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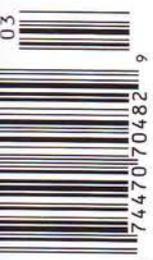
- Our First Year as Fulltimers - Part 2
- The Journey Continues along the Fundy Trail
- Our Junior Explorer Tells his Tale

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'High and dry at low tide'
Alma, NB

The "Picture Province"

New Brunswick is a magical place! Part 2

By Dale Dunlop

In the last issue, we left the Dunlops at Ponderosa Pines Campground near Hopewell Rocks.

That night, it started raining heavily and the wind came up so our plans to return to Hopewell Rocks that morning to kayak were not to be. Instead, we did a little extra touring and came across a couple of interesting places we otherwise would not have visited. The Fundy Trail diverts from Route 114 just after Riverside-Albert to follow the coast along Highway 915. At Harvey, we turned left and headed out towards Mary's Point. We first came across the Studio on the Marsh (www.studioonthemarsh.com) where the works of world famous wildlife artist Lars Larsen (who died in 2003) are sold by his wife Michelle Harvey. Lars came to Canada from Denmark, and was so taken with the Mary's Point area that he settled here and used the wildlife found nearby as the basis of his art. As we continued on, we were impressed by the beauty of the salt marshes, red cliffs, and abundant wildlife.

The next surprise was seeing the outline of a three-masted wooden ship against the backdrop of a small harbour. Turned out this was Shipyard Park, and the ship was actually a monument to the many ships built in the area. When I got out to take a picture, I realized there was a bald eagle perched on the foremast, and it remained there without taking any notice of us as we toured the park. The pavement ended at Lars Larsen marsh, a Ducks Unlimited endeavour which was teeming with migrating waterfowl. We turned around and got back on Highway 915 heading for Cape Enrage.

We had been to Cape Enrage many years before, and I remembered a very steep and winding road so I was a bit leery of trying it with the RV, but the road had been upgraded and it really was not difficult getting the 6 kilometres to the site. Cape Enrage was named for the turbulent waters that abound in the area, caused by the huge tides sweeping over an underwater ledge that leads from the cape into the ocean for quite a ways. At one time,



there was just a lighthouse, albeit in a very spectacular location. Now it has become much more with a restaurant, a zip line, rock climbing and rappelling. We were told that Cape Enrage was where search and rescue teams honed their skills at cliff side rescues of which there are quite a few along the Fundy cliffs. Someone got the great idea of turning it into a commercial enterprise. Alison was quite happy that the venture had just closed for the season, as I was deprived of a chance to break my neck - maybe next time.

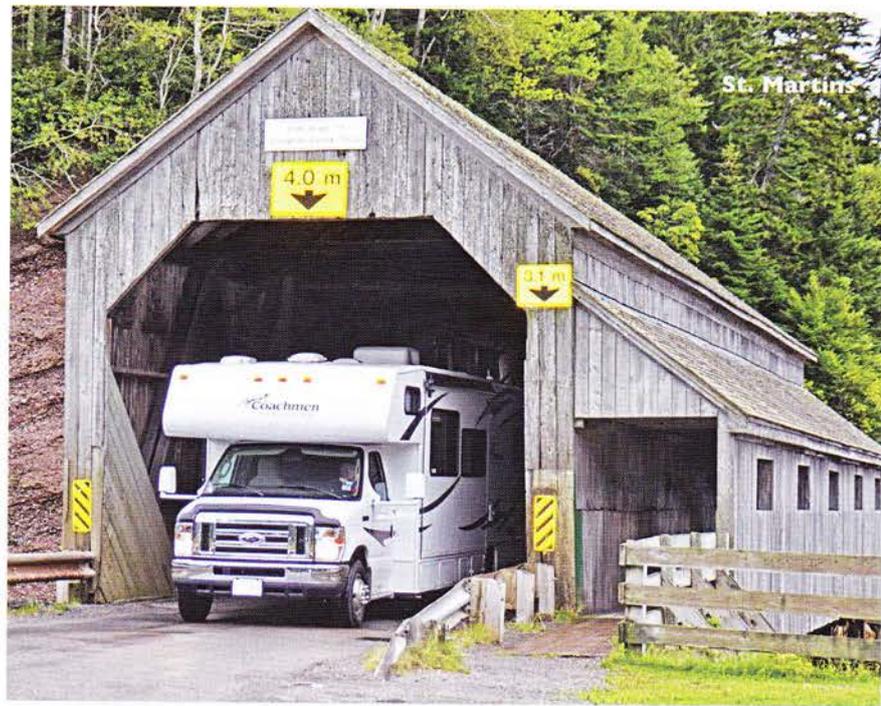
Unfortunately, the rain continued to come down and it was quite foggy, so we couldn't get a real appreciation of Cape Enrage. However, we did get a nice picture with the lighthouse in the background. The one enterprise we could enjoy was the Cape House Restaurant (www.capeenrage.ca/en/plan-your-trip/restaurant) which has

