

LARK HARBOUR

THE

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BLOW·ME·DOWNER

ABOUT THE OUTER BAY OF ISLANDS, NEWFOUNDLAND

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!!! Oh-h-h-h-h-h Canada !!!

When my wife Susan and I immigrated to Canada in 1967, this country was widely respected for the example it set throughout the world. It was 49 years since the Armistice was signed at the end of World War One, and only 22 years since the end of World War Two. Canadians and Newfoundlanders had both fought valiantly in these two wars, and many had also volunteered to fight in Korea a few years later. Canada had gained the respect of the entire world and particularly in those countries of Western Europe such as the Netherlands where Canadian soldiers had been instrumental in freeing the people from the shackles of Nazi domination. Indeed the Netherlands people were so overjoyed at the part played by Canadians that they have shown their appreciation by presenting this country with thousands of tulip bulbs that bring beauty and thanks to our capital Ottawa every spring.

This was a land whose every citizen could feel proud of what his country stood for. Admittedly, there were still many areas which needed attention, such as the unequal status of Aboriginal people, the poverty which always makes its chief victims the children and the aged, conditions so easily visible in many regions of the country; this was also the time of the disgraceful residential schools that were such a blot on the landscape of Canada. But when Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949 the government of Louis St-Laurent came through at the behest of Joey Smallwood with the first child allowances and old age pensions, both being the sources of unimaginable wealth for so many in this province. Of course there were opponents of these measures, like the merchants of St John's, who had no need for child allowances or old age pensions, and bitterly opposed Confederation with Canada because it would endanger their lifestyle, they thought.

A little later governments headed by John Diefenbaker and Lester Pearson, governments of different political stripe for sure, but still imbued with the generous spirit of Canada, introduced and established Canada's first plans to provide free medical care to all who needed it, regardless of their ability to pay. There was also the passage through Parliament of the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, achieved under the leadership of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, perhaps our most visionary prime minister since Sir John A Macdonald, despite the "fuddle duddles" and the "just watch me's". This was yet more evidence that the vast majority of Canadians were generous people with a spirit of respect for humanity that was followed through in their treatment of the less fortunate of their fellow citizens.

It would be wrong to deny that Canada was certainly no utopia in

those days because there were still so many changes needed, but the country was visibly possessed of a good measure of the milk of human kindness and a determination to bring about changes that would benefit everyone, rich and poor alike. And that determination was put into action, making Canada a leader in social legislation at home, and also in numerous international matters.

So where have all the bouquets gone? The seventies and eighties continued to bring with them considerable improvements, although a few cracks were beginning to appear in the otherwise clean façade. Governments committed a few *contretemps*, peccadilloes that ruffled a few feathers and resulted in usually minor disgraces, but mostly the villains were apprehended and made to pay the penalties.

Then along came Stephen Harper and the Reform Party, later to combine with the Progressive Conservatives. "*Too much political patronage!*" "*Not enough law and order!*" "*I'll fix that!*" And to its eternal shame, a large part of the country fell for it. The term "Progressive" was dropped from the combined PC and Reform parties to produce the "Conservative Party of Canada", largely dominated by the Reform element, minus a good number of more moderate or progressive members as collateral damage. A General Election returned a minority government in 2006, and Canada embarked on its (Regressive) Conservative path, with the mean-spirited government now seeking its fourth mandate. Now after nine Harper years we have more people in prison than ever, despite a lower crime rate, with many of their own members of parliament breaking their own laws.

In a CBC interview with Peter Mansbridge, Stephen Harper once remarked that *when he is finished with Canada, it will be unrecognizable*. On this Canada Day, let's hope he is truly finished with our great country, because he has already made too much of it unrecognisable.

**God keep our Land glorious and free
O Canada! We stand on guard for Thee**

Happy
Canada Day
to Everyone !

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

LH = Lark Harbour YH = York Harbour JB = John's Beach
 HC = Holy Communion MP = Morning Prayer EP = Evening Prayer
 P&P = Prayer & Praise; HB = Baptism; MHS = Mem Hymn Sing

2015 JULY 2015

1st Wed **CANADA DAY**
Full Moon
 5th Sun Pentecost 6 - 11:00am LH, HC; JB, 7:00am, HB, HC
 12th Sun Pentecost 7 - 11:00am LH, HC;
 - 2:30pm JB, Cemetery Flower Service
 19th Sun 2:00pm LH & 3:15pm YH, Cemetery Flower Services
 26th Sun Pentecost 9 - 7:00pm LH, EP; 10:30am JB, EP
 31st Fri *Full Moon*

