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Foreword by Ken Stinson
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A RITE OF SUMMER

The camping days of a literary critic

BY WILLIAM FRENCH

ILLUSTRATION BY TINA HOLDROFT

One of the most compelling rituals of spring in my latitude involves putting up our tent trailer for the first time after the long winter. This annual ritual is staged in my suburban driveway, and it signals the official end of winter with far more certitude than the passage of the vernal equinox or the northward flight of geese.

It’s a routine job, one I’ve performed hundreds of times during our travels, but I don’t hurry it this time, because I want to savor the moment. I unhook the clamps that hold the top down, pull out the sliding drawers at either end to raise the roof, fold down the step and unzip the door flap. I poke my head in, ready for the first whiff of an indefinable fragrance – a blend of textures canvas redolent of golden sunshine, pungent mosquito coil, camp stove fuel, pine woods and the faint suggestion of a salt beach at low tide. Invariably, this heady essence evokes a nostalgia as sharp and powerful as the remembered smile of a beautiful woman. With that first whiff I am once again beside a rushing glacial stream in the western mountains, on a rocks ledge overlooking the foaming sea in Cape Breton, in a forest at the edge of a Pacific tidal basin, on the hot Christmas sand of a Florida beach or prowling the rugged shore of Lake Superior — the children’s young again in a world full of possibilities and cheap gas.

The trailer will roll again this summer, but not as far as it used to. It will faithfully track wherever we choose to lead it, but now the imperatives have changed and our expectations are more modest. No more the vaunting cross-continent expeditions with full family complement of six, plus occasional dog. The four offspring, now adults, have their own goals to pursue, and their parents are more apt to spend their holidays on a distant February beach where the tropic sun briefly melts the wintry chill in the homes. But there’s usually a week or two left in summer for a pilgrimage under canvas to a provincial park a few hours’ drive from Toronto, and one or more of the children will visit, perhaps with spouse or fiancée, remembering around the campfire those other summers and other adventures when they were young.

They will particularly remember our first native tour, in the summer of 1969, when, seized with the courage of the innocent, we headed for the East Coast. I should admit here that I realize there are purists who make a distinction between trailering and roof camping. The backpackers indubitably totter together all the wheeled instruments of pleasure — vans, camper-trucks, hand-sailed trailers with televisions and toilets, the bloated aluminum Airstreams and ubiquitous Winnebagos, as well as the modest tent trailer. The purists are rightly scornful of these mobile pleasure palaces, and to go “camping” in them is a contradiction in terms. But the tent trailer is in a different category, and its conception ranks right up there with the invention of the paint roller and the roto-matic on trains, the unsung heroes who first got the idea deserves a statue in each of our national parks. After all, the tent on wheels combines the mobility of the car with all the discomfort of porous tents, which is no minor accomplishment.

Ours is a basic model, with no frills — no don’t need chemical bunks, sanitation dumps and similar luxuries. Five minutes after arriving at a campground we are ready for business, the first order of which is usually a cool beer from the cooler and to watch the setting sun and wonder if that other site we looked at down the road didn’t have a better view.

In the summer of 1969 I had been invited to a week-long literary conference in the Gaspé at the Canada Council’s summer retreat, the former salmon fishing hideaway of Lord Stanley, the governor general who gave the Stanley Cup to hockey. It seemed an ideal time to experiment with a tent trailer, combining the business of Stanley House with a vacation. We decided to rent a tent trailer, a prudent move for urbanites before making a big investment. I got the necessary hitch and wiring installed on our eight-cylinder station wagon (six kilometers a litre with a tailwind), bought the basic equipment, such as cooler and Coleman stove, chose a wardrobe from Honest Ed’s, picked up the trailer one Saturday morning in July and was given a five-minute briefing on how it worked.

When we headed for the open road, I felt that first exhilarating rush of the camper whose holiday can be totally unrestrained and unplanned. We drove up the Don Valley Parkways in Toronto, and when we reached Highway 401, I realized that if I turned left I could keep going until I reached the Pacific Ocean or Gulf of Mexico, with cheap campgrounds all the way. A right turn would take us to the Atlantic seaboard — Cape Cod, Cape Breton, Newfoundland. . .

I had taken the precaution of checking the location of a likely campsite somewhere between Montreal and Quebec City for our first night — there are guidebooks with that sort of information — and there was an ideal one near Drummondville called Les Voltigeurs. With all the last-minute details of loading for our first trip — six people on the road for four weeks — we left Toronto later than expected, and by the time we approached Les Voltigeurs the sun had just set. I
We had learned the first rule of camping:
always expect the unexpected.
That day we made it all the way to the south coast of the Cape. The view from the car was wonderful, but all we had for dinner was a can of pork and beans, the camper’s staple food. I got the new stove set up, but I had only just finished the instructions. I filled it with fuel and pumped the handle terribly, but it refused to light. I had no idea what to do but I ignored the remarks about the black thumb of chefs who couldn’t light a stove. Next morning, in daylight, I read the instructions and discovered a key sentence: "When pumping, keep thumb under oil in handle." Otherwise no air pressure is built up.

On the second night we arrived at another convivial weekend rendezvous for local residents, who regaled us with bawdy Gallic détachement. Bikers parked their big machines beside us and erected pop tents. There was a stage with costumed chanteuse, who sang the songs of France and Quebec. When the news got out, the rest of the group was in tow, the singer grudgingly dedicated the only song she knew to us — ‘Your Cheat in Heart’.

We were up at dawn and made our way into the woods to pick blackberries as we could, through the forest of empty beer bottles and sleeping revellers.

gard for our tender sensibilities. I remember the solemn feeling I had as we watched it being towed away on a uncertain fate in Spokane. Washington. This was a very careful operation. As a matter of fact, the option of running away on a train was considered. But the train station was too far away, and the option was dropped. Instead, we took a bus and arrived in the city. The trip was exhausting, but we managed to make it. We stayed in a small hotel and explored the city. We were both in awe of the architecture and the culture. It was a memorable trip, and we hope to return someday.

In Yellowstone park a magnificent grizzly bear came out right up to our tent and started-up at us with a look of unbridled fury. Our fears were justified when he began to paw the earth with his powerful paws. We were forced to retreat to our tent and await his departure. This was a terrifying experience, but we were grateful to be alive.

In Yosemite park I saw a magnificent grizzly bear. It was a rare and beautiful sight. The bear was enormous, with a thick coat of golden-brown fur. It was lumbering up the hillside, its huge paws pounding through the dirt. It was a magnificent sight, and I was overwhelmed by the beauty of nature.

In Grand Canyon National Park, I saw a magnificent grizzly bear. It was a magnificent sight, and I was overwhelmed by the beauty of nature. The bear was enormous, with a thick coat of golden-brown fur. It was lumbering up the hillside, its huge paws pounding through the dirt. It was a magnificent sight, and I was overwhelmed by the beauty of nature.

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We were in Venice, thus demonstrating their ability to thrive in any environment. The city life — the alleys are invariably succeeded by subterranean canals. We also visited several places to which we kept returning, special places, whose remembered pleasures and allurements keep a light weight of expectation through the long winters and sustain the vision of the coming summer.

