

# QUEBEC HERITAGE NEWS

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2005

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 7

\$4

## NATURAL HERITAGE



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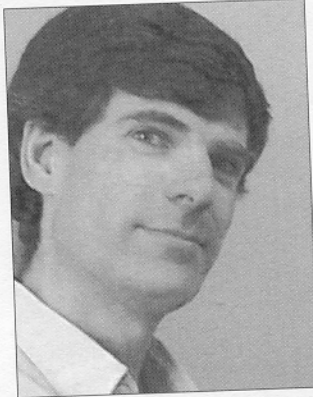
**LIVING OUTSIDE IN: WHAT IS THIS NATURE?**

**THE CRYSTAL EYE OF NUNAVIK**

*'Going to the snow'*

## Winter pulls more than wool over our eyes

My country, one of our national poets famously declared, is not a country; it is winter. And whatever else he may have meant, he was right about winter: here on the top crust of North America we have a lot of winter, global warming or no global warming. However mild the cold season may be at times, it does come awfully soon and take forever to go away. It also dominates our thoughts: even in the blistering heat of this past summer I remember thinking, "Enjoy this; it will be winter all too soon!" And I was right: it was winter all too soon, and now I wonder why I wasted time last summer thinking about it.



Winter is part of our heritage, sure. Other places get snow on occasion; we have it in our soul. We have icicles and rinks and ski slopes and toques and sticking out your tongue in the middle of a snowfall trying to catch the fat flakes and avoiding getting it (your tongue) stuck on a fence. No sight warms our hearts more than the first fall of snow which turns the ugliest landscape into the prettiest of picture postcards. I hate it.

At the risk of offending the national spirit, I put my cards on the table and declare that a very tiny bit of winter is more than I really need. Okay, so that picture postcard is pretty, but it isn't a patch on a garden full of flowers or a forest full of leaves; shovelling snow (truly our national sport, if you think about it) is good exercise, but as an activity it pales beside hiking, boating, and riding a bike, all things that winter stops me from enjoying. And whatever other winter activities people indulge in and claim to enjoy, sooner or later they have to come indoors in order to stay alive. Like the snow that hides an ugly landscape, winter pulls more than wool over our eyes. This outlook of mine was reinforced some weeks ago when old friends of ours from Australia arrived for a visit (November is the beginning of their summer holidays) and declared they were mad keen on getting "to the snow," as they called going up north. Their teenage son Alex had gone "to the snow" (ie, a 6-hour drive from Sydney) for a few ski lessons the previous July (the coldest part of their year, albeit still T-shirt-in-the-back-yard weather) and wanted to try it again. They were so mad keen they rented a cottage near Mont Tremblant (the only place that had snow in late-November) for part of their stay and invited us up for a day to share the joy. Now, my family had been to Tremblant just last summer and had a delightful hike and a scenic gondola ride and a

tasty cappuccino at an outdoor café (does it get any better?) but this was a whole other racket. Alex wanted to do ski school, so this meant that our son, who has never shown the slightest interest in skiing, had to do ski school.

The advertised \$59 deal to get one child outfitted and instructed for a couple of hours seemed a reasonable price to pay to preserve social harmony, so we assented - only to discover that deal was not available so early in the season; instead, we were looking at \$50 for instruction, \$35 for equipment, and then \$45 for a lift pass. We managed to convince the boys to forgo the instruction, given time constraints and the presence of four adults and two younger children whose role that day was limited to watching the two of them ski - and, in the case of the adults,

carrying various cameras plus shopping bags full of additional gloves, hats, scarves, etc. We "pedestrians" (as Tremblant rather condescendingly calls non-skiers) got a discount on the gondolas: only \$22 a head.

We rode to the top, ate some very rugged and expensive burgers, and studied the trail map. The boys' plan was to take the "easiest" route down to the base, checking in every 20 minutes on their "mobile" phone. I began to get an uneasy feeling: was it possible that sending two neophyte skiers on the "easiest" route down Mont Tremblant was tantamount to sheer insanity? This feeling was intensified when we were outside watching our boy's wobbling knees as he practiced on the gentle slope near the door to the restaurant. I reminded him that "easiest" did not mean "easy" - after all, the "easiest" way down when one falls out of a helicopter is straight down, and it usually ends in excruciating pain. This observation didn't quite change our boy's mind, but taking another practice run, going out of control, and colliding with a fence just inches from the sheer drop clearly marked "Danger - Experts Only," did. He agreed to let Alex go alone - and it turned out that the "easiest" trail only went a third of the way down so he was down and back again in less than half an hour. Our boy took his skis off with obvious relief. I was very proud of him, even as my mind calculated the \$150-plus cost of not going skiing. Among many other things, winter is expensive.

Don't get me wrong: I believe that people who enjoy going "to the snow" can go...to the snow. It's a free country, even if that country is really only winter. I loudly and earnestly sing the praises of our great natural heritage, and look forward to enjoying it. Just as soon as the snow melts and I can see it.

**Rod MacLeod**

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### LETTER

Hi,  
I noticed an un-attributed article in the September-October edition of the Quebec Heritage News about the Fairbairn House project in Wakefield, to turn it into a museum (I only received the QHN last week, as I am in Manitoba at the moment).

I wrote the architectural study of that house for the museum committee. I note that the picture which appears in your story is un-attributed, but it comes from the cover

page of my study. I took that picture. I would like an attribution to appear in your next edition, please.

Yours,

Dr. Shawn Graham (formerly of Bristol Village Heritage Team)

Director of Cultural Resource Management, Geo-Cognition, [www.geocognition.com](http://www.geocognition.com)

*Editor's note: We are always happy to credit photos when the source is known. Thank you Dr. Graham.*

**Front page photo: Riders tow toboggans in Sainte Agathe, from Joe Graham's new book. See Page 21.**



## QAHN names new executive director

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) has named Dwane Wilkin executive director, effective immediately. Valérie Bridger, whom he replaces, has accepted a position with Townshippers' Association, after serving QAHN since its inception more than five years ago. Over this time, Ms. Bridger's commitment to maintain the highest possible administrative standards was matched only by her many achievements in the field of heritage, notably as chief developer of QAHN's communications network and as a significant force behind such QAHN initiatives as the Heritage Trails brochure series and the ongoing Heritage Webmagazine project. She will be missed.

As shown in the picture Dwane is experienced in dealing with hard-shelled directors, whether they are big old snappers or not.

## HERITAGE ISSUES

*Serious danger because traditional agriculture is less viable?*

### Landscapes at risk in the Eastern Townships

The landscapes of the Eastern Townships feature outstanding views onto wide-open valleys and magnificent mountain ranges. They derive their beauty from the mix of panoramic views and rural scenery which are readily accessible to residents and visitors from the various roads crisscrossing the Townships. Many of our beautiful views have disappeared over the last ten years and many more are threatened due to brush taking over open areas and the plantation of evergreens.

In May 2004, the Municipality of the Township of Potton, Mansonville, informed the population that the Council had given a mandate to the Consultative Committee on Urbanism to promote, as a first step, the conservation of its landscapes by way of an awareness campaign to instil admiration, pride and a sense of ownership amongst the population regarding our beautiful landscapes and to encourage landowners to take concrete steps to preserve them.

The Potton Heritage Association, whose mission is to promote and protect our scenic, architectural, cultural, and archeological heritage, wishes to congratulate the Council for this initiative. Through this document on the subject, we wish to contribute to this awareness campaign, focusing on the consequences of evergreen plantations.

Our beautiful landscapes are a resource for the local residents as well as an important attraction for tourists and people seeking here a rural way of life. Lumbermen and farmers of bygone days cleared the land and then worked it for their livelihood. By doing so, they opened vast areas along the valleys which today display scenic views onto our farmsteads, checkered fields, mountains, lakes and streams.

Unfortunately, these beautiful landscapes are today seriously at risk of disappearing because traditional agriculture is less viable and other productive uses for the land have not yet emerged. At this time, this phenomenon prevails in the Eastern Townships: former fields and pastures have often turned to brush or are being planted with evergreens. The result is an impoverishment of the rural landscapes or, worse, it's "closure", i.e. the disappearance of panoramic or pastoral views altogether.

Evergreens, planted in dense, geometric blocs not only close off interesting views but also affect the visual quality of the landscape at large because they are out of harmony with the highly diversified and natural surroundings. Pine plantations also have a very negative effect on the ecosystem, affecting both the flora and fauna. The annual

fall of needles covers the ground in an ever-denser layer, causing the soil to turn acid and sterile. Over time, dense pine plantations only look green from the outside; the underbrush becomes a brown, dried out, and lifeless "nature morte"! Consequently, an ecological barrier is created since there is no more food for birds and other animals. In addition, biological diversity, along with our scenic heritage landscape is being destroyed.

Reforestation with evergreen species is being encouraged and subsidized by the Ministry of Natural Resources of Quebec and the forest industry. Many acres of good agricultural land, have been reforested in this fashion, and many more will suffer the same fate to the detriment of our landscape. Surely, there are many good reasons to reforest abandoned land, but it is not necessarily in the best interest of our community to do so without any consideration whatsoever for the local environment and its landscape. A beautiful and cared for landscape reflects the pride of the community for its environment and is an invitation and a great attraction for tourists and people seeking a rural way of life.

We deplore that the Ministry of Natural Resources encourages and subsidizes reforestation with evergreens without any consideration of their effects on the landscape and the local ecology. There is, one could presume, a choice to be made between spending public money for the benefit of a small number of landowners rather than for the community as a whole. A balance between the rights of landowner and the community at large can surely be found, provided the community is or can be motivated that its interest is at stake.

To quote the Conseil du paysage du Québec "It is essential that the protection and enhancement of the landscape be a common cause: institutions, businesses, professionals, and all citizens must, once fully informed, have an input into the future orientation this protection and enhancement should take. The landscape is a collective enterprise; it is of public interest and both an individual and collective responsibility. Every community is responsible for its territory and the value it gives to its landscape".

The Potton Heritage Association values the Townships landscape, viewing it as part of our heritage. We invite you to contact us with your comments and suggestions. The landscape is everybody's business.

*Hans Walser, President and Gérard Leduc PhD, Potton Heritage Association, Box 262, Mansonville QC JOE IXO.*

