

ANNAPOLIS HERITAGE SOCIETY

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ANNAPOLIS
HERITAGE
SOCIETY

Newsletter – Summer 2006

www.annapolisheritagesociety.com

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The Annapolis Royal Train Station Project...saving a "building of stories"

On Sunday, June 11th, more than 200 people visited the restored Annapolis Royal Train Station during its afternoon Open House. I was very gratified that so many people took the time and trouble to come and see this small building, so important to the story of their lives, and to the history of the Annapolis Royal area. Here is a thumbnail sketch of that history, and it begins with the DAR – the Dominion Atlantic Railway.

The DAR ran for 36 days short of a hundred years in the northwestern part of Nova Scotia, primarily through an agricultural district known as the Annapolis Valley. It was created on October 1st, 1894, through the merger of the Windsor and Annapolis Railway (which operated between Windsor and Annapolis Royal, as the name would suggest) and the Western Counties Railway (which operated between Yarmouth and Digby). The gap between Annapolis and Digby (the so-called "missing link") was closed in the early 1890s with government assistance. The merger of the two railway companies then permitted trains to operate directly between Yarmouth and Halifax.

A key component of the DAR's passenger and freight business was its connections with various ferries that operated in the Bay of Fundy and the Gulf of Maine. By 1904, the DAR owned and operated twelve steamships and ran services between Yarmouth-Boston, Yarmouth-New York and Digby-Saint John.

These ferry services launched the DAR into the forefront of Nova Scotia's budding tourism industry, bringing travelers from the United States and Upper Canada into the unspoiled Nova Scotia countryside. To cater to these travelers, the railway subsequently built a series of hotels... the "Digby Pines" resort hotel in Digby, the "Cornwallis Inn" in Kentville and the "Grand Hotel" in Yarmouth.

On November 13, 1911, the Canadian Pacific Railway (the CPR) leased the DAR and all its subsidiaries. This permitted the DAR to retain its operating independence and corporate identity.

During the First and Second World Wars, the DAR played a critical regional transportation role, serving HMCS Cornwallis, RCAF Station Greenwood, RCAF Station Stanley and Aldershot Military Camp. Post-war, the DAR was an important mode of travel, but by the late 60s, with the advent of Highway 101 and new ferry terminals in Saint John and Digby that did not allow for rail-side transfers at the dock, passenger numbers declined.



Northeast end of the Annapolis Royal train station after its restoration.

By the 1980s, the DAR/CPR transferred operation of the Halifax-Yarmouth passenger service to VIA Rail, a Crown corporation. In January of 1990, federal government cuts to VIA Rail meant the end of the line for the Halifax-Yarmouth service. The last train stopped in Annapolis Royal in March of 1990. The track was taken up shortly afterward, and the train station was closed.



Decorative structural braces at the Annapolis Royal Train Station

A new station on the track

But let's go back to 1913. The old Annapolis Royal passenger station, located closer to Allains Creek, had burned down, and people wanted it replaced. Here is an excerpt from the *Annapolis Spectator* of June 12th.

"The new station is an assured fact. As a result of Mr. Gifkins' visit, the much needed new railway station will be located on the land back of the Rice property, now occupied by Joe Edwards. Victoria Street will be extended to make the proper approach."

And here is one from the *Annapolis Spectator* of March 12, 1914.

"The new railroad station was opened on Monday. A large crowd of citizens was on hand to see the first train come in."

Mr. Gifkins had kept his promise, and in only nine months, Annapolis Royal had a "fancy" train station, designed in the Arts and Crafts style by the CPR's chief railway architect in Montreal. Unlike other DAR stations, usually constructed of wood, the Annapolis Royal station was built of more expensive brick, with a slate roof.

Why build a "fancy" station in Annapolis Royal? It was to impress and encourage the tourists getting off those DAR trains and ferries - coming to visit old Fort Anne, or stay the summer at Milford House or fish and canoe at Kejimikujik. The station was, in other words, part of the DAR's marketing plan, and it was built to be beautiful.

Regrettably, its beauty lasted only as long as its usefulness. After the final train went by in 1990, the station was opened sporadically, but by early 2002, when I first considered restoring it, it was flooded to the floor joists, long boarded up and left to rot. And all its stories were boarded up with it...it had no voice.

