

David Brett of Seeley's Bay, Ontario, along the Rideau Canal route, stands on his genuine English narrowboat. Fred Rutland describes seeing this unusual attraction in his article A Steamer On

The Rideau, and further in this edition of the Newsletter, you will read how a replica of a narrowboat will be appearing at Expo 86 in Vancouver.

A STEAMER ON THE RIDEAU

by Fred J. Rutland (as written in 1982)

A way back in 1826, when Colonel By and his corps of engineers set out to provide a navigable waterway from the Ottawa River to Lake Ontario for the movement of military supplies, he saw the increasing use of steamers for the movement of freight and passengers on the Ottawa River. So he designed and built larger locks and deeper channels than would be required by the small bateaux used by the military, to accommodate the steamers. In fact, he used

a steamer, renamed the Rideau, for the final inspection trip before declaring the waterway open in 1832. That was a party that lasted two weeks as he travelled from Kingston to Ottawa with plenty of entertainment at each village.

This year those same villages are celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Rideau and "Rideau 150" celebrations are scheduled for a whole year! Because steamers were so important to the water-

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way for the first 100 years, Parks Canada wanted to include steamers in the celebrations and that is where we came in. There is no formal organization of steamboat nuts, but for several years the Frontenac Society of Model Engineers located at Kingston has hosted a regatta for steamers. Usually about 10 or 12 will attend, but when they spread the word that the 1982 event would be a cruise to Ottawa, 31 showed up with representation from Florida (a 40' paddle-wheeler), Maine, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Ohio, Michigan, New York, London (Ont.), Niagara Falls, etc., etc.

We trailered "Coffee Pot" to Kingston June 29th and were launched by crane, courtesy of Rideau Marina as their contribution to the celebration. By June 30th the fleet had assembled at the Kingston "Confederation Basin" in front of the City Hall and that evening, the skippers and their crews, approximately 100 people, were entertained at a dinner by the Canadian Legion. We were called Flotilla 150 and were given T-shirts to prove it. It is said to be the largest flotilla of small steamers in the century! At the captains' meeting we were sorted into three groups and assigned positions in the parade and in the locks. This arrangement lasted almost the entire first day of the trip!

We left Confederation Basin 9:30 a.m. July 1st and steamed line astern to Portsmouth and return to the delight of the cheering multitudes. Thence through the causeway bridge and up the Kingston Mills locks where the fun commenced. After a few snafus, we learned to travel through a flight of locks in rafts of three boats, there being 12 to 16 boats in a lock. The sternwheeler, which got in crosswise a couple of times, was on its own. Our first day's run ended in Seely's Bay, where, after a turkey supper, we were bused back to Kingston in 35 minutes for our over-night accommodation. Our destination July 2nd, was Westport. The passage through the Newboro Channel and lock was uneventful until we entered Upper Rideau Lake and rounded the point into a brisk headwind and square waves

three feet high. The large sail area of Coffee Pot's superstructure made us feel we were going to windward with our spinnaker set. The engine chose that moment to pack it in. After a hundred years of trying it got tired and quit when the valve guide seized, the eccentric slipped and everything came to a full stop. Except Coffee Pot, and she was going backwards. There were two escort vessels with the flotilla, one from the Coast Guard and one from Parks Canada. One of the mother hens passed us a line and we resumed our slow progress towards Westport. With the aid of a couple of shims cut from a 7 Up can and by the proper application of wrenches, repairs were made long before we reached Westport so the escort dropped us and went back for somebody else. B & B type accommodation had been arranged for us at Westport and at the other overnight stops: Smith's Falls, Merrickville and Manotick. At Ottawa we stayed two nights at a residence of Carleton University.

Jack Telgmann, the lively curator of the Kingston Pump House Steam Museum, leading light in the FSME was the driving force behind the organization which functioned so well. Parks Canada in addition to providing the escort boats, supplied all the fuel. A truck met us at almost every lock and at the overnight stops with hardwood cut to suitable lengths. In addition to this, a barge followed the flotilla with not only wood, but propane, kerosene and coal. Since many of the boats were too small to carry the luggage for all their passengers (one fifteen foot boat had 3 people on board) a van was supplied to carry all our baggage from one overnight stop to the next. They then bused the captains from Ottawa to Kingston to pick up their cars and trailers and supplied the crane to haul us out.

