

Doncaster Ballyhoo

FOR LAURENTIAN WATERFRONT AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTY

Number 34

Spring-2004

The electronic Ballyhoo is now up and running and contains much of the information from back issues of the Ballyhoo as well as articles first published in Main Street about how Laurentian places got their names. It also has a section called Associations where we have invited groups to post information concerning their communities, and, of course, pages of information on properties for sale. This last section gives a thumbnail for each property with a link to the MLS site, but we also have more detailed information available upon request. We will regularly send a link to those who have subscribed to the electronic version when there are significant changes or items of particular interest.

The future of the Mount Sinai Hospital building still hangs in the balance. It has been seriously vandalised, including the theft of the copper roof from the domed temple that sat four storeys up on the building. This has resulted in the autumn rains and winter finding their way into the building and down four flights of stairs, seriously stressing the building. The neglect is a sad commentary on how we maintain our public property. Unfortunately, there has not been much public reaction to the situation, and so we will likely lose this historic landmark and the possibility of recycling a solid, well-built concrete structure.

The hospital in Ste-Agathe has its priorities in order as witnessed by this paragraph in a letter from Dr. Ron Calderisi of British Columbia, currently working in the Middle East. He made the following comments about the staff after spending time with his parents in the hospital: *You should be very proud of them. They have carried out their duties with professional efficiency, good humour, kindness and sincere compassion. They have treated my father and other patients with gentleness, tenderness and respect. With their actions your employees have demonstrated that the secret of patient (client) care is in caring for the patient (client)... I have not seen any framed mission statements hanging on your hospital walls. I haven't missed them. The mission of the hospital is clearly written in the hearts and behaviour of your staff...* His words are inspiring and remind us that the Fondation médicale des Laurentides should be on our annual donations list. They can be reached at (819) 323-4565.

We welcome Conrad Bordeleau to our staff. Conrad has been working in real estate in the Laurentians for the past 16 years and we have found him to be a pleasant, diligent professional. We are delighted that he accepted our proposal to join us full-time. He can be reached at (514) 979-4028 or by email at conrad@doncaster.ca.

The Heritage Committee now has an office, upstairs of the library on St. Vincent Street. This will allow them to collect and sort archival material from our region. They need volunteers to keep the office open for regular hours. You can drop around to the library and see the office, if it is open when you go, or call Terry Turcot, the president of the committee, if you would like to help. Her telephone number is (819) 326-2476.

A few weeks ago, we were looking for a quality gift that would be useful and speak of our region. We found it at the Chapedelaine Bakery run by Maison Emmanuel in Val David. Maison Emmanuel is a residential community for the handicapped that was founded by Inge Sell in Val Morin and incorporated in 1982. Originally she looked after 6 children but it has grown to house 24 children and adults needing special care. Not only does it house them, it has become theirs. The residents run the bakery and boutique and do weaving, woodworking, candlemaking and pottery workshops. Today the small community consists of seven buildings and is staffed mostly by volunteers who provide training and living assistance to the residents. We were impressed to discover that the woman who sold us the gift, placemats woven by residents of the community, was a volunteer who gave her time one day a week to help keep costs down. You can learn more by visiting their website at www.maisonemmanuel.org.

(819) 326-4963

www.doncaster.ca

The Palomino Lodge

The railroad's arrival in 1892 had a huge impact on our area. Almost every property changed hands in the twenty years that followed and many of the stories of places and families date from that period. Along with the development of the tuberculosis treatment centres, there were a large number of properties that became little, and sometimes not so little, hotels. Today, many of the names, such as Sun Valley Lodge at Trout Lake and the Wenerville Hotel near Lac Brûlé, have slipped below the horizon of memory, but some have left traces. Sometimes a building has found a new use or a road passing through the original property has maintained an element of its past. One such road runs between Route 329 and Route 117, joining Lac Brûlé to Ivry and Lake Manitou.

The original property once belonged to Melasippe Giroux, one farmer among the many who eked out a living in the hills between the two lakes. His farm bordered the small lake that bears his name today. His family hung on until 1908, fully 16 years into the boom that began with the railroad, and finally sold to Morris Ryan, the owner of a Montreal dry cleaning business. Ryan had no reason to believe that the land would ever be farmed viably. With open, stony fields rising from the shore of tiny Lac Giroux to treed hilltops, the farm had never been able to provide more than subsistence. The summer season was short and the evenings generally cool. It was contiguous to the large parcels that the Molson families acquired, and, like most Montrealers who bought farms up here, Ryan did so just to have a country retreat, a gentleman's farm. Over the next twenty years, he would sell off and buy back pieces wanting to share his bucolic getaway but not quite sure how to do it. Little could he foresee the day his son-in-law Henry would come looking for a new start in life on this run-down rocky farm.

