

SPACE-AGE ARK BRAVE NEW HOME

Here at last! A possible answer to the high cost of heating & eating. An ecologically designed bioshelter powered and heated by the wind and sun. And more! It recycles its own wastes and grows its own food. What's it like to live in one? Writer Constance Mungall moved in to find out

It was a rotten February night. Freezing rain ricocheted off the greenhouse panels. The whole Ark whistled in a 56-mile-an-hour gale. The Jötul stove, blazing with an oak wood fire, whistled, too, in a different key. The vent from the Clivus composting system froze and moaned as its blades ground round in the storm.

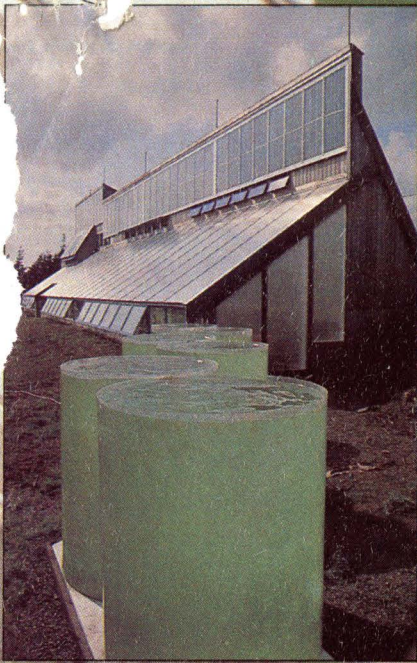
David stirred in front of the TV set. "What should we be worrying about in terms of this storm?" he asked Nancy. The two of them made a quick inventory: solar panels, water storage, fish ponds, greenhouse temperature and glazing, windmill, Clivus system.

The temperature outside was -15°C , in the living room 22°C , the greenhouse 7°C , the fish ponds 13.5°C , the water storage tanks 45°C . The double glass doors bent in the wind, but the greenhouse glazing held firm. All was well in the Ark.

David turned the thermostat down to 16°C , humped one last log in the Jötul for good measure, and went off upstairs to bed. Nancy took a sleepy five-year-old Meredith to the bathroom, checked on Chris, 13, in his room, and joined David.

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Far left: The Ark, powered by sun and wind, overlooks Northumberland Strait on Spry Point, P.E.I. Centre: Glass walls and roof solar collectors gather heat. The Ark is also a fish farm and tilapia will be raised in the round tanks. Near left: Six-kilowatt windmill generates power for household appliances. Below: Even in midwinter, Nancy Willis, David Bergmark, who run the Ark, and their children Meredith and Chris, can pick fresh chard and other vegetables from the greenhouse for supper.

PHOTOS BY JOHN LAYERS



GOURMET MUSTARDS

Wine Mustard

Preparation time: 20 min

Standing time: 40 min

Cooking time: 10 min

Makes: 2½ cups

- 2 cups dry white wine
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 (4-oz) can dry mustard
- 3 tbs honey
- 1 tbs vegetable oil
- 2 tsp salt
- Few drops hot pepper sauce
- 1 tbs cornstarch

Place wine, onion, and garlic in a small heavy saucepan and boil 5 minutes. Cool. Put mustard into a small bowl; strain wine mixture and add to mustard,

mixing with a wire whisk until smooth. Add honey, oil, salt, pepper sauce, and cornstarch and whisk until smooth. Return mixture to a small saucepan, and stir constantly over medium heat until thick. Cool, then pour into small jars or crocks. Refrigerate at least two days.

Tarragon Mustard

Preparation time: 15 min

Standing time: 1 hour

Makes: 1 cup

- ¼ cup dry mustard
- 2 tbs honey
- ⅓ cup dry white wine
- ¼ cup wine vinegar
- ½ tsp salt
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 tsp crushed dried tarragon leaves

Mix together mustard and honey in the

top of a double boiler (not aluminum because it can discolor egg sauces). Add wine, vinegar and salt. Let stand an hour or two to develop flavor. Blend in the egg yolks and place over boiler bottom filled with hot, but not boiling, water (sauce will curdle if water is boiling). Over low heat, beat constantly with an *electric mixer* or wire whisk and cook about 10 minutes or until slightly thickened. Remove from heat and beat in the tarragon. Refrigerate up to three weeks.

