

Doncaster Ballyhoo

FOR LAURENTIAN WATERFRONT AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTY

No. 17

Winter 1998

We have reason to be proud of the Heritage Committee and the efforts of its members. By this spring, we will have a brochure describing a walking tour of Ste. Agathe. The buildings featured were chosen in consultation with the *Groupe de recherches en histoire du Québec* and the whole project was financed by the municipality of Ste-Agathe-des-Monts and the Ministère de la Culture. If you want a copy, you will be able to obtain one this spring at the Ste. Agathe information office at (819) 326-0457. The Office de la langue française will not permit it to be done bilingually with public money, so we are now looking for a way to do an English print run.

Speaking of the information office, this service has existed for 40 years and, while it is funded by the municipalities of Ste-Agathe-des-Monts and Ste-Agathe-Sud, it is administered by the Chamber of Commerce. Carmen Cloutier, who has worked there for 18 years, has been in charge of the operations for the last 15. She and her staff do a really good job of making sure they have information on anything and everything that is going on. They will be moving into the recently renovated railroad station this spring, a decision that was made after much discussion and deliberation.

The amalgamation of the three Ste. Agathe municipalities that we discussed in some detail in previous issues is still being examined. While all three municipalities have accepted to participate in a government study, the position of Ste-Agathe-Nord is still opposed to the amalgamation. The town of Ivry, that was included belatedly in the recommendations, has refused to participate. The study is supposed to be finished this spring or early in the summer.

Most of the local municipalities now have curbside collection of recyclable materials. If you don't have the service yet, it should be available soon. After studying many different schemes, the MRC has gone for large green containers on wheels you roll down to the road for bi-weekly pick-up. Some of the towns oblige you to take even larger black containers of the same shape for normal garbage. They are a little unwieldy if you live on a long private road, but people are adapting by making a small, protected area near the public road and just leaving the containers there.

If you buy a daffodil in early April, you will be supporting a worthy cause. Jacqueline McDonald, president of the local chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society, and her team have been very successful at raising awareness and money to help in the fight against cancer. She and her volunteers will have tables in many local businesses on the *Journées de la jonquille*, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of April.

(819) 326-4963

Fresh Air & Clean Water

In 1894 Harper's Magazine carried an article about the Laurentians by McGill University principal Sir William Dawson. A young nurse in New York, upon reading it, decided that she had to visit, and set off to Ste. Agathe. Her name was Elizabeth Wand, and her seven year love-affair with our area is documented in her memoirs.

A single woman with a pioneer spirit, she quickly realised that Ste. Agathe was an ideal place for a health spa, and she purchased a small cottage and headed off to Montreal to introduce herself to the doctors there. By the end of her first summer, she had purchased half of a farm on the Tour du Lac and designed her first building. The following summer, R. Wilson-Smith, a past mayor of Montreal, became one of her guests, and by the end of that same summer, he had bought the property from Miss Wand. This house still stands on Tour du Lac and is known as *Auberge de la Tour du Lac*.

The indomitable Miss Wand bought the other half of the same farm and built herself another complex. This she named *Quisisana*, which she said means 'Here is health'. Many of her guests, who came originally for reasons of health, bought land and stayed on. In her own words, she was a pioneer in the creation of our recreational community: "Lake Brulé had its beginnings before I went out, but Trout Lake, Manitou, Lake St. Joseph and Lake Tremblant all benefited by my pioneer work. I also sold lots on my own property, and soon was the centre of a nice little colony of my own."

Her efforts were doomed by their own success. While most of her guests were patients who were convalescing, Ste. Agathe was becoming identified as the best setting to deal with the major health problem of human history. No other convalescent home could co-exist in a town with a tuberculosis sanitarium. The fears of contagion were too great.

In 1873, two years after he graduated from medical school, Dr. Edward Trudeau of New York was diagnosed with tuberculosis. As a teenager, he had watched his older brother die of the disease, and he surely felt that he was soon to follow. After several failed attempts to shake the disease, he decided to move to Saranac Lake in order to rest, and perhaps die, in a beautiful area where he had vacationed for a few summers when he was younger. When he arrived at Paul Smith's Hotel, the owner's brother-in-law carried him up two flights of stairs, two steps at a time, and

remarked that the Doctor weighed no more than a dried lamb skin.

