

Doncaster Ballyhoo

FOR LAURENTIAN WATERFRONT AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTY

WINTER 1996

Please come and join us again this year for our Canada Day celebration at Lac des Sables. Last year an estimated 3500 people turned out at Place Lagny to witness the events, particularly the spectacular fireworks that were launched from rafts in the middle of the lake. Rénovation Ste-Agathe and the owners of Boutique Kermesse loaned six floating docks. They were used for a dance performance and to launch the fireworks. Royal Fireworks of Montreal told us that we need two more rafts than that to ensure safety and to make a really spectacular show.

We consulted with Réal Latreille at Rénovation Ste-Agathe who is offering a discount to people who order the first eight new floating docks this spring and give him permission to use them for Canada Day. On top of that he will deliver them to our site and pick them up after, all for free, just like he did last year. If you are planning to order a floating dock, please let him know before the end of March so that he can build it to your specifications. Who would have thought that buying a floating dock could be a political statement?

We welcome Gérard Provost, chartered real estate agent, to our office. Gerry has been working in real estate in the Ste-Agathe area for the past fourteen years, during which time he has won the Laurentian Real Estate Board's Mireille Léger Award for Excellence. He is an excellent sailor, and prior to moving here, he was a bush pilot in Northern Quebec. Gerry lives with his wife and young son on the Presqu'île Nantel in Ste-Agathe where he has been active in the Association. We look forward to a long, happy and productive relationship.

The Heritage Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the young volunteers of Katimavik who came to Ste-Agathe and helped us renovate the station. They have been working on the station since mid-November, changing broken windows, scraping and painting. They also helped reorganise our files and are involved in many other ways around the community. The volunteers come from all over Canada and the programme will continue until July 7th, though work on the station will have to wait. The Committee has planned a spaghetti dinner to be held on Saturday, February 17th from 11:00AM to 8:00PM at the Trinity Church Community Hall during which it hopes to raise some more money to keep going on the station renovations. If you are around that weekend, we hope to see you there.

The Hospital Foundation is launching a five-year fundraising programme this year, and as usual we have included their forms. These are difficult times, and we know that most of our readers are already implicated elsewhere. The hospital is particularly moved by the efforts made in the past and hopes that they will continue in this time of need.

The Foundation is also proud to announce the appointment of Claudia Couture to the position of Executive Director. Ms. Couture comes to us from the foundation of the Centre Hospitalier Fleury where she was Director General. She is also the past National Director of Financing for Epilepsy Canada, past president of the communications committee of the Canadian Cancer Society and many other similar activities too numerous to mention here. Her appointment is a clear indication of just how seriously the community takes its hospital services.

Please note that there is a chance that you will receive a second solicitation directly from the Foundation. Ms. Couture will do her best to eliminate duplication, and she asks you to bear with her.

We are also curious to know how many people receiving our newsletter actually read it. So far we have kept fairly good records of everyone who has confirmed, but we would really appreciate it if you would let us know. In that way, over time, we can shorten our list so that it goes only to people who truly want it.

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The Iroquois and the Sulpicians

The signing of La Grande Paix by the Iroquois and the French in Montreal in 1701 brought to an end the wild days of the French-Indian Wars. These wars reflected the European conflicts: the French fought the Iroquois who were allied with the British, while the Huron, Nipissing and Algonquin were either neutral or took the side of the French. As we saw last time, the Weskarinis, who were the indigenous people of our Laurentian area, were casualties of these wars, having been massacred by the Iroquois on the shores of Petit Lac Nominingue in 1751.

The Ste Agathe area did not figure much in events that followed. While the occasional Algonquin party probably trapped furs here, the events that would allow our area to be settled were unfolding further south. The Sulpicians set up a mission at Lake of Two Mountains in the early 1700's and maintained the peace between the Iroquois and the French in exchange for fur-trading rights to the territory. The Sulpicians sold off these rights to French entrepreneurs and did their best to convert the Iroquois and Algonquin to Catholicism. In the war with the English that led to the loss of the colony, many of these Iroquois actually fought for the French.

In 1763 when the colony was transferred, the English king refused to recognise Jesuit and Récollet titles over large tracts of land. Encouraged by this, an Iroquois at Deux Montagnes decided to sell his house to an English businessman. He hoped to demonstrate in this manner that the Iroquois owned their property, and gambled that the Sulpicians would fear confiscation of their lands if they challenged the rights of this Englishman to buy. The Sulpicians were more afraid of the Iroquois strategy than of the English. They petitioned Governor Burton to recognise their clear title. Burton accepted to respect the Sulpician property rights if the latter would swear homage to George III, King of England, which of course they did. Thus the Iroquois/Englishman sale fell through and Sulpician titles were recognised.

