

Associates of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick

EXTRAIEXTRAI

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Scene at Pokiok Gorge - 1903

H.F. Allbright of Isaac Erb & Son

Down the River St. John by Canoe---in 1903

At the end of the 19th century, New Brunswickers knew they had a great river in their midst and were hailing the St. John as the "Rhine of America." But this nickname derived mainly from the broad expanses and lofty hills of the valley below Fredericton. Above the capital was a long stretch of river that was far less known, even to those who lived in the nearby south of the province.

It was with the idea of repairing this knowledge gap that a party of nine canoeists, in late June of 1903, undertook a 125-mile trip down the St. John from Grand Falls to Fredericton. They especially wanted to promote the joys of the upper valley to other potential canoe-travellers, and so the group included a Saint John newspaperman and a photographer, who

Down the River St. John by Canoe - in 1903 *(Continued)*

admirably chronicled the journey. But, in the longer, archival view, the real value of their work was the record it produced of a section of the St. John in its distant, pastoral past, before there were automobiles, power boats and power dams.

Recently, the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick acquired this record from a donor. It consists of a detailed account of the trip by reporter F. B. Ellis that subsequently ran in the weekly edition of the Saint John *Globe*, and an album of 23 accompanying photographs that were taken by H. A. Allbright of Isaac Erb & Son and later displayed at that renowned firm's studio in Saint John. To say that the collection is a fine addition to the Archives' holdings is not enough; it is, in fact, a small treasure, an engaging glimpse at how that section of the river once looked—and hasn't looked now for many decades.

This group that came down the St. John was an all-star cast. In addition to its diligent chroniclers, the party also included four seasoned sporting guides, including Harry Allen, "a jewel of a cook," as Ellis described him. Naturally he was placed in charge of the cuisine. Another member was Tom Phillips, "the great Fredericton shad fisherman" and "a prince of river men," who traveled in a 300-pound wooden canoe *cum* rowboat that he himself had built. And then there were those two friendly giants of the upper valley, George Armstrong of Perth, and Adam Moore of Scotch Lake and the Tobique River and most points in between.

Notice should also be taken that two officers of the Fredericton Tourist Association were along, too, and so was the district passenger agent of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The significance of their inclusion was that this was at a time when the tourism business was just beginning to develop in New Brunswick. The two Frederictonians were the tourism association president, J.W. McCready, and its secretary, McCready, a lawyer, even Robert Allan. managed to squeeze in some regular business on the trip, paddling ashore as the party passed Andover to do a little probate work in the local courthouse.

The railway man deserves a mention, too, for he was C.B. Foster, an evident rising star in the CPR hierarchy who, though transferred to Toronto about a year later, remained so well thought of back in New Brunswick that, when he married in 1906, the Saint John *Globe* carried a detailed account of his out-of-province wedding—a wedding, incidentally, attended by representatives of all the major railway and steamship lines in North America.

What Foster had in mind as he set out with his boon companions on the St. John in 1903 was promoting a combination of rail and canoe travel. One can hear the passenger agent's dutiful voice in one of Ellis's newspaper paragraphs: "The Canadian Pacific Railway runs right to Grand Falls, and it is only a few hours' ride—and a pleasant ride at that—from St. John, Fredericton, St. Andrews or any other provincial point. The regular day train from any of these places will land the passenger at Grand Falls early in the afternoon, giving plenty of time to view the wonders of the falls and its still more wonderful gorge, and to get some miles down river before night settles down."

These travellers did just that. They gazed at the falls from "the quaint suspension bridge" that spanned the gorge, then climbed down onto the rocks for a closer look. The river was, of course, still free-flowing at this point (it would be about another quarter-century before the St. John's first hydroelectric dam was built at Grand Falls), and all the water gathered from its previous 218 miles plunged unfettered over the brink to crash on the rocks 75 feet below, sending up a spray that drenched those who got too close like a summer rain.

The pictures that Allbright took here—of the falls and of logs caught in the eddys and "wells" of the gorge—show the river as it has not looked now for several generations. Later in the trip he would capture other scenes that, in the course of the next three-quarters of a century, would also disappear: the ledgy Narrows near the mouth of the Tobique, the upper tip of the island out in front of their town where Woodstockians once disported themselves, and the deep and lovely little waterfall and gorge at the end of the

Down the River St. John by Canoe - in 1903 *(Continued)*

Pokiok Stream—all long vanished under the waters of hydroelectric impoundments.

