip to the sand dunes at Tracadie or fixing up an apartment for Mavor and his family. Or travelling in the double decker bus down to Howard Webster's farm with Eric Harvey, Frank Sobey, Charles Scott, Sam Freedman and other important Canadians. We felt it was our responsibility to share our Island and learn from these people who were giving their time and energy to our collective cause.

The one thing that did happen rather quickly was that everyone was content with the Summer Festival direction and the excitement of building an important new art gallery in our country. The memorial to the Fathers of Confederation was not exactly addressed. It seemed good enough to live in the present and not address our history in any serious manner. And then

what happened? Anne of Green Gables, that fictional redhead took over and ran the Fathers into the ground!

Anne of Green Gables is wonderful, but the challenge that the Fathers offer is really something. Questions float around about this country, and all we had to do was listen carefully to the Peter Goswski tributes to know how terribly concerned Canadians are about what this country is about and where it is going in the bigger picture of things!!!!

No better place in this country could there be than to centre discussions on “country evolving” than in Charlottetown where our Fathers of Confederation came to do exactly that for days in September 1864. They talked, they partied and they enjoyed the peace of this gentle Island while they shaped the beginning of our Confederation.

Now back to the event I was at the other day. In the last few years as dollars became tighter and other provinces recognized their own cultural needs, the Confederation Centre of the Arts became less important to each of them.. As a matter of fact I am sure they saw us as being just another cultural centre with little distinctiveness in the boarder Canadian way that their own Province. So they began to withdraw support.

Ottawa itself has faced a national review in the arts. They have the National Art Centre, The National Art Gallery and they have developed an area of funding called “building patriotism” where they have passed out

flags, fireworks etc., but still nothing on a serious intellectual discussion anywhere as to what it is to be Canadian. I think that is the role of Confederation Centre and though I am very happy to see the Feds recognize a responsibility toward the fabric of this building, that they played a role in placing in our midst, they still MUST encourage the programming to reflect a review on Country Evolving – while still encouraging all the happy party times to occur just like they did in 1864. We have an important role to play and we must hold hands to see that it is done.

When I went to that press conference the other day I was more than a little taken back to see on the table in front of the VIP's – three of our M.P's and The Chairman of The Board and The Executive Director of the place – a collection of RED hard hats. I jumped to the conclusion that this was over kill by some Liberal underling and I devotedly wished they had not been so crass. Today I learned differently. It was all just an accident. Apparently hard hats come in many colour now. Tradition has it that the white ones are used by officials – architects, foreman and the like – and no worker worth his salt would be caught in one. The general workers have in the passed used orange, but today those hats come in blue and RED etc.... So I truly believe it was all an accident. I really do. But when I asked a contractor friend of mine today 'who uses red

hats?’ the answer was “the lesser lights” . I’ll just leave it at that.

This money is very important to Confederation Centre and we must be very grateful that the needs of the place have been recognized. While it is being spent; however, we must be sure that the integrity of this important Canadian piece of architecture is carefully treated.

Nora, Nora, Nora

Saturday, February 16, 2002

It is not common that in the run of your usual week you have the opportunity to attend a birthday party for a Hundred Year Old and to visit another who is 106 today, but that was my week.

Tuesday, Jim Montgomery of West Street had his 100th birthday party at the Culinary Institute. What a great collection of friends that came together to celebrate his event. Born up near Kensington, he moved to Charlottetown when he was a young man. He worked for Sid Green, confectionary wholesalers until he opened his own business in that line. The wholesale business created great activity in downtown Charlottetown before the days when the grocery store magnates took over that end of the mercantile world, too.

Jim is a highly respected man in our community and I was honoured to be at his party. Why I was there is a perfect example of the smallness of this country. My sister Mary Claire is on her condo board in Calgary with a very good friend of Jim's niece, Virginia, who lives in Edmonton. Mary Claire and Virginia have met and then we learned that Virginia grew up with an "old boyfriend" of Betty's so now it is my turn to know Virginia with all those common threads.

On February 16, 1896 Nora Alexandria Halloran MacDonald Wonnacott was born to Peter Edward Halloran and his wife Catherine in the house that her grandfather Henry Charlton had built at 103 Fitzroy Street. She was the youngest of her family. She had a sister Kathleen and brothers Lou and Bert. This year at 106 years she may well be the oldest person on the Island and she is quite the lady. She's pretty, doesn't wear glasses and likes the men! The only thing that worried me was that she kept repeating that I "had not aged a bit". I think she was losing it a somewhat there.

Nora is related to me. Her Mother and my great grandmother were first cousins. They were Campbells from Argyle Shore area. That makes us third cousins once removed, if you can follow that. I suppose its good to be part of that gene pool.

Happy Birthday Jim and Nora

Happy Heritage Day

Sunday, February 17, 2002

The third Monday in February has been celebrated as Heritage Day now since 1974. That year a Parliamentary Committee reached an unanimous agreement on the declaration of that day being a National Holiday. The press had speculated that the necessary legislation would be passed so the holiday would begin in 1975! Does anyone know what happened.

Heritage Canada pushed so strongly to make it a national holiday. When Pierre Berton was Chair he thought for sure that his voice would be heard. At Peter Gzowski's memorial his family made a special appeal for a mid winter holiday, too. He had obviously pushed hard for it . Heath MacQuarrie, one of our great politicians who died recently in Ottawa had always hoped to have a winter holiday. The day he wanted was Sir John A Macdonald's birthday. Unfortunately his birthday was on January 11th and that is just too close to Christmas to interest schools, labour people etc.. That's been unfortunate, because Sir John A. is worthy of that recognition.

If we did celebrate a February holiday and called it Heritage Day we could take it in what ever direction we wanted: Prime Ministers, Johnny Canuck, Tuktoyaktuk Day or whatever we wish.

Tomorrow we're going to celebrate Heritage Day at City Hall by passing out some awards for special treatment of heritage buildings, the Mayor is going to announce his plans for shaping the 150th anniversary of the city's incorporation in 2005 and we're putting together a simple display on the Mayors of our City. We have had 44 of them over the years and we must begin to develop the stories on each of them. That is what the display is about. Holiday or not we're going to celebrate.

Friends of The Farm Meeting

Tuesday, February 19, 2002

The Friends of The Farm meeting regarding The Experimental Farm is Wednesday Night at Colonel Gray High School at 7:30. This is the most important meeting for people who believe in park land in the city and, I believe, the first occasion for "greenies" to stand up and be counted. The Friends are adamant that this not be a meeting that pits greenies against the active sport people in the city. This is a meeting that is asking for support of long range planning for parks in the city and in particular the protection of the greater part of the old farm property. The Friends look forward to a big, big turn out tomorrow night.

Early Tourism

Tuesday, February 19, 2002

Today on Radio Noon I listened to a Barbara Chisholm speaking on a book that she recently produced with others called “Castles of the North” a book that covers those wonderful CN and CP Hotels across our country. There is going to be a TV program on the History Channel tomorrow night on the subject. It sounds as if it will be a very fine survey of those great buildings. It is even going to include our own Charlottetown Hotel. HOWEVER, the lady in her interview had some of her facts wrong. She claimed these hotels were the beginning of the tourist industry in our country and that I do not accept.

I’m not prepared to respond in detail tonight, but this is a subject that I have been thinking about as it relates to our Island. We were in the tourism business early. Lets talk about Mrs. Isabella Bird who came to visit us in the 1850’s and treated us as a curiosity. In her book *The English Women in America* she gives a charming account of what it was like to be a tourist in North America in those days.

Our hotel history of Charlottetown is a story in itself. Like *The Wellington Hotel* that opened in the 1820’s and operated on Great George Street for years and years. And the pride Charlottetonians had in the *Davies Hotel*, later called the *Victoria Hotel*, at the corner of Great George and Water Street that opened in

in 1909. They all predated the Grand Hotels of the CN and CP. And the great history of the Seaside Hotel in Rustico. “This magnificent Watering Place . . . of first class style” that was operating in the 1870’s and burnt to the ground in 1906. I know they weren’t so grand, but it was her point about tourism starting with “The Castle Hotels” that I disagreed with. I want to write about our early tourism sometime soon. Keep in touch.

Tick-Tick, Tick-Tock

Sunday, February 24, 2002

Charlottetown needs a town clock. I know we have a sundial on the south wall of the hose tower at City Hall, but that isn’t good enough. We need a clock – maybe more than one – in a prominent place in the down town. We use to have a number of clocks. A really nice one hung out from the old Bank of Montreal building. They have one on the front of their new/old building, but it is never going.

The official one from the past was the one on the Court House Tower. It was a wonderful clock with three faces and it was lite up at night. When that building burnt twenty six years ago on January 29th the clock tower sucked the flames up and the clock was completely destroyed. When they restored the building, they did put a clock on the roof almost as a after thought. It is not in a tower. but rather in a dormer that faces only south.

People don't even put clocks in prominent places in stores now. We who shopped at Taweels for more than a life time were controlled by that clock that hung near the cash. You could even see it as you passed by in the car. The other clock that was handy was the one in the window of Roger's Hardware China Department. That was great. You could check the time as you waited for the light at the corner of Queen and Grafton.

How many times in the run of a day do we non-watch-wearers ask someone for the time? We won't – all of use – succumb to wearing watches. Remember, too, town clocks can be a piece of public art or at the very least an important piece of street furniture. It is time we joined forces and added such a town amenity to our community.

Hockey Hockey

Sunday, February 24, 2002

The Men's Hockey game is about to start at Salt Lake City and stop our country while we all watch. If they are half as good as the women were, we'll win. I want you all to know – in case you don't – that Cassie Campbell the Captain of the Women's team is rooted in Park Corner and therefore a relative of Lucy Maude Montgomery. A couple-of-cousin-once-removed, I think. Her grandmother, Ruth had a belief back in the 60's that she had a responsibility to save the old farm house in Park Corner where LMM use to visit and, indeed, was

married in the parlour. I'm sure she never foresaw the success that the site would reach. It is gentle spot. They even hold weddings there now and people come from Japan to be married in the parlour where LMM was married.

Blinded By Light

Tuesday, February 26, 2002

It gives me quite a bit of satisfaction to be able to say at a meeting – at the proper time, of course – “As a member of the International Dark Sky Association . . .”. And you know I do belong to that association and I'm proud of it.

They put out a newsletter at least four times a year. Articles hit you all the time. Like the one from the Fraser Valley in British Columbia. Those people are, they say “asking for the moon”. They are creating a Dark-Sky Park and they advertise on their sign “a dark-sky preserve”. Manitoulin Island is doing the same. Another article tells of a search for a service station that has cut its light level to 10 foot candles or less.

Albuquerque, New Mexico are concerned with the loss of their beautiful skies to careless and illegal lighting practices and “...would like our children to once again see the enchanted dark skies of New Mexico from their own backyards”.

Calgary in the next three years are retrofitting their residential streetlights with “fully shielded luminaries

and reducing their high pressure sodiums from 200 to 100 watts. Spain, Australia, Chile Bristol, England ... they are all working at it.

This is an organization that encourages good quality outdoor lighting that helps improve visibility at night, saves energy and improves nighttime ambiance while preserving dark skies for all mankind.

We live in a community where our Energy Corporation is encouraging wind power and are asking us to enroll in a Green Power Program. One of the first things they must do is to address the excessive Christmas light program that is sponsored by our utility provider.

To learn more about the International Dark-Sky Association check their web page at www.darksky.org . Maybe you might even join.

Greenlands

Friday, March 8, 2002

This is a talk I gave this week related to the Discussion on the Experimental Farm.

General History of Greenspaces: By the end of the 18th century – beginning of the 19th century many writers were beginning to inspire beautification – beautification of homes, cottages and cities and parks. We had people like John Claudius Loudon, Andrew Jackson Downing and even John Plaw, who later moved to this Island and

is buried in the Old Protestant Burying Ground, writing about the Picturesque, The Rustic etc. and encouraging beauty and places to promenade. They were interested in places to connect with nature and places for passive recreation. Loudon entitled his plan for London “Hints For Breathing Places”. Sometimes these parks were very formal landscaped parks but they did lean strongly to just plain green space and they loved trees. Big trees like lindens and oaks.

So we were on top of things when we began pushing in the mid 1860’s to restore a part of the 70-80 acres of Government House Farm for Public Park space. Here’s a quote from the Islander of 1869:

“There is not in British North America a more attractive Park than might, at a trifling expense, be made of the thirty or forty acres which form the western end of Government Farm. In the name of all classes of our community we ask the Mayor, without delay, call a public meeting to take this subject into consideration. Let the representatives of the City be called upon to interest themselves in the matter. Let them be requested by the meeting to wait upon the President of the Executive Council and ask for the assistance of the Government in the matter.”

The debate and the pushing continued, but it wasn’t until June of 1873 when we were about to enter Confederation that the act that was shaped to give a part of

the Government House Farm over to the City of Charlottetown :

“The said land shall be used, appropriated and set apart by the city, at the expense of the city, for the sole purpose of a Park, Promenade and Pleasure Ground, for the use of the citizens, the inhabitants of this Island and all Her Majesty’s subjects ...The said City shall not, on any account whatsoever, use, or permit to be used, the said lands, for the purpose of Circuses, Shows, or Exhibitions of any kind, whatsoever, and should the same be so permitted to be used by the said City, the lands herein before mentioned shall revert to and be vested in Her Majesty her heirs and successors”

So they had their park, at least they had the land, but once they had it, it seems no one did very much about it. The press went after the issue. The Daily Examiner in the Summer of 1877 pushed the city for the first “energetic steps towards securing for itself a suitable Pleasure Park”. They continued:

“Human existence, robbed of every convenience and comfort, is only a cruse. Better not be born than to have to endure ceaseless suffering. Life is a blessing only when it is enjoyable.... A spacious and well ventilated and decorated PUBLIC PARK, where nature and art may be made to combine their happiest effects for the gratification of the eye, the ear, the taste and the imagination, is the best possible retreat for a jaded body and a careworn mind.”