a world class view, when it's not foggy. Looking at the menu, we quickly realized that this was no ordinary restaurant as there was clearly someone with imagination behind the scenes. I did a double take when I saw the chef – he was the same guy we had seen the night before at the Broadleaf. The two places could not have been more different, the Broadleaf sticking with very safe traditional fare, and Cape House clearly allowing the chef to do his own thing. We talked to the chef, Trevor Fox, who turned out to be the sous chef for Jeremy Wilbur, with whom he collaborated on the creation of new dishes using only New Brunswick ingredients.

We ordered fiddleheads, a twisted Caesar salad, tomato soup and lobster tacos. Without a doubt, it was the best lunch we've had for many a day. The tacos were divine with long strands of meat from the pincers of the lobster. We have never been able to get these delicate pieces of the lobster out in one piece, so I asked Trevor how he got them out and he replied, "with a rolling pin". The tomato soup was made from fresh tomatoes, and the salad was a grilled slice of romaine with a delicate dressing. However, the to-die-for dish was the fiddleheads. These are the shoots of the ostrich fern and are usually available only for a few weeks a year in the spring. Since this was late summer, I assumed they were frozen, which they were, but somehow the texture and taste were better than any we ever tasted. The greens were tossed with white balsamic vinegar, pickled onion, local feta cheese and dried cranberries. The secret apparently was to blanch the ferns before freezing them.

So the lesson to be learned is that even if Cape Enrage is fogged in or it is raining, as long as the restaurant is open, make the trip.

As we continued along the Fundy



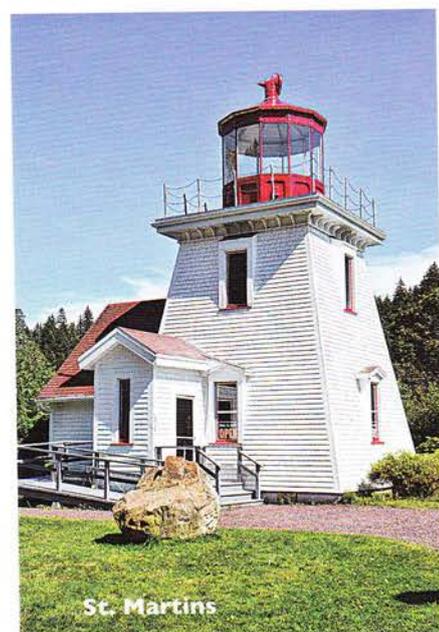
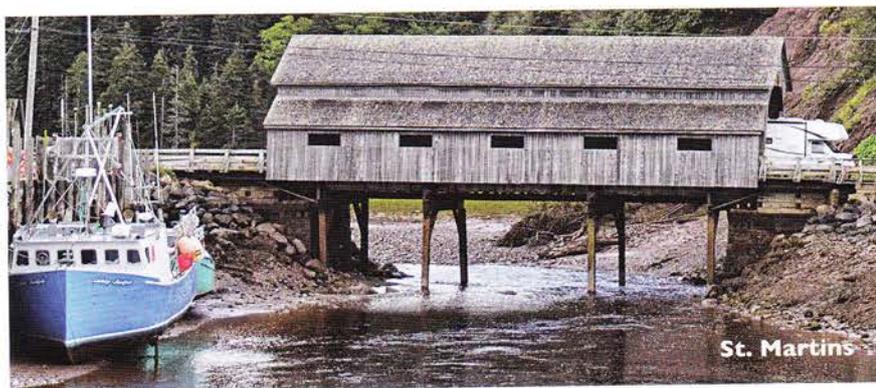
Trail, the scenery was unfailingly beautiful and the hills became higher and higher. We were entering an area where there is no coastal road, and the largest area of remaining wilderness along the entire bay. At the heart of it is Fundy National Park, which was our next destination. Just before entering the park, we passed through the small fishing village of Alma, where fishing boats were left high and dry by the outgoing tide. It's not an uncommon sight in this part of the world.