## HERITAGE ISSUES

### The soon-to-be-lost stagecoach road

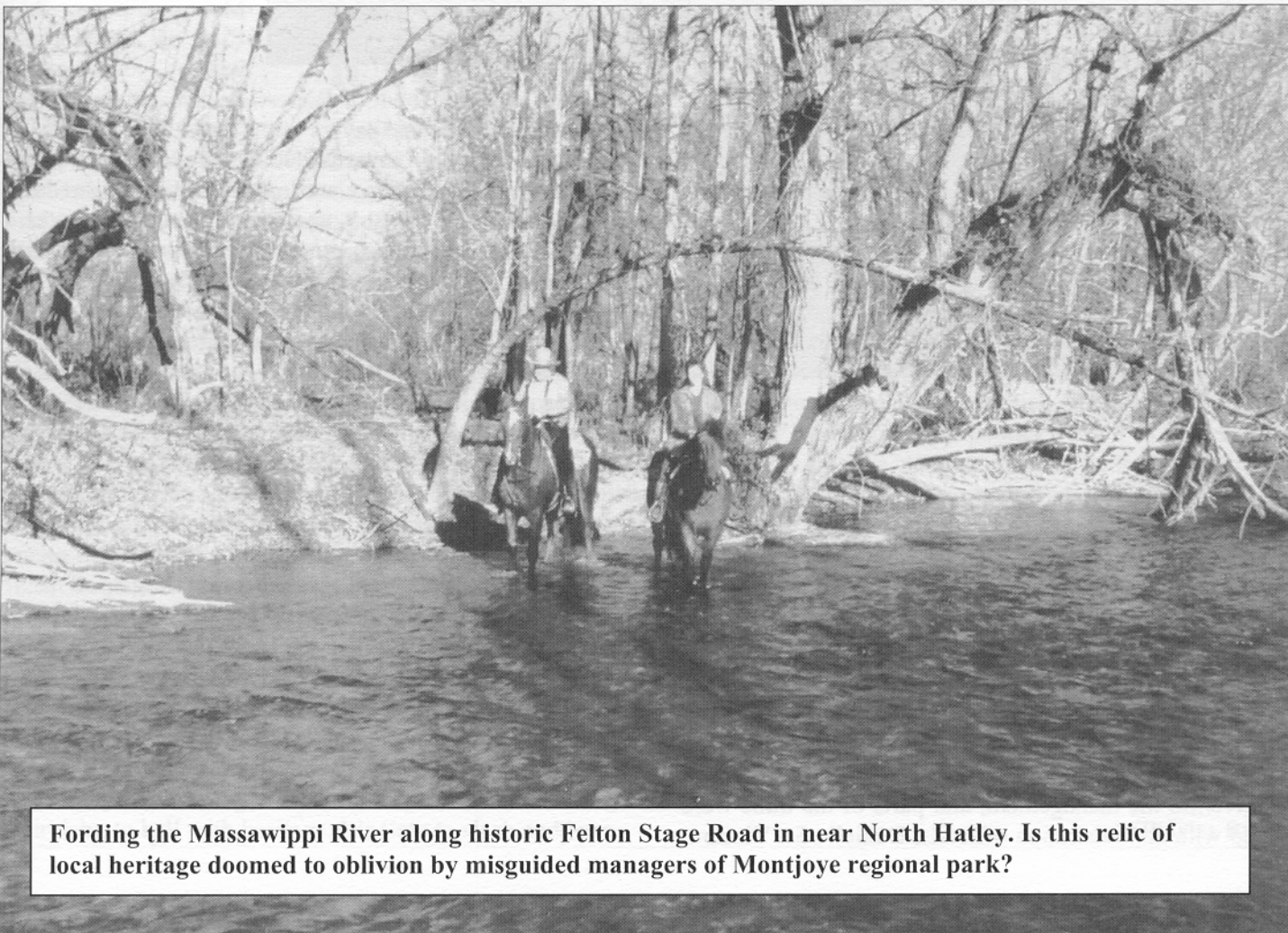
# Felton Road faces logging skidder inside regional 'park'

By Gladys Mackey Beattie

When Thomas Felton was given his huge land grant, which included the present city of Sherbrooke, one of the conditions which he was supposed to meet was the construction of a road which would allow settlers and goods into and out of the Eastern Townships. He built his home near the present southern end of Felton Street, and Dunant Road. Called "Belvedere Mansion", it was by all reports a beautiful and luxurious home with a view of Mount Orford. The road leading to his estate from Sherbrooke (Hyatts Mills) followed "Drummond Road", now Galt St. West, passing by what is now the University of Sherbrooke (Cilles farm) by Belvedere to the junction of Felton and Dunant.

Until the late 1970s present day Dunant Road was officially Felton Road and shows on land deeds as such. Going south from Belvedere Mansion the route roughly followed the present day Chemin Dunant past the rock quarries until approximately 5605 Dunant where it

reportedly left the road near a little school house and continued southward through the woods via the Moore (now Beattie) farms, over the brook, along a stone wall, past a huge boulder locally known as the "couch rock" and down through the swamp to the Doyle property, now Lapierre, to atop the hill at the Bean Farm, present day F. Labbé property. From here it dropped by switch backs down over the steep ridge of the Massawippi Escarpment near the Reedsville School and down again to the Massawippi River which it forded in front of the Bond (Little) farm. Here it followed the river south for perhaps a kilometre then swung sharply left to follow a sandy ridge before climbing steeply out of the river valley to arrive on the present Chemin Hill Road off of Sherbrooke Road in Hatley Township. From here it proceeded south eastwards to the North Road and East Hatley and off in the direction of Barnston, and a little further, New England. Oral history abounds around this stage route, but little has



Fording the Massawippi River along historic Felton Stage Road in near North Hatley. Is this relic of local heritage doomed to oblivion by misguided managers of Montjoye regional park?

## HERITAGE ISSUES

been written. One anecdote tells that the Stage had to stop on the Beattie Farm to hold a quick funeral under an apple tree and bury a baby that had died en route. Another tale recounts how when the stage was coming through at night, the farmers had to keep a sharp eye out for their horses because if there was a lame or sick horse on the stage coach teams, the coach driver would simply help himself to a farm horse, leaving the sick or injured and likely worthless animal behind for the hapless farmer.

The exact dates and schedules of the stage are difficult to find. There was an apparent reluctance on the part of Mr. Felton to build the road, and he did not start it until after completion of his mansion which took several years. We do know that with the building of the railways in the 1870s, the stage lines quickly became obsolete.

The different companies which operated the stage lines adjusted the actual trails to use the most practicable terrain to get to their



counsellor from Lennoxville, and also with the Mayor of Canton Hatley, Pierre Levac, who is also president of the Régie. All who saw it acclaimed it to be a historical treasure. Now almost eight years later, absolutely nothing has been done to preserve or protect this gem. But commercial woodcutters have been allowed into the park, threatening to destroy a large section of the road and remove huge old pine trees which line it in one area. The principal owner of Montjoye is now the City of Sherbrooke, with Hatley

Township and the Town of Waterville also holding some shares. Sherbrooke taxpayers contribute \$145,000.00 a year, Canton Hatley pays \$20,000, and Waterville pays \$10,000. All their energy and money are being directed toward an alpine ski hill – to the detriment of the other facets of the park, which extends on both sides of the Massawippi River. There is approximately 700 acres of land within the park.

As parks go, it is a gem containing many historically significant relics as well as a great diversity of habitats including a large section of the Massawippi River. The greenway, a bike path along an old railway line, passes directly through the park. Besides the stagecoach road, there are many other significant ruins and relics within and close to the boundaries of the park. Developing only the ski hill and cutting off the forest, while ignoring all other aspects of this property, goes against the spirit and principles for which the land was obtained from the federal government at much less than its market value.

It is critical that action be taken quickly. Heavy equipment is already on the site making roads and the tree cutting has progressed in close proximity to the road. Many semi-trailer loads of logs have already been removed from the



destinations. Looking at the route, and the size and weight of those cumbersome coaches, it is little wonder that many people complained that they had to walk as many miles as they rode. Male passengers were also expected to push when necessary!

When the Régie Intermunicipal de Montjoye was formed in 1997 to buy and administer the former Hillcrest alpine ski hill and its other property, a large section, perhaps 3 km of this old stage route, was within its boundaries. Information about its historical significance was given to the management, and parts of the trails were walked with administration officials, Danielle St. Vincent,

**Above: The Dynamo – remnants of North Hatley's first electric power dam; the Felton Road trail. Photos by Gladys Mackey Beattie. Opposite: the Montjoye web site mentions neither park nor heritage.**

property. Other historically important things may have already been destroyed. If the woodcutting continues as planned, it will be necessary for logging crews and their equipment to cross a small brook below a waterfall. Oral history says that the clay from near this waterfall was of exceptional quality. Here the Indians made small clay balls and left them to bake in the sun. These were reportedly used as ammunition to down small game. The whole park needs protection until appropriate studies can be done to determine its true value.

Since the principal owner is the City of Sherbrooke, it should be the main target of any reaction from the community. In January there will be a meeting of the Régie intermunicipale de Montjoye, the



Beattie (info from Peck Family) (d), Arthur Cheal, Donald Little, Gordon Humphrey.

governing body, but the wood cutting operations will have progressed to a critical point by then.

By Gladys Mackey Beattie, Dec. 10, 2005

References: Much of this material was gathered in 1998 or earlier from persons who were already elderly or ill. Unfortunately so much time has passed that many of the sources of information have passed away. A 'd' indicates those who have.

Clifford Cilles (d), Lawrence Cilles, (d), Mary Jardine Campbell, (d.), Reginal Connors (d.), Wendel McKnight, Elsie King Beattie, Clarence Davis, (d), Curtis

## EDITORIAL

# To make up their deficit it's time to slash and burn

It's been a long time since I've attacked a keyboard in anger but this Montjoye story really gets me going. It goes back to the 1980s when the old Hillcrest ski hill near North Hatley almost went broke. It had been a family-run operation, with local families as its users. It was close and inexpensive and I bought season passes for my kids. Anyway it was bought over by a gang of yuppies who spent piles of money replacing the old tows and lifts with state-of-the-art monstrosities. They added snow machines, renovated the rambling chalet, changed the name to Montjoye and ultimately more than doubled the price of a ticket. Then in the 1990s the yuppies turned out to be drug smugglers. Big-time. Along with their millions in cash, their warehouse-sized stash and their BMWs, the government seized their ski hill. This made a few headlines at the time, being the first use of a new Criminal Code provision allowing the fruits of organized crime to be taken over by the state. The federal government ran Montjoye for a few years while the case went through the courts. But then Ottawa got bored with the ski business and sold Montjoye to a few local municipalities which wanted to make it into a much-needed regional park. When it was purchased from Ottawa the founding municipalities vowed to preserve the human and natural heritage of the 700-acre park. In addition to the ski hill the park's hills and valleys straddle the Massawippi River, providing relatively undisturbed habitat for a wide variety of wild plants and animals. As Gladys Beattie points out in this issue of Quebec Heritage News, it is also home to some irreplaceable remains left by the first settlers – their only road, their first power supply and more.

When heritage is destroyed it is almost always because the owners are either short-sighted or evil, and more interested in converting their property to money than in conserving it for the future. Usually it's local government which wrings its hands and laments its inability to save whatever's going down the tubes. In this case the opposite is true. The property is operated by La régie intermunicipale du Centre récréotouristique Montjoye, a joint committee of the owning municipalities. But it is run as a business, not as a park.

In parks people relax, play, enjoy nature, study their past, ponder their future, picnic, procreate or whatever. In the recreation business, a few people pay a lot of money to do a little skiing. But the ski business depends on the weather. And the weather being what it is, they can't make enough money on the ski hill. To make up the deficit and pay down their debt, to hell with heritage. It's time to slash and burn.

— Charles Bury

# NATURAL HERITAGE

## Living Outside In

# What is this nature that is being consumed?

By Joseph Graham

In his book *Songlines*, Bruce Chatwin describes the difficulty that the aboriginal peoples of Australia had with airplanes. In their creation mythology, songs came first. The world was sung into existence and their whole oral culture was recorded in songs that were passed down through the generations. All things were explained and recorded in song, and families were identified through their song lines. If it was not in the songs, it didn't exist. That was where the airplanes caused a problem. They were definitely flying overhead, making noise and acting like they really existed, but they weren't in the songs. Thankfully for aviation, this forty-thousand-year-old culture solved the problem by singing the airplanes into existence.

Contemporary society, looking out through the airplane window, swings from the end of a long organic thread woven through civilizing influences and conventions that have allowed us to co-exist in a certain ruthless harmony. The long tendril of our past weaves through time and curves back upon itself, deceiving us into seeing our

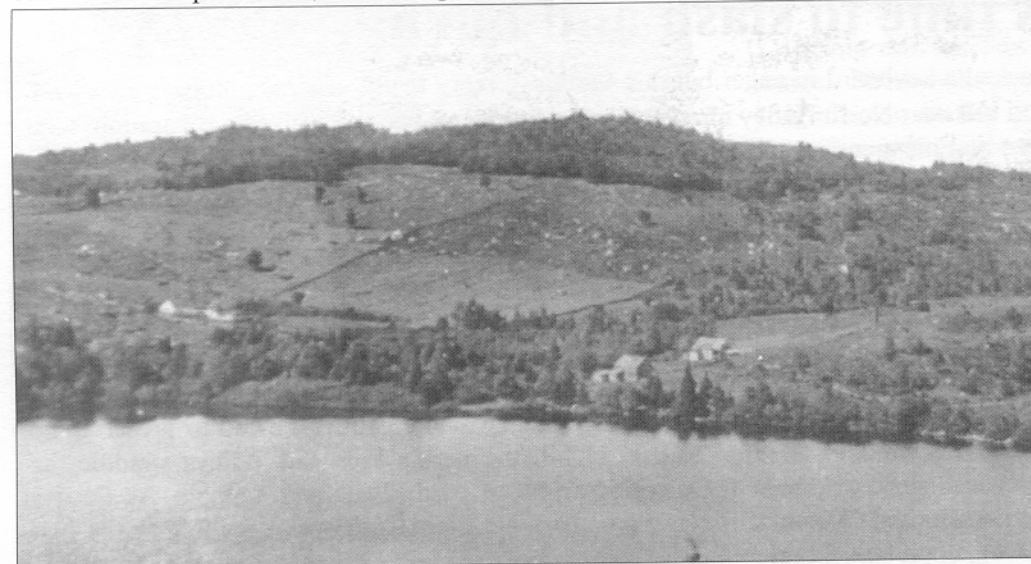
sunshine and animals and insects live among them in a harmonious environment that has existed from time immemorial. They want to get back in touch with something that they feel they have somehow had to forego. These city dwellers appear to be serving at the front of a war that is slowly being lost. They come to the country to breathe real air and to regain their courage to return to the front lines. Their country retreats must be environments finished in wood and stone with a discreet access to the necessary road systems and a view of untouched, untrammelled nature in the back and side yards. A living room view that looks out over a road at the vista of rolling hills, mountains and perhaps a lake is destroyed if the road can be seen. One lovely property offered for sale was repeatedly rejected because, although the road was invisible, the view of a lake was seen through the horizontal lines of the electrical power system. Perhaps, I wondered, if these parallel horizontal lines could be seen as a stave ready to receive the notes of a musical score, perhaps if a series of birds sat on them in just the right places, big round black birds with long tails that sang

during visits, then maybe these wires would have a welcome place in the view.