Note: Do not double or triple this recipe because egg yolks may not cook properly. If you want more than 1 cup, make batches one at a time.

INSTANT SPICED TEA MIX

Preparation time: 10 min

Makes: 2½ cups

- 1 cup instant (100-percent) tea
- 1 (7-oz) package instant orange-drink crystals
- ½ cup instant lemonade crystals
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground cloves
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg

Blend all ingredients together and divide into little tins or miniature tea caddies. If using a wooden basket, place tea mix in a small plastic bag and tie with a twist tie. To serve, stir 1 heaping tablespoon mix with 1 cup of boiling water. ■

THE ARK

Continued from page 53

David and Nancy, a young couple in their thirties, live with the children in a modern-day survival unit, an updated Ark, on Spry Point, P.E.I., 45 miles east of Charlottetown. It's an experiment in wholistic living, an almost complete biosystem that draws its energy from the sun and the wind, grows its own food, and uses its own waste to grow more crops.

David Bergmark is one of the architects of the Ark, and Nancy Willis is a horticulturist responsible for the family-sized greenhouse immediately below her kitchen, and for the adjoining greenhouse, 1,900 feet square, big enough for commercial use.

As an experimental project, the Ark, which cost \$130,000 to build from federal government funding of \$354,000, is big—larger and more complicated than a private home. The living quarters—living-dining area, modern kitchen and small greenhouse downstairs, three bedrooms and bathroom upstairs—take up about a third of the total space. The rest includes laboratory, workshop, commercial-sized greenhouse, barn for storage and machine work, and heat-storage tanks. But it's not hard to see how a family of four, like David and Nancy, Meredith and Chris, would live in a three-

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bedroom house built on the same principles.

The Ark was built by a diverse group of about a dozen scientists, technicians and philosophers who call themselves the New Alchemists (the name is inspired by the aim of ancient alchemy: to integrate science and the humanities). John Todd, a 37-year-old marine biologist born in Prince Edward County, Ontario, and educated in Hamilton, is their visionary leader.

It was Todd who conceived the Ark, out of more modest experiments at the New Alchemists' headquarters near Boston, Massachusetts. He persuaded Premier Alex Campbell of energy-hungry P.E.I. to contribute a 20-year renewable lease on 180 acres in the undeveloped east end of the island, and the federal Ministry of Urban Affairs to fund it as a UN Human Settlements project.

Todd named the experiment "The Ark" because it was designed as a survival unit. His idea was, it could survive an economic holocaust while the rest of us, dependent on oil from Saudi Arabia, food from Florida or California, disposal of our own pollution somewhere we don't even think about . . . could go under.

He wangled it so Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau came to the official opening last fall—and so the PM was visibly impressed.

My son Alex and I spent a week last February finding out what it's like to live in an Ark. We felt like pioneers in a situation which—if we're lucky—more Canadians may experience within the next five years. Alex, 17, helped put up the windmill; I made bean salad and ratatouille (my two company dishes) and washed thousands of cups for VIPs who tramped through almost daily.

The Ark, made of unpainted wood, looks something like a boat, tight and sturdy. Its prow juts forward to the Northumberland Strait; it looks clear across to Cape Breton Island on a fine day. Its stern is sunk into the billow of a wave—the berm of earth bulldozed up to protect the northern exposure and lift the bitter winter winds up and over the house. Architecturally, the building is very beautiful, and well put together by Island carpenters. It fits into the red bluffs, beaches and woods of P.E.I. Behind it are the superstructures of four windmills . . . one experimental mill is mounted . . . and a big parking lot for visitors.

The whole house is designed with weather in mind—architect David Bergmark maintains that the heating bill of the average Canadian home could be cut to a quarter by good design—lots of windows to the south, few or none to the north, protective windbreaks of earth and trees, lots of insulation (there's up to

12 inches of fibreglass on the Ark's ceiling) and tight joints throughout (there're no drafts in the Ark).

Greenhouse, living room and kitchen are solid walls of plastic and glass to the south. The three bedrooms upstairs all look south—two of them share a protected balcony reached through double glass doors. The house itself is an efficient solar collector.

And incredibly, this past cold winter, the Ark has been heated almost entirely by the sun. The Jötul has been stoked for about three hours every evening—and comforting it is, too, crackling with logs David buys from a friend in St. Peters, 18 miles away, for \$25 a cord. (Last winter he used three cords.) But during the day, even cloudy days, direct heat from the sun alone is enough.