Fundy Park is an absolute dream come true for hikers, with over twenty separate trails ranging from easy to strenuous. Despite the continuing drizzle, we were anxious to get on a trail and chose Dickson's Falls, which was a short trek to an amazing waterfall. The silver lining in the rain cloud was that the falls were bursting with water and at its finest. Later we drove out to Point Wolfe, where we found a picture perfect covered bridge and the very scenic mouth of the Point Wolfe River as it emptied into the bay. After that, we got a nice secluded spot to park at the Chignecto Camp-

ground, and decided to dine in for a change. The penne we whipped up was good, but it couldn't compete with the leftover fiddleheads we had brought from the Cape House.

Fundy Park was the type of place we could easily have spent at least a few more days, not only for the hiking, but to play the Stanley Thompson golf course. However, our itinerary was set, and in the morning we continued on Route 114 through the park and at Sussex Corner, got on the 111 to St. Martins. This took us away from the coast and up through the Caledonia Highlands, and then back down to sea level. As the crow flies, it wasn't more than 45 kilometres, but by road it was three times that long.

If there is a prettier harbour anywhere than St. Martins, we have yet to see it. The people at the tourist office were proud to tell us that it is the only place in the world where you can see two covered bridges and a lighthouse in one scene. Add in the gaily coloured fishing boats, and you have the perfect 10 in terms of a great photo opportunity. The town of St. Martins was once a prosperous



community of ship builders, ship owners, and sea captains. We were admiring the many fine examples of architecture when we came around a corner and saw the scene described above. We stopped at the tourist bureau in the lighthouse, and poked around the small collection of gift shops that has sprung up by the wharf. After that, we continued on through one of the covered bridges to the beach just around the corner where you can park, and at low tide, walk to St. Martins famous sea caves. There were many people doing it, but we wanted to press on to our real destination for the day, the Fundy Trail Parkway (www.fundy-trailparkway.com/en).

If you look at a New Brunswick map, you will see a big gap between the towns of Alma and St. Martins

with no roads. This is one of the largest coastal wilderness areas in North America. In the 1990's, some forward thinking New Brunswickers came up with the idea of developing a parkway along the coast so that people, other than ardent hikers, could enjoy the vistas from the high cliffs of Fundy, and get down to some of the remotest beaches in Atlantic Canada. The first section opened in 1998, a further section in 2010, and the last section is scheduled to open in 2017. The parkway consists of a paved highway flanked by a biking/hiking path that runs for 16 kilometres from the entrance to the end of the second phase. Along the way, we found numerous places to park and walk to lookouts that offered spectacular views. The lookout at Pangburn Beach revealed a long

stretch of beach hundreds of feet below with nobody on it. We would have loved to hike down, but did not have the time.

At about 12 kilometres in, we turned into the Interpretive Centre where a group of women was preparing to hike into Hearst Lodge for an overnight stay. Believe it or not, famous publisher and model for Citizen Kane, William Randolph Hearst had a lodge here almost a hundred years ago. It is now possible to stay at the lodge. While visitors hike the 2.8 kilometres from the Centre, their luggage is transported up by truck. This seemed like as good a reason as any to return someday. Before heading back, we did hike down and over a suspension bridge that crosses the Big Salmon River that is not far from the Centre. The entire parkway is quite suitable for RVs of all types.

Returning to St. Martins, we pulled into Century Farm Campground (www.centuryfarmcampground.com) where we were assigned a spot directly on the ocean, with a view along the beach to the sea caves. It was easily the nicest camping spot on the trip, and one that would be hard to beat anywhere. For supper, I tried out the 'world famous' seafood chowder at The Caves Restaurant, and agreed it was pretty good with generous portions of seafood, while Alison had the seafood casserole which was even better. Also great was the view of the sea caves for which the restaurant is named.