Shortly after the destruction of the World Trade Centre, a doctor came to see me. He wanted help to find a really isolated place to live where he and his family could be removed from the risks of a terrorist spreading smallpox. I asked him if he was planning to give up practicing medicine. No, he told me, he needed to work to be able to afford to buy the refuge he envisaged. But, I thought, wouldn't the doctor himself,

working in a hospital, be the carrier of the risk he wished to escape? The city people come to the country, but necessarily bring the city with them. It is us. We are all carriers. 'Country' people are just the ones who live on the periphery of the urban world. Farmland subsists on the spaces between, and for the benefit of, the cities.

We in the countryside have a perspective from the outside looking in, a slightly objective view of city life. From here, the city is very much alive. It appears as a gigantic organism that has digested rock and steel in its growth and sends its tentacles, highways, power lines, out into the



beginning as something other, something outside of our experience. What we see often leaves us feeling alienated and resentful, wanting to jump free from our human constructs to find our true selves in nature. We have lost our ability to see ourselves, our edifices, our man-made environments, as natural.

Living in the Laurentians, I am perceived to be 'living outside' of the city, in an unsullied woodland where everything began. City people come here to be free from human constructs, to be away from the steel and concrete, to experience the outdoors, where trees grow in the



countryside. Rather than living in a separate nature, we in the country live on one of those tentacles, a part of the monster. The city impinges upon the country threatening to remake this 'natural' environment in its own image, but is it really consuming a pristine, natural environment free from human intervention? What is this nature that is being consumed?

The March 2002 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* contained an article called 1491 by Thomas C. Mann. In it he summarized our changing view of the American continent before the arrival of Europeans, and, in a nutshell, he described how we are learning that the whole 'natural' environment was so influenced by human presence before Europeans arrived that it must be seen as a human artefact. This is believable when one thinks about European landscapes, but the Americas were supposed to have been pristine, untrammelled nature. Not so, Mann suggests. Even the Amazon rain forests are arguably built environments. The wild country that Europeans 'discovered' was in fact the residue of a great civilization that had been destroyed by the clash of contact.

Mann describes the explorations of Hernando De Soto in the early 1540s and what he saw. De Soto arrived in Florida with 200 horses, 600 soldiers and 300 pigs. He wandered through what is now nine states, from Florida to Texas, contaminating everything in his path, but the descriptions of what his men saw run contrary to our images of the American south before the arrival of Europeans. One survivor of his party described the area that is now Eastern Arkansas as follows: "very well peopled with large towns, two or three of which were to be seen from one town." His men went on to describe a cluster of small cities, each protected by earthen walls and sizable moats. No European returned to that area again until La Salle came through one hundred and forty years later. Where De Soto had seen about fifty "large towns", La Salle did not find a human settlement for 200 miles. Where De Soto found an established civilization, La Salle and his successors found roaming buffalo and occasional nomadic villages.

Similar reports of abandoned forests have come down to us regarding New England, and we know that Jacques Cartier met an Iroquoian people in the St-Lawrence Valley in the 1500s but seventy years later, Champlain found Algonquian peoples. The St. Lawrence Iroquoian peoples had vanished. In the south, anthropologists blame De Soto's pigs, brought along as a convenient meat supply, for the devastation. Elsewhere it was simply contact, culture shock. It happens almost every time cultures collide, but it does not mean that the new culture found a wild, natural environment. Everything they found was a

human construct or the aftermath of one.

Contemplating this, it is easy to see that the Laurentians are covered in second-growth forests that grew wild on old farms, abandoned as a new technological culture spread into the area. The evidence is apparent from your car window in the autumn when the leaves change colours along straight lines in different abandoned fields. These farms, according to Mann, had in their turn displaced earlier human-influenced structures. Nature has been a human construct for thousands of years. There is no outside, no natural refuge. It is all us.

I dozed off sitting in an easy chair in my living room the other afternoon. Soft music was playing on the stereo and the book on my lap was failing to hold my attention. My wife, sitting in an identical chair across the room, read quietly, and between us two large matching sofas stared emptily at each other across a cluttered coffee table. My slumber was profound and I sank into another world of unawareness. For a short while I was not. Eventually, some part of me returned and my eyes opened and gazed entranced from a sleeping brain. I took in the sofas, the table, the clutter, my silent wife and I saw a room alive



before me. The sofas were engaged in deep silence with each other as though the occasional human occupants were only one expression of their continuous exchange. The table fully participated and the other chair enjoyed my wife and the story that were currently animating it. The window behind one of the sofas formed no barrier with nature; it flowed equally in and out through the glass. Everything shared the soft music. Everything was animate. As we swing on the thread spun through our civilizing influences, alienated from the green world of our past, let us hope that we can learn from others and sing our nature into existence.

*This article first appeared in slightly different form in Liberté no. 256, volume 46, #4, November 2004 through the collaboration of Louise Lachapelle.*

**The first picture (left) was taken in 1911 and the second (above), the same view 85 years later. In the more recent autumn shot, the leaves at the top of the hill, from the trees that were already mature in 1911, are a different colour from the mountain below.**

## NATURAL HERITAGE

Though it has no outlet, Pinguluak Lake is renowned for clear water

# Quebec's newest park protects ancient Arctic crater

By Dwane Wilkin

A soft-water lake of heavenly descent will be the star attraction at a vast new park slated to open next year in the rolling tundra of Quebec's far north.

Pinguluak Lake was punched deep into the earth's crust a million and a half years ago by a meteorite the size of a small mountain and is considered to be one of the youngest and best-preserved craters on the planet.

With an average depth of 145 metres, the cone-shaped crater floor dips 240 metres below the water surface in some places.

"It's the second-most transparent lake in the world," Quebec parks official Raymonde Pomerleau said.

Though a conservation plan was first put forward five years ago by the provincial parks and wildlife ministry, negotiations between Quebec and the Kativik Regional Government over the new park's administration have taken longer than anticipated.

Construction of emergency shelters and traditional inukshut markers along future winter trails were carried out this past summer, but Pingualuit Provincial Park probably won't be ready for visitors until the summer of 2006.

Pingualuit is the Inuktitut term for skin blemishes caused by cold weather, and refers to the goose-pimpled landscape of lakes and hills that make up the Ungava Plateau.

The new park's boundaries take in 1.1 million square

kilometres of arctic terrain, including sweeping tracts of land along the panoramic Puvirnituk River Canyon, home to gyrfalcons, peregrine falcons and rough-legged hawks. Lemmings, caribou, fox and the occasional musk ox also make their home here, and botanists have found more than 120 different species of vegetation ranging from moss to lichens to miniature willows.

### TO PRESERVE THE CRATER ITSELF

The main conservation goal in establishing the park, however, is to protect the crater itself, an ecological and geophysical anomaly that has attracted the interest of scientists from around the world. The only fish living in the crater are an isolated population of Arctic char which feed on their own young.

And because the only way for the crater to discharge its contents is through evaporation, an exchange of water takes an estimated 330 years, making the lake extremely vulnerable to pollutants.

"It gives you an idea how fragile the lake is," Pomerleau said. "Any pollution would take a very long time to evacuate."

To visit the park, visitors first have to make their way to Kangiqsujaq, an Inuit village that lies on Wakeham Bay, 88 kilometres northeast of the crater. A new interpretive centre built here that houses displays on the park and its history.

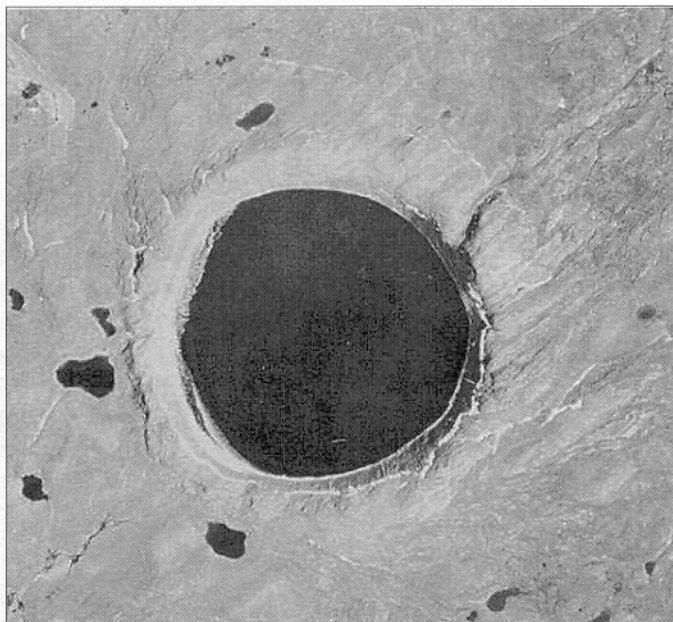
Kangiqsujaq is one of 14 remote villages in Nunavik, the Inuit name for their traditional homeland in arctic Quebec. The village is serviced by air from Montreal via Kuujuaq



on the Ungava Bay coast. A number of exotic-adventure seekers, mostly from England, have been trickling into the village each summer for years. Sylvester Stallone purportedly stayed at the local co-op hotel while scouting possible film locations a few years ago.

Stranded by retreating glaciers thousands of years ago and cut off from other waterways, the so-called Crystal Eye of Nunavik sits 2,000 feet above sea level and is a sort of geological rain barrel, fed entirely by snow and rain.

Because of its relatively pristine condition, the crater also promises to reveal much about life on the planet 1.4 million years ago, when the



in Quebec along the Koroc River and the Torngat Mountains.

120-metre wide meteorite blazed through the earth's atmosphere and exploded with atomic force.

**LAYERS**

Layers of mud that have built up over hundreds of millions of years on the lake bottom likely contain traces of pollen, which should prove valuable to scientists hoping to piece together a timeline of early plant evolution.