The Examiner went on to describe their dreams. They were big ones. Here were some of the things they wanted:

“A keeper’s lodge, carriage drives and pedestrian walks, statues of some notable men, fancy pond, museum of arts and curiosities, children’s summer house, boys’ playground, an esplanade, music stand, trees planted by notable visitors, a vinery boat house, fountain, labyrinth, public flower garden and shrubberies, green house etc. etc.etc.”

They didn’t want much. Our citizens were becoming very aware of what other cities in North American were doing: Boston, Montreal, Halifax and certainly New York. They pointed out in the newspapers that our Park, now being referred to as Victoria Park, was proportionately larger for Charlottetown as compared to Central Park to New York. So there!

Things did not go smoothly even tho’ the park was very popular among a great cross section of the citizens. By the 1880 the press went after them again. And they complained about loose horses and cows in the park , they complained about no access road, the dust, the mud, nude swimmers [always in the male tense] and the criminals – one poor Methodist minister from Mt. Stewart was mugged and robbed in the park and could not give his sermon on Sunday at the Grace Chapel.

Over the years “Recreation, Promenade and Pleasure Grounds” went through many translations. During the years they have had horse races in the park, then we started to enlarge the sports facilities, then we turned Government House into a Military Hospital, then a Technical School and we came very close in the 20’s to passing it over as the site for the new CN Hotel. A portion of the farm was sold off for the PEI Hospital and by 1939 we had a baseball diamond, a softball park and a football field out there.

In 1944 they were going to put the Naval Barrack to the field west of Government House. The headlines in the newspaper read “ Charlottetown Naval Barracks has First Priority But Victoria Park Site needed”

“Citizens of Charlottetown must decide whether or not they want a new Naval Barracks in Charlottetown”, said Captain J.J.Connolly. “ Opposition in the form of quibbling over alternative sites may well prove disastrous to our prospects...the site at Victoria Park is the only practical site. Captain Connolly promised if it was built there it would be set sufficiently far back, and they would erect a building in keeping with Government House and the historic associations of the park.”

They overlooked mentioning the 8 foot page wire fence that they would likely have put up ... anyway it didn’t happen. The battles go on. Remember the Softball Battle of the 1990’s when Eddie Power and group where going to building something of the scale of a small

Fenway Park there and then this winter we have had the skateboarders needs debated

We are not alone in the debate between what exactly is meant by “contact with nature and pleasure grounds” and the multipurpose public playgrounds, but more and more the public are asking for clarification. In this city we have a fine recreation policy but we do not have a parks policy. That is something we must insist on. Particularly when we have added a number of ‘parks ‘ to our agenda that were not planned, but imposed: the Confederation Landing, Joe Ghiz Park, Routes for Nature and Health, Rails to Trails. Then we have in the city Government House Gardens , Ardgowan and many other green spaces acquired through that city rule of 10% of development lands goes over to parks.

Now we have the issue of the Experimental Farm. I want to give you a little more history. When Charlottetown was first settled men were given a lot downtown and 12 acres in the Royalty so they’d have a place to grow feed for the horses etc. . Some of the leading citizen who choose to live in the manner of the English Country style, that they had left behind, soon bought up a number of the Royalty lots and built themselves fine substantial homes. They created quite the estates. We had Mount Edward, build by Judge Jarvis, Ardgowan by the Popes, Falconwood by the Grubbs, Belmont and Norwood by the Wrights, Binstead by the Fellows or Hensley, Glynwood by the

Longworths, Inkerman House by Colonel Gray and then we had Ravenwood that is the focal point of the Exerimental Farm to day. They were gracious properties, landscaped commodious houses, long treed lanes .. They were homes for country gentlemen. They even ran with the hounds out there....

Ravenwood was built by William Johnston in the 1820's. He was a land agent, a major enemy of James Bardin Palmer and for a few years Attorney general. They described him as talented, ambitious and merciless. I think it might have been fortunate that he died at the age of 33. After Johnston the house was lived in by his son-in-law, then by J.C.Pope our first premier after we joined Confederation.

There were others owners until 1909 when the property with 29 acres was purchased for the Experimental Farm. Over the next 20 years fifteen more properties were acquired. The second largest property purchased was the DeBlois/Blake property that had been built on the Malpeque Road in 1827 and named Davenport Lodge. Frank Tinney lived there for many years when he worked at the farm. They tore it down in 1971. We tried to save it.

Another important property they bought was the old brick and pottery site where FW Hyndman and Mr Hornsby joined forces and produced pottery and bricks to the tune of 13,000 bricks a day and milk pans and

crocks by the 2000 dozens. A business than began with a boom in 1880 and was closing with a whimper by 1890.

The Home Farm totalled almost 140 acres. Take away the land given over to the Mountie Barracks, the CBC and the Farm Centre and then the land that they want to keep around the Research Station and we're left with about 88 acres. That is the land that is much in the news these days.

The Experimental Farm in its prime was a lovely place and a meaningful one for many Islanders. Not only did they do important research for Island farmers, but they challenged them into modern farming methods. They also worked hard at creating a friendly place. The Farmers' Picnics where the highlight of the season for many. In 1913 they demonstrated the automobile and took people for rides even tho' it would still be six years before cars would be able to travel on the Island roads seven days a week! The Farm was on the list for all VIP visits and the place was a winter haven for all who lived near by – skating on the ponds, sledding on the hills.....

Friends of The Farm

Friday, March 8, 2002

The Home Farm, a document approved by the members on March 4, 2002:

The Friends of The Farm came together seven years ago to contemplate the future of “The Home Farm” that was

understood, sometime soon, to be declared surplus. The Friends recognized this important site to be of great significance to all Islanders – urban and rural – and that its future offered extraordinary opportunities to leave a legacy on this Island for our childrens’ children. With the circumstances that have occurred recently, we have reviewed our proposal and have come to the following conclusions:

- The professional development of a master plan for the site, taking into consideration the natural and historic qualities of the site, the vistas and the emphasizing of good conservation of land, air and energy is of critical importance.
- A complete assessment of the farm buildings with a strong consideration to the efficient re-use of some of them. This would also mean a complete understanding of the Federal Heritage Building Review Offices’s protection that exists for Ravenwood itself.
- The traffic access to the site must be reviewed, along with the economic ramifications. The Friends would want to minimize the impact of these necessities on the landscape and residents in the area. This would also provide the opportunity to review the parking needs of the entire site. These issues should be addressed with a complete understanding of the Traffic Study that has recently been completed and the City’s

Transportation Study that is to go to a public meeting toward the end of March.

- The Friends must work in co-operations with The Rails to Trails, the Federal, Provincial and City Governments and the Department of Tourism to establish this important green space as significant in the mind set for the Capital City.
- That a feasibility study must be begun immediately into the merit of establishing a botanical garden and arboretum in the Capital City of The Garden of The Gulf
- That recognition must be given to the fact that the present site for the aquatic/ice complex in the “middle of the garden” is less than appropriate and encouragement must be given to ever effort to return it to the corner of University and Belvedere where minimal interference on the farm site would occur.
- That The Friends of The Farm do not stand against the development of the aquatic/rink complex, but feel that the time has come for the needs of the passive recreation people and those interested in parks and gardens should also be supported and that this site allows for all to work together to build a fine legacy for the future.
- The preservation of the Farmers’ Market in its present location if that is the desire of their executive.
- That an understanding be arrived at as to how The Farm complements and supports the Parks Canada site

at Ardgowan and as to whether their interperative needs could involve certain aspects, and uses, of the Farm site.

- The Friends of The Farm support a sympathetic development of a non-commercial nature along Belvedere Avenue while maintaining a stronger empathized green link with the University. The Friends recognize that it would be necessary to introduce a protective stand for Mount Edward Road while encouraging a stronger link with Ardgowan.
- The lighting of the Farm site and any development that occurs around the perimeter must be approached with concern for the guidelines set out by International Dark Sky Association.

Executive, Friends Of The Farm (Chair, Dr. Lloyd MacLeod; Vice-chair, Judge Ken MacDonald; Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Bert Christie; Directors, Connie MacKay-Carr, Catherine Hennessey, Laurie Lee Howard, Gordon MacInnis).

I Said Julie don't go

Friday, March 15, 2002

Well the Ides of March came early this year. Something serious happened to the links that tie us all together and I was off and out of cyberspace for almost four days. It was then that I realized how addicted I was and how I missed you all [well probably not all]. My e-mail got all

mixed up, too so if you lost my address remember it's me@catherinehennessy.com and please try again. So beware the Ides of March.

A Contracting Firm

Friday, March 15, 2002

Thirty years ago this spring the province was in the throws of preparing for the centennial of our entrance into Confederation. Remember we didn't join with the others in 1867, but waited until we had little choice because of railways debits etc..

To celebrate our 1973 Centennial the Federal Government's gift was a sizable number of dollars that were to be spent on capital matters. The debates went on and on as to how the dollars should be spent. As usual the debate pitted the sports people who wanted ice making equipment, yes, even a swimming pool, etc. against those who wanted to preserve something of the heritage of the place for "our childrens' children".

Early on it was decided that no great single great place would be built, but rather they would consider the whole Island worthy of interperation and that the focus would be on locations to highlight particular aspects of our history. When the dust settled in early June '72 we were headed for the development of a Ship Building Museum at Green Park, a farming complex at Orwell Corner and a Fisheries Museum at Basin Head. In addition Summerside was to get some display area that

was unclear for awhile[it ended up being Eptek] and Charlottetown was to have a headquarters for the Heritage Foundation. [The other thing that was to happen was the establishment of an Endowment Fund for the general good of the Foundation's work with special empathizes on building, and caring for, a Provincial Collection – we'll leave the story of that for another day]

The Centennial Commission did not impose Beaconsfield on us, but rather said go find a headquarters. We looked around. For a while we thought the old Bank of PEI on Great George Street would be very good and it would have been too. We looked over the possibilities of building new – that didn't make sense because we would have had to buy land etc.. Then we learned that people were looking at Beaconsfield to tear it down and use it for a motel site. Ugh! We focused very quickly. Wanda Wyatt, Fred Hyndman and myself met with the Cundall Trust on June 27, 1972 and left with a building for \$40,000 [twice as much as I thought they should have charged us, but I have to admit the price was good then and looks very good today]. It had without question location, location, location.

It was called The Cundall Home when we bought it. It was painted worn grey, it was tired inside and almost every room had a sink in it. It had been a home for girls from 1919; first as a YWCA and then as the nurses residence for the PEI Hospital. It was loved and if you

closed your eyes you could see the gligging girls dashing up and down the stairs – or boys waiting in the parlor.

It was mid summer when Fred Hyndman and I went out to Brackley to see Walter Matheson about overseeing the job of renovating. What an evening. Walter Matheson was 86 at the time, but he was still in the construction business – sort of. He had graduated from McGill in mining engineering about 1912. After working in the states for a number of years, he returned to PEI and began a construction company. He exuded confidence and had a reputation of being wise and fair. He had the qualities we needed desperately, but he wasn't much interesting in taking on any work. After a lot of stories and impressive responses from us, he did agree to do the job. Within a few days he drove up in his big car, with his foreman with him. They were a team extraordinari. That was the beginning of a wonderful relationship and how I met Bob Brown whose wake I was at today. It was a long way around telling you how sad I was to lose that friend.

The Hillsborough River

Sunday, March 17, 2002

Away back in 1986, I got concerned about the Hillsborough River. My little house at Cranberry Wharf sits on its banks and its history spoke to be each morning as I sat at breakfast. What a history. It is our

major settlement river and it was THE main road on the Island for years and years before any of us were thought of. It has an archeological story to tell that has hardly been touched. It has an Acadian story that is still being written. [My friend Earl Lockerby is working now on the Battle of the Hillsborough which I hope will appear in print before too long. It was a battle between the Acadians and the British that is hardly know about]. Later we had The Glenaladale Settlers in 1770 and the Monaghan Settlers from 1830 on and many others in between.

In the early nineties a group of us got together to begin a push to get The Hillsborough designated as one of Canada's Heritage Rivers. Our mission statement reads: This organization recognizes the Hillsborough River's wide variety of values, including human, natural and recreational. It is dedicated to the betterment of the River through appropriate actions which identify, nurture and enhance existing and new avenues for any development and management of the River compatible with its natural and cultural values>

The River was designated as a Heritage River in July 1997. To better understand its qualities you can have a look at The Heritage River Series on The Discovery Channel, Monday March 18th at 10:30 p.m here in the Maritime. They will be focusing on the Hillsborough that night and you could well see someone you know on the program.

Oscar Night

Sunday, March 24, 2002

Even though I am not a very strong movie fan, I must watch tonight because it will make me feel closer to my sisters, Betty and Mary Claire, who with Claude are attending an Oscar Party with the Kellys in Victoria, BC. I am here and lonesome. I have already had a peek at the TV and it appears we still have to dress in black for awhile yet. Enjoy your evening and may a movie that you have seen win – or one you know about, at least.

This event reminds me of sitting in the sun in Lake Havasu, Arizona on Oscar Day 1998 and watching planes flying over toward California and we kept saying “Look at them they are all going to the Oscars” and we’d laugh. Betty, Mary Claire, Al and I were together that day.

The Garrison Ball

Tuesday, March 26, 2002

Fifty one years ago last night I went with Sidney Campbell to my first formal dance – yes Harriette and Alex, Sydney Campbell, your first cousin! It is no wonder we relate to one another!. It was at the Charlottetown Hotel and I thought that we would dance all evening. Instead we spent a lot of the evening upstairs in a series of suites where various and asunder

couples socialized, and mainly drank, in a setting that was outside the pale so to speak in those days. Sydney and I were rather naive and we just moved around from group to group while I asked myself why we were not downstairs dancing. Those were my pre-gin and tonic days for sure. The most memorable part of the evening – besides Sydney – was that I met Bennett Carr that night and we have crossed paths many times since and as the years go by I like him better all the time. Well now that I think of it there was no other way than up. Those were his pre-Jean days!!! Sydney and I had met in third year Prince of Wales and I do believe we were fellow tutored-students of Mildred Harrington – someone I must write about someday soon.

The Island Way

Tuesday, March 26, 2002

A funeral at the Kirk the other day caused me to ponder on our traditions of respecting the dead and sharing our sympathy with the living. Traditions run deep in this Island. We go to wakes. We go to funerals. We go to funerals in bodies when it is someone who worked with us – or even if it's a close member of their family who died. We send food. We stop at the side of the road and wait until a funeral passes by. We're closely knitted about funerals.