And we found our happy place in Breton Highlands National Park — not at the main campsite but farther along the Cabot Trail, on a rocky ledge poised between mountains and sea at Comer Brook, where the views are less than the ocean and Gulf of St. Lawrence and the sounds of the sea calms the pebbly beach to a far more potent tranquillity than Valium. When a gale blows up, the trailer rocks in the wind and seems likely to be lifted up and carried out to sea, setting sail for the Magdalen Islands beyond the horizon. I found a deer there once, dead on the beach. It had fallen over the cliff, pursued by those who know what demons.

The best way to see the countryside is by car. The back roads in countryside are less traveled than the main roads. The back roads are also more scenic, with fewer traffic jams and more natural beauty.

After appreciating the attractions of these two parks, we continued our journey to the national park of Chet camp, where descendants of displaced Acadians who successfully fled from the English made their new homes and families. There are seafood stores in the town where fresh scallops, lobster, shrimp and fish are sold. We also saw the historic Lighthouse at Cap de la Madeleine and the famous Lighthouse at Cap des Rosiers, as well as the lighthouse of Cap des Rosiers. The town is known for its traditional music and dance, and we were able to see a traditional dance performance.

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You might call Bert Shea one of the original land explorers of Imperial Oil Limited. After World War II he and his colleagues found themselves standing knee deep in the grasses of farmers’ fields, squinting at the landscape, assessing the prospects for oil development. Later on, over lunch or dinner, perhaps in a farmer’s kitchen, the bidding would start. And still later, once Shea and others like him had convinced the company the land was worth buying, they would return to discover that the selling price had gone up as much as $5000 an acre (0.4 hectares) within days. “A good sales representative might take three to four weeks to negotiate a land deal,” says Shea. “But by the time the company felt comfortable buying, someone else had come in and bid up the price.”

This kind of active competition for land wouldn’t have been very surprising if Shea had been scouting in the Alberta foothills. But in 1956, when Shea was Imperial’s district manager for Montreal, he wasn’t out looking for another Ledue. He was tramping around the outskirts of Montreal in mushrooming communities such as St. Thérèse and Beaconsfield, as well as along the south shore of the St. Lawrence, looking for prime locations from which Imperial might sell gasoline in a still-to-be-created suburb.

Those were the days when the oil industry played a key role in the growing suburbanization of Canada. “Industry was expanding to the point where service stations were being erected at most key intersections,” he recalls, “and if Imperial was going to maintain its position as the major oil company, we had to develop the skill to anticipate where the next suburb would be.” It’s hard to imagine Imperial marketing managers as real estate people but that was and continues to be a key part of their job. “It was one of the most exciting challenges of the postwar era,” according to Shea, “Canada’s population was growing, and our job was to make sure the needed services were in place, specifically gasoline stations that would fuel the automobiles that supported the growth of suburbs and urban communities across the country. We were in the vanguard of urbanization.”

Now, as manager of external affairs for Esso Petroleum Canada, Bert Shea recalls fondly those “pioneering” days of 30 years ago. Back then the Esso Petroleum’s external affairs manager, Bert Shea (centre), with Don Pennor, manager of the trade practices inquiry for Imperial (left), and Roger Purdhe, vice-president and general manager of marketing for Esso Petroleum.
thing, inflation seemed to be becoming a permanent feature in the Canadian economy. And with it came the prime minister's thought that the price of everything was at a 36 new one. And in 1962, the growth in the number of cars was 116 percent. Since 1930, Canadian motorists have witnessed a remarkable increase in the way the oil industry saw progress and obtained their oil in an era when gasoline prices, according to one major survey, were so low that 15 percent of their budget was spent as a deciding factor in its purchase, to an era in which price is, for many, the only consideration. We've moved from an era of plentiful supply, through an era of acute world and spot local shortages to a point where supply capability again comfortably meets the demand. Yet this balance is now being threatened by international political upheavals. We have moved to a time, in 1949, when Imperial, Shell, Texaco, and Gulf accounted for 87 percent of all refining capacity in Canada to the point where they hold less than 58 percent. Major national and regional competitors, such as BP and Pacific Petroleum (which now form Petro-Canada), Turbo, Husky, Sunoco, Chevron, and Irving—had spread across the country offering competitive prices, products and services.

Clearly, about the only thing that hasn't changed since Bert Shea out "buying fields," is the intense competition that has surrounded the industry's marketing and retailing efforts. The consumer, more than anybody else, has been the main beneficiary of the many changes that have taken place over the past 30 years. It's the motorist who has historically dictated the direction in which the industry goes. As consumer awareness and buying power has increased, so has the regular feature and influence of changes in consumer attitudes and expectations. The very nature of the gasoline station began to change. Esso dealers started offering a variety of new services: car washes, soft drinks, clinics, take-out food restaurants and even liquor stores. By the 1970s, in the struggle to maintain their share of the increasing competitive market, many of the major oil companies began selling gasoline under a different name often from a non-frustrated outlet. If gasoline retailing 15 years ago had an aggressive, carnivorous quality to it, there were other more sobering aspects of the business. For one thing, it seemed to be becoming a permanent feature in the Canadian economy. And with it came the prime minister's thought that the price of everything was at a 36 new one. And in 1962, the growth in the number of cars was 116 percent. Since 1930, Canadian motorists have witnessed a remarkable increase in the way the oil industry saw progress and obtained their oil in an era when gasoline prices, according to one major survey, were so low that 15 percent of their budget was spent as a deciding factor in its purchase, to an era in which price is, for many, the only consideration. We've moved from an era of plentiful supply, through an era of acute world and spot local shortages to a point where supply capability again comfortably meets the demand. Yet this balance is now being threatened by international political upheavals. We have moved to a time, in 1949, when Imperial, Shell, Texaco, and Gulf accounted for 87 percent of all refining capacity in Canada to the point where they hold less than 58 percent. Major national and regional competitors, such as BP and Pacific Petroleum (which now form Petro-Canada), Turbo, Husky, Sunoco, Chevron, and Irving—had spread across the country offering competitive prices, products and services.

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refining operating. And the reason everyone gets involved in the war is that no one can afford to lose customers. In a business where market share is extremely important, the customer is always king, but companies can only afford to lose money for so long. To protect its own dealers, Imperial absorbed most of the losses incurred in last year’s price war, causing a decline of about $97 million in marketing revenues. As Penrose points out, not only is this type of pricing bad because of its effect on earnings, but it leaves the company open to charges of anticompetitive pricing practices even though it is only following market prices to try to maintain its share of the market.

But last year’s price war wasn’t the only thing that paired company executives. Imperial’s market position in Esso service-station gasoline dropped from number 1 to number 2, behind Shell. And Petro-Canada quickly rose to become a significant marketer. During the lean years of 1981 and 1982, when competitors were aggressively marketing despite the recession, Imperial’s marketing efforts were devoted to restraint and the rationalization of its service-station network. Although it made good economic sense at the time, the net result has been a loss in the Esso-brand market share and, worse, a lack of clear brand image and, most important, a competitive environment. “This caused a dramatic change in thinking last year on the part of many of us,” says Esso Petroleum’s vice-president Roger Purdie. Obviously there has to be a better way to sell gasoline than to lose money doing it, and he is convinced the marketing organization has found it.

