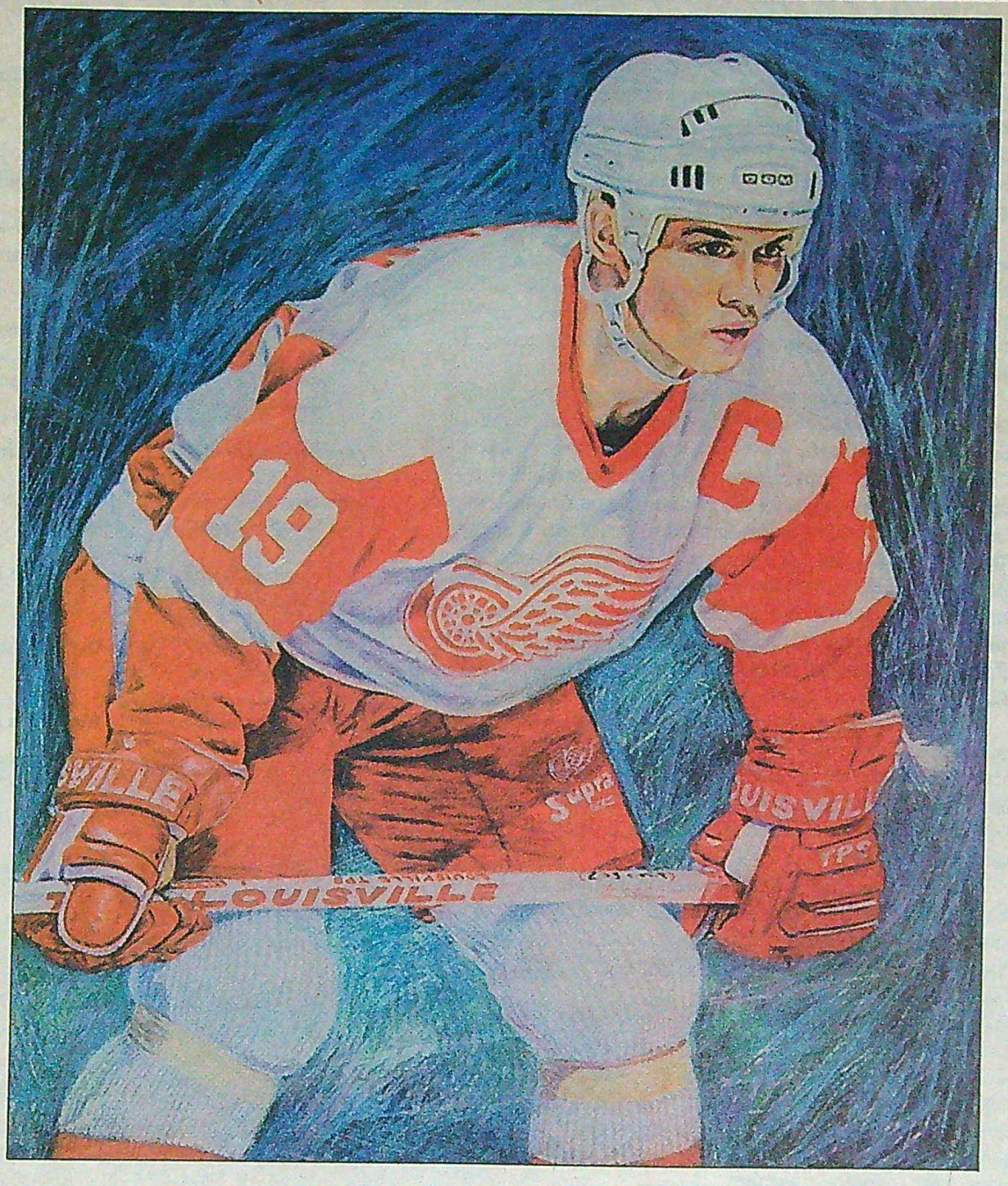
Partici-Paper

Magazine

Inverness County
Cape Breton
Nova Scotia

Jan./ Feb. 1995
Volume 16, No.1



On exhibit at the St. FX Gallery

Barrie Fraser's Hockey Art

see page five

Swing into Spring

Recreation and Continuing Education Course Offerings

see page 15

Director's Desk

Partici-Paper

Volume 16, No. 1, January/February 1995

Contents

Those splendid old stoves	3	Mary Anne Ducharme
Barrie Fraser's Hockey Art	5	Mary Anne Ducharme
Au Coin du Nord	6	Daniel Aucoin
Catherine Poirier folkartist in wool	8	Daniel Aucoin
Ancestors Unlimited	11	Jim St.Clair
Community Health Promotion Grants	14	C.B. Health Unit
Swing into Spring Adult Ed Courses	15	Recreation Department
The Perennial Flower Garden	24	Darlene Sutherland
County Talent Search	26	Recreation Department
Volunteer Recognition	27	Recreation Department
Kitchen Ceilidhs	28	Mary Goodwin
Signs of Hope	29	Mary Goodwin
Four new books for winter reading	30	Mary Anne Ducharme