Traditions have changed. For instance we have very few wakes at home now. We don't hang flowers on the

families' house anymore and we have not worn black arm bands for a long time. We do carry pain in our hearts, though.

“Lord God Almighty, before whose face the generations rise and pass away...” When one spends so much time on Island history and genealogy, it is hard not to see each celebration of a life in the connection of family and community.

Bill Burnett whose funeral I attended at the Kirk on Friday had a name that was synonymous with the Guardian for all the days when we were growing up. At the beginning *The Guardian* was routed in Presbyterianism – and Conservatism. It's first issue was on December 16, 1890. J.E.B. McCready took it over in 1896 and then with a little pause the Burnetts took it on.

Bill's father became editor in 1912 and from then until the Thomson family took over in 1954, the Burnett family played the major role in directing the editorial comment of The Guardian and directed it well. Through those years they were supported by Frank Walker, Ellen's Diary, F. H. MacArthur, Neil Matheson, Agricola, and on and on.

My tradition is strong in reading the *Guardian* every morning without fail – even tho' my mother, a dyed in the wool Liberal would, in our house, not go to bed without reading the Patriot – the “Liberal” paper. It was so bad that if she needed to put papers on the floor

for some reason or other, they would NEVER be the Patriot.

I don't believe an Islander can be a true blue [that is a bit of a pun] without reading the *Guardian* and I have enjoyed my relationship with so many of their players – Bill Hancoxs, Gus Flynn, Audrey Jenkins, Lorne Yeo, Walter O'Brien, Bill Ledwell, Walter McIntyre and now Gary MacDougall and his crowd. I know from personal experiences that The Guardian does cover the Island like the dew!!!

Heritage Canada

Wednesday, March 27, 2002

Heritage Canada was established in 1973 and it worked really hard to fulfil its mandate “. . . to preserve and encourage the preservation of Canada's heritage structures and sites”. It had its ups and downs as most new organizations have, but it has accomplished much. It's still producing a good magazine, it is a good lobby group and it has had some very strong innovative programs.

The first board like most “first” boards was “ministerial” in its causes. Hartland MacDougal was Chair, with Peirre Berton as his Vice. And as it evolved each province had good people. Alan Duffus from Halifax, Shannie Duff from St. John's, Phyllis Lambert from Quebec etc. When Hartland retired Pierre took over. One of his main goals was to create a mid-winter

holiday called Heritage Day and it should still be an important goal.

Bob Phillips was the first executive director and Jacques Dalibard was the second. They were different. Bob was a bureaucrat and “loved” Canadian history. Jacques was from France and a graduate of Columbia University’s school of Historic Renovation. In his mind the people were less important, the professionalism of the mandate was the thing. History will write how those two men and their directions mattered in our lives. Since then we have Brian Anthony who came from, well, among other places, Confederation Centre of the Arts, but is a very good bureaucrat and knows his way around the Ottawa scene and is successfully bring to the organization another whole dimension.

What we, who began on the edges of the thing, got out of our Heritage Canada membership was a linking together of people with common beliefs. I still have friends in St. John’s, Halifax, St. Andrew’s, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Regina, Vancouver and Victoria because of our early meetings with, or because of, Heritage Canada.

Charlottetown has benefited greatly from those relationships. What we learned was that all of use were in the same boat; caring deeply for our communities and up against extraordinary and rapid change. We were naive, inexperienced, but we felt we were right. We had wonderful support. In those days we felt as emotional

about the main street of St. Andrew's, as the Murray Premises in Saint John's or Brunswick Street in the Halifax. We cheered the saving of a little log house in the Fredericton's downtown as much as we did Robert Service's cabin in Dawson City or the Papineau Chapel in Quebec or the Richman House in Annapolis Royal.

And THEY cheered when we successfully acquired and refurbished The Hartz O'Halloran Houses on Great George Street and the Blanchard house on Sydney Street. Heritage Canada made a difference.

Later they took on another approach and they focused on The Mainstreet Programs and we once again with the help of a Heritage Canada trained person, Tom Ward and Peter Hyndman, a Charlottetown architect who worked for HC, we benefitted from their professional approach to heritage preservation.

Today Heritage Canada is working hard on legislation and developing governmental understanding of the economic and emotional importance of saving old buildings and mainstreets.

Sometime in the middle of all this Parks Canada, a very sympathetic partner, got involved in a name change and out of that came the Department of Canadian Heritage, more generally identified a Canadian Heritage. Just simply TOO close.

Although many years have passed, I am amazed how people in positions of importance- government and media people – still get Heritage Canada and Canadian

Heritage mixed up. I don't blame them, but I still get furious. Its Canadian Heritage's fault for taking that name so many years after Heritage Canada had been founded. Why can't we correct this. It's embarrassing.

Arbor Day

Thursday, March 28, 2002

We celebrate Arbor Day on the third Friday of May these days. We use to celebrate it on the 24th of May – remember “the Queen’s birthday, if we don’t have a holiday, we’ll all run away”. Personally, if we didn’t go swimming on that day in the North River we would feel we were chicken. I can’t imagine it today even with global warming!

Tomorrow, I’m going to a meeting where I hope the city is going to hire a part time arborist. I can’t tell you how long it has been that Charlottetownians have been worried about beautification. I’m telling you, it dates back to at least the 1840’s! Read this....” I shall spare myself the trouble of writing you or troubling the public with a very long preamble, but merely bring to your notice the marked difference between North American Provinces and the Republican States in general, with regard to the adornment and beautifying of the public squares, in their cities and smaller towns, with trees and walks.” and THAT 1850 letter goes on in a way that would make you cry.

Then in 1882 a St. John Telegraph correspondent wrote about us “...all the streets are laid off at right angles and of unusual width, but from the very width present a bare appearance owing to the absence of trees”. Look up Queen Street today and you could say the same thing.

We began celebrating Arbor Day in 1884 – not that long after the idea was conceived in Nebraska in 1872. Our squares reflect the celebration of those early Arbor Days and so do many of our streets. It was all citizen driven -- the Warburtons, Harris’, the Fitzgeralds, Newbery’s, Rankins, MacDonalds, Haszards and all good people. who cared – and school kids for years and years.

We have been taking beautification of this city seriously for over 150 years. If tomorrow we take a giant step in moving the beautification to a stage of good planning we will see the results explode before our very eyes. We must address every block of this great historic city and make it MORE beautiful. FOR US. Then anyone who comes to visit – or wishes to do business in our community – will be proud participants.

Easter Greetings

Monday, April 1, 2002

It would be difficult to say Happy Easter today with the state of things in the middle east. Janet[Ari]Dale is in

Isreal practicing medicine and wearing fatigues [is that how you spell them?]. It is a worry.

Today most people my age are remembering where they were in 1939 when the King and Queen came to visit. I know Johanna was in the up-stairs window in Wellner's Jewellery Store on Sunnyside and Kate MacDonald in a white dress with a blue coat was somewhere on Grafton Street and Betty and I with our Uncle Clair, who was a dentist on Bay State Road in Boston, where on the corner of Richmond Street and Great George. It was pouring rain and the Royal Couple where on their way back to the ship at the end of the Marine Wharf.

I was at a garden party at Govenment House the last The Queen Mother visited PEI and it was a wonderful day at that glorious place. I think all our parents loved that women and it is apparent by all the tributes today that they were not alone.

I'll add schedule of the '39 Royal Visit later.

Well here I am again and with the Official Itinerary of the Royal Visit of '39.

The Royal Couple arrived at the Marine Wharf at 12:30 on June 14th and were greeted by Lieut. Governor and Mrs. DeBlois, Premier and Mrs Thane Campbell, Mayor and Mrs Foster then they drove up Great George Street to Province House and a few others – you know

Prime Minister MacKenzie King went everywhere with them all over Canada and even into the USA.

At Province House The Premier gave the official welcome on behalf of PEI Islanders and The Mayor “handed” his address to His Majesty on behalf of the Citizens of the City. [Can you imagine the negotiations other than that detail]. Her Majesty was presented a bouquet by, I think Virginia. Is that right?. Members of Government and their wives were presented.

The Royal Party then drove to Government House for a luncheon. Lieut. Governor DeBlois and decorated Government House beautifully with hundreds of geraniums. Then the rains came and the wonderfully planned Garden Party was so confused. All the well planned outfits were put to an extraordinary test.

By 4 o’clock the party was to leave and return to their ship. Streets were lined to and from Government House and the day altho’ an umbrellaed one, with hundreds of wilted geraniums, has long been remembered in the minds of many Islanders.

His Majesty’s reply to the Premier’s greeting was “It has been good to see the enviable conditions in which members of the different races dwell here as citizens of Canada and The British Commonwealth of Nations. Their life exhibits the blessings which abound where democratic principles flourish in an atmosphere of tolerance and goodwill”. This statement is worth pondering during this week-end of world events. How

sure are we that we understand how fortunate we are in this country.

Now I must go and have a gin and tonic in honour of The Queen Mother and cook something from Mrs Beeton's Cookbook.

A Beautiful Summer Resort

Wednesday, April 10, 2002

An article in the Charlottetown Herald of June 1883 notes "Rustico, for quietness and enjoyment, is the very queen of watering places" so it is no wonder that on that glorious point below South Rustico that a hotel rose in 1871. It was first called The Ocean Hotel and it was a two storey building with 21 bedrooms, large dining room, a bowling alley and an ice house. In 1875, the owner Mr. John Nelson suffered a financial set back and it was sold or taken over by John Newson in 1876.

John Newson was a furniture maker in Charlottetown and it was suggested that he had supplied the furniture for The Ocean Hotel and therefore had first claim when the crunch came; otherwise it seems strange that he would have bothered. Newson had married Mary Allison Jost in 1867 and by the time he took over the hotel they already had five children. Although it appears to have been Mary Allison who took over the operating of the hotel even though over the ensuing years she produced five more children. Her summer days must have been full.

Over the twenty five years that they operated the Seaside Hotel, the place was, first, the centre of summer activities for their extended family; the Josts, the Stanleys more Newsons and cousins from all over. The Newsons were part of the business, social and religious elite of the city so they spread their net far and wide.

Summers on Rustico Bay were truly an series of glorious holidays for that extended family along with a wide collection of guests drawn to the spot. That “charming scenery, salubrious and bracing atmosphere, sea bathing, sea and river fishing ...” noted in their advertising along with the confirmation that “the Seaside possesses advantages equal to any hotel in North America.” would be hard to resist.

It was such a significant destination that when the Governor General, The Marquis of Lorne and his wife, Princess Louise visited the Island in 1879, it was natural that the “out of town” trip planned was to the Seaside Hotel. The big disappointment of the day was that Princess Louise did not accompany her husband , the Governor General.

On that Saturday, August 11, 1879 a train left Charlottetown for Hunter River with “a large party of ladies and gentleman” and under the charge of Conductor Kelly, one of the most esteemed conductors on the line. Mr. McNab, the Superintendent of the Railline also accompanied them.

At Hunter River a large throng was congregated to greet the official party. The procession, several miles in length, moved in horse and carriages toward South Rustico – under an arch in New Glasgow and another one in Rustico. They arrived at the Seaside Hotel for a grand Bill of Fare of boiled and roasted turkey, wild duck, tongue and chicken, cold lamb etc, etc.. The Guest book shows “Lorne 1879” as proof of this exceedingly important event on Prince Edward Island’s North Shore.

Over the years visitors came from all over; Fathers of Confederation from Ottawa, Mr. Laird from the North West Territories, and the Swabey’s and even Mr. Beazley from Amoy, China, Rev. Lang came from Inverness, Scotland, some Dawsons from Lennoxville, Quebec and even Cyrus Field, either the Atlantic Cable guy or his son, and Sir Joseph Pope, Island born, but a very important man in Ottawa.

The three hour drive in good weather from Charlottetown was a joy if you chose not to take the train to Hunter River. The “travel” writers waxed eloquent on the landscape they passed. The extended holiday, and the returns, that most guests seemed to take confirmed that the Seaside Hotel on Rustico Bay was one of the finest hotels in the Province in its day.

The hotel closed in 1904 and the Newsons moved their large brood and extended family to Warren Farm,

across the harbour from Charlottetown. The hotel burnt on a January night in 1906. The end of an era.

Our War Memorials

Friday, April 12, 2002

Just in time for Armistice Day last November , the war memorial on the north side of Queen Square was put together again and the green men cleaned up and looking magnificent were back where they belonged. The details of the sculpture now show up like never before in our life time.

We should be very proud to have such a magnificent piece of public art in our city square. It was designed by an important Canadian sculptor, George William Hill. For instance in Ottawa, G.W. Hill did the Thomas D'Arcy McGee and the George Brown monuments. Our monument was unveiled on July 16, 1925.

Discussions about the Soldiers' Memorial took a long time. They started of thinking about a building; a home for veterans, a library etc. They even gave a lot of thought to it being a wing to the north of Province House going back as far as Grafton Street. Plans had been prepared by Mr. Chappelle. Then our friend R. T. Holman of Summerside suggested a highway to be called Victory Highway! There was talk of a grand arch. There were other suggested designs for monuments some quite grandiose. The debate continued for over four years.

Wisdom prevailed and we didn't get the arch or the gross wing to Province House, but we did get G. W. Hill with 20 tons of Stanstead [sic] granite from Quebec and soldiers casted in bronze in Brussels. It seems to have cost \$16,000 dollars; less than it cost to repair the stone and clean the bronze last year.

Now we must address the Boer War Monument on the south east side of Province House. It is a fine monument, too and it needs cleaning. The sculptor for it is prominent as well. Hamilton McCarthy, a British sculptor who had settled in Canada was one of the two artists for The Alexander MacKenzie monument on Parliament Hill, and he himself did the South African War Monument in Ottawa and that wonderful piece on top of the hill, near the Art Gallery, of Samuel de Champlain.

Although our piece of sculpture was not as grand as we had hoped for its pretty nice. On that July day in 1903 when it was unveiled what was lost in stature [so to speak] was made up for by the numbers that attended and "by the order, precision and dignity " of the event.

