

# Doncaster Ballyhoo

FOR LAURENTIAN WATERFRONT AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTY

Number 31

Spring 2003

## WE ARE MOVING!

**W**e have sold our building on rue Principale, our base for the past 16 years and are giving it up as of mid-May. We have taken an office for meeting our clients at 56 rue St. Bruno in Ste. Agathe. With modern communications systems, a large portion of our work can be accomplished from a home office and we will be able to continue to serve our market with the same high degree of personal service that we have always prided ourselves on providing.

*Efforts are still underway to save the Mount Sinai Hospital building in Ste. Agathe's Préfontaine district. The building, which has been abandoned for several years, is slated for demolition this summer. The proposal for recycling the building would see it used in part as a retreat for educational groups such as the McGill Centre for Jewish Studies and in part as an international retirement home for artists. We are still looking for a foundation that can oversee the project, at least until we have the opportunity to set up a specific non-profit corporation. Mount Sinai was the first Jewish community hospital in Canada and is an integral part of the history of the Laurentians. If you can help save this property, please give us a call or send us a note.*

Recently the Canadian Club in Ste. Agathe had the opportunity to hear Inge Sell, founder of Maison Emmanuel of Val Morin and Val David. Ms. Sell is one of those remarkable people who has seen her life as a mission. Over the past 20 years she has taken Maison Emmanuel from a foster home for challenged children to a real community formed with these children, many of whom are now grown up, who care for each other and live together with volunteer co-workers in a communal atmosphere. Maison Emmanuel, thanks to help from experts who have been teaching such skills as pottery, weaving and woodworking, have recently set up the Chapdelaine Bakery in Val David where they also sell their crafts. Money is always short, and, under the guidance of Margaret Hourston, the Eastern Star organisation has undertaken a fund-raising that should raise the profile of Maison Emmanuel at the same time. On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, the first Great Rubber Ducky Race will be held on the North River at 1445 rue Cécile Larose, Ste-Adele, J8B 1Z2. If you can't make it to the race, you can still back a rubber ducky by sending a tax-deductible donation to the above address, and a duck will carry your numbers down the river. There are five quality prizes. For more information, call 819-322-7014.

*A group of citizens and elected officials has rallied around Will Dubitsky's call for help in examining the proliferation of communication towers and ambient light pollution in the Laurentian region. The group has met a number of times since the beginning of the year and has developed a clear mission statement and a plan for getting the four levels of government together to address these serious public issues. They invite other concerned citizens to join them. For more information contact [info@cielnoir.org](mailto:info@cielnoir.org).*

**(819) 326-4963**

**[www.doncaster.ca](http://www.doncaster.ca)**

# Dr. J. Roddick Byers of the Laurentian San

**D**r. J. Roddick Byers contracted tuberculosis in Sherbrooke, where, he later acknowledged, he had been overworking, delivering four babies a night and taking no time off. He took the rest cure at the Trudeau sanitarium in Saranac Lake, New York, where he developed a good relationship with Dr. Hugh Klinghorn, an ex-patient himself who served on the ward and was devoted to the study of tuberculosis.

In the story of D. Lorne McGibbon, in the Ballyhoo #24, we outlined how McGibbon had sent Byers up to Ste-Agathe to get the hospital started in 1908. McGibbon gave him the money and authority to buy up as much land as needed north of the village, the land where the hospital is today. Byers acquired 200 acres. The three men worked together over the next few years to assure that their plans for a hospital would be realised. Dr. Byers said that he repeatedly had to rebuff the tendency to build what he called "chicken coops" and went on to say, "they had started 'sans' in the Maritimes in tents." He held out for a proper hospital.

To keep his benefactor happy, he had to begin operating immediately, so he also acquired a boarding house on the corner of Prefontaine and Albert Streets and opened with 8 beds. It took three more years before the San itself opened with 44 beds. The original sanatorium building can still be seen by driving up des Ardoises (the extension of Albert Street) and looking to your right.

When the war started Dr. Byers foresaw the disaster that was coming with 100,000 Canadians enlisted in the Armed Forces. He made an appointment with the minister and went up to Ottawa to tell him how important it would be to prepare for the huge number of TB patients that would be coming out of the trenches. The minister reassured Byers, showing him a study that revealed that there were only 50 cases of lung disease overseas.