The plan involves a new, four-year, $150-million investment in the company’s service-station network. The move to more and more self-serve stations will slow down somewhat, and there will be a rise in the number of what can only be called “super service stations.” To listen to Purdie and watch him draw figures and charts with his finger on the top of his desk, exuding enthusiasm, makes it easy to sense the new aggressive stance planned by the company. He says, “If you had asked me a year ago if Imperial would ever get out of the retailing business, I would have said no, but not with a hundred percent conviction. Today I’m saying no and we all mean business.” Notwithstanding the recent price wars, he envisions still another change in consumer preferences. Motorists will continue to become more value conscious. They’ll want the best retail locations, new technologies at the pumps, new and varied services with dealers and employees who care for customers standing behind the Esso sign. We’ve come through a rough time in the marketplace and the job out there won’t be easy.” Purdie says, “But on the other hand we’ve been here for more than a hundred years, and we’re not about to quit. We’re strong and efficient and we’ll continue to serve effectively a consumer who has benefited enormously from our company.”

This sense of dedication is echoed in the concluding statements of Imperial’s marketing submission to the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission: “Over the years, Imperial has served Canadian consumers honorably and effectively by meeting changing demands in the market through research and the development of better products, by providing a changing mix of efficient and innovative retail outlets and by consistently giving them good value for their money.”

That kind of spirit has always played a significant role in the way Imperial deals with its customers. Bert Shea, who, after his early years in Quebec, became the sales manager in Newfoundland, remembers one particular winter in St. John’s.

“We had a violent snow storm in 1969, so bad the city lost power for several days,” he recalls. “A state of emergency was declared and only emergency vehicles were allowed on the snow-blocked streets.”

At the time, Imperial was the major gasoline and home heating oil supplier in the province. Many residents faced the very real possibility of running out of heating oil, and the heating of hospitals was a deep concern. It was a situation that required a quick plan, which Shea helped put together.

First he gained the cooperation of the city in getting its snowplows to clear a path to the Esso bunker-fuel depot on the far side of St. John’s harbor. Then, with the snowplows leading the way, Esso people started to truck out bunker fuel for the hospitals. “Meanwhile,” recalls Shea, “a local firm agreed to supply us with sizable paint cans, which we loaded on stake trucks along with a bunch of toboggans. We began making public announcements on the local radio stations, VOCM and CJON, telling listeners that during the state of emergency those who required heating oil could go to their local Esso station — by foot — and pick up a can for a $1 or 50c.”

The strategy worked for people fit enough to brave the blizzard. But what about the elderly — old Mrs. Penny out on Portugal Cove Road and many others like her. Bert Shea describes what happened where the toboggans came in. “Again we went on the air. We told those who were housebound to ring us and we would drive out to their houses, and our drivers would go as far as they could by truck. Then they would trek the final distance on foot, ski or snowshoe with the oil loaded on the toboggans.”

Now he had asked Imperial to undertake such an effort, but for a company that had supplied gasoline and heating fuel to Newfoundlanders long before Confederation, it was part of the company’s long-standing commitment to the community. And it is precisely that dedication and competitive spirit that will ensure, in the future, that Imperial will do its best to see that no Mrs. Penny, no matter where she lives in Canada, will, says Shea, “run short of fuel.”

Nature’s ally

One group’s efforts to save precious lands

BY JACK BATTEN

In the most public-spirited of ways, Charles Sauisol is in the business of rescuing precious Canadian land. He’s a man who is pushing deep into his seventies, astonishingly active for his or any other age, handsome and energetic, with the sound of fire-crackers in his voice, and over the years he’s suffered a share of setbacks in his unique work. He has stood by in despair as chunks of real estate that he considered rare and special for their natural values disappeared in subdivisions and expressways. But in the last couple of decades, Sauisol has taken part in miracles of land rescue, helping to save for the limitless herds of wild animals, migratory birds and flowers of poetic loveliness.

The agency for this grand success is a remarkable organization called the Nature Conservancy of Canada, of
which Sauvie was executive director until recently. The conservancy, 22 official years old in 1981, is a national, nonprofit, charitable organization, "dedicated," in the opening words of each of its annual reports, "to the preservation of ecologically significant natural areas, unique natural features and places of special beauty." It accomplishes its objectives by soliciting funds from donors — both corporate and individual — and spending the money in a variety of ingenious ways to acquire lands that its own inspections have revealed as particularly worth maintaining. The conservancy itself holds the lands for only brief periods, passing them on instead to government agencies and local conservation bodies, which then own and protect them in their natural state for the enduring benefit of all Canadians.

Statistics indicate some measure of the conservancy's triumphs. Up to the end of 1983, it had put its hand to generating gifts to the Crown of lands worth more than $9 million, and it had provided another $4 million to conservation organizations across Canada, which led to the purchase of 258 separate properties, adding up to a whopping 15,500 hectares. The conservancy manpower that has generated this turnover in property includes 19 unpaid trustees from all parts of the country and a staff of six at conservancy headquarters in Toronto. At the helm until recently, the indefatigable Charles Sauvie champions the conservancy's cause with the declaration that "the system we've developed here for saving land is the best in the whole god-darned world."

By way of illustrating his point, Sauvie ticks off a sampling of the properties, coast to coast, that the conservancy has aided in preserving:

Barna Forest 412 hectares of spruce and hardwood forest and meadow on Cape Breton's Bras d'Or Lake, which, among other things, serve as a breeding area for that rare bird, the American bald eagle.

Les de la Grande 162 hectares of islands in Lac St. Pierre near Sorel, Que., which form an important staging area for migratory waterfowl. The islands are also home to numerous birds, including American woodcocks.

The Osprey Wetlands 2800 hectares in and around Ontario's Saugeen Valley. The wetlands provide homes for a stunning array of flowers and small animals and supply the crucial food base for waterfowl. The islands are also home to numerous birds, including American woodcocks.

The Mincing Swamp 7500 hectares of rivers and low-lying swamp near Barrie, Ont. The area is so dense that, in the words of Ard Lewis, the conservancy's first chairman, "you only have to paddle a few hundred metres into the swamp and it gets as remote and mysterious as anything you'd find in the wilds of Labrador."

Le fleuve, Un parc: An ongoing project designed to turn a 72-kilometre stretch of the St. Lawrence River between Montreal and Lake St. Pierre into a natural river-park. The area includes 109 islands and broad stretches of natural shoreline.

Qu'Appelle Valley-Pleasant Hills A series of deep ravines close to Wobeleys, Sask., which are, in places, thick with such trees as aspen, balsam, chokecherry, Manitoba maple and green ash.

Cloverly Salt Marsh 42 hectares on the east coast of Vancouver Island comprising a diverse system of flats and waters that provide sanctuary for a paradise of exotic birdlife.

The beginnings of the movement reach back to 1962 meeting of a small committee of members of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists who decided that the time was ripe for the formation in Canada of a group that would concentrate on the solicitation of ecologically essential lands. The committee included a number of the country's leading biologists — David Fowler of Toronto's York University, Bruce Falls of the University of Toronto and Bill Gunn of the world of freelance biology — and its inspiration came from two sources. One was the example of such similar bodies in other countries as England's National Trust and the second was the serious wasting away of Canada's natural lands, especially in areas close to large centres of population. The committee recruited the services of Ard Lewis, a young lawyer who attended to the tricky business of incorporating the organization in November, 1962. He also rounded up a board of trustees and was himself appointed chairman. The Nature Conservancy of Canada was in operation.