After a great night's sleep, assisted no doubt by the clear salt air, we had a really good Mexican breakfast at Fiori's (www.salmonriverbandb.com), which is run by a retired couple from Colorado. They fell in love with St. Martins and decided to make it their summer home. Luckily, they brought some great Tex-Mex recipes with them. Huevos rancheros in small

town New Brunswick, who would have thought?

Heading out after this hearty breakfast, we followed the Fundy Route through mostly farming country until we rumbled into our final destination, the city of Saint John.

We were not deterred by the chilly drizzle falling as we set out for an adventure with the Reversing Falls Jet Boat Rides (jetboatrides.com). The website warned we would get wet anyway, so what was a little more water? Well, neither of us anticipated how wet we would get, or how much fun it would be getting that way. There was one other couple and Andre, our very comedic, capable, but slightly crazy captain. Reversing



Falls is a famous natural phenomena that occurs twice a day in a narrow gorge right in the city when the rising tonnage of the incoming Bay of Fundy tide smashes into the down water rush of the entire flow of the Saint John River, and we were going right into the thick of it.

The boat sat low in the water so one could really appreciate the massive collision of the waters. Huge eddies whirled up in front, beside and under us as the tiny boat hurtled over and into the turbulence. It was weird to see water apparently rising when it should be falling, forming a wall several feet higher or lower than where your mind says it should be. Andre manoeuvred the boat with obvious skill and ability to maximize the thrill of the rough water, all the while keeping up a running commentary on what we were seeing, and ensuring we all got a good soak-

ing. All too soon it was over, and we returned to shore, wetter and wiser about the nature of Reversing Falls. This was not a ride for the faint of heart, though I'm sure it's much safer than it looks.

We then headed to the city centre for lunch at the Saint John Market, Canada's oldest continuous farmer's market (www.sjcitymarket.com), which has been housed in an historic building in the oldest part of the city since 1876. In addition to fresh produce, dairy, fish and meat products, the market is home to quite a number of eating establishments, from delicatessens to Asian food, and a famous seafood eatery, Billy's Seafood. It was crowded with visitors from a passenger ship that was in port as well as local office workers, but that only added to the ambience of a successful enterprise that remains vital to the city.

After lunch, we had arranged to meet up with Don Smith (smithdow@nb.sympatico.ca) for a guided walking tour of the old city. Don is a retired educator and a history buff who offers his services to groups large and small, for the pleasure of sharing his knowledge of his city with visitors, and for very reasonable recompense. Don walked us through the history of the city from its early French beginnings in 1604, to the arrival of the Loyalists after the American Revolution in 1783, the event that shaped the future of the city for years to come. Even today, Saint John describes itself as "The Loyalist City". We learned more about the city's history, and saw more of its unique architecture than we had in many previous visits.

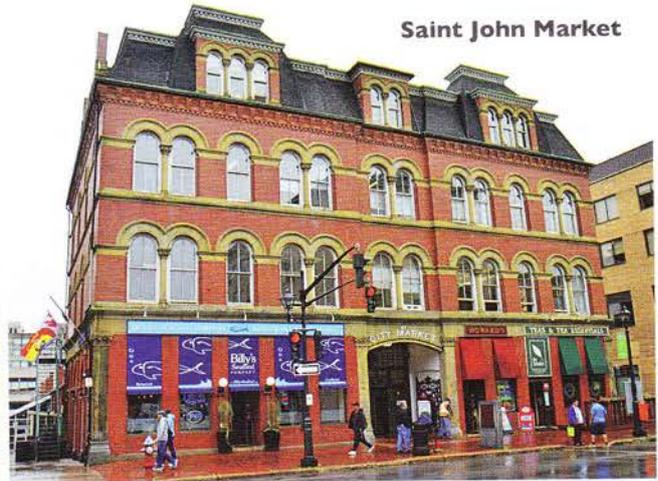
After saying goodbye to Don, we returned to a very interesting arts and crafts gallery we had passed on the walk. Handworks (www.handworks.ca) is without a doubt one of the finest of its kind in Atlantic Canada. When we entered, one of

the owners was looking for a place to display a colourful steel and glass dragon that could have come right out of Game of Thrones. Alison was very taken with the works of local artist Lynn Wigginton, and we are still kicking ourselves for not buying one of her fine works.

