

# Doncaster Ballyhoo

FOR LAURENTIAN WATERFRONT AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTY *SUMMER 1996*

Come join us again at Parc Lagny on the waterfront at Lac des Sables to celebrate Canada Day on July First. Because it is a Monday, we are hoping you will make a special effort, but we can assure you that the last event, the fireworks, will be launched by 10:00 PM so the kids (and the working parents) can get to bed at a reasonable hour. Activities are planned to entertain the whole family with performances by clowns, acrobats, magicians, musicians and dancers starting at 4:00. Don't forget also that Rénovation Ste-Agathe is offering a discount to anyone who orders a floating dock and is willing to wait for delivery until after Canada Day so that we can use it for our events. Réal Latreille and the team at Rénovation Ste-Agathe were a great help to us last year, lending us four docks for the event, including delivery and retrieval, all without cost.

*Good news! The town of Ste-Agathe-des-Monts has taken on the responsibility of ownership of the old railroad station. It will be renovated and leased out in part to small commercial tenants who can offer services to people using the Linear Park as a bicycle path in summer and ski-doo trail in winter. This is the culmination of ten years of work and lobbying on the part of a small group of anxious and interested people who include, among others, readers of this newsletter.*

Work has begun on the study of the architectural history of Ste. Agathe. The Heritage Committee was involved in selecting the firm, and I was impressed by how rapidly the professional historians identified the different threads woven into the fabric of Ste. Agathe. The objective of this study is to answer questions about the history of Ste. Agathe, in particular the age and elements of its architecture. The first gem they brought to our attention was a report in the Montreal newspaper, La Minerve, which in the summer of 1872 reported that several competent witnesses had observed a strange beast swimming in Lac des Sables. The beast caused a lot of turbulence and was sighted twice. It had "a head like a horse, and its feet resembled those of a stove," according to the eye-witnesses. Once the study is complete, we will have an invaluable tool to aid in the heritage restoration of our area.

*The Medical Foundation fund raisers wish to express their sincere gratitude for the many contributions that have come from the members of the English-speaking community. In this time of cutbacks and other problems, every bit of involvement and support goes a long way. The recognition that the English community cares about the hospital brings benefits in services available to all of us, full-time and recreational residents.*

Various lake associations are holding regattas again this summer, as they do every year. It would be exciting to see some kind of 'invitational' organised on Lac des Sables to see which lake association really has the 'best' team. The town of Ste. Agathe has organised a recreational committee for events to be held around Lac des Sables. They seem to be looking for ideas. If a few teams can be mustered, we would be happy to approach the town and see if they are interested.

*Thank you to our many readers who confirmed that they are indeed reading this newsletter. Your response, including letters, phone calls, faxes and e-mail, has been very gratifying to Sheila and me. You are holding in your hands our twelfth issue, each of which was entirely produced by us (except for the printing). We write, edit, fold, stuff, seal, sort and mail them ourselves. If you wish to keep receiving the Ballyhoo, just let us know. We will gladly keep you on the list. For those of you who have already responded, we've put an asterisk by your name on the envelope.*

**(819) 326-4963**



# Who was Augustin Norbert Morin?

While the Iroquois and the Algonquin negotiated with the Sulpicians in the Lake of Two Mountains area, events were unfolding elsewhere. With the loss of the 13 colonies, Montreal took on major strategic importance to the British. Trading companies were setting up and Loyalists were arriving in the former French colony. Abandoned by France, all its structures and special interest groups were scrambling to survive and adapt to life under British colonial control. By the beginning of the 1800's it became evident that westward development was not French. The seigneurial system began to grow in upon itself, collapsing under its own weight. Peasants could not simply continue to divide their fields among their sons, and this resulted in a large, landless labour pool. The government was made up of an elected Assembly as well as the British-appointed Governor, who named a Council. Inevitably the Assembly became dominated by the seigneurs, and the Council, by colonial business and development interests, and, as inevitably, one was predominantly French and the other predominantly English.