Plans are also underway to establish a second provincial park near the village of Kangiqsualujjuaq, to be called Kuururjuaq, featuring some of the most breathtaking scenery

Quebec's biggest lake was blasted into existence by a meteorite

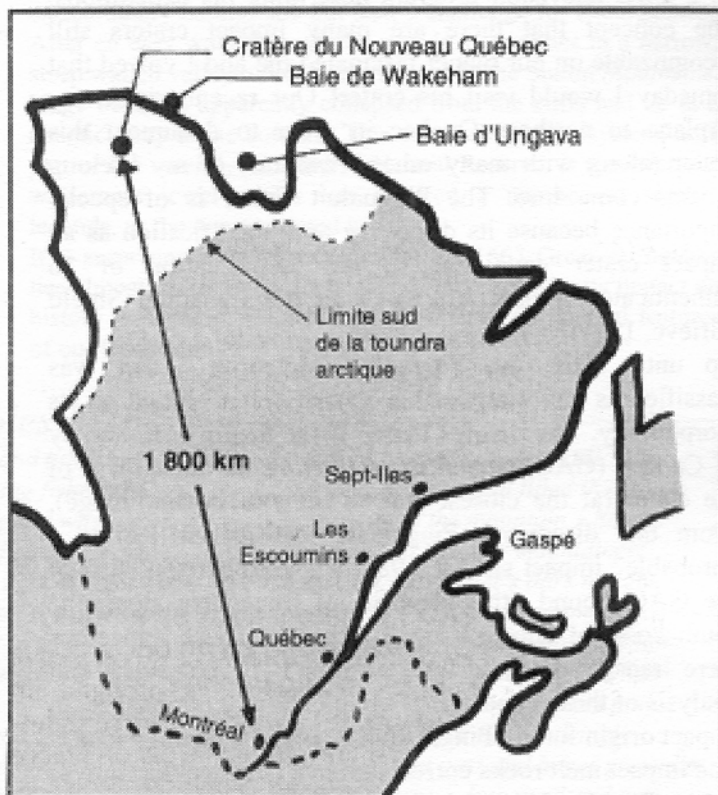
**Science was slow to find the Crystal Eye of Nunavik**

The following is adapted from *My Aerial Explorations of Terrestrial Meteorite Craters*, by: Charles O'Dale, as it appears on the web site of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, <http://ottawa.rasc.ca>

In Northern Quebec there is a pristine simple crater that in 1999 was renamed the Pingualuit Meteorite Crater. It is larger than the smallest crater on the moon that is visible by telescope from earth. The crater is 3.44 km in diameter with a depth of 400 metres. The lake which occupies the crater is 267 metres deep and it is Quebec's deepest lake. The crater rim is over 100 metres above the surface of the enclosed lake with a pitch of 40 to 45 degrees down to the water. Uplift from the original impact extends outward to a distance equal to almost twice the diameter of the crater.

In 1943 it was the crew of a USAF aircraft who first noticed and took pictures of a circular structure imbedded in the bedrock of the Ungava Peninsula. Because of the remoteness of the structure, it was only in the 1950s that geologic expeditions to the crater were initiated. The geologic data gleaned from the many expeditions to this structure, conclusively identified it as a meteorite crater.

The first expedition to the crater was initiated by a prospector, Frederick W. Chubb, who thought the circular structure was a kimberlite tube and thus a source of diamonds. Victor B. Meen, from the Royal Ontario Museum of Geology and Mineralogy in Toronto,



accompanied Chubb on the expedition. During the short preliminary investigation no meteorites (or diamonds) were found among the boulders on the rim or on the surrounding plain. Nevertheless, Dr. Meen felt quite

certain that the morphology of the formation indicated that it was caused by the impact of a huge meteorite and not from volcanic action. Dr. Meen estimated that since there were no Inuit legends about the structure, the impact of the meteorite must have occurred at least 3,000 years ago. He named it Chubb Crater after the sharp-eyed prospector.

Dr. Meen returned the following year in an expedition sponsored by the National Geographic Society. During that return trip he discovered a magnetic anomaly on the crater rim that he thought was due to the signature of the meteorite. This hypothesis has since been proven wrong. It is now known that the majority of the mass of a large meteorite that contacts the earth at cosmic velocity will vaporize upon impact. The resulting explosion will form a circular impact crater in the target bedrock.

I saw Dr. Meen on our old black and white TV in the 1950s when he appeared

on a CBC television program describing his expeditions. The concept that there are many impact craters still recognizable on our planet fascinated me and I vowed that someday I would visit his crater! Our recent trip in my airplane to northern Quebec in order to document this crater (along with many others) was one of my lifelong dreams come true. The Pingualuit Crater is of special importance because its discovery and identification as an impact crater gave rise to the identification of 26 authenticated impact structures on the Canadian Shield (Grieve, 1991).

Up until 1962, the Pingualuit Meteorite Crater was classified as "only a possible impact crater" based on its morphology. Then Ken Currie, of the Geological Survey of Canada (GAC), found impactites on the raised rim of the crater (at the closest part of the rim in this image). From this discovery, Pingualuit was reclassified as a "probable" impact site. In 1988, Blyth Robertson, also of the GAC, found other deposits of impactites along the south coast of adjacent Lac Laflamme. These impactites were transported there by glaciation. The discovery and analysis of these impact melt samples firmly established an impact origin for the Pingualuit Meteorite Crater.

The impact melt rocks correspond to a chemical mixture of some of the local target rocks. They contained mineral and lithic clasts, some of which showed diagnostic shock-produced Planar Deformation Features in quartz. They also contain enrichments in Ir, Ni, Co and Cr suggesting that the impacting body was chondritic in composition with siderophile element enrichment. The exposed bedrock of the Pingualuit Meteorite Crater's target rock consists of a

mélange of metamorphosed, Archean plutonic rocks cut by rare basic dykes.

The <sup>40</sup>Ar-<sup>39</sup>Ar dating method of the impactites determined the age of the impact to be 1.4 million years. This places the impact before the first major northern hemisphere continental glaciation in the middle Pleistocene.

This low angle image on Page 10 illustrates the depth of the Pingualuit Crater relative to the surrounding terrain. When we initially approached the Pingualuit Crater on my



aerial exploration, the structure first appeared as a small hill on the horizon. We were forced to fly down at 1500 feet above the ground to keep under the cloud layer. When we arrived at the vicinity of the crater, the height of the rim and the depth of the crater were exemplified when the lake that filled the crater suddenly became visible from behind the crater rim only when we were about a kilometre away! What a view!

Glacial erosion has removed

the ejecta and some rim material. It is estimated that the original ground plane was as much as 15 meters above the present level. Even at our altitude the apparent size of the crater was deceiving. To give an idea of the scale, if I stood on the crest of the rim and threw a baseball as hard as I could toward the lake (and I used to make it to home plate from centre field!), the ball would only make it two thirds of the way to the water!

The lake which occupies the Pingualuit Meteorite Crater is the most amazing colour of blue that I have ever seen. The clarity of the water, tested with a Secchi disc, has been documented to have a visibility of over 30 metres! The lake is not connected to the regional drainage system, it is supplied solely by precipitation and is very poor in nutrients. The Arctic Char in the lake are totally isolated from the local lakes and have responded to the consequent malnutrition by evolving oversized heads and thin bodies. The images on pages 10 and 11 show a "gully" eroded through the crater rim. A hypothesis of how the fish originally "got into" the crater's lake is possibly explained by this gully. During the times of glacial melt, the water level in the crater was higher than it is today and drained through this gully. Arctic Char may have swam upstream in the creek through this gully and into the crater from one of the local lakes.

I just could not get enough of this crater. My video and still cameras were constantly active. I was fortunate to have a fellow pilot share the flying chores as I was only looking out at the crater!

*Photos on pages 10-13 by Charles O'Dale and Heiko Wittenborn, and from <http://diabledesmers.qc.ca>.*

## The Great 1663 Earthquake

# Natural disaster changed the face of New France

By Gérard Leduc

Although earthquakes are rare in Quebec and usually of weak intensity, our history once witnessed a violent and exceptionally prolonged one. At the beginning of February 1663, in Quebec City, Father Jerome Lalemant, a Jesuit, left with the Relations des Jésuites a vivid written testimony of this extraordinary event. Another account came from the letters of Mother Marie de l'Incarnation, founder of the Les Ursulines Nuns.

The first vibrations of the earthquake were felt on Shrove Tuesday, February 5, 1663. The earth shook violently, sometimes accompanied by loud bangs like thunderclaps and the seismic upheavals lasted until the following fall. Lalemant described very realistically the intensity of the earth tremors as well as the devastation in the St Lawrence Valley, between Montreal, Trois-Rivières and Tadoussac. He described the flattening of the forests where, according to the Indians, the trees were swaying like drunken men, before collapsing. He talked about catastrophic landslides, giant faults opening up, the disappearance of mountains and the rise of others, the change of course of rivers and of other chaotic consequences. No casualties were reported.

Interestingly enough, several celestial phenomena occurred before and during the earth tremors: asteroids or comets streaking across the sky in a fiery path, a solar eclipse, as well as two incidences of "Sun dogs" which are atmospheric events occurring when the sun shows up accompanied with two other luminous disks; this results from the optical refraction of sunlight in an icy fog. For the missionary, this natural event had a supernatural significance as well as the other upheavals then taking place, which were interpreted as God's voice.

Father Lalemant described with great detail, filled with emotion, the events he was seeing. He also depicted the dreadful fright experienced by people who were convinced this was the end of the World. Accordingly, they rushed to Confession and to Communion, to the great satisfaction of the missionaries. Even

the Indians, labelled Savages and Barbarians by the priests, reached for spiritual support and took refuge in the missions.

This earthquake did not limit itself to the St Lawrence River Valley but covered all of southern Quebec and New England. According to Smith (1962), the whole Northeast was affected, including 1,750,000 km<sup>2</sup> (750,000 mi<sup>2</sup>). This earthquake most likely hit the Eastern Townships and, indeed, Mr Jacques Boisvert, a diver of long experience, raised the question regarding Lake Memphremagog after he saw the startling chaos of huge boulders at the bottom of the lake in the area across Owl's Head mountain. At an equal distance between Newport and Magog, lies a deep fault, 12 km long and, in places, over 1 km wide and plunging down over 100 metres.

We are led to believe that the great upheavals of the Earth crust took place thousands, if not millions of years ago. It is my opinion that the Lake Memphremagog's basin originated much more recently, as the bottom formation suggests it could have been shaped by the 1663 earthquake. Specialists in plate tectonic science and paleoecologists might be able to clarify the matter. Recent natural catastrophic events around the world are examples of the continual dangers we are threatened with.

In Pottou Township, there is a place called the Nine Holes that could have been formed by the 1663 earthquake. One has to see it to appreciate the upheavals that took place. It is not only an extraordinary natural site but also a challenge for excursionists. After an easy walk through the woods, one comes to a narrow, steep walled valley running east to west in the Sutton Mountains. Huge boulders apparently collapsed from the cliffs and lie in a chaotic array at the bottom. This awe inspiring ecosystem, now part of the recently established Natural Reserve, is a mysterious wilderness jewel which has inspired a number of sombre legends, as the one presented here.

It is surprising and unfortunate that the 1663 Great earthquake lies almost forgotten in the annals of time. Maybe its impact on history was minimal but it certainly shaped the natural features of our landscape.

### The Nine Holes Mystery

*Years back there was a mountaineer  
Who lived above the Sutton Town.  
Because his skill upon the slopes  
Was great, he gained a fair renown.  
He was by name Bill Aberlee,  
A tall and rugged outdoor man.  
He made his home beside Cliff Lake  
But did not live by normal plan.  
He climbed the rocks and tramped the  
hills  
To seek the Nine Holes Mystery,  
But found their secret hard to learn  
Although he knew each stone and tree.  
Now these Nine Holes within the earth  
Went farther down in rock and sod  
Than lighted match could burning fall,  
Or bamboo fishing pole could prod.  
The caves that lined the cliff below  
Were deep and dark, a perfect den*

*For big and brown, and fullgrown bears  
Who snarled at passing fishermen.  
What made the holes and why just nine  
And did they reach the caves below?  
Were there so many ugly bears?  
For years he'd heard the stories grow.  
Bill Aberlee one day in June  
The while these questions nagged his  
mind  
All caution threw upon the breeze  
And vowed some certain answers find.  
So he was up at early dawn.  
He took a fishing pole and rope,  
An axe, some candles, matches, too,  
And started off with highest hope.  
There was some fear when evening fell  
Because there was no sign of Bill.  
The night seemed long but daybreak  
came*

*At last but he was missing still.  
The folks by noon had filled the streets  
To gaze upon the mountain's height.  
"We must go find our mountaineer,"  
They said, "Before it's dark tonight."  
They looked with care around the caves  
And shouted down each separate hole.  
Their first alarm came deeper when  
They found his axe and broken pole.  
They searched for Bill Untiringly.  
And days went past and hopes grew dim.  
Then one by one despaired and quit  
With doubts over finding him.  
The caves and Nine Holes all remain  
The mountain's well kept mystery,  
But there's another question now -  
The tearful fate of Aberlee!*

By Iva Duboyce

# NATURAL HERITAGE

## Mammals, amphibians can't fly south

# Winter is down time for hibernators big and small

By Dwane Wilkin

**D**own, down they go, to lake bottoms and underground dens, to chambers deep in the dark cold soil and silent caves, to slumber.