Tuberculosis was such a common disease that it could well be the candidate for the greatest single enemy that our species has ever confronted. According to F. Ryan, author of *Tuberculosis: The Greatest Story Never Told*, an estimated one billion people died of the disease between 1700 and 1900. To add to the impact of the disease, it tended to cut people down in the prime of life. A German botanist named Hermann Brehmer contracted it in the 1840's and moved to the Himalayas to die while pursuing his interests. To his surprise, he was cured. He subsequently went on to study medicine and to propose a rest-cure for the disease, and in Germany in the 1850's, he opened the first tuberculosis sanitarium.*

Luckily, Dr. Trudeau would learn more about Dr. Brehmer's cure. Over the course of that summer, the progress of the disease was arrested and he began to recover. Saranac Lake at that time was a vacation spot for the summer only, and when Trudeau moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, for the winter, his disease returned with the same force it had had. During his second summer, Dr. Loomis, who met him at Saranac Lake, encouraged him to stay for the winter, since he was so very happy there. Dr. Loomis expected him to die, but Trudeau, studying the techniques developed by Dr. Brehmer, recovered.

He dedicated the balance of his life to developing sanatoria on Dr. Brehmer's model and it was to this, fortuitous environment that many well-to-do Montrealeers were sent in the 1890's and early 1900's.

During the last decade of the 19th century, Dr. Arthur Richer explored the possibility of building a tuberculosis sanitarium in Ste. Agathe. Dr. Richer was educated at the Pasteur Institute in Switzerland and he was the head of the Montreal League of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis. The ever reliable *Album historique de la paroisse de Ste-Agathe-des-Monts* documents the opening of the hospital in 1899 at which 200 doctors were present. There were 25 rooms. It goes on to mention that the Richer sanitarium was destroyed by fire in 1902, but Ste. Agathe's involvement with tuberculosis was only just beginning.

*According to the Webster's New International Dictionary, copyright 1913, a sanitarium is a sanatorium used exclusively for health care, while a sanatorium is a resort with a salubrious climate. Therefore, while Ste Agathe may have been a sanatorium, the institution was a sanitarium. Rot, my spellguard.

What's it Worth or The Storm-damaged Trees

We were lucky. Yes, the ice storm did a lot of damage, but, compared to the South Shore, we were on the edge of the storm's path.

In cleaning up after the storm, it will be useful to know which trees have the potential to grow into something and which don't. Generally speaking, most of our forest is second growth. That means that it was cut over for lumber or farming or that it burned at some point in the past century. Most of our area was cleared farms as recently as fifty to sixty years ago. The trees that come up on this cleared land are 'pioneer' species. Their seeds sit in the soil and will not grow in shady areas, but will spring up in sunny, exposed ones becoming the first trees to establish a new forest. They do not thrive in shade and are called 'intolerant' species. These trees tend to grow out and up in the sunshine, but rarely get very large. 'Tolerant' species, on the other hand, germinate and grow in the shade of the forest. These trees can prosper in shade or direct sun. Over time, they will grow very tall and, by casting the intolerant trees in their shadow, will eliminate them.

Tolerant trees grow more slowly. Examples of these are the great white pines that once dominated our forests, sugar maples, some spruces, hemlock and ash. The intolerant trees include white birch, balsam-fir, poplar (or trembling aspen) and some red maples.

If a tree is whipped over with its crown in the snow, chances are it is one of the intolerant species. Most likely it will be a birch or poplar. Often it may be necessary to cut these trees down. If the trunk hasn't cracked, it may straighten up, and if the tree isn't too large, you may be able to help it do so. However, it is going to be vulnerable to the next storm. If you have to choose between such a tree and a maple, even though the maple may be smaller, consider taking the birch out.