Almost immediately, Bill Gunn produced the Hedging corporation's first case. Gunn lived in Clarkson, a picturesque community west of Toronto and close to the locally famous Rat Rat Marsh. This property, owned by a Colonel Rat Rat, occupied 60 hectares, and of these, 20 hectares made up the Rat Rat Marsh, the last haven for one-of-a-kind varieties of wildlife on the stretch of Lake Ontario between Toronto and Niagara Falls. When the Colonel died, his executors entered into an agreement to sell the 60 hectares, and at that point Bill Gunn, in his best cavalry-charge manner, urged the conservancy to ride to the rescue of the Rat Rat Marsh. Gunn, Lewis and others mounted a furious fund-raising campaign, and gradually donations began to flow into their offices. The most substantial gifts arrived by mail without advance notice in two separate envelopes. They came from two sisters — one sister per envelope — who shared a desire for anonymity and a love of nature; and each envelope contained a check for $25,000. In all, the conservancy purchased 60 hectares of land in Saskatchewan, was purchased by the conservancy in 1982.

In 1982, the conservancy purchased 60 hectares of land in Saskatchewan, was purchased by the conservancy in 1982.
vancy raised $80,000, but that sum fell short by a couple of hundred thousand dollars of the asking price for the land. The conservancy carried on two years of negotiations with the Ontario government, the University of Toronto and the Royal Ontario Museum in a futile effort to involve them in the struggle. In the end the Rattray Marsh, though it survived, became the property of a subdivision of high-priced homes.

"It was a terrible heartbreaker," Lewis says of the experience. "But the incredible irony was that we used the money and momentum from the Rattray failure in the one project that really got the conservancy in high gear. That was the great project at Cavan Bog."

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To most of the locals, Cavan Bog represented an eyesore, a place where muskrats bred, a patch of land that wasn't much good for anything except getting your feet wet. The bog, almost 1012 hectares of it, sits by the village of Cavan, 120 kilometers north-east of Toronto, and for conservationists it is a measure of quasi-primeval wilderness. It boasts 22 species of wild orchid and is thick with sedge, bulrush, pine and hardwood trees, a shelter for more than 100 varieties of birds and a rich profusion of small animals.

The conservancy made the bog a high-priority item in 1966, when Charles Sauviol checked on the prospects for a successful rescue mission. Sauviol had recently joined the conservancy to become its projects director, the officer in charge of evaluating lands for their natural values, and with the Cavan Bog project he hit pay dirt in more ways than one.

"First of all, I had the money," Sauviol recalls, savoring the memory. "I had $50,000 because the two sisters who donated $25,000 each to the Rattray project met with me and told me to keep the money even though the project they'd given it for had collapsed. Their amazing generosity gave us the chance for a breakthrough."

And, second, Sauviol came into a vital piece of information when he discussed the conservancy's ideas for Cavan Bog with Christine Norumbell, chairman of the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority, under whose jurisdiction the bog fell. It seemed, as Norumbell told Sauviol, that the provincial government was prepared to support local conservation authorities to the extent of matching grants. That is, if an authority could raise a sum on its own for a specific project, then the government would match the amount and even, in some cases, throw in another 50 percent. The catch was, however, that smaller conservation authorities, such as the Otonabee one, which invariably had access to the most precious land, lacked the facilities to generate their own funds. Thus, they were stymied.

"That's when the light went on in my head," Sauviol says. "In the case of the Cavan Bog, the conservancy had $50,000 to buy extensive holdings in the bog. But if we teamed up with the Otonabee conservation people, we could double the money and really get a significant share of the bog. And that's what the magic formula we started applying all over the place. We raised the money and worked with local conservation groups so it would be doubled by the government's matching grants. That idea was responsible for putting the conservancy on the map."

Sauviol and his conservancy colleagues began to pour their energies into two main functions: soliciting money and scouting for land. The latter chase felt largely to Sauviol, and through the years he has ranged across the country to tramp through swamps and marshes and forests in all kinds of weather, on foot, on skis and by canoe, in order to assess the potential for conservancy action. By 1981, for example, he inspected or otherwise investigated 35 properties in Ontario and 50 in other provinces, and of those, the conservancy carried out the acquisition of eight pieces of land, followed by another 11 in 1982 and 15 in 1983. It's demanding work but, to Sauviol, "as gratifying as anything God put us on earth to get done."

As for the money-raising, it proceeded slowly in the early years but gained momentum with satisfying acceleration as the conservancy began to spread the message of its worthy purpose. In 1982, for instance, it took in more than $100,000 from all sources. The conservancy has been particularly rewarded in ensuing charitable foundations, corporations and wealthy private donors, and a key to success with these groups is the invitation to foundation and business executives to pay visits to the land their money is intended to benefit.

"It's the personal touch," Sauviol says. "I remember the time we took some fellows from Imperial Oil Limited up to visit the Otonabee Wetlands. Well, before the day was out they were virtually up to their knees in swamp, and they had to put their shoulders to a van that was stuck in the mud. But those fellows didn't mind a bit. The thing is, whenever people get next door to nature, they love it."

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In an especially encouraging sense, Sauviol's own life story reads like a metaphor for the entire conservation movement in Canada, from one-man campaign to multileveled operation, from simple joy through passages of desolation to a fresh hope that is supported by glowing prospects. Sauviol's father arrived in Toronto from eastern Ontario almost a century ago to work on the dredging of the Don, the river that meanders through the city's east-central neighborhoods to Lake Ontario, and it was the wilderness surrounding the Don that became the focus of Charles Sauviol's love of nature. He was introduced to it as a youngsters on hikes with the East Toronto 5th Troop of Boy Scouts, and he made it his holiday home in 1927, when he bought a ramshackle cottage on one-and-a-half hectares of land at the fork of the Don River. He converted the cottage into a backwoods paradise surrounded by vegetable gardens and fruit trees. He kept bees, raised chickens, canned fruit, tapped for maple sap and educated himself in nature's ways. As part of his learning process, he researched and wrote articles that painstakingly documented the history of the area (the collected articles were finally published in 1981 in a charming book titled Remarkable Sketches of the Don). But in the mid-1950s, Sauviol watched as his paradise was paved over to make way for the Don Valley Parkway, a six-lane express route that carries cars and trucks in and out of the city centre.

"It hurts like the dickens when you
low land as beautiful as mine was." Sauviot says, but the experience galvanized him into action on behalf of the conservation cause. Taking time away from his family and his career as a crackerjack advertising salesman, he served, by acclamation, for 11 years as a member of the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and chairman of its conservation areas advisory board, fighting to safeguard parts of his beloved Don and other Toronto regional valley systems. In 1966 he went national with his battle when he hooked up with And Lewis, who left law to work full time as the conservancy's executive director from 1968 to 1981. "I was the planner and Charles was the go-getter," Lewis says of those years. "That was how we got such positive results — we looking after the conservancy's structure and Charles performing as the man of action out in the field."

Sauviot succeeded Lewis as executive director and held the position for two years, resigning in September, 1983, so he would be free to finish the projects closest to his heart. Among these he counts gaining press coverage to spread the conservancy's message, getting five mansions rezoned and raising funds. "We need money to save our kind of land," he says, "and I've elected myself as the number 1 salesman." (Leading the conservancy now is Lloyd Maveda, who as a boy read Sauviot's conservancy column, which appeared in the weeklies Maveda's father republished.)

