

# Doncaster Ballyhoo

THE LAURENTIAN WATERFRONT AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTY SPECIALISTS *SPRING 1994*

**C**ongratulations and thanks to the many people who responded to the Laurentian Medical Foundation fund-raising of earlier this spring. The response from the English-speaking community was very impressive and was noted and appreciated by everyone involved. They are still \$25,000 away from their target of \$275,000, but this is quite an achievement in these difficult times. The Foundation is a direct response to funding cuts by the provincial government. It was set up to by Dr. Michel Frenette, a local general practitioner who grew up here in the community, to fill a real need for the purchase of equipment for the hospital.

One outcome of the fund-raising drive for the Foundation was an invitation from the Hiawatha Festival of the Arts to organise an event at the Hiawatha site that would be in part for the benefit of the Foundation. We will keep an eye on this development. It is very encouraging to see this kind of cooperation among the communities up here.

Preliminary plans have been made for this year's edition of the Hiawatha Festival of the Arts. It will be running from July 15 to August 9, and invited artists include the Desrosiers Dance Theatre, Les Ballets Jazz, Karen Young and Normand Lachapelle, as well as the Montanaro dancers. More complete details will be available soon and we would be happy to send you a copy of the schedule as soon as it is printed. Give us a call up North, or call the Festival office in Montreal at 281-6510. Even if you didn't get out to see it last year, mark it on your calendar for this summer. This is an exciting event of international calibre.

The Ste. Agathe Heritage Committee has been working for some time to encourage people to respect the architectural history of Ste. Agathe. One of our principal objectives is to properly and professionally identify the historical buildings and sites around the town in order eventually to set up a walking tour. It is amazing how complex such an undertaking is. Unfortunately there is very little reliable information about things as simple as when some of the older buildings were built. In the meantime, the spirit of heritage renewal is spreading through Ste. Agathe. If this is something you appreciate, take the time to seek out and compliment the owners of businesses that have done such renovations. Your encouragement will contribute in a very real way to the positive atmosphere that is ever more apparent in Ste. Agathe.

An exciting improvement in recreational facilities is the Linear Park that is being developed along the old CP Rail right of way running between St. Jerome and Mont Laurier. It follows the flow of the North River between Ste. Agathe and St. Jerome and is benefitting from the plans of Gaz Metropolitain to run its pipeline up to Mont Tremblant. Once the line is buried they will be spreading and compacting stone dust along the route, providing an ideal surface for bicyclists, and even casual strollers. The stretch from Val Morin to Ste. Marguerite Station is particularly breathtaking as the river drops through a series of rapids. Because of the needs of the railroad, there is a very gentle gradient the whole length, so don't feel intimidated by the elevations reached... even the out-of-shape can do a length of the park, and the more motivated can travel great distances quite easily. Give it a try!

- Joe Graham

**(819) 326-4963**



# HOW GREEN MY GRASS?

**T**o many, a well kept lawn is a thing of beauty, something to be proud of and to spend many hours and lots of money to enhance. How many of us however, have taken more than a cursory look at what we actually do when we create a green, unblemished, immaculate lawn?

The people who promote lawns say that a 50 by 50 foot lawn produces enough oxygen to sustain a family of four. Pretty impressive. What they don't say is that one hour of mowing with a gas powered lawn mower produces pollutants equivalent to driving a car 350 miles.

In addition to the pollution created in that fashion, we add the effects of the herbicides and pesticides most commonly used by homeowners. Michael Pollan says in the New York Times (May 5, 1991), "The lawn is a symbol of everything that's wrong with our relationship to the land. Lawns require pampering because we ask them to thrive where they do not belong." Adelheid Fischer points out in the Sept./Oct. 93 Utne Reader that the pesticides used on lawns contain "the herbicide 2,4D a suspected carcinogen, and the insecticide diazinon, which, though still widely used on home lawns, has been banned from golf courses and sod farms because it kills birds."

Fischer goes on to describe the water absorbency of turf as "approximately that of concrete", implying that much of what we spray on our lawns is washed away into water-courses and eventually ends up in our lakes and drinking water. Come to think of it, the household well is usually somewhere under that pretty green carpet that is our lawn.

Canadian jurisdictions have recently begun to join the fight against the use of chemicals to regulate growth and pests. The most prominent example is the town of Hudson Quebec, which went so far as to ban lawncare companies that spray chemicals and to follow through and win a court case based on their new bylaw. This sort of action and continuing stories of children falling ill after playing on recently sprayed lawns is encouraging the growth of a movement away from this wasteful and destructive behaviour.

Another concern about overzealous lawncare is the habit of many homeowners of watering their lawns regardless of local rules, and in spite of evidence that heavy watering does little good. How many times during a particularly dry summer have we seen furtive, nighttime excursions by homeowners setting up sprinklers to avoid municipal fines for breaking a lawn watering ban? Estimated water use on lawns on the East Coast of the United States is 30% of urban water use, while on the West Coast, this figure rises to 60%, according to the authors of Redesigning the American Lawn: A Search for Environmental Harmony (Yale University Press, 1993).

