

Doncaster Ballyhoo

THE LAURENTIAN WATERFRONT AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTY SPECIALISTS

SUMMER 1993

Our purpose in preparing and distributing this newsletter is to keep you informed of issues of interest and importance to recreational property owners and users.

Reaction to our earlier newsletters has been very gratifying and has resulted in the addition of two more pages in this issue so that we can share some of that reaction with you. Letters we have received include the one reproduced here from Notary Norman Malus of Montreal who writes about the importance of certificates of location. We agree fully with him about this and thank him for taking the time and effort to write.

We have also included excerpts from some of the other letters we have received as well as a few paragraphs about some of the activities in the area, both past and future.

If inquiries can be used as a gauge of activity, our market is showing signs of recovery. While the number of sales is not high, there is definitely renewed interest in the recreational market and we can hope that over the next year, presuming that interest continues, we will have had a chance to sell those properties that have been sitting on the market for, in some cases, three years. If you are toying with the idea of selling, however, please remember that it is still very much a buyer's market. One of our clients described this market trough as a hangover after the binge of the eighties. For a lot of people it has been much more serious than that, but we can all hope that, like a hangover, it will wear off.

The local municipal councils and the chambers of commerce are always trying to find ways to make life in the area more pleasant or entertaining for us all. It has always impressed me just how receptive these groups are to our suggestions. If you have ideas that you feel could improve the quality of life in your area, share them. Bring them up to your lake association meeting this summer or send them directly to your town council or to the chamber of commerce.

One group that has done this is the Lac Dufrense Lake Association. Some of the members were concerned that the lake could be hurt by a proliferation of motor boats and sea-doo's. They requested that a survey be sent around to the other members and it resulted in the discovery that 84% of the members wanted an immediate ban on sea-doo's and wished to see motorboats phased down to 10 horse-power over the next five years. We are finding that the news of this survey has significantly heightened interest in the Lac Dufrense community among our buyers.

Your feedback about the kind of information you would like to have about the Laurentians, and your input of fact or opinion is more than welcome. We look forward to sharing your views as well as our own in future issues.

- Joe Graham

(819) 326-4963

Why can't I cut down all my trees?

What a question!

Actually there are three questions here : Why can't I, Why shouldn't I and Why would I?

Let's take the first one first:

Why **can't** you cut down all the trees? It's very simple. Were you to do that, you would very likely be hauled into court by the government, which takes a very dim view of this sort of thing. Regulations exist governing just what one may do with one's land, especially near a lake or river. As a general rule, a property owner may cut just enough trees to build and to create a reasonable living environment. The permissible amount one may cut varies greatly from one municipality to another. Usually a limit is placed which reflects the community's policy of conservation. Often a relatively small proportion, like 20 or 30% of the living trees may be cut. In some of the more urban Laurentian communities, even some which are built around a lake, there are few restrictions. As to the shoreline itself the rules are more rigid and uniform. They state that natural ground cover on the shoreline must be maintained with the exception of 10% which may be cleared. Needless to say, anyone who has travelled much in the Laurentians will have noticed cottages with great expanses of lawn going right down to the water. These however, are not recent and the landscaping had been done at a time when there were no regulations governing waterfronts.

Why **shouldn't** you cut down all the trees? The answer is a little more complex and has to do with the health of the body of water in question. Lakes and rivers are complex ecosystems, formed over the millennia and existing in a relatively fragile balance of their constituent parts. Thus the mean temperature of a given lake may be in part influenced by the type of vegetation on its shores, vegetation which often shades the shoreline. The mean

temperature thus created provides a living environment for the aquatic life of the lake, life which would be adversely affected by any radical change in mean temperature. To replace all or most of the natural vegetation with pretty green lawns would not only tend to heat up the lake or river, it would also introduce leached fertilizers and weed killers into the water, thus increasing the phosphate and toxin levels of the water and thereby reducing the oxygen it contains as well as degrading the quality of the water. Another blow to the aquatic life.



One advantage to leaving most of the trees on your lot, besides the shade and coolness they bring, is the privacy they provide. In many of the most desirable lake locations in the Laurentians, houses are not visible, either from the road or from the water. To the casual observer these lakes appear uninhabited.

