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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Dinner Is Featured To Honor Sportsmen

By NEIL A. MATHESON

I'M LOOKING forward to Sunday night and the activities at the Summerside Lobster Carnival which is featuring the Sports Celebrity Dinner, and the distribution of plaques indicative of selection to a place in the "Prince Edward Island Sports Hall of Fame"

First of all a salute to the chaps who have made the Lobster Carnival event grow at Summerside. If you think their task has been easy, think again. I have no details on the financial problems involved over the years, but I know it has never been easy. The fact the Carnival is still an important feature of our summer entertainment tells me that the men and the women behind it have done a good job. They are continuing to do so.

Phil MacDonald, Toronto, George A. Callbeck, Summerside and the late John (Whackey) MacEachern are the names to be honored at the Sunday dinner. They were selected several weeks ago by the board of directors of the Prince Edward Island Sports Hall of Fame.

Mr. MacDonald is coming home for the event – he was a Charlottetown boy – Mr. Callbeck will also accept his award, and Chick Williams, a veteran of unusual athletic feats in his own right, will accept the plaque for his former friend, "Whackey".

The colorful Frank (King) Clancy and the scrappy John Ferguson will receive honorary plaques at the dinner.

Started 'Hall Of Fame' Idea

IT WAS A GROUP of men from the Summerside Lobster Carnival executive that initiated the Sports Hall of Fame idea here a year ago. This year the provincial government has named an official Board of Directors of the Sports Hall of Fame and I have the honor to be the chairman.

I'm looking forward to meeting many former athletes, and perhaps some current ones, at the dinner on Sunday evening. It should be a really good night.

And don't forget the Carnival runs through the week, with something new, interesting, exciting and different for every day. You want somewhere to go and forget your problems for a few hours, why not go to Summerside someday next week. You might like it enough to go back for another day.

Christmas Cactus In July

HOW LATE IN the year does a Christmas Cactus bloom? I saw one this week at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay Hardy, 11 Linden Avenue, Parkdale.

One side of this cactus bloomed at Christmas, the other side is in full bloom now. Recently I had a story here about a Christmas Cactus blooming in mid-June. Here is one in mid-July, for the blooms will easily last until next week.

If somebody knows of a Christmas Cactus blooming later than July, I wish you would let me know.

The Hardy people came 18 years ago from Montrose, where Mr. Hardy was a successful farmer.

That 'Yankee Gale' Story

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I wrote a column on "The Yankee Gale". It was done on a story I found in "A Scrapbook" edited by a Mr. MacKinnon who once edited the Pioneer newspaper.

This week there has come to my desk another story on the same storm that was written by J.D. Lawson, Charlottetown. It came from the voluminous historical selections of Mrs. Mary Brehaut, 7 Grafton Street, City.

In the past few days a Henry Bourque, Pontiac, Michigan was searching for material on the old storm. His father had been in it and was one of those who survived.

The Yankee Gale date is October 4, 1851. Because I did this story before I am only going to use a few colorful paragraphs from the Lawson effort.

The storm struck about four o'clock one morning, it blew itself out late the next evening. The destruction was almost indescribable.

Behind Cavendish, for example, could be seen a wreck with the mutilated forms of 13 men lashed to the rigging, naked, owing to the rigor of the breakers.

Nearby a waterlogged hull was fast aground with 10 crewmen dead in the cabin. In an adjoining cove, another vessel was aground with 14 men. None had tasted food since the storm broke, but at least they were alive.

In the Rustico area three ships were wrecked within a few miles of each other. The remains of those aboard were buried in the graveyard of the Episcopal Church, Rustico.

One Unusual Story

HERE IS ONE unusual story from the storm. The "Franklin Dexter" was owned by Capt. Wickson and sailed by his four sons and a nephew.

Three of the crew were found lashed to the rigging, their bodies were horribly mutilated and their clothing in shreds. The other crew members had disappeared.

As soon as the parents of the Wickson boys heard the story, the father – then 70 years of age – came to P.E.I. from Massachusetts to bring the sons' bodies home for burial. Soon as he arrived in Rustico he saw one son's clothing hanging on a fence.

Most of the bodies had been buried, so they were exhumed as Wickson searched for those of his sons. The man fainted several times during this trying operation, but finally he was able to identify three of his sons, and his nephew. Finally the body of his other son was recovered.

Altogether there were a dozen ships wrecked in the storm along the Northern side of the Island. More than 80 men were lost.

A story in the Guardian files says there were 70 vessels lost and 150 men killed or drowned.