



/Mike Wilkshire

# Your Voice

MUN Pensioners' Association (MUNPA) Newsletter • Vol. 19, No. 2, April 2021  
Editor: Bernadette Power • Design and layout: Mark Graesser

## From the Editor

Welcome to the April issue of **Your Voice**. Spring is supposedly here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Different parts of the province are seeing different versions of Spring. Some are having unseasonably warm temperatures while other parts of the province are seeing intense fog, downpour rains and an occasional sprinkling of snow. I am privileged to be in the Big Land as I write this message, enjoying a beautiful sunlit spring with fantastic moonlit skies! I guess there are times when living south doesn't result in sunny weather!

This April newsletter edition offers many stories from members reminiscing about their school days. Likely this is a direct result of continuous news stories about schools. Seemingly, they are opening, closing, online, offline and/or blended model. Parents are concerned about their children's health but also their education and future implications. Are they receiving adequate socialization? Should there be more opportunities for sports and arts activities? Are they being prepared for public exams? Will they be prepared for post-secondary institutions? Will this pandemic put them behind?

Pressures seem to be mounting with students themselves also speaking out with concerns that their future could be seriously interrupted. The stories in this issue remind me of how our approach to education was much simpler years ago. Ultimately the rule of thumb was you go to school when you are old enough and you stay there until you finish, whatever that reason was. For some, it meant leaving school to attend to family needs or to add to the family income. Others finished all grades and still others went on to post-secondary institutions.

I often think back to my parents and their connection to formal education. My mother successfully completed grade 5 and then had to leave school to do housework for family

income. My father graduated grade 2 and worked with his family in the fishery. They were both very bright and successful. She became a postmistress in a small community and single handily served all the needs of post office requirements. He was a fisherman and had a canning business, a community shop and handled all the business transactions that went along with that. Together they had a house, vegetable gardens, goats, sheep, hens, wells (there was no running water), wood stove (no electricity), outhouse, and, oh yes, ten children! Like many others, they survived and thrived in less than ideal conditions and faced many challenges along the way. To put it mildly, they were self-educated.

My parents' journey to education was likely not what they thought it might have been. But despite the interruptions, their learning continued throughout their lives. I'm struck by how much of a privilege it is for people to attend school, in a world where there are still people who cannot, for many reasons, including their gender. I often think back to past generations like my parents, not that long ago, and know that our children and grandchildren are facing challenges this year that none of us really thought would come our way. Whether they are learning at home or at school, they are still indeed learning. Formal or informal. By the book or not, we're all in this together and one day, I hope our kids and grandkids will be writing stories about how they weathered a pandemic and came out stronger for it.

**Bernadette**

### Inside this issue

President's message . . . . .	2
Upcoming Events . . . . .	3
Best Friends . . . . .	5
College Days . . . . .	7
My New School . . . . .	9

---

## President's Message

This has been a busy time: Despite the pandemic and the adjustments it has forced us to make, our Programme Committee organized a series of online events, including well-attended sessions on wills and advanced directives, recognizing symptoms of heart attacks and strokes, and a St. Patrick's Day programme with Shelley Neville and Peter Halley. Striking about all three was the range of participants they attracted and the ways in which presenters and performers involved people, making what was exceptional normal. Kudos to Bob Helleur, Donna Jackman, and Anne Sinnott for a job well done – and there is more to come.

Our Board of Directors meets monthly. Although much of what we do is routine – monitoring our pensions and benefits, intervening, when asked, on behalf of members – others have been anything but. In February, our office manager, Jackie Collins, was returning materials to our Signal Hill office. Jackie had finished unpacking when an upsurge of COVID cases and a province-wide "circuit-breaker" ground the process to a halt. Kudos to Jackie for getting the job done despite the difficulties.

Less routine was a request from CURAC (the Colleges and Universities Retiree Association Canada) to participate in meetings on communications and future directions. Intended to initiate a planning process, the two sessions provided us with a window on CURAC and its member associations: Some, like MUNPA, are

well established, others relatively new. Many represent retired faculty and staff, but others do not. Almost all -- along with CURAC -- struggle to communicate with their members. One thing that was apparent was that one-size fits all communications may not be appropriate. Another was that CURAC could do more to disseminate information about member associations and what they are doing. Spreading the word about best practices normally happens at CURAC'S annual meetings, but the 2020 in-person meeting was postponed and later held online. Hosted by McGill's retiree association, the 2021 meeting will also be online.