Solar panels at the top of the house (vertical to catch maximum winter sun and its reflection from water and snow) catch the heat and send it down to storage tanks under the living-room floor. The Ark's three tanks hold 16,000 gallons, enough to store heat for 28 days without sun. December and part of January are likely to be overcast on P.E.I., but even in those months, heat was stored rather than drained from the tanks.

When the thermostat is set higher than the living-area temperature, warm air is drawn from the storage tanks, and circu-

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lated through ordinary floor vents throughout the house.

One cold but sunny day, the tanks measured 40C while the water feeding into the storage tanks from the collectors was 15C. It was heating up at a rate of about one degree every 40 minutes during the day, but after dark it could drop back 17 degrees. When I visited the family, the Ark had no curtains, but soon after they were able to buy drapes to pull over the double glass doors of the living room, and insulating shutters for the greenhouse glazing to keep more heat in at night.

An enameled orange woodburner from Denmark sits in the basement for backup heat, but it wasn't lit once all winter.

I soon adjusted to the nighttime tem-

perature of 16C. Chris's room, where I slept, was a good sun-collector and, if I kept the door shut all evening, was still about 20C when I went to bed.

We learned how to swing with the weather. Wednesday, the temperature was -7C, but the sun shone brilliantly all day. By midmorning, the temperature in the greenhouse had reached 25C. It was like a hot summer day. We stripped to T-shirts, and I complained no one had told me to bring my shorts. David estimated later the larger water storage tank gained enough to heat the house for two days.

Nancy worked in the greenhouse all day—basking in the summer heat. Together we transplanted 61 cabbage seedlings, 61 Swiss chard and 86 butternut lettuce. They filled almost all the bench

space in the domestic greenhouse, leaving room for two flats of hybrid giant and climbing tomatoes Nancy planned to seed next day.

Later, she turned on the seep hoses to water more seedlings in the commercial greenhouse, and stretched out in her bikini to sunbathe. The greenhouse glazing is double acrylic with 3/8-inch air space between for insulation. It lets in ultraviolet rays, so she got a tan.

The only drawback—the plastic is not transparent, so the breathtaking view across the strait is cut off. As it is, you have to look over the balcony on the west to see the ocean, but the view from kitchen and dining area into the greenhouse is a lush prospect itself.

We were already eating flourishing parsley, lettuce, Swiss chard, broccoli and curly kale from the greenhouse—enough to feed us every day and some to spare for neighbors. And this in the February week I saw three stalks of pitiful broccoli at 69 cents and slimy spinach at 89 cents a pound in the Charlottetown Co-op store.

Fresh cut flowers are also a winter luxury on the island, but Nancy had petunias, marigolds and geraniums. In the greenhouse, she had more petunias, marigolds and acorn trees sprouting, and scarlet runners almost ready to grasp the waiting strings.

The big greenhouse has its own natural heating system. On sunny days like that winter Wednesday, the glazing gathers in the sun's rays and hot air rises to a pitch in the roof, where it's trapped and blown down a big galvanized pipe into the 118-cubic-yard rock storage chamber under the adjoining barn. At night and on sunless days, the rocks give up their heat and warm the greenhouse. In summers, when the heat would be too much, the vents at top and bottom let in the breeze off the strait.

December 19, 20 and 21, when a horrendous storm brought down power lines, the Ark was left with no heat, but it maintained itself above freezing; the greenhouses survived.

"The passive systems worked on their own," explains David. Heat stored in the soil, the house and the fish ponds carried the building through. Basil, sweet marjoram, thyme and oregano plants from Nancy's herb garden were the only loss.

Thirty 500-gallon fish tanks behind the growing beds in the big greenhouse and five smaller tanks under the herb garden in the domestic greenhouse act like low temperature furnaces. The thin fibreglass tank sides admit more than 90

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percent of the light, and the algae rapidly growing in preparation for the fish stocks absorb the heat. February pond temperature was 18C, enough to stabilize the greenhouse temperatures at night.

So far only one pond has fish, tilapia, a tropical fish that feeds on green algae and, therefore, does not ingest the chemicals that finer fish, which eat other fish and crustaceans, pass on to humans. The tilapia were too small and bony to eat during my visit (they grow to edible size, weighing about a half pound, in three to four months) but Nancy assured me that the food editor of the New York Times called them "the finest tasting farm-raised fish I've eaten," and they sell for \$3 a pound in New York and Chicago.