Today discussions go on as to whether the Peace Keepers and The Merchant Marines could be included on our war memorial or must they build a new one for them.. Hopefully wisdom will prevail once more and those brave souls will be honoured on the existing monument. Let us hope soon we can build to celebrate

peace and life and have no more War Memorials. It doesn't look good these days though.

Queen Mother's Funeral

Sunday, April 14, 2002

As someone said "one last service to her country".

You have to wake up very early to see live the goings on in London, but it wasn't the first time. I remember listening on the radio to the wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip in November 1947[?], and then being in Boston when the King died and watching the whole thing on television in February 1952. Since that we have had the coronation, the wedding of Princess Margaret, the wedding of Prince Charles and Diana. [I remember my sister in Calgary calling that morning. They were having a big party with champagne and all. They hadn't even bothered to go to bed.] Before that we had Anne's wedding and later we had the weddings of Andrew and Edward.

We all know the ceremonial route and Westminster Abbey well – even have visited when we have been in London just to confirm how much we know.

Last Tuesday wasn't any different. What pageantry. It was a most beautiful service and the sermon by the Archbishop of Canterbury on "dignity, laughter and duty" was one fine piece. The horses, the Last Post, the 192 pipers, the bells and the fly past with the Lancaster and two Spitfires ...oh it was a wonderful show.

Johanna, you will be happy to know I conducted the choir and organist through most of their renditions – particularly with God Save The Queen.

Package-ing

Sunday, April 21, 2002

I was lighting my fireplace tonight to add “mood” for my gathering of Island Historians and friends and I lit one of those pressed logs and I thought why do they package them so crudely. This one was called Northland in great big letters. I don’t want to start my evening off advertizing for that company. A discreet ad would be acceptable, but the whole log!!!! I say if you have a good product why do you have to be so loud about it? I know I should be burning beech logs in my 1810 fireplace!

Downtown Residents Meeting

Wednesday, April 24, 2002

Thursday, May 2, 2002 Beaconsfield Carriage House 2 Kent Street at 7:30 p.m Downtown Residents – a small “a” association.

Something happened last year and we did not get together, but like before, the city could use our thoughtful input on so many fronts. We have arranged to hold a gathering Thursday, May 2nd at 7:30. We have asked a group of people to be part of a panel to discuss

“The Arts in The Downtown”. Deirdre Kessler will be the Chair. David MacKenzie from the Centre, Chris Serverance from the Heritage Foundation, Judy Whittaker from the Council of the Arts and Margaret MacKinnon from the Crafts Council will join her. We have also asked Keir Kenny for his views. We think it will make an interesting evening – and – don’t worry, we wouldn’t let the topic negate bring up other subjects if anyone wishes.

Here are some other issues not on the agenda that we, as downtown residents, should be cognisant of:

Although we should still be pushing for the special protection of the 500 lots there are other issues. For instance, there are a number of significant properties for sale within the 500 Lots [that is Euston Street to the Waterfront, the Bridge to Government Pond]. We hope they will be acquired by people with a full appreciation for the qualities of the area. Since our last meeting we can proudly say a number of new owners and renters have moved to our neighbourhood because THEY have CHOSEN us. We welcome you and hope you find the time to come to this gathering.

In addition to new residents, we must welcome McAssey’s Restaurant, The Gahan House, Founder’s Hall, an enlarged grocery store on the corner of Hillsborough and King and a much upgraded Eddie’s Lunch on Prince Street. In regard to major projects to come on stream are APM’s new shop and manufacturing

centre in the old Woolworth's Building on Queen Street and the IT Centre on University and Fitzroy Streets. Jack Diamond from Toronto has had his hand on the design so we should expect a pretty good building when it's finished. The block between Euston and Fitzroy has been levelled for the new Federal Building. The architectural team, for what will be a ground breaking design of a sustainable building, will be announced by the end of May. All of these impact on the community we live in and we believe can contribute to the ambience that downtown residents want.

As you have read recently Council has made the decision to place the skateboarders in Victoria Park. The powers – the Recreation Department – have picked their site and soon we will see the construction begin. The debate was never over the skateboarders, but the fact that Victoria Park was given over to the city by a Act of The Province in 1876. Victoria Park is not like other parks in the city, the Act makes it different. The fact that we have done many things wrong in the past does not negate our responsibility to that act.

Another Green Space is on the city's agenda. The Experimental Farm is another potential park area. This 88 acre site has been a landmark [and open space] in our community for more than 90 years. It was being phased out by the Federal Government, but not before they have given 20 acres to the city for the Aquatic/Rink Complex. Most people thought that the facility would be located at

the corner of University and Belvedere, but when the big announcement was made, lo and behold, the facility is smack in the middle of the farm.. The Friends of the Farm that came into existence a few years ago had dreams and aspirations for the whole farm. That might have been a little unrealistic, but to reduce it to half of that is losing a lot. This pristine green space must be regarded carefully by the citizens of the city before it is allowed to be picked apart by a far-away- Federal- Government-policy without the citizens of this community putting in their two cents worth. Think about it!!! If you want to be part of this issue join the Friends of The Farm.

The issues evolving around Victoria Park and The Experimental Farm touch close to the soul of all of us. It is unfortunate to be pitting the supporters of active sports against the needs of those who enjoy passive recreation. It is time to discuss a parks policy in the city. It would be a good topic for a spring meeting.

The Mercantile Shift continues and the empty spaces in our downtown reflect it sadly. The closing of Henderson and Cudmore last summer was a sad blow to the people who have an historic/traditional view on our downtown shopping. We grew up just expecting it to be there. Last week we heard of new uses for the building and we look forward to activity there again.

Although we have a new Sobey's Grocery Store up at the head of Upper Prince Street we still do not have

our grocery needs met well enough in the downtown. We are grateful for the Root Cellar and The Uncommon Grocer for our speciality items as well as some of our other necessities, but we still need a general grocery store. The Co-op has done little for us as a shopping experience, and more seriously have nothing to pick up the quality of the space itself, even with their “NEW” approach to merchandising.

The promise for an updated liquor store doesn’t seem to have gone anywhere although none of us can complain about the service and friendliness of the one that we have. It’s just that we feel the operation could make a better contribution to the streetscape and a little redecorating could add to the spirit of the place.

The City Garage on the corner of Weymouth and Water Streets has moved out of the downtown and efforts are being made to replace it with a housing complex. That kind of project will only add numbers to support our downtown residential needs. Let’s hope we have a favourable announcement soon on that matter. The Joe Ghiz Memorial Park is looking very good. It’s three cheers for the IODE, the City and others who helped shape the project.

There were fine new sidewalk cleaners at work around town this winter. Although people in the outskirts might not readily recognize the difference, sidewalk cleaning in the downtown offers quite different problems [and needs] than in suburbia. Cleaning

sidewalks, in unison, on a city block is something impossible to pull off – and – then to co-ordinate it with the street ploughing just doesn't work. What happened this winter is a big improvement – so thanks go to the Dept of Public Works and our Councillor. [This is an point that was important on February, but we'll leave it here anyway because winter will come around again.] The problems with the intersection of Queen and Water Street are being discussed. This is a very busy intersection with lots of new-in-town people confused as we more experienced ones deal with it as a four way stop. Apparently we are not going to have lights or a four way stop, but a re-configuration of the corner of Water and Queen Streets. We're going to have a major accident there if something isn't done soon.

Last week meetings were called to review the report of the Toronto teams who had been commissioned to look at a possible way of addressing a public transit system for our city. This is an issue that must be carefully considered in the light of our aging population, energy efficiencies, insurance rates, affects of more asphalt on our landscape, gas emissions and such things, in addition, to just plain simply addressing the over use of cars. The answers seemed to be somewhat sensible , but somehow, and maybe it was clearly stated, we will probably remain with the status quo... even tho' that will end up being more expensive in the long run. Be prepared to ponder this question seriously because the

question will be asked if you would ever use such a syor need one. Think carefully.

Speaking of cars, lets think about trucks. The over-use of our city streets by huge trailer trucks is not exactly friendly. In most tight downtown areas such machinery is relegated to depots at the edge of town and deliveries are legislated to be done by small delivery vans. If large machines must entre they do so during off hours or by special permit. Regular traffic by these large machines is damaging to our small-close- to-the-street houses by rattling their very roots, to say nothing of the havoc they play with traffic in the downtown. Much thought is being given to the building of connectors in the downtown – that is by under-ground systems or plus 15's [like on Kent Street]. The talk goes about connecting across Queen to Confederation Centre and then across Grafton to Confederation Mall and then across University to DVA and then across Kent , once again, to meet up with the new \$3. million dollar garage about to be built. There would be another connection made between the new Federal Building and the Queen Street Parkade. This in a city where there is, as yet, no sidewalk to the hospital. It would be cheaper to supply everyone with all-weather clothes, boots and umbrellas. His Worship Mayor MacDonald has recently set up a committee to begin the planning for the celebration of the city's 150th anniversary of its incorporation. 2005 can be an opportunity to bring together dreams and plans

for our city's future. Give it some thought. Doug Boylan is the Chair of the committee or speak to the Mayor, himself.

Councillor Clifford Lee added last year a number of new period street lights east along Grafton Street and this summer he has intentions of installing others along University Avenue before Euston Street. He added a great many well designed trash bins, too. He has mentioned that he has heard little response to last years efforts, so you should let him know your thoughts and what you think of his effort.

The Mayor has also established a steering committee to; look at the Capital City and ponder its future. The committee under the chairmanship of Harry O'Connell is asking for community input. We'll have Harry come to a Downtown Residentseeting sometime soon and talk about it. In the meantime give our precious community some thought and contemplate the city you want in twenty five years...oh heck maybe even wonder about five years.

All those are issues for other times, at this meeting we want to think and talk about the Cultural scene in the city. Here is a list of things that make this community tick – Confederation Centre, The MacKenzie Theatre, The Council of the Arts and the Arts Guild, The Crafts Council, The Museum and Heritage Foundation with Beaconsfield, The Archives, the Library, The Symphony, UPEI, Holland College, The Culinary Institute, Book

stores, antique shops and art galleries, Province House and Parks Canada's efforts, The Buzz, Keir Gallery, Founders' Hall, Art Rental, City Cinema, CBC, CHTN, The Guardian, church choirs, restaurants and bars. Add to that the staff of these places, the boards that operate them and the people they attract and you have the makings of a very vibrant community. And they are all within walking distance of one another.

Ruby Houle

Monday, May 6, 2002

Ruby Houle lived on the corner of Hillsborough and Sydney Streets. She was the watch dog of Hillsborough Square. I thought of her this morning as I took of for the archivies. I just live up tSydney Street from her house and around the corner from where my sisters and I grew up.

We knew Ruby Houle and respected her and were frightened into being proper when she was around. I remember we were draw with chalk on the side walk one day when she came along and she just turned right into our house to report our activities to our mother. Ruby was a pillar of Trinity Church and the Rebecca Group [I think}.

She was big into elocution and was a big player in drama in the city. She put on Anne of Green Gables at Hertz Hall some time in the late 30's- early 40's. So you can see just how progressive she was. She was

straight-backed and firm in her carriage. You knew she meant business. She'd sit in her porch and watch for some kid to do the wrong thing and she was on the phone to the police. At a public meeting at City Hall last year, I told them about her and said I was taking over as the watch dog of Hillsborough Square. I must start growling more. The square certainly isn't one of our best in the city.

Today I was read of the death of Edward Whelan – the great politician and editor of the early Examiner. Altho he did not attend the Charlottetown Conference, he did attend at Quebec and therefore is regarded as Father of Confederation. He lived on the site of Ruby Houle's house and died there, as a matter of fact. He died in December 1867 and not long after his house burnt and most of his papers were lost.

A New Federal Building

Tuesday, May 7, 2002

W-O-W what an announcement today. Our Federal MP's flew into town with Solicitor General, Lawrence MacAulay in the lead and accompanied by Minister of Public Works, Mr. Boudria to announce the architects for the new federal building that is to be built at Halloran's Corner – north west corner of Fitzroy and University over to Euston. The announcement was exciting enough because they told us this was going to be a ground-breaking building in sustainable

development. There had been a wide proposal call and we knew they had received about 14 or so proposals and that they had narrowed it down to four and today we were to learn to whom. Imagine our excitement when Mr. Boudria announced that our own firm of Bergmark, Guimond, Hammarlund, and Jones were the successful ones. They are joined by the Toronto firm of Urbana Architects Corp, a member of the Hok Canada Group of Companies !!!!! The old days of simple calling an architectural firm after the players seems to be out of vogue in bigger places. Anyway the room full of Islanders were pretty happy that our Islanders had made it big-time.

It is especially nice because Bergmark and Hammarlund were just out of MIT when they came to PEI to work on The Ark – that experimental project of sustainable living in Little Pond, near Souris back in the 70's. So what goes around comes around you could say about those two. The speeches were great. Both ministers were happy and Shawn Murphy gave us a little history lesson on the Federal buildings we have had in Charlottetown since we entered Confederation and Mayor George MacDonald was some happy to have this sizeable building – first of all being designed and built in Charlottetown with all the jobs that will provide – and then to have confirmed the Federal Government jobs right in our downtown.

It will be great to watch the design of this building evolve. Don't expect a "snap on age building", but get excited about a fine contemporary building in our midst. A building where "form will follow function". Its going to be fun. My thanks, good luck and love to all who worked so hard to put this project together in this very special community. Those architects are some lucky to make such a contribution to our urban landscape.

This project will truly help to celebrate Charlottetown's 150 years of incorporation in 2005!!!!

Murray Adaskin

Tuesday, May 7, 2002

What a treasure we lost today. Murray Adaskin. He was 96. I met him at the Governor's Levee in Victoria on New Years Day 2001. He was so sweet. A small man, but can you believe he wrote 130 works. You're going to hear a lot on him in the next few days.