The restoration of the Annapolis Royal train station began in earnest in July of 2005 when we removed all the rotten floors, sills, joists and supporting beams. We then installed French drains around the perimeter of the building, which finally succeeded in keeping the water out of the basement. That task was followed by the installation of all new wiring, plumbing, electrical and heating systems, although the radiators in the two waiting rooms are original to the building.

We were able to restore all the windows and the oak wainscot in the station, a huge accomplishment given their state in 2005, and a tribute to the Burrell brothers who did the work. Even the glass windowpanes are original, saved (except for five) by the sheets of plywood that made the station look so sad from the street while it was boarded up.

We were able to save the stationmaster's desk and office, the luggage room's original sliding door hardware and the ticket window's brass grille. The only structural changes made to the original design of the station were the transformation of the main washroom into a kitchen and the insertion of a door into the original luggage room.

So, the train station visitors saw during the Open House on June 11th is essentially the same station that had been built 92 years before in 1914. It is a tribute to the workmanship of that time that so much could be saved by today's local area craftsmen, all of whom deserve an enormous amount of credit for their dedication to the project.

Is it worth all the time, money, and plain hard work to save a "building of stories" like the train station? If I ever had any doubts about the power of transformation, they were erased by the light streaming through those restored windows and the expressions on the faces of people at the Open House. One woman said to me that afternoon "You will never know what this means to me. You have brought back my childhood."

Yes, I'd say it was worth it. It was truly worth it.

Jane Nicholson
Chair, Communications Committee

Sources:

Ness, Gary W. Canadian Pacific's Dominion Atlantic Railway, Vol. 1, Calgary, Alberta: B.R.M.N.A. 1988

Ness, Gary W. Canadian Pacific's Dominion Atlantic Railway, Vol. 2, Calgary, Alberta: B.R.M.N.A. 1995

President's message

At the annual spring meeting of the Annapolis Heritage Society, longtime member and area historian Peggy Armstrong gave a presentation on the origin and early history of the organization. She recounted the energy and determination of founding spirit, the late Marguerite Wagner, who, with her husband Ralph purchased the O'Dell House in the 1960s, and around whom an active and enthusiastic group of like-minded heritage buffs coalesced. Originally intent on saving the threatened buildings in the lower part of town, Historic Restoration Enterprises as it was known then, soon became the repository for artifacts and archival material donated by area citizens. Marguerite's contacts within the community and with members of Nova Scotia's museums, archives and library systems has served the organization very well over the years, and the Wagner's contributions to the Annapolis Heritage Society can't be overstated. News of Ralph's recent passing gives us pause to remember those whose ideas and efforts we carry on.

It is timely then that the interim report of the province's Heritage Strategy Task Force was released on the heels of Peggy's talk on the "roots" of our organization. Despite an ever-increasing awareness within communities of the value of heritage to a culture's wellbeing (as demonstrated by Peggy's chronology of our organization's growth over the years), government recognition of the same has lagged in the past. The interim report acknowledges some long-standing problems, notably the lack of adequate funding to maintain community museums and their collections, and the need for heritage protection legislation with more teeth. This is an interim report, and additional comments are invited before September 1, 2006. I urge all members to read the interim report and press your M.L.A. for the legislation when the final report is submitted.

Summer Intern Jennifer Donovan

Recent visitors to the O'Dell House Museum may have seen a new face diligently working at a computer in the AHS Genealogy Centre. Jennifer Donovan has come to the AHS as an intern from the Masters of Museum Studies program at the University of Toronto.

Jennifer's principle responsibilities have been to write a detailed report about the AHS artifact collections and the proposed move of parts of the collection to a new storage building on the O'Dell House Museum property. This report will be critically important as the Society moves forward with what we have started to call the AHS Artifact Protection Project.

During her time with the AHS, Jennifer has also played a role in many of our ongoing projects. She has built a small exhibit for National Aboriginal Day and assisted in the assembly of the Paint the

Town Revisited exhibit. Additionally, she has worked with volunteers in our collections management department, presented a workshop on artifact handling at the Digby Annapolis Museums Committee's staff training day and started a full inventory (including writing individual condition reports) of artifacts that are on display at the O'Dell House Museum. The AHS would like to thank Jennifer for her efforts. We are very lucky to have Jennifer this summer.