The day after we arrived at Hartwell's lock, Ottawa, we proceeded to Dow's Lake where the boats were seen by several hundred people while we were treated to lunch by John Roberts, Minister of the Environment who also presented each

captain with several souvenirs of Rideau 150. Then to the National Arts Centre where the boats were on display until about 7 p.m. Back to Hartwell's Lock for hauling out next day. 125 miles to remember.

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Another steamer cruise on the Rideau was hosted by Parks Canada in July, 1985 as part of the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Parks Canada. The steamer fleet has now become "The Great International Steamboat Flotilla" and the annual regatta at Kingston is probably the largest annual assembly of little steamers in North America.

Twenty-six steam launches cruised from Kingston to Chaffey's Lock and, as in 1982, the organization of the event was excellent. Fuel was made available at each lock and an escort boat provided towing service to the disabled - for which we were most grateful!

The skippers remembered what they had learned from traversing 39 locks in 1982 and there were no problems; rafts of two or three boats to a total of fourteen to

sixteen in a lock smoothly moved from lock to lock in a flight of locks without difficulty. We left Kingston at 10 a.m. and seven locks and 23 miles later, we arrived at Seeley's Bay at 5 p.m. in time for a chicken barbecue dinner. Buses then conveyed the crews to our accommodation in Kingston in 35 minutes!

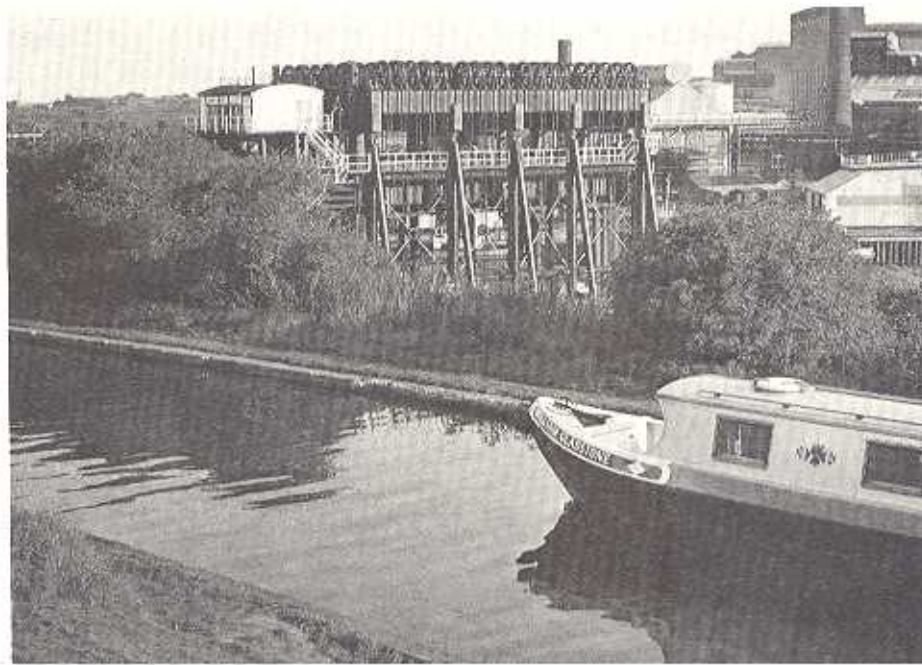
After an early breakfast, we were bussed to Seeley's Bay to resume our leisurely trip to Chaffey's Locks, a distance of ten miles with seven locks. Here there was time to take local school children and other guests for a cruise on Newboro Lake to the Newboro Lock. Then dinner at the Community Hall and a one hour bus ride to Kingston.

Two days were required for the return to Kingston, again stopping at Seeley's Bay. Here we saw a strange vessel which proved to be a Narrow Boat from the English Canals, a picturesque addition to our Rideau Waterway.

TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF CANAL BUFFS
by Roberta M. Styran

It was undoubtedly a great pleasure for those of us fortunate enough to meet with the group from the Inland Waterways Association of Great Britain, who visited Canadian canals last fall (see report in November 1985 issue of CCS Newsletter). But it was more than just a pleasure: it was tremendously encouraging to discover that our trials and tribulations -- and occasional triumphs -- are not unique to this side of the Atlantic. Our hopes, goals, frustrations, and successes, are much the same. We all want to preserve as much as possible of our respective canal heritages; we are all familiar with the apathy, and the political and economic pressures that make our efforts at times so seemingly hopeless; we can all rejoice in our accomplishments, however limited they may be in contrast with our dreams.

I would like to share with Canadian Canal Society members some canal news from Britain, which will underscore this sense of shared endeavour. Those of us who live in the Niagara area are only too well aware of the difficulties facing the Welland Canal, as part of the St. Lawrence Seaway: the costly stoppages of the past two seasons, resulting from accidents to Seaway bridges in Quebec, and to Lock Seven at Thorold; increasing costs of all kinds. The Welland is the acknowledged bottle-neck of the Seaway system; but the whole system is itself facing increasing competition from both the trucking industry and the Erie Canal and the Mississippi waterway. While it would be possible to widen the Welland, it may be economically unfeasible, if the long-term



The Anderton Boat Lift at Northwich, England. (Photo from J. Salmon Ltd., Sevenoaks, Kent, England.)

operation of the Seaway is in jeopardy. We in Canada may watch with sympathy the discussions in Britain concerning the once-bustling Manchester Ship Canal which, when I saw it in 1983, was still carrying considerable traffic. In contrast, in a three-hour visit in July 1985, I could not get a photograph including a ship on the Welland Canal. The Manchester Ship Canal Company intends to close the upper reaches (above Runcorn), in 1987, claiming that they are now operating at a loss, in the face of an increase in both traffic on the motorways, and the use of East Coast ports consequent to Britain's entry into the European Common Market. So it was encouraging to note that the IWA publication, WATERWAYS, reported in its summer edition that considerable public support has been expressed for trying to maintain the canal in operation.

Another major concern of British canal buffs is the attempt to preserve the world-famous Anderton Boat Lift (built 1875) at Northwich, on the Trent and Mersey Canal in Cheshire; a very impressive engineering structure -- even on a rainy Sunday! The cost of restoration has been estimated at £600,000

(over \$1,200,000 at the present rate of exchange); nevertheless, 15,000 people signed a petition to be presented to Prime Minister Thatcher, demanding that the British Waterways Board (the government body responsible for the operation of all waterways in Britain) find the money.

I'm sure all CCS members wish their British confreres the very best of luck in such Herculean endeavours!

So much for the trials: on a more happy note, I'm pleased to report that a century-old lift bridge (one of a few surviving small wooden bridges similar to that at Arles portrayed by Van Gogh) is to be restored. During a routine inspection, engineers discovered a dangerous flaw in the "Skew" or Starke Bridge over the Shropshire Union Canal at Whixall. One of the steel hinges supporting a beam weighing a ton-and-a-half had sheered through, so that the structure could have come crashing down at any time. The bridge has been secured leaving a clear passage for pleasure boats, and the county council are consulting the Ancient Monuments Department to decide what is

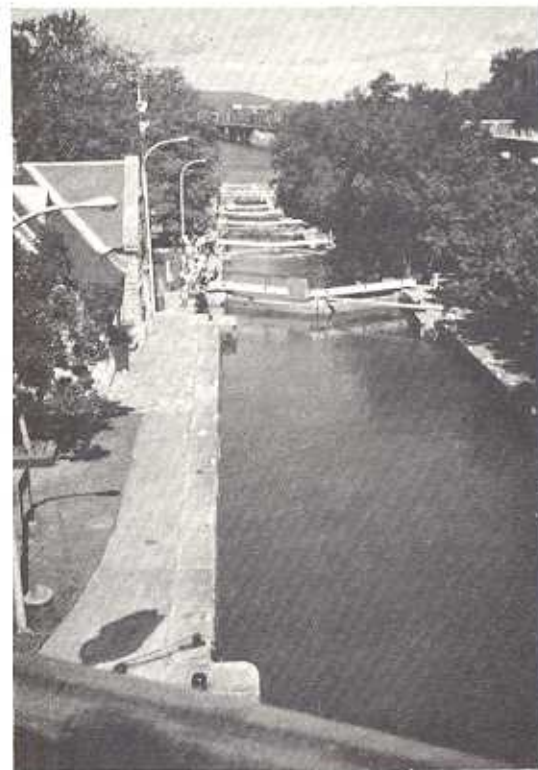
to be done. Fortunately, it will not simply be pulled down and replaced with a modern steel bridge, but will be properly repaired, to continue to delight continuing generations of canal buffs and pleasure cruisers -- as it did me on a glorious Sunday morning last July!