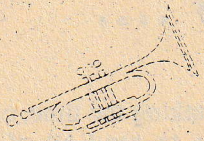
And now to why **would** you? Part of the fun of owning a lakefront is the access to the water. Much of the natural ground cover on the shores of lakes and rivers is tough to struggle through and distinctly uncomfortable in shorts and sandals. What to do about this? As previously mentioned, you may cut up to ten per cent of the shoreline vegetation. On a lot with 200 feet of frontage, this works out to 20 linear feet, more than enough to put in a floating dock and/or build a patio.

There is a reason to buy a place out in the country. Something here attracts you, and it is different from what you experience daily in the city. In order to enjoy that difference and to pass it on to your children, try to change it as little as possible.

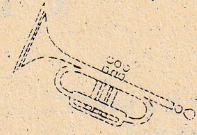
To paraphrase someone much wiser than me:

"We did not inherit this beautiful land from our ancestors, we borrowed it from our children."

- Michael Averill



NEWS ...



Just before we were ready to mail out our last Ballyhoo, we had a discussion with Lise Berthiaume of the Fondation médicale des Laurentides. She gave us a number of flyers for their fund-raising campaign. The target, which they achieved by appealing to all segments of the local community, was \$270,000. On behalf of our staff I thank all of you who contributed for your generous donations. Our hospital is a pleasant surprise for those people who are used to the urban hospitals with their crowds. Ours is very human and caring, the way hospitals used to be way back when. Ste. Agathe has a history of top quality medical services. Earlier this century it boasted three tuberculosis hospitals to serve the diverse urban communities needing our clean clear mountain air for their cure.

Not to be missed this summer: the Hiawatha Festival of the Arts in Ste. Agathe North. We went last summer and were very impressed. We watched a performance by Montanaro Dance as well as some dance comedy routines, a South American group and others. By the end of the evening we were brought back suddenly to the reality that we were in Ste Agathe and not in Place des Arts. We went out into the moonlit night, crossed the old summer camp into the cafeteria for a glass of wine and an after-hours concert. We went a few times and intend to go back this summer. The Festival begins on July 9th and a very stimulating programme has been planned. For more information you can call (819) 326-3464, from June 29 on.

We recently received statistical information from the office of the MRC des Laurentides. The MRC, or Municipalité Régionale du Comté, is a level of government in between the municipal and the provincial. It groups together all the municipalities in a given area and administers them in common. Ours runs from Val Morin to La Minerve and from Arundel to Lantier. The southern part more or less covers the territory we serve. The information we received includes everything from population figures broken down by age, education, permanent or part-time residency, employment, etc., to reports on climate including average temperatures and precipitation throughout the region. The full report is available from the Société de développement économique des Laurentides in St. Faustin.

The Third Annual Village d'Art in Val David takes place from July 31 to August 15. Exhibitions include the 1001 Pots at Kinya Ishikawa's studio, craftspeople displaying their wares at many local sites and paintings, lithographs, prints and sculptures at many of the studios tucked away throughout the Val David area. Pick up a map and guide at the information office at the entrance to Val David or at any of the exhibitor's locations, or phone Jocelyne Archambeault at 326-2474.

Our local heritage committee signed a lease for the Ste Agathe railroad station this spring and hopes to save it as a heritage building. Hopefully, it will be used to collect and disseminate heritage information on the Ste. Agathe region and will also be used in conjunction with the future linear park. The park will be a bicycle path in summer and during the winter the southern part, from St. Jerome to Ste. Agathe will be a cross country ski trail and the northern part, to Mont Laurier will be open to ski-doo's. The park follows the route of the old railroad line and passes through some of the most picturesque scenes in the Laurentians. You can get on anywhere and follow it to any road or beyond. Because it is an old railroad line, the grades are very gentle, making it an ideal outing for families of different skill and fitness levels. We are hoping that negotiations between CP and the provincial government can be completed soon. A letter to your Member of the National Assembly voicing your support of this project would help by demonstrating public interest in the project. Send it to your member where you vote or to the member up here, or better still, write to Mr. Yvon Picotte, Quebec's Minister of Leisure, Fish and Game, 6255 13th Ave, Rosemont, Quebec, H1X 3E6.