A good deal can be done online. Missing however is the element of serendipity – chance meetings where you make new friends and learn what others have been doing and what worked and what did not. One idea that emerged was to use the CURAC website to disseminate information about best practices. Another was to create a database with information about constituent associations and how they are organized.

The "circuit breaker" disrupted not only the return to campus but also the provincial election. I wondered whether vaccinations would come before or after the election results. Despite indications that counting would extend into April the results were announced on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Vaccinations are underway and many of us are getting our first shots. But COVID variants are spreading, forcing other jurisdictions to implement circuit breakers of their own. Spring is coming and more of us are being vaccinated. Better times are coming. However, the pandemic is not over. Please keep safe and look out for others.

**Steve Wolinetz**

### **MUNPA Contact Information**

Office Room 2003E, Signal Hill Campus  
Office Manager Jackie Collins  
Main e-mail [munpa@mun.ca](mailto:munpa@mun.ca)  
Phone (709) 864-6979  
Website [www.mun.ca/munpa](http://www.mun.ca/munpa)  
**Your Voice** [yourvoice@mun.ca](mailto:yourvoice@mun.ca)  
St. John's Programme Committee  
[munpaevents@mun.ca](mailto:munpaevents@mun.ca)  
Grenfell MUNPA Committee  
Mary Sparkes [msparkes@grenfell.mun.ca](mailto:msparkes@grenfell.mun.ca)  
Lois Bateman [lbateman@grenfell.mun.ca](mailto:lbateman@grenfell.mun.ca)

---

# Upcoming MUNPA Events

## **Meat or 'Beyond Meat' and Other Nutrition Conundrums**

by Dr. Janet Brunton and Dr. Rob Bertolo,  
Biochemistry, MUN.

**Wednesday April 28, 2:30-4 pm.  
Register by Sunday, April 25**

What's in that new burger? Learn more about plant-based proteins and related nutrition matters.

These are all Zoom presentations, so registration is essential. Email [munpaevents@mun.ca](mailto:munpaevents@mun.ca)

Check our [website](#) for further details about each event. Some events have space limitations. See our group offerings at the same site.

And Check out our [Facebook group!](#) A great way to re-connect with old friends.

## **Traditional Skills and Crafts at Risk**

By Dale Jarvis

**Thursday, May 6, 2-3:30 pm.  
Register by Monday, May 3.**

Dale will talk about a recent Heritage NL project on traditional skills and crafts at risk including birch broom making, bark tanning, and blacksmithing.

## **Seniors and Fraud**

by [Seniors NL](#).

**Thursday, May 13, 2:00-3:30pm  
Register by Monday, May 10**

Topics will include recognizing frauds and scams targeting seniors.

## **Annual General Meeting**

**Tuesday, June 8, at the Signal Hill Campus**

As of this posting, both live and virtual attendance options are planned. Further details will follow, but mark your calendar for approximately 12noon- 4pm.

---

## NOTICE FOR MUNPA MEMBERS PAYING FEES ANNUALLY

This is a heads-up for the small number of you who opted to pay MUNPA fees annually, rather than by monthly payroll deduction, when you retired.

In reviewing our membership database we've discovered that annual fees are due at different times of the year. That's no surprise. While faculty retire at the end of a semester, that is not true of staff or professional librarians. This has consequences: Busy retirees forget to send a cheque for annual fees, our office finds it difficult to send out reminders, and – you can guess the rest.

MUNPA fees are modest – presently \$2.00 per month or \$24.00 per year – but we need your fees to staff our office, run programming, and look out for your interests. As indicated at the 2020 AGM, changes are needed to better streamline the ways in which member fees are collected. Starting this spring, annual fees will be due on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Having a single due date will allow us to send out reminders in a timely fashion.

**Not everyone is affected:** Most of you pay your fees via monthly payroll deduction and, therefore, will not be affected. How you pay is up to you. If you have been paying annually and still want to do so, you can. We'll be sending out letters in the spring, explaining the new arrangements, but it's simple enough that we can outline it here:

As indicated above, annual fees will be due on June 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have paid within the last 12

months, we will pro-rate the 2021/22 fee so that you will only be charged your normal monthly amount for any overlapping months. This will not result in an increase in fees, regardless of the amount you currently pay.

If this sounds complicated, there is an easier solution. As our website indicates, you can ask HR to deduct monthly membership fees by automatic payroll deduction. You can find the relevant information and a copy of the form that you need to submit on our website. Just go to [https://www.mun.ca/munpa/about/Archive1/Automatic Payroll Deduction Email.php](https://www.mun.ca/munpa/about/Archive1/Automatic%20Payroll%20Deduction%20Email.php), and follow the instructions there.