The big tanks could hold 20,000 tilapia, which with low-cost algae feeds

could make fish farming a good business. The five smaller tanks under the herb garden in the domestic greenhouse could grow enough for a good fish dinner once a week for a small family.

When a good crop of algae has grown and the fish have added their own wastes, water from the fish ponds will be used as fertilizer in the greenhouse.

The solar heating system, the greenhouses and the fish ponds are the exotic parts of the Ark. They make it look a little like a space-age dwelling, isolated on its windblown point. Otherwise, it feels like a city house hooked into all the conventional services.

There seems to be unlimited hot water—heated, again, by the sun alone. The 100-gallon tank above Chris's bedroom has its own solar heating system: panels

at a 60-degree angle to catch the sun's rays year-round (not perpendicular to catch winter sun as are the space-heating panels). The tank has an electrical coil to switch on in case it's needed to keep the water hot in low-sun months, but like the backup furnace, it's never been needed.

The Ark has a washer and a dryer, an electric stove in the kitchen, a refrigerator and all the usual small appliances: vacuum cleaner, iron, hair dryer, TV, radio and record player, and of course power tools.

All are powered by a 6-kilowatt windmill (the small windmill that was standard on Maritime and prairie farms before rural electrification was 2 kw). Juice from the windmill comes into the Gemini converter, which brings it into phase with the public power signal on the island, and makes it usable by the Ark's appliances.

A mill of this size, running about a third of the time, produces about 1,800 kilowatt hours a month, much more than the Ark would need as a single family dwelling. Meantime, electric power lines run from the road to the house and windmill. The windmill is experimental (the energy is transported from the top of the tower hydraulically) and therefore spends some time on the ground for adjustment. Then power from Maritime Electric keeps the place ticking.

The final system in the Ark is waste recycling. Waste from the two toilets and the kitchen goes down chutes to a Clivus Multrum bin in the cellar, where it's processed and turned into compost. Theoretically, the compost should be clean and usable in the greenhouse in about two years, but Nancy, cautious about the chemicals and even bacteria it may contain, plans to have it tested for disease organisms first, and meantime to use it outside to nourish trees and other non-food plants.

Someone had to hold five-year-old Meredith's hand as she perched on the Clivus at first. It's like sitting on a clean but very deep one-holer: bright orange plastic seats on wooden bases above 20-foot chutes to the storage bin below.

There's absolutely no smell from any of the outlets. "Less than from a flush toilet," says Nancy. Different from an outhouse, its decomposition uses oxygen and is therefore more complete, and the natural draft in the vent draws odors down.

Kitchen wastes go down a chute, covered by a plastic bowl, from the kitchen counter. I never got over my fear of dropping something down, say the coffee pot filter, but David reassured me it could be retrieved from below if I did.

Input of toilet and kitchen wastes must be balanced. Nancy tosses down a handful of garden wastes or seaweed when she feels the Clivus system needs it. She also keeps a flourishing compost pile in the greenhouse. ▶

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Could an ordinary person run the Ark? After all, David is an architect who worked as its construction supervisor, and Nancy, a horticulturist and the New Alchemists' assistant director in Canada. Both are technically and philosophically in tune with the Ark. No need for special training, they both say.

The house itself is more efficient than most, and Nancy has no fewer labor-saving devices. Without her commercial greenhouse chores, and her role of hostess to scientists, politicians and the public who visit the Ark, Nancy says the living quarters would take no more housework than a normal bungalow.

With the 1,900-foot-square greenhouse and the 30 fish tanks producing cash crops, it would be a full-time job—but one many women would enjoy—at

home with the kids, but producing and earning. The self-composting Clivus system is easier than operating a compost pile of kitchen wastes, as many conservation-conscious housewives do these days.

The solar collectors, for heating house and domestic hot water, need no more attention than the average oil furnace.

"I know it's collecting on a sunny or a diffused-light day," says David. "I hear the pump going, and to be sure, I feel the pipes. The one going out of the collector down to the storage tanks is warmer than the one going in—about 15 degrees difference. In fact, there are fewer adjustments necessary—no annual cleaning, no oil deliveries.