Then there's the "ill wind" situation: The Globe and Mail carried a story this fall about the tremendous crop losses suffered by Scottish farmers as a result of the wettest summer since 1879 -- losses estimated at over \$150 million. But a British paper reported that the consequent importing of French grain was benefitting the British Waterways Board -- up to 700 tonnes a week were being landed at Sharpness Docks on the Severn, and being taken some 30 miles by canal barge to the Tewkesbury flour mill!

And so it goes: aside from unexpected windfalls, we may take comfort from the knowledge that in countless cities, towns and villages in Britain men and

women of all ages and walks of life continue their efforts -- sometimes physically in the muck and debris of abandoned stretches of once-prosperous waterways; sometimes in committees and pressure groups, endeavouring to persuade reluctant councils and other governing bodies that their bit of canal heritage is worth preserving; and sometimes enjoying the fruits of their labours as they either stroll the peaceful towpaths, or cruise at a leisurely pace along some of the 2000 or so miles of restored canals, through idyllic countryside, or once-thriving industrial landscapes.

It is true that our situation, and problems, differ in some respects. But our interest in preserving a vital part of our heritage, our pleasure in waterways and their traffic, and our willingness to work for what we believe in, unite us in a common struggle. Let us hope that there will be more opportunities for us to visit each other, and gain strength from our shared experience!



The Flight Locks of the Rideau Canal where it joins the Ottawa River, in the heart of our nation's capital, look cold and desolate in this winter photo (left) taken by the Society's Past President, Colin Duquemin. In contrast the locks are full and "ready for business" in your Editor's early summer picture.

Lachine Canal Begins To Take On New Life

For over 130 years the Lachine Canal was one of the most active of Canadian canals. But since the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959 the 16km canal cutting across Ile de Montreal from Montreal to Lachine has fallen into disuse.

Now, however, Parks Canada is converting the canal into a recreational area. Picnic spots, green spaces, flower beds as well as facilities for swimming and canoeing are planned. A large start has already been made on the project including steps to remove pollutants and debris from the water-filled canal. The entire project is expected to be completed by 1988.

Civic Public Works

Narrowboat at Expo 86

A replica of a traditional British canal narrowboat will spend most of the coming summer chugging its way around the waters of the Expo 86 site in Vancouver. The vessel will not only be a tourist attraction, but will be used to promote interest in Britain's old canal network, both as one of the world's oldest industrial age communications system and best examples of early civil engineering. As well the narrowboat named "City of Birmingham" will promote British interest at Expo 86 acting as a complement to the UK's own major conventional pavilion.

Birmingham City Council partially sponsored the project to help promote industry and tourism in the city and its bid for the 1992 Olympics. Built in Great Britain, the narrowboat is being shipped to Vancouver in time for the May opening of Expo 86 by Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

OTTAWA -- The president of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, William A. O'Neil of Ottawa, has been elected chairman of the International Maritime Organization for a fourth consecutive two-year term of office at its annual meeting held in London, England last December.

New Head of Seaway's Western Region

Ottawa -- The appointment of J. Bruce McLeod, as Vice-President, Western Region, The St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, effective May 31, 1986 is announced by W. A. O'Neil, President.

Mr. McLeod will succeed Malcolm Campbell who is retiring after serving as the Western Region's Vice-President since 1979, and with the Department of Transport and subsequently the Seaway Authority since 1950.

Mr. McLeod currently serves as Director of Corporate Planning, at the Seaway Authority's Head Office in Ottawa.

Born December 23, 1941, in one of the small Ontario villages later to be inundated during the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, he is a 1964 graduate in general engineering of the Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario, and studied in business for one year in London, U.K.