We spent the last two nights of our trip at the municipal campground in Rockwood Park (www.rockwood-parkcampground.com). While the lots were nothing special, the park was only minutes from downtown Saint John. Rockwood claims to be Canada's largest municipal park, and contains a number of lakes that have nice trails circling them, as well as a golf course, swimming, horseback riding, rock climbing, fishing, an interpretive centre, and even a zoo. It also has a very good restaurant, Lily's Bistro (www.lilylake.ca/lily-scafe.html) that overlooks Lily Lake, and it was only a short walking distance from the campground. We had a nice meal with a bottle of wine, and didn't have to worry about driving back.

That evening, we chatted with a number of RVers who were part of an Adventure Caravans tour of Atlantic Canada. They hailed from all parts of the U.S., from Florida to Alaska, and most states in between. It was good to see others exploring the wonders of this part of the world.

While looking at the sea caves in St. Martins, we had noticed a sign proclaiming the area as part of the Stonehammer Geopark. Intrigued, we went online (www.stonehammergeopark.com) and discovered that it was one of 90 geoparks worldwide, and the only one in North America. The geoparks belong to an organization, under the umbrella of UNESCO, that identifies geologically significant areas around the world. The Stonehammer Geopark is named for the distinctive tool used by geologists to break apart



rocks, but it was also the name of a club founded in Saint John over one hundred years before to study the unique geology of the area. The website indicated that we could find more information at the New Brunswick Museum (www.nbm-mnb.ca), so that was our next stop.

The museum is right in downtown Saint John, with parking across the street. On request, we were given a guided tour by a very knowledgeable young lady named Alex. Before hitting the Stonehammer exhibition, we toured the historical displays that included some outstanding folk art dioramas that were over a century old, and the hall of whales where there is a skeleton of a huge right whale and a mastodon. However, the geological exhibit was the highlight.

We learned that the reason that the area around Saint John was proclaimed a geopark was that in a very small area, rocks from every single geological era can be found. The exhibit helps create an understanding of how the earth was transformed by displaying the earth as it looked from its very creation to the present day. As you examine each different globe, the floor underneath changes to contain examples of life as it existed during each era. Most people may not think that geology is that interesting, but after seeing the Stonehammer exhibit at the museum, you will very likely change your mind.

The Stonehammer Geopark is comprised of a dozen separate places where the geology of the area is on display. We had already seen the caves at St. Martins, the Fundy Trail Parkway and Reversing Falls, and now it was time to visit a couple more.

The Irving Nature Park (www.ifdn.com) is just outside the city, and provides a great green space for residents of Saint John all year round. Although the land is owned by J.D.Irving Ltd., it is essentially a gift to the people of New Brunswick from the Irving family who are pretty well omnipresent in New Brunswick. We parked the RV at beautiful Saint's Rest Beach, and watched the huge ships that were coming and going from the Irving refinery across the bay. Then we followed the roadway that creates a circular loop through the peninsula that makes up most of the park. There were lots of places to stop and get out to enjoy tremendous views of the large salt marsh on one side of the park, and numerous small coves on the other, many of which were specked with the bobbing heads of seals. There were a lot of other people enjoying the park as well, including a toddler who had climbed up the steps with his mom to see the views from the observation deck.

We had one final destination before ending our New Brunswick odyssey, Dominion Beach on the

Saint John River. Here we had made arrangements with Go Fundy Events (www.stonehammergeopark.com/go-fundy-events.html) to hire a guide to take us to see one of the more unusual parts of Stonehammer Geopark. Shoving off into a tranquil bay, our guide showed us where a glacial moraine had blocked the course of the mighty river, forcing it to carve a way through the narrow gorge that hosts Reversing Falls; that happened 15,000 years ago. We stayed close to the shoreline, and before long, came to a series of circular impressions in the sides of the rock that plunged directly into the river. These were stromatolites, fossils of the earliest living things on earth, a type of primitive algae. They were a billion years old! We continued a route around Greenhead Island, passing by a lighthouse, and then really started to feel the pull of the river towards the falls when we turned into a cove and arrived safely back at the beach.

It had been another long day and we were dog tired after the kayaking, the last part having been into a fresh wind. We returned to Rockwood Park, and for dinner walked to Lily's where, appropriately enough, we both had the special Stonehammer three course meal. It was a delicious and very filling way to end the trip. Never again will we think of New Brunswick as just a place to drive through. **RV**