FROM OUR READERS

"What it's worth"..... A lot to me to know my work is appreciated.

I enjoyed your Ballyhoo and especially appreciated your kind and flattering comments on my work. I try to do custom designed unique houses, but with respect for the environment - both natural and contextual - in other words appropriate if somewhat special design.

Thanks for your comments - Best of luck.

- Len Warshaw

... I read with much interest your "Ballyhoo" and wanted to congratulate you on your excellent mix, content and style which is incorporated into it. Good marketing.

Just finished a road connecting the property I bought through you to

- Bob Lajoie

... The second Ballyhoo has arrived. Thank you.

We found it especially interesting because of the article on septic tanks, etc. Actually, we use Sani- Laurentides to pump our tank...

And your Christmas card, with the lovely picture of Ste-Agathe station. That brought many memories back, of the days in the 20's and 30's, when we used to stop at Ste-Agathe on the train (there was a ten minute break) and our Dad would pop out and buy us each an ice cream!! In 1937 Dad bought his first car, and we would drive up. It took more than 4 hours to do so. Now it is possible in 1 1/2 hours.

Anyway, we are thinking of the lake again. Spring time always brings plans for the cottage. This year....

- Agnes Dalrymple

I received your "Doncaster Ballyhoo" which I found very informative and most enjoyable to read.

Please keep me on your mailing list. Thank you.

- Steve Berenbaum

I just returned from a business trip ... My mail was stacked high with all the normal invoices, Gold Card reports, flight guides etc.... Then I saw that old looking brown-beige paper which seemed to shout out to me "read now!" "You all" did a great job on the newsletter. I found it very interesting.

Now let me ask you an important question... When are you going to find me my dream country home? Good luck!

- Dave Brownstein

First, I want to thank you for taking the time, effort and your own financial resources to send all of us your newsletters. To those of us with an interest in Laurentian happenings, we are most appreciative. Your reports keep us apprised of general goings-on, trends and market conditions. Many of us who spend two and a half days of every week in the Laurentians are certainly interested.

As a practising notary, for more than thirty years, I have had the occasion to execute Deeds of Sale for a great many country properties. There really is a difference in the atmosphere surrounding the execution of a recreational property as opposed to what we term 'the city home'. The purchase of a country home is generally the realization of a dream and I have come to find that the whole transaction takes on a much different ambience.

I think it is true to say that the city home is a necessity and has to do with issues that concern proximity to schools, shopping, lines of transportation to the office and saleability. A country home has to do with lakes, views, direction of the sun and wind, and trees.

As a practitioner I think your readers should be apprised of the fact that a certificate of location in the country is a very vital document. It is sometimes the case that the necessity of an up-to-date certificate of location can be neglected. Purchasers should definitely ensure that the documentation concerning the survey be in proper order in order to safeguard the situation for eventual resale and in order to carefully understand the location of building and land in relation to neighbours. I would go as far as to say that even those who have already purchased homes in the country without proper certificates of location or who have added buildings to their property since acquisition would be well advised to have a certificate of location prepared.

I cannot overemphasize the point that deeds and documents concerning the purchase of a country home should be given the same careful scrutiny as the purchase of city property in order to avoid future problems.

Trusting this information has been of help to you

- Norman Malus, Notary.

What's it Worth or Why do I want to sell?

If you overhear real estate agents having lunch together these days you are bound to hear things like "He has to sell, he's been transferred," or "The house belonged to both of them, so they had to sell for the divorce," or "The business closed. They just can't keep the country house." These are among the many reasons for selling that people have today. There are so many hardship cases right now that the agents feel entitled to assume that if your property is on the market, you are fair game for a bargain hunter. It is for this reason that when you put your property for sale, you have to assess the market. This is true anywhere, but it is particularly true of recreational property. It is very important to assess the market before offering your property.