Henry Kaufmann was a driven man who worked his way to a tidy fortune during his twenties and early thirties. One of nine children, he would not apply himself academically and so was apprenticed to learn carpentry. Having received payment in some shares, he soon discovered that trading in them could be much more lucrative than carpentry, and he took to his new career with the determination of a skilled labourer. Despite his hard work, he was not prepared for what happened on that fateful Friday in October 1929 when his wealth simply ceased to exist. Henry was 34 years old and had to start over, but he fared better than many.

His father-in-law received him at the farm and assigned him the challenge of using his carpentry skills to build a log house. He is said to have disappeared into the bush and built one. Ryan was probably thinking that they could sell the house, and that Kaufmann could build another. They must have been trying to figure out some way to create a livelihood on the barren farm that Giroux had abandoned. All that they had used it for until then was riding horses, hardly a lucrative pastime. Whatever their thoughts, they did not go into the business of selling houses. Instead, Kaufmann built a lodge, and Ryan and he arranged with the Rabiners of Montreal to run it for them. It became the first Rabiner's hotel.

In those days, people came to the country for their holidays and they had the choice of many hotels and inns, each with a special feature. The ones on the shores of large lakes could offer boating, canoeing and swimming. Lac Giroux was not really large enough to do much boating, but the Ryans had horses and miles of trails.

When Rabiner left to set up his own hotel directly on the shore of Lac des Sables, Kaufmann, undaunted, built an even larger lodge and a huge stable, and took over the operations himself. Kaufmann depended on hardworking employees, and he drove them hard. One who remained loyally for many years was Arnold, a World War One British cavalryman. Arnold looked after the stables, and guests remember him as a character, but he knew and loved the horses almost as much as he liked his Dalmatians. These he raised on his own, letting them breed with no more than the detached interest that a farmer might take in his farm dogs.

In the early part of the century, riding was a major recreational activity in the Laurentians, predating skiing and water sports, and it only grudgingly gave way to skiing through the 1930's and 40's. During that period, Arnold's stables had over a dozen horses and the trails to go with them. Kaufmann had a particular love for palominos and so he named the hotel Palomino Lodge. Palomino horses are not a breed, but simply a distinct golden colour. Breeding two palominos will give you a white horse; a palomino and a sorrel will produce the distinct palomino colt with the 14 carat gold colouring and the white mane and tail.

Among the many guests received at the Lodge was Lorne Greene, who later became famous as the father in the television series Bonanza, riding off across his ranch at the end of each programme. The Lodge also housed Princess Elizabeth's retinue in the early '50's when she visited Canada prior to her ascension to the throne.

What's it Worth?

or

It's Our Town

As more people choose to retire in Ste. Agathe des Monts, have we considered what influence, what responsibility, we have or will have for our community over the next years?

Ours has become the region of choice for retirees and the over-65 population of the MRC des Laurentides is expected to double by 2021. The under-20 group is expected to decline by 29% in the same period, and our stores and the infrastructure will need to be more oriented to the new demographic make-up of the region. Already Ste. Agathe has earned the reputation of the place that rolls up the carpets by 10:00 PM, and while that is fine for the older folks, the truth is that more activities will have to be available for this group. At the same time, the Chambre de Commerce is focused on increasing the commercial base and has been promoting ideas such as the installation of a Wal-Mart and more facilities for the 'tourists.' Is this what is indicated?

A community is what we make of it, and we in the English-speaking community have had the sensation of 'walking on eggs' over the past thirty years as we watched a young, aggressive, nationalist French community grow up around us. We have all gone through the sensations of feeling that we are not really 'at home,' and made efforts to understand our society from a young French perspective while feeling an indignant sense of being dispossessed at the same time. Now, though, we are in a new period of growth where the French majority has discovered and embraced entrepreneurship, leading to less overt nationalism and a more open attitude towards the rest of society. Our area is also becoming more influenced by the older, more conservative French Canadians who are retiring here. The hospital is becoming more central to our lives and more important in our community. We are living through changes that could make our community very much more pleasant even than we could have hoped. There is also an opening, perhaps even a need, for us to become more involved.

This is timely, because as the population ages we are going to become increasingly dependent upon each other. Perhaps it is time to know what different organisations are doing and to climb over the language barrier and get involved. We have provided a short list below that represents a cross-section of the social clubs, support groups and volunteer-based associations that are active here. There are, of course, many more than we can list here and you can get more information, including contact names, numbers and schedules, where available, by going to our website at <http://doncaster.ca/associations/groups> or by calling Leisure Services at City Hall, 819-326-4595, ext. 2.