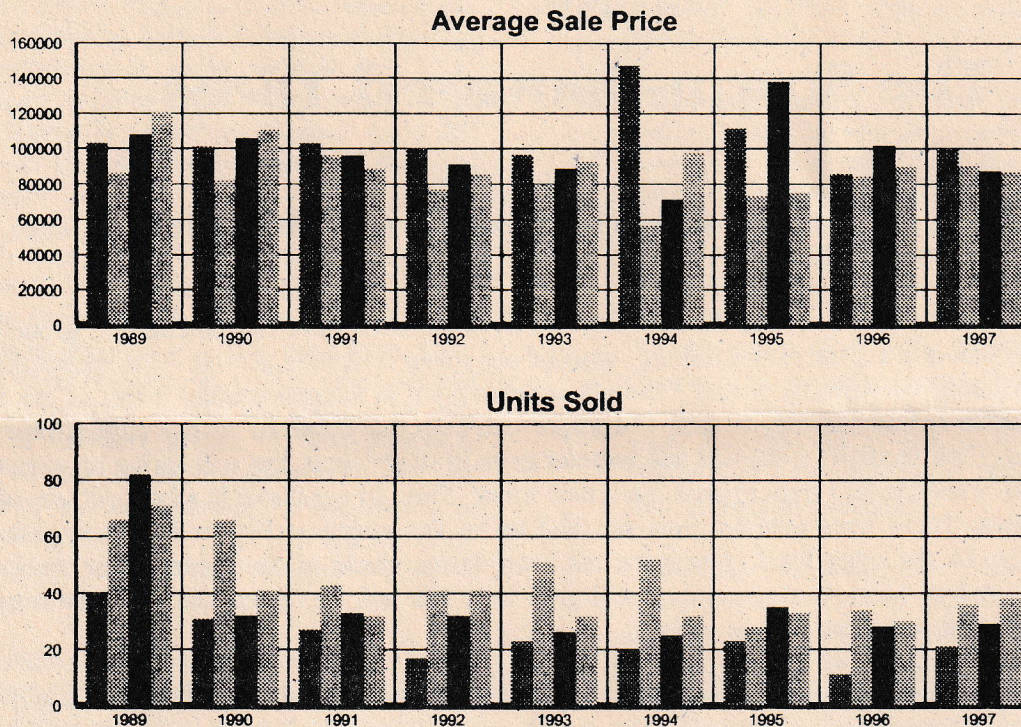
Pruning the dead branches off of some trees will tidy them up. Make sure you do it right. The *Société de l'arbre du Québec*, a non-profit foundation funded with private and public money and through the Canadian Forestry Service is offering to help. They have set up a WATS service underwritten by the forestry engineers of Québec.* They can guide you as to the best technique and the best time to prune your trees. A quick call to them informed us that the trees could surprise us with their power to regenerate and that we should not be too hasty in condemning them. Where there is no danger, the best advice seems to be to wait for spring. New growth will hide the missing limbs, but if the crown of a coniferous tree is broken, the tree will have to grow around the old crown. Trees that have done this in the past look a little spooky. They grow straight up to a point, then turn to the side and continue upwards like a headless sentry with one arm pointing to the sky. Sometimes, several new crowns form, as though they were all vying for the top spot.

A part of the forest that is more difficult to predict is the fauna. Species of creatures can be decimated by storms like this, and other, competing, species may fill the gap. By summer's end, we may hear cries in the woods that we have never heard before. The January '97 ice storm in our area seems to have created a niche for the owls, and by late August we could hear them every night.

Written in consultation with Daniel Boyer, forestry engineer, Timmerlinn Ltd. (819) 326-3559.

** La société de l'arbre du Québec. Tel: (800) 811-2727*

MARKET TRENDS



Analysis of the figures that were used to calculate the above graphs shows that total volume over the last two years is 47% of the volume in 1989 and 1990. At the same time, using 1989 and 1990 as our control, the average prices in 1996 and 1997 are 89% of the earlier period. A quick glance would suggest that the volume drop took place precipitously in 1990 and never recuperated while prices dipped to a low sometime in 1994. A sampling in 1992, 1993 and 1994, after anomalies have been removed, shows that the average price for this period was 83% of the control period.

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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