Intern Jennifer Donovan wearing an 1830s reproduction dress in front of the O'Dell House Museum.

In Memoriam

The Annapolis Heritage Society would like to offer our condolences to the family of Ralph Wagner on his recent passing. As one of our founding members, many of our Society's activities would not have been possible without Ralph's dedication and generosity.

AHS / David Armstrong Memorial Scholarship

The Annapolis Heritage Society awarded its first annual \$1000 scholarship at the graduation ceremonies of the Annapolis West Education Centre in Annapolis Royal last month. Society chair, Ian Lawrence, and Peggy Armstrong were on hand to present the award. The recipient of the 2006 AHS/David Armstrong Memorial Scholarship was Tim Cress who plans to further his studies in history and then to go on to Education at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. As part of the application process, Tim presented a proposal for a school tour of the AHS sites and specifically, the O'Dell House Museum. His ideas were both creative and practical and will likely be put to good use the next time a school group visits.

For more general details about the scholarship, visit the "About Us" section of our website www.annapolisheritagesociety.com.

Sherry Caldwell,
Chair, AHS Education and Outreach Committee

Interiors and Artifacts at North Hills Museum

On July 22, North Hills Museum hosted an event called Interiors and Artifacts. This event featured many prominent Nova Scotian artists who were invited to paint paintings using the artifacts and grounds at North Hills Museum as their inspiration. Included among the artists were Tom Forrestall, Sheila Tinker, Rick Zenkner, Jane Racine, Ray Sanford. Additionally, Deborah Kuzyk and Ray Mackie are contributed studio pieces inspired by the site.

Throughout the month of August, these works of art will be on display at the museum and available for purchase. A portion of the proceeds of these sales goes toward the ongoing operation of North Hills Museum. Any pieces that have not sold by the end of August will be sold at a silent auction during our Labour Day weekend tea. For more information on this event, please call North Hills Museum at 902-532-2168.



Tom Forrestall painting in the master bedroom at North Hills Museum during Artifacts and Interiors.

The Sinclair Inn Demystified

The Sinclair Inn Museum is certainly one of the most interesting and historically important museums in Canada. Not only is it one of the oldest timber framed houses in Canada, but it also contains examples of early Acadian architectural methods in the form of the wattle and daub clay wall construction. What can be confusing about the museum, however, are its origin as two separate homes. This article seeks to clarify some of this history.

The front portion of the building was built in 1710 by Jean Baptiste Soullard and his wife Francoise Louise Comeau. Soullard moved from Quebec to work as a gunsmith and silversmith in Port Royal. Sadly, the family did not stay in Port Royal long after the home was completed because in 1710 the English captured the town. It was at this time that its

name was changed to Annapolis Royal. The house itself was sold sometime before September of 1713 to John Adams and the Soullards moved to Quebec shortly afterwards.

The back and largest portion of the museum is the hardest to date. It is believed that this section was originally built sometime between 1708-1711 by Jacques David dit Pontiff the Garrison's surgeon, and his wife Jeanne de Saint-Etienne de la Tour. This building replaced three buildings Pontiff owned (one which contained a billiard table, one that served as a hospital and the third his home) which were burned in 1707 in an attack by New Englanders¹. This building is referred to as the Skene home because it is believed that William Skene bought the home from Pontiff after moving to Annapolis Royal in 1711.

Unfortunately, deeds from this time are lacking so the origins of this home were arrived at through other means. One clue found within the home itself was what appeared to be the name Skene (the letters 'Sk' are very visible) and a date engraved on a window ledge (the digits '17' are very clear, and the date appears to be 1719). This indicates that this was in fact the home which Skene had purchased from Pontiff. Adding to this is a study performed by scientists from Mount Allison University, whereby they attempted to determine the age of the home through a technique called Dendrocronology. Dendrocronology is method of dating wood by taking core samples, in this case samples from structural timbers throughout the home. The information is then correlated with data from tree samples in the area. From this, an approximate time The tree's age can be determined, providing a time frame as to when the tree was cut down and used to build the home. Through this method it was determined that the home was indeed built in approximately 1711.