Their first night out, the party camped near a fish hatchery below Grand Falls at the mouth of the Rapide de Femme stream, where presently an army of buzzing ill wishers joined them. "The midgets began work as soon as we landed," wrote Ellis, "came in swarms and remained with us until our departure the next morning, leaving every member of the party well marked."

Not good for tourism this, but soon more of the valley's compensating attractions hove into range. At the sharp point of land where the large Aroostook River, also undammed, emerged around a high ridge from Maine, they took in a captivating upstream view of both rivers. A bit later, they were at the mouth of the Tobique River, the site of a Malecite Reserve, whose inhabitants Ellis described, in a sentence worth an academic paper by itself, as "a prosperous people, living like their pale face brothers in good, comfortable wooden homes."

Because the Tobique had already achieved a certain cachet (wealthy Americans had formed the Tobique Salmon Club as long ago as 1890), the party decided on a short, exploratory side trip into its adjacent reaches. Swift and shallow here, the Tobique required a change from the paddle to the more arcane skill of the pole, but it was no problem: the expedition had along some of the best polers around. Even Tom Phillips, in his 300-pound warship, had no difficulty moving upstream against the current.

The party didn't linger long on the Tobique, though, presumably for reasons of time, but here again we can detect the person of passenger agent Foster approaching the ear of reporter Ellis: "Those who would like to see more of the Tobique can put their canoes on a train at Andover for Plaster Rock, which will give a trip of about thirty miles down this most important branch of the St. John. It is a side trip well worth taking. The water of the Tobique is so much clearer than the St. John that it runs with it a long distance before intermingling."

As the canoeists continued their descent of the St. John, they entered a stretch that Ellis labeled "the garden of New Brunswick"—the rolling farm country between Andover and Woodstock. This was "a fertile and well-cultivated land. Woods are seen only in the distance. Most of the land is cleared and under cultivation. That it yields profitable returns the general appearance of the farm buildings show."

This is a strikingly different view from the more common 19th and 20th century portrayals of New Brunswick as a backwoods kind of place where people barely managed a meager existence. Certainly the province did have its hard-scrabble parts, but Ellis spotted none within the river valley: "There are no tumble-down houses, and no deserted homes. All dwellings and outbuildings are kept well painted, and many of them are models of architectural beauty. These fine houses and well-kept farms convey to the mind a far better idea of the general prosperity than could columns of statistics on the yield of the farms."

This is a softer view, one more akin to the familiar, romanticized representations of the turn-of-the-century New England countryside, and, bearing in mind the essential promotional nature of this expedition, one might be inclined to discount Ellis's boosterism—except that Allbright's photographs fully bear him out.

Climbing to better vantages on hillsides overlooking some of the villages and towns—Andover, Florenceville, Woodstock—the photographer shot pictures of communities that were tidy and appealing; they look as though they would have been fine places in which to live and love and raise families.

It was close to idyllic—but not perfect. A century ago, pollution was already upon the riverscape, and even a romanticist like Ellis could not avoid it. "Paddling down the river," he wrote, "one is impressed with the idea that the authorities should take greater care of the river. Down almost every tributary stream float sawdust, deal ends, shingle blocks and other lumber from the mills along the banks. It seems as if no care was being taken to prevent the

Down the River St. John by Canoe - in 1903 (Continued)

throwing of refuse into these streams, and that refuse—so swift are the currents—all finds its way to the St. John."

He also concluded that the river's fishery, a resource of seemingly enormous potential, was being neglected. Farmers were netting salmon on their way to spawning grounds, and fish ways on some of the feeder streams were so out of water that the fish couldn't reach them. Consequently, the St. John was missing the opportunity to become a great sport-fishing river.