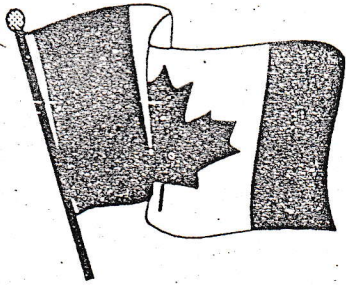
From 1763 to 1936 the Iroquois and Sulpicians continued to fight this legal battle over their lands. The Iroquois were very creative in their fights. They invited a Methodist pastor to run their mission in 1852, thereby threatening to convert to Protestantism rather than Catholicism. This scheme backfired when the pastor fled in the face of the utter religious apathy of the Iroquois, Algonquin and Nipissing. After subsequent attempts, they built a Methodist temple, but the Sulpicians got a judgement and had it dismantled. Over this period many Iroquois became Methodists and their attempts to break the Sulpician hold over their land can be credited for the creation in 1877 of Montreal's Civil Rights Association to promote religious freedom.

The Sulpicians set up villages for the Iroquois and for the Algonquin and succeeded in encouraging them to live in a spirit of cooperation. The sparse populations of these two peoples became centred around Lake of Two Mountains, and the rest of the area began to fall to settlers. Over time, there was nothing the Iroquois could do to get the same rights to the land as the settlers were getting. Neither the French nor the English crown seemed to be willing to recognise them as anything more than wards, non-citizens who had to be encouraged to move away. There was clearly no interest in their culture, history or political structure, yet, from the Iroquois perspective, it is their great unwritten constitution, the Great Law of Peace, that was the inspiration for Western democracy. Their symbol, the Eagle, and their democratic laws were copied by the 13 American colonies in the creation of the United States. Their goal was always to try to find a middle position between the French and English colonists. They were a people of six nations, the Mohawk, Seneca, Cayuga, Onandaga, Oneida and Tuscororas. The sixth was actually adopted by the other five, according to their oral history, around the time the Europeans were first arriving in America. I had occasion to have a long discussion with Tom Morris of Kanawake, and was fascinated to learn the Iroquois perspective. It lends credence to George Woodcock's statement that our salvation will be found in the philosophies of the indigenous peoples.

Most of the Ste Agathe area was being logged during the mid part of the 19th century. The British Empire's appetite for wood devoured forests over a period of 500 years, and most of our area fell under the axe even while the first three homesteaders were arriving in 1849. While they were traveling overland from St. Jerome, the logging was following the river systems that drain into the Ottawa, following the same routes as the Weskarinis had followed for so many centuries. Logging reached its peak in our area in the 1860's, long before the influence of Curé Labelle was felt.

In 1853 Queen Victoria ordained that 250,000 acres should be set aside for the 'Indians', and so the Doncaster Reserve, a square of land six miles on a side, was created. At that time the townships of Beresford, Wolfe and Doncaster were just starting to be surveyed and the Indian land was pretty far away from the Iroquois and Algonquin who were at Lake of Two Mountains. Another, larger reserve, Maniwaki, having an area of 58,975 hectares (over 150,000 acres) was also established, and over the next 25 years the Algonquin moved to it, having tired of the endless legal battle that the Iroquois were having with the Sulpicians.

In the meantime, a social revolution was taking place in the Canadas that would create our democracy. The Chateau Clique here and the Family Compact in Upper Canada were struggling to protect their historical privileges.



WHAT'S IT WORTH?

OR

IT'S UP TO EACH OF US

We all know that to get anywhere we have to see where we are going. We have to visualise our destination. The referendum and its aftermath have helped me to do just that. I have discovered that I am not a 'Québécois', and more importantly I have discovered that no matter how long I, or my children, live in rural Quebec, we will never be Québécois. We are something else. We are 'Montréalais'. A 'Montréalais' is a citizen of a modern, pluralistic society with its own rich history, who generally speaks more than one language and lives in the influence of more than one culture. I can't be a 'Québécois', because the vision does not encompass my experience. It excludes much of what I am. I am a happy Canadian, because being a Canadian is also being a citizen of a modern, pluralistic society.

This simple and seemingly obvious observation has greatly changed my perspective on our local market. I am a proud Canadian from a distinct, multicultural region of the country: Montreal. I live in the Laurentians because it is a beautiful recreational environment close to a very special city.

