

Doncaster Ballyhoo

FOR LAURENTIAN WATERFRONT AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTY

No. 18

Summer 1998

Last year on Canada Day we had a lot of fun with our canoe rally and the activities for the kids. A lot of the same people are involved again this year. As a matter of principle, we're holding it on Wednesday, July 1st, and it will be at Parc Lagney. Please come. Bring your kids, bring their grandparents, cheer for your lake association's participants in the canoe rally or get out in a canoe yourself. Jeff Carter and Barbara Stolt have informed us that it will be a *little* less complicated this year. Marcel Boisvert will have some help with the kids' activities. He has not been well, but he is still determined to keep things going. We'll have fireworks after the entertainment. Most of the entertainers are virtually giving their time. It'll be quite a show. As usual, we have received great help and cooperation from the town of Ste. Agathe.

According to the federal Heritage Ministry, there have been more requests for help setting up Canada Day celebrations all over rural Québec than they have ever seen. Surely a sign of a change in the atmosphere.

We have noticed an increasing demand for properties with a good view of the night sky. Apparently a number of amateur astronomers find our area particularly well suited to this activity. Many areas suffer from light pollution combined with smog which reduces visibility. Our clean, clear air and low-density developments provide lots of opportunity to see stars and planets simply not visible from more urban locations.

On Page 3 we have provided a list of the major summer events in the Ste. Agathe area. There are many more minor events that we have not listed, and, if you are curious, you can find out more from the Information Office located in the railroad station, or by phoning 326-0457. The dance festival that used to be at Camp Hiawatha didn't disappear. It simply moved to St. Sauveur under the name Festival des Arts de St. Sauveur.

It is important to make sure that you are properly registered with the school board of your choice for your country property as well as your city house. While you don't have a vote if you are a part-time resident, you still have a say on where your taxes are going and the local English school is particularly vulnerable. Contact Ste. Agathe Academy at (819) 326-2563 for more information.

Thanks to initiatives of the local Canadian Club, we have had the pleasure to participate in several round-table dialogues for the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN). Sheila was invited to Ottawa to join a small group drawn from across Canada to improve the kit which community groups are using to foster discussion of issues of importance to the people of this country. The opinions, perspectives and statistics generated are gathered and studied by the CPRN which uses them to help influence policy makers, and the individual participants come away from the discussions with a greater understanding of the social policy issues and how their neighbours are thinking about them.

(819) 326-4963

THE RAILROAD ERA BEGINS

Théophile Thibodeau became curé of the parish of Ste. Agathe in 1878 and simultaneously homesteaded a large peninsula at the far end of Lac des Sables. He was the community's spiritual leader during Ste. Agathe's most difficult years. He inherited a parish that was just discovering that the fields would not yield, and the local farmers were either leaving or looking for other ways to make a living. Several of these hard-working pioneers built hotels. While the clientele consisted to some degree of vacationers from the city, there were also the migrants flowing north to the promised land of Curé Labelle. These mixed populations and mixed demands created mixed values and the most contentious issue that Curé Thibodeau had to deal with was the temperance movement. On the one hand, there were those who wished to forbid the sale of alcohol and on the other, there was the growing commerce available to those who could furnish the needs and desires of the new market.

The Curé was clearly happy to retreat to his home on that huge peninsula that later became known as Rolland's Point, and subsequently, Greenshields' Point. In 1882 he tried to retire there but he was soon forced back into service. He mustered the energies of the parish to build a new presbytery and he was curé in residence when the smallpox plague swept across the province in 1885. The plague took 50 lives in Ste. Agathe, a huge tragedy for the small town. The same plague claimed thousands in Montreal. While the vaccination against smallpox had been available for some years, a failure of communication resulted in the rural and poor urban French populations' paranoid belief that the vaccination was in fact the cause of the plague. The situation became so serious that Quebec was quarantined from the rest of the continent.

Following the plague came a drought that caused three consecutive years of crop failures, and, in 1888, the poor Curé died trying to rescue the presbytery from a fire that destroyed it. For many years, and even to this day, people claim to hear him singing or talking in the woods of the peninsula he loved so much.

True to the adage that it is always darkest just before dawn, the news of the imminent arrival of the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental railway at each community filled the Laurentian hills with hope over the following years. If nothing else, it provided work in the construction. It reached Shawbridge by 1890, Ste. Adele by 1891 and Ste. Agathe by 1892. It was a life-line thrown out to a pioneer hamlet providing sustenance and identity. Ste. Agathe was suddenly a destination. Between 1887 and 1896 the total evaluation tripled for the area described as Ste-Agathe-des-Monts, and by 1911 it had risen 20-fold, and this, despite the great fire of 1907. Not only was the railway not a boondoggle, it rapidly turned Ste Agathe into a boom town with all of the problems and advantages that implies. The colonist families suddenly found opportunity and growth, but the majority of the new-comers were neither Catholic nor French. This was not exactly what the good Curé Labelle had envisioned when he campaigned for a railway and talked about a northern route of colonisation that would go all the way to Manitoba. People were coming to Ste. Agathe simply because the lakes were clean and the air was fresh and invigorating. They weren't on their way anywhere else.

