The Good Ol’ Hockey Game

Perfectly suited to our climate and geography, ice hockey stirs our blood, inflames our passions and makes Canadians feel like a family.

By Martin O’Malley

Early last summer, soon after the final buzzer sounded on a splendid hockey season, a major poll told us that hockey is second only to the national health care system as the most potent unifying force in the country (player strikes and lock-outs notwithstanding). Somehow, the news itself didn’t surprise me; what did was that I had never really considered this before.

My son and I were in Florida the winter before on an assignment that had nothing to do with hockey, but one night we bought tickets to a game between the Winnipeg Jets and the Tampa Bay Lightning. Between periods we wandered outside and found ourselves surrounded by spectators who were fascinated by the sparkle of the game but ignorant of its complexities. My son and I instinctively felt at one with the game, much more so than did the Americans. We appreciated the nuances—the goalies, the stupid penalty, the cheap goal, the beautiful goal— and soon found ourselves explaining the game to some tourists from Alabama. One man wanted to know if the fights were real or staged, as in professional wrestling. “Oh, they’re real,” we said, and we recognized fellow Canadians in the crowd by the way they smiled and nodded in agreement.

Mr. Alabama could not comprehend how any athlete could suffer such back-alley punishment and still play the game. I explained that hockey players don’t get good leverage on skates, and as wicked as the fights look, they don’t cause nearly the damage of a check into the boards or an errant stick in the teeth. Mr. Alabama wanted to know why hockey players get so angry so quickly—he thought it didn’t fit the stereotype of the peaceable Canadian. “It’s because hockey’s so fast and you get hit so unexpectedly that it’s just damned irritating,” one of the other Canadians said.

I found myself thinking of another time in Florida, when I was writing a book on Brian Spencer, who played in the National Hockey League for 10 years and who would later be murdered. He had long since left hockey and was working as a mechanic, but he was still called Spinner. “Hockey is a reckless-abandon game,” he said. “You’ve got to be aware of 360 degrees at all times. If you’re not you’re going to get hurt. Only a fighter pilot in the sky has more dimensions to worry about.”

By this time a small crowd had gathered, and I was astonished to find that people were referring to our expertise simply because we were Canadians and Canadians know hockey. By no means am I an authority on hockey; it’s just something I picked up through my pores. I could never referee a game. I stopped playing organized hockey when I was 12, but I know hockey—I know the way an Italian knows opera or a Frenchman knows wine. When Imperial Oil and Murray’s Wasegade started bringing in Hockey Night in Canada on television in 1952, I was there. I’d listened to the games on radio before that. In my late teens and twenties I used to pull on my skates and play alone, imagining myself in some crucial contest, cutting around the defence, sliding the puck to my left side and raising it to an upper corner of the net. I loved that quick gliding sensation, the smell of hockey—ice and snow have an outdoor, bovine smell—and the thud of puck against wood, the skitter of stick against pipe, the iddik-kik of skating.

(One of my high school teachers liked to use “skate” to illustrate onomatopoeia.) Have you ever slipped and cracked your head on the ice? It makes one realize how solid the earth is.

Perhaps last summer’s poll seemed particularly interesting to me because 1993-94 had been such a bumper year for hockey and perhaps also because the country again faced a momentous election in Quebec, to be followed by an even more momentous referendum on whether Quebec stays or goes. It was a good time to be reminded of hockey.

The crowds were back in the game. Canada won the junior world championship and the women’s world championship, and for the first time in 33 years, our national team won the world championship in a thrilling final against Finland. The sweep would have been complete if our Olympic team had won the gold medal in Norway, but after a tense shoot-out we had to settle for the silver. And for some reason—maybe it’s because Toronto, Canada’s biggest city, had a competitive team again—the National Hockey League play-offs were more action-packed and satisfying than they had been for years.

How is it that hockey can be so Canadian yet so strikingly un-Canadian? Canadians are polite, reserved, deferential, peaceful and masters of compromise. Yet hockey is rude, abrupt, aggressive, violent and absolutely uncompromising in its competitiveness. The novelist Hugh MacLennan called hockey “the counterpart of the Canadian self-restraint.” His explanation was that the game “takes us back to the fiery blood of the Celtic ancestors, who found themselves minorities in a cold, new environment and had to discipline themselves as all minorities must. But Canadians take the ferocity of their national game so much for granted that when an American visitor makes polite mention of it, they look at him with astonishment. Hockey violent? Well, perhaps a little. But hockey was always like that.”

MacLennan, I’m sure, would have been amused by a debate in the House of Com-
played with vigour and glea when the white
man first arrived. Lacrosse is ever bit as
aggressive and violent as hockey but not as
tast, not as crisp and not a game that blends so
easily with the climate of this country, where
most lakes, rivers and ponds conveniently
freeze to provide natural hockey sur-
fases just about everywhere in winter.

How and when ice hockey came to be, no
one seems quite sure. Evidence suggests that
designing more sophisticated than the
Dutch and British did more primitive skates
and played games on the ice. And British
soldiers stationed in Canada during the mid-
19th century used sticks fashioned from
branches and a ball to play a hockeylike game
on the frozen rivers and lakes. Over the years
the games were refined and eventually ice
hockey boiled down to be (Neil Lucas, a hockey
historian at the University of Maryland,
believes the first codified set of hockey rules
was developed by two players from the
McGill University team in Montreal in 1879.)

There is some question about where Cana-
dia's first official hockey game was played, but
we do know that the country's first hockey
league was launched in Kingston, Ont., in
1885 by Captain James Sutherland. The
league consisted of four teams, including
those of Queen's University and the Royal
Military College.

Hockey soon became a favourite Canadian
pastime. In 1893 Baron Stanley of Preston,
the 16th Earl of Derby, the then governor
general of Canada, donated the cup that has
remained emblematic of hockey supremacy to
this day. Lord Stanley's sons, Arthur and
Algonquin, played hockey on an outdoor rink
at Ottawa's Rideau Hall, engaging members
of the nearby Cobblestone Guards to play with
them on a team dubbed the Rideau Rebels.
Lord Stanley's aide, Lord Kilkyrose, also
played for the Rebels and suggested that his
superior have a trophy forged to be awarded to
the best hockey team in the Dominion.

This, Lord Stanley did, and in 1893 the
Montreal Amateur Athletic Association became
the first team to win the Stanley Cup play-
loffs in 1894, the entire province of Quebec,
along with viewers across Canada, listened in
utter fascination and admiration to the medical
reports on Patrick Rose, Stephenson.

When Roy, the Canadiens' star goalie,
appeared for the start of a game against the
Bris.
having been pumped up intranscroesly
with antibiotics the refused to admit to an
appendectomy), he was greeted with three
standing ovations before the opening face-off
in the Montreal Forum. His heroes were
instantly dubbed "the miracle on St. Cather-
line Street." The Globe and Mail reported,
"Hockey is as much a part of francophone
identity in this province [Quebec] as the lan-
guage itself; thanks to the glorious history
of the Montreal Canadiens." One may be able
to imagine Quebec separating from Canada,
but it is impossible to imagine the team being
called anything but the Montreal Canadiens.

As a Torontonian and a latter-day, bred-in
the-bone hockey fan, I've heard the past few
years particularly pleasant. There were too
many years when it was easier to cheer against
the Maple Leafs, when they were such a
pathetic, disgruntled, lifeless squad run from
from on high by an orange-haired fellow called
Harold Ballard. He was the man who once
engaged Darryl Sittler, then the team's cap-
tain, that Sittler ripped the captain's decal off
his jersey. Ballard also once publicly humili-
ated one of his coaches by telling him to appear
at the bench before a game wearing a paper
bag on his head. There may be many people
across Canada who are not Torontophiles, but
most hockey fans are happy to see an exciting
and genuine contender reappear to represent
the city.