As executive director, Sauviot's duties immersed him in land investigation, in concocting complex deals with government departments and conservation authorities, in acting as a resource person for conservationists, in reviewing natural lands and, not the least, in fending off potential attacks on established wildlife preserves.

"Ah, the battle we've fought," he says. "We had a fellow who wanted to put a baseball diamond on part of the Greenock Wetlands in the Naugars Valley. We had a bunch of people who were looking to run a logging operation through the Missisng Swamp. And up at Cavan Bog — first it was a group that planned to run a highway through the middle of it and then it was a public utility company that wanted to throw up a brick building in the corner of the bog near the prettiest little cedar ravine you ever saw. Well, I read the riot act, and I went to the Parliament building, and we beat back those challenges."

Sauviot is feeling feisty and optimistic about the conservationist cause. He lives today in a house that backs onto Toronto's Don Valley, which has been revitalized through a program of re-planting and conservation, and within minutes of stepping out of his yard he finds himself deep in sweet cherries, catnip and lilac bushes, in a happy haunt that includes a swimming hole, sizes for campfires and groves of pine trees. And on a plot of protected Don Valley natural land owned by achemical company, just five minutes from his home, Sauviot operates an apiary and beehy. For educational experiences, "It amazes everyone that quality honey can be produced five kilometres from downtown Toronto," he says. "Last year, a pollen analysis of a batch of honey I couldn't identify showed that it was derived from the flowers of poison ivy. That honey was quite a sensation and a high quality product. Samples of it were given to clients as a momento of the company's 50th anniversaries."

Sauviot takes the fresh blossoming of his valley as a reflection of the upbeat mood in the conservation movement across the whole country. "I used to go to bed feeling better about the defeats," he says. "But I'm living today to enjoy the benefits of, among other victories, a new Don Valley system, which helped renew. And people in every part of Canada are having the same experience. That's the job the Nature Conservancy of Canada is helping to get done — saving our land for all of us."

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**WORKING WONDERS**

It was a simple idea. Instead of one waste bucket at each key location in the Sarnia Chemical plant, put two. Fill one with the industrial garbage (broken wood, hunks of metal), which every factory accumulates; shape and color the other so it stands out and save it for hazardous wastes, which need special, and expensive, disposal. Simple, but it saves Esso Chemical Canada about $5000 a month without compromising public safety.

Saving dollars on costs is one of the few ways of adding to profits in today's tough, highly price-competitive international commodity chemical market. Only the lowest-cost producers survive. Esso Chemical — with its emphasis on cost-cutting, with its dedication to matching the most efficient pacesetters in its competition, with its stickers on

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**Esso Chemical benefits every walk of life**

BY PATRICIA CLARKE
near Redwater, Alta., and a cluster of petrochemical facilities close to Imperial's refinery in Sarnia, Ont. It's a logical business for the company to be in — it provides a means of upgrading a small fraction of its gas and oil into higher value products.

Petrochemicals are created from natural gas, natural-gas liquids or crude oil by rearranging their carbon and hydrogen atoms. Nitrogen fertilizers are made by combining the hydrogen from natural gas with nitrogen from the air to produce ammonia, which is used as a fertilizer by itself and as a component for other fertilizers. Phosphate products are made from phosphate rock imported from Florida, ammonia and sulphur.

The petrochemical industry increasingly existed in Canada before World War II. It was Imperial's wartime experience in helping to produce a petroleum-based synthetic rubber that started company thinking about postwar opportunities. A careful study helped them decide that, yes, there was an expanding market for industrial chemicals, and in 1955 Imperial set up a chemical products department with three employees.

Today it is a $740-million-a-year business with a capital investment of more than $1 billion. Its 1915 employees include people with MBAs and PhDs, engineers, computer scientists and operating and technical maintenance technicians. Its products, which become part of the manufacturing and agricultural food chains, make almost every part of our lives safer, safer and less expensive. The car that may run on Esso gas contains petrochemicals in its vinyl upholstery, rubber lines and the plastic parts that make it lighter and therefore cheaper to run. Artificial hip joints made of plastic enable arthritic to walk again. Clothes, dyes, detergents, floorings and roofs — all come from the five percent of our oil and natural gas that is used as raw material and fuel for petrochemicals. In the process of transformation, that five percent supports about 18,000 highly skilled and technical jobs and earns $1.7 billion a year for Canada in export dollars.

The objective is not only to pare what you can from the 30 percent of expenses that you can to produce the plastic products, but also to use the most competitive feedstocks efficiency in the last two years, Esso Chemical has made sure both so successfully that it reduced costs in 1982 by $91 million, twice its target. Even with 10 percent in 1983, markets for petrochemical derivatives — housing and automobiles — and a world recession not helping, demand for fertilizer, it was in the red for the first time in 10 years. "We've done a lot in the last several years to improve our competitiveness," says Esso Chemical president John Atik, "and that means doing the things we do better, not just more cheaply." Having served as executive vice-president of Esso Chemical from 1978 to 1980, Atik received several years of growing in Esso Chemical's European operations before becoming president.

While safety on the job pays off economically as it keeps production running smoothly, Esso Chemical also sees it as a barometer of an effective organization. "Experience shows," says Don Kor, manager of environmental affairs, "that companies that pay attention to the safety of their work force tend to be better in other ways too." Just to remind management of that, a color chart showing the safety performance of people in each major product hangs in the boardroom at Esso Chemical's headquarters.

Esso Chemical's market is the petrochemical operations are adjacent to the petrochemical industry in Sarnia. Along the 800-kilometre stretch of 40 to 45 kilometres,
been down around the world recently, particularly in the United States, where it has dropped 15 percent a year for the last two years. At the same time, more countries with surplus gas reserves, such as the USSR, the Middle East nations and Mexico, have been building their own plants and compete vigorously on price. The anticipated advantage of Canadian feedstock over the U.S. Gulf Coast product has been significantly reduced.

The new facilities to produce ammonium and urea fertilizers and the expansion of the phosphatic fertilizer plant are all "state of the art" in efficiency and environmental protection, says Esso Chemical's senior vice-president Morley Handford. The ammonia plant, one of the largest of its kind in the world, operates on about 80 percent of the energy used by the conventional plants. Four to five man years went into its conception, even before design started, so that, for example, the equipment could be designed to make the best possible use of energy. Handford expects reasonable market growth in western Canada in 1984 on top of a six percent gain in 1983. And as the market expands, a new, all-Canadian technology group will be working diligently on new products and services. Improvements are being made, for example, to urea-fertilizer, which now loses some of its nitrogen when it sits on top of the frozen wheat fields from November to April. You can't have a chemical industry without chemical wastes, and Esso Chemical people say frankly that the problems are greater than anyone used to think. That's why they put a good deal of effort into monitoring disposal and testing methods to reduce or reuse wastes. "In the new fertilizer plants," says Gordon Zoll, the plant manager at Redwater, "we've gone beyond the current standards. We've really built them for the air and water emission standards of the future." Scubbers installed to prevent sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxide (both main components of acid rain) from getting into the air surpass environmental standards, says Chris Taworek, planning manager for agricultural chemicals. "We're way ahead of what the competition is doing," he adds. "It's the cleanest facility in Alberta."