Deadline for submitted articles for the March/April issue: February 24

EDITOR: Mary Anne Ducharme
R.R.#2 Whycocomagh
Nova Scotia, BOE 3MO
Telephone: 945-2982

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS:
Jim St. Clair, Daniel Aucoin
We welcome letters, photos, contributed articles, information

PUBLISHER:
Inverness County
Department of
Recreation/Tourism
John Cotton, Director
Box 179, Court House
Port Hood, N.S. BOE 2WO
Telephone: 787-2274

Printed by *The Pictou Advocate*
Partici-Paper is free for Inverness County residents
For other subscribers per year:
Canada: $10.32 - United States: $13.21
(send payment to the Recreation Department)

- Details on **Spring Programming courses** offered by the Department of Recreation/Tourism have been finalized. **On site registration for the spring session is February 13-17.** Check this issue for details on courses available in the various communities throughout the county.

- Nominations are now being accepted for **Volunteer Week 1995.** The Municipality will honour volunteers during the week of April 23-29. Early nominations will be eligible to be chosen to represent the county at Provincial Ceremonies in Halifax on April 21. See inside this issue for nominating a volunteer.

- The Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS), in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources and Nova Scotia Power Inc, have developed a **project to assist tourism operators improve profitability** by introducing proven measures for energy conservation that are cost-effective. The 1995 Timely **Seminar Series on Energy Efficiency,** a one-day workshop, will provide you with the necessary tools to cut energy costs at your operation. This seminar will be held at five different locations throughout the province during the month of February. If you would like more information, you can call the Recreation/Tourism Department at 787-2274 or call TIANS at 423-4480.

- **Inverness County Winterfest '95** activities are now underway and will run to the end of March. Communities are encouraged to contact the Recreation/Tourism office with your plans for any indoor or outdoor events. The Recreation/Tourism Department will help with coordination and promotion of these events.

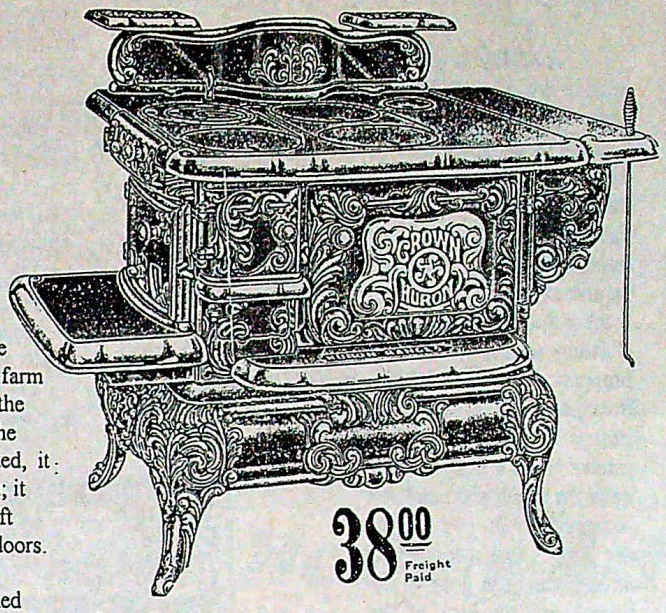
- **The 1995 Cape Breton Loppet Ski Series** has begun. This year's loppet includes 8 events taking place throughout the Island. **Ski Margaree Loppet,** Margaree Valley will take place February 25. Registration at St. Patrick's Hall, NE Margaree, 10:30 am-12:30 pm. Start time is 1 pm. Registration fees: $10.00/ individual; $7.00/student; $25.00/ family of 3 with $3.00 extra per family member. Contact: Evelyn Carmichael 248-2074 for Cathy Coady Fraser at 248-2047. On the day of the Loppet, call 248-2237. For details on dates and location of the loppet series, contact the Recreation/Tourism office at 787-2274.

- **The Inverness/Victoria County Trails Federation Trails Map** has recently been produced. This map was prepared to provide snowmobilers with the information necessary to safely enjoy our trail system by being an informed, responsible, and legal operator. The maps are for sale for $3.00 and can be purchased through any of the snowmobile clubs in Inverness County.