As the planet's northern hemisphere tilts from the sun, nature's pulse grows faint in Quebec. Plants have scattered their seed and died or gone dormant. Migrating birds have flown south to warmer climes.

But animals who stay heed a different urge: to overcome a dearth of food by thrift or by toil.

Most mammals in eastern Canada head for cover beneath the frost line. By mid-winter about half of them have already turned down their thermostats and gone to bed.

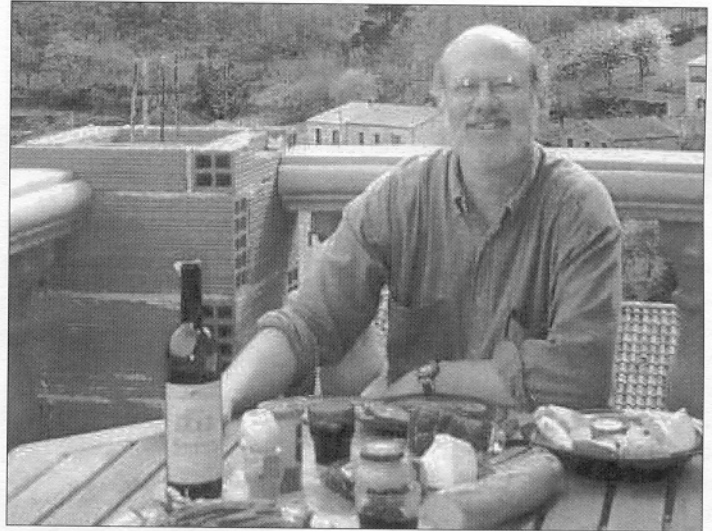
"Basically, there are two strategies," according to Donald Thomas, a biology professor at the Université de Sherbrooke. "One is to keep working and maintain a high body temperature trying to find food. The other is to go into hibernation < and that means bringing the body temperature down to low levels."

Groundhogs and some varieties of mice lie in their burrows. Bats hang still inside caves and old mine shafts.

You might still glimpse of a busy chipmunk laying up the last stores of butternuts and acorns; but most creatures can't afford to wait till the snow flies to settle in.

"It's very, very costly when it's cold for a small animal to maintain a high body temperature," said Thomas. "And costly means a lot of food just at the time when not much food is available."

Gorging on abundant food over the long productive days of summer enables warm-blooded hibernators to build up precious fat reserves under their skin, which they begin to mete out sparingly in the fall to sustain their bodies' vital



functions. Research shows some animals, such as chipmunks, put on as much as 30 per cent of their body weight in fat.

When hibernators turn in for winter, they also turn down their metabolic rate. This means their heartbeat and breathing drop sharply. A reduced metabolic rate, which scientists measure in terms of oxygen consumption, plunges animals into a near comatose state called torpor.

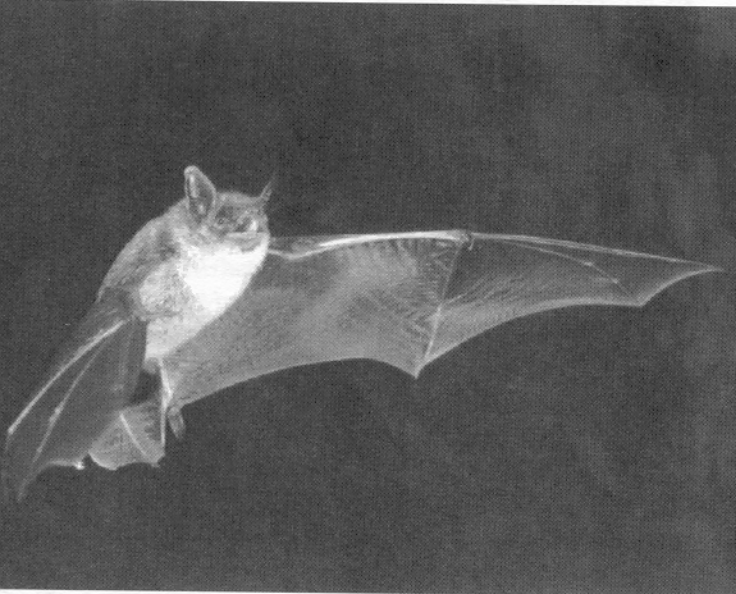
Hibernating bats, for instance, consume air rapidly in bouts of panting that last a few minutes, followed by breathless intervals of up to an hour and a half in length.

Some animals are capable of surviving extended periods without breathing at all. Turtles that hibernate underwater can live for three to four months without taking a breath. Bullfrogs, mink frogs and leopard frogs sink into ponds and streams to wait out winter under ice in a sort of liquid-cooled coma.

Cold-blooded hibernators such as frogs and toads, snakes and turtles have evolved their own fascinating survival strategies. The boreal toad for instance, one of the last hibernators to go down in fall, typically digs its way three metres into the earth, below the frost level.

"When the ground freezes, they sense it and dig even deeper," says Ken Storey, a hibernation expert at Carleton University in Ottawa. "You'll find them moving south in the midwinter, literally right toward the centre of the earth."

Other types of frogs in Quebec dig themselves into shallow mud and let their bodies freeze as hard as



**This page: Prof. Donald Thomas, little brown bat. Opposite: A typical groundhog burrow suitable for hibernation, wood frog in calling position.**

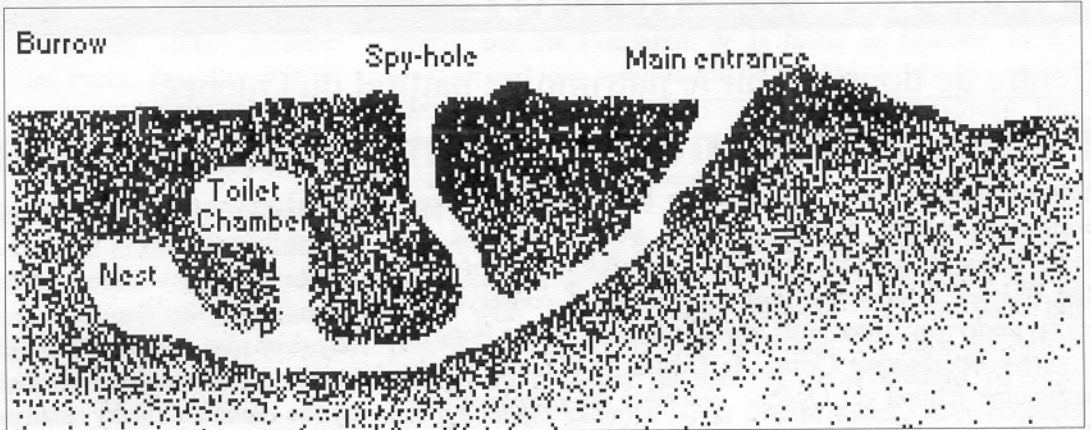
hockey pucks. For them, loitering can prove deadly. "If the ground freezes first, well, they're toast," Storey says.

Scientists who study metabolic suppression don't fully understand what mechanism triggers it or why animals who experience long periods of low body temperature aren't damaged by it. But there is a growing body of theory to explain how and why hibernation works the way it does.

As a general rule, animals above three or four kilograms don't hibernate at all – they stay active and warm all winter, foraging for scarce food and drawing down fat reserves to balance the budget. Similarly, the bigger the hibernator, the warmer its body temperature during torpor. A little brown bat, for instance, weighing 8 grams, will drop its body temperature from 37 degrees C to just slightly above air temperature, or 5 degrees C, when it moves into a cave or mine to hibernate. A two-kilogram groundhog, by comparison, will drop his temperature to 8 degrees C, roughly three degrees warmer than the air temperature in his burrow.

Hundred-kilogram black bears, by contrast, drop their temperature by a mere one or two degrees, which has led some scientists to argue that they shouldn't really be called hibernators at all.

One explanation for the difference? Small animals have large surface areas relative to their mass, and turning up the furnace wastes limited energy reserves < just at the time when food is scarce.



"The cost of living for a little guy is huge," says Thomas. "You try to heat your body at 37 degrees against 0 degrees – or minus 20 – when you've got this huge area that is just pumping heat out into the surroundings. A big animal doesn't have the same problem."

Bull frogs, mink frogs and leopard frogs all sink underwater to avoid freezing, living off stored nutrients and absorbing oxygen through their skin and the lining of their mouths.

But wood frogs, chorus frogs and tree frogs stay closer to the surface, letting sub-zero temperatures turn them into living ice cubes. Frozen, the animals show no movement, no breathing and no heartbeat, and yet revive fully within minutes of thawing each spring.

Just how they manage to emerge intact has been the focus of much of Storey's research.

Freeze-tolerant frogs, it turns out, stay alive by converting stored glycogen, a carbohydrate, into massive quantities of glucose. The sugar molecules act as a cryoprotectant, or antifreeze, in their vital organs and muscle tissue.

Storey says these frogs use glucose to hold water inside the cells of their body tissue.

"Ice stays outside their cells. So although they're frozen and they seem very solid to you, all of their cells and organs are shrunken down and filled with these huge amounts of sugar."

The way frogs break down glycogen is the same in humans, except that the amphibians produce huge amounts of sugar in a very short period of time and they do so at very low temperatures. Studies show that freeze-resistant frogs produce blood sugar levels 10 times above that which would be considered diabetic in humans, and they do so very quickly < within 12 to 14 hours after ice crystals start to form on the skin.

Storey, who has conducted extensive studies of hibernation techniques among amphibians and reptiles, speculates that dinosaurs must have taken weeks to gear down their metabolic rates.

"They'd have to sit there watching football and eating Cheetos for a long time to cool down."



# NATURAL HERITAGE

## Centre de données sur le patrimoine naturel du Québec

### Province extends tracking plans for species at risk

*Editor's note: Nothing is closer to the core of heritage preservation than knowledge and activity related to conservation of the plants and animals that fill our world. The Quebec government has a number of conservation efforts underway. Here in its own words the Quebec Natural Heritage Information Centre, le Centre de données sur le patrimoine naturel du Québec describes its purposes and projects.*

With its vast territory spanning approximately 1.7 million square kilometres, Québec is home to a wide range of ecosystems and a relatively large number of species. Optimizing the conservation efforts designed to preserve this biodiversity requires defining goals and priorities based on objective considerations.

Through its work, Centre de données sur le patrimoine naturel du Québec (CDPNQ) is instrumental in addressing this concern. The CDPNQ is not an independent entity but is integrated into the administrative structures of the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, which is responsible for the management of plant species and natural communities, and the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, which is responsible for the management of animal species.

The CDPNQ's mission consists of gathering, storing, analyzing and distributing data on elements of biodiversity, especially those elements and element occurrences with the greatest conservation value. Currently, the data management system contains more than 10,500 occurrences of various elements related mainly to threatened or vulnerable species, namely 375 vascular plants and 79 vertebrate animals. In the near future, certain groups of invertebrates (molluscs and insects), natural communities and animal assemblages will be added to the elements of biodiversity already being tracked.

CDPNQ data is used to define conservation priorities. It is also useful for work involving recovery plan drafting, environmental impact studies, application of protective measures, research projects, zoning project analyses, regulatory review and even forestry planning.

#### Zoology projects under way

##### Amphibians

##### Mountain dusky salamander

Description: In the context of the stream salamanders recovery plan, a master's project currently under way at the Université de Montréal involves describing the habitats used by the mountain dusky salamander in order to better protect this amphibian. The results should be available in 2005.

##### Western chorus frog

Description: In the context of the western chorus frog recovery plan, habitat conservation plans are currently being drawn up for this species in the Montérégie and Outaouais

regions. There is a great deal at stake, especially in the Montérégie region where the species is in decline as a result of urban development and increasingly intensive farming practices.