By the 1820's Montreal was receiving rural emigrants along with increasing numbers of immigrants from war-torn Europe. Napoleon had been defeated and all the European structures were being challenged by the new industrial era. There were no proper accommodations for these people and in the early 1830's an epidemic of cholera broke out. During the course of the epidemic 6,000 people died. Radicals blamed the British for the epidemic and xenophobia took hold among the French.

To complicate matters, a power struggle between the Assembly and the Council pitted the seigneurs against business interests. The Assembly was working to rule, led by Louis Joseph Papineau, Seigneur of Petite Nation. Serge Laurin, in his book *Histoire des Laurentides*, points out that Papineau and his allies were very effective at directing the people's anger against the English and the business class and deflecting attention from the abuses of the seigneurs. By 1837 they could not avoid criticism of the seigneurial system, and made every promise imaginable to keep their constituency on side. *"J'ai assisté à presque toutes les assemblées où l'on nous disait que nous combattions pour notre religion, pour notre patrie, et bien des fois nos chefs nous disaient pour nous encourager que si nous remportions la victoire les dîmes et les rentes seigneuriales seraient abolies ainsi que toutes les taxes et que nous partagerions le bien des riches et les terres des loyaux."* (p193, HdL, excerpted from *La rébellion de 1837 à St-Eustache*, by C.A. Globensky). They had drafted the '92 resolutions' and by the autumn of that year public frustration resulted in several uprisings. The troops were called in, and by the time the dust had settled, over 350 people had lost their lives. Papineau fled to the United States, accompanied, according to some accounts, by a large, boistrous lumberman, who became the Paul Bunyon of American mythology.

A lawyer named Augustin Norbert Morin, the author of the 92 resolutions, was the real, though unsung, hero of this epoch. He arrived with Papineau at St. Charles in the middle of the battle to try to talk the peasants out of taking up arms. He was arrested in the confusion and sent to prison for a short time. He was not a seigneur, and, in later years, he succeeded in abolishing the seigneurial system. He was one of the founders of Laval University, its first Dean of Law, a minister in the united Canadian government of Lafontaine-Baldwin from 1851 to 1854 and he was the founder of the newspaper *La Minerve*. He became a judge of the superior court in 1855.

During this same period, probably in an attempt to develop new agricultural regions for the displaced habitant farmers, he set up experimental potato farms in Ste. Adele. The parish itself, founded by him in 1852, commemorates his wife, Adele Raymond, as does, perhaps, Lac Raymond. His name lives on in the township of Morin, Val Morin, Morin Heights, the St. Norbert Parish in Val Morin as well as Lac Morin, or Manitou, as it is known today. It is sad that this remarkable Canadian and Laurentian pioneer has slipped between the charismatic figures of Louis Joseph Papineau and Curé Antoine Labelle.



# WHAT'S IT WORTH?

or

## AN AFFAIR OF THE HEART

Some years ago I dropped in to see an elderly gentleman who wanted to sell his cottage. Following his instructions, I arrived at the end of a long road, and there, separated from the world beyond a thick hedge, was a rundown cottage nestled neatly on the near side of a treed lawn. The lawn followed a shimmering waterfront beach as together they disappeared into the woods and around the corner of the lake. It was an idyllic setting, even if the house did look a little rough.

The owner greeted me and showed me through the place with great pride. There was a lot to criticize in the house, but there were three bedrooms and a functional kitchen and bathroom. We discussed the value and the price, rarely the same figure, and then he showed me his survey plan.

The property was broken up into two waterfront lots and three lots on the other side of the road. Each one was significantly substandard, but all taken together, he had most of an acre of land. "I've got 5 lots," he told me. "That makes it worth a lot more money. I could sell these separately." I could imagine the major asset of the property, its privacy, being carved into five. I expressed my reservations and he told me he'd get back to me.