At Sarnia, one of the problems that has been solved is minimizing the amount of phenol that is discharged with wastewater. Even a few drops taint the taste of fish. The neighboring Esso refinery for years has operated a biological oxidation plant, in which bacteria consume dissolved phenols and leave only harmless sludge. Esso Chemical now feeds some of this excess biological sludge into its clean-water separator and has found that the bacteria clean up the phenol in what Don Kerr calls "their final mission."

As Esso Chemical's two businesses, agricultural chemicals and petrochemicals, operate in different places, relate to different governments and serve different markets, it made sense to set up a management structure that took this into account. This happened last year when Morley Handford became the senior vice-president in Edmonton, responsible for agricultural chemicals, and Ralph Shepherd became the senior vice-president in Toronto, responsible for petrochemicals. "We wanted to put authority and management closer to the customer, closer to the competition, closer to the government that affects it," Akriti explains. The new structure also shortens the lines of communication and decision-making. And with fewer layers of management to filter ideas, there is more opportunity for everyone to be heard. Akrit says that making sure this happens through a monthly "lunch with the boss" for different groups of a dozen head-office staff members.

The conventional wisdom, Shepherd says, is that the chemical business may be improving at about the same rate as the gross national product. Whether the outlook is depressing or not, he views it as a challenge to "meet the competition head-on by becoming the most cost-competitive producer."

"We're not interested in maintaining the status quo," Akrit says. "We are continuing to look for ways to be the most profitable chemical company in Canada. We are determined to be the best." O
will welcome as many as 1200 people in a few hours. The boy leans his bike against a tree and picks his way slowly over cables and ropes, past vehicles with licence plates from Florida, California, Quebec, Ohio, Saskatchewan and Texas. Orange and blue lights shut down from the side of a truck. “Jungle Killer on Tour ... Giant Python Snake ALIVE!” Six ponies tethered in the shade of a van stand motionless with their heads drooping. The boy pauses at the corner of the big top, takes a deep breath and walks over to the five workers who are hauling on a tent rope. One of them sends him a parting look. He is in position to adjust a bleacher seat. They talk for a minute and then the boy dashes toward a tractor-trailer, a big smile spreading across his face as he runs. He has become part of the magic, accepted into this world of romance and mystery — if only for a short while, if only to help unload bleacher seats from a truck.

Each May, for the past 12 springs, the Martin and Downs circus has set out on a five-month odyssey through rural Canada — a rolling village of clowns, high-wire performers, jugglers, circus ponies, performing dogs and at least one elephant. Every morning the convoy of pickups, vans and trucks rolls into a new town and the big top is put up on a prearranged site. Posters in windows, ads in local papers and a sound truck cruising the streets all help the local sponsor sell tickets for two shows later in the day. Early the next morning the convoy is off again, following a route of red arrows nailed to telephone poles by the 24-hour man, hop-scotching across the landscape. Viewed from the sidelines, this is an exhausting and rootless existence, but perhaps these are the very things that have given circus life and circus people such a special place in our hearts. Not that long ago there were as many as 40 of these “mud shows,” so called to distinguish a tented performance from the newer, more anteptic shows that flourish in indoor arenas and on television. Today, only a handful are still on the road, bearing names that are rich in circus tradition: Hoxie’s Great American, Carson & Barnes Circus, Vargas, John Strong ... in Canada, only Martin and Downs is left to follow the red arrows at dawn. For more than 100 years the traveling circus has been an institution in North American life, a fancy lady always on her way to a date down the road. Only the name of the town, the weather and the spectators change from day to day. The peak of circus glory was probably in the 1920s when it wasn’t unusual for a show to be made up of four trains, pulling up to 100 cars. Arrival in any community was a major event, with thoughts turning out at dawn to see the huge wagons roll off the flatcars on the siding, the canvas spread and raised and the vacant lot transformed into a tent city. By the 1950s, circus life was undergoing dramatic changes. Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus — the legendary Greatest Show on Earth — stopped performing under canvas and switched to indoor shows. In 1956, Clyde Beatty Circus and the King Bros. Circus both shut down. The owners complained of tough competition from upstart television, labor troubles, high railway freight rates and the nemesis of all outdoor shows — the weather. The A.G. Kelly and Miller Bros. Circus managed to keep going by billing itself as the “last of the tented circuses — see it now or miss it forever.” Prophetic, if premature.

By the 1970s, pachyderms, greasepaint and clowns were making a comeback, but indoors — in television studios and arenas, where promoters could ignore the weather and cope with much lower costs for travel and equipment. Through it all, though, a dwindling number of outdoor shows struggled on in the belief that a circus isn’t really a circus unless there’s grass under your feet. Here in Winchester, Al Stencell leans against his trailer in the moonlit sun and talks about the past and the future. He is in his mid-thirties and this is his circus. He owns it, promotes it and does more than his share of the worrying about it these days, because this may be the last year he can afford to go on the road. “Too many hassles,” he says with a shrug. He can handle bad weather, moody animals, even local bureaucrats who insist on a sheet of licences and permits. The problem is the steadily climbing costs of travel. On the road five months of the year — the price of tires and gasoline, food for 30 to 40 people, advertising rates in local papers, three-color posters ... Recognizing that this way of life must be doomed, Stencell recently launched an indoor show, Super Circus International, with trial runs in Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. In terms of income, he admits “a week indoors is like a month on this thing,” but his heart is still with his tent circus. He savors each day as his circus moves through the Ottawa Valley on what may well be Martin and Downs’ last tour. “We’ve been lucky for a lot of years,” he says with a smile, his eyes following the sound truck as it bounces across the grass toward town. “Maybe we should quit while we’re ahead of the game.” Lucky? There was the night when four tires were ripped to shreds on a gravel detour, times when the mud was up to the truck’s axles and even the elephants couldn’t pull them off the lot and that terrible day years ago when two of his people were electrocuted. And every night there’s the business of adding up the day’s receipts and weighing the impact of the weather, a movie in the next town, a local bingo or church social. “The last couple of weeks have been slow,” he says. “Too hot, I guess.” It takes unusual people to thrive on so much travel and so little privacy, to perform over and over again in towns they don’t know the names of, for people they’ve never met and likely won’t see again. “A good group this year,” says Stencell. “No clowns, no politicians. They get along and everybody seems to be having fun.” Dick Kohlriesser, a former rodeo clown, is here with the wife, young son and six truck ponies that make up the Liberty Pony Revue. Ron Dykes, from Montreal, a Martin and Downs veteran of three years, is a juggler who doubles as the sound-truck operator. His wife, Lee Walker, a high-wire performer, is not on tour this year; she’s finishing up her university thesis in Russian history. Captain Bones Craig and his elephants, Judy and Sahib, are unquestionably the stars of the show. A bearded giant of a man, Captain Bones spends his days in faded jeans and stripped to the waist. Larry Sellen is the resident clown, Professor Zamboni. Behind the

In a world of television and computers, the traveling circus is a touch of old-fashioned magic.
TRAVELS IN NEWFOUNDLAND...
where a rich culture thrives

BY MARTIN O’MALEY

For our first day in Newfoundland we decided to tour west. Why not? I had been to Newfoundland before, though never to St. John’s, one of the oldest cities in North America and one of the most charming capitals in the country. I had been to Corner Brook on the west coast and up to the interior of Labrador, but always as a journalist chasing down some vital piece of news that became irrelevant a week later. Besides, it was the 100th anniversary...
Enduring the chill
Atlantic weather,
more than 900
outpost communities
do the coastline
of Newfoundland

of Sir Humphreys Gilbert's arrival at St. John's, where he trudged up the Hill O'Chips to claim Newfoundland as an English possession and thus began a process that created the British Empire and Commonwealth. Tourism was big in Newfoundland in the summer of 1983, and we were happy to be part of it.