##### Various anuran species (tailless frogs and toads)

##### Anuran population tracking

Description: This project has been under way since 1993. Tracking carried out in conjunction with the

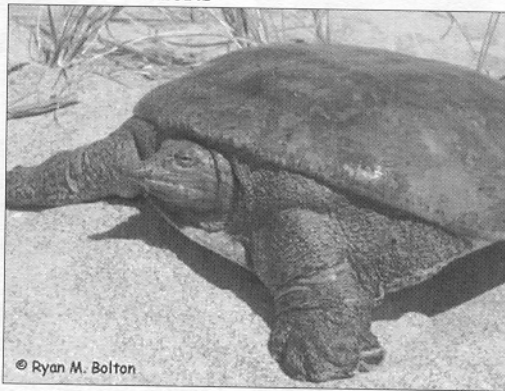
St. Lawrence Valley Natural History Society (SHNVSL) and volunteers has enabled the target species to be identified and relative population numbers to be assessed along predetermined roadways. The data gathered since 1993 have been analyzed in the context of a master's project (statistics) carried out in conjunction with Université Laval. The recommendations of this project will serve to improve the anuran tracking program.

##### Turtles

##### Eastern spiny softshell

Description: A far-reaching project to track eastern spiny softshells hibernating at the Alburg bridge on Lake Champlain was initiated in 2004 by the Eastern spiny softshell recovery team. Thirteen turtles were tagged and tracked in order to document their behaviour during bridge reconstruction work. The project is being carried out in conjunction with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Dept.

An egg-laying site designed to offer females of this species an undisturbed place to lay their eggs has been developed along the aux Brochets River (Pike River - ed.). This



**Photos: Above, Eastern spiny soft-shell turtle; opposite, Peregrine falcon anatum sub-species.**



project has been carried out in conjunction with Ducks Unlimited and Québec's Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs. Tracking will be conducted in upcoming years to determine the degree to which the turtles use the site.

#### **Wood turtle**

**Description:** A Université de Sherbrooke student is about to complete a master's project carried out in the Estrie region. This project involves documenting the thermal ecology and habitat selection of the wood turtle. Some thirty turtles have been tagged in order to be able to track their travels over two years (2003 and 2004). The results should be published within the next few months.

#### **Various turtle species**

**Description:** An experimental project designed to develop egg-laying sites for various turtle species has been under way for four years in the Outaouais region. Carried out by Université de Montréal in conjunction with several other partners, the project involves proposing practical techniques for developing egg-laying sites for several turtle species.

**Description:** A team formed in 2004 is producing a recovery plan for five species of Québec turtles: Blanding's turtle, the wood turtle, the musk turtle, the map turtle and the spotted turtle. The plan proposes a number of habitat- protection, information and public consciousness-raising initiatives.

#### **Mammals**

##### **Rock vole (yellow-nose vole)**

**Report on the status of the rock vole in Québec**

**Description:** Inventories are being carried out in several Québec regions to determine the species' range and its relative abundance. The information gathered will be used to write a report on the status of rock vole in Québec.

#### **Bats**

##### **Network of acoustic bat inventories in Québec**

**Description:** The network was set up in summer 2000 in conjunction with the Biodôme de Montréal and volunteers from the Fondation de la faune du Québec. The project is designed to obtain information on the distribution and status of bat populations in Québec. The project is currently being carried out on 16 listening routes located throughout the province. Using echolocation detectors connected to tape recorders, volunteers record bat calls. These calls are then analyzed by specialists from Envirotel 3000 Inc. and species are identified by sonagrams. In the medium and long term, it will be possible to determine population trends for cave dwellers. This project has been carried out in conjunction with Envirotel 3000 Inc., the Development and Mines

Branch of the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, and the Fondation de la faune du Québec. In the medium and long term, it will be possible to observe annual variations in bat populations in several Québec regions. This data will also be used to make recommendations for protecting species and their habitats.

#### **Bats**

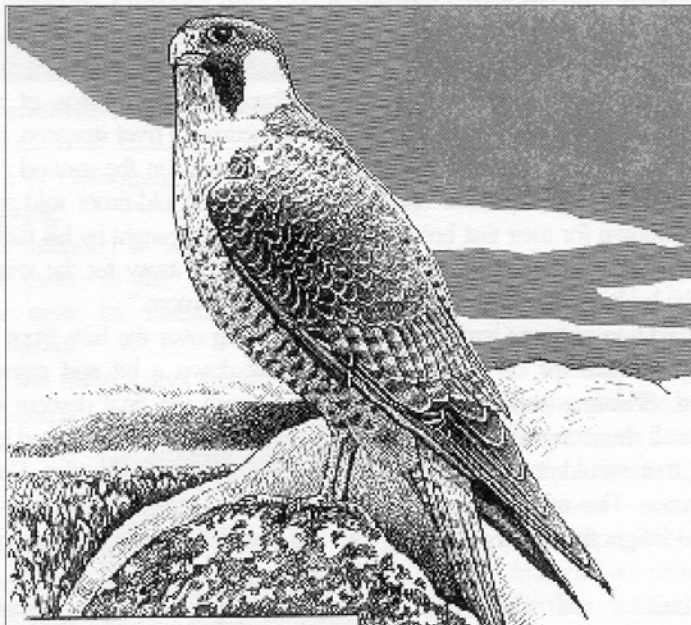
**Description:** Sixteen bat hibernacula (hibernating locations) have been set up in Québec, mainly [in abandoned mines] fitted with special grates allowing bats to pass but preventing the public from accessing the mine for safety reasons and to disturb the bats as little as possible. To count the specimens hibernating in certain mines, laser counters have been installed near the grates. The data gathered will be used to develop a long-term population trend indicator.

#### **Bats**

**Description:** A project carried out in conjunction with the Université du Québec à Montréal and the Biodôme de Montréal in the context of a master's thesis involves documenting the feeding habitat of certain bat species detected using various devices. The three sectors being studied are Laval, Mauricie-Bois-Francs and Estrie. The findings will help learn more about bat habitat requirements in order to better protect the species.

#### **Birds**

##### **2005 peregrine falcon survey**



Annual tracking of the anatum sub-species in southern Québec is carried out by the Association québécoise des groupes d'ornithologues du Québec (AQGO) in conjunction with the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Faune Québec sector of the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune. In addition, a survey of the peregrine falcon population has been carried out every five years since 1970 all

across North America, including in Québec.

*For more on 12 threatened or vulnerable Québec animal species* [www.fapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/etu\\_rec/esp\\_mena\\_vuln/index.htm](http://www.fapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/etu_rec/esp_mena_vuln/index.htm), and [www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca/](http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca/)

*For more on 59 threatened or vulnerable Québec plant species* [www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/biodiversite/especes/index.htm](http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/biodiversite/especes/index.htm)

*For more on the Centre de données sur le patrimoine naturel:* [www.cdpmq.gouv.qc.ca/mission-en.htm](http://www.cdpmq.gouv.qc.ca/mission-en.htm). Pictures from [www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca](http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca) and Dr. Donald Thomas.

# NATURAL HERITAGE

## Road to Richmond is paved with history

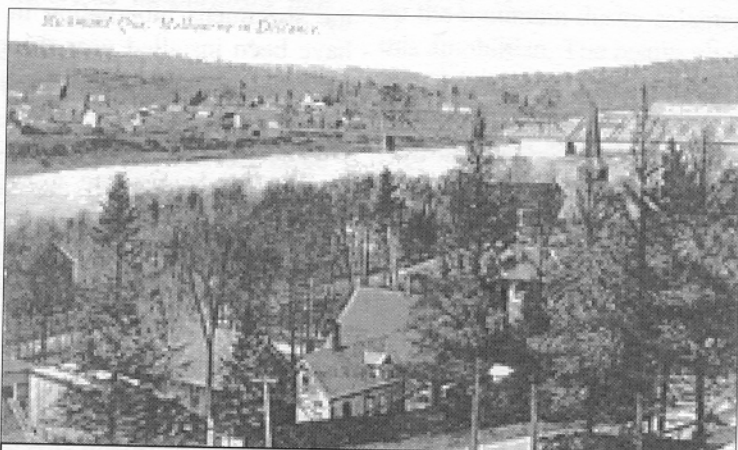
# Saint Francis Valley takes a ramble through the years

By Claudia Villemaire

The towns hug the river bank along the St. Francis. It almost doesn't matter what direction one takes to come to this once bustling railroad community – the view from the hills as the traveller approaches Richmond or Melbourne is spectacular.

The river, infamous for its stretches of hidden ledge, whirlpools and eddies, has tiny hidden beaches, islands where placid water flows silently and even a small cottage-country neighbourhood near Greenlay. But any visitor setting off for the local county fair will find history hidden in the bends, swift water and placid bays of this river that separates Richmond and Melbourne.

Near the towns, the remains of what must have been one of the longest covered bridges, (today only the stone walls on each bank are still visible) linked the growing towns. Elegant homes graced both banks along this stretch where the best highway



Richmond and Melbourne, c.1900, Farfan Collection

was the river itself in spite of the dangers. Legend tells of the demise of this bridge when an ice jam and a gale carried it away. Emergency transport took the form of a barge-type raft, frustratingly slow. The contraption was poled across the water, stabilized with an assembly of ropes that served as a guide as well.

Ancestors in this reporter's family, known for their fast horses and sadly lacking patience, often would whip up their horse to Greenlay, about seven miles upriver, cross the bridge to Windsor and, with a fast horse heading in the general direction of home, arrive back on the Richmond side before one barge was tied up.

Then the railway came to town. Shunting yards were begun, expanded and soon filled, as the small shunt engines hurried up and down the tracks building trains that would travel to Montreal, Quebec, Boston and points between. The rails converged on a station that handled passengers and freight from every corner of the globe.

Here also was a roundhouse, a building with small stalls where engines could be repaired. "We had six passenger trains a day coming in. You could order fresh sea food for dinner in the morning and serve it that evening," recalled Cliff Gunter, former owner of the Grand Central Hotel that overlooks the Richmond rail yard.

"Dining rooms were famous here. With so many passengers coming and going all day long, some with a couple of hours to wait, hotel kitchens were wise to earn a fine reputation," he added as we talked about the good old days.

Travellers approaching from the north are following a well-trodden trail that once was a stagecoach road, known as the Craig Road. Of course, roadways have changed over the years, hills trimmed, gullies filled and curves straightened. But just outside of town, the old road bed is still visible and anyone passing can take a moment to imagine the sound of a lumbering *diligence*, horses' hooves muddled on the sandy track, harness jangling and the leather straps that supported the swaying coach squeaking as only leather can squeak.

### INDIAN VILLAGE

Further downriver, the site of an Indian village is still clearly visible. The falls, near Ulverton, about a two or three foot drop, still roar gently, white water rushing away from their base. Another legend tells of the first settlers, arriving by raft and flat-bottomed boat at the native village, who would shoot the rapids on this wily river,

though no one on board was able to swim.

There are still photos of men holding the catch of that day, sometimes a river sturgeon, one hand in the gills, with the monster's tail curling on the ground. "Those fish would be five to six feet long," one old-timer told this reporter, recalling one particularly large beast caught by his father. "That fish would be cleaned, sliced and salted away for the winter. And, my, it was good. Don't see those anymore."

Coming over the hills from Waterloo, travellers would do well to slow down a bit and enjoy the panorama that unfolds as they approach the final descent into Melbourne. Between Racine and Melbourne, the valleys and layers of hills and mountains seem to go on for a hundred miles. Sometimes one can catch a glimpse of Mount Orford in the rear-view mirror. Or straight ahead, the Danville Pinnacle rears up on the distant horizon.

Copper mines and rustlers' hideaways abounded there and some older residents can recount the old tales and legends of this mysterious, peaked mountain jutting up higher than the hills around it.

Deer abound here, so a watchful eye is recommended. They can startle an inattentive traveller if they suddenly appear on a road or trail.

Everywhere the hills and small mountains are not far away. A trip like this always holds the promise of a voyage into the history of the area being visited. All it takes is a bit of time, a few facts and a good imagination.