And hockey has its personal moments too.
My wife and I followed intensively the 1972
Canada-Russia hockey series, right up to that
last game on a rainy weekday afternoon, liv-
ing and dying with each goal, with each awful
loss and each joyful victory. We watched most
of that last game on the sun room at the back
of the house. The Soviets got ahead of Cana-
da, and feeling sulky and disparities, I chose to
leave and drive to a college where I was study-
ing on a fellowship. The truth was, I couldn't
bear to watch Canada lose that last game.
When I arrived at the college I heard a roar from
the common room, which was packed with
professors and students. "What gives?" I
asked, and someone breathlessly told me
Canada had just tied the game. I joined the
roaring crowd of academics and watched Paul
Henderson sweep in to pop the winning goal.

Mixed with the euphoria was a nagging sad-
ness at having gone home, at having left my
wife to experience the thrill alone. She is
French-Canadian, I am an Irish-Canadian
anglophone, and our love of the game was
one of the things we had always shared. Prob-
ably I am putting too much of an edge on it,
but often I think if I had stayed in the sun
room that afternoon and we had shared that
wonderful moment, it might have been the one
little once-more that would have kept us
together.

On a train trip across the country years ago,
I watched from a window as we rattled by
little towns in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick
and Quebec. It was Stanley Cup play-off
time, and as the train rolled on in the evening
I could see the familiar bluish light in houses
where people were watching the game on
television. It felt as if the entire country was
performing some tribal ritual, sharing some-
thing important, something people might talk
about for years -- certainly the next day at the
winter cooler or over the back fence.

When I was much younger and separated
from someone I loved in the huge geography
of Canada -- she in Ottawa, I in Winnipeg --
she used to tell me to look up at the moon at
a certain time. She said she would do the
same and we would share something and
know we were sharing it. When I watched the
terrific hockey in this year's Stanley Cup play-
offs I had the same feeling -- that old chaos,
old schoolmates, maybe even my old love,
inamorata (she married someone else and
now lives in Halifax), were watching at that
exact instant the same rink-long dash and
hearing the same, "He scores!"
Energy Goes Underground

Canada's network of buried pipelines provides a safe and economical means of moving oil, gas and other fuels from their source to the consumer.

BY PAUL MILLER

Stand on the edge of the Gardon Valley, three kilometres west of Remoulins in the lavender-scented hills of southeastern France, and you can gaze out on what I think is the most beautiful pipeline in the world. The people of the region don't call it a pipeline, of course. They don't even call it what it technically is, an aqueduct. They call it a bridge — the Pont du Gard.

The Pont du Gard is a bridge of sorts, a span of transportation technology that has not just survived but thrived for several centuries. The aqueduct was part of a pipeline system built around the year 19 BC by the eminente Roman statesman and engineer Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa. Although its construction required a large initial expenditure of labour and ingenuity, once in place the system conveyed about 200 million litres of water — a commodity inseparable in the Roman mind from the concept of civilized life — more than 40 kilometres each day from the shaded hillsides of Uzès to the baths and fountains of Nîmes. The conveyance continued around the sundial, except during the occasional siege, for more than 400 years. And even in the fifth century, when deliveries faltered, it was not a flaw of design or construction that caused the stoppage but, quite literally, vandalism.

Today's modern pipelines, the high-tech successors to the Pont du Gard, combine all the attributes of their ancient forebear — large-volume, low-cost, continuous deliveries — with the flexibility to carry a much wider range of cargoes across both land and sea. As well as water, they now transport crude oil, natural gas and virtually every type of petroleum product, including liquid petroleum gases such as propane and butane. They also carry carbon dioxide and ethane, which is used for manufacturing petrochemicals, and diluted bitumen from Imperial Oil's oil-sands plant at Cold Lake, Alberta, to Edmonton and to markets in the United States. They even carry solids (such as coal, iron ore, gold tailings, limestone, kaolin and sand), which are ground into powder and then mixed with a liquid carrier (normally water), thus allowing the solids to be piped for distances of up to several hundred kilometres.

The development of mechanical pumps and compressors, as well as high-strength flexible steel, has enabled modern pipeline engineers to propel their cargoes over terrain that even Agrippa, with his ingenious arsenal of gravity feeds and siphons, could only dream about traversing.

There is a pipeline across the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea, which carries natural gas from Algeria to Sicily. There is a gas pipeline across the North Sea that rises from the depths at regular intervals onto platforms equipped with compressors that speed it on its way to northern Germany. The world's longest pipeline, named the Northern Lights, crosses 700 streams and rivers, not to mention the Ural Mountains, to transport natural gas 5,400 kilometres from a massive gas field in western Siberia to consumers in western Europe.

Modern pipelines may lack the graceful
Roman arches of their predecessors, but given the scale of the task they are now called upon to perform it's probably just as well that most of them are unseen arteries, toiling invisibly beneath our unsuspecting feet. While there are no reliable estimates of the total length of pipelines in service around the globe, an indication of the scale of the industry can be gleaned from the fact that, in the United States alone, there were about 700,000 kilometres of fedally regulated interstate energy pipelines at the end of 1992.

According to the U.S. energy publication Oil & Gas Journal, more than 80,000 kilometres of new pipeline construction was planned around the world for 1994 and beyond. In 1994 alone, more than 25,000 kilometres of new lines, costing (U.S.) $34 billion, were scheduled for completion. New projects include an underwater line that will carry natural gas 700 kilometres from a reservoir in the South China Sea to Hong Kong, a large-diameter crude-oil pipeline beneath the jungles of Colombia that will increase production from one of the world's largest recent oil discoveries, an Australian pipeline that will carry natural gas from Queensland to South Australia and scores of other undertakings on every continent.

In fact, pipelines have become the fastest-growing means of transporting commodities in the world. One reason for their popularity is efficiency. 1,000-kilometre crude-oil pipeline uses only half of one percent of the energy contained in the oil it transports, and next to a very large ocean-going tanker is the cheapest means of transportation. Equally important in this era of large-scale commodity movements, the economics of pipeline transportation improve as the scale of the job mounts. For example, a 90-centimetre, large-diameter oil or gas pipeline can carry up to 17 times the cargo of a 10-centimetre line for only a small percentage increase in construction and operating costs. Economics aside, pipelines are the only practical method for transporting natural gas across land and short passages of water.

(Natural gas can be liquefied for long-distance ocean transportation, but the cost of lowering its temperature to the -160°C needed to turn it into a liquid is very high.)

Pipelines - as long as they are properly constructed and maintained - have also proved themselves to be an exceptionally safe means of transporting large quantities of material.

One reason for this is that most pipelines are buried, out of harm's way. (There are notable exceptions. Parts of the Alyeska crude-oil pipeline across Alaska are elevated on metal supports to prevent the heated oil from disturbing the permafrost.) But there are a number of less obvious reasons why pipelines, throughout most of the world, are so safe and durable. Before being buried, each section of a terrestrial pipeline is normally x-rayed to ensure that its welds are sound. It is then coated or wrapped with protective materials ranging from rubber to plastics before being lowered into a trench that is carefully filled to provide an additional measure of protection. In Canada and many other countries, pipeline rights of way are inspected regularly from the air, and in special situations by foot patrols and even by that ultimate leak detector, the canine nose. The use of dogs to detect leaks in underground pipelines was pioneered by Imperial several years ago and has increasingly been adopted by the pipeline industry.

Sensitive instruments are also used to monitor the contents of a line and to shut it down if there are any indications of a leak. And the insides of pipelines are periodically cleaned by complex scrapers (called pigs because of the squealing noise they make). Other 'smart pigs' are equipped with instruments and linked to computers to detect any thinning or weakening of the pipeline's walls.

"More than 99.998 percent of the products carried by the pipeline companies reporting to us, which represents most major lines, reach their destination safely," says Ian Scott, manager of pipelines, operations and environment for the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. "But another way, in Canada only one barrel of product is spilled for nearly every 80,000 barrels carried."