Mr. McLeod joined the Seaway Authority in 1968 and held progressively more responsible positions in support of operations. He has been instrumental in establishing a sophisticated structure for planning improvements to the Seaway and he also helped develop some of the Authority's major improvement projects including the computer-assisted traffic control system which will go into operation at the Welland Canal this year.

Mr. McLeod will be located at the Seaway Authority's Western Region offices at St. Catharines, Ontario.

Cruise News

Last fall a new cruise started on the Champlain Canal from Albany to Whitehall, New York. This year Captain Lynn H. Bottum is buying the "Dutch Apple" and is negotiating for cruises via the Hudson River and the Champlain Canal to Whitehall and then, via Lake Champlain, to Ticonderoga. The price for the one day trip, Albany to Whitehall, is \$79.50 (A.F.) which included three meals and a bus back to Albany.

Cruise News continued...

Captain Wiles in the "Emita II" does the trip in three days, cruising all the way, and charges about \$340.00 (A.P.).

(The above information was supplied by Mrs. Lillian Alvord of Cazenovia, New York.)

THE BOOK SHELF

Canals, A New Look: Studies in honour of Charles Hadfield, edited by Mark Baldwin and Anthony Burton. Chichester, Sussex: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1984. Pp x + 195, illustrations, references, index, £15.00.

This volume was conceived to honour Charles Hadfield's seventy fifth birthday. It contains a bibliography of his publications which fills five pages, a fitting tribute to his significant efforts in publicizing the place of canals in the history and the future of transportation technology. The editors also remind us that, along with David St. John Thomas, Charles Hadfield set up one of the most significant publishing houses in the fields of industrial archaeology and history of technology: David and Charles of Newton Abbot, Devon, and North Pomfret, Vermont.

The contributors to this volume have done justice to the breadth of Mr. Hadfield's interests. Prof. A.W. Skempton provides a review of English river navigation engineering prior to 1760 while David Edwards-May describes push-towing, the current state-of-the-art in economical bulk transport. From the conservator's standpoint, Anthony Burton looks at how canals affected their surroundings, Peter White discusses preserving this canal environment, while Roger Squires looks at the financial and other problems of restoring derelict canals. Paul Vine describes European excursions of British pleasure boaters in the century preceding World War II and Mark Baldwin adds a bibliography of the same era. Dr. Baldwin also provides an exhaustive bibliography on canals in Britain published prior to 1950.

The Book Shelf continued...

This volume is not meant as an introduction to canals yet it is too wide in its scope to provide a basis for scholarship in the field. It does, however, provide the would-be canal enthusiast with an array of subjects and appropriate bibliographies to show that interest in canals by industrial archaeologists can be subdivided according to an individual's interest. Whether he is a "new navvie" hacking at the undergrowth in a derelict lock chamber or a bibliophile, firmly attached to his arm-chair view of canals, the average enthusiast interested in British canals will find this book to be a welcome addition to his library.

George Hume

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The April 1985 Newsletter contained several inquiries by Colin Duquemin including the present status of the Culbute Locks on the Ottawa River near Pembroke.

These locks are described as "two locks in tandem" in Robert Legget's Ottawa Waterway which also includes a photograph taken about 1906-07. The locks were apparently abandoned in 1884 and largely destroyed by fire in 1912!

I visited the site at the end of October 1985. It was reached after a short drive and walk over private property (with the owner's kind permission). The river flow was at a low stage and the whole length of the lock site was essentially dry with the river flowing past the old wooden dam which was mostly gone although the remains of a portion of the dam could be seen on the south bank.

There was not a lot of the lock structure remaining and the site of the upper lock was piled up with pulp logs that presumably got lodged there during high spring flows/water levels. However part of the upper entrance walls still exist along with some bits of timber

Letter continued...

cribs. The floor of the lower lock is still partially in place including steel straps along the lower mitre gate sill and circular arc castings that were possibly to guide gate operating ropes (Welland Canal style).

There is certainly enough of the old lock still in place to warrant a visit. Such a visit should be in late summer or early fall when the river stage is low.

Walter E. Webb

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Since my last report of September 1985, a lot of things have been "done" and "undone" due to a lot of circumstances that were "mysterious", "unexplainable" and "completely beyond control" but your dedicated board of directors pressed on relentlessly anyway to keep the wheels turning over the winter. Thank heavens for Spring!