2015 AUGUST 2015

29th Sat *Full Moon*

2015 SEPTEMBER 2015

7th Labour Day
 22nd Fall begins - Autumnal Equinox
 27th Sun *Full Moon*

2015 ADVANCE DATES 2015

Oct 12th Mon Thanksgiving Day
 Oct 19th Mon Canada Federal General Election
 Oct 24th Sat United Nations Day
 Oct 27th Tues *Full Moon*
 Oct 31st Sat Hallowe'en
 Nov 1st Sun Back to Standard Time - Clocks back 1 hour
 Nov 11th Wed Remembrance Day
 Nov 25th Wed *Full Moon*
 Nov 30th Mon NL Provincial Election
 Dec 21st Mon Winter begins
 Dec 25th Fri *Full Moon* - Christmas Day
Christmas Day and New Years Day are both Fridays

EDITOR'S NOTE

Please note that the minutes for the June Council Meeting were not available in time for this issue. They will be included in the September issue. The reason for this is that minutes will not be available for publication until they have been reviewed and approved by the whole Council at a regular meeting.

This edition of the BMD also covers the period until September. The September issue will be available near the end of August.

The 2015 BMDs have been a little different from previous years, as they have contained more national and world items and less relating specifically to our Province, as I have not been living in Lark Harbour since December 30th. Another difference is the number of links to further information. Those links are a convenient way of making reference to other sources, and I plan to continue using them.

Sincere thanks to our readers for your encouragement these past months. I hope to continue publishing in the future, although circumstances may dictate otherwise. Only time will tell.

SOME LINKS TO FURTHER INFORMATION

Here are some links to various items relating to the work of the UNHCR, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, that readers may find of interest.

[Some news about survivors of the earthquake in Nepal](#) - pictures and accounts about real people helping to rebuild lives and communities in troubled regions of the world.

[See this 4 minute video of little 8-year-old Omar](#), who was born with a growth hormone deficiency, but now lives in Finland where he can get treatment.

[Refugee, Asylum Seeker, or Migrant](#) - what is the difference?

[Watch this 2½ minute video about the lives of refugees in Burundi](#)

25 June 2015 – The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, today called the [opening in Seoul, Republic of Korea \(South Korea\), of an office to work on human rights issues in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea \(North Korea\)](#) “a breakthrough that would have been unthinkable only a few years ago.”

The above items illustrate the important work being done around the world by UNHCR, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. People displaced from their traditional homes because of natural disasters and even more by insurgency and open warfare in many places, have become a serious problem around the world. Millions have become dependent on the generosity of relatively few, and they tend also to be in parts of the world where drought, floods, and other extreme weather conditions hinder food production, where disease is often rampant, and where poverty and disease often render social conditions very unstable, as was demonstrated by the recent Ebola epidemic in Africa.

When you sit down to a fine dinner in your comfortable home with your family around you, think of the people depicted in those stories and videos above. Remember that they may be surviving on less food than you leave on your plate. In addition they may have had to scour garbage dumps where wealthier people have discarded food.

DONATIONS YOU COULD MAKE

You can help the starving children and their parents by donating a few dollars to funds like Oxfam, Canadian Feed the Children, the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), or one of many others.

You can also receive a personal tax refund on many such donations. Just check that the charity is registered by going to the [Canada Revenue Agency](#) website, typing in the name of the charity, and clicking on “Detailed search” where you will see the organisation's number if it has one. CRA assigns numbers to approved charities. At the end of the year or sometimes earlier you will receive a receipt for your donations entitling you to claim a refund according to CRA regulations. The refund varies depending on your taxable income, and the amount may be applied against either spouse's income or shared between both partners.

- SLH

SUGGESTED INTERNET READING

Thousands of articles appear daily on the Internet. Many are written by reputable journalists and are published by responsible media organisations like CBC, CTV, the Globe and Mail, and many others. Often they pass unnoticed because of their intimidating quantity that many people have neither the patience nor the inclination to sort through. As an experiment, we will present links to some of these that our readers may find interesting. Each link is accompanied by source references and other relevant information. Just click on the link while you are connected to the Internet.



[Civil Society coalition takes aim at Harper government for stifling dissent.](#) - This is a CTV report by Mike Blanchfield, of the Canadian Press, published Tuesday, June 16, 2015. It details the views of a coalition representing some 200 organisations and 500 individuals who accuse the Harper Government of “muzzling scientists and public servants and portraying First Nations and aboriginal groups as threats to national security”. The article quotes a number of organisations such as government officials, publicly-funded bodies and charities whose efforts have been hindered or stifled by withdrawal of funding simply because they have taken positions of which the Government disapproves.