Montreal is the third largest English-speaking city in Canada and the third largest French-speaking city in the world (after Paris and Kinshasa, Zaire). It is a trading city whose business people have connections all over the world and it is a major port. It boasts some of the finest food in North America, and not only in the restaurants, it is safe at night, it has world-class entertainment, and of course it has one of the best recreational areas imaginable only a quick hour north. On top of all that, it is ours; it belongs to all of its peoples. That certainly is something to build on. Let's maintain a vision of our city and our culture as we wish it to be. It is time for us to embrace and start sharing our own vision of our society. The previous municipal administration together with the Liberal provincial government of the time, commissioned a task force to rethink Montreal. When this task force report is eventually acted upon it will empower the region in a way that will make Québec City less relevant to our futures. The study was called

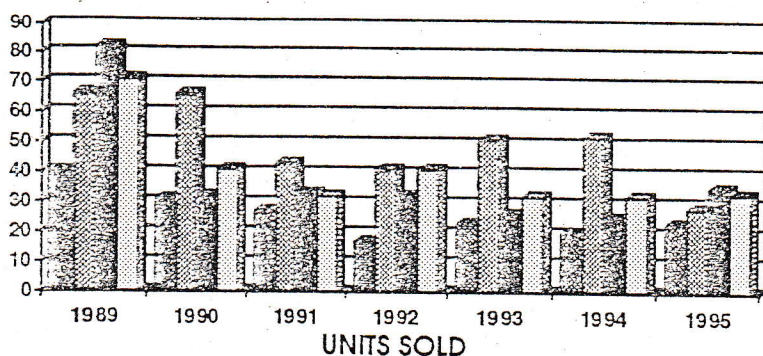
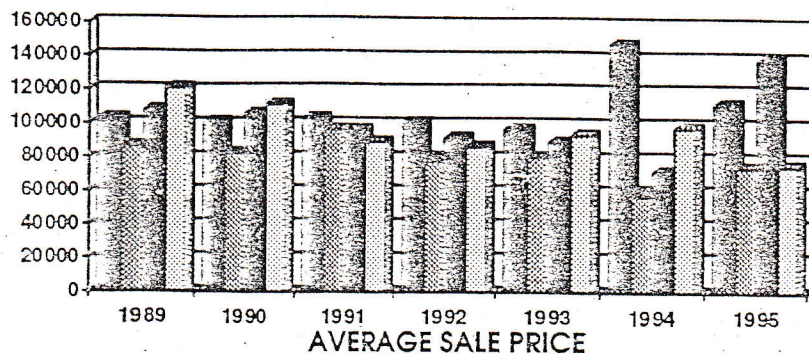
"Montreal, a city region" (also known as the Pichette report) and among its goals, it visualises "A distinct city-region ... where the citizens, the majority of whom are bilingual, can take advantage of a superior standard of living at an affordable price and in a stable, safe social climate." (pg 10, common goals).

The Laurentian market will exist even if the Laurentians becomes part of a separate Québec, and the lakes will continue to be enjoyed by Canadians. Around some of the lakes, almost forty percent of the mailing addresses are not in Québec. In the case of one large lake, it seems that over 50% live primarily outside of Canada. While it is true that many of those property owners used to live in Montreal, many others simply chose to have a vacation spot in the Laurentians. A purchase here is good value compared to other areas in North America or elsewhere, and the world is small enough that deals are heard about even across oceans. Travel has become so simple that, even with the added cost of a plane ticket, it is still cheaper to maintain a vacation home here than in many other places. Our unique Laurentian villages are a quaint backdrop to our different seasons, and the Laurentian market, like any other, responds to the market forces.

Consider the facilities: We have more than 50 lakes within a seven mile radius of Ste Agathe, in many of which the water is drinkable. We have the Red and the Devil rivers, not to mention the North river that follows the Linear Park through the heart of the territory. We have ski trails, ski-doo trails, walking trails, ski-hills, parks, a first rate road system and even an airport. Many of our lakes have organised communities with activities, there are camps for kids, reliable workers and all variety of restaurants and shops.

The Laurentians will continue to be there for us to enjoy. It is up to each one of us to decide what that is worth. The problems that we confront are only different, not more severe, than problems that we would face elsewhere.

MARKET TRENDS



A couple of very high priced sales in Ste-Agathe in the third quarter last year gave a good boost to the average sale price in this area, but the number of transactions taking place is still very low compared to the peaks achieved in 1989. We are seeing barely half the volume of sales of that period, but prices held relatively steady. Once again the conclusion must be that good value will sell, be it up-scale or otherwise.

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.

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