Mother's Day

Sunday, May 12, 2002

I am thinking of all the Mothers I know and all the Mothers I knew and all the people who have mothered me over the years. Happy Mother's Day to all

More on Houle

Wednesday, May 15, 2002

I found the write up on Ruby Houle's Anne of Green Gables. It was presented by Trinity Young People's Union in November 1944. It was most successful. Connie Martin played Anne Shirley and Dorothy Allen and Peter MacDonald played Marilla and Matthew. Others in the cast that we know or remember today were Grace Diamond, Wilma Watts, Fred Norton, Louise Brown etc. It must have been quite the production. Between the first and second act young ladies sang "When its Summertime at Green Gables"

In 1920 Anne was on the movie screen. "Anne of Green Gables has been picturized and was an attraction in movie shows in New England and California..." It had been filmed in Dedham , Mass. We seem to have come a long way.

A. W. Mitchell – Photographer

Thursday, May 16, 2002

The other day I read of the death of Marion Mitchell in Prince Albert. It made me think a day back in 1972 – just about this time of year – when Marion and her son Ivan came into the Heritage Foundation . We were still up in that office on Kent Street. They carried with them boxes of glass negatives. Some 3x5's and some 9x10's. Fortunately there were some prints in the collection, too,

so that we were able to get an idea of the scope of the collection.

The photographer had been Marion's late father-in-law, Albert William Mitchell. A.W., as he was known by, had died at the age of 38. He had worked his full career at Prowse Brothers. He was so devoted to his work that he had risen to the position of a director and Secretary to the board. He seemed to be awfully good. One obituary had noted that "after a life lived about as perfectly perhaps as is possible for mortal man" and the other noted "Honest, and true and faithful, the son was worthy of his sire". [So much for the mother's role in the matter!] Neither of the obituaries that I read mentioned his avocation as a photography and that is what today makes A. W. Mitchell famous.

The Mitchell Collection, as it is called, is one of the most extraordinary photographic collection that the Island possesses. It covers the ten year or so before Mitchell's death in 1906. They have been reproduced so many times. His collection of photos of the Micmac people in Rocky Point are wonderful. He also had great pictures of people in fashionable bathing suits and others riding bicycles. Their are family groups and architectural interiors, as well as exteriors. There is a great self portrait taken it seems on top of one of the buildings on Queen Street across from the market. There are pictures of Government House and Province House

with great parades out front and pictures of the first stone St. Dunstan's being built.

Islanders were very lucky to receive this collection and none of us there that day could ever have imagined how useful it would be to historians. Sadly we don't know how he became involved in photography or who would have taught him. Around the turn of that century photography was important and we had people like G. H. Cook and J. A. S. Bayer with studios in the city and earlier Cyrus Lewis was active and even Louson was around then. . He could have learned from one of them or maybe he read all about it in Popular Mechanics!

There is a lesson for all of us in this story. When we have collections of importance we should begin to think of what happens to them "later" for the greater good. Just a thought.

Charlottetown, Our Hometown

Saturday, May 18, 2002

I want you to start thinking about Charlottetown. We want to know how we can bring it from "Good to Great". It has many attributes and I'm going to make a list and you'd be welcome to add more. Here's mine:

HISTORY: The site and name was chosen by Surveyor General Samuel Holland and included in his report to

The Right Honorable the Lords, Commissioners for Trade etc. in September 1765. Named after Charlotte, wife of George the 3rd, it was designated the Capital of the Colony because of its location “...as being one of the best and nearly central parts of the Island” as Holland put it. There were a few other reasons, too.

LAYOUT: The town was layed out by Charles Morris of Nova Scotia in 1768 after which Patterson, our first Governor and Thomas Wright fiddled with it a bit. What we have today: the orderly blocks in the downtown with the four Squares, and what is left of Queen Square, are all part of the original plan. Outside of the downtown be have remnants of what is left of Charlottetown Common and The Royalty. It is a prize winning layout.

SCALE: “A little town that runs down to the sea” was how it was once described. And except for some intrusions our scale has remained fairly “sweet”. People enjoy walking the streets of our downtown. Scale is an abstract word, but it is mathamathical and if something relates [or doesn’t] in size to our human size we are, at least, subconsciously effected.

WATERFRONT: Charlottetown Harbour brings together three rivers: The Hillsborough, The Elliot or West and The York or North River. These three rivers were recognized by Samuel Holland has having “easy

communication with the interior parts [of the island]”. It is a magnificent harbour for boating and in our day the swimming was equally great whether it was off the wharves at the waterfront, in Victoria Park, at the Butts or along the Brighton Shore, Inkerman or Dickieson’s. Sadly we can hardly swim in the Harbour any more altho’ you still see kids jumping of the wharves.

The debate continues as to the value of Charlottetown as an active port. We do ship potatoes out, fertliizers in and lots of fuel stuff and, of course, we do have the cruise ships. How much more activity be can except remains to be seen. The harbour has nice deep water and moving things by ship seems to make economic sense, but what things?

OUR STORY LINE: We have been marketed fairly intensely as the Birthplace of Confederation and that is true. Altho’ David says we were the Bedroom of Confederation. He is, of course, correct. They came here to talk about Country Evolving and that it what was so important about the 1864 Conference. We can build on that, but we have lots of other stories, too. They can range from Thomas Carlyle’s First Love who arrived here as the Chatelaine of Government House to Watson Duchemin who invented the lovely roller bearing and built pipe organs on the side. We had Johnny Hatch our famous firebug and Mark Butcher our wonderful

furniture maker etc, etc, etc. Then, of course, we have the stories of you and me. It all comes together the big stories and the little ones, the old ones and the new ones, that make this our hometown important to us all.

CAPITAL CITY ROLE: When we first began, the capital city's role was clear. We would be the home of the Lieutenant Governor, the centre of Government for the Colony, the headquarters for the Courts and the major marketing centre. Today we are still all of those things and that role, grown as it has and dispersed as it has, still gives stabilization to this town that we often take for granted. Ownership, I believe, for the Capital City belongs to all Islanders and I'd like to see that strengthened. That is going to take work.

BUILDING STOCK: One of the really pleasant aspects of Charlottetown is its architecture and the variety we have. Although we have been pretty brutal to it, we have retained some very nice examples of what our builders left us. In more recent years we have been made more aware of the value in maintaining and caring for this aspect of our town. It is a big subject.

TREES: We have been planting trees to make our town prettier even before 1884 when we first celebrated Arbor Day. Although they have been subjected to vandalism, disease, and less than the best care, we have some very,

very fine trees. Much more care has been given in recent years to planting more and pruning more. We still have a long way to go.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: What town with a population of under 30,000 can claim an University, a Technical College, a Vet School and a Culinary Institute. We can add to that two high schools, and 15 other schools to say nothing of all the other learning experiences we provide “ within our four walls”. The spin-off from these institutions far and exceed what is generally supposed.

CULTURAL LIFE: As far back as I have read in history, Charlottetownians were always interested in music, drama and the arts. Culture is always tho’ an up hill battle. The battle doesn’t mean that no talents exists – often to the contrary. When the Confederation Centre landed in our midst we thought all aspects of our cultural needs were to be met. Alas we learned that stepping into the big time had its pluses and minuses, but it has been a grand step anyway. I think the Centre has caused us to stretch in many directions and we are the richer for it. I’d even go so far to say the the arts are holding the downtown together at the moment. Ant the talent is wonderful.

PARKS AND RECREATION: Well we have rinks and hockey, soft ball, and, I guess baseball. We also have a fine yacht club and a golf club within minutes of the downtown. We have tennis courts and a beautiful race track that overlooks the Hillsborough River – that is be unless the Irvings build tanks to block the view.

Recently we have bought into Rails to Trails that links us with a trail that goes from Tignish to Elimra! We also have the Routes for Nature and Health in town and the Board-walk along the Waterfront of Charlottetown and around Victoria Park. Yes, and we do have Victoria Park. The most beautiful gentle spot that is presently, and maybe for quite a few years, in a state of confusion as to what a park really is and how active sports and parks are different. Victoria Park is a whole story in itself and its future really might have to be settled in the courts. There does not seem to be another way.

Today many of us are pushing for park expansion. We really want to see a good deal of the Experimental Farm, that is presently being phased out , turned into a park/garden. We are a city without a Parks Policy so we must go through the shaping of that before we know what green space means in the minds of this city. Oh yes almost forgot, we are about to get a new indoor swimming pool and a skateboard park.

HOSPITALS and all: We now have one wonderful hospital with a loyal staff and caring health

professionals. We are going through the same growing pains as most communities, but we should not have a problem attracting health works to this beautiful, safe and relatively healthy community.

SAFE: Some crime, a murder or two over the last number of years, usual amount of petty stuff and one bombing that we are not very proud of. We have bootleggers to everyone's amazement – and some discomfort. We have a lot of noisy and messy parties going home late at night that we should be able to deal with and we have dog walkers who don't scope. Otherwise it is a wonderful place to live.

CLIMATE: Except for a few weeks in the spring, our climate is just great. Late spring, summer and fall are excellent. Winter just has to be embraced and to thought positively about. Nice bright cold sunny days, what more can you ask for. It is just those few weeks in spring.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER PLACES: With the new bridge travel within the Maritimes is now a song. After that, alot of people we love live 600-700 miles away, but we make their visits here so worthwhile that they put up with that distance. Its our dear family and friends that live more than half way across the country that we worry about and wish it could be easier for them.

Generally our place here is worth everybodies' trouble to get here.

So there you go, that's my view. Now you think about Charlottetown and let us know how we can make it better. We'd be very happy to hear from you.

Curtain Call

Saturday, May 18, 2002

Thirty eight years ago tonight, May 18, 1964 the curtain in the theatre at Confederation Centre of the Arts went up for the first time. The Dominion Drama festival had begun and seven plays were to be preformed before full houses each evening and for two matinees. Full houses for seven plays was as great a miracle as the fact that there was a curtain to raise.

A Year Ago

Friday, May 31, 2002

A year ago tonight I became #2522 in the Order of Canada. It was a grand occasion and those days in Ottawa with my family and friends Gary, Grace and all the others we saw will always remain special.

I want to say how proud I have been of Her Excellency in all the events that have been so incredibly emotional this past year. She rises to every occasion. We are lucky to have her. I hope we can bring her and her

consort to Charlottetown for some specially significant role in celebrating what Birthplace of Confederation is really about. Personally I like Country Evolving best.

I was particularly proud to be joined in that Order of Canada fraternity this past year my three Island friends; Artist and art promoter Henry Purdy and two others whom I cared deeply about and who died after they were appointed, but before they were installed: Bill Hancox who came here to be Publisher of the Guardian and stayed on to be a great supporter of the arts and one time executive-director of the Confederation Centre – to say nothing of his involvement in the establishing of the Gold Cup and Saucer Parade and Race, and my friend from Tignish, Henry Gaudet who pushed that community to care for its' history away beyond what it wanted to do. I'm sorry they missed the party.

There one thing I must say about an award like this; it puts the pressure on you to do better and I am trying every day.

Beautification

Saturday, June 1, 2002

Today a group of people got together to discuss Beautification and Trees in Charlottetown. It was Councillor Clifford Lee's idea. Landscape Architect, Ernie Morello was the chair. It was a great day. There were a lot of caring people there who truly love this city and want to see it better and better. A number of subjects

were discussed and when I get the notes, I'll share them with you.

I was asked to speak on the History of Beautification in our town and I enjoyed the time it took to review my research and come up with a story. It is a little weak around the edges, but its helped me get a better handle on things, so I hope it will do the same for you.

Beautification

I want to begin by saying that Charlottetownians have been concerned with beautification almost since the beginning – and that is over 230 years! Our early citizens, the layout of the town – and of course the climate – all played a part in how this issue was addressed. Most of our citizens came from the British Isles [directly or indirectly] where gardening and “beautification” was a subject for all classes for almost a couple of hundred years. Our early settlers brought with them the notion of gardening out of necessity, but there is early evidence of landscaping. Although that could mean more removal of trees rather than planting, we have throughout the Common of the Town and The Royalty remains of grand driveways, hedges and groves that had to be planted.

Island books like Hints to a Farmer by Judge Peters written in 1853, Account of Prince Edward Island by John Stewart written in 1806, a book by John Lawson

written in 1851 and Bagsters with his hints for emigrants in 1861 all covered the subject , with at least one good chapter, of what grew best and the importance of gardening; it was not all about growing food and survival.

By 1840's we had a Horticultural Society "for the benefit and amusement of the inhabitants" and a Mr. Parker and a Mr. Prendergast were advertizing themselves as Gardeners and Botanists. Mr. Prendergast also advertised "Pleasure Grounds and Shrubber laid out faithfully and kept neatly".

By 1850 we were beginning to have our critics. Tom Moon put an ad in the newspaper telling us how disgraceful it was to see our large spacious square so neglected. He cautioned us to "stop looking like stubborn mules with continual hot sun shining over your heads' and he reminded us what a treat it would be 'to walk where it was so adorned".

By the time the Horticultural Association held their first Exhibition in 1852, there were classes for Geraniums, Myrtles, Fuchsias carnations etc, etc.. Later on they were holding two exhibitions a year with an Autumnal Exhibition in the fall. These exhibitions were held in Mrs. Grubb's Garden that was at Holland Grove located where the Inn In The Hill is now. They held them for a number of years.

The first mention we have of planting street trees was in 1860, but unfortunately most of them were destroyed soon after they were planted.

The 1870s don't sound great in Charlottetown. The filthy state of the town, the sanitary conditions, the cows, the pigs, the horses running loose, the awful dust and so few trees to speak of. Newspaper articles paint a very poor picture. To make matters worst, we had Oscar Wilde, the Apostle of Beauty visit us in 1882. How embarrassing.

The newspapers continued to rant on the conditions. One letter noted that it wasn't much money that was needed, but "a judicial expenditure, combined with a good deal of energy and enthusiasm and a knowledge of how to utilize, practically, whatever means we now possess" [Not a bad theme to be remembered for our meeting today]

The answer seems to have come in the form of Arbor Day in 1884 [Arbor Day had begun in Nebraska in 1872] and our leading citizens took the event on with enthusiasm. They decided what trees to plant, citizens pledged themselves to one tree, or more, and they held a parade with wagons full of shovels, buckets and trees. They had a band – and they paraded from one square to the other. The trees were Rock Maple, White Birch, Indian Pear, Black Walnut, Elm, Chestnut, Mountain Ash, Lime and Oak. Even then they didn't plant evergreens. Likely there had just finished getting rid of

so many that they could hardly imagine planting them. 110 trees were planted that first Arbor Day and from then it it was an annual event.