"Just set the thermostat and listen for a slight glug—like a 16,000-gallon gold-

fish bowl—when the heat is drawn from the tank," says David.

The Ark windmill is an experimental prototype, and often down for tinkering; theoretically it should fail no more often, perhaps less often, than a centralized power system, subject to blackouts in storms. You develop a feel for the wind when you're dependent on it, like the old-timers had. A certain smell in the air, and you know its direction; you don't need the anemometer to tell you the speed.

Nancy and David's biggest problem is not with the hardware, but with the droves of people who're attracted by the dream of self-sufficiency to visit the Ark.

Since the participation of so many thousands can itself change the experiment, the Ark residents limit visiting hours to from two to five on Sundays.

David and Nancy are enthusiastic but not evangelistic about the way they live.

"Self-sufficiency is an attractive idea, but we can't achieve it overnight," says Nancy. "We're not purists—we don't recycle our bath water, or even catch our rain water.

"Maybe people can pick up one idea at a time from experiments like ours, and move slowly toward a better control of their own lives, less dependence on big technology."

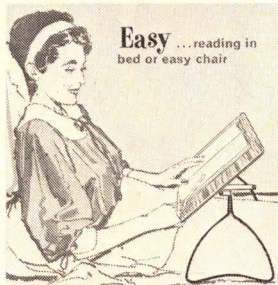
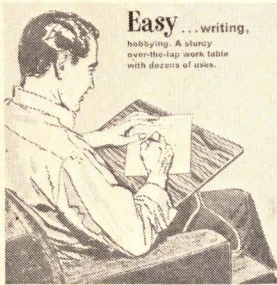
David estimates that he could build a new three-bedroom house that would use the sun's heat the way the Ark does for \$30,000 to \$35,000, including, on P.E.I., the land. It would immediately reduce the usual heating costs to a quarter. He calls this "passive solar heating." The house itself collects the sun's heat and stores it without expensive storage tanks. Another feature that could be adopted for immediate return: the solar system for domestic hot water. It would pay for itself in four years, he estimates.

At the opening last fall, the Ark was called "an early exploration in weaving together the sun, wind, biology and architecture on behalf of humanity," and Trudeau said there's lots of money for this kind of experiment.

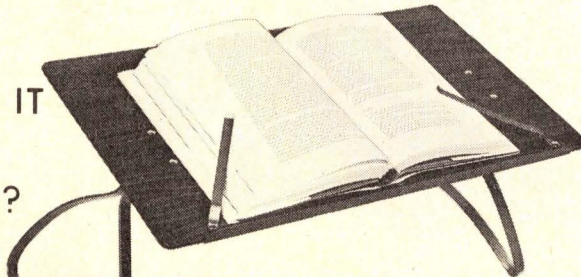
Canadian government contribution to projects like the Ark is lumped under the headings Renewable Energy and Conservation. This category comes to 16 percent of the total federal expenditure on research and development in energy to be spent this year. Nuclear research and development, on the other hand, will get \$94 million or 68 percent of the same federal energy R and D budget. And of course, it's a drop in the bucket next to the billions the oil companies spend to extend their resources to keep us going to the year 2000. And yet this avenue, use of *renewable* safe energy, can help solve our long-term energy problems and change our style of life.

As for Alex and me, we're from a family of campers—we enjoy being close to nature. At the Ark, we couldn't escape

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in the next century, but the original families, the Trietes, the Lutzes, the Steeves, are still there.

The new township was later called Moncton, ironically after the British general who harried the Acadians in the 1750s.

There are a few architectural gems lurking in the elm- and maple-shaded streets of the old town behind Main Street. (The federal inventory of houses over 100 years lists 136.) Many have been turned into professional offices, more have been divided into apartments or rooms for rent. A very few have been bought—dirt cheap—and renovated, mostly by recent comers like city manager Bob Boxwell and his wife Marilyn, who value two luxuries, spacious living rooms and being able to walk to work and shops.

The new suburbs are in the north, and in Dieppe and Riverview, across the Petitcodiac. A new highway, named after a former mayor, Ambrose Wheeler, will soon circle the city from the Riverview causeway to Dieppe and the Shediac Road. It will relieve downtown traffic, now clogged by trains at level crossings (a sign of CN power in the town) and by erratic road signs.