### MUNPA NOW ACCEPTS ANNUAL FEES VIA *e-transfer*

In a continued effort to make it easier for members to pay membership fees annually, MUNPA now accepts payments by bank ***e-transfer***, as well as by cheque. Just send your payment via ***e-transfer*** to [munpa@mun.ca](mailto:munpa@mun.ca). Be sure to include your email address and the purpose of the payment (i.e. janedoe@mun.ca 2021-2022 member fees) in the comment field so we can correctly credit the payment, provide a receipt, or reach you if necessary. A password is not needed as the ***e-transfer*** will be automatically deposited into MUNPA's bank account.

Should you have questions or need assistance, please contact the MUNPA Office: [munpa@mun.ca](mailto:munpa@mun.ca) or 709-864-6979. We are always happy to help.

---

## Early spring in Labrador



/Bernadette Power



/Bernadette Power

---

# **Best Friends**

**Roberta Buchanan**

I was teaching a first year English course and in the first class I suggested that each student in the class introduce their neighbour. I counted off the class in twos and gave them time to find out something about their partner and then we had the introductions. It broke the ice and allowed everyone to get to know something about others in the class. I was surprised when two of the students said, "This is X and her best friend is Y." It seemed so childish. These were young adults, in their late teens; it's the kind of thing young children do.

I thought back to how important it was when I started grammar school at eleven years old to have a best friend. Without one you were nothing. No one to walk with in the crocodiles when we filed two by two to the gym for morning prayers, each classroom in sequence, and then again to the dining room at lunchtime. Or the processions through the streets to our local Anglican church for services on special holy days, or on very special occasions to Westminster Abbey. My best friend was Rose, a tall gentle girl with jet black hair. She had been in London during the blitz, had contracted tuberculosis and had been sent to a clinic in Switzerland. Before school started we were all given a list of required uniform: grey blazer with the school crest, grey felt hat with blue hatband with G C H (Grey Coat Hospital) embroidered on it; gym slip; blue blouse, undervest, grey regulation bloomers with white "linings" (separate underpants), grey shorts for gym etc. It was an expensive outfit, especially if ordered from the school's supplier. Rose told me her family couldn't afford it, and had to be given a special grant from a fund supplied by the "Old Greys" (alumnae) for that purpose. I had no idea about money; it was something adults dealt with and nothing to do with us children.

How sweet it was to walk hand in hand with Rose around the playground at break, exchanging confidences, or indulging in school gossip about our teachers. I complained about our bad-tempered English teacher, Miss Jarman ("Old Jar"). She was so old, why didn't she retire? We knew why she was bad-tempered. She was a spinster, no one would have her! Rose

said there was a rumour that Miss Jarman had been engaged to be married but her fiance was killed in the First World War.

We had our little quarrels. At one point I became deeply offended with Rose and refused to speak to her or walk in the crocodile processions with her as my partner. This created consternation in our little society. A mediator was appointed. She told me that Rose was very upset and wanted to know why I wasn't talking to her. I preserved a haughty silence. To tell the truth, I had forgotten why, but would lose face if I admitted it. The mediator said Rose wanted to make up and be friends again. So we did.

Rose invited me to stay for the weekend. She lived in Tachbrook Street (Pimlico), in one of the Victorian terrace houses forming both sides of the street. They were all identical: steps down to the basement with "area" for the dustbins, first floor, second floor with large front room with high windows looking on to the street; and top floor. There was no bathroom with bath, you had to wash at the kitchen sink. There was a small walled garden at the back with a flush toilet. There was also a toilet on the top floor, which was rented out to lodgers, a married couple. There was no electricity, only gaslight. Once these had been middle class houses, with a servant in the basement kitchen and a parlour on the second floor, but the area had declined to rentals, with many of the houses divided up into small flats.

No one used the front door. Rose and I went down the basement steps to the area door and into a big room with a large table and chairs. This was their living room and dining room. Everything went on there with everyone sitting round the table. At the back was a small kitchen with a gas stove and a gas water heater over the sink. We went upstairs to the second floor to the large room that Rose shared with her mother. Rose had the bed by the window; her mother the other bed across the room. Both were single beds. In between was an expanse of linoleum. Rose's mother had moved out to let me have her bed.