At the same time, they began The Queen Square Garden Fund and they tackled the spaces around Province House, Post Office and Court House with avenges. They got lots of financial support. That project was shaped under the direction of Arthur Newberry and in later years by LeBaron Tait's father. It became our piece de resistance.

To celebrate the Queen's Jubilee in 1887 the direction turned to Victoria Park that had been given by the Crown to the City for its care " for the sole purpose of a Park, Promenade and Pleasure Ground for the use of the citizens, the inhabitants of the Island and all her Majesty's subjects." We'll probably have to go to court to interpret what exactly those words mean in the 21st century. The Roadway around the park had long been asked for and it seem the correct to decide to do it. That is when the Park got its name, too. Improving and beautifying the park then became an important issue.

It is hard to image a town without paved streets and sidewalks, with lots of garbage, animals galore and a lot of outdoor privies, but those conditions would exist in this town for many years. Can you imagine with "the fashions" of the day, walking in spring slush, mud or June dust. One newspaper noted the deplorable conditions of the side walks – with all those cellar

hatches that use to be around. The article [it was 1919] went on the tell of a women being brought up short when the hem of her skirt got caught on a cellar hatch. They warned our citizens to just “Wait till women vote”.

Over the first quarter of that century, we seemed to have turned the town around. The aim was to make it “one of the most picturesque cities in Canada” and when you read visitors’ reports in that time, they seemed to have achieve that. The Queen Square that I remember was beautiful – peaceful – and it had that fountain, and a band shell and the Paton’s drinking fountain and the cannons. It was grand.

In 1903 we had planted 300 trees and they tackled, particularly, the Malpeque Road. They planted 200 elms there and my generation of Islanders speak with reverence of the “ old shaded Elm Avenue” – the present University Avenue that is so sad today. The tree planters kept up the effort. Pownal Street was planted on both sides a couple of years later and individual property owners took it on themselves to plant in front of their properties. That’s why great George Street has so many trees.

The same year of 1903 they were pushing big time with a program called “Make Home More Beautiful”. Sweet peas were the flower of choice that year. But we still had dust and my now we were worrying over our summer image – the effect on the “The Home Comers Excursion”

It wasn't only tourism that drove us though. Numerous times we read about the link from cleanliness to godliness – the moral value. Once we were advertised as “Clean and Christian” and, often, health was the leading factor. The Flora Association, that seemed to replace the Horticulture Association, was advertising their annual competition, stating that “Cleanliness and tidiness with healthy, growing plants’, they stated, ‘are the prime factors in healthfulness”. They gave as the other reason – it was “the cultivation of a taste for beauty, for beautiful surroundings and for a beautiful city”. They advertised that “ love of the beautiful is a virtue and one cannot go far astray in morals, in religion, in patriotism, who looks for the beautiful in nature, in art and in man and woman” !!!!!!! [1919]

They tried everything; Limerick Contests, Home and City Improvement Assoc., and Bird House Competitions. Lawn and Backyard Competitions, and then Brighten Up Week. We continued to have exhibitions and we continued to celebrate Arbor Day until it faded a bit and it still isn't as great as it used to be.

Through most of this period we had great gardeners in town. Their homes were showcases. In 1909 the Experimental Farm opened its doors and we had their additional expertise in our community and a very fine setting for VIP's to plant trees! We got great press. We

were praised and praised. Letters to the editor all the time.

But we still had the watch dogs!! In 1936 we were worried about how the pruning of trees was being done. We brought a guy to court for driving his wagon up against a birch tree and taking some bark off and we always had to deal with vandalism. I met some of those “vandals “ in later life. They weren’t so bad.

By the end of the first quarter of the century our streets, in the downtown anyway, were pretty well all paved “with everlasting concrete”, and we had water and plumbing pretty much all over.

For most of the 20th century we pushed – and we did improve – gaining in some places – losing in others. Fashion changes like the impact of the automobile has been fierce, the wiring, and for that matter the plumbing, and now district heat and Eastlink Cable have had their impacts . But as someone wrote in 1932 “Movements for civic betterment seldom get anywhere without active and responsible leadership” So today I challenge you to contemplate this very special city and help Clifford and our other councillors to shape our dreams in the best possible way.

“Let us beautify the city; let us be proud of it and grateful for its natural advantages for there are few cities in Canada, or elsewhere that possess as much natural attractiveness as Charlottetown.” Editorial in *Guardian* of August 1919.

Old Protestant Burying Ground

Monday, July 1, 2002

For the last few years a group of us have taken The Old Protestant Burying Ground under our wing – with the support of Mayor George MacDonald and City Hall staff. It is the place we use to call the Elm Avenue Cemetery. It's old. The first recorded burial is 1784. It closed in 1873 when it was really full and city residents got very worried about quality of City water and felt all cemeteries should be in the outskirts of town.

Back in the 40's Elsie Cambridge, a lady with strong Island connections came to visit and it seems spent her time at the cemetery creating the most extant list of burial stones that exists. It is from this list, and on site exploring, that fellow board member George Wright has created a fine inventory of burials. Each stone has been photographed and a form made for each. We have also been collecting obituaries from the newspapers. In other words we're putting "the meat on the bones" so to speak.

The site is much improved. Stones have been straightened and many repaired. A number of stones have been recovered from under layers of sod and we have discovered several tombs – those are vaulted ceiled spaces where more than one burial occurred. There were eleven sarcophagi there when Miss Cambridge document the place. We have repaired three or four, but

some have been damaged almost beyond repair. The place definitely looks good.

One of the most important issues that the committee has addressed is the establishment of an endowment fund. Already we have \$20,000 in the account, but we need enough to assure perpetual care. I think the support of descendants – and a number of historians – has been exceptional so I think we'll succeed on that front, too. On July 31st at 7 o'clock the annual Memorial Service will be held.. Trinity Church is looking after it this year. If you are in the area, drop around .

Happy Canada Day

Monday, July 1, 2002

Happy Canada Day to all in my cyber world from Charlottetown. We are the home of this year's CBC Canada Day show and fireworks. Check it out on your TV around ten o'clock p.m. and you'll get the picture. These passed days we have been a hum of activity. There has been a huge stage built at Confederation Landing Park – and much to our surprise a real Tom Sawyer fence built all around. That is to assure that only ticket holders get inside.

Those who live along Water Street can get the view from their upstairs windows. It is a reasonable gift for the inconveniences they may suffer over the week-end.

Most downtown residents don't mind these singular events. What bothers them most are the weekly gatherings at one bar on the water front and the impolite crowds they seem to attract. It is a common problem in many tourist driven communities as to how to balance the year around residents needs with those who want to party. [Oh, oh, the downtown residents like parties, too, but].

Down across from THE STAGE on the old railway lands is what we use to called the Bill Lynch Show. It almost seems sacrilegious to have this show appear anytime but at Old Home Week and Exhibition. It makes it all so common. Remember the cotton candy that we waited for all summer . It now comes in blue, too. The buzz of the Crown and Anchor wheel brought back memories, too. That was our introduction to gambling. Bingo and the Tilt a Whirl were there when I walked around as well as the Merry go Round. The Ferris Wheel has been replaced by something called the Zipper. But I assure you the people look the same that run the concessions and you can definitely find the same cross section of people there as we always did. Last night I didn't see any little girls coming off the rides with green faces, but if I go this afternoon I am sure I will.

My contribution to Canada Day this year is a new flag pole. Yesterday I dug the hole for the form, mixed the bag of pre-mix cement and put in the sleeve. I checked this morning and the cement is hard, and I hope

the sleeve is straight because I'll put the pole in today. I am looking for a VIP to raise the flag for the first time.

Betty and Mary Claire will be on Saturna Island for the Lamb Barbecue and between there and here many friends will I am sure be doing specials things. I hope it is a great day for all.

Follow Up on Canada Day

Tuesday, July 2, 2002

Altho' the weather man spoke of dark clouds, some rain and a thunder storm, it was a glorious day. The Mayor got his small bauld spot burnt red attending the noon day event at Confederation Centre and Province House.

Sam, the Record Man had a dashing hat on and it did not worry him. The Lieut-Governor was under an awning. The Centre Company performed beautiful and the Boys Choir from Montreal joined in.

The formal declaration at the front of Province House – that place where the Fathers of Confederation met in 1864, so it is always meaningful. After it was over I captured The Mayor and his wife, The Chairman of The Centre Board and UPEI President Wade – the other VIP's slipped through my net – to officially raise a flag on my new flag pole. After cooling refreshments, it took the Mayor and I four attempts to get the flag right side up. It now flies gloriously in my backyard where it can be seen from both Sydney and Dorchester Streets.

In the evening a number of friends gathered at my place for turkey etc. until it was time for the fireworks to happen on the waterfront. It was a wonderful Canada Day and we have plans to repeat it next year.

I await now the report from Saturna Island.

Hop-Scotch

Saturday, July 6, 2002

Whenever I work in my garden and recover so many pieces of glass, I can't get out of my mind the days we played hop-scotch just around the corner. We would search diligently for the right piece of glass to play with. There would be my sister Betty and Nancy Mullins and June MacDonald among others. We'd draw the pattern on the sidewalk or street with chalk.

There would be three rectangles one after the other, then a pair side by side, a single one and then another pair. You'd throw the glass and then jump, I think on one foot, and pick up the glass. If the glass was the perfect one, it would be thick enough to sometimes land on its edge and somehow or other there was a significance to that, but I forget the details.

All I can remember when I am gardening and finding almost two hundred years of glass chards, is how important some of these pieces would have been to our games of hop-scotch.

Downtown Connectors

Sunday, July 14, 2002

The underground connector between Best Western on Grafton Street and their addition across the street was estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$500,000. The Plus 15 from Royal Trust Tower to Confederation Court Mall cost somewhere around \$300,000. All that was a number of years ago.

The proposal on the table now will cost somewhere between \$3M and \$5M with which we could buy everyone in the city at least an umbrella and a pair of rubber boots. In cities like Calgary, Minneapolis and even Toronto and Montreal where major commitments have been made to connectors, are first of all connecting high rise buildings – high density stuff. They still kill the life on the street in a big way.

Someone said, about them, that it is a sign we have given up on the street and that is certainly what followed in Calgary. The retail moves up stairs and at street level things become dead. If you go underground you take the street with you. Street life is the vitality of downtown. Policing of these spaces is not the responsibility of city police – that is a serious issue. The fact they only connect certain places in the city is negative and controlling. Jane Jacobs the guru of cities and the author of *Death and Life of Great American Cities* – a classic – writes and speaks strongly against this approach as do many other important urban landscapers. To take such a

step in this city – at a cost of 3-5 million dollars – will do nothing to increase activity in the downtown and must be very seriously debated.

Bring Back The Beaches

Sunday, July 14, 2002

A few years ago THE NEXT CITY had an article on city beaches and it got me thinking about how much we have given up and how what is right in front of us is so often ignored.

Charlottetown is almost surrounded by water and when we were kids we swam in Victoria Park, the Butts, Rocky Point and very much in the North River. We tried to swim from Victoria Day until the middle of September. We fought blood suckers and rocks and glass on the beach, We built rafts and had them built for us. We rowed and we kayaked and we dug clams. We dove and we swam and we dove and we swam.. The tides ruled our days. If the tide was out we dug clams, if it was in we swam.

At Victoria Park you started of swimming at the end of Brighton Road and when you got good you could move around to the bath houses that were near Fort Edward and if the tide was really high, and you were very brave, you could jump off the top of the bathing houses. It was wonderful. A few weeks ago I was at a meeting where the Rocky Point Ferry was brought up. What a resource that was for Charlottetown kids. In less

than 20 minutes from the Prince Street Wharf you could be at a dear beach and all within sight of Charlottetown. Why can't we try to bring that back. Inkerman Shore was our space though and we knew every inch of it. On a few occasions, we'd boat over to Lewis' Point and then for a big thrill we'd go to the old North River Bridge and jump off – most of us with ropes tied around us because the current there was pretty strong. I wonder how we got there? I haven't dived for a couple of years, but you know there is nothing more thrilling. I'd better look around for a raft.

For Peter Mitchell

Thursday, August 29, 2002

The City Beautiful Charlottetown, located on a site chosen and laid out in the 1760's, has long been concerned about beautification. The plan of the town with a Common and a Royalty surrounding the seaside town offers an exceptional opportunity to study the impact of geography on community. When the history of buildings, industry, business and beautification are layered on top of that plan, we have almost the complete picture of the city's 240 years history. It is apparent that the concern during the first half century was one of clearing land rather than planting. advertisements for trees and flowers can however be found in local newspapers as early as the 1840's. We have the first report of planting trees on the principle streets in 1860.

For the next fifty years there were consistent efforts made although it often proved to be two steps forward and one back. The Annual celebration of Arbor Day from 1884 onward did instill in the minds of Charlottetownians a real value for trees and their care. The first Arbor Day must have been a sight with many of the leading citizens with “spade and shovel marching beside horse and carts loaded with three hundred hardwood trees of 12 different species...” . Our City squares to this day reflect that effort. In the Commons and the Royalty where treed lanes and some exceptionally fine examples of some hardwood species are almost all that is left of the early country estates. These estates and the settlement pattern in those parts of the town emulate the British tradition that the early settlers brought with them. There is one estate that remains and it has been the focus of a community effort over the past year. In 1906 The Federal Government began to acquire property for an Experimental Farm in Charlottetown Royalty. The centrepiece was a house and farm called Ravenwood. The house built about 1824 for William Johnston an Attorney General for this Island, it is to this day a visual reminder of those earlier times. With changes in the Experimental Farms needs this property has been declared surplus and will be passed over to Canada Lands. The Community wants it to become a Public Garden and Arboretum. The debate continues. With such a glorious geographic and tree

planting history the onus is on us to document the history and to enter the information on whatever geographic information system that might be in use in the City and Province. That way the landscape can dictate its richness on the future development of this Birthplace of Confederation in the Garden of the Gulf. Catherine G. Hennessey The Painting is in the Confederation Centre Art Gallery Collection and was painted by Robert Harris. The property on the right is Ravenwood and the property on the left across the Mount Edward Road, is Ardgowan. The date is 1871.