That same autumn, Dr. Byers received a call from a senior army officer telling him that he was henceforth Lieutenant Byers and that there were 76 TB patients arriving in Halifax. The new officer was ordered to take as many as his facilities could handle.

He tore out partition walls, closed down the lab and had the Military Hospitals Commission acquire the Laurentide Inn, bringing his capacity from 52 to 128

beds. Again he had a fight on his hands to see that new accommodations would be built to his standards. By this point he was Captain Byers.

Treatment for tuberculosis consisted almost exclusively of the rest cure combined occasionally with a painful operation called 'artificial pneumothorax', collapsing of the lung. Captain Byers and his staff soon had on their hands almost a hundred young men, most barely into their twenties, who were told that they must do nothing but rest. Their prospects seemed to consist of dying, being tortured or sleeping. In his retirement Dr. Byers laughed as he told Fred Poland of The Montreal Star that he had a lot of his soldiers slipping into the village and getting drunk or going AWOL. He said it didn't help their condition and they would turn up ten days later in much worse shape.

Captain Byers began knocking on doors in Ottawa until the government gave him the funding to create occupational therapies for the soldiers. They were given a 'work prescription' tailored to their stages of recovery and thereafter had to report to their sergeant on their progress. The therapy progressed through carpentry to music, art and schooling for rehabilitation. In three years they had qualified 78 civil servants in two languages and absenteeism went from 50% to 2%.

Byers' management of the San was so successful that he eventually received a delegation of 50 people from the American military to study his scheme, which was then adopted in the USA.

In 1919 the Laurentian Society for the Treatment and Control of Tuberculosis transferred the San by deed of gift to the federal government and its capacity was increased to 250 beds. Health being a provincial jurisdiction, the federal government committed itself to transferring the facility to the province in 5 years, but during its tenure it added a central heating plant and five new pavilions. By the beginning of 1924 the last soldiers had left and the property was transferred to the province. Captain Byers became Dr. Byers in private practice in Montreal as a TB specialist and spent a good part of his time fighting for medical pensions for his soldiers.

Dr. Byers eventually retired to Gananoque, Ontario, where he died in 1960.

# What's It Worth?

or

## Private Spaces

Privacy is a relative concept. One person's idea can differ hugely from another's and these preferences are expressed when people look for country property. While primary residence choices will be governed by considerations like distance from work, school and public transit, other priorities come to the fore in the choice of a vacation home, and the issue of privacy is pretty high up the list. Some want to be in a community of like-minded people with a lot of space while others are horrified at the prospect of being with people they might have to get to know. For some, privacy is something that can only be found indoors, often restricted only to the bedroom, and comfort is found in being close to neighbours; for others, large hedges enclosing intimate spaces become a part of the private area. For still others, it takes hundreds of acres to provide the needed buffer.

Over the past hundred years our concept of privacy and private space has changed. Probably a lot of the change can be attributed to the automobile, not because it allowed people to get farther away from the city into the countryside, but because it made getting there a private experience. The automobile replaced the train, a more communal mode of transport. If you took a train somewhere, you had to respect a schedule and you travelled with others. Your trip and your return were dependant upon this scheduled movement of people and your personal plans had to be adjusted to what was available. You were part of a group and conversation and exchange were inevitable, even anticipated. In a car, a family is isolated for the duration of the trip.

During the same period, television has replaced much of our communal experience. Now even when we are in the smallest group, the family unit, it is not necessary to continuously acknowledge our co-participants beyond agreement of the selection of programming. At the same time, we are bombarded with commercial messages, our cell phones and beepers follow us almost everywhere, and we seem always on the go.