*Continued next page*

I met the family: Mrs. McAllister, tall and strong with black hair like Rose, her younger brother, and Mac, her father, when he came home late from the pub. Mrs. McAllister put his dinner on a plate in the gas oven turned low, with a plate on top to keep it warm. Mac liked to go to the pub after he got off work. He was the second husband; the first had died during the War. The next day I met Rose's step-sister, daughter of the first husband, who lived in a flat on the opposite side of the road. She had only contempt for Mac and idolised her dead father. She had a little baby, and I met her husband when he came home from work. He was working in Westminster Abbey restoring the stained glass windows which had been damaged in the blitz during the War. He gave me a piece of the old glass, dark green, which I treasured for years.

**M**rs. McAllister worked as a char (cleaner) in wealthy Kensington houses, while Mac worked as an odd job man and painter for rich old ladies. I liked her very much. She made me feel at home and welcome around the big table. She was strong and capable and held the family together.

I enjoyed my weekend with Rose and I asked my mother if I could invite Rose for a visit, and she said I could invite her to Sunday dinner. We always had a linen tablecloth, and each place setting had a crocheted mat, with a fork on one side and a big knife and a little knife (for bread and butter) on the other, and a soup spoon if we were having soup. At the top was the dessert spoon. Also on the left side a linen napkin, in silver napkin rings for myself and my brother with our initials engraved upon them. Rose was very shy. We lived in a street off Park Lane, in a large house which had been requisitioned during the War and divided into apartments. It had an impressive entrance with a black and white tiled floor.

Rose told one of the other girls at school that she didn't feel comfortable at my place and was embarrassed that she didn't know what all the cutlery was for. Of course, that girl told me, with a smirk. Rose never came back to my place, but I continued to visit hers. My mother, to tell you the truth, was a bit of a snob and perhaps made no effort to make Rose feel at home.

At a certain point in our school life we were divided into upper and lower streams. The upper stream did Latin, and perhaps Greek if we were lucky; the lower stream took German. (Everybody did French.) Some girls felt it was pointless studying a dead language. What use was it? German was regarded as a more "commercial" language. Rose and I were no longer in the same class, but we always remained friends. There were other differences. Rose was always very religious, and was taken under the wing of our headmistress, who regarded herself as a bit of a missionary. She invited Rose to stay with her on weekends, and I'm sure used her as an informant as to what was going on in the school. On the other hand, I became an atheist! This in a school which dedicated itself to turning out devout Anglicans. Rose became more and more involved in the church, and spent her weekends volunteering for the Anglican missions to the poor. There she met a young man from Yorkshire who was studying to be a minister.

When I visited her we shared confidences. I was unhappy at home and at loggerheads with my mother. Rose told me about Him. Like, he walked her to the bus stop, and when the bus came he kissed her, in front of everybody. "No," I exclaimed, "How shocking!" In front of everybody! "Yes," she said, "I was so embarrassed." "How awful," I said. Yet, we both had the feeling that it was rather wonderful, perhaps.

**W**hile Rose progressed more and more towards a romantic climax in her relationship with the trainee minister, my relationship with my mother deteriorated to such an extent that she told me to move out. Where would I go? Where would I live? By this time I had left school and finished my training in typing, shorthand and bookkeeping at Miss Edith Plocki's Secretarial College, and was applying for jobs as a shorthand typist. London was a very expensive place to live. I was very upset and of course confided in Rose. Mrs McAllister came to the rescue. She had a back room that I could rent, room and board for one pound a week.

Thank goodness for best friends!

Rose married her young minister and moved north to be a vicar's wife. I went to university. Mac died and Mrs. Mac moved into a nice new modern flat built by the Council for seniors, at subsidized rent. We all had happy endings.

---

# College Days

Joan Scott

We are used to hearing about what it means to go to a big U.S. university. This is about my very different college days, as a woman at a London Teachers' Training College in the early 1950s.

I did develop career plans but none worked out for me other than to become an elementary-school teacher. What clinched it for me was a broadcast around 1950, about how the NUTS, The National Union of Teachers, had won equal pay.

So, with a decent five subjects at "O" level, and two, Botany, and Zoology, at the Higher level, in 1953, I was accepted for, and won a Borough Minor Scholarship to support myself at, a two-year Teachers' Training College.

Largely because the boyfriend was finishing a Ph.D. at Queen Mary College, in London, I chose Philippa Fawcett Training College for Teachers, in Streatham, South London. I had no trouble being accepted was not surprising as few other applicants had any courses at the Higher level.