Of the 51 spills that did occur in Canada in 1992, the most recent year for which statistics have been published, more than two-thirds were on property owned by the pipeline companies. Essentially all of the spilled liquids were recovered, while escaping gases dissipate into the atmosphere. In addition, pipelines contribute both to safety and to environmental protection by greatly reducing traffic congestion on roads, railways and inland waterways. Imperial's Sarnia Products Pipeline, which runs from Sarnia, Ont., to the company's distribution terminal north of Tecumseth.
It's little wonder that Canada, with its diversified resource base, is home to one of the largest pipeline networks in the world.

Canada's energy pipeline network has continued to proliferate, expanding to markets in central Canada, the midwestern and northeastern United States and the U.S. Pacific coast.
For much of the school year, the approach to Joanie School in Iqaluit is a study in frozen white on white. The greyish white school sits atop a snow-covered hill on the edge of town, its blank facade — windows, door, roof — resembling the ice-stilled expanse of Frobisher Bay below. Pure, silent immobility.

But you push through the doors to an explosion of colour and motion. Greeting you in the foyer is a huge banner assembled from vivid cloth cutouts: an Inuk in bright yellow parkas, chained hands tossed high above fur-trimmed head, stands on black rocks surrounded by the green, white and blue of mountains, sea, and dancing water. In English and Inuktitut, the banner bears the watchwords of the school: respect, responsibility, cooperation and explore. The nearby gym, hung with brightly coloured sports banners and the Canadian flag, is a hub of activity.

Just outside the school office there is another banner, this one white on brilliant green. "Environmental Green School" is emblazoned across the top, while number-bearing medallions climb one side, tracking the number of environmental projects Joanie students completed as participants in the Learners in Action Green School programme, which aims to increase environmental awareness among children.

"The children lead visitors to this banner right away," says Joanie's principal, Florence Shnei, pretty vivid herself in a purple sweatshirt with a white polar bear splashed across the front. "They're so proud."

They should be. The banner bears witness to the extraordinary way the school not only participated in this Canada-wide programme but became its pacesetter.

In the fall of 1992, when little Joanie School, with its 206 students (80 percent of whom are Inuit), joined the programme, 2,571 other Canadian schools were already enrolled (now almost 4,000 schools are involved). But it was Joanie that raced ahead. In just 15 months its students completed the 1,020 environmental projects necessary to earn Joanie the title Earth School, becoming the first school in Canada to achieve this honour.

Now, first is first. It's an absolute. But turn right at the banner and you come face to face with a reminder of why some firsts are more impressive, more moving, than others. Next to the school office stands a rack of pamphlets — photocopied pamphlets, in fact, so they're not colourful at all. The titles are just as stark: "Youth and Abortion," "Youth and Suicide," "Youth and HIV," "Youth and Stress."

Many Joanie students — often from homes going through a cultural and technological fast-forward — that many of us cannot even imagine — are considered to be what are known in today's parlance as "children at risk," reinforcing the prevailing view among southern Canadians that the North is a place of social disintegration and grim statistics. Indeed, the suicide rate among aged 15 to 34 in the Northwest Territories is 160 per 100,000 — nearly six times the Canadian average for that group. Even more appalling, the Northwest Territories' overall suicide rate has tripled since 1992.

Considered in this light, Joanie's 15-month drive from programme enrolment to Earth School is particularly satisfying.

The Learners in Action Green School programme — a deceptively bland name for something so potent — is run by the SEEDS Foundation, an Edmonton-based national non-profit organization that is funded largely by oil and gas companies and is devoted to strengthening the environmental knowledge and activity of Canadian youth. "The Learners in Action Green School programme and other SEEDS programmes have and can continue to be an effective mechanism for developing an environmental awareness among children," says Lynda Schryer, director of environment and safety for Imperial Oil, a major contributor to SEEDS.

But the Green School programme is credited with more than developing an environmental awareness in youngsters. "We get a lot of feedback from schools about higher morale," says Lynda Jakubec, manager of the programme. "It gives students and teachers something positive to share — it brings them together."

This is exactly the potential that Florence Shnei spotted back in 1991, shortly after she had arrived at Joanie after serving as principal of a school in Resolute Bay, N.W.T. "We had just defined our goals as a school," she explains, "and it seemed to provide a safe environment and family-type school where students..."
would feel valued and where both academic achievement and the culture and language of all students would be emphasized. We were looking for a way to unify ourselves as a school around those goals. It was slow at first — well, talk to the children. They'll tell you.

And they do. Despite the fact that Earth School status is ancient history by now in their young minds and despite the fact that they are in the last day of preparation for this year’s science fair (in which every child is involved), the children remember the Learn- ers in Action programme very clearly.

Lucy Kukee, last year a grade 6 student at Joamie, echoes Slinery as she says, “It was hard at first.” A former classmate, Jayko Kilabuk, jumps in. “But it got easier. Because … because we began to understand.”

Project criteria for the first two levels are fairly relaxed. SEEDS wants to teach that every action, however humble, and every person, however young, is important. Anything the children did to help the environment, whether alone, in small groups or as a class, at school or at home, was counted as a project — as long as the student or students involved told us about it and wrote it up in the English-Inuktitut logbook.

Andrew Morrison, now a grade 4 student, remembers the day his class walked up to the nearby pond: “It was very, very cold, and we cleaned up all the garbage. (There were a lot of cleanup projects. Groups of students and whole classes adopted specific pieces of land as their responsibility.)

Families were drawn in. Lawrence Inuainak-Sackett, a grade 3 student, says, “Me and my older sister, we go shopping and then we use the bags for something else.” Even guinea pigs got involved. “I wanted to recycle something for my guinea pigs’ cage,” says Stephen Rigby, a grade 8 student. “I learned that the best thing is newspaper, but not the Ucravla Criuun — it has coloured ink and that could hurt them.” We use The Globe and Times.

Some projects were wonderfully inventive. “Everything,” says Cornish, “and sweeping to indicate the collection of pine, lump, lumber, metal strips and other useful stock, ‘everything comes from Canadian Tire.’ He groans, knowing I know that the town centre is in Ottawa, and three hours away by jet. ‘That’s what Mat Naugajuk calls it — he’s the teacher who runs woodworking, he explains. ‘When supplies run low, Mat says, “Time to visit our Canadian Tire” and he’s off to the town dump. Nobody recycles like Joamie.’

When asked to talk about the programme’s benefits, they don’t simply talk of an increased environmental awareness among students. Self-esteem, says one, has clearly improved. “And it did a lot for our morale as well,” adds Lesley Serkoski, another Joamie teacher, as Shelly Londsdale nods in agreement. “We got a lot of positive feedback from parents and the community. It got more parents involved in both the school and the community, too. The programme, the teachers agree, brought the parents and staff together. And, say Shelly Londsdale and Inuainak points out, it isn’t over. “The students turn off lights now without being asked,” says Londsdale. “They sense, paper, and the school and grounds are cleaner. I’ve seen Joamie kids picking things up off the road and putting them in the garbage.”

Sea Sick as they quickly get any beyond doing things for credit. They pass do these things now because it’s right.”

The Earth School experience has been a great boost, but staff members still struggle daily with the world beyond their realms. Late one morning, with the dispatch of much experience, Florence Slinery arranges for a mother to come to the school to collect her son, a boy, as sometimes it means with some students in particular, has flown out of control beyond anything the staff can cope with at school. “We know it’s just your behaviour,” she explains gently, crouched child-height. “You’re a little boy and we love you, but sometimes you just can’t take your punishment, so it’s best you go home for a little while.”

Yet, for all the difficulties and daily problems, there is clearly something very right about Joamie. Minibee or the key sign is the perfect innocents of the children. Noisy as they are often, they are usually very focused. The staff provide support and shows the children how to meet them.

Do you know what ‘statistics’ means?” she asks. One definition and several repetitions of the word later, she sends him on his way.

“There’s a real sense of community here and a sense of much more to come,” says Stephen Cornish, leaning against a not-so-desk desk. He’s not surprised that the school took so readily to Learners in Action. “It must relate to the land. When they say they’re going on the land, they’re talking about a lot more than just a physical destination. It’s spiritual.”

