



# Your Voice

MUN Pensioners Association (MUNPA) Newsletter-----Volume 9, No. 1; January, 2011; Daniel Stewart, Editor

## Editorial

This month's issue contains the conclusion of Abe Ross's account of how, after many years at Memorial in St. John's, he settled in Nova Scotia for his retirement. The **Memoir Club** is interested in stories of how people came **to be** at Memorial. Anyone with a story can get in touch with Roberta Buchanan—rbuchana@mun.ca—the founder and leader of the Memoir Club. If you do not have access to email, phone or write the MUNPA office and we will pass on a message.



Peter Harris and Bert Rose, chuckling at the MUNPA December Social.



The December Social on December 10 was well-attended—over 90 MUNPA members came for food, drinks, conversation, and music.

## Computer Purchasing Center

MUNPA members who are retired from Memorial and who purchase items at the University's Computer Purchasing Center should make sure to identify themselves as retirees.

## Problems Receiving MUN Pension in Other Countries?

We had a report of a member living outside Canada having difficulty getting her pension payment converted to the local currency without paying a high exchange fee. If other members have had trouble receiving their pension in other countries, please let us know. We are discussing with MUN Human Resources how problems like this might be solved.

## Letter from Abe Ross (Conclusion)

Given the way our 2001 home hunting started out, I would not have predicted that we would find anything that year. My sabbatical started in September 2001. As we prepared the house for the renters and packed for our time in Guatemala we listened on the radio to the sounds of what we have come to refer to as 9/11. We finally did manage to leave town and half an hour out I discovered that I had left my wallet on the bureau at home. We raced back, glad that we had kept a key to the house, and found my wallet where we had left it. We didn't realize how lucky we were to have recovered it until the renter stopped paying rent in March, stopped paying for heat, telephone, and stole some of our possessions. It is easy to imagine what he would have done had he found my full wallet on the bureau.

Our first night in Nova Scotia we stayed at a B&B in New Glasgow which we still refer to as "the haunted house." Eating our breakfast of sliced white bread (not even toast) jam and instant coffee, we described for the owner what we were hoping to find. By this time we knew that our ideal would be a place we

could afford on a lake or pond, in the woods, needing little maintenance (no house painting), and easy to close up when we went south for the colder months. Perhaps not realistic but ideal. She mentioned a lake near Truro where we might find what we were looking for. She also suggested that we check the weekend newspaper real estate listings.

We looked at the lake she suggested and knew that the houses would be out of our price range. From there we headed into Truro to keep looking. On the way we stopped at a small country grocery to see if they had any weekend papers left. When we asked they said that they were all gone. As we started to leave the parking lot the owner came running out with a paper she had found below the counter. We searched the classified ads not seeing anything which seemed to fit our needs/wants. We did, however, spot an ad for a real estate office which was on our route into Truro. Worth a try.

The real estate agent had two places which were on the water, one on the Bay of Fundy and the other somewhere back and beyond the airport. Even beyond Upper Stewiacke (wherever that was). Both of the places were further than our one hour from the airport criteria but we were willing to stretch that limit a bit.

On our first trip we were able to check out the two places from the outside. The place on Fundy looked okay but not great. Anyway, given the tides in the Bay of Fundy it was waterfront property for a few hours twice a day and mud flat property the rest of the time. From there we drove to see the place in what we thought of as the “back of beyond.” Following the agent’s directions we drove for about an hour east from Truro on pleasant country roads and then turned onto an unpaved logging road. The dirt road seemed to keep going on forever. We passed “College Lake” and wondered if perhaps we had misheard the name the real estate agent had given us—“West Loon Lake.” After another long while we began to wonder if we had perhaps missed any turns or signs. Just as we were seriously thinking about turning around we saw the sign to West Loon Lake. We found the house with the real estate agent’s sign and walked down the driveway (the gate was locked) to see the house. At first impression it was just what we were looking for. We didn’t let ourselves hope too much until we were able to see the inside on our next visit with the agent.

We had spent the whole day driving around to the properties and were tired and ready to return to the place we were staying. We got into the car ready to start the drive back to Windsor, a few hours on the other side of Nova Scotia, turned the ignition key and . . . nothing. The engine didn’t turn over. I checked and the battery was dead, dead, dead. Okay, dig out

the cell phone and call CAA, no problem, just an unplanned delay. We didn’t have to be anywhere at any time so no urgency. Dialed CAA and no phone rang at the other end of the line. I looked at our phone and there were no bars showing. We were in an area without cell reception (yes, there are areas like that in Nova Scotia too).

Talk about a feeling of desperation. It was around 6 PM, on a Friday night and we hadn’t seen any people since we started on the long dirt road to West Loon Lake. We started down the driveway next to the property we had looked at and there was no one in the house at the end of the driveway. We started up the road in the other direction. There was, thank goodness, someone in the second cottage (they call them “camps” here). She had just arrived for the weekend and she had a cell phone which worked here. It turned out that our situation was not as desperate as we had thought. If we had come in from the other end of the unpaved logging road we would have passed through New Glasgow and Stellarton only 40 km away. The tow truck arrived, the Canadian Tire mechanics stayed on the job after hours to replace the generator in the car and we were on our way back to Windsor later that night.

We are approaching the end of the odyssey. We returned to see the inside of the two places and it was clear that the house on West Loon Lake was the one we wanted. Offers were made, refused, raised, prices lowered. A mortgage was arranged long distance with our bank in St. John’s. A CIBC employee at the Avalon Mall very helpfully carried a cheque, literally, to the Bank of Nova Scotia at the other end of the Mall.

For the next four years we spent summers at our “Lake Place.” In 2004, when I retired, we moved here full time (well, for the 7 warmer months of the year). We have never regretted our purchase. I do not know if we would have fallen for this place if we had seen it at the beginning of our hunt several years ago. However, I like to think that perhaps we learned a lot by seeing so many places that weren’t quite what we wanted and by not settling for less.

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## Contact MUNPA

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