Some weeks later, having heard nothing despite a couple of calls, I decided to wander over and see how he was doing. When I arrived I found instead a young couple who happily told me they had rented the house for the summer. They were delighted with their find and extolled its privacy, explaining how many inconveniences they would

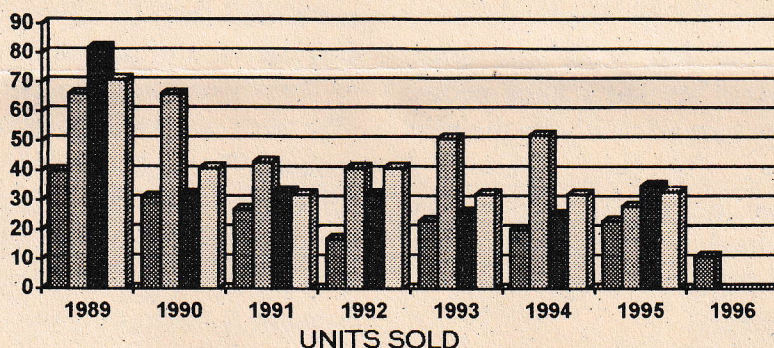
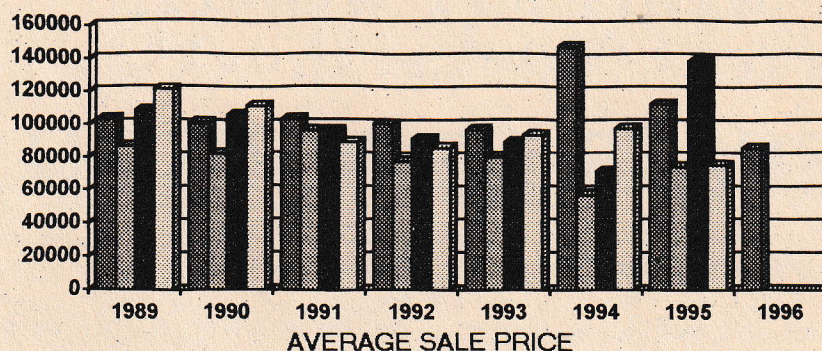
put up with for just such an intimate place. We exchanged pleasantries and I left them my card. I concluded that the owner had decided not to sell and put it out of my mind.

The next weekend I received a call from the tenants. They asked me if I could drop in. When I arrived, to my shock and horror there was a gigantic silver and red trailer parked on the lawn beside the house. I thought the tenants had brought it there, but when they came out of the house, their faces told the whole story. The old gentleman was puttering around, hooking up the beast. "Is he allowed to do that?" the tenants asked me. "What can we do?" There was really nothing much to be done. I could imagine three other trailers across the road by summer's end.

A country property is best conceived as an affair of the heart. Its highest value will result from the pleasure you take in using it, not in some scheme to exploit it. The Laurentians is a recreational playground of great beauty that can offer something for a wide variety of tastes. It is a place where thousands of families come to relax and play together, winter and summer. It has lakes, ski-hills, trails, gardens, restaurants and much more. Shifting the paradigm to the perspective of the developer, though, it is a graveyard of failed projects. Surveyor's offices and municipal registries are full of plans and subdivisions that should never have been done. Curiously, many people have sold their country cottages and done very well. They have discovered that highest and best use on the market is the same one they enjoyed. They have simply sold that which gave them pleasure.



# MARKET TRENDS



Despite the low interest rates, the total volume of sales has dropped to the lowest of any quarter since we started recording. While average sales are somewhat higher, the sample is so small that it is hard to draw any conclusions from this. The low interest rates, the CMHC 95% financing for the first-time buyer and the RAP are all market stimulants whose effect on the number and size of sales should be more evident in the next quarter, traditionally the time that people buy their first homes. The last two are artificial stimulants. The RAP is a programme whereby first-time buyers can use their RRSP to purchase a house. Our sample covers the entire municipalities of Ste-Agathe-des-Monts and Ste-Agathe-Nord in order to have a balanced overview of both the primary and recreational sales.

If you would like back issues of the Doncaster Ballyhoo, give us or 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.

IMMEUBLES  
**Doncaster** inc.

REALTIES  
chartered real estate broker

150 Principale  
Ste-Agathe-des-Monts, QC  
Canada J8C 1K3

Fax: (819) 326-8829

Tel: (819) 326-4963

e-mail: 76171.1725 @ compuserve.com

**Owned and operated by:**

**Joe Graham**

chartered real estate agent

**Sheila Eskenazi**

affiliated real estate agent

**Sales associate:**

**G rard Provost**

chartered real estate agent

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