The 200 students lived in various nearby locations. Along with about 25 others, I was put in a hostel run by Gladys Helliwell, a music instructor, in a large old house in Palace Road, about 20 mins. walk from the college. No one in our hostel had a room of their own. I was lucky to live over the garage, and share a bedroom and bathroom with only one other young woman. As we filed into the basement dining room for breakfast and supper, made by the Housekeeper, we each picked up our labelled butter and sugar rations for the week.

The college building consisted of two large originally detached houses, joined and renovated in

the post-war 'Festival of Britain,' style; well-lit rooms, pale birch furniture, some made by Ercol (which is still turning out beautiful furniture in 2021), and bright lime green and red, well-designed fabrics, against pale grey walls.



**Trainee teachers at the Philippa Fawcett Training College for Teachers take part in a nature study class in 1954.**

*/London Metropolitan Archives*

There we had our lectures and discussions and ate our lunches. In the big joined back-gardens we had miniature biology field trips and played some sports. For field hockey, sometimes played against other teachers' colleges, we, the players and a few supporters, went by bus to a pitch on Clapham Common. A far-cry from the U.S. college sport scene.

We had classes on the philosophy and also the history of education which were taught partly by us students, preparing papers on different theories or individuals. Then there were subjects that today might

be called teachable subjects, (a term I despise as surely all subjects are teachable) such as English, biology, health and so on. That term merely narrows and controls options, deliberately keeping the horizons of future teachers low.

It was there I first experienced classes where discussion was the point of the session. My first response was that this was a big waste of time. But the experience grew on me.

We did art and craft in special rooms with good instructors. Each had to choose a "Paragraph 8, or special subject" on which we would focus for the whole 2 years. I have written elsewhere about a confrontation which made me drop my obvious first choice for this, biology, and instead take up Speech and Drama with the fascinating, for an overgrown teenager,

*Continued next page*

Mrs. De Montmorency. She was a larger than life, elegant woman in the County, mold. Today I recognize this as "class." Polished brogues with high heels, silk scarves and fine tweeds. She was a cut above the other instructors, single professional women though they mostly were. As well as her, the course came with cheap seats at London matinees, so we were well educated. Once Clare Bloom and Richard Burton, were taking in the same matinee.

As though it was not a legitimate part of our 1950s education, a shabby older woman, a survivor of earlier struggles, visited the college to tell the story of women's education, when it was thought that our wombs would go wandering around our bodies if we were educated, and/or exercised vigorously. Those arguments had more staying power than we then thought, as they resurfaced for me in the literature against women becoming scientists when I did my Ph.D. at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) in the 1980s.

At college I was one of a group who planned a raffle, the prize for which was the female version of The Kinsey Report on sexuality, fresh off the presses in 1953. In my circles, publication of this book was quite an event.

In London, possible educational trips beyond the college were plentiful and rewarding. We were given instructions as to which busses to take and even our fares, and sent off to specialized museums, to different teaching situations to observe in children's hospitals, more specialized children's institutions, purpose-built nursery classrooms, etc. as well as to our major teaching practice sites. I learned about varieties of children's disabilities, met people and teaching situations that I had not imagined existed. I remember one teacher who was passionate and positive about being able to improve her students' I.Q. scores, when the education establishment believed they were carved in stone, not least Sir Cyril Burt himself. No one then had looked seriously at his twin studies.

I began to see the classroom from the perspectives of some of the old hands. At one of my teaching-practice schools, one Friday afternoon, a rather clueless little boy, perhaps nine years old, arrived with a bucket and said that Mr.

So-and-so needed some powdered wool. He was sent to every teacher, on this fool's errand for the amusement of staff, and I can't say I was totally horrified.

One of my main teaching-practice sites was in Poplar in the far East End, and another was in Brixton. Although I did not know it, that area was becoming popular with the Windrush generation. From the West Indies, many of whom had fought in the war, then had the right of residency in the U.K.

At the end of my two years, while some went to the University of London to which our college was affiliated, to complete a degree, I, with the majority, took a job as a teacher. This was still the post-war period and teachers were in demand. I applied to the London County Council (LCC) and to Harlow, Essex, and was accepted at both.

From a career perspective I should have chosen the LCC. It was hardest to get into and paid at a higher rate. However, I planned to marry, and my future husband was heading to Harlow for a research job at The Admiralty labs there. There was a housing shortage, and we were eligible for accommodation in the New Town.

During my college days at Philippa Fawcett, I learned a trade, did some growing-up, and acquired a piece of paper that was a foundation for much future formal education. Then I got married and began being a teacher. At the start I must have been somewhat unsure of myself, because after one week-end session of making "flash cards" I had a 'eureka' moment, suddenly thinking, "I can do this."