Laurentian Club of Canada, monthly meetings featuring talks in English by people with expertise in their fields
Comité du Patrimoine (Heritage Committee), monthly meetings, looking for volunteers to oversee archives
Société Alzheimer des Laurentides, support group for people dealing with this disease
SPCA, runs an animal shelter and need volunteers and fundraisers
Canada Day Committee/Fête du Canada, organises the annual July 1st celebration
Groupe Vocale Cadence, an amateur choir that performs locally
Le Bel Âge, has their own Golden Age meeting hall, many activities organised for seniors
Maison Emmanuel, a residential community for the handicapped that relies on a large volunteer base

The Palomino Lodge (continued)

Henry Kaufmann and his wife Berenice Ryan ran the lodge until they sold it to one of their regular guests, Samuel Steinberg, in 1956, and while the Kaufmanns never had children, in a sense the Lodge stayed in the family as Henry's nephew had married the daughter of the new owner. Henry, though, went back to the stock market. He and his wife Berenice moved back to Montreal where they were involved in many charities and they left their estate to a foundation established in their names. The Berenice and Henry Kaufmann Foundation still exists today and its name can be found attached to many good works in Montreal and elsewhere.

Palomino Lodge went on to be the country retreat for Steinberg's employees until the company sold it in the 1980's. Over the years the fields grew in and subsequent owners did little to maintain the property, eventually abandoning it to the woods. The road going by, keeping faith with the past, is still called Palomino Road.

Thanks to Elliott Kaufmann and Robert Levine for sharing their memories.

A Call for Help

On April 13th, at 4 a.m. (after the Ballyhoo went to press) a fire destroyed the 169-year-old farmhouse where Maison Emmanuel started 23 years ago. A family of four got away unharmed but lost everything. It is a devastating loss. The Community is in shock and in mourning.

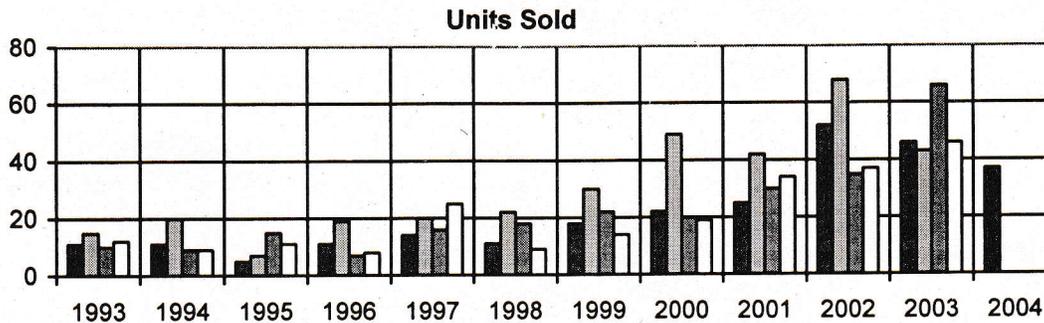
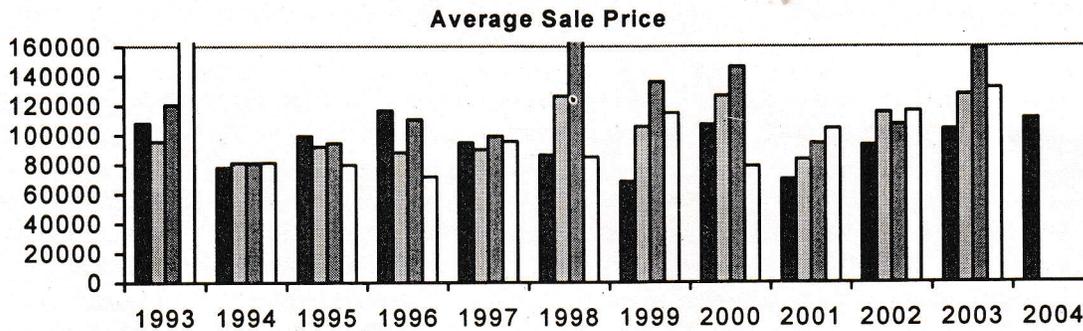
Inge-Barbara Bastian, President of the Board of Maison Emmanuel inc, said that they intend to rebuild and are in urgent need of financial and moral support.

She also expressed her appreciation for the support of her neighbours.

Tax-deductible donations can be made to

Maison Emmanuel
Centre Éducatif
1561 chemin Beaulne
Val Morin, P.Q.
JOT 2R0

MARKET TRENDS



We have received a lot of requests to return to the old graphs that we used to publish showing both the average price and the total number of sales. This became much more difficult as a result of the amalgamation of the three Ste. Agathes and Ivry, since our original sample area comprised only Ste. Agathe des Monts and Ste. Agathe Nord. These new graphs display all transactions in the whole of present-day Ste. Agathe des Monts.

If you would like back issues of the Doncaster Ballyhoo, give us a call or drop by. We will happily add the names of your friends or neighbours to our list if they would like to receive their own copy. Please let us know if you change your address. Having an accurate mailing list helps us keep our costs (and waste) down.

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 (Not intended to solicit properties currently listed for sale)