The Soullard and Skene houses were brought together in 1781 when Frederick Sinclair and his wife Mary, two recent immigrants to the area, bought them both. The latter was moved from the adjacent lot and attached to the back of the Soullard house. This allowed the Sinclairs to build a large inn and tavern. It was at this time that the Georgian style still seen on the exterior of the building was established.

Our understanding of the Sinclair Inn continues to evolve as more studies are done. Within the last three years, there has been both archaeology and dendrochronology testing done at the site. As with any good mystery, this testing often answers one question while it poses four or five more. With an unparalleled history and plenty of questions left to be answered, this museum will continue to charm visitors for years to come.

By Kory Wade
AHS Interpretive Supervisor

Heritage Strategy Task Force Interim Report

On June 21 the provincial Heritage Strategy Task Force interim report was released. Included in the document were 49 recommendations on a range of issues affecting the heritage community, including the funding of museums and archives, the preservation of cemeteries, archaeological awareness, protection of intangible culture and promotion of cultural diversity. This document has far reaching implications for the way in which heritage and museums are seen in this province.

The initial thoughts from the Annapolis Heritage Society are that the Task Force has done an admirable job in collection and deciphering a wide variety of information. Its findings about the state of museums in Nova Scotia are quite accurate. We also applaud recommendations like the elimination of the loophole that allows developers to significantly modify or destroy registered historic properties after a one year waiting period. On the negative side, we are somewhat disappointed that there are no recommendations concerning the preservation and conservation of artifacts. We feel that these activities which are crucial to the long term needs of artifact collections should be addressed in the final report.

Voluntary Planning, the group that organized the Task Force, is currently accepting feedback on the interim report. This will allow the Task Force to adjust and modify any recommendations before a final report is presented to the provincial Cabinet. AHS recommends that our members read the document and send their thoughts to Voluntary Planning. The report, as well as a digital response mechanism, is available on the group's website <http://www.gov.ns.ca/vp/>. The deadline for responses is September 1, 2006.

Congratulations Kory Wade

The Annapolis Heritage Society would like to offer its congratulations to Kory Wade on his recent graduation from Acadia University with a degree in History and Political Science. Kory, the AHS Interpretive Supervisor, is currently spending his fifth summer as an interpreter at the O'Dell House and Sinclair Inn Museums. We would also like to wish him luck as he begins his Bachelor of Education degree this Fall.

AHS 2006 Fundraising Raffle

The Annapolis Heritage Society is thrilled to announce that that we have been donated an oil painting by Cluny Maher, one of Nova Scotia's most renowned artists, for our 2006 fundraising raffle. The painting entitled *Railway Bridge on Cornwallis River, Kentville* is a beautiful example of the work of an artist who has been called the "pre-eminent landscape artist of Maritime Canada". The painting will be on display at the O'Dell House

museum until the prize is drawn on December 15, 2006.

Cluny Maher was born in 1941 in Frampton, Dorchester County, south of Quebec City in the province of Quebec. After receiving a Bachelor of Arts (1963) and a Bachelor of Education (1964) from Loyola College in Montreal, he taught for twelve years in the public school system. In 1973 he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Sir George Williams University (Concordia).

In 1977 he moved to Nova Scotia with his family and a year later settled in Tupperville in the Annapolis Valley. This beautiful rural landscape continues to be an inspiration. He has exhibited and sold his work in several locations throughout Canada and the United States. In 1994, the Maher Gallery opened in Tupperville and most recently moved to its location in Lunenburg on the province's South Shore.

Tickets for this painting cost \$5.00 and will be available at the O'Dell House Museum and on Saturday mornings at the AHS table at the Annapolis Royal Farmers and Trader's Market. The proceeds from this raffle will be used to assist with the ongoing renovations at the O'Dell House Museum, the AHS Artifact Protection Project, and the general operations of the Society. For a preview of the painting, please check Events and Exhibits section of the Society's website www.annapolisheritagesociety.com.

Annapolis Heritage Society

136 St George Street

PO BOX 503

ANNAPOLIS ROYAL, N.S.