At a shop on Buckhurst Street, we each bought a reversible slicker, green on one side, yellow on the other, then headed down to the dock to board a tour boat for some "sight-seeing, whale-watching and cod-juggling."

The flat-bottomed boat spluttered into the harbor then turned eastward into the Atlantic Ocean and an invigorating salty breeze. The swells were gentle, unobstructing beneath the little boat as if on this day the ocean merely wished to remind us of its power, not threaten or intimidate us so as to do any time with the slightest flex of a muscle.

We never did see a whale, but Tom, the tour guide who studied philosophy at the University of Guelph, once told us all to stand and turn our backs to a point of land with a lighthouse on it, called Cape Spear. We did, of course, and Tom announced: "Now you have all turned your backs on the whole of North America." Cape Spear, he explained, is the easternmost point of the continent.

Eventually we did find a school of cod and were catching some with our jiggers, whether we knew it or not. I must have had a three kilogram cod on my line for fifteen minutes before Tom came over and told me I had one. I'm used to fish that tug, that sometimes even leap right out of the water, but these fish just impale themselves on the hooks, and you haul them up hand over fist as you would an old rubber hoop. I had been watching Bill, the other guide, hold up a cod by sticking his thumb and forefinger in the eyes, so I tried it with mine. It worked fine, but across from me I noticed a middle-aged lady whose face was chalk-white. "Look up at the sky!" Bill shouted at her. He walked over quickly and put an arm on her shoulder, trying to soothe her. "Don't look at the water," he said. "Try to look up at the sky." Too late. The lady only barely made it to the side of the boat where she looked straight down at the water for the longest time. We have a splendid color slide of me holding a large cod, standing in front of a lady in a doubleknit pant suit who seems to be praying to the ocean.

The next day we drove. First, south to Cape Spear to see what it looked like from high, to inspect the old lighthouse and its bedroom that has been wallpapered 167 times. The functional lighthouse, or light station as they are sadly called today, is about 100 meters away from the original one and is operated by Jerry Cantwell, a man in his mid-thirties. The job he has been in the Cantwell family a long time, passed on from father to son for six generations.

On to Petty Harbour, some 13 kilometres south along twisting roads, by hills of grass and wild flowers, cliffs and those sudden and spectacular Newfoundland vistas that appear so dramatically after a bend in the road, as if an unseen stagehand had pulled a lever to swing open a curtain. Petty Harbour: majestic, gloomy, medieval, gulls flapping over docks, schoos and boats that seem centuries old, solitary faces at windows in tall, thin houses of red, yellow, blue and green, watching — what? the ocean! Us? Later it would become a rule of thumb that we knew when we were off the beaten path because we got these looks: surprised and curious, with something of the expression a baby gives when a stranger comes too close. To get around Petty Harbour we drove through narrow, twisted roads, between houses, behind houses, up steep gravel roads, which often lead to dead-ends or somebody's backyard where wood was piled high, teapot-fashion, drying out for winter.

We mistakenly assumed Petty Harbour to be the prize among the Newfoundland outpost, somehow representative of the more than 900 outpost settlements that dot the 48,000-kilometre coastline of the huge and brooding island. It was overcast and drizzly and probably a poor day for making judgments, but it seemed the ideal locale, the perfect tableau vivant macabre for an Alfred Hitchcock movie about murder and fright.

Nowhere else in Canada, not in Labrador and not even among the Indians and Inuit of the Mackenzie Valley, have I heard such a diverse and distinctive English. It varies widely from the north of the Avalon Peninsula to the south and even from one town to another. Sometimes it's "It's pronounced, sometimes not; sometimes even in the same sentence it is and it isn't. It has a pleasing cadence, often an Irish lilt, but for the newcomer it is not always easy to understand.

At Burin Cove, farther south along the eastern shore of the Avalon Peninsula, I got out of the car to watch a softball game in progress between the O'Neill Motors Dartan and O'Keefe Building Centre teams. Both teams wore bright red uniforms — the O'Keefes' were red with white trim and the O'Neills', a meaner suit with black trim. There were no seats for spectators, and the few of us who stood to watch draped our arms over the top of the fence behind the first-base line, as if watching the last stages of a horse race. We backedstop the Atlantic yawned blue and placid, spreading all way to the horizon of Ireland, the ancestral home of the O'Neills and O'Keefes.

David Quinton, a gifted and award-winning television producer for CBC: St. John's had tried to prepare me for the outports. He drew maps, etched in places worth exploring and gave me advice on how to conduct myself.

"People are warm, yes, and they'll respond, but don't just barge in, stop them on the back and ask for their life story," he said. "Be quiet in a corner for a while, let Newfoundlanders accept shyness. They don't like pushy, aggressive people."

At Burin Cove, watching the softball game, I raised my camera and aimed the telephoto lens at the field. From behind the O'Keefe bench I heard a robust voice shout in my direc-
Newfoundland’s colorful speech has roots in its history. While the Eng-
lish spoken in many parts of Canada
goes back only to the 19th century, Newfoundland English stems from
the 16th century, and the isolation of
the island has had the effect of intensi-
fying the old speech patterns and col-
loquials and, as a result, creating
a specialized vocabulary. “This is
a very unusual part of the English-
speaking world,” says Story, “because
nearly everyone’s ancestors come from
two rather small areas: England,
West Country — Devon, Dorset and
Cornwall — and the southwest of
Ireland.” There are words and expre-
sions used in Newfoundland that once
were common in England and Ireland
but have since died out there and thus
are now unique to Newfoundland.

**Left to right: Professor George Story, part author of ‘A Dictionary of
Newfoundland English,’ Joey Smallwood, who led Newfoundland
into Confederation; and Shane O’Dea of Memorial University.

**Trinity Bay. The name of
Newfoundland communities is descriptively
eccentric. They are honest names. Historians might have preferred some-
thing a little drier, explorers would have chosen something more
vain-glourious, but these Newfoundland names speak of splendid splendours
of home cooking and families. They cer-
tainly are not names a committee of
names would choose.

There is a remarkable museum by
the water at Harbour Grace, which
contains walls and glass-enclosed mem-
orials of Harbour Grace’s great era of
flight. A short distance from the
museum is a cliff that overlooks Con-
ception Bay, and it was here in the
1920s and 1930s that many flyers
tried to fly off for Europe. “The
daring pioneers who used the Harbour
Grace airfield,” says a plaque on the
ground, “have glorified the chapter in
the history of early aviation and
directed attention to Newfoundland
as the crossways of North Atlantic ar-
routes.” It was from Harbour Grace,
on May 20, 1932, that Amelia Earhart
took off in her Lockheed Vega for a
solo flight across the Atlantic. One
could stand at the edge of the cliff, at
the end of what used to be used by the
recreational boat trips, and think how
miraculous it was to see the plane
soaring toward the horizon.

