



NOUS AVONS 25 ANS !

WE ARE 25 !

**25th Annual General Assembly
April 19th 2015**

President's address by Sandra Jewett

Our community, between belonging and isolation.



Each year, tradition gives an opportunity to the President to address the general assembly about issues or projects of concern to the mission of the Association. I recognize that I stray somewhat from what duty obliges. I ask your indulgence, and I will be brief.

This winter, my thoughts have been very much taken by the negativity surrounding what I perceive as a widening gulf within our community: the deliberate actions of some, and inaction by others that seems to have allowed positions to harden among us. Dissension and division, while normal in this, or in any other community, seem to have found greater volume, while voices of reason and conciliation seem muted.

Although I cannot speak for you, I must say that I am weary of the politics of resentment and the cacophony of protest in this place I call home. I confess that I tire of the pleas of one faction over the other, while the trees we so love stand as silent sentinels to our woes. Do they see, as I do, that the vast majority among us, those in the middle, are oblivious to the views of the extremities? There is no need for me to detail the debates of the 2014-2015 season. They are etched in our minds and memory.

As an individual, I have virtually driven myself to distraction wondering how I, personally, with whatever influence I may have, could work to reverse what I see as deeply troublesome. For me to separate my duties as President of this Association from the responsibility, duty and sentiments I feel so strongly as a native citizen of Potton is very difficult. To some degree, I have been obsessed, and it has been to the detriment of my obligations as President, and for that I apologize. The Association deserves better.

Thankfully, the noise will soon subside as we proceed into the spring and summer seasons of Potton's rustic loveliness! Each of us whether barbarian or sophisticate may then enjoy the brief respite that warmer

temperatures and sunshine will bring us. Problems will be out of sight but very much unforgotten. Some say the universe unfolds as it should. But I wonder?

Our views of community, rural life, and its management may differ. To be successful, the management must be sensitive to our multiple identities, values and perceptions. Someday we will learn that.

Actually, one day it might be interesting for our Association to sponsor a forum to discuss the whole philosophical spectrum of what a community is – and how to encourage positive growth within ours. Be grateful that I will not embark on that subject now.

In the interim, I intend to continue to do whatever I can to encourage the harmonious progress of our Township. I am grateful for my great good fortune to make my home here, when others, in the larger and weary world of competing sorrows, of unimaginable deprivation and displacement are so much less fortunate – where people who live in places of ancient cultures endure interminable battles over whose God is more important - whose people the most brutal – whose voice the loudest. Mothers yearn for some small modicum of peace, some crumb of hope for their children, the majority of whom will never know the tiniest fraction of what we have and take so lightly. Food...shelter....the quiet of a starry night ... Peace!

From its founding, 25 years ago, our Association has contributed in a very positive manner to the growth of our community. I daresay even essential. We have proven by our commitment to participate in the building of a community that is more mindful of the richness of our heritage and our history. The talents and savoir-faire of our members is incredible and is such a valuable asset. Our work to promote and protect our heritage and history must continue. And we will. But, we must also continue to promote optimism and the social networking that essentially knits a community together – our community. We should each do our part, each of us in our own way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sandra Jewett".

Sandra Jewett, President
Potton Heritage Association