Does this mean we have to give up the visual and sensual pleasures of lying on, gazing at or walking barefoot on our grassy spaces? Not really. The solution to responsible landscaping simply requires finding a ground cover appropriate to the site chosen for the lawn. There are new grasses on the market which are drought and insect resistant, slower growing and require less mowing. But equally important, we can preserve the lawns we have already invested so much time and money on.

One of the primary things is to try to stifle the urge to water them. Constant watering of a lawn in fact weakens it, by discouraging the growth of deeper roots. A non-watered lawn will often, after a period of adjustment, come back once it has established deeper roots.

Weeds, what do we do about them? I can still remember the way we used to take care of dandelions and crabgrass. It involved a long handled instrument with a v-shaped metal tip. One walked around the lawn, digging the tip into the base of the offending weed and cutting it off. If this is done early in the season and regularly before the weeds go to seed, the lawn will soon become essentially weed-free. It's good exercise too!

In place of chemical fertilizers, why not use compost? Not only does creating compost cut down on the volume of garbage which ends up in ever diminishing landfill sites, it does a better job on the lawn because it releases its nutrients more slowly and is less soluble, thus not washing off the land as quickly as chemicals.

Another useful tip which not only helps to preserve a healthy and weedless lawn has to do with clippings. Instead of raking them, bagging them and leaving them to be collected by the garbage man, why not just leave them? If left on the lawn, clippings not only break down and nutify the lawn, they also act as a trap for moisture, ensuring that the soil remains moist longer after the morning dew has been burned off by the sun. In addition, they form a sort of mulch which impedes the growth of weeds.

We need to recognize that everything we do impacts on our environment and its capacity to renew itself. We live in a world where we've been brought up to accept certain values. These values evolved in a time where less attention was paid to and less was known of the interdependence of every living thing on this planet.

It's time to take a different approach, one which permits us to retain the comfortable and familiar, but not at the expense of future generations' right to the same thing.

by: Michael Averill





# What's it Worth?

or

## The Value of Neighbourhood

Real estate has an aura about it that tends to make people feel that it will rise in value forever. As a Realtor I am the last one to disabuse anyone of that notion, but, at the same time, a proper understanding of why property appreciates helps in making decisions about how to acquire and care for a country home.

The cost of property rises as the purchasing power of the dollar diminishes. We have experienced inflation for most of the last fifty years, but we must imagine that a prolonged period of deflation would cause real estate to lose value as the purchasing power of the dollar rises. Let us assume a steady inflation rate as a constant and not concern ourselves with this aspect for now, because there is little an individual can do to change the course of the overall economy.

Real estate also fluctuates in value with the fluctuating popularity and desirability of the neighbourhood. As a neighbourhood becomes more popular, naturally people are willing to pay more, and the prices go up. Whereas the first aspect of appreciation is mostly influenced by the overall economy, the second is more influenced by fads and fears. One neighbourhood may slowly gain in popularity for years, and then, as its demographics change, it may quite rapidly soar or tumble.

We feel that a real estate agency has a responsibility to be conscious of what the trends are in the neighbourhoods it serves and to keep in touch with the community whether or not any particular house is for sale. As Realtors, the first issue of concern to us when we meet a purchaser is his or her choice of neighbourhood. We break our whole region into neighbourhoods and discuss the relative merits of each one with the purchaser before we discuss any individual property. Different neighbourhoods necessarily appeal to people with different needs and desires, and a purchaser will pay a higher price or purchase with more conviction if satisfied that the neighbourhood is where he or she really wants to be. A condo project is a neighbourhood within a neighbourhood and the popularity, demographics and so on of the individual condo project will have a huge influence on its value.

In order to determine the value of your property, if you start by appraising the neighbourhood, you will find that it offers some excellent guidelines. Is the neighbourhood de-

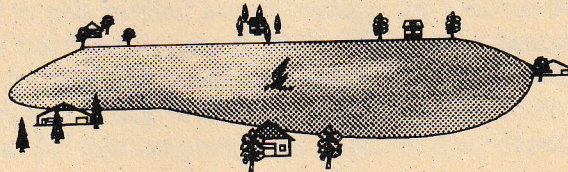
sirable? Are new buyers demographically consistent with the current population? Can you find out which houses recently sold and for what amount? Does the neighbourhood have an identity? Sometimes neighbourhoods have nothing more in common than where they pay their taxes. Around lakes, the neighbourhood will often have formed a lake association. Through this association, it develops a sense of community. It can plan activities, express concerns and in the process define the values and priorities of its members. Such a community is likely to be dominated by one demographic group. Are new buyers of that same group? Usually they will be, but when they aren't, it could mean that the community is on the verge of major changes. Sometimes the new group will not participate in the association, or at least not in the same way as those long established. The new group may be wealthier or less wealthy than the old. The quality and extent of renovations that the new group does will tell you the

answer. If serious extensive renovations are going on, it is likely that the whole neighbourhood will rise in value. If the new group is neither renovating nor participating in the association, chances are that values will drop.