These sobering concerns aside, the river constantly presented intriguing diversions. Sometimes it would be one of the "quaint wire ferries" that bore people and their carriages from one shore to the other. Or the sight of one of the St. John's unusual towboats being hauled upstream by means of a long rope linked to a team of horses walking along the shore. Or perhaps a log or deal raft, which were large collections of logs or deals (lumber) tied together and fitted out with steering apparatus to convey them downriver. Catching up with one on their first day out, the party had hauled their canoes aboard and ridden the raft for several miles. They were fascinated by the skills of the three men in charge in steering their unwieldy craft by means of a sweep at one end and a rudder at the other. "The pilot knew the channel, every inch of it," reported Ellis, "and he knew just how to maneuver his raft to keep her in it, and where

the channel crosses the river there were those curious contrivances, wing dams, to send him scooting over to the other shore." Ellis enjoyed this little water-borne hitchhike and commended it to other canoeists.

There were lots of other advisories for would-be river travellers—about hotels and camping spots and the cost of guides (\$3 per day, including canoes, tents and cooking utensils). For those roughing it, he promised that they would find "the people everywhere hospitable and ready to sell fresh milk and any required articles at most reasonable prices."

Thus did the writer, photographer, and the rest of the party complete their journey to The last stage—through the Fredericton. islands above Fredericton-was as enjoyable as any other part, but they were still happy to see the looming bridges and spires of the capital. They had been on the water for the better part of six days. They could have made it in four, but it would be best to plan on a full week, wrote Ellis, in order to do all of the sightseeing one would want to do, "to climb some of the hills and to thoroughly enjoy the varying beauties of nature."

Since this was long before the era of polls and surveys, we, of course, don't know how many other long-distance adventurers responded to this gentle prodding. What we do know is that these nine experienced something that would grow increasingly rare—a quiet descent of a civilized river—and that they left a wonderful permanent record, which has been preserved.

-David Folster

NEWS ON THE ASSOCIATES

Annual General Meeting 2002

The Annual General Meeting of the Associates will be held at the Provincial Archives on Tuesday, June 11th at 3:00 p.m. The business meeting will be followed by the sod turning ceremony for the Archives new repository and

the opening of the exhibit "Preserving New Brunswick's Documentary Heritage." Associates and interested members of the public are welcome.

News on the Associates (Continued)

Projects

The Capital Branch of the New Brunswick Genealogical Society Inc. has several projects underway to assist the Associates: they are holding a yard and bake sale at the Seniors' Centre on Johnson Avenue on Saturday, June 8th, from 8 am till 12 noon with proceeds going to the Associates; and at the May meeting members voted to donate \$1000.00 to the Associates of the Provincial Archives with the request that the money be used towards the purchase of a new reader printer.

Planning for the addition of the new repository for preservation of archival records has been completed and construction is slated to begin in July. The Archives will remain open throughout the construction period.

The Archives now boasts a renovated and wellquipped exhibit and public programming room thanks to a grant from the Cultural Spaces Canada Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage and a matching contribution of the Government of New Brunswick. The Department of Supply and Services carried out the renovations, removing partitions, painting, installing exhibit lighting and reclaiming the terrazzo floor. New cases, a large screen and LCD projector, a sound system and other audio visual and information technology make the room an attractive and versatile venue for meetings, exhibits, presentations and educational programs.

PANB Retirements

The Archives has lost six long-term employees to early retirement. We are continuing the series begun in the previous issue of **Extra! Extra!** by

highlighting the career and life activities of two more of the retirees.

Burt Glendenning

Burt's long career at the Provincial Archives began in 1975 when research for a masters thesis at Concordia University brought him to us. He either liked what he saw, or decided his help was needed, and he remained.

One of his first areas of responsibility was justice records. In short order, he did an historical overview of the court system in New Brunswick, the first person to tackle this complex topic, and his work remains very valuable and useful. Part of his responsibility was to oversee the transfer of records from courts throughout the province to the Archives. Arrangements for this transfer had been made

with the assistance of the records management branch and the cooperation of the Chief Justice, but in one instance, a Saint John clerk was unwilling to part with the records. Archivists across Canada heard that Burt was "Ridden out of town on a rail," such was his persistence and dedication to duty.

Burt brought many significant private sector collections to the Archives. He says the seed for this activity was likely planted when, as a youngster, he accompanied his grandfather in a horse-drawn wagon on trips to the dump with garbage. Along the way, they often stopped to

Burt Glendenning (Continued)

collect off neighbours, too, and that was when he first became aware of what people throw away.