A good indication of the lively character of the town is the number of better-than-average, and a couple of absolutely top eating places. The night life doesn't measure up. That's because, June to September, half the town streams at five sharp down the Shediac Road to the beaches and cottages that beckon half an hour away from Northumberland Strait, where the water averages 70 degrees in summer, the warmest north of Myrtle Beach.

"There are 9,000 cottages at Shediac," says Recreation and Parks Director Bob Cameron, "and 99 percent of them belong to Monctonians."

The coast north and south of Shediac is a delightful hodgepodge of relaxed living. Within easy commuting distance, it's what Toronto Island was to Toronto 25 years ago. It's still just possible to find a cottage, on cement block piles, with septic tank, for around \$5,000, or less on leased land, although newcomers are being forced to look farther south as far as Shemogue and north to Buctouche. Some Monctonians who can't swing a cottage—several families may join to build one in a group—tent in commercial grounds all summer.

The big beaches, most of them provincially maintained, offer stretches of clean sand, dunes and bars, but there are still hidden bays and coves completely free of hotdog stands, beer cans and anyone else's footprints.

This easy access to lonely beauty—Albert County to the south offers another variety—is part of the character of the place. And so is the Acadian flavor.

Moncton boasts it's a bilingual city,

but it's not really. It has two major populations. One, the English-speaking, has 60 percent of the population and disproportionate political and business power. The other 40 percent is bilingual, in fluent English and *Français*, which is Acadian French liberally sprinkled with English nouns and adverbs.

The Acadians, French-speaking Catholic descendants of the first European settlers of the Maritime provinces and north-eastern Maine, still cherish a way of life quite different from their English-speaking neighbors. Moncton, with its important Francophone university, independent French daily newspaper, *L'Évangeline*, and lively Acadian cultural activities, is their centre. Nevertheless, many Anglophones living there boast they grew up without hearing a word of French.

Carmen LeBlanc, film librarian at National Film Board offices in the CN Plaza, grew up an Acadian in Moncton. Like many, her family couldn't afford the convent, so she went to public school, where she learned fluent English, little about the Acadian culture, and to bear taunts of English classmates at the "dirty French." ("My parents said don't pay attention, they don't know any better. It made us try to better ourselves, to stand on our own feet.") Her first job was in the office of Moncton Hospital. It was an English-speaking office, as her supervisor reminded Carmen when she heard her talking French on the telephone to her sister-in-law.

"It made me feel bad," she admits now, "but the French were passive in those days. None of us spoke up."

In 1968 they did speak up, in a comic opera confrontation between students from the five-year-old University of Moncton and the then-mayor, Leonard C. Jones. A polite student delegation asked for recognition of both languages, and municipal services in both French and English. They presented Jones with a copy of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. After his patronizing, unsympathetic response, a high-spirited and less polite delegation left a pig's head on his doorstep.

The confrontation ended next year with dispersal of a student occupation of the university science building, dismissal of some students, temporary closing of the sociology department and presentation of an honorary degree to Pierre Trudeau. That year, the N.B. Official Languages Act made the province officially bilingual.

Both English and Acadians were fighting for their culture, language and sense of identity, and more immediately, economic preference. Requirements for bilingualism in federal and provincial agencies—and the CNR is Moncton's biggest employer—means English middle managers of 55 to 60 have to

learn French or relinquish chances of promotion to the bilingual, that is, to the Acadians. In an area where recent shutdown of Eaton's catalogue operations and a Swift Canadian Co. plant and CNR layoffs eliminated 1,120 jobs and where unemployment at the end of August was 10 percent, people are touchy about job requirements.

There's no doubt the confrontation was inflamed by Mayor Jones, who later ran for parliament and won as independent MP (after Robert Stanfield spurned him as the Conservative candidate) for Moncton.

The new mayor, quiet, reasonable Gary Wheeler, carefully de-escalates any possible confrontation. For instance, incredible as it seems to a newcomer, a bronze plaque in French to match an English plaque erected in the City Hall years ago was recently installed in secret, after office hours. Both plaques list the 1971 Council, when Jones was mayor and the handsome hall was opened.

Reports of the secret installation ran across more than half the front page of the Moncton Transcript next day, with comments by Jones ("a dastardly mistake") and his promise to take action against the use of his name on a French-language plaque!