B0S 1A0

Telephone: (902) 532-7754

Fax: (902) 532-0700

www.annapolisheritagesociety.com

Email: historic@ns.aliantzinc.ca

President

Ian Lawrence

Executive Director

Ryan Scranton



Family History Day 2006: Untangling Your Roots Genealogical Conference

September 9, 2006

Champlain Hall Cornwallis Park, NS

Registration cost \$50.00

Schedule is Subject to Change

8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:45	Keynote Speaker: <i>Dr. Allan Marble (GANS)</i> Topic: Cottage Hospitals & Poor Farms
9:45 – 10:00	BREAK
10:00 – 11:00	1. Mayflower Descendants – <i>J. Gordon Wood</i> 2. What Archaeology can teach us about our Acadian ancestors – <i>Dr. Marc Lavoie – Universite St-Anne</i>
11:00 – 12:00	1. Planters and Pioneers – <i>Bria Stokesbury, Curator, Kings Historical Society</i> 2. How to use a public library for genealogical research – <i>Joanne McCarthy, Halifax Regional Library</i> 3. Tombstones (outside event) – <i>Deborah Trask, Gravestone Preservation Advice</i>
12:00 – 1:00	LUNCH
1:00 – 1:45	1. Historic Places Initiative – <i>Jill Scott, HPI Senior Registrar</i> 2. Black History – <i>Speaker TBA</i>
1:45 – 2:30	1. Internet Research Sites / Genealogy How To – <i>Luella Marshall</i> 2. Genealogy's role in Tourism – <i>Lisa MacIsaac, Nova Scotia Tourism Development Officer</i>
2:30 – 2:45	BREAK
2:45 – 3:30	1. Loyalists – <i>Speaker TBA</i> 2. Mi'Kmaq – <i>Speaker TBA</i>
3:30 – 4:30	Question and Answer Period – <i>Dr. Terrance Punch</i>
Dusk	Garrison Cemetery Tour, Annapolis Royal – <i>Alan Melanson, Historical Association of Annapolis Royal</i> NOTE: Must sign up and provide own transportation for evening tour

For more information please call the AHS Genealogy Centre at 902-532-7754 or email
historic@ns.aliantzinc.ca

To register, please send your name, address and email along with your cheque to:

**Macdonald Museum
P.O. Box 925,
Middleton, N.S. B0S 1P0**

This event is co-hosted by the Digby Annapolis Museums Committee – Annapolis Valley Historical Society (Macdonald Museum), James House Museum, Annapolis Heritage Society (O'Dell House Museum), Admiral Digby Museum, and Islands Museum.

Annapolis Heritage Society Annual Giving

This is your chance to help the Annapolis Heritage Society preserve, present and promote your history.

The AHS has always relied on the generosity of its members, whether in donating artefacts, archival material, cash or hours of volunteer effort. Our leadership in developing museums and supporting heritage preservation has much to do with our members. As both the Federal and Provincial governments continue to decrease their support of heritage based activities we are constantly searching for new ways to replace these long time sources of funds.

Donations to Annual Giving help us to meet basic operating needs, expand existing programs and services, and build our collections. It is only through the generosity of our members and friends that we are able to maintain a high level of service.

Your support is essential to our future. Please help us to ensure that **your** history has a secure home. Thank you for your ongoing support of the Annapolis Heritage Society.

Yes, I would like to make a gift of:

\$25 _____ **\$50** _____ **\$100** _____ **\$250** _____ **Other** _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Prov/State _____ Postal/Zip Code _____ Email: _____

Please use my gift to support:

General Operations _____ Other _____

Please make cheques payable to: **Annapolis Heritage Society**. All donations \$25 and above will be issued a Canadian tax receipt.