Since those youthful days, the quality of Burt's gatherings has mostly improved; indeed some of the Archives most prestigious collections were acquired through Burt's efforts – papers of the Burchill Lumber Company, the papers of renowned New Brunswick potters Erica and Kjeld Deichmann, and the papers of Milton Gregg, to name a few. One of these accessions led Burt to work on two special projects, researching and selecting materials for exhibits at the National Museum of Civilization and at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery on the Deichmanns and their craft.

A particular part of Burt's work, one that has also brought him into close contact with donors and other archives in the province, is the evaluation of archival records. He has developed an expertise in the financial appraisal of records and is a member of the National Archival Appraisal Board. Several other archives in New Brunswick have drawn on Burt to appraise records they are acquiring.

In 1987, Burt visited all of the archives in the province to determine their situations and needs. This helped the Canadian Council of Archives set priorities and establish programs for supporting archives across Canada. Burt then went on to play an important role in administering projects funded by the CCA. He has, as well, participated in archival affairs nationally, as vice president, then president, of the Association of Canadian Archivists, and on the association's nominations, constitutional review and planning and priorities committees. As President of ACA, he brought the archivist's national conference to Fredericton in 1989, helping in the local organization and creating an opportunity to expose our programs and successes to many archivists.

The Provincial Archives, and those who research at the Archives, have benefited from the energy and abilities of many individuals who were employed at the Archives on various programs. Burt has administered these programs, which have given important experience to participants and been invaluable in furthering the Archives' objective of making historical records accessible to researchers. Since the early 80's, over 400 individuals have assisted the Archives in this way, and Burt is remembered by many of them as a mentor.

Another aspect of Burt is his engineering and technical knowledge. This made him a natural to manage the Archives' building issues. There have been many of them, as one would expect in a building converted for the specialized operations of an Archives. From solving mundane, but difficult, maintenance problems to sophisticated mastering а computerized environmental control system he has kept the Archives running. His skills and abilities have been especially appreciated during construction projects at the Archives. These have meant maintaining access to the building, making staff as comfortable as possible during the noise and dirt of construction, explaining the particular requirements of the Archives to engineers and construction workers, ensuring that Archival collections are protected at all times, dealing with dust and heat setting off fire alarms, and being "on call" (or more likely at the Archives) long after the end of a normal working day and on weekends.

Burt took over management of the Public Service Unit in March 1985. This position brings many challenges - managing the most exposed activity of the Archives; coordinating the large number of staff and students who are enlisted to deliver public service; explaining why the Archives cannot provide certain services; and dealing with the occasional unreasonable visitor. Burt's personal attention to detail and his commitment to making the records of the Archives accessible to all have contributed to our solid reputation. At the same time, his knowledge of New Brunswick history and of the collections of the Provincial Archives have made him very valuable to staff and researchers. Burt's duties have also entailed public programs - in-house and visiting exhibits and special events and speakers. There have been many of these, including an exhibit on New

Burt Glendenning (Continued)

Brunswickers at home and on the battlefront during World War II, and a return exhibit prepared by the Municipal Archives of Dordrecht depicting Canadian efforts in the Netherlands in World War II.

Burt has been editor of *Extra Extra*, the newsletter of the Associates of the Provincial Archives since its inception, and he has contributed articles to the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* and to historical and archival newsletters and journals.

He has had a long involvement with *Acadiensis* and *Acadiensis Press* as an Editorial Board member and as Treasurer. He has also been a member of the Board of Directors of the Genealogical Institute of the Maritimes, and a member of the National Commission of International Council of Archives for the 1992 International Congress in Montreal.

On the personal side, Burt is known as: an easy touch for stray cats; a gourmet cook and connoisseur of fine wine (after life in Montreal), notwithstanding his frequent forays to Harvey's: a demon driver, who had colleagues trusting enough to accept a drive to a conference or meeting certain that he was intent on doing them in, although he has had no accidents to our knowledge and no more than a regular share of speeding tickets; an avid collector of published Brunswickana; New and creative a photographer.

Indeed, photography is more than a personal interest with Burt. He earned a Certificate of Proficiency in Photography from the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design in 2000, and has participated in a number of photographic workshops, including several with renowned photographer Freeman Patterson.