“Canadians deserve a vibrant and dynamic democracy and they are capable of building that together,” the report concludes. “It is the job of government to support those engaged in this task, not undercut and destroy their striving for a better and more inclusive democracy.”



[Study: Home-Schooling Up Almost 30% Across Canada](#) - This item, whose author is not named, is dated 2015 June 16, and is from the London, Ontario, radio station CFPL AM broadcasting on 980MHz. Home-Schooling is simply where parents decide to remove their children from the formal school situation and take on their education themselves. It is legal in Canada, but all provinces require parents to notify the educational authorities of their decision, and some also require the submission of a formal educational plan and evidence of student progress.



[Putin says Russian military will receive 40 new intercontinental ballistic missiles this year](#) - Article by Vladimir Isachenkov, Moscow, the Associated Press, in *The Globe and Mail*, Tuesday, Jun. 16, 2015. This article presents the other side of the issue. We so often see only the American, or “our” side when it comes to Russia, China, or other nations that are not part of “The West”. Many situations in the West are mirrored in other parts of the world, and it’s interesting to compare the Russian arguments with those we hear from our own government and our NATO allies, especially the USA: “*The United States is inciting tensions and carefully nurturing their European allies’ anti-Russian phobias in order to use the current difficult situation for further expanding its military presence and influence in Europe.*” In the preceding quotation, simply replace “The United States” with “Russia” and “anti-American phobias” with “anti-Russian phobias” and the difference is negligible.



[GLOBAL WARMING STUDY rebuts doubters: No stop, no slowdown](#) - Article from *The Wisconsin Gazette*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, by Associated Press, author not identified, Tuesday, 16 June 2015. The research by NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, shows that “since 1998, the rate of warming is about the same as it has been since 1950, about two-tenths of a degree Fahrenheit a decade”, or slightly more than one tenth of a degree Celsius over the same time period. It quotes some of the measures to ensure that the science used in the research is valid and acceptable. In the end it is just one more article on the topic, but it explains quite well the relentlessness of the warming process. It also attempts to explain the adjustments made for comparing temperatures taken over different media (sea vs land) and with more modern equipment.



[Watchdog says Tory clause guarding RCMP sets ‘perilous precedent’](#) - Gloria Galloway, Ottawa, *The Globe and Mail*, 2014 May 14.

[Legault questions motivation behind ‘black hole’ of retroactive gun registry law](#) - Bruce Cheadle, *The Canadian Press*, 2015 June 04.

[Harper says his government encouraged RCMP to destroy disputed long-gun data](#) - Ottawa, *The Canadian Press*, 2015 June 16.

[RCMP gun database offline – for some, it’s irrelevant](#) - Selena Ross, *The Globe and Mail*, 2015 Apr 10.

The four articles above cover a year from 2014 May to 2015 April when questions about RCMP action relating to the destruction of the Long Gun Registry became public. It was a controversial issue from the start, and when Québec announced that it wanted to keep its section of the list, the controversy increased. The Harper Government meanwhile encouraged the destruction of the entire Registry at a time when the Québec portion could legally have been maintained by that province. The issue is complex, but the action of the Harper Government when it encouraged the RCMP to destroy the file, could be described as ‘jiggery-pokery’ at best, and at worst downright illegal action. It certainly smacks of an attempt to rewrite history, which any government should be ashamed to do. Shades of George Orwell’s famous novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four!* Read the details for yourself and decide what you think.



[NL fattest province in Canada, StatsCan Report shows](#) - CBC News, 2015 June 17. Newfoundland & Labrador tips the scale in a new report from Statistics Canada, that shows one in three people here are obese . . . This province has surpassed the national average of 20.2% by 10 percentage points, making it the second most obese region in the country and the most obese province.



[Mt Everest moved by deadly earthquake](#) - SkyNews.com, Australia, 17 June 2015, author not identified. According to the report, Mount Everest has been moving about four centimetres a year in a north-westerly direction for the past decade. But according to Chinese researchers, the recent earthquake in Nepal changed that, causing the mountain to move three centimetres to the south-west. Interesting. I wonder if Blow-Me-Down Mountain is on the move like that?



WIKIPEDIA



One of the great things about the Internet has always been its cost-free openness to everybody, once you have paid and connected with your ISP (Internet Service Provider). There are few things still free in life, and many of those are not worth having anyway. But look at what you get with the Internet.

You have cost-free communication by email to any other Internet user anywhere in the world: compare that with the cost of mailing a physical letter, which is \$1:00 + HST anywhere in Canada, and more for overseas letters. Your email is also, for all practical purposes, instantaneous; there are occasional glitches, but they rarely last more than a few hours, and are often much shorter. If your system is reasonably up-to-date you can even have visual communication using systems such as Skype, also at no cost for the basic service.