# HERITAGE HAPPENINGS

[www.QuebecHeritageWeb.com](http://www.QuebecHeritageWeb.com)

## West Quebec historical societies contribute to project

**D**evelopment of content for the upcoming Outaouais Heritage WebMagazine ([www.QuebecHeritageWeb.com](http://www.QuebecHeritageWeb.com)) is proceeding on schedule. Editor Matthew Farfan has had some excellent collaboration from area historical societies, in particular the Gatineau Valley Historical Society (he says thanks especially to Carol, Adrienne, and Michael for all their help) and the Aylmer Heritage Association (especially Enid Page). Both groups are lending textual material and archival photographs for inclusion on the magazine.

Matthew has also met other groups in the region, and visited numerous historic sites, museums, and attractions. He is currently writing feature articles on some of these sites. He welcomes input from heritage enthusiasts in the area, and may be reached by email at [mf@qahn.org](mailto:mf@qahn.org) or by phone at (819) 876-5047. The launch of Outaouais Heritage WebMagazine is scheduled for this spring.

Outaouais Heritage WebMagazine is intended to serve as a window on West Quebec's past, a guide to the region's heritage treasures and a knowledge bank for researchers, according to website editor Matthew Farfan.

"There's so much wonderful material out there," says Farfan. "We plan to cover it all : local and natural history, historic landmarks, museums, and all of the other heritage attractions that make the Outaouais so fascinating."

Modeled on Townships Heritage WebMagazine and Laurentian Heritage WebMagazine, the new West Quebec website is the latest addition to the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network's web portal, Quebec Heritage Web, found at [www.quebecheritageweb.com](http://www.quebecheritageweb.com). The new website promises to offer a blend of stories, archival photography and historic documents that will help trace the region's development from the days of the early fur



Lunchtime on a mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century timber drive down the Gatineau River at Chelsea

trade onward, including the major role played by English-speaking settlers and timbermen in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Funding for Outaouais Heritage WebMagazine, which will be launched in the spring of 2006, has been provided by a grant from the Department of Canadian Heritage.

### QUALITY AND VARIETY

Farfan said he has already met with a number of website contributors and other partners from West Quebec when visiting the Outaouais recently. "The project's success will depend on the quality and variety of material we produce."

Farfan added that Outaouais Heritage Webmagazine aims to bring together a range of voices in the field of heritage, including historical researchers, students, teachers and conservationists. Article submissions and suggestions from the public are always welcome.

"We're creating a magazine," Farfan says, "so new material will be added all the time."



**BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS**

**Plenty of history, heritage reading in current offerings**

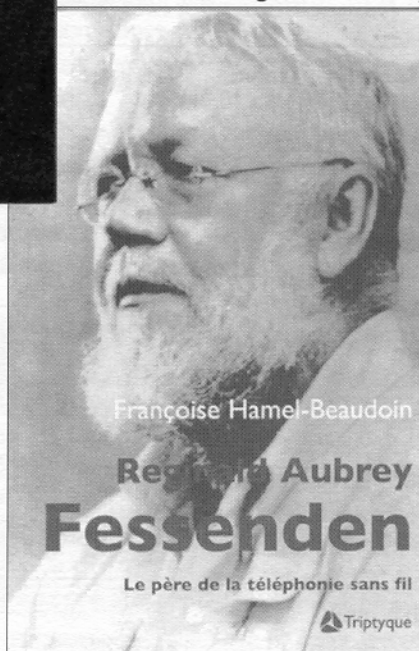
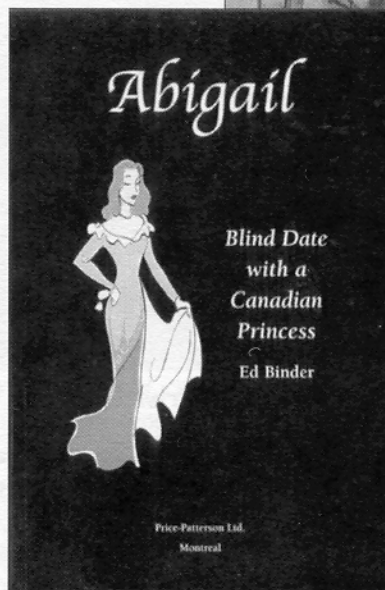
The anglo-Quebec literary scene is alive and well, at least judging by some of the recently published books received at the Quebec Heritage News. Memoirs, murder, biography, autobiography and oral history are included and there's something to read for almost everyone.

- *The Ghost of Griffintown, the True Story of the Murder of Mary Gallagher*, by Gazette reporter Alan Hustak is a slim but fascinating look back at an unsolved 1879 sex-trade murder. It tells a tale of prostitutes and Johns in one of Montreal's seamier districts, during the age of immigration from Ireland. I won't tell you how it turns out, but bless the author for including both a handy index for the serious reader and several helpful illustrations. Price-Patterson, \$10.95. A good quick read.

- *Jeanie Johnston Journal*, by Quebec City native Catherine McKenna, is subtitled *An Irish Famine Ship Revisits Canada and Grosse Ile in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. However it is as much about the author herself as it is about the 2003 reenactment. As well as recounting the highs and lows of the rugged voyage, McKenna takes a candid look inward, contemplating shipboard life down to her misplaced undies – "white laced Ralph Laurens". I won't tell you how that turns out either. Index and pictures. Price-Patterson, \$9.95. This one's for you if you're interested in personal experiences.

- *Abigail, Blind Date with a Canadian Princess*, is by Ed Binder, a columnist for the Montreal weekly newspaper the Suburban. It reminds me of Harvey (the Invisible Rabbit), the play, colouring book and 1950 movie starring James Stewart. The difference is that while Stewart speaks to Harvey in public, Abigail and the author communicate through Binder's diary. No index or pictures, and I hesitate to classify it as either fiction or non. Price-Patterson, \$14. This is a very funny book but slightly stoned and you have to be in the mood.

- *Once Upon a Time in the Gaspé, Volume 1*. This is a



collective work of oral history, mainly children interviewing grandparents. It was prepared and published by the Committee for Anglophone Social Action, a community group based in the Chaleur Bay town of New Carlisle. It contains many delightful tales of life throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, told in the simple, colourful language of the Coast. language. Index and pictures. Price-Patterson, price not marked on the book nor listed on the publisher's web site (must be around \$15). This book is optimistically titled Volume 1. I look forward to more.

- *Reginald Aubrey Fessenden, le père de la téléphonie sans fils*, by Francoise Hamel-Beaudoin. This is a French-language book which I mention here because Fessenden is

such an illusive figure and the only English book on him currently in print is intended for schoolchildren. Born in the Eastern Townships and raised mainly in Ontario, Fessenden taught at Bishop's University but McGill

wouldn't hire him so he moved to the U.S.A. He was a genius inventor who worked for Edison and Westinghouse, and challenged Marconi. His hundred of patents cover many areas but his most important invention was discovering how to send voices, music and other identifiable sounds by radio wave. Marconi sent beeps of Morse code through the air but never any other sound. As the title suggests, Fessenden is indeed the father of all wireless communication except shouting. Pictures

but no index. Les Editions Triptyque, \$21. Anyone interested in history, radio or genius should have this book.

*Reviews by Charles Bury*

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS **BOOKS**

**Naming the Laurentians By Joseph Graham  
Published by Les Editions Main Street, Inc.**

**N**aming the Laurentians is an anthology of stories about Laurentian places and how they got their names. It covers centuries and involves peoples and nations from far and wide. Choose a name, read about it, and you will be spun into a web of stories that connect us all.

Names from the earliest Algonquin settlements share geography with others that reflect the growth of democracy, the rivalry of the Institut Canadien and the Catholic Church, the role of the British Empire and rising influence of the United States.

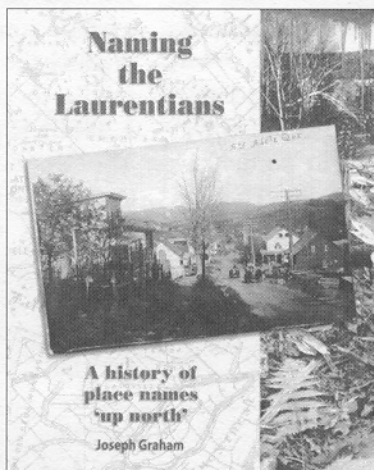
Each section is introduced with a map and the book is complemented with over 80 illustrations taken mostly from early postcards. There is a

detailed bibliography and an index that locates names, places and ideas.

To order, send a cheque for \$33.70 (\$24.95 plus taxes, postage and handling in Canada - please inquire for foreign orders) made payable to Naming the Laurentians, 1494 6th Range Road, Ste Lucie des Laurentides, QC J0T 2J0. The ISBN number is 0-9739586-0-X.

If you are a retailer, or wish to order from any other country, please contact [distribution@ballyhoo.ca](mailto:distribution@ballyhoo.ca). If you

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**Naming the Laurentians**

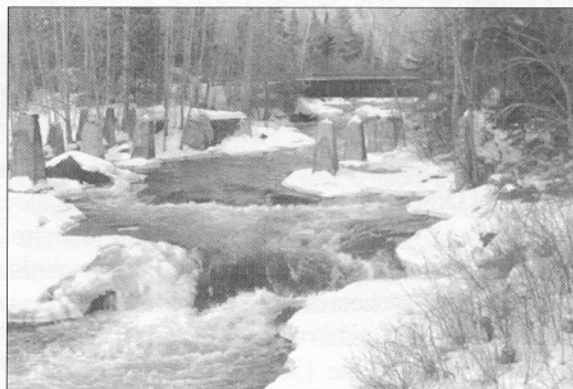


**About the Author**

Joseph Graham has lived and worked in the Laurentians for most of his 56 years. His writings have appeared in many publications and he is a regular contributor to the Quebec Heritage News. He has owned and operated a real estate brokerage for the past few decades together with his wife, Sheila Eskenazi, and he began researching history to share it with their clients. His stories have appeared in the company newsletter since 1994 and in the newspaper Main Street over the past four years. His writing has also been recognized by the Canadian Author's Association. He is a co-founder and past president of the Ste. Agathe Heritage Committee and has been involved in other initiatives that involve Laurentian history. He and Sheila live in Ste. Lucie where they also raise chickens and keep a large vegetable garden.

**An excerpt: Page 38**

(...) Around the same time, Etienne Brûlé and Nicolas du Vignau accepted to be exchanged for an Algonquin chief's son named Savignon. The chief's son went to Paris, and upon his return characterized the French as strange people who would argue loudly but did not fight. With the help of these men, the French began to build up the human resources to explore further inland. When they reached Lake Huron, Champlain observed a small band that had exceptionally good beaver pelts and a variety of trade goods, and his curiosity was piqued. He began to inquire about them and soon learned they came from Manitoulin Island in the Georgian Bay. Instead of hunting, they had managed to obtain what they needed by trading among the different communities. They travelled as far as the northern Cree in the rivers that drained into the large northern waterway that is known to us as James Bay. They carried goods among the peoples of the Great Lakes and were respected for their integrity everywhere they went. As a result, their influence was out of proportion to their numbers. He learned that they were called the Adawe, or Ottawa, and that the word itself meant "those who trade."



## HERITAGE NOTES

### Sodec and Bélanger-Gardner Foundation invest in film

# Funding received for documentary on Ursuline nuns

Press Release: Sodec and the Bélanger-Gardner Foundation have announced that they would fund the development of a script for a film by Stéphane-R. Tremblay on the educational work of the Ursuline nuns of Stanstead.

Tremblay's documentary will trace the nuns' last months in Stanstead and will shed light on the way the community influenced different generations of children, in particular that of the filmmaker, i.e. those 35 to 40 years old. Thanks to the help of many people associated with the former Collège des Ursulines and of the sisters themselves, Tremblay was witness to the nuns' last days in this border community, a period that was emotional, but also serene.

Tremblay has numerous film credits under his belt. In the 1990s, he completed the series *Anima* and *Série noire*, televised respectively by Télé-Québec and *Historia*. *La Fondation pour l'alphabétisation* awarded him with their

televised publicity campaign. He has also produced several documentaries on literacy, including *Passage*, which focused on school drop-outs. In this film Tremblay will explore some of the consequences of the Quiet Revolution, notably the loss of organized religion as one of the leading guides for the values and rituals that define us as a society.