/Gene Herzberg



---

# My New School

Dorothy Milne

In the summer of 1950, when I was seven years old, our family moved from the rented flat in the long-settled middle-class Anglo enclave of NDG (Notre Dame de Grace) to a newly built house in Ville St. Laurent, about four miles further north on the island of Montreal. We now lived in a house that we owned, or would own when the mortgage was eventually paid off. It was one half of a duplex and had cost the princely sum of \$18,000 (about \$198,000 in today's dollars).



At the time, this area was just beginning to be developed. There were a few houses to the north and west of us, but looking east from the front door, we could see fields and a few traditional Quebecois farm houses. The street was grandly named O'Brien Boulevard, and would in time become a busy four lane thoroughfare that linked Côte Vertu to the northern shore of the island. When we arrived however it was a rather bucolic lane that had grass growing in the middle of it. I am sure there was grass there because one day, I found a bow and a few arrows in the house. Without any adult supervision, I went out on the street and shot some arrows down the street. Almost immediately they were lost in knee-high grass. Despite my efforts, I never found them, and that was the end of my archery career.

In the Spring, the farmers not far to the east of us would set fire to their fields. I remember seeing the flames from our doorstep and hoping the wind would not blow them any closer.

Though there were some Anglo families living in a few houses nearest us, most of the people in Ville St. Laurent at that time were Francophone. Since we didn't mix with them, we were now much more isolated socially than we had been in NDG.

When September came, it was time to go to school again. My sisters had a long daily commute by streetcar back to NDG to West Hill High, but I began to attend Grade 2 in a new elementary school that had been planned, now that enough Anglo-Protestant families had moved into our area. Its location was just three blocks from our house.

The operative word was 'planned'. That first year, the school consisted of a temporary building located on a marshy area that had recently been the north end of a farmer's field. From the nearest street, a long boardwalk about a meter wide led to the door of the building. From a central entrance, there was one classroom to the right, another to the left, and an office in between.



I have only a few memories of that school year. The classroom was a pleasant, light filled space, and we had a lovely young teacher, a recent graduate, I now assume. I suspect we were her very first class. Unfortunately, she was totally unable to control us. Every day was one long

*Continued next page*

---

"My New School," continued

cheerfully chaotic descent into bedlam. One day she told the class we had behaved so badly that we would be kept in during recess. As soon as the bell rang, the boys and then the girls streamed out into the yard to play anyway. We must have reduced her to tears. We certainly ended her teaching career, because she was let go at the end of the Fall term.

Once the ground froze over, we could play at will in the yard. There was, as I remember it, no adult supervising us. One day as we were exploring the field at the back of the school we found skulls. Big skulls. We were excited and horrified but also relieved when we were told that they were the skulls of cattle that the farmer had buried there.-

After Christmas, we had a new teacher - a seasoned, middle aged teacher - who soon brought order back into our lives. The only thing I remember clearly about her is that she insisted that I could not just speak up whenever I felt like it. She told me that if I wanted to speak in class I had to raise my hand and wait to be called upon. (I knew the rule, I had just not found it possible to follow it.) I thought this was a rather suffocating rule. Perhaps because I was the youngest at home - or perhaps it was just

my nature - when I had a new idea I was so excited by it that I wanted to share it at once.

**I**n the Spring, the creek that ran by the temporary building became a roaring torrent. The teachers told us that it was dangerous - we might fall in, be swept away by the current and drown. We were absolutely forbidden to go anywhere near it. The warning only served as a magnet. When the bell for recess rang, most of the children made a bee line for the creek. Though we were all fascinated to see the raging water, I noticed that it was especially the boys who could not resist going to the very edge of the water, as if daring themselves to fall in. None of them did, fortunately. As I remember it (perhaps faultily), none of the teachers were supervising, and none came out and hauled the boys back from the danger.

The following September, when we came back from summer vacation, we found that the marsh had been drained, a brand new permanent school with eight classrooms plus a kindergarten had been built and the school yard was now paved and fenced. There was no sign of the rushing creek or farmer's field. For better or worse, from now on our school lives were going to be more 'normal'.

---

## ***Above the volcano***



In 1975, while on a visit to St. Vincent, I hiked 1,200 meters up through the rain forest to the rim of *La Soufriere*. The recent eruption inspired me to retrieve some photos of that visit, displayed here.

Mark Graesser