Visiting the science fair two days later is like visiting a familiar country — so much of the Earth School experience has been incorporated. The theme is technology and the environment, and the children are as vivid as they present their projects. I believe something Florence Slinery had told me earlier: performing and writing up all those projects for Learners in Action had been good training in research and language skills. That benefit is evident in the quality of the children’s science fair work and their confidence in discussing it.

It’s a good omen for Nunavut, the separate territory that will be carved from the eastern half of the Northwest Territories on April 1, 1999. Nunavut will need administrators and residents who display the attributes being nourished here: modern skills and the intuitive and self-confidence to use them. It will also need something that has always been valued in the North, something that the Learners in Action programme has known how to tap and that has also outlined the Earth School agenda of Joamie composition.”

Despite the fact that 40 students at Joamie have achieved Earth School status, Joamie students say they will continue their environmental efforts. "We can all do our part, you know."
Writing Homes

Across the country, people are working to preserve the former homes of Canadian writers, a mission that is giving prominence to this country’s literary heritage

By Douglas Fetherling

As set down in Barometer Rising, the 1941 novel by the late Hugh MacLennan, the Halifax Explosion of 1917, in which more than 10,000 were killed or injured, certainly makes one of the most unforgettable passages in the whole history of Canadian literature. MacLennan (who was only a lad at the time of the blast) witnessed the terrible scene from the bathroom window of a house at Sudville and South Park streets, where his family had been living for seven years.

At the time of MacLennan’s death in 1999, the Victorian town house, somewhat altered, was a hairdresser’s shop. The property was actually owned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, whose Halifax headquarters are a few steps away. By 1995, the house “had been unoccupied for two years and had been damaged by a fire and by weather,” according to Bill Donovan, the CBC’s regional director for the Maritimes. Engineers reported that it couldn’t be allowed to remain in its then-current state. Yet many people feared what would be lost if the old structure were need. Atlantic writers and publishers, along with the Friends of the Public Gardens (a group dedicated to preserving the environment in and around the nearby Halifax botanical garden), formed a committee to try to save the house and refurbish it as a memorial to MacLennan. After what Donovan calls “repeated and extended negotiations,” the plan came to nothing—this would-be preservationists found they couldn’t raise the necessary funds. On September 18, 1999, the CBC pulled the plug.

The MacLennan affair concluded in acrimony and disappointment. “The MacLennan house could have been to Halifax what Dickens House is to London,” says Elizabeth Pacey, the Nova Scotia representative of Heritage Canada, a group dedicated to preserving Canada’s historic architecture. “Instead, it’s a CBC parking lot for only a handful of cars.” Elsewhere across Canada, though, similar stories have often had happier endings, as Canadians have become increasingly aware of the value of writers’ homes not just as part of our architectural heritage but as a kind of necessary context for the complete appreciation of Canada’s literary past. In some cases, the writers in question are among our best known; in others, they are now more obscure. The degree of success achieved has also varied considerably. A couple of the sites are often deemed as being too commercial. Most, however, are simply too small known as they should be.

As a tourist attraction, no one else in Canadian literature has the drawing power of Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874-1942), famous the world over (especially in Japan) as the author of Anne of Green Gables and other works. She was born in Clifton (now called New London), P.E.I., a few kilometres from Cavendish, in a two-storey cottage built in the 1850s. Ever since 1934, when the house, which overlooks the sea, was turned over to the province by the industrialist K.C. Irving and made into a Montgomery museum, it has been attracting a growing number of visitors—currently almost 10,000 a year. This despite the fact that the writer lived there only for the first 21 months of her life.

Left motherless in infancy, Montgomery was cared for by her maternal grandparents, the Macneills, who lived on a farm at Cavendish. A 10-minute walk away was another farmhouse, the green-gabled one she borrowed for her most famous book (first published in 1908).

As a tourist attraction, no one else in Canadian literature has the drawing power of Lucy Maud Montgomery, famous the world over as the author of Anne of Green Gables
When Montgomery married and moved to Ontario in 1911, the Cavendish house, built in the early 19th century, was left vacant and soon fell to ruin. Even during the author's own lifetime, "people would come and take away bricks as memorials," says Jennie MacInnis, whose husband, John, is the late writer's first cousin once removed. To thwart trespassers, the family razed the house in the 1920s. The land has continued on in MacNeill hands, however, and in 1986 the family opened a Montgomery museum, which last year drew about 10,000 visitors. As for the farm that Montgomery used as a setting for her fiction, it was bought by the federal government in 1936 and incorporated into the newly established Prince Edward Island National Park. Over the years, the house has been restored to its 1960s appearance, and last year, according to Parks Canada, drew 31,000 visitors.

These sites, as well as other locations, are packed during the three-day Lucy Maud Montgomery festival organized by the Cavendish Area Tourist Association each August. A few islanders may complain about commercialization, but most seem thankful for the tourist revenue.

Montgomery married a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend Ewart Macdonald, and for 15 years, ending in 1926, they resided in the mansion at Leaskdale, Ont., a hamlet about 65 kilometers northeast of Toronto. She wrote half of her works there. In 1993, the township of Uxbridge bought the building from the church authorities and hopes to open it to the public eventually as yet another Montgomery museum. The renovation efforts will be aided by the fact that Montgomery took many photographs of her home, showing everything from the landscaping to the decor. In 1927, Montgomery and her husband spent a two-week holiday at Bella, Ont., about 20 kilometres west of Gravenhurst, in the Muskoka cottage country. There she was struck with the inspiration for her novel The Blue Castle.

Today, the tourist home she died at is owned by Jack and Linda Horton, who have restored it to its 1922 appearance and added Montgomery memorabilia. In their first year of operation, 1992, they had nearly 2,500 visitors. Stephen Leacock (1869-1944) was another Canuck of Montgomery's generation who got an early start on fame. "People come here from all over the world," says Daphne Mainprize, curator of the Stephen Leacock Memorial Home, once the writer's summer residence, on Old Brewery Bay near Orilla, Ont., the town Leacock used as the basis for "Mariposa" in Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town. "To them, it's a shrine." As for Leacock himself, she says, "He would probably get quite a chuckle out of the setup here, but he would no doubt be honoured too." And perhaps a little relieved, after the apparent resolution of a crisis that threatened not only the view from the house but the house's irreplaceable collection of 10,000 Leacock letters, manuscripts and books.

Leacock had owned the Brewery Bay property for years before he built the house on it in 1928. After he fell ill into his old age, to the point, says Mainprize, "that vagrants off the trains would sleep inside." In the mid-1950s a Toronto developer bought the house and land, selling them to the city of Orilla a year later (and donating the contents of the house). In the summer of 1956 the Stephen Leacock Memorial Home was opened. Since then its operating hours and the number of visitors have both grown steadily. Trouble came a few years ago when, amid loud protests, the city sold part of the land to a condominium developer; dust and dirt from construction equipment threatened the delicate collection, whose condition was jeopardized. The critics. Indeed, all the Leacock material is housed in Swanmore Hall, a new building on the grounds designed with all the necessary climate-control and fire-protection equipment.

A controversy similar in some ways to that surrounding the Leacock Memorial Home has been unfolding in Quebec. The subject is a two-storey mansard-roofed farmhouse in Vaudreuil-Dorion once inhabited by Felix Leclerc (1914-1998). The nationalistic Quebec poet and songwriter lived and worked there in the 1950s (before moving to France, where he became an international sensation, returning eventually to Canada to settle on Île d'Orléans). In 1973, Bill Craig, a friend and admirer (and one of the city's minority anglophones), purchased the property and its contents from the writer's former wife. The contents turned out to include an extensive collection of old postcards and the like, relating to Leclerc's early work. For several years now, Craig has been attempting to interest the provincial and municipal authorities and private groups in acquiring the house, which is becoming run-down. So far he has been unsuccessful. He claims various levels of government are interfering with a possible sale; the township says simply that the price Craig is asking is too high and the property too dilapidated.