Burt is a founding member of *Silver Fish*, a collective of fine art photographers, and he has mounted, or participated in, a number of photographic exhibits.

It is not possible to fully recount Burt's contributions to the Provincial Archives. joined the staff eight years establishment and has worked in many sections - either as an archivist or manager. Two contributions of enduring importance are: his input into the evolution of professional policies and procedures for the Archives operations including, the design of systems to control and provide access to the microfilm and records collections; and his work in explaining, justifying and quantifying the needed new and improved space for the Archives operations and records storage and in identifying and promoting a solution to this need. We have been a long time in realizing this goal, but Burt's projections and justifications have proven valuable and valid.

Burt has many interests and involvements that will keep him busy in retirement. A trip to South Africa for another photographic course is already booked. He has also expressed an interest in returning to the Archives to work on a major collection needing a finding aid. Burt and his wife, Elizabeth Hamilton, a senior librarian at the University of New Brunswick, share many professional interests, as well as friends across the country and families in Fredericton and Burt's native Bathurst.

A summary of the qualities that have characterized his work at the Archives would include such adjectives as dedicated, knowledgeable, versatile, responsible, and cooperative. We know that we will miss Burt at the Archives, and we also know that we don't fully understand how *much* we will miss him.

PANB Retirements (Continued)

Don Toole

Don Toole is a native of Oromocto, a son of a long-established Sunbury County Family. As a young man, Don joined the Royal Canadian

Navy and served aboard the H.M.C.S. Saguenay. He saw duty in the Atlantic and Middle East, but New Brunswick called him back and in 1969 he began work in the School Book Branch of the Department of Education. He helped manage their extensive inventory and was one of those who made sure every student had their textbooks on time - a task which never endeared him to the students of New Brunswick. In 1985, Don moved from managing a warehouse full of books to the Archives' Records Centre full of records.

Don has remained with the Archives' Government Records Section since that time and has seen major changes in personnel and operations. Don has not only seen a steady growth of records coming into the Records Centre but has taken an active role in managing that growth. In 1995, Don became Supervisor of the Storage and Retrieval Unit (Records Centre), the position from which he is now retiring.

Considering that since 1995, the Records Centre has processed about 75,000 boxes of records and handled about 50,000 requests for files, it is obvious that Don and the Records Centre staff have been busy.

The challenges and changes faced by the Records Centre since 1985 include: the increased volume of records and requests for records, handled by a small staff; the introduction and use of computers to help manage and control the

records and requests for them; and the increased level of sensitivity and security surrounding records brought about by legislative changes affecting personal information.

In all of these new emphases and challenges, Don has been adaptable and even eager to discover ways to meet and overcome them. Certainly the computer age has not passed him by, and he has offered significant suggestions as to what could be done to automate and streamline Records Centre procedures. He has been a good ambassador of records management as he has visited and assisted civil servants across New Brunswick.

Besides Records Centre responsibilities, Don has also admirably met personal challenges. He has maintained his 'homestead' in Keswick where he and Mary raised their son, Brad, who is now married and has launched his successful career. Don has been active in community events, especially in days gone by, coaching softball teams and helping organize recreation-related activities. He and Mary have been seen in recent years keeping fit on their circuit in Keswick. Don has often been called upon by friends and family to lend a helping hand in home repairs, yard maintenance, or just to give advice on what could be done to 'make things better'. Call him; his advice is always good.

Don's wit and humour will be missed at the Records Centre. All his friends and colleagues wish him a enjoyable 'retirement' and "Best Wishes".

ACQUISITION OF NEW MATERIAL

Government Records

RS72 **Index to Sunbury County Probate Court Records, 1786-1984.** 28 pgs. Updated index includes additions for post 1965 files.

RS141 A5 **Index to Provincial Registrations of Births, 1900-1905.** 658 pgs. (also on microfilm).

RS141C1 Index to Kent County and Northumberland Counties Death Registers, 1888-1920. 515 pgs. (also on microfilm) Prepared by Michelle Falkjar, a volunteer, and transferred to the Archives for editing and production.

PrivateRecords

Recent Acquisitions:

MC3007 **Northumberland County Cemetery Transcriptions**. Compiled by the Miramichi Branch, NBGS.