You have information available on a huge range of topics with the click of a few keys—newspapers from all over the world; research on everything imaginable; the ability to purchase items which will arrive at your home within a few days or less; banking facilities in your home; travel bookings . . . the list is infinite.

And you have WIKIPEDIA. There you can find information on almost any topic you could name, from self-diagnosis of medical conditions to the ancient history of the Hottentots. All for free.

So what exactly is *Wikipedia* ?

It was founded in 2001 by [Jimmy Wales](#) (b. 1966 Aug 07) as an Internet encyclopedia to which anyone can contribute. You don't have to be a college professor, or holder of a PhD, or indeed fitting into any mandatory categories of age, education, experience, nationality, or anything else. The only requirement is to be able to write and to have something you want to write about. You can then post it on Wikipedia for all the world to read, free of charge. Your work may later be edited, by you or by readers who have seen statements they feel need to be edited for some reason.

Wikipedia has been criticised for the fact that items may be submitted by anyone, on any subject, regardless of whether the submitter has appropriate credentials or any credentials at all. This may mean that the material the articles contain may be accurate, or not. It is therefore wise to approach any Wikipedia article with a measure of caution, as the writer of the article may have no valid claim to expertise or knowledge of the topic. Judicious use of the information is therefore advised, although the same may be said of conventional printed encyclopaedias or any published material.

However despite these limitations, Wikipedia and its sister webpages have become a recognised part of the Internet and are used regularly by vast numbers of people. It is very convenient, and has the useful capability of being accessible by electronic Links from documents such as this. One of Wikipedia's sister webpages is [Wiktionary](#), a free online dictionary available in many languages. It may be accessed by clicking the blue hyperlink in the previous line. Another sister page is [Wikiquote](#), and there are several others, including: [Wikibooks](#), [Wikisource](#), [Wikinews](#), [Wikivoyage](#). Each one deals with a specific set of topics, such as books, news, travel, or quotations, and are accessed by using a search or by clicking the applicable hyperlink. Your computer must of course be connected to the Internet in order for the hyperlinks to work.

Wiki pages provide a very useful service on the Internet, allowing access to information which might otherwise be costly or → → →

ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE NEW INDUSTRY IN NORTHERN CANADA

IT'S NOT TOO OFTEN that we hear about a new industry opening in Northern Canada without an uproar about environmental problems, but the residents of the small settlement of [Sanikiluaq, Nunavut](#), are doing just that while at the same time escaping the kind of castigation hurled at the Newfoundland seal hunt.

According to an article by Bob Weber in the [Edmonton Journal](#), the 850 people of Sanikiluaq are earning a good living in the springtime by collecting feathers from the nests of the [eider duck](#) which are plentiful around their community in the [Belcher Islands](#) of the southeastern Hudson Bay. Thousands of eider ducks lay eggs in nests on the ground, and the female eider plucks her own feathers to provide insulation for her eggs. The local people collect half of the feathers, leaving the other half to keep the eggs warm, and the raw feathers are then sold for about \$330 a kilogram.

The feathers will eventually be used to fill [duvets](#). These feathers of the eider duck are one of the most effective natural insulation materials. I recall as a child we had [eiderdowns](#) on our beds, but whether the insulation used in those was in fact down taken from the eider duck is questionable, although they were filled with feathers. However those feathers may have been from the more humble domestic goose, whose quills used to be very plentiful in England just before Christmas when geese were the traditional Christmas dinner meat, documented in Charles Dickens' book [A Christmas Carol](#). Goose feather beds were considered to be the height of luxury in earlier times when ordinary people slept on straw pallets.

These days of course turkeys are now the bird of choice for dinners at Christmas and Thanksgiving in England as in North America, and to my knowledge turkey feathers do not have any special insulating value. The cheaper versions of 'eiderdowns' or duvets are most likely stuffed with some synthetic material, the byproduct of the ubiquitous oil industry.

However the people of Sanikiluaq are cashing in on the down of the eider duck which abounds near their community, and they are not being hounded by wildlife groups like Greenpeace or others of similar ilk because, of course, the ducks are not being killed for their feathers. In fact it seems likely that they will be carefully protected by those who are harvesting their feathers. Eider down is a luxury item as also are seal skins, but since the ducks are not killed for their down, although the local inhabitants do use them as a source of meat and eggs for eating, there is no hint of any objections such as are heard from wildlife protectors intent on preserving the small proportion of seals whose skins are harvested yearly around the shores of Newfoundland.