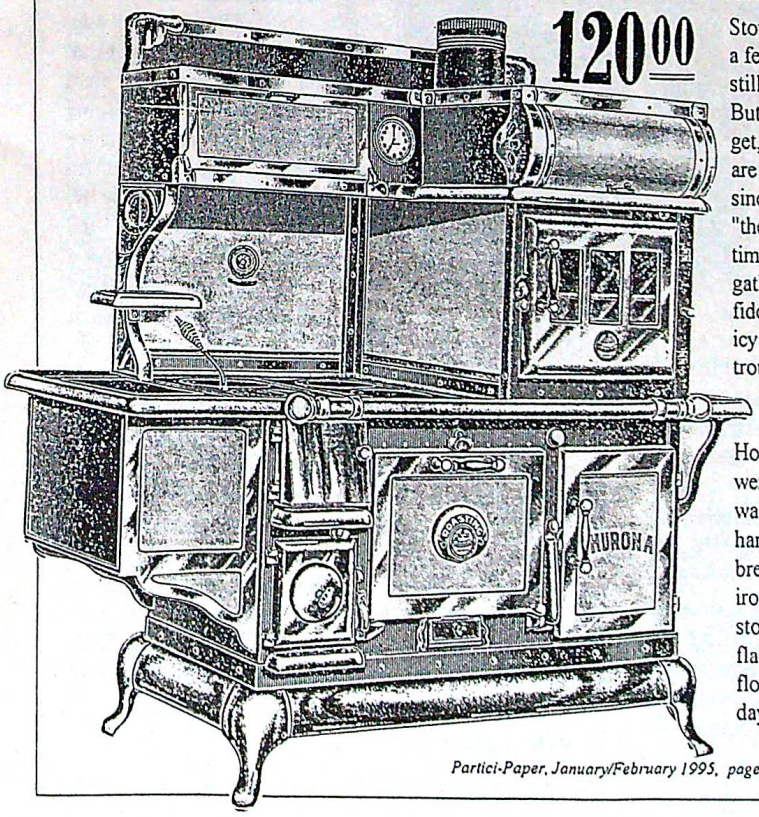
The kitchen stove was at the heart of home life: warmth, food, and close family connection

Those splendid old stoves

by Mary Anne Ducharme



In 1920, a Cape Breton woman with a large family may well have gone with her husband on the farm wagon down to the nearby train station to pick up the most magnificent kitchen stove imaginable to her: the Hurona. Ordered from the T. Eaton Company Limited, it had a rising oven, a baking oven and a roasting oven; it had two accurate thermometers; it burned hard or soft coal or wood; it had nickel trim, porcelain enamel doors. a copper reservoir to heat water, plate warmers, a warming closet, the pig iron cooking surface gleamed with a high polish, and it had a clock. It was delivered, freight paid, for $120.00 and if anything was amiss you could return it for a full refund. If the wife was from a less affluent situation, she could opt for the Acme, which at half the price had only one oven, but it was thoroughly dependable, had a water reservoir, and it could be used either for coal or wood by changing the grates. There was even a Crown Huron stove that could be purchased for $38.00. These stoves, ancestors of which were in production since 1847, were a vast improvement from the open hearth cooking of earlier times when women were in constant danger of burned skirts and babies.



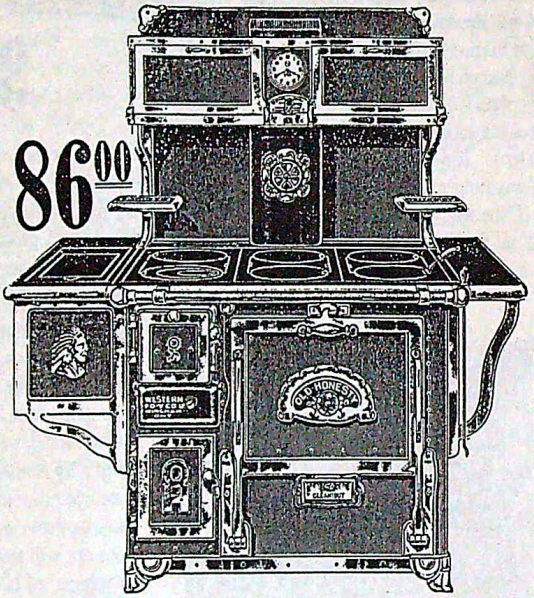
Stoves of this era were built to last a lifetime, and a few lasted two or three lifetimes with survivors still at the heart and soul of Cape Breton kitchens. But repair parts have become nearly impossible to get, and many gems have fallen into cellar holes, are quietly rusting away in old barns, or have long since been buried in the strata of landfill known as "the iron-stove age. " Even so, those iron stove times are still treasured in memories of family gatherings, of kitchen ceilidhs with neighbours, of fiddle music and song. In those cheerful hours the icy Cape Breton winds could not penetrate, nor the troubles of the world.