Once you have determined the vitality and the average value of your community, you will be able to examine your property in light of this information. Remember that your property is not likely to vary hugely from the value of the median property, and if it does, then it might mean that either way too much or way too little has been invested in its construction or upkeep. The general tendency of values in any neighbourhood is towards the median, pulling the more expensive homes down and the less expensive ones up. Your house usually ends up being worth closer to that median amount than you might have thought, no matter its own individual characteristics.

Good neighbours and responsible members of a community bring the worth of the whole neighbourhood up. Being conscious of the community or helping out with the lake association will positively influence the value of the property in it to everyone's benefit. The people, and therefore the spirit, of the community will always have more influence on values than any particular aspect of any individual property.

- Joe Graham

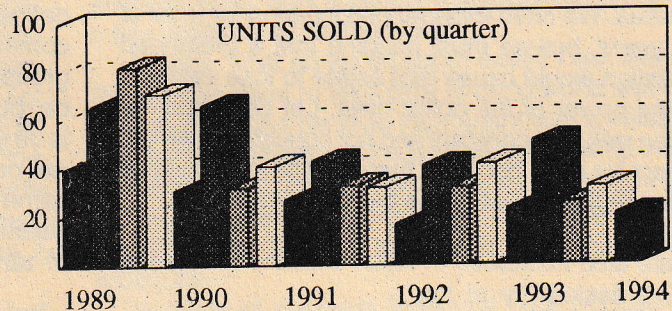
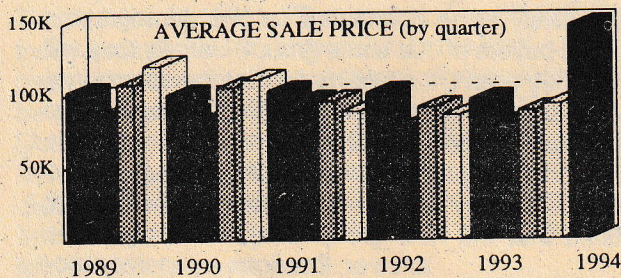




# MARKET TRENDS

We can see by the accompanying graphs that, while the number of units sold in the first quarter of 1994 is consistent with the trends we have seen over the last few years, the average price is not. This is an anomaly that is easily explained. One property in our area of study recently registered a change of ownership for over one million dollars, (which is less than half what had been paid for the same property in August 1988 during the run-up to the peak of the market). If we remove this one property from consideration, the average price for the quarter would be \$95,000 rather than nearly \$150,000, making it consistent with previously noted trends.

- Sheila Eskenazi



Back issues of the Doncaster Ballyhoo are available from our office. Give us a call or drop in and we will be happy to supply you with any issues you may have missed. If you know of anyone else who you feel would enjoy receiving the Ballyhoo, please let us know and we will gladly add them to our mailing list. Also, we would appreciate your letting us know if we don't have your correct address so that we can keep our list up to date.

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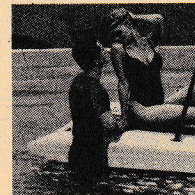
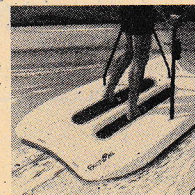
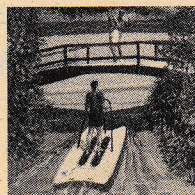
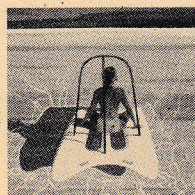
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**WEEK I :**

July 15, 16, 17 (Fri., Sat., Sun.)

**DESROSIERS DANCE THEATRE**

**WEEK II :**

July 21, 22, 23 (Thu., Fri., Sat.)

**DOUBLE BILL with:**

**BAND à PART**

(Louis Robitaille & 6 dancers of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens)

and a music group to be determined

July 24 (Sunday)

A music show to be determined

**WEEK III:**

July 25 or 26 (Mon., Tue.)

**PIERRE-PAUL SAVOIE & JEFF HALL-BAGNE**

July 28, 29, 30 (Thu., Fri., Sat.)

**LES BALLETS JAZZ**

July 31 (Sunday)

**KAREN YOUNG & NORMAND LACHAPELLE**

**JAZZ, POP & FOLK** - One of Québec's finest singers

**WEEK IV: August 4, 5, 6**

(Thu., Fri., Sat.)

**MIXED PROGRAMME with DESROSIERS, MONTANARO**

& other invited guests

*StepJet Corporation, which manufactures and distributes the marvelous device on the reverse side of this page has generously sponsored this schedule so that we are able to include it with the Ballyhoo.*