Let's hope that the Inuit people of Sanikiluaq, Nunavut, are allowed to continue their ecologically-sound harvesting of eider down, pursuing their traditional lifestyle in a region where they can make a good living happily in their remote homeland of southeastern Hudson Bay.

- SLH

→ → → inconvenient. They also make possible the use of convenient electronic devices such as hyperlinks that can help readers find information or cross references more quickly.

In the end a service like Wikipedia cannot exist without financing, but its operators demand no fees for its use; instead they request donations from users. Help them if you can.

- SLH

INFLUENTIAL USA REPUBLICANS CALL FOR THE LOWERING OF THE CONFEDERATE FLAG ON GOVERNMENT PROPERTIES



One of the more frequently seen variations on the Confederate flag.

IS IT A SHIFT in political thought South-of-the-Border? Or is it merely a cynical vote-catching ploy? In the last few days since the horrendous [shooting in Charleston, South Carolina, USA, of nine innocent people](#) by [Dylann Storm Roof](#), age 21, yet another crazy gun-wielding young white man, a significant number of leading politicians are reviewing their opinions about the displaying of the Confederate flag. Some of them are members of the Republican Party (aka the Grand Old Party, aka the G.O.P.) whose membership has included many of the most staunch supporters of traditional segregationist values in the South. But is this move relating to the flag a genuine change in their personal positions or are they simply following what at the moment is a very vocal segment of the US general public, bearing in mind that they face a general election in 2016?

[Walmart Stores](#), perhaps one of the most conservative and image-conscious retail businesses in the USA, have also announced a decision to remove the flag from products they offer for sale. Said Brian Nick, a spokesman for the company, *"We never want to offend anyone with the products that we offer. We have taken steps to remove all items promoting the confederate flag from our assortment—whether in our stores or on our web site."*

Perhaps it's too much yet to hope for a sea-change among our southern neighbours. But if these moves denote even a tiny rift in their monolithic resistance to the gun attitude, maybe we might see further changes in the future, and after another generation perhaps even a willingness to at least modify their much-touted constitutional right to bear arms as proclaimed in the [Second Amendment](#) to the Constitution which states: *"A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."*

Considering the developments in small weapons such as the US Constitution would have been unlikely to envisage when the Second Amendment was adopted in 1791, surely there must be an increasing number of Americans who would at least support some kind of modification to the language of the Second Amendment. Such a change would no doubt make changes more likely here in Canada, since the Harper Conservatives are the main supporters of the arms lobby in this country, and seem to be content to follow USA gun leadership.

One may be inclined to question why the Confederate flag should be held in disdain by Americans with more liberal views, but much of that attitude may be attributed to [William Tappan Thompson](#), 1812 - 1882.

Thompson was an ardent white supremacist who designed a version of the Confederate flag with a white background, which became known as "the Stainless Banner". While he was editor of the *Savannah Morning News* (based in Savannah, GA, he published several editorials, one of which (1863 April 23) contained the following inflammatory words: *"We are fighting to maintain the Heaven-ordained supremacy of the white man over the inferior or colored race; a white flag would thus be emblematical of our cause."* Small wonder then that his flag came to be identified with racist anti-coloured sentiments in 1863 when the Civil War was still being fought, and that it is still a rallying point for racist sympathisers even today.

It is probably wishful thinking that the anti-African-American racialism which had its roots in the slave era is going to disappear any time soon. But the fact that prominent Americans are even thinking about this gigantic slur on their society may be an encouraging sign. Perhaps it may even be taken as a hint that after almost two and a half centuries the constitutional elements of equality and freedom as defined by the founding fathers in the Constitution of the USA, are finally maturing as they should. The United States of America certainly has the potential, perhaps more than any other country at this time, for all its citizens to enjoy a decent and fulfilling life.

We Canadians should also be looking into the innermost recesses of our own society to ensure that the rights of equality and freedoms defined in our own Charter are being upheld. If we fail in that, then we are as guilty of racialism as are our southern neighbours. - SLH

Further articles on the flag issue

[Governors in Three States Seek to Banish Confederate Flag From License Plates](#) - by Jess Bravin, *Wall Street Journal*, 2015 June 23.

[Not so fast? Haley could face tough battle in push to remove Confederate flag](#) - *Fox News*, 2015 June 23. No author named.

PLEASE NOTE

*In keeping with our practice over the past
several years, there will be no issue of*

The Blow•Me•Downer

for the month of August 2015.

*The next issue will be September 2015
to be available online during
the last few days of August.*

ENJOY YOUR SUMMER AND BE SAFE