The home of the poet E. Pauline Johnson (1861-1913), author of OLED and Feather and among Canada's best known natives of the past, looked for a time as though it might end up in similar limbo. Recently, however, events took a brighter turn, and the house, located on the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ont., is being reopened as an expanded and improved museum after being shut since the mid-1980s.

Chiefwood, as the house is named, was built by the poet's father, a Mohawk chief, between 1871 and 1875 and was often alluded to in Johnson's writings. She bequeathed it to the Six Nations band council, which rented it to a succession of band families until 1983, when it was opened as a museum. But the old house deteriorated, as old houses will without constant vigilance. By 1984, a leaking roof and other extensive defects forced its closure. It wasn't long before a structure once visited by dignitaries such as Edward, Prince of Wales, and Alexander Graham Bell was home to weeds and squirrels.

But the Six Nations community didn't let the matter rest there. In time, members of a younger generation took up the challenge, organizing a restoration. The critic. Indeed, the poet Daniel David Moses thought of Johnson as a role model when he was growing up on the reserve in the 1960s. "For me it was really great to see her there just across the river," he says. "I saw it every day. It helped me realize that a writing career was an option for me as well." Architects drafted plans for saving the house and turning it into a new and better museum, with its original furniture. According to Wellington States, who chairs the renovation committee, the cost, estimated at $340,000, was met partly by the federal and Ontario governments and partly by private donations the band worked to arrange. Chiefwood, he says, is expected to reopen in March 1995.

In 1986, a property developer in Neepawa, Man., wanted to razed an 1895 house that had been used most recently as a home for mentally disabled girls. The two-storey house of buff-coloured brick is where Margaret Laurence lived from the age of nine to 18. The author of such novels as The Diviners and generally considered one of Canada's most beloved writers, Laurence was still alive at the time (she died the following year) and lent her tacit support to a local committee that sprang into action and bought the place for $40,002. "It was small but in great shape," recalls Dorothy Campbell-Henderson, one of the founders of the committee, which, having acquired title, "bundled" various Canadian corporations, local businesses and individuals into helping with the cost of restoration. The Margaret Laurence Home at 312 First Avenue is now a local museum, housing the author's typewriter and various other artefacts as well as her numerous awards. One room is set aside as a research centre for scholars of Laurence and her work. When the museum was first opened, others used it as an art gallery, as well, and space set aside for local cultural groups. But as more and more Laurence memorabilia were donated, the collection expanded to fill the entire house. Last year, the spot attracted nearly 4,000 visitors. "Not exactly like Lucy Maud Montgomery's house," Campbell-Henderson confesses, but then Neepawa is rather out of the way. She is rightly proud that the whole affair is made possible only through the "thousands of hours volunteered by local people.

Meanwhile, Laurence's house at Lakefield, after being shut down in the mid-1980s, Chiefwood, the former home of E. Pauline Johnson, will soon be reopened to the public.
near Peterborough, Ont., has also found a new lease on life. This, the place where Laurence spent her last years, was inherited by her two children who, in view of the existence of the Nepperwa museum, decided to put the property on the market. As luck would have it, it was bought by a couple across the street, Ron and Joan Ward, Baptist aid officers who have worked in Somalia, where Laurence began writing in earnest in the 1950s and which was the subject of her earliest books. The Wards rent out the house to writing groups, religious and secular, including people seeking a writer’s retreat. He wasn’t a Canadian, but the novelist Wallace Stegner (1909-1993) has a special place in the hearts of readers and writers on the Prairies. For four to five years, starting in 1916, when he was seven, the American novelist lived in a simple gabled house his father had built in the community of Eastend, Sask. He drew on childhood memories of the area in several novels, including On a Darkling Plain (1940) and The Big Rock Candy Mountain (1943), as well as in later works. Sharon Butala, the esteemed Saskatchewan novelist and Eastend resident, calls him “the Herodotus of this area.” As the ancient Greek historian did in his own time and place, Stegner, she says, immortalized his own town and period. “He gave us something that is peerless in the history of this community and province.”

The story is the familiar one of neglect and initiative. In 1986, Butala became interested in saving the house, by then vacant and deteriorating, and received the slightly bemused blessing of Stegner, with whom she corresponded for a number of years. She and others raised $10,000 to purchase the structure and another $50,000 to stabilize it and restore it to its original floor plan. It is now owned and administered by the Eastend Arts Council. The group’s first initiative was to open it to the public as a Stegner museum, but, says Butala, it proved easier to obtain funding to make it a temporary home for visiting writers-in-residence. There have been a half-dozen so far, including the novelists Sean Virgo and Terry Jordan. The structure is also the site of public readings, art exhibitions and the like. The Edwards have leased the property to the community.

The story makes clear once again the sort of consensus needed to create a literary heritage museum. The fate of the Stegner homestead, for example, stands in stark contrast with that of the birthplace of the Saskatchewan novelist W.O. Mitchell, author of Who Has Seen the Wind and Jake and the Kid, who was born in Weyburn in 1914. Seven years ago, when it was rumoured that the owner of Mitchell’s boyhood home (built by the writer’s father, a druggist) was thinking of selling it, a number of local residents, including Marlene Yorkoski, the head librarian at Weyburn Public Library, tried to spur action. They tried to interest the Saskatchewan Writers Guild in buying Mitchell’s boyhood home. “Everyone in Weyburn considers Mitchell their own,” says Yorkoski, “and we thought it would be a red-hot idea.” The guild, however, didn’t have the financial resources and the idea was dropped. The three-storey house, which has since been broken up into apartments, is currently on the market.

Sometimes, it would seem, sincere volunteers just isn’t enough. Sometimes a situation requires an angel. Such was the case, for example, with what’s now called the Carr House in Victoria, where the painter and writer Emily Carr was born in 1917 and spent almost all of her first 28 years. The house at 207 Government Street, designed by Victoria’s first architect and completed in 1884, now has almost 5,000 square feet of living space, but only because one powerful individual took the initiative at a crucial point in the building’s history. Sold by Emily and her sister in 1938, the property had been subdivided and the house split into apartments. The late David Groos, a local Liberal MP, could see that the house was in an untenable position. So, after trying unsuccessfully to get others interested in saving it, he bought the structural shell in 1984, on condition that in the process the Emily Carr Foundation. The building’s future safety assured, Groos then transferred title to the Victoria Junior Chamber of Commerce, which solicited the help of the National Historic Parks Branch (now Parks Canada) in restoring the place. When the project grew too big for the local business group, the provincial government joined in. Until the early 1980s, the Carr House was open to the public and used for children’s art classes, but funds ran short and it was closed. In 1989 it was opened as a historic house museum.

After Prince Edward Island, where a virtual industry has sprung up in remembrance of Lucy Maud Montgomery and her most famous character, the place in Canada with the highest concentration of literary pilgrims is probably Dawson City, Yukon Territories. First, of course, there is the cabin of the rollicking poetaster Robert W. Service, who came to Whitehorse in 1904 (after the Gold Rush was over) and moved to Dawson four years later. Reaping from his job in a bunk, he rented a log cabin in which to write—what he did until 1912, when he left Canada rich and famous as a result of his gold-rush ballads. “The cabin became a shrine soon after he moved out,” says Michael Gates of Parks Canada’s Yukon district branch, which acquired the cabin from the municipal government in 1970 and set about restoring it. The cabin opens for three months annually and this year attracted about 13,000 visitors.