I'm Back

Saturday, March 22, 2003

OK, OK I have surfaced. I have no explanation for it, but it has given me a lot of concern. I care so much for you all and I have so many stories to tell. I think your response to my web page made me shy and besides I have truly been overwhelmed with the research material that I have collected. Three to four hours a day in the archives for over a hundred days a year amasses a lot of material and then I must spend hours at home working on its recovery. No wonder my head is in confusion, but I want to share some of it with you and I must begin doing so or I will die having done nothing with it at all. I think the war – and a long winter – has caused me to escape into my dream world, think and worry about you all, and with the sounds of CBC Radio Two, I have been

forced me to make contact. I hope I can keep it up.
Blessings to you all in these confusing days.

Grocery Stories

Sunday, March 23, 2003

It is almost a month since we celebrated Heritage Day at City Hall. This year we had a small exhibit on Corner Grocery Stores. It was a timely subject since downtown Charlottetown had just lost its prime store – the Co-op on Queen Street. Gloriously situated for downtown residents and workers, it seemed not to have a strong handle on who their customer was and the changing demographics of the downtown to say nothing about the changes in culinary needs [more about that latter].

A year ago Frank Zakem did a wonderfully little book on his family and his father's store on the corner of Weymouth and Grafton Streets. It was very popular.. As part of his project he did a preliminary list of other grocery stores in the down town. He had listed 48 and by the time the exhibition was over we had a list of 64 and it was obviously growing. Then if we counted grocers the number would almost double since stores changed hands and have almost a genealogy of their own. When we were growing up on Hillsborough Street we had ten grocery stories in a two block radius. Generally you charged at one and they had delivery boys – cute ones like Howard Glover. Over Christmas when my sisters were home, we had a Saturday morning

coffee party for the Taweels whose store was on the corner of Queen and Fitzroy. We had shopped there almost all our lives. It was great fun. Saul, Peter and Paul and Dulla came, their wives and some who worked in the store and a lot who shopped there. Everyone enjoyed being together again. That was what it was about those stores were part of your extended family.

A couple of weeks ago The Downtown Residents Assoc. had a meeting on the Shopping Crisis in the Downtown [we also lost our last hardware store recently]. Over 60 came out to the meeting. There were no solutions, but a strong consensus that we form an interesting group of consumers with fairly fussy needs and if the hurdle of “buying power” could be addressed, a wonderful useful, gathering place could be added to the downtown. Quality of product, ambience and consistent staff were some of the needs that were pointed out. Parking was an issue, but it sounded to me as if it was a hurdle that was overrated, after all most people live downtown because they like to walk to places. City Hall people were there and it is hoped there will be a solution to this problem.

Community Concerts

Friday, March 28, 2003

When we were kids we would have season tickets to the Community Concert Series held each year. These concerts were organized back in 1932 and ran until the

Confederation Centre opened and then a number of things changed – sometimes at a loss. These concerts were directed locally by group of music lovers and, internationally, by The Columbia Concerts Company with some connections with Columbia Recording business. They said they had 90% of the worlds great artists and to tell the truth they probably did.

The deal was that each October our local group would hold a membership drive and you had to have that membership as there were no single ticket sales at the door. They promised quality and at least three concerts each year. We never knew what we were going to hear. It was after the membership drive that the local committee had to make the choices depending on how many memberships they sold and I suppose to some degree who other Maritime centres were choosing.

We thought they were all wonderful. We hear harpists, John Knight, The Trapp Family, Leopold Simoneau, Michael Rhodes, The Longines Symphonette and the Danish National Orchestra – just to mention a few. The concerts would be held at Prince of Wales College gym which couldn't have been acoustical great, but we didn't know the difference. The gym would be full. It was a fine introduction to good music. We owe a lot to the local organization – people like Mrs Keith Rogers, Lillian MacKenzie, Art McInnis and lots of others.

Canadian Collector

Friday, March 28, 2003

The Canadian Antique Collector – a journal of antiques and fine arts – was a ground breaking magazine. It was the first time that Canadianna was given full prominence in a magazine format. It began just in time for Canada's '67 Centennial. Marion Bradshaw, a lady of extraordinary vigour and good taste, was the editor and carried the magazine through at least twenty years of great information.

By the mid 80's the Canadian scene had changed and Canadianna was truly recognized as something to be reckoned with. The Macdonald Stewart Foundation was the patron. David and Lillian Stewart believed in the subject. Yes, he was the man who supported the Brier for years. In addition to their support of the magazine they also sponsored three wonderful symposiums. One in Montreal, one in Toronto and one in Guelph. These symposiums brought Canadians together from across the land. Presented under Marion's direction, they provided a rich view of, not only antiques and fine arts, but food, music, flower arrangements and Canadian vistas that enriched the lives of a whole generation of Canadians working in the heritage field.

I have friends all across this land because of those symposiums. In 1970 Marion conceived the idea of doing some special issues that would focus on one province at a time. Nova Scotia was the first and it came

out January/February 1972. It set a high standard. Marion came to the Island and started on us to produce a Island issue. It was important if we were to do it, that we would have a magazine out for our 1973 Centennial. It was a worry. It would be our coming out – our first time on the national stage. I was the Island co-coordinator.

The effort began in earnest in the summer. Great discussions took place on what we would cover and who would write the articles. I'm still proud of the line up; Dr. Bolger, Ian Robertson, Leslie Maloney, Mary Burnett, Gary Carroll, Irene Rogers and Ruth MacKenzie, Moncrieff Williamson, Marc Gallant, John Cousins, Leone Ross – even Corneilus Howatt was in there. The package was delivered to Marion about ten days before Christmas. It was difficult and exhausting to get everyone to produce on time, but you know that magazine is still being used by students of Island things and, sad to say, is almost the only printed information on some of the subjects we covered in the issue. Why I thought about all of this, is that the magazine was launched in March 1973 – thirty years ago this month. It is hard to believe.

Diviner

Thursday, April 3, 2003

I was thinking lately of when we built the cottage at Inkerman Shore. It was 1942. I found the bill for the lumber the other day. We bought it from Wilhelm

Madsen in Wood Islands. It cost \$108.10 delivered in Charlottetown!!! I remember the man, he had guinea hens. The first time I ever saw them and I loved them then and I still do today.

We needed a well. Our father went to find a diviner and he found one – down east somewhere. It was a big event at Inkerman. All the men and the kids hanging around. The man was very serious and took his defining stick and moved carefully around the back yard. He suddenly declared the spot and it was very clear that the rod was pointing directly to a spot. That was where Jimmy the Pump dug the well and we always had great water from it.

The story of the digging is one I will share with you another time. Now you might think that “Oh sure, silly stuff”, but the evening didn’t end at our place. Two neighbours were watching and they were having a terrible time with their pumps. Salt water all the time. One, Harold Pickard, you could understand . He was right on the shore. Roddie Gillis was on the shore, too, but he had a high bank in front of him. Our diviner took off to investigate. He declared Harold Pickard’s spot to be away off by a hedge row on even flatter land – almost on the shore and he put Roddie’s spot across the lane from his cottage. When they dug their wells, they never had salt again. Magic? No there is something far more serious about that exercise and I’m glad I saw it all happen when I was a kid. I do believe it has affected my

thinking throughout my life. If I ever build in the country again, I am certainly going to seek out a diviner.

Dark Sky Week

Thursday, April 3, 2003

I've been a member of The International Dark Sky Association for a number of years now. I love being at a meeting and contributing to the discussion like this "As a member of the International Dark Sky Association, I would like to add.....". It has been a stopper. But I am a serious member of that Association – a deep believer.

Last fall I had a call from a young man who works for CFCY who asked me about the association. He, too, had come around to believe we were contaminating the earth in yet another way. I loaned him all my newsletters and told him as much as I believed I had no time – nor energy – for more causes unfortunately. I would just have to continue bring up the subject within my own circle of causes. <◇ God bless him, he, his name is Brian Roach, has gone to some government people, but more importantly he went to the Island Nature Trust. He asked Kate McQuarrie to take up the issue with her board. Last fall they declared 2500 acres, their holdings on PEI, as Dark Sky Reserves. That is wonderful. I told Kate today she could add 130 more acres because my farm in Fort Augustus is a Dark Sky Reserve.

This week is National Dark Sky Week and I think it would be a great gift to the world for more people to

work on toning down light. I have my causes. The street I live on in town is ridiculous. I can read the Guardian out there any night of the year. Victoria Park is a disgrace with 360 degree lights over those softball fields, but the worst of all is the newly built Island's Waste Management Plant in Brookfield, which is certainly ironic. All this when our energy costs have just gone up 13%.

Most of the overdose is just plain thoughtless and if someone is at a table at the right time they can do some good or you can just begin at home. Think about it and to learn more check the Association's web set at www.darksky.org.

Daylight Saving Time

Saturday, April 5, 2003

Prince Edward Island has not always been on the cutting edge. Our attitude toward the acceptance of the automobile, and for a period of time liquor, was long and drawn out. Tonight we put our clocks ahead. It reminded me of a headline I read this winter. It was April 1961 Guardian. The headline read "Protestant Churches stay on Standard Time". I remembered that the city and the country were always at loggerheads over the daylight time issue, but I hadn't remember that there was theological side to the argument, although I remembered them referring to Standard Time as God's Time. So Spring Ahead Tonight.

Cultural Circles

Monday, May 12, 2003

Lately I have been thinking a lot about the Cultural Circles that are keeping the downtown of Charlottetown alive these days. Just think about it: the Confederation Centre in the old Market Square – a place that brings together, [at least on an average] 700 ++ persons a night during the summer months and the ambience of the downtown attracts double that many everyday during that period. Add to that Province House, the PEI Council of The Arts and The Arts Guild, The MacKenzie Theatre, IT Centre, The Library and The Archives, The Crafts Council with their shop and Holland College. You can also include the privately run galleries and antique shops, and the bars that provide entertainment , and, yes, of course the City Cinema; a sophisticate centre for film watching.

Maybe, if you like playing house, you could add Beaconsfield to that circle or attend some of the events that occur in The Carriage House operated by the Museum and Heritage Foundation. Then take the circle to its next 360 degrees and add the University, Carrefour, BIS and the group of cinemas at the Charlottetown Mall and you begin to recognize the support system in the arts that exists in this small part of the world. We are very fortunate.

Contemplate our media people and just how supportive they are to all our cultural activities and they add some of their own. Last week I was out to say goodbye to Wayne Collins who for years has been the co-host on the CBC Morning Show with Karen Mair. Tears all around. Then I dropped off on the way home to welcome Bill McQuire back to the Guardian as City Editor. By the end of the week I was back saying goodbye to Lorne Yeo who for over 30 years has been an editor there. All people who care. Add The Buzz, our monthly arts magazine and CFCY Radio and you have to say we are well looked after.

On second floors, on main stages and in other nooks and grannies we have publishing houses , sound studios, dance groups, film people, the Symphony, Theatre PEI, poets, writers, organists etc. etc. etc.

Since last fall City Council has been obsessed with bring in a hockey team and now they've got it. Last week they were on the radio talking about how they needed billets for those players: big guys they said who eat a lot, but would become some family's big brother and everyone would live happily ever after. They were also announcing that they were going to spend something like \$500,000. on the Civic Centre to make the necessary improvements to satisfy the teams needs. And that is only a small portion of the recreational budget.

The arts are different. Individuals have a creative need and they express it and ask people to come and see what they think. Watch. Listen. Yes, and even buy on occasion. While this goes on people move around our city talking, exchanging ideas and generally being a presence. Many of the participants live in spaces around town, they eat in restaurants, drink an odd beer here and there. They add buzz. Create ambience. On occasion everything ticks and they blow us out of the water with their success. Is the support the same for the arts as for sports? I don't think so.

As we see the mercantile scene change to big box stores and the franchises, the undistinguishing streetscapes and the people places that such a direction creates is appalling. We must begin to review what really attracts us to a place and what we want to do about it.

Basil Greenhill

Monday, May 12, 2003

In spring of 1972 it was decided that the prime focus of the '73 Centennial Celebration was going to be heritage, heritage, heritage. It was quite a controversial time. I think I have written about it before. Anyway by June we knew that we were going to have a place to celebrate our fisheries history, our agricultural history and our ship building history. It was exciting and we had only a year to pull it all off.

Although there is a story around each of those projects, I want to draw your attention to Green Park, the site chosen to commemorate our ship-building history.

Green Park was the name given by Westcountryman, James Yeo (1788-1868) to his operation on Campbell Creek in Port Hill on Lot 15 in PEI. It was there he built his fine house and his store and shipyard. The Yeo family were involved, one way or another, with a largest percentage of the 335 vessels launched around Richmond Bay according to Marven Moore and Nicholas DeJong. I think their operation was surpassed by the Peakes, but I might be wrong.

Now back to 1972 , one hundred and four years after James died. The house had been acquired a few years before by the Province of PEI and they had even operated a display in it for a couple of summers, but now we had to do more.

Why had the house been purchased and how in the matter of one short year were we able to develop a story line for the site? It is simple. It all came to be because of a book entitled “Westcountry in Prince Edward’s Isle” by Basil Greenhill and his wife Ann Gifford published in Toronto in 1967.

Basil Greenhill was in Diplomatic Service in Ottawa at the beginning of the 1960’s. At a reception one night he met Angus MacLean who was then Minister of Fisheries. The talk, as it would, got around to

PEI. Basil, who had previously published a number of articles on maritime history remembered a connection with Appledore in England and Prince Edward Island. They were interested in picking the subject up and they were talking to the right man.

It wasn't long before the Greenhills arrived on PEI and made connections – and friends – with the Islanders and in particular with the Port Hill people. Stories and research on the Island and in Ottawa and the Westcountry confirmed the traditional tales they had heard in England and the result was their book.

I don't think the province would have acquired Green Park if it had not been for the Greenhills whose work gave national recognition to what MLA Robert Grindlay had been saying before they even arrived. And I do think that even more of PEI's shipbuilding history would have been lost had their work not focused us collectively on those glorious shipbuilding years.