Aside from his WASP stuffiness (his ancestors were Welsh and Loyalist), Jones was considered a good mayor for 11 years by most Monctonians, even at that time by the Acadians. Today he is loyally supported by many Moncton Conservatives (he got 80 percent of their votes in his 1973 election despite Stanfield's rejection) and a raggle-taggle group called the English-Speaking Association. There are 200 out to weekly ESA winter meetings at the Lions' Senior Citizens Centre. Their aim: "To protect, preserve and project our English language and culture and to maintain our constitutional rights."

"We want our political, economic and social rights," says Denis Losier, Executive Secretary of *La Société Acadiens du Nouveau-Brunswick*, which donated the controversial plaque. Some city administrative services, when requested, are offered now in both languages.

"It's too slow," says Losier. "When we call City Hall or the fire department, we want to be answered in French. We want French road signs. We're not asking for more than to be served as we should be."

Between the two polarized groups, most Monctonians, English or Acadian, laugh and go about their business, usually in English.

Two things are clear. Acadians are *not* separatists—you never hear *Acadie Libre!* And neither group, English or Acadian will lose its identity, not for a long, long time.

An example: Madeleine LeBlanc, who works for CN Marine as translator and coordinator of the company's design

the knowledge that we depended on nature for our comfort—for the warmth of our bedrooms at night and for our work during the day, for the lettuce we picked for lunch and the broccoli for dinner. We got high on the thought we were working with the wind and the weather to form our own mini-environment, instead of depending on anonymous utilities to do that for us. And we felt good about our fellows who were working with us.

On our return to Toronto, Alex and I turned down the thermostat, and reactivated our compost pile, which we'd abandoned for the winter months. That'll have to do us until we can build our own Ark. ■

COULD YOU LIVE IN MONCTON?

Continued from page 59

ulation of 400,000 within a 75-mile radius, near enough to drive in, shop or see doctors, dentists, lawyers, and return home that day, so the specialized services are good. Hardly a financial capital, Moncton was still the place for Reuben Cohen, local millionaire lawyer, financier and art collector, to assemble his mini-empire and gain, along with George Urquhart, head of a hardware and building supply group, a mention in

PLANTS

*That I should turn to plants
is not so strange.
My mother kept a garden.
As a child, I ran
chin-deep amid the foliage,
absorbing scents
and a feel for green.
Her garden was a mother to me.*

*That I should turn to plants
and cling to memories
like family
is not so strange.
I learned to build secret nests
between the greenery and the garage
and in that cool, shady spot,
I slept.*

*It is not so strange
that the earth feels familiar
in my hands
or that the slow excitement of growth
is something I understand
or that I appraise each garden that I pass
knowing, that in the plants somewhere,
a child may be hiding.*

*That I should turn to plants
is not so strange,
that I should find peace
in pots of dirt
and my oldest shirt,
that I should wander away comfortably
to dig and pull and putter
with the earth.
or that I should return, hair awry
and looking like my mother
when she worked in her garden all day.*

BY ELIZABETH JOHNSTON

Peter Newman's *The Canadian Establishment*.

Moncton's Main Street mixes imaginative, spanking modern, and derelict 1920s. Its central core stretches 10 city blocks from the CN Terminal Plaza to the innovative Assumption Place, a square with fountains and flowers hedged by headquarters of Assumption Mutual Life, the City Hall and Hotel Beauséjour (which itself brings a fairly cosmopolitan crowd for conventions and sales meetings). In between is Highfield Square Mall, one of four large shopping plazas in the area that, along with new office blocks spotted behind Main Street, have drained parts of downtown of its vitality. Downtown merchants hope to rehabilitate the shabby remains by making it into a covered mall. The only structure

of any height is the 350-foot N.B. Tel communications tower.

Main Street continues past Bore View Park, where tourists wait for hours to see the miniature tidal wave rush upriver twice daily from the Bay of Fundy, and turns into Champlain Street in Dieppe, the next-door municipality.

Moncton looks new for a Maritime city, but its history goes back over 200 years, to the early 1700s when the Acadian French came up the Petitcodiac and established a small settlement called "Le Coude" because it was at the bend or elbow of the river. The British destroyed the village in 1758, and eight years later a handful of families, mostly Dutch-German, were brought in by Pennsylvania land companies. Acadians, Loyalists and other waves of immigrants joined them



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