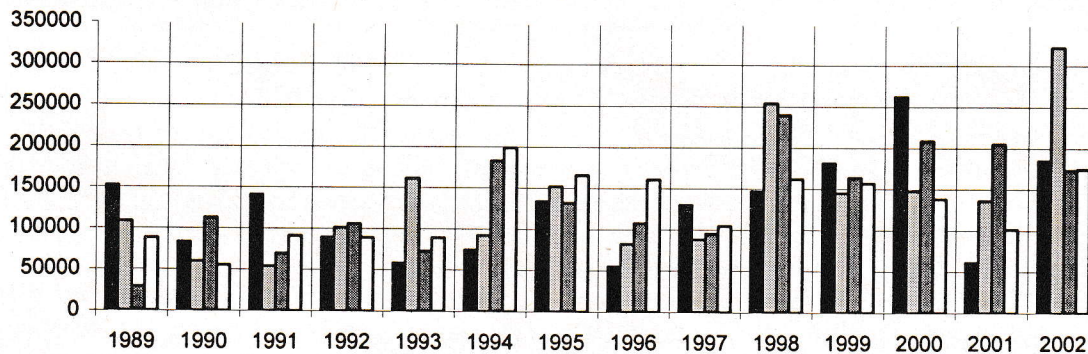
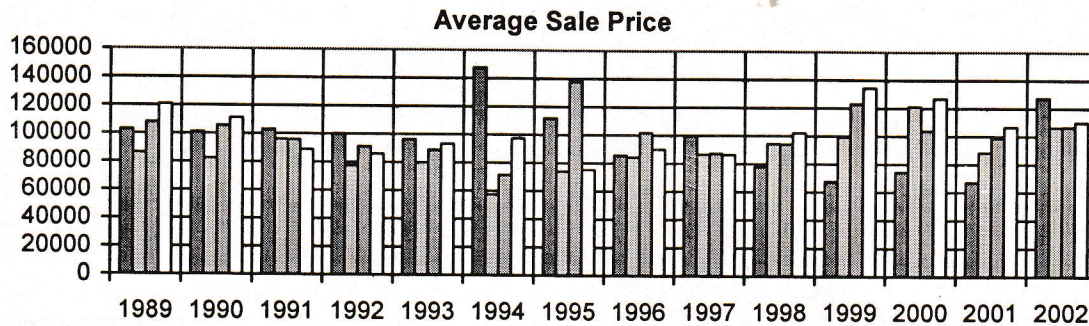
Humans have always existed in groups. We are communal animals and the life of a hermit or recluse was never the norm. What differentiates us from the other species is our ability and need to communicate abstract concepts, yet now many of us crave a 'Walden Pond' life of solitude. We idealize the huge spaces of the family farm and want to acquire large private properties. We fence them and try to possess them, feeling that anyone crossing is trespassing on our property.

In F.C. Ireland's *Sketches of Lachute* in the late 1880's, he mentions a bylaw that obliged farmers to take their fences down to a maximum height of 24" for the winter to facilitate the passage of sleighs. What does this say about the citizens' understanding of private land ownership? In farming communities, farmers almost invariably built stiles for people to cross over fences and through pastures. Water used to be taken from a communal well and farmers and ranchers used stretches of land at the disposal of the community for grazing their animals together. Society was built around an imperfect balance between private and common spaces. Our personal wealth was a measure of our value to the common good. Our fields were showpieces, measures of our ability as stewards, on public display. The saying "Good fences make good neighbours" was a reflection of the need to keep grazing animals in rather than neighbours out.

Some country communities maintain the communal aspect of those farming days, keeping properties in a perfect state, showpieces for the neighbours and passers-by. Around some lakes the residents even welcome what others would consider trespassing. In some of these areas, the individual houses feel more like communal spaces, with people dropping by continuously. In contrast to a pristine isolated environment where the neighbours are trees and the visitors, deer and birds, these areas bubble with the excitement of a summer camp for adults.

As a result of these different expectations and priorities, understanding what a person means in terms of privacy is one of the first challenges that we have to meet in beginning our search on behalf of a family looking to acquire a country property.

# MARKET TRENDS



The upper graph reflects statistics publicly available for sales of homes in the old Ste-Agathe-des-Monts and Ste-Agathe-Nord municipalities. Since the forced amalgamations it has become almost impossible to collect the data in the same manner. For that reason we are modifying our graph to reflect just the sales handled by Doncaster Realties. You will notice anomalies: Generally, the average price is higher and less stable from quarter to quarter. If in a certain quarter only a couple of building lots changed hands, this will bring the average down significantly. As well, since the properties that we sell are mainly secondary residences, the market influences are quite distinct from the broadly based market plotted in the first graph.

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)