When The Greenhills visited the Island in September 1972 a group of us travelled around Port Hill area with them and we appreciated his help in shaping the story line for the Green Park site. A few years later I had a wonderful lunch with him at the Maritime Museum in Greenwich where by that time he was the director.

Basil Greenhill died a week or two ago in his beloved Westcountry. I wished I had had the opportunity to see that part of the world through his eyes. It is an

area where PEI should be holding cultural exchanges. The cemeteries are full of our Island ancestors. He would have been a great tour master for us.

Brian MacKay-Lyons

Monday, May 12, 2003

Friday night, the 16th of May, at the K. C. Irving Building on the UPEI campus the Friends of The Farm are welcoming Brian MacKay-Lyons as their guest speaker. Brian is an internationally recognized architect in Halifax and for Islanders it is important to know that he is married to one of Stu MacKay's daughters. His topic will be "Public Spaces and Spirit of Place". We'll begin at 7:30 and hope many of you will be there.

The future of the Experimental Farm is still up in the air, but it is important for us all to contemplate its future so when the day comes for decisions we'll be there with our view points.

Inkerman Shore

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

In the late forties we were at the cottage at Inkerman Shore. It seems funny now because it really was at the end of Colonel Gray Drive very much within our present city limits. We use to move from Hillsboro Street [then spelt that way] virtually across town for the summer. Our friends the MacDonald did worse than that; they

lived on Ambrose Street and moved out to Inkerman Shore. Whatever there is something special about moving to a cottage and leaving behind the formality and structure of winter life. Anyway that is the life we had and there is rarely a day goes by that I don't think about it in one way or another and be thankful.

Yesterday I was out shopping around noon and the radio was on in the car as usual to CBC. It was the news. They were announcing the loss of a prominent Maritime horseman and radio announcer from St. John. I knew right away who it was going to be and I sat there and cried. Ingham Palmer was one of the boys who would come out to Inkerman to visit we girls almost every night. They were great summers. Our father had borrowed a bell tent from the army and had set it up in the backyard. Sometimes there were ten girls sleeping there a night. Hilda from down the road, Johanna and Libby whoes cottages were on the lane to Lawsons', Daphne who came from Montreal and would stay when she was allowed and my sister Betty and I. Others would stay now and then, but we were the regulars. We laughed a lot.

After dinner the boys and some city girls would come. We'd light fires on the beach, dig clams and cook them, sing, row on the river and swim and in the fall steal corn or apples. What a life. Our mothers never seemed to care where we were or worried about us. We made our own fun and expect when we, the Smiths, had

to go to church on Sunday we never wore shoes. My friend Dolly's old saying, "they are picking in our row now" certainly applies to the last few months. Barbara Rupert, Bill Leonard and now Ingham Palmer have gone to another world. I'm sorry we didn't hold more reunions. I'm doing my best.

A couple of weeks ago I had Charlie Hine and his wife Barb here for dinner with Ron Atkinson and Gloria, I talked to Phylis Tait on the street today with more intent and tomorrow night Jack McAndrew is coming over and that is good. Blessings to those Inkerman days that brought us all together.

No Smoking

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Yesterday *The Smoke Free Places Act* came into effect on PEI. No public places like bars and restaurants can have smoking sections unless they construct a very specially ventilated room and they can't serve food or drinks in it.

It is a progressive step. It has taken a long time, especially when you consider the article I read in the December 19, 1914 Guardian: "A regular attendant at the Charlottetown market has called the Guardian Office in reference to the large amount of smoking which is indulged in in the market proper, during market days. Especially at the noon hour is the smoke most objectionable, when large crowds of men may be seen

standing outside and around the meat stalls smoking and expectorating, notwithstanding the facts that “No smoking etc.” signs are posted in prominent places.....” That wonderful old market and all the regulars there ... Mrs. Johnson, the Fords and many others whose names I forget. With all the smells in that place I never appreciated that smoke wasn’t among them.

New Zealand

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Thirty years ago this month we were busy at the Heritage Foundation putting the final touches on Beaconsfield. It was to be officially opened on July 2nd by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip. We were working down to the wire. The phone rang and it was a lady from New Zealand who was in New York and “wanted to come over” because her great grand father had spent time on the Island and was in government here. I said by all means “come over’ and inquire who her great grand father might have been. “Robert Poore Haythorne” she announced. I expressed my feeling of his importance in our history and she was amazed that we knew of him.

She came and I took her to see the ruins of his old home in Marshfield and then back to town to show her his house on the corner of Hillsborough and Dorchester Streets. She was thrilled and it certainly made the time away from preparing for a Queen, worth

it.. Unfortunately the Foundation seems to have lost her address and I can't remember her name. What a shame.

Our connections with New Zealand have been brought to my mind this week because of two things. The island is reviewing electoral reform and the Institute of Island Studies brought in three speakers to review the issue. Dr. Helena Catt, a professor of political science at the University of Auckland was one of them. She gave a very convincing presentation on proportional representation that she believes works so well in New Zealand. There is much to think about on that whole issue.

Back to New Zealand. I have friends in town whose daughter will be marrying a New Zealander this summer and his parents are coming for the wedding. I gave my friends and Dr. Catt a great article published in an New Zealand historical journal in 1981. It is an article written by H.M.Rodewald those great grand-father had captained the "Prince Edward", one of three ships that had left Charlottetown with migrants for New Zealand between 1856 and 1863. So you can imagine that we have many connections in New Zealand. They are stories that I want to enlarge upon in the next little while. I'll do my best.

Our Heritage Spaces

Monday, June 30, 2003

Since the very early days of Charlottetown, Queen Square was the centre of government, market, court and church, with our seat of government as its focal point. Throughout the last years of the 19th century exceptional efforts were made to beautify the square and it became a place of great pride to all Islanders and their visitors. It was onto this setting that the public chose to place the Boer War Memorial in 1903 and the large war memorial in 1925 as tributes to those who made the supreme sacrifice. Both monuments were sculpted by significant sculptors, whose works appear in many prominent sites in this country.

There was a time after the 1903 Market House burnt in 1958, and after the post office moved and while the Confederation Centre was under construction that the pride in the square faltered and we lost faith. The restoration of Province House by Parks Canada and their recent work on the gardens around the building has returned Queen Square to a place of tranquil beauty. During the summer months the gardens and the fountain north of the building is always being used by so many people with kids running through the fountain to the great enjoyment of many. The successful cleaning of the 1925 war monument lead naturally to the same being done for the Boer War Monument and I am sure we will be equally impressed with the results. The city and the

province deserve our appreciation as does the PEI Service Memorial Park Committee who lobbied hard for this work to happen. Alas I am now concerned about the future direction of this committee. Their desire to create Memorial Park from Grafton Street to Richmond, including our Province House, is going too far. This in my mind is adding yet another name to Queen Square and truly over shadows the focal point of our provincial governance. Queen Square is a special Island place.

Next the committee wishes to take over the fountain and install a sculpture reminiscent of the one on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. I believe we should not copy other places but preserve our distinctiveness; and to me, the way we preserve our distinctiveness is by saying NO to Memorial Park and NO to the loss or redesign of the fountain. And judging from comment in the Guardian recently, it is apparent that the issue of moving the Boer War Memorial is still in the minds of some. That scheme is unacceptable in the mind of any loyal Charlottetownian.

The Boer War Memorial should stay exactly where it is. I appreciate the desire of this committee to commemorate the men who served since the Korean War and I believe that to be a worthy notion, but not in this location. I believe the square has more than reached its saturation point and now we must look for new locations or simpler designs that do not express such dimensions as we have in this proposal. I have walked

the site and carefully considered its importance, its merits and its surroundings and I have two suggestions that I hope will send this committee back to the drawing boards. There is a small space between the south side of the monument and the gentle curved hedge to the north of the fountain. Something small, simple and thoughtful would not intrude here. Or the relationship of Queen Square with the Department of Veterans Affairs building might be enlarged upon, leading the committee to consider a monument on the front plaza of the DVA Building. The Peace Keepers and the changing mandate of DVA go very much hand in hand. This is not a letter to discourage the remembrance of our armed forces, but a plea to protect a space that must not be cluttered by excess. *This appeared as a letter to the editor of The Guardian on June 28, 2003 from myself

Beaconsfield

Friday, July 4, 2003

On the night of Canada Day, thirty years ago, I stood at a window at Beaconsfield overlooking the crowds coming from Victoria Park after the Fireworks. Thousands of people were there that night and so was the Queen of England. Remember it was the centennial of PEI joining Confederation – The Place to be in’73. It was a beautiful night and mood was lovely.

I was all alone in Beaconsfield. We had worked all week-end on cleaning up the house after carpenters,

floor sanders, sprinklers and painters had left. I had walked around earlier in those almost empty drawing rooms wondering how we could pull it all together the next day and be ready for a Queen to officially open the place on Tuesday morning. It was frightening.

“We” were only a small group; the secretary, Janice, some summer students like Daphne Dumont and Joyce Dewar and faithful board members and friends and Alan and Isabell Swan who had recently moved into the back apartment as caretakers. We went to work. We hung William Douse over one mantle and a James Peake ship painting over the other. We had a chart of Charlottetown Harbour and a collection of photos by Lionel Stevenson of Island barns. We had the Mark Butcher sofa in one corner and “a cabinet of curiosities” in the other. There were a few other things, but they slip my mind at the moment.

At the end of the day there was a prestigiousness to it all in its minimalism. The final touches were put in place early Tuesday morning when under the direction of Mary Dolphin the most beautiful arrangements of garden flowers were put in place to fill in the gaps.

When the Queen and Prince Philip drove up about 10:30 we greeted them as if it had been no work at all. Walter Shaw, who was on our board at the time, said it was the nicest event he had ever attended with the Queen. That was quite a complement. There were some funny things like when Prince Philip went after Dr.

Bolger for not putting a “Prince Edward Island and the World” map in his book “Canada’s Smallest Province” and then he caught me calling the chart of Charlottetown Harbour a map! We saw the Queen trying to turn off the drip in the bar sink we had left in the Board Room and we learned that the radiators were the same as at Windsor. She giggled a couple of times and was very interested that Princess Louise, the Marquis of Lorne, had dined with the Peakes in the house in 1879. When she did her walk about outside after she remembered a woman she had met on a previous visit to Charlottetown. Not bad, eh.

But the story of the stories was the one about the cutting of the ribbon at the front steps. We had looked high and low for a fine worthy pair of scissors fit for a queen to cut a ribbon. They are hard to find. I was on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal a few weeks before and went from one antique shop to another. All I was able to find was a pair of grape scissors, but they were very sweet – and sterling. We tested them and they cut a ribbon so I took them home. Everyone seemed pleased, but mind you, not very familiar with grape scissors. There is a great picture of the Queen cutting the ribbon that day with Wanda Wyatt, Dr. Bolger and myself looking on. It has Prince Philip looking curiously over her shoulder and what he was actually saying at that moment was “Grape Scissors, she can’t cut the ribbon

with those"! She did and thirty years ago today
Beaconsfield was officially opened.

Imagine

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

A couple of weeks ago I went to Boston. Now you have to know that Boston is almost my second home. Kate MacDonald, better known on the Island as Kate Reggie Alex from Souris [now of Halifax as well] had agreed to take me by plane – on her bonus points – to attend a school reunion down there. I was busy and for a while didn't think I could fit it in, but with her persistence I decided I should do it. Anyway Kate and I haven't had that much time alone together and I thought that would be a good thing.

The plan was that I would drive to Halifax the night before and we would catch the 8:45 plane to Boston the next morning and we would be in Harvard Square for coffee with my young friend Mary Ann Winkelmes by some time before 11 o'clock. After that we'd could do the bookstores and Crate and Barrel at Harvard Square and be back to the hotel for the reception before seven o'clock. A grand plan.

There was a glitch. I had been very busy before I left ... going one direction and another. Gary Carroll had fortunately arrived home from Ottawa shortly before and he was going to look after my dog Nellie and the cats, Ruby and Rosie, but I had other things to be done. Now

I do not have a passport. I am not a big traveller and had not travelled into the states since 9-11. Somewhere I do have a birth certificate and a health card, but some how or other I arrived at the airport on Friday morning without either. It was unbelievable. Kate tried to tell the man at the counter that I was well known in Charlottetown, but he just rolled his eyes. I did, too. But it was all to no avail; I was not allowed on the flight without some proof that I was a Canadian citizen. My grey hair held no weight.

I called home – it was 6:45 in the morning. My friend Gary does not like telephones and was not about to answer. On the third attend, he did, but I wasn't sure where to send him to look for anything. Even with those directions he did find my Social Insurance number [I kept calling it Social Security which didn't help anything] and he took it to my friends at the Inns of Great George Street to fax it to me. When I told my “new found friend” Dereck that I had my Social INSURANCE number coming on his fax. He again rolled his eyes and said there is no way I can allow you to go to Boston on that only: Boston would send me back and fine Air Canada. That made it clear we were NOT going to be in Cambridge for coffee with Mary Ann.

That gave us six, almost seven hours to solve my problem. I call Gary again. This time I suggest that maybe The Palace of Saint Dunstan's Basilica where I

was baptised would do something. So Gary was off to The Palace. Then I thought that maybe Vital Statistics might be able to help and I called Montague PEI where they are located. Yes, they did not mind doing business over the phone, but I would have to have someone pick it up and fax it to me – they did not go that far. Well I thought of somebody I knew in Montague, but they informed me that they had a place on Garfield Street in Charlottetown and they could look after it there. Sooooo a call to my friend Dental Don. About an hour after the 7:45 plane had left for Boston I had a bundle of faxed papers with all I needed to get into the USA of America; thanks to The Palace, Gary, Don Stewart, Vital Statistics and The Inns of Great George Street.

When after that lengthy stay at the Halifax airport where we had breakfast, mid morning Bloody Marys and lunch, we arrived at Boston and the Customs desk. The very nice man suggested, when I passed him my wad of faxed data, that next time I should travel with the originals. I smiled sweetly and told him that there would be no problem there. I have still not received my telephone bill from that morning. I am sure it will record nicely the goings on of that very special experience. By the way Kate did not bit my head off at all, and she should certainly have done so.