AHS Annual Giving Fund
PO Box 503
Annapolis Royal, NS
B0S 1A0

AHS Request for Volunteers

The AHS is constantly in need of volunteer labour. It is only through the dedication and generosity of our volunteers that the AHS has been able to play an important role in preserving, promoting and presenting the heritage of Annapolis County. In this edition of the newsletter, we will profile a few of the volunteer committees and opportunities that can be found at the AHS. If you are interested in helping out with one of the following positions or have other skills you would like to share, we would be thrilled to hear from you. We greatly appreciate the generosity and dedication of the volunteers who allow the AHS to function. Please contact us at one of the numbers given below or at 902-532-7754 or historic@ns.aliantzinc.ca

Job Title: Accessioning Clerk

Committee: Collections Management and Archives

Time Required: Approx 4 hours per week

Contact Person: Ryan Scranton 532-7754

Job Description: Document new acquisitions to the

AHS artifact and archival collection by:

- Making an identification number on each item
- Recording details and description of item on hard copy forms and in digital database
- Researching items as needed

Job Title: Genealogical Research Volunteer

Committee: AHS Genealogical Centre

Time Required: One afternoon per week

Contact Person: Frank Taylor – 532-7685

Job Description: Genealogical Centre volunteers assist researchers who are using AHS resources.

-Develop knowledge of AHS genealogical reference collection

-Collection of research fees and sales of retail merchandise as needed

-Shelving of genealogical resources

Job Title: Farmers Market Volunteer

Contact Person: Ryan Scranton 532-7754

Job Description: The Annapolis Heritage Society has a table at the Annapolis Royal Farmer's and Trader's Market on Saturday mornings during the summer and fall. We are looking for individuals who may be interested in spending a few Saturday mornings at the table selling raffle tickets and merchandise as well as letting visitors know about the Society and our upcoming programs.

Genealogy Books and CD ROMs for Sale

All prices include shipping and handling charges

	CDN \$	US \$
<i>Yorkshire Settler Genealogies</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Bath	\$26.00	\$23.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Clark	\$25.00	\$22.25
<input type="checkbox"/> Gilliatt (Revision 1)	\$31.00	\$27.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Halliday	\$25.00	\$22.25
<input type="checkbox"/> Hawkesworth	\$25.00	\$22.25
<input type="checkbox"/> Hudson	\$25.00	\$22.25
<input type="checkbox"/> Jacques	\$25.00	\$22.25
<input type="checkbox"/> Jefferson (Call for Availability)	\$31.00	\$22.25
<input type="checkbox"/> Mills	\$25.00	\$22.25
<input type="checkbox"/> Milner	\$31.00	\$27.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Oliver	\$31.00	\$27.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Robinson	\$25.00	\$20.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson, Leonard (Revision 1)	\$23.00	\$20.25
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilson, Robert (Revision 1)	\$23.00	\$20.25

Other AHS Genealogical Centre Books

<input type="checkbox"/> Hicks		
<input type="checkbox"/> Longley (Revision 1)	\$36.00	\$32.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Marshall	\$51.00	\$45.25
<input type="checkbox"/> McCormick	\$36.00	\$32.00
<input type="checkbox"/> The Descendants of Andrew Ritchie	\$46.00	\$40.75
<input type="checkbox"/> Samuel Harris Esq.	\$53.00	\$47.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Starratt (Call for Availability)	\$45.00	\$40.00

Resources on CD Rom

<input type="checkbox"/> Bear River Telephone and News Vital Statistics 1879-1911	\$30.00	\$26.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Christian Messenger Vital Statistics 1837-1884	\$30.00	\$26.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Annapolis County Probate Abstracts by Wayne Walker	\$30.00	\$26.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Annapolis Newspaper Vitals and Local History 1832-2004 (NEW)	\$36.00	\$32.00

Books not Published by AHS Genealogical Centre

<input type="checkbox"/> McGrath and Taylor	\$51.00	\$45.25
<input type="checkbox"/> History of Port Royal – Annapolis Royal by Brenda Dunn	\$42.00	\$37.25
<input type="checkbox"/> Port Royal Habitation by Wayne Kerr	\$21.00	\$18.75

Please make cheques payable to **Annapolis Heritage Society.**

Total \$ _____

Name _____ **Telephone** _____

Address _____

Postal/Zip Code _____ **Email** _____



Postcard image of the bridge from Annapolis Royal to Granville Ferry circa 1935. Image courtesy of the Nova Scotia Museum
74.101.4

Do you have something you would like to contribute to the next Annapolis Heritage Society newsletter? We are interested in brief articles on the history of the Annapolis region, family histories, pages from family bibles or ongoing events that would be of interest to our members. Please email submissions to historic@ns.aliantzinc.ca Due to space constraints it may not be possible to print all submissions.