MC3021 **Central Blissville Baptist Church**. Minutes, membership lists. 1833-1947. Photocopies.

MC3030 "Pappy" West and the Fundy Trailers fonds. Fundy Trailers were a NB family singing group led by Pappy Weston, who was inducted into the NB Country Hall of Fame in 2000. Recordings of radio show on CKDH in Amherst, NS. 1956-early 1960s. 14 tapes.

MC3028 **John Browne fonds**. Three letters of John Browne, recently immigrated to Bathurst, NB from County Clare, Ireland written to Michael Studdert, in Ireland. 1843-1849. Photocopies from the National Library in Ireland.

MC3040 **Lord Beaverbrook Collection**. Letters of William Aitken to his son and returns from the school Lord Beaverbrook attended. 1885-1910.

RS155 **Restigouche County Council Records, 1877-1966.** 5.3 meters textual material and 14 microfilms.

RS184 **New Brunswick Museum Records, 1938-1989.** 40 cm. textual records and microfilm. Includes up-date to vertical files subseries.

RS267 **School Buildings Branch Records, 1925-1966.** (Note: bulk of records 1944-1966) microfilm.

RS662 New Brunswick Armorial Bearings Records, 1868-1992. 30 cm.

MC303 **Barry Family fonds** (addition). Judge Jeremiah Barry day books, cash books containing information of both a personal and professional nature, and case ledgers containing summaries of cases in Supreme Court and various county courts. Also minutes of St. Dunstan's Library Committee kept by Barry's daughter. 1887-1950. 40 cms.

MC3037 **Veniot Family fonds**. Correspondence, diploma, speeches, clippings, photographs, biographical sketch of P.J. Veniot, first Acadian premier who completed the term of Walter Foster, and of his son, Clarence J. Veniot, medical doctor and MP and Senator. c.1925-1950. .9 m.

MC3041 **James H. Holmes Lumber Co**. Cash Book. Contains accounts of Doaktown firm. 1927-1942.

MC2995 **Film of Royal Visit to the Miramichi**, June 13, 1939. From Miramichi Historical Society.

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Recent Acquisitions (Continued)

MC80/2623 *The Chronicles of Samuel Nixon and His Descendants* by Jack Edward Nixon Hester (5 volumes).

New Finding Aids:

MC80 **Revised guide**, indexed by subject, author and title; approximately 150 new titles added. Current to January 14, 2002.

MC223 D1 **Anglican Parish of Dalhousie Vestry.** Minutes, Parish Registers, 1845-1961. Microfilm.

MC3038 **St. Stephen Women's Institute fonds.** Minutes, membership lists. 1981-1986. Microfilm.

MC3039 **Victoria County Women's Institute fonds.** Minutes, membership lists. 1927-1996. Microfilm.

Extra! Extra! is published twice yearly. Inquiries about the newsletter should be addressed to Paula Glendenning, EXTRA! c/o Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P.O. Box 6000, Fredericton, New Brunswick, E3B 5H1, or via e-mail to provincial.archives@gnb.ca

The Board of Directors of **the Associates of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick** are members of the public who have volunteered to facilitate the activities of the Provincial Archives. They come from many walks of life and have diverse cultural interests. In some way all had some connection with the Archives before this appointment. All have experience using the documentary holdings of the Archives. The Associates for 2001/2002 are: President, Gwen Davies, John Corey, Joseph Day, Cyril Donahue, Ernie Forbes, Joe Knockwood, Jocelyne LeBel, Fernand Lévesque, Frank Morehouse, Mark Pedersen, Betty Sewell, and Bill Spray.

ARCHIVES WEB SITE

The Archives Website URL is http://www.gnb.ca/archives. It provides general information on the Archives, its holdings, hours of operation and its programs as well as information on the Associates of the Archives. Also available are some general guides to holdings and genealogical guides for each county. Individuals contacting the Archives via the internet are asked to provide their mailing address. All of the documents and most of the Archival finding aids are not available through WWW. Additional information continues to be added and existing information is updated to reflect changes in publications dealing with records management and electronic records, information on exhibits and finding aids, and growing databases.

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If you wish to become an Associate, please complete the enclosed form. Contributions are welcome and tax receipts will be provided.