The Hurona, Old Honesty, the Acme, The Regal, the Climax, the Crown Huron, the Home Comfort -- all of these, and others like them were part of an era in which the family couldn't wait to come inside to the sweetness of a hardwood fire and the maternal fragrances of hot bread and smoke cured ham or herring. The cast iron tea kettle simmered always on the back of the stove. The perpetual soup had hours in which the flavours could harmonize, and its ingredients flowed and ebbed according to the leftovers of the day before and the heartiness of rural appetites.

continued, next page

Those splendid old stoves, *continued*

The stove was were you hung your socks and mitts to dry, where Grandpa or Grandma sat in a rocking chair, and where stories, music, and songs were shared. Under it the cat and her newest litter of kittens basked in the warmth contentedly. In front of it on Saturday nights, the Enameline portable bath tub was the scene of weekly personal scrubbing behind a privacy sheet, each using the same water. Other evenings, you might prop your feet luxuriously on the open oven door to read the latest Tom Swift or Ruth Fielding adventure, oblivious to the hubbub of family around you. Now and then you checked on the progress of the weak lamb behind the stove, brought in from the cold, now reviving and taking an interest in this strange iron mother and the humans gathered near it. Later, under the flannel and wool of a homemade quilt, you felt the rise of the warm draft through the open grate in the floor, or the heat of the stovepipe as it passed upwards into the icy darkness.



Some people would say we remember all this too fondly, forgetting the cumbersome and dirty tasks of hauling firewood into the house and storing it in the woodbox, and other unpleasant tasks surrounding the ashes, creosote, and cleaning the entrails of the iron monster. There were errant sparks that marked the floor. There were cold ash mornings when the we forgot to bank the fire properly, and burned fingers, and the grimy filth that had to be washed from the walls and ceilings in the spring. And, the old stoves ate up a prodigious amount of floor space, squatting imperiously in the center of the kitchen and requiring the subservience of all lesser furnishing and humans.

There are scaled down replicas now produced, but none are as classy or as well made as the originals. My own wood stove is an Elmira Stove Works Oval replica, purchased at $1,900. ten years ago, and our love affair with it has had ups and downs. The heat on chill days in the spring and fall when the oil furnace is shut off, is delicious. The fragrance of the hardwood fire and the tick of the stovepipe as the heat rises is companionable and cozy. And what my four-burner friends do not sufficiently appreciate is the luxurious expanse of cooking surface. However, in the first year of our new woodstove, we found we had much to learn about woodstove cooking, and experiments often went sadly amiss. Our cat Zeb also learned a great deal. Sitting in a peaceful manner behind the stove, as all cats are meant to do, he was suddenly overcome by the enticing aroma of turkey stew with sage. It was gently simmering in an open cast iron pot, and he leapt on the stove to sample this heavenly concoction. With a blood-curdling yowl and the sizzle of four scorched feet, he instantly abandoned this bad idea. He walked gingerly for a while, but he learned the lesson well and somehow imparted it to his siblings. Thereafter all turkey stew was safe from feline predation in our house.

A damning quality of woodstoves, from my husband's perspective is stovepipes. He despises the installation and cleaning of stovepipes with a fervor that he reserves for nothing else in our household. The stove has also ruined many vinyl tiles with creosote leaks; and depending on the wind, disastrous downdrafts can belch eye-watering smoke into the house no matter how the drafts and dampers are adjusted.

There were admittedly devil stoves that do not deserve fond recollection. In some houses, the kitchen stove created a scorching torrid zone in the kitchen while the Arctics prevailed in the room next to it. There was a stove that nearly spoiled my mother's girlhood because it foiled all her first attempts at bread-making. My six uncles were less than patient with her lack of aptitude. There is a knack in achieving a steady flame by adjusting the dampers and firebox draft and by choosing the right pieces of wood for a cooking task. She had to learn the principles of how the stove and chimney must be the right degree of hotness to draw air across and around the oven compartment. For her, the flames burned madly, the thermometer was a liar, and in the oven the top crust of the bread burned and the bottom stayed raw. When my grandmother was ailing, my mother was left to cope with cooking tasks for a large family and she has memories of broiling days of slavery to "the Red Hot Tyrant."

continued page six