While there were many families who had come to create a holiday-homestead, some as early as the late 1860's, Octavien Rolland is credited in the *Album historique* as being the first *villégiateur*. He was the son of Jean-Baptiste Rolland, the founder of Papier Rolland, and he bought the estate of the late Curé Thibodeau. Early maps show it to be a farm and from other sources we learn that it was generously endowed with mature white pines.

The newcomers discovered a vigorous, spirited population that can be best described by referring to Elizabeth Wand's memoirs once again: *"I found Ste. Agathe a village nestled at the lower end of the lake. The houses mostly built of logs, with plaster between, and white-washed. Little gardens with vegetables and flowers, all so neat and trim-looking. The people clad in home-spun of their own weaving, knitted stockings, good thick ones, also the work of the women and girls. The catalogue carpets and braided rugs, such a happy looking industrious people, hospitable and kindly to a degree."*

MAJOR SUMMER EVENTS 1998

JUNE 23 & 24 St-Jean Baptiste Day celebrations at Parc Lagny

JULY 1 Canada Day at Parc Lagny
Kids' games & make-up, Canoe rally
Live entertainment, Fireworks

JULY 4 Treasure hunt at the École de Voile, Ste-Agathe

JULY 13 TO 18 Midway amusements

JULY 25 & 26 Sailing Classic regatta on Lac des Sables

JULY 25 World Music Festival in Downtown Ste-Agathe
Medieval Day/Ecuador Evening

JULY 26 Gypsy Day/Ecuador

JULY 31 Music from Cameroon

AUGUST 1 Brazilian Day

AUGUST 2 African Day

JULY 25 TO AUGUST 16 1001 Pots pottery show in Val David

AUGUST 8 & 9 Triathlon

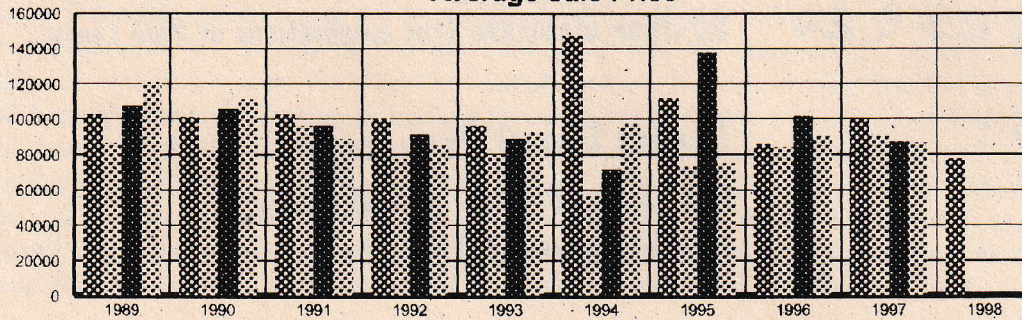
AUGUST 16 Exposition of sports cars on St-Vincent Street

AUGUST 22 Grand "Groyser" Klezmer Concert at Camp B'nai
Brith (Tickets available at Doncaster Realities)

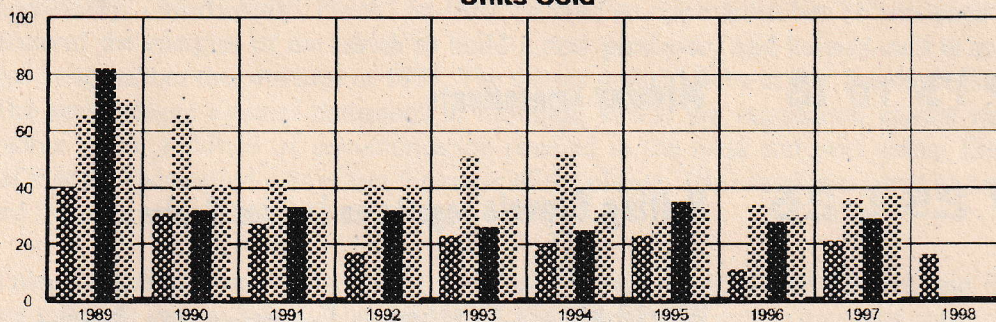
SEPTEMBER 7 Family festival at Parc Lagny

MARKET TRENDS

Average Sale Price



Units Sold



April 1998 has outperformed the whole first quarter of the year and May looks even stronger. The average price for April is as high as the highest second-quarter since we began the graph. By the time you read this, the market should be well into a serious recovery. Time will tell if it is a trend or just a spike in the market.

We have received much constructive criticism of our graphs, suggesting, among other things, that we show the median price and/or that we limit our statistics to waterfront properties. We are looking into it, and may offer a different picture in the future. We are grateful for the input.

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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Our office is open six days a week, closed Tuesdays.

(Not intended to solicit properties currently listed for sale)