The American writer Jack London is also closely associated with the great Yukon gold rush. In 1936, a pair of trappers working about 120 kilometres from Dawson stumbled on a bush cabin with London’s name and the year 1908 in pencil on the back wall and lived there for several years. In 1964, Dick North, then a journalist, heard of the cabin’s existence and tracked down one of the trappers to find out its precise location. Then, with financial assistance from several sources, including the federal government and local business, he turned it into the London House, a museum. Opened in 1986, Dick North, then a journalist, heard of the cabin’s existence and tracked down one of the trappers to find out its precise location. Then, with financial assistance from several sources, including the federal government and local business, he turned it into the London House, a museum. Opened in 1986, the project was rescued from the brink of disaster by one powerful individual—Anita North, the writer’s niece and family memorabilia. What is important is not so much the specific public use to which writers’ former homes are put but rather that they are maintained in some form as literary heritage sites. Not only do they increase interest in our writers, but they are touchstones of a vital aspect of our culture. "They crystallized the irony and didn't gloss over it. Both got the essence of the North." And so, of course, in our own time has Jean Pierre Berton, a native of Whitehorse and author, who wrote a book about Dawson in a wooden frame house with sawdust insulation at the corner of 6th Avenue and Hanson Street along what the Klondike Vistors' Association likes to call Author's Alley (the Jack London Interpretive Centre is directly across the street and the Service cabin is just a few doors down from the centre). By now, the story is familiar. The dwelling, built in 1901, fell into desuetude after the Berton's moved out. It then passed through many owners. What is different in this case is that the rescuing angel turned out to be the author himself. In 1999 Pierre Berton bought the house and turned it over to the Yukon Arts Council. "When he did so," says Kathy Jones-Gates, former editor of The Klondike San, "it was in the understanding that it wouldn't be made into a shrine. He wanted it preserved as a working place, not something static." Accordingly, the arts council, the visitors' association and other funders have spent or committed to spend an estimated $30,000 to turn the building into a habitation for successive writers-in-residence. Still, when it opens in 1996 it will have been restored to turn-of-the-century style and will feature some Berton family memorabilia.

What is important is not so much the specific public use to which writers' former homes are put but rather that they are maintained in some form as literary heritage sites. Not only do they increase interest in our writers, but they are touchstones of a vital aspect of our culture."
Helping Kids Help Themselves

A new programme devised to introduce youngsters to community work improves both their skills and self-esteem

BY JANE FINLAYSON

Daniel Moss, a big, tough-looking 18-year-old, was always the kid trouble found too easily.

He remembers constantly lashing out at everybody and everything around him, although he still can’t say why, more often than not relying on brown rather than words to make his point. School was a frustrating bore, he says, and he “goofed off a lot.”

He was happiest playing sports, especially hockey, and he liked to play hard. The youngest of four brothers partial to roughhousing, he learned to be tough.

Now Moss is tired of living with the labels that have stuck to him for too long: “angry,” “defiant,” “aggressive.” He wants to get out from under the shadow of a bad reputation.

And he thinks he’s beginning—just maybe—to find his way.

The journey began last February, the middle of another aimless school year for Moss, when a guidance counsellor told him about a new programme for selected high school students. It involved volunteering for a community organization for three hours a week during April, May and June, followed by eight weeks of paid full-time employment with the same organization.

Was he interested? Moss said he’d give it a try.

The programme, sponsored by Imperial Oil, was called KAPW—Kids and the Power of Work. Moss, a grade 12 student at Toronto’s Northern Secondary School, was one of 20 participants chosen from four area high schools to take part.

The objective was to help certain students—such as those suffering from low self-esteem, enduring troubling home situations or generally having problems navigating the stormy seas of adolescence—broaden their experience and generally gain confidence.

“We wanted to give kids who for one reason or another were at a disadvantage a chance to excel, to believe in themselves,” says Susan Young, treasurer of the Imperial Oil Charitable Foundation, which oversees Imperial’s charitable donations and funded KAPW. “We hoped they would acquire skills that could lead to employment or even influence decisions about their own futures. We also hoped we could turn them on to the joy of volunteering.”

The KAPW students, who were recommended for the programme by their principals, were recruited and interviewed by the Volunteer Centre of Metropolitan Toronto, which matches individuals who want to volunteer with the community agencies that need them.

The students were able to choose where they worked from among 62 community agencies.

The KAPW programme was coordinated by Syrellk Bernstein, the Volunteer Centre’s tireless, dynamic manager of recruitment and referral.

Her firm hand guided KAPW relentlessly, she was in constant contact with the agencies and the students, as well as with a group of Imperial employees and volunteers, who provided additional advisory support for the students.

Richard Husbands, a tax adviser in Imperial’s comptroller’s department, was one such monitor.

He found that his role “miraculously had its degree of uncertainty and rejection. Here you were with the responsibility of being an intermediary between a social agency and a young person at risk.”

Husbands’ case Alexander Stou, a grade 12 student at Nelson A. Boylen Collegiate Institute, was an exciting, uncharted challenge.

“Once the barriers were dismantled through communication,” Husbands discovered, “the student became a captive listener, an adviser, a nonjudgmental adult, a friend. My student still calls me long after the programme has ended. You don’t think any more about whether you made a difference to his life—you know that you have.”

When Daniel Moss first met Bernstein, he had little idea of where he wanted to work but thought he’d like to be with children, particularly if he could teach them to enjoy playing the sports he loves so much.

At a recruitment interview he agreed to pursue the position with Toronto’s Eastcourt Child and Family Centre, which involved working during the summer as a counsellor at Winwoodasis, the organization’s day camp for troubled children; he received training during the period he served as a volunteer. The camp programme combines lessons in self-control and problem-solving with the usual range of summer recreational activities for children between the ages of six and 11.

“When they told me these were kids with behavioural problems, I thought I could be effective because I’d been no angel myself,” says Moss, “I’d been there.”

At camp, Moss met Jake, a nine-year-old whose mother had died shortly before camp began. Moss became a lifeline for the grieving child, and one day Jake asked him to be his big brother and to take him home with him. Moss was humbled by Jake’s intense attachment.

He also began to see something of his own younger self reflected in the behaviour of that sad, angry little boy.

“I identified with the anger,” says Moss. “I still don’t know where my own anger stemmed from, because I think basically I had a happy childhood. I’ve had support from my family—and, even though I’ve turned away from it at times. I’ve come to realize that not everyone has supportive families. At the camp I was the one who could give some support. I moved away from being so wrapped up in myself. I really thought I could make a little bit of difference...”
somewhere. I'd never felt that before."

"Most young people are very capable," says Sydelle Bernstein, "but many of them have to be convinced of it. Often all they need is one positive experience to help them see that as individuals they can make a difference. That's what KAPOW is all about, empowering youth to do something with their lives."

When Imperial asked the Volunteer Centre to set up KAPOW, the first door Bernstein knocked on was that of Howard Godsh, principal at Toronto's Oakwood Collegiate. Godsh leapt at the chance to get involved. "I sensed right away that Oakwood was an ideal school for KAPOW. We were already running our own programme to help some kids build up a sense of who they are and understand that they're worthwhile. It's a tough enough challenge with any teenager but all the more difficult in an economically depressed community such as this one, because kids will give up and say there's no point, they'll never get ahead. The KAPOW programme has been absolutely tremendous."

One by one, the other three schools came on board - Northern Secondary School, Nelson A. Boylan Collegiate Institute and Sir Sandford Fleming Secondary School. With student populations ranging from 650 to more than 2,000, the schools are a multicultural mosaic reflecting the wide-ranging ethnic diversity of the neighbourhoods the schools serve. At Sir Sandford Fleming, the smallest of the schools, students come from approximately 80 different ethnic and cultural groups and among them speak about 32 languages.

For Irene McEllern, a vice-principal at Sir Sandford Fleming, KAPOW brought back her own experiences as a teenaged volunteer. "For some, this may be the first experience of seeing people doing something for nothing," she says. "It's a powerful lesson to learn how to give of yourself."

Karen Thomas, who is in her final year at Sir Sandford Fleming, believes that the experience KAPOW gave her is invaluable. "I became more independent because I was encouraged to make some decisions about how to approach my work," says Thomas, who worked in the office of Big Brothers of Metropolitan Toronto. "I had to make up my own mind. It was as if I was testing myself when I had to figure out the best way to do things. I think I passed the test." For Thomas, the key was being valued by co-workers - it gave her the confidence to trust in her own ideas. "I was surprised to find out," she says, "that my opinion was mattered and that I was included in some of the decision-making."