As a follow up on our meeting with Inland Waterways Association from England, we received some "international" press through a delightful article and photograph in the November issue of American Canals. The fact that your president was included in the photo did not influence the decision to make note of the article in this report!

President's Report continued...

Again in connection with the American Canal Society, plans were initiated at our joint meeting in Peterborough to organize a future reciprocal meeting in the United States and I am pleased to report that we have progressed to setting the date as the "Victoria Day" weekend of May 16, 1987 for the meeting to take place at Syracuse, New York, with a programme in hand that promises an interesting look at parts of the Erie Canal, the Oswego Canal and a boat trip. So mark your date books for this one and we will have a lot more information for you as the event approaches.

Earlier in the year I sent out a letter to the membership outlining our plan to hold our Spring 1986 meeting and field trip in the Montreal/Chambly area, however our response from the membership fell too short of the minimum numbers and the time limit to make the trip economically viable.

The fact that it was a "three day" event suggested that "Chambly" be rescheduled for a "holiday weekend" at a later date and so the trip was deferred for further planning and rescheduling.

Undaunted, your tireless Board of Directors immediately swung into "Plan B" which still schedules our Spring meeting to take place on the weekend of May 31, 1986 but the location will be Welland where we will explore the fascinating history and geography of the west end of the Canal on the "other side of the hill" so to speak. The Niagara peninsula and the Welland Canal area has many wonders to explore and this field trip promises to find some of the more "obscure" wonders. A lot more information and registration forms etc. are on their way so plan to be with us in "Wonderful Welland".

Our membership is climbing steadily and numbers exceed 112 at this time. The treasurer assures us that we are still solvent, and meeting our ongoing oblig-

President's Report continued...

gations. Our future plans for meetings and field trips are shaping up nicely with a field trip in the Buffalo-Lockport area for the fall of 1986, Syracuse for spring 1987, and "Chambly" for Labour Day weekend 1987. This will be a very early Fall meeting but it will provide the three days we require at a time when the weather is usually fair and the local operators are still functioning.

Regretably I must close on a rather sad note in reporting the death of Mr. Alan Howard, a friend and colleague, and the first curator of the Marine Museum of Upper Canada from 1962 to 1981 when he retired. Alan was indeed a most gracious person with a great sense of humour and a profound knowledge of Toronto Bay and the activities on the Great Lakes which he shared happily and enthusiastically with everyone.

On behalf of the members of the Board of Directors may I wish you all a fine summer season and hope to see you at Welland.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Our secretary, Bob Voaden, passed along an interesting paper to me recently. Entitled "The Currency of the Welland Canal Company", it was authored by William H. McDonald of Toronto and describes a little known event during the early years of the Company when it was almost constantly on the brink of financial disaster.



As a means of raising capital a proposal was made that the Company issue its own currency. This idea was first explored in 1829, the year the canal opened, but was not acted upon until 1836. On August 4 of that year the Board of Directors held a public meeting of the "Merchants, Farmers, Mechanicks (sic), and other men of business in St. Catharines and vicinity", who pledged

Editor's Notebook continued...

to accept the Company's notes at par in their business transactions.

This experiment of issuing "Welland Canal Money" was very successful with a total of \$33,463 in denominations of one, five and ten dollars being issued during 1836. As far as is known a \$5.00 note of September 2, 1836 is the only one that has survived.

The measure no doubt saved the Company from bankruptcy, but equally important as the actual issuance of the currency was the always energetic William Hamilton Merritt's efforts in encouraging individuals to endorse the Company's notes.

Speaking of Mr. Merritt, a new biography of the Welland Canal's chief promoter has recently appeared. Entitled Merritt - A Canadian Before His Time, the book was written by Jack Williams and published by Stonehouse Publications, the book publishing arm of the St. Catharines Standard.

It presents a straight-forward, very readable account of Merritt's life and career.

It's certainly a great pleasure to acknowledge the numerous people who have contributed in one way or another to this edition of the Newsletter. To Lou Cahill, Lillian Alvord, Walter Webb, Fred Rutland, Roberta Styran, George Hume, Peter Styrmw, Colin Duquemin and Bob Voaden, my sincere thanks for your interest and support.

Sherman L. Zavitz