**Joey Smallwood set out to consolidate
these export opportunities. It had to be
done, but for many of the importers it
was a painful and wrenching expe-
rience. The first attempt was on a
local level. Each export family was
offered a maximum allowance of $600
to relocate, but the money was only
given if the entire community certi-
fied its willingness to move. In 1965, a
joint federal-provincial program ex-
panded the relocation attempt by
offering each household $1000 plus
$100 for each family member. This
time a resettlement committee had to
approve each move, and no assistance
was paid until the relocation was
complete.

There were hardships, says Shane
O’Dea, who teaches English at Me-
rial University. A report compiled by
the Institute for Social and Eco-

demic Research at Memorial describes
the move of one family from Tack’s
Reach, an island outpost in the West-
ern Channel of Placentia Bay, to the
larger community of Arnold’s Cove,
about 22 kilometres away. “Davi-
nine navigation is difficult in fog and
on stormy days,” the report says, “and
the passage to Tack’s Reach is perilous
during the night for there are said
to be 375 islands and rock outcropping
in the area, many of them submerged
during full tide.” The family was
relocated without notice upon arrival
at Arnold’s Cove in February, 1965,
and they were later fined even from
using an empty fish-
shed to sleep in. The newcomers spent
their first night in Arnold’s Cove
behind an overturned boat. The next
day they found a tiny abandoned fish

appointment for 2:30, but he didn’t
know anything about it. He asked
where I was, I said I was, and he said,
“Hey man, you can walk from there.”

What color is your house?”
I asked. There was a pause, as if he had
cropped his hands up to the receiver and
asked someone, then he replied:
“Don’t know.”

I drove back, knocked on the door
and a young bearded man answered and
asked if I wanted to see Mr. Small-
wood. I entered inside. I entered a
corner and sitting in a huge leather
revolving chair, behind a high desk lamp
— it was he. If he had been Wilfred Lauer he
wouldn’t have been greater.

We talked for more than an hour,
mostly about the encyclopaedia of
Newfoundland he is hard at work on.
He is preparing volume two of which
eventually will be a five-volume work, which
he hopes will be finished in 1996, when he will be 93 years old. He is
also working on two other books.
He works 15 hours a day, every day of

The Redoubt, Number 2, 1964
In Closing

One day in May, a little more than 25 years ago, I made a decision that startled my relatives and amused my friends. I bought a car without even knowing how to drive it. I bought it not because I had always dreamed of owning a car, but simply because I was finishing up my divinity degree and was about to be sent to my first appointment as a young ordinand in the rural countryside of New Brunswick, not far from Moncton, where I was to have live congregations and obviously needed a car to get around. And there was one other reason: a dozen or so of us in that class — the class of 1958 at Pine Hill Divinity Hall in Halifax — had struck a deal with an automobile dealer in New Brunswick whereby we got a dozen cars at discount, because, as one of the salesmen put it, we were doing the Lord’s work, and as one of us put it, “Who wants to pass up a good deal?”

One of my classmates, the sort of fellow who seemed to have been driving cars from the age of eight, offered to go with me the long distance, about a six-hour drive from Halifax, so that I might pick up my car. It was a Pontiac, a gleaming gray model known as a Parisienne, for which I put down the sizable amount of $2500. My classmate drove my car and me back to Halifax, and the car was empty, and empty, in the college parking lot. He then took on the job of teaching me to drive, a project of mild urgency since, in addition to graduation and ordination only a few weeks away, I was getting married and my prospective wife thought that since we were planning a honeymoon trip, it might be useful if I learned to drive. I did — driving with my classmates through the empty evening streets of Halifax, with the windows down and the car fragrant with the moist smell of spring, salt wind and fresh lilac. I began to learn to release the clutch, shift the gears, rev the engine and to feel the sense of confidence that comes when, at last, you pull away, move smoothly into high gear and know that you are in control, not just of the car but somehow your future as well.

It was a sign of the times, the expansive and optimistic fifties, that all of us, without much in our pockets, made the decision we did to buy a kind of car that, while not in the luxury class, was clearly an affirmation of the place of the traditional Larger North American car in our lives and in the vocation we had chosen. In fact, a couple of other students in our residence — one headed for engineering, the other for medicine — expressed their sage approval of our choice, adding that the kind of new small cars dashing here and there would simply not do for dignitaries of the church. “You can’t go around in just any kind of car” — a clear echo of an era that was to pass, swiftly and perhaps sorrowfully. Personally, I liked my first car and held it in respectful memory, not because of some supposed style or swank it had, but because, for a country minister, its size proved to be its virtue. It became, as soon as I settled into my pastoral work in Albert County, N.B., a kind of public vehicle and performed that job with good natural competence. At times, it seemed full, front and back, of wolf cubs or church workers or just local people in need of a ride somewhere, usually to the city to visit a hospital, a nursing home or more rarely a courtroom. (In fact, one of my congregations was of such size that with a little arranging the entire membership could have been accommodated in the car, including my wife.) When I had a funeral, which unfortunately was rather often, my faithful gray car fitted right in at the head of the procession, carrying the pallbearers, though when I mentioned its value in this regard to a neighboring colleague who drove one of those tiny cars, which can be nameless, he cautioned me against the sin of pride and added that his little bug was right at home as the lead car at a funeral, for, after all, the scriptures say that a little child shall lead them.

Perhaps the joys that you feel in owning your first car have something to do with age and youth and the carefree enthusiasm of early manhood. Once in May, after I’d been driving for barely a year, I decided, along with my wife, to go to New York to see the sights, for I had never been in a large city in my life and had heard that in New York there were many tall buildings. I could have taken the bus or, better still, the train, but I was in my early twenties and the spring seemed full of endless promise, so I drove my new car straight into the honking, humbled center of Manhattan, where I rolled down the windows, stared at the parades of people and circled the streets for an hour until I found the place in which we were to stay, the old Victoria Hotel, where a man at the door looked at our New Brunswick licence plate, then at me, shook his head and took the car off my hands, which was good of him and certainly good for me.

One day in late March, 1960, after we had owned the car for a couple of years and had grown grateful for its faultless service, my wife woke me very early in the morning and announced that the time had come, that I had better get the car out, warm it up and, to use the phrase my parishioners always used, “strike out” for Moncton, for the hospital, specifically for the maternity ward. We were under way in less than an hour, the roads clear and banked with old gray snow, the car moving as always with calm, steady confidence when slowly — near the famous geological formations known as the Hopewell rocks — it began to list, then shudder and shake, the way cars always did when they had what my first car had: a flat tire.

As if he knew he was needed, the service station owner from the village materialized beside the car. I rolled down the window and he — a lay preacher at an evangelical church — asked in a low whisper, “Is she all right?” and of course we both laughed and said yes. Whereupon he fixed the tire, we went on our way, and our first son was born about an hour after we arrived. With such unusual, extraordinary moments is the memory of my first car embellished. My first car was one of the major excitaments of my life. It will always be, of course, one of the images I keep of my past, just as I keep the snow and the spruce and the sweet air of summer in the East. But it seems to me now that the car was more than merely that. It was, as well, the answer to a pledge that life seems to make to all young men, generation after generation, who one day smile softly at the purr of the engine, the hum of the tires, the fulfillment of one of life’s perfect promises.