



Letter from the President | December 2020

Potton, December 11, 2020

Dear members and friends,

I send you this, my first message, with great pleasure, with humility and with a certain degree of timidity. Never did I aspire to become President of our Association when I joined the Board of directors in 2019. However, the departure of five of eight directors has shaken up many things and I am learning "on the job" - so to speak!

I am humbled by the accomplishments of my predecessors and wonder if I will be able to do the same. I can assure you, however, of my desire and determination to continue along the path traced by these people who have made the PHA a recognized and respected heritage association, both through its quality publications and its defence and protection of our local heritage.

Many of you don't know me. I am a native of Potton and married to John Aiken, another native. We are fortunate to have three sons who are now in their thirties and are pursuing careers outside the region. After 37 years as a social worker, I retired in 2009. Some of you may know me as a volunteer at Potton Library on Saturday morning. I have also been the "voice of the parade" at the Spirit of Potton Festival for over 25 years. I have always been proud of my origin and of this region that never ceases to dazzle us with its landscapes and the diversity of its people.

I come to the presidency of the PHA at a crucial moment in its existence. Indeed, health concerns and time will play an inexorable role in its future, as they have in the past. Everyone ages. Health needs change. It is essential to recruit new members and bring new vitality to the Association. Previous board members gave countless hours of their time and energy over the past 30 years to make the Association what it is today. Subsequent Boards will establish different priorities and perhaps favour different projects. Finding new members is becoming urgent. We are now only five directors as opposed to eight in the past. It would be interesting to bring more residents from the Township to participate in the PHA cause. Our efforts will go in that direction.

I have been asked a few times if there will be any changes in the PHA and frankly, I do not foresee any major changes; However, except with respect to the tasks assigned to the directors. We can no longer or even expect to have individuals who will assume leadership in the majority of files to be discussed or projects to be carried out. With five directors, we will no longer be able to assume these tasks alone. We will have to solicit the active participation of the members either by forming sub-committees or by delegating the management of a file. Otherwise, we will head again towards exhaustion of our contributors.

I assume the Presidency during the pandemic, an unusually difficult time for all, which has forced us to rethink our plans and achievements. Excursions with Carol Bishop were put on hold. The AGM for 2019, normally held in March annually had to be postponed to 2021. Hopefully in a few months, we will hold our AGM in its usual forum. As I write these lines, we are in a red alert zone. Therefore, we do not know what is in store for the next few weeks and the first few months of 2021, if no longer.

Nonetheless the Board was still able to meet twice in the fall and is now operating on the basis of emails between directors to deal with issues that cannot wait until the end of the pandemic. This has allowed us to identify priority projects for the current year.

As a first step, a future edition of our HPH magazine, scheduled for the spring of 2021, will honour the "Builders of the PHA" in its 30th Anniversary year.

Secondly, we are planning a revision and redesign of the "Incomparable Potton" brochure. Some of you may be asked to help us with this project.

On the longer term, a project illustrating the "Potton Mountains in Seasons" will take place with the collaboration of Louise Abbott.

We will of course continue to collaborate with the Municipality and other partners if required, for any ongoing or future projects, within our human and financial means.

It was important for me to inform you of your Board's current activities during this time of pandemic and pause and to introduce myself even briefly.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank my fellow members of the Board: Carol Bishop, François Hébert, Sandra Jewett and Thierry Roger for their involvement and precious support.

I look forward to meeting each of you in person. In the meantime, if necessary, you can contact me by email: apphaw@gmail.com or by phone: 450-538-5020

On behalf of the Board, I extend to each of you my Best Wishes for a Happy Christmas with your loved ones, be it in person or virtually, along with Good Health for 2021.

Lorraine Rouillard

Sincerely,

Lorraine Rouillard, President

Potton Heritage Association