



# DIARY

## A bit of a misprint on my Senate appointment

By Robert LaFrance

After all my lobbying for a Senate appointment, all my letters, the sending of apples to higher-ups in the Prime Minister's Office, talking to everyone from Members of Parliament to cabinet ministers all the way up to janitors, and getting the appointment, they spelled my name wrong in the paper.

Talk about upset when I read in my Dec. 23 daily paper that they had spelled my name P-E-R-C-Y-M-O-L-K-L-E-R when I had clearly written P-O-B-E-R-T-L-A-F-R-A-N-C-E in my letter suggesting that I be named senator. I could see their making the mistake of a few letters, but all of them?

When I and my family are all settled in Ottawa with my annual salary that is roughly equal to what I've earned in total since 1991, it will still rankle.

When I go in for my (free) haircut in the parliamentary barber shop (where Flug used to work) and when I go in for a (subsidized) meal at the parliamentary restaurant, I will still bristle if someone calls me 'Senator Mockler'.

As a journalist since 1978, I have seen my share of words with bizarre spellings, but this particular error was the most hurtful to me. As the editor of this newspaper will confirm, I have never made a mistake, and to see such an 'egregious error' sitting on the front page of my daily newspaper is extremely annoying for that reason. Of course I should note that, while I ain't never done misspelt a word, I have been known to lie. That qualification alone should have zapped me into the Senate decades ago. I can also drink, sleep, show up late for work, and I enjoy fact-finding missions to Mexico as long as they are in January

and February.

Down at the club last night, as the boys were saying their goodbyes before I head for the Ottawa burial ground (as Wayne so delicately phrased it), we got onto the subject of computers. While some had mentioned I was going to The Red Chamber (Or is it Blue?) and would see enough dinosaurs there, others said that we had enough members in the Luddite or Dinosaur class right here in the club. Probably half of them had never turned on a computer (or vice versa), so much of the talk went right over their heads, except when Willie the janitor started insulting me, as if it were a roast or something.

"I won't say Bob has lost a lot of brain cells," he began, "but they turned him down for a cell phone last week because of a severe shortage. And by

the way, to be fair, I wouldn't say that Senator Bob needs a software upgrade, I think if he got a whole new set of drivers that should bring him up to 1988."

On the subject of hoarding, and how we got onto that subject I don't know, for many years I have been keeping the freezer here full of grub against the inevitable nuclear holocaust or crop failure or both, and of course I had to clean that out. I found round steak from 1999 and something - possibly carp - from even earlier. The only information on it was or were the numbers 198\_, which means it was put in there somewhere between 1980 and 1989. With my salary once we are safely installed or ensconced in Ottawa, we can afford not only more food to hoard, but a new freezer. Some of that 1992 stuff seemed a little iffy to me.

We all recall those computer software wunderkinds who became billionaires overnight in the 1990s; now there is another breed of entrepreneur who is no less wealthy no less quickly - salt sellers. Anywhere from three dollars to ten dollars for a 10 kg bag of the stuff (plus our firstborn) and didn't we need it. I haven't seen so much ice since Wayne Kleberon's bar mitzvah, which was a little strange anyway because he's not Jewish.

I hope everyone had a happy New Year's celebration and I hope 2009 is a good one, even for George W. Bush who now, it seems, wants to move to this county. Mr. Bush, who it is said tends to tipple a bit, heard the phrase 'Scotch Colony' and said that would be just the place for him to forget his mistakes. I would think if Loch Ness were filled with Scotch, it still wouldn't be enough.

## Igloo building competition to launch Winter Carnival

By Madeleine Leclerc

Plans are already underway for next February's Grand Falls Winter Carnival. Again the event will be launched with the igloo building competition slated to be held from Feb. 13 to 15. However, contrary to last year's site, the competition will be located in back of the Rendez-Vous Hyuandai dealership on Ouellette Street.

"When we approached Daniel Bevesque, owner of the Hyuandai dealership, he was quick to say yes to our request that the igloo building competition be held in back of his property," slated Eric Ouellette, professional engineer with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of New Brunswick (APEGNB) and a member of the event's organizing committee.

"We will rebuild the Guinness world record-breaking igloo on the site," Ouellette added.

Last year's ice igloo measured 25 feet, 9 inches in diameter and 13 feet, 8 inches in height. The previous world record was held by Hydro Quebec. It had an internal diameter of 24 feet, 11 inches and an internal height of 12 feet, six inches. The Grand Falls igloo took 70 volunteers, 2,000 blocks of ice and 50 hours to build.

"It required a lot of planning and hard work to build a safe and solid structure that ultimately accommodated more than 200 people at one time," stated Ouellette. "The igloo was so strong that it stood intact for 59 days until a warm stretch of weather brought it down on April 8."

Ouellette also credits the cold northern New Brunswick weather and the engineering expertise of the team as contributing factors to building the successful world-record igloo.

"We will also have many interesting events held throughout the weekend leading up to the announcement of the competition's winners."

use to build the blocks for the igloo. We are also looking for volunteers at the entrance and for security, etc. People will be on site on Friday, from 7 to 11 p.m., Saturday, from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. and Sunday, from 8 a.m. until 10 a.m. There will also be a colouring contest for kids from grades 1 to 6. The public can visit the finished masterpieces from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. when the winners will be announced," Ouellette stated.

In addition to the igloo competition, the site will also boast a giant tent which will greet visitors. "We plan on having ex-jockey Ron Turcotte here on Saturday and Sunday, health-permitting, and canteen services as well. The local Historical Society will also a display on site. We are hoping on having snowmobilers stop in also. The snowmobile trail is nearby. The site is very visible from the Trans Canada Highway and hopefully, travellers will stop in as well," he added.

Ouellette and his group also plan on having sleigh rides and slides on

site. "Everything will depend on the weather of course," he stated. Well-known ice sculpture artist Albert Deveau from Edmundston will also be on site and organizers also plan on installing a webcam which will oversee the entire area. "People will be able to go on-line and see what is going on," Ouellette said. In addition to the igloo building competition, other activities will be held during the Winter Carnival weekend. However at presstime these activities had yet to be finalized.

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