

## THE WOMEN BEHIND "STEAMBOAT LANDING"

### Doris Graham & Renie Milne

#### Lantern Profile



Two local women have put together a striking new craft shop called "Steamboat Landing." Doris Graham and Renie Milne have converted the Old Scovil Store in Portland into an exciting gift boutique.

The name of the shop refers to Portland's early history. Steamboats brought goods up the Rideau Canal to the Old Landing to be shipped overland to Brockville and vicinity.

Reconstruction of the old general store began two winters ago with restoration of the floor. With much help and hard work, the building was transformed and enlarged. The beautifully designed layout embraces the shop, a pottery studio, guest apartment and residence.

What brought Doris and Renie together was the desire to create a unique and high quality gift shop. By keeping their standards high they have surpassed run-of-the-mill crafts shops. Display is tasteful and uncluttered.

In spite of the shop's refined atmosphere, Renie and Doris have been careful to carry a broad selection of goods. Prices range from \$2 and up, including many attractive and reasonably priced gift items.

The visitor to Steamboat Landing is struck by the brilliant silk-screened decorative kites. Beautiful butterfly mobiles glint in the window.

The shop carries a variety of cards, including Glen Loate's exquisite nature cards and Renie's found-feather arrangements. Gifts for the family include whimsical tooth fairy dolls, story-glove puppets and dolls.

For a special gift, look for the redwood and butternut boxes by Lucille Pancyr of Ottawa.

A variety of woven goods are supplied by the Stormont Hand Weavers and Spinners. The well designed and finished "Kaybee" coats are reasonably priced at \$52.

Of interest to local history buffs is a small display of booklets produced by Heritage Canada.

One exciting aspect of Steamboat Landing is the associated pottery studio. Jennifer Devine and Liz Hoffman, both of Ottawa, will be resident potters for the summer. Visitors to the shop are welcome to watch the fascinating creation of finely crafted ceramics. The finished work is available in the shop. Devine's delicate porcelain balances nicely Hoffman's dark bodied functional stoneware.

Both Doris Graham and Renie Milne are craftspeople in their own right. Doris studied pottery at Algonquin College in Ottawa. Although Steamboat Landing is usurping her time now, she hopes to get back to the studio next winter.

Renie is accomplished in the art of stitchery, having worked at Montreal's Visual Arts Centre for nine years. She explores textures in her wall hangings, two of which may be seen at the shop. Look for the award-winning "Winter."

Doris points out that a background in crafts has helped her in creating Steamboat Landing. "We both feel well prepared to select items and run the shop." Their familiarity with crafts also enables them to answer questions about the craftspeople and their techniques, enriching the shopper's visit.

Local interest in the new shop has been encouraging. The enthusiasm expressed at the Opening has led the shop's owners to consider remaining open weekends until Christmas.

### North Leeds Plan

#### What next?

The North Leeds Planning Board will meet again soon to appoint a new secretary. This position was left vacant by the resignation of Shirley Bryden.

A telephone interview with Planning Board Chairman Everton Strong revealed that no moves have been made since the public meeting on the Plan on May 11.

The Board is waiting for Consultants J.L. Richards to make the deletions recommended at that public meeting. Mr. Strong says that the Plan should then receive Planning Board approval and be ready for submission to the Ministry of Housing.

Two aspects of the Plan came under heavy fire: lots must have direct access to a public road, and quotas which restrict the number of new lots. Mr. Strong feels that removal of these clauses is necessary to reflect local planning wishes, even though it may be unacceptable to the Ministry of Housing. He says, "Let's SEE if the Ministry rejects it... It's our Plan, not J.L. Richards, not the Ministry's... it's ours."

Mr. Strong expressed frustration with the consultants and the planning process. If the Ministry will not approve the Plan, North Leeds may not have one. Mr. Strong points out, "We're overburdened with restrictions as it is. We could get along with just building and health inspection... we've got along up until now."

Such a viewpoint may be dangerous. Dr. Dick Tindall, who lead a local government seminar in Portland this spring, emphasizes that it is important to have zoning by-laws in place. He says, "While the Board is throwing up its hands in despair, the area may be the victim of bad growth... It is a shortsighted view to allow all

growth." He points out that other areas have regretted their failure to control development when faced, for example, with costly water quality problems.

Dr. Tindall says that while the Ministry of Housing must approve a Plan to make it "Official", zoning by-laws controlling land use may be passed without one, subject to OMB approval.

If the North Leeds Plan is not approved by the Provincial government, it may be useful as an "Unofficial Plan" - simply a policy statement on which zoning laws are based. An unofficial policy may be a "useful document if implemented and followed." Certainly, it would be better than nothing.

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Doris Graham and Renie Milne of "Steamboat Landing" in front of a large stitchery wall hanging by Renie.