The executive director of Big Brothers, Barbara Hickey, says Thomas was a self-starter who gained lots of varied administrative experience in the office, excelling at the assorted duties assigned to her. "At first she was extremely shy, so it was deeply satisfying to watch her mature over the summer and successfully take on every job we gave her."

Thomas is a thoughtful, soft-spoken person whose ambition is to study business administration and start her own business, preferably a nightclub featuring the blues and tap music she loves so much. "She is the elder of two children and says she feels unrelenting pressure to excel. It is an expectation largely self-imposed, although she says her father, who doesn't live with the family, has strong views about the importance of attending university and frequently expresses them."

mostly Thomas is driven by a fierce desire to be independent and move away from the North York neighborhood known as "The Jungle," where she has lived all her life. An area well known for the wrong reasons, it is a maze of winding streets plagued by drug trafficking, drug use and violence. It is also a community where the trust between police and a largely black population is fragile at best.

Thomas is well aware of what she calls "the ignorance and senseless violence" in her neighborhood - she has seen friends hurt, friends die. But she also knows there are a good many people who are successfully raising children there, and she resents the fact that people are stereotyped because they live in the area. It is because they have so often been lacking in her life that small kindnesses, acceptance and recognition are important to Thomas. At the Big Brothers office she was constantly reminded how helpful people were; and that they took the time to thank her for her efforts. Thomas says she will remember these gestures of appreciation when she has her own employees.

Looking back, Bernstein says KAPOW exceeded her wildest expectations, despite the heartache of one student who completed her volunteer hours but dropped out - she decided she didn't want to work during the summer any more."

By summer's end, Daniel Moss sounds weary. He is drained from the unremitting emotional demands of Wmoodness. But he's proud that he stuck it out, and he believes that he more than met the goal he set for himself to make the camp experience positive for the young people he says gleefully, "Those kids really took to me."

"You know, in the first place it was a big deal for me to even show up regularly. On the one morning I didn't, I realized I'd let a lot of people down and that they cared that I'd let them down. That's what I knew that I really belonged," he was never late again.

He also says observing the behaviour of troubled youngsters helped him recognize his own habit of what he calls "constantly setting myself up for failure."

Some timely guidance from staff advised him on establishing goals and planning the steps to realize them led him to believe he has "a fine chance."

"I'm more aware of myself. I know it's one thing to say this and quite another to actually act differently. But I'm ready to try again at school and just get on with my life. Sure, I still get angry, but I'm learning how to pace myself, how to take time out and deal with frustrations - then people will always let you down, but I'm trying to stop letting myself down." Moss sums up his experiences: "This summer I got lots of positive strokes for everything I tried to do. People noticed that I was trying hard. And they cared. I liked the teamwork at camp. It was all about teamwork. And meeting great people." He wants to go back. More important, the camp wants him back.

"Without KAPOW, we would never have met Daniel, and if we had, I don't think we would have given him the chance because initially he seemed angry and unapproachable," says Leena Augerini, camp director at Earl Bouchard Child and Family Centre. "But Sydelle encouraged us to get beyond that tough exterior and give him a chance. I'm glad we did, because he's a very caring, giving person, and it wasn't long before we discovered it."

"Daniel's an absolute natural with these kids," she adds. "He understands them because he's not too far removed from where they're at. He became an excellent role model with obvious empathy for their difficulties. I can't too his horns enough."

Imperial and the Volunteer Centre believe KAPOW is ready to spread its wings, too, and hope next year to tap into the national network of about 200 volunteer centres across Canada and interest other corporations in sponsoring KAPOW program."

"The programme seems to have been of tremendous benefit to the students involved," says Imperial's Susan Young. "Just think of the benefits if KAPOW programmes are run across the country!"
Scenes
From a Life

Memories, reflects a Canadian writer, allow us to come to terms with the past and help shape our future.

By KENNETH BAGNELL

My memory has always been a random thing, unlike the memories of some writers, who can recall almost every word they have spoken or heard since they were five. But now, with my 60th birthday just days away, I have begun to search my memory, hoping to gather its casual mix of words and pictures and place them in a more coherent form, to clarify the fragments and perhaps sense what memory confers upon life, especially my own.

I suppose there are people who don’t want to remember but only to forget. They try to wipe clean the slate of memory as if to expunge yesterday or to pretend there was no yesterday. Naturally they can’t; yesterday is never gone—not truly. “Time,” says a Chinese proverb, “is that which goes away and becomes the past; that which arrives and becomes the present.” Better to look at the past, come to terms with it, perhaps learn from it. Without memory the past would be lost.

The past, of course, cannot be relived, although some of us attempt to do so. We go back in

Now, with my 60th birthday just days away, I have begun to search my memory, hoping to gather its casual mix of words and pictures and place them in a more coherent form to forget. They try to wipe clean the slate of memory as if to expunge yesterday or to pretend there was no yesterday. Naturally they can’t; yesterday is never gone—not truly. “Time,” says a Chinese proverb, “is that which goes away and becomes the past; that which arrives and becomes the present.” Better to look at the past, come to terms with it, perhaps learn from it. Without memory the past would be lost.

The past, of course, cannot be relived, although some of us attempt to do so. We go back in

search of a garden from our past, only to find the garden is gone. A friend once travelled halfway across the country to visit the house he had been born and raised in and, indeed, had spent half his life in. But it had passed through several owners, each of whom had changed its configurations, and it seemed completely different: the living room had become the kitchen. It was not just a disappointment but cast a permanent shadow over the clear recollections of his memory.

Once, in the late 1980s, I had work to do in Italy and went to a small village called Revo, a place of towering silence and the smell of earth-brown streets high in the mountains of the Trentino region. There I met an aged man who, learning I was from Canada, told me that he had immigrated to Toronto in the 1960s and had spent happy years there until, for personal reasons, he had returned to Italy. But his heart remained in Toronto. His eyes closed as he tried his best to explain how happy he had been in the city. “In Toronto,” he said, “for me, every day was a good day.” If only his wife would agree, he said, he would take the plane back there that night. He would go to the place where he had

spent so many happy days as a barman, the Walker House Hotel. I did not tell him, of course, that the Walker House, an old world place, was long gone, and in many ways so was the Toronto he remembered. Instead, I asked why it was that Toronto was so warmly held in his memory. He replied with two simple words, “The people.” Then he passed, and in case I hadn’t heard clearly, he repeated them, “The people.” That is also what the rooms of my own memory hold, not ideas, formulas and principles I have heard, but recollections of people I have known—their voices, their characters and sometimes their contributions to my life, which left me stronger, perhaps better.

A friend who knew his past and learned from it so well that he almost never repeated a mistake once told me that if he heard certain sounds—the closing of a screen door on a summer morning, the thump of a puck on an outdoor rink on a winter night—a sea of recollections would come flooding back. I know what he meant, at least in part. In my own case it is as if I remember not with the ear but the nose. Certain smells will set the tides of memory rolling—the first scene of a November
The second began swiftly, surprisingly, in the first years of the 1960s, the decade of upheaval, when I found myself suddenly moving from a village of 200 people in the Maritimes to a city I had never even visited, Toronto, then on the threshold of its greatest growth. I was dropped into a new life—journalism—one that involved travel, which was to become, despite one interval of a dozen years when I served as editor of this magazine, a major aspect of my life, so that even now there is a travel bag beside my bed, always open, as if ready for packing and departure.

The Second World War looms largest in my early memory, as it probably does in the memories of all who are my age and in the collective memory of all who lived through it. It was the defining event of my childhood and is woven so thoroughly into my life that it is hard to believe that all around me are people—many almost my age—who have no memory of that time, when almost every man old enough to serve wore a uniform, when the trains were crammed with soldiers waving goodbye. I was five when it began, 10 when it ended, leaving me with memories of grim years in which I learned that even a small child cannot be sheltered from the unfolding of history.