"Why do you want to sell?" The good agent will always ask this question. Everyone who decides to sell has taken the decision for a reason. The reason he is given will influence how the agent will work. In the current market the agent's job is to identify the client who must sell or whose motivation to sell is highest and then to encourage him or her to bring the price to a point where it is obvious that the buyer will have a good deal of difficulty dismissing or forgetting the property. If you are thinking of selling, you have to ask yourself if your reasons are strong, given the kind of stressed-out competition in the marketplace. If you feel you must proceed with putting your place on the market, make sure your agent does his or her job. Set a realistic price.

If you are not motivated by distress, then don't put your house on the market but use the time to get acquainted with your agent. Ask to be kept informed of what is happening in your neighbourhood. Frequently, especially in the Ste Agathe area, we see vendors who don't do

this, but figure that it is better to put the property on the market anyway. They are often advised to do this by agents who are afraid that they may be wrong to refuse the listing, regardless of how unrealistically high the price is, because, well, who knows? Another agent may take it, and then what?

If you have decided to sell, though, and the market is distressed, remember that a property that is exposed on the market too long becomes invisible to all of the most likely community of buyers: the neighbours. When you put your property for sale, you create an event in the neighbourhood. If the price is right, that event can translate rapidly into a sale. If it is too high, it may only be the source of some disparaging gossip. Or, if it is put on the market at too high a price without fanfare, that is, without a sign, it risks becoming invisible to the agents, and they tend to forget it. What is of paramount importance in this market is the price. In fact, a sophisticated buyer will know that if a property is overpriced and has been on the market for a long time, his low offer is not likely to have any competing bids and he may be able to hold out for a low price. All buyers ask the question "How long has it been for sale?" If the price starts off right, the answer will be "Not long."

The best advice a distressed vendor can receive is to price it right, even if it hurts, and to get the job done. Make sure that if you are going to be taking

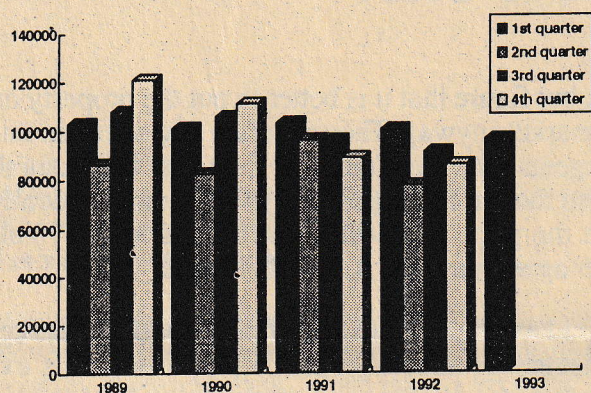
losses anyway, you take them proactively. If you are not in a hurry, enjoy your property and remember, the market always comes back.

- Joe Graham



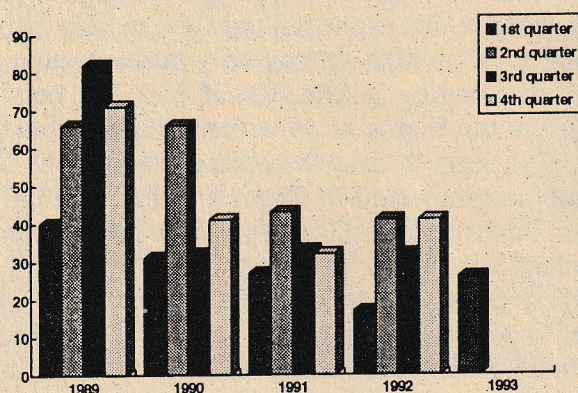
MARKET TRENDS

Average price



As you can see from the graphs reproduced here, there has been a slight increase in the number of residential properties sold in Ste. Agathe des Monts and Ste. Agathe Nord in the fourth quarter of 1992 and the first in 1993 as compared to the previous year. Let us hope that this is a trend.

Units sold



There are markedly fewer transactions than in the heyday of the market so one or two high-priced sales will have a disproportionate influence on the average price shown. Note that there were a total of 259 sales in 1989 and only 131 in 1992!

- Sheila Eskenazi

IMMEUBLES
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REALTIES

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