#### LARGER STUDY

The Ursuline convent operated from 1884 into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The documentary is part of a larger study which spotlights the history of Stanstead. In 2001, Tremblay received the support of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec. Tremblay is calling on the public for help: he is looking for objective stories from Ursuline students of all generations. He invites those who would like to share their stories to call him at (514) 279-9764, by email at [stephane@stephanetremblay.ca](mailto:stephane@stephanetremblay.ca), or write to him at 6979, rue Boyer, Montreal, Québec, H2S 2J9.

## Morin Heights: Recent Activities & New Publication

The Morin Heights Historical Association has recently published the seventh edition of *The Porcupine-Le Porcépic* # 7, (2005). Like the sixth edition (2004) this magazine is entirely bilingual. Also, number 7 features eight colour pages and several articles emphasizing the whole history of Morin Heights and surrounding area.

There are articles by local and locally connected writers on subjects such as the development of downhill skiing in the Laurentians, efforts to maintain heritage buildings, family stories that relate to the settlement and daily life in past generations as well as interesting overviews of important historical events in the district. There are many excellent photos and eight colour pages in this somewhat deluxe edition.

The *Porcupine-Le Porcépic* is available in Morin Heights at the Municipal Office, Vaillancourt's Store and Mickey's Store. In Mille Isles, it is available at the Municipal Office and the newly opened Maple Grove Store. Also, past editions, numbers 4, 5 and 6, are also on sale at all these locations except the Morin Heights Municipal Office that has only number seven. All these books are also available directly from the Morin Heights Historical Association through our website [www.morinheightshistory.org](http://www.morinheightshistory.org) or email to [mhha98@hotmail.com](mailto:mhha98@hotmail.com). The cost is \$15.00 per book. For postage, add \$3.00 within Canada and \$5.00 outside of Canada.

This year has been the 150th Anniversary of many Laurentian municipalities, including Morin Heights, Mille Isles, Saint-Sauveur, and Sainte-Adèle. The Morin Heights Historical Association has participated very enthusiastically in our local celebrations. In conjunction with the Municipality of Morin Heights and the 150th Anniversary Committee, our major project

was the installation of nine permanent historic plaques at various heritage sites in Morin Heights. There is a free self-guided tour for these sites offered by the Municipality and our Association.—  
Sandra Stock

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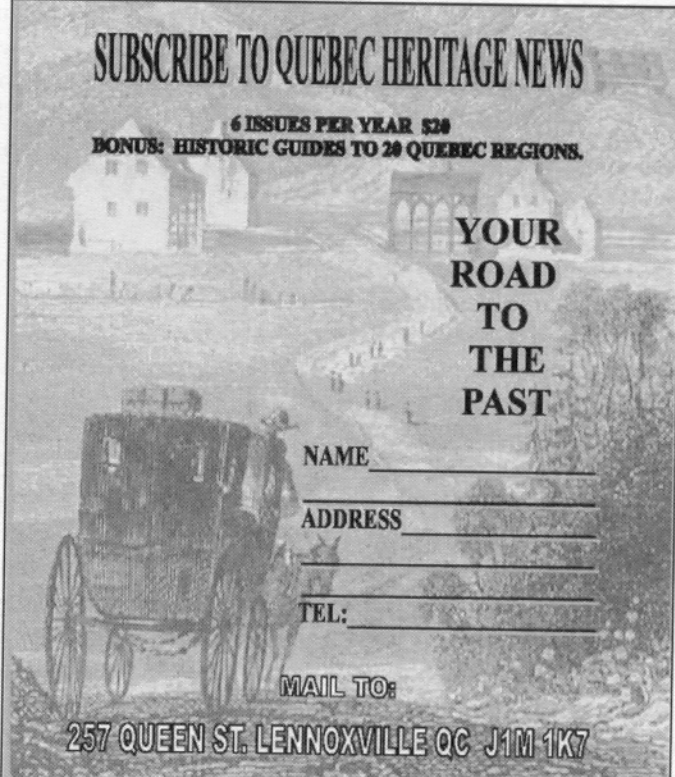
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## HERITAGE &amp; CULTURE

## ELAN picking up energy, members

## Anglo-Quebec arts community keeps eye on the future

By Dwane Wilkin

Singer-songwriter and composer Karen Young is no stranger to celebrity. In a professional career spanning more than three decades and a broad range of musical genres, the Hudson native has delighted audiences and critics from France to California ever since her folk hit, *Garden of Ursh*, hit the pop charts when she was just 19.

Collaborating with Quebec bassist Michel Donato in the 1980s, Young managed to establish herself as one Canada's premiere jazz vocalists, earning a Felix award along the way, as well as a coveted Juno nomination. She's even raised a daughter, Coral Egan, who's an award-winning musical talent in her own right.

But the flowers she received last month were just for being plucky.

Plucky because, as anyone gathered at the Sala Rossa on St-Laurent Boulevard will tell you, making a living as an English-speaking artist in the heart of French Canada is every bit as challenging as it is rewarding. Not only is the pay skimpy, toiling alone for months on end is an occupational hazard that can dry up inspiration like a summer drought in a bed of carnations. "As artists," Young said, "we're not that good at helping ourselves, because we tend to be more into working on our art."

Which explains why more than 200 painters, writers, dancers, actors, musicians and craftspeople from all over Quebec and all regions of the professional spectrum jammed the Montreal hall during the Nov. 21 founding meeting of Quebec's English Language Arts Network (ELAN).

The new multidisciplinary arts network, which has received funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage, seeks to improve the lives of English-speaking artists in Quebec by providing them with new opportunities for exchanging resources and promoting their work within Quebec's French-speaking milieu. It's hoped, among other things, that the new network will be able to help artists navigate the dreary administrative channels of government grant-writing.

While the impressive legacy of anglo arts in Quebec has at times been overlooked or even dismissed by critics as a mere adjunct to broader English-Canadian culture, veteran artists and arts advocates who've struggled to establish careers here alongside their French-speaking counterparts clearly take a great deal of pride in their ability to breach Quebec's historic linguistic divide.

"My whole life has been dedicated to music, but also to building bridges between anglophones and francophones and reaching out to ethnic communities," said Young, who has spent the better part of the last 25 years collaborating and performing with Québécois musicians. Proximity to French artists is the main reason so many anglos choose to work in Quebec, and the inspiration drawn from this relationship contributes to the fabric of what longtime arts lobbyist, theatre director and ELAN vice-president Jane Needles calls Quebec's "cultural tapestry."

"The francophones tend to be much more adventurous than the English," says Needles, who also teaches arts administration at Bishop's University in Lennoxville. "They're much more willing to take risks, especially within the performing arts." Thanks to increasing interest in cross-cultural collaborations, Needles says Quebec audiences have the best of both worlds. "For instance, the Centaur is doing plays that were originally written in French, translated into English, and played for the first time at Centaur. And French companies are taking English plays, translating them into French and doing them within the French milieu."

Given its 350-year-old history as a hub of trade and a centre of learning, it's no surprise that Montreal's rich cultural heritage continues to attract artists from across Canada and around the globe. What people sometimes forget is that this heritage is also indebted in part to generations of Quebec artists who have worked and lived in English — from any number of minor 19th-century painters who've left us invaluable knowledge about early British colonial life, to writers and poets such as Mordecai Richler, Ted Allan and Leonard Cohen, who forged their literary voices in the side streets and back alleys of



Lin Snelling and Karen Young: New wave rising

pre-Expo Montreal.

Needless to say, markets and venues for traditional English-language culture have changed dramatically since the days of Duddy Kravitz. Nearly all Quebec artists have to be able to work in French these days, or else, as Needles puts it, "you'll be down the 401 and living in the metropolis of Toronto with 5000 of your colleagues who are also unemployed."

Dance artist and choreographer Lin Snelling, who was acclaimed to serve as ELAN's first president, is keenly aware of the link between art and history. A yearning to understand her own past led her a journey some years ago to Kindersely, Saskatchewan, where her maternal grandfather, a Dane from Copenhagen, had come to homestead and where her mother was born. The journey inspired her dance work, *Extinction*, which explores ways of bringing the past into the future.

"It's the kind of story that can enliven discussion about the present," says Snelling, who one taught dance history and who readily acknowledges the debt art owes to historical knowledge. "I think history is something that we should acknowledge in the arts and I think most artists do that. I think most great art considers what has come before it, and I think there are many artists in Montreal who do that in all forms."

If the ELAN turnout is any indication, a new wave of anglo-Québécois innovators is already started to crest in the 21st century, on television an film sets, in community theatres, museums, jazz clubs and art galleries. What better proof that Quebec's English-speaking heritage has a future?

## HERITAGE ISSUES

# Sherbrooke will honour little-known hero with picture

The City of Sherbrooke plans to commemorate Quebec-born railway hero William Bennett Best by erecting a framed picture and certificate at a Lennoxville community centre early in 2006 -- 112 years after Best led a daring train rescue in northern Minnesota.

But the man crusading to gain official recognition for Best still hopes to muster a historical marker with greater staying power.

"A man of that calibre deserves more than a piece of paper," Jim Belknap remarked on learning the news of the pending memorial. "It's kind of cheap."

As reported in the July/August issue of Quebec Heritage News, Belknap has been waging a one-man campaign to preserve the memory of Best's deeds ever since he found a collection of the train engineer's personal papers while cleaning out an attic in Coaticook in the late 1990s.

A native of Lennoxville, Best was working for an American railroad in 1884 when he found himself guiding a passenger train through a raging forest fire. Against the protests of some of his colleagues, Best held his engine in the flame-swept town of Hinckley so that townspeople could squeeze aboard the train and escape to safety. Hundreds of lives were saved as a result.

Best later returned to Canada where he rose to prominence in Winnipeg as a trade-union leader, serving as General Chairman of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. He moved back to Quebec when he retired, living in Coaticook until his death in 1934. He is buried in the Lennoxville cemetery.

### TURNED DOWN

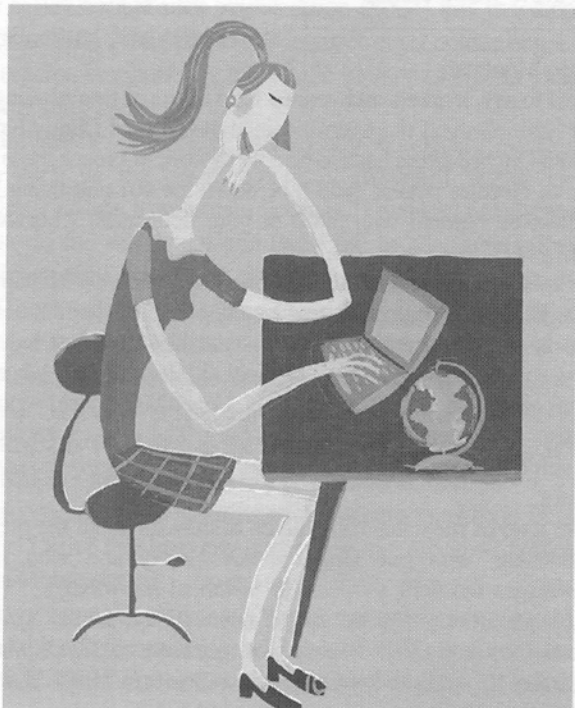
Five years ago, Canada's Historical Sites and Monuments Board turned down Belknap's request to commemorate Best, saying that Best's heroics had made no lasting contribution to Canadian history. Attempts to interest other heritage authorities and institutions proved equally futile.

A Townships-based granite engraving company estimates that it would cost a little over \$800 to embed Best's picture in stone, along with a brief text.

After the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) took up Belknap's cause in June 2005, the City of Sherbrooke announced that Best's name would be given to the city's Toponymy Committee for use in naming new streets.

A framed picture and a bilingual account of Best's actions are to be hung on a special wall at the Amadée Beaudoin Community Centre in Lennoxville on February 23, 2006 during the borough's annual achievement awards ceremony.

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