I recall almost as a blur, as it was looking through a window-sprain on a rainy day, the very early years when my uncles on both sides, six of them, all left for the ominous uncertainty of the army and air force. On Sundays I sat silently at the table, beside the dining room window, as my parents, like others, entertained service men stationed nearby. There were blackout and rationing, and in the streets, a grey anxiety descended like the snow. But among all the memories, one remains more vivid than others—and more instructive.

On an afternoon in the early 1940s, my mother and I were sitting in the living room when a woman came up the steps of our veranda. She had one of the worst jobs of the war years, delivering tragic telegrams to families whose members were overseas. She held in one hand; it was addressed to my mother, the eldest sister and therefore the one to whom such telegrams would be sent. It was the message all families dreaded and many thousands received. Her brother, my uncle, had been lost over Germany. My father came home immediately from work, his step quick on the sidewalk, his face as grave as I would ever see it. We went, the three of us, to the soft green countryside beyond the town to carry the terrible news to my mother's family.

The memories of that day remain clear despite the fact that I was so young and the overcast of time. The clearest perhaps is of a sentence spoken by my grandmother, a strong woman named Sarah Andrews, who with my grandfather, a coal miner, had raised a large family. After the family had been told the news, she did her best to console her grief-stricken children, two of them other sons in uniform home on leave, and then went to her room alone for a while. In time she came back, quietly helped prepare the evening meal and then summoned everyone to the table. There was a silence. Then she spoke with an emphasis not at all common to her: "We must all carry on." Her words have gone on sounding in my own life, not out of mere sentiment but because they are, in the end, the best advice there is to guard against self-defeat and self-pity. No matter how strong our faith—or how helpful our therapist—in the end we must reach within, find our courage and carry on.

Memory is not just a repository but an instructor. And no passage in my memory impresses me more than the events of the spring of 1951. My boyhood ended in a stroke, so swiftly that for years afterwards I was to wonder if it had ended too suddenly. I had decided, in the years leading up to my high school graduation, to enter the ministry. I had been involved—much too involved for the sake of my studies—in almost everything that drew upon the human voice: orating, debating, preaching, acting, broadcasting. Perhaps because of that or perhaps because of the innocence of youth, I was designated a minister of sorts even before I set foot in university.

Around the middle of June that year I took a bus from my home in Nova Scotia and headed to a speck of a village in New Brunswick set in a deep valley overlooked by thick stands of spruce and maples. The church, small and white and glowing in the sun, sat at a crossroads on the floor of a valley called Pleasant Vale, not far from Moncton. I was appointed to spend about three months there as the "student minister" prior to entering university, presiding over most things an ordained minister did except weddings, baptisms and communion. Apart from my congregation in the village, I had two others. The three congregations, each of which had about 10 families, were roughly six kilometers apart. I would hold a service for each every Sunday, one in the morning, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. I would officiate at funerals when necessary, I was 18 years old.

On my first Sunday I conducted the morning service, and after lunch a family I was boarding with kindly drove me the distance to my second church. We arrived at half hour early at the building on a small knoll, almost enveloped in bush. They left, I waited for my afternoon congregation. The time for the service arrived. One hour passed, then two. No one came. There had been a mistake, and no one knew I was to be there that Sunday. I was in a remote and distant place, the woods seemed dense the elders almost met one another across a ribbon of hot dirt road. There was only one thing to do: walk to the last church for the final service. I did, and while it was a long and lonely walk—six kilometres in new shoes I had been given for graduation—I arrived just in time for the service. I was met by expectant and grateful people, some of whom reminded friends for many years.

My parishioners, without exception, were unfailingly kind and respectful, as most people of that long past era were to young people entering the clergy. But I found the summer difficult. I was shy, and to deal with my shyness I donned a professional demeanour when I conducted services. I was, at the beginning...
all spoke one refrain: Toronto is cold, smug, dull, arrogant, self-centred, materialistic, self and carpeted with wall-to-wall boredom. And it has no restlessness worthy of the name. Well, perhaps its cuisine was ordinary, but as for the rest, the city, certainly in my experience, proved just the opposite. I took to the city the first week, in fact the first day I arrived. There were several reasons, but one in particular stood out: the city offered opportunities with an even hand. To me at least, it seemed clear that merit mattered much more than class and connections. And the city was friendly - at least as friendly as one has a right to expect any city to be. I felt this instantly, with the welcome of The Observer's editor, A.C. Forrest, who brought me to Toronto and became the most influential mentor of my life. He was a man of stature and generosity, who even helped my wife and me find a house, helped me become a writer, and very early in my career gave me large responsibilities I did not know I could fulfill. Now, many years after his death, there is never a week, even on the day I do not recall his example - and all of his calm and reasoned perspective on life, never making much of an issue of it than it deserved, and a virtue he exhibited in his own professional life, courage.

Toronto, brimming with life and the fresh energy and culture of European immigrants - Italian, British, German, Greek, Portuguese - became my home for good. I was swept up in its blossoming optimism and soon felt there was little I could not accomplish. For that spirit alone I would be permanently grateful to Toronto, so grateful that while I never argue with those who over-hype its mistakes, I keep in the past, I myself do not join in the criticisms. Its past, in this century and before, was the foundation for the opportunities it offered me and many others of my generation from all parts of the country and the world.

More than 10 years later, I spend more and more of my time by the TLs and recall my own past and the past that was the beginning of all that is. Sometimes, when the day is not yet over and the long light is still on the water, I am reminded again of what I sometimes said as a youth and still believe - in the evening of our lives, the past and the future meet in a time that is eternity. The currents of that river carry the names of those I have known and will remember for ever. Now, in the earliest shadow of the day, I am one with the waters and with memory.

The voices around me when I came to Toronto all spoke one refrain: Toronto is cold, smug, dull, arrogant, self-centred and materialistic. But the city, in my experience, proved just the opposite. 

I wandered slowly past photographs of mothers and children and traditional family portraits and eventually came to Ernie Kroeger Family Stories, a moving series of photographs, accompanied by words and documents, that traces the photographer's family for several generations. A rear view mirror shows a carefree couple cooing during the early part of the century. I conclude that the couple in Kroeger's great-grandparents and that the photograph was taken in Russia. The accompanying explanation tells us that the photographer's great-grandfather became mayor of a town called Nikolaipol and was murdered during the revolution. Then there is a picture of Kroeger's grandfather taken, I believe, in a Siberian work camp. Beside it is a letter written by the grandfather to his family in Canada asking for help. He later died in the camp, we learn. Kroeger's story is a familiar one to many Canadians, whose family histories contain stories of tragedy in distant lands. 

I come to a work described by Maureen McEvoy, the museum's program manager, as one of the most moving in the show. It is of the wall of a prison cell at Archambault maximum security institution in Quebec. A prisoner stands before it. He seems to be looking at the only item on the wall other than graffiti. It is a snapshot of a newborn baby - his child, one assumes. The work speaks of parental love and the sadness of separation. "It speaks," says McEvoy, "to all of us." 

Another poignant series is Judith Lerner Crowker's One in Five... so named because it deals with the issue of single-parent families, in which one in every five Canadian children is raised. It begins with a photograph of Crawley, her husband and their two small children. Accompanying it are the words, "Parenting alone began when he crashed his motorcycle and died." We see the children grow up. The boy has no memory of his father. The last frame records a conversation between the son, Gloeden, and Crawley. "One Father's Day I told Gloeden that I was angry at Michael," said Crawley. "How can you be angry at a dead person?" Gloeden asked. "Easy... Because he got on that motorcycle when he was drunk, because he's not helping with child care, because he's missed out on you guys..."

I move on to Donna Ferrato's portrait of a mother and baby. The two are asleep, facing each other. The mother, with her aquiline nose in perfect profile, is exquisitely beautiful. Beside the picture are the words: "A mother and her infant son slept peacefully after arriving at the Women Against Abuse Shelter. The next morning she said, 'It was our first night in a long, long time.'"