

CHANGE 2

Well Christmas is over and I trust you had as happy a time as Valerie and I did. The children made different plans this year so we didn't have them as we have for a number of years. Were we lonely, anything but! We visited, had people in, went to sundry parties and generally had a splendid time reminiscent of our first years here. An enjoyable change.

Now, I suppose, we are expected to look forward to the New Year and we are doing that. We will spend New Year's Eve and New Year's morning with the same dear friends as we have for the past number of years. A great celebration including our own fireworks display over the Reach to welcome 2008.

From my perspective we can look forward to a year of change, not only around the rest of the world but right here in the County. The assassination of Benazir Bhutto in Parkistan is sure to have an ominous effect on the Middle East and particularly Afghanistan where our troops are trying to effect change in that war torn land. The real estate crisis in the U.S.A. will likely have a serious impact on our trade as we are by its largest trading partner and our strong dollar could affect our trade world wide.

It looks, however, despite the negative effects; we here in Prince Edward County will see a lot of economic development.

I was reminiscing the other day and got to discuss the changes that have occurred in the last fourteen years since we arrived. No Frills, Canadian Tire on the Highway, a much enlarged Waring House, and an expanded IGA which together with the A & P are now open 24 hours a day. There are many new stores and businesses on the Main Street and a number of new apartments. I must mention the new restaurants and the re-done Merrill Inn and of course, the beautiful Claremont. Of course, I have to mention the Wineries which, in my view, act as a magnet for people to visit and enjoy the County and leave money in our various commercial establishments.

I was chatting the other day with a woman who moved here about six years ago. Prior to that, she had been a senior official in the Municipality of Niagara-on-the-Lake for a number of years. She said that in her view one of the major differences between Niagara-on-the-Lake and Prince Edward County is the number of fine restaurants we have which NOTL doesn't have.

PELA – CFDC (Prince Edward & Lennox and Addington Community Futures Development Corporation) co-sponsored the development of a new web site – eastquest.ca

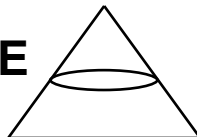
which outlines all the activities throughout the municipalities in eastern Ontario and permits users to custom plan their trips and arrange accommodation – with the specific aim of attracting our fellow Canadians from Quebec. So as a volunteer on the Board of PELA CFDC, I was pleased earlier this fall when the papers commented on the increase in tourism, particularly visitors who came from Quebec. Let's consider some of the changes that will occur in 2008 that we are sure of. There will be a significant number of condominiums. Two developments are now under construction one at the west end of Picton and the other on the Hill.

Other exciting developments will also include condos, the Edward Building now under construction on Main Street and the Royal Hotel that will begin renovations in 2008. When Valerie was on the Regent Theatre Board some years ago she used to say that the east end of Main Street would some day become a major attraction for visitors and residents alike. I think she may have been right since the two projects mentioned and the new Book Store and Café project will significantly change the character of this area and coupled with the Regent Theatre and existing restaurants and will become a 'destination' to visit. We will also have a new Home Hardware our on the west end and a record number of building permits for both business and housing will ensure continued growth.

I can recall when the second stop lights were installed on Main Street and Picton became, to my knowledge, the only town in North America to have lights into Tim Horton's! This occasion was made famous by the Frere Bros in their song. I wonder what song they will produce when the roundabout becomes operational in 2008. I'm sure for a while it will make very interesting watching as we all get used to going around and around and maybe end up in Home Hardware, the Waring House or Hallowell Nursing Home before we manage to get back on highway 33 or Schoharie!

All in all 2008 has all the signs that it will be a year of continuing growth and prosperity. Change always makes us

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