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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Trip To AWF Is Basis For Today's Column

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I'VE DECIDED to write this column on my trip to the Atlantic Winter Fair where a number of Island people did an impressive job in competition. I've already told in the news columns about the triumphs of our livestock men and potato growers. Right here I want to call your attention to a splendid victory by Mrs. Edwin Donald, 2 Gordon Drive, Charlottetown, who was awarded the handicraft grand championship for her hooked rug that pictured Prince Edward Island so graphically.

The rug attracted an unusually large share of attention and the Grand Champion award pinned to it attracted even more of the tens of thousands who visited the display during the week.

THE AWF people spent a great deal of money in preparation for the big event and it was evident in many ways. They made mistakes as one might expect from a first-time effort, but they realize that and are planning already for an even better show next year.

Island exhibitors to whom I talked had warm praise for the treatment they received. My own reaction is equally warm. The friendly co-operation was in evidence everywhere I stopped to ask information, and that goes for Halifax as well as President Don Oland and his AWF executive and all of their people who worked with them.

John Gale and Frank Miller did a particularly fine job on press relations, but Don Oland dropped over to say hello on numerous occasions just in case there was anything I needed.

I must add a word of thanks also to Gregory Pierce, Canadian National Telegraphs who dropped in to the press room every evening to look after my copy, and extend courtesies in any way possible.

Long since I have learned to get along at these fairs without much help, but all of this friendly co-operation and show of interest made covering the fair for this paper that much more enjoyable.

And now for some of the more unusual things I bumped into.

Route Direction Is Interesting

MANY OF you have had experience seeking directions or inquiring about distance to some given place, when you were traveling on strange roads. We - Mrs. Matheson was with me - visited Lower Sackville after my work at the fair had been completed as we were calling on Mr. and Mrs. Wendell Mayhew. Myrtle - she is the former Myrtle MacLeod of Breadalbane and Wendell come from Crapaud - had given me good directions over the phone but I checked up further at a service station where I stopped for gasoline.

I asked "How far am I from Pine Hill Drive?" - it's a small subdivision where the Mayhews reside - and was amused when the colored lad who manned the pump told me "You drive past the next traffic lights, and you'll find it someweah, away out theah".

A LITTLE farther on I asked another chap who replied "Pine Hill Drive? It's ahead of you about one and one-half miles away."

Just for fun I checked the mileage on the speedometer and found it was exactly six-tenths of a mile.

I met many Islanders at the Fair and most of them stopped for a chat, most of them discussing some of the items I have had in this column. And I got several good stories.

Judson MacKinnon, a carpenter and builder, was born in Iris, has his home in Summerside but is working just now in Halifax because of the building slump at home.

Forerunner Of Neighbour's Death

HE RECALLED that his mother - Mrs. Mary MacKinnon, 86 lives now in Murray River - looked out the kitchen window at Iris one night about 10 o'clock and said "I can see Stephen Compton's woodpile as clearly as though it were day."

Judson looked out the window but he could see nothing in the darkness of night. "Next morning", Judson told me, "my brother, Harold, went up to play checkers with Compton, and they let the fire go out as they became interested in the game.

"Compton came to the woodpile as my brother came home to have dinner, but when Harold returned after dinner he found Stephen Compton dead at the woodpile. "

The sudden death of the young man shocked everyone in the community, but it was not surprising to Mrs. MacKinnon. She knew something like that was going to happen when she saw the woodpile so clearly the previous night, though the night was dark to everyone else. That was around 1937 or 38, Judson told me.

Car, Corpse Lost, Never Found

HERE IS an even more unusual story.

Mrs. Bruce MacDonald - she was Florence Paul of Brookfield and Bruce comes from Glen William - told me a story that concerns a Montreal family, but she heard it from Mrs. Ivan MacLeod who was formerly Irene Storey of Charlottetown, who had heard it from a girl who had some connections with the Montreal people.

I didn't get the people's name but they were driving through one of the long stretches of desert road in a mid-Western State when the man's mother, who was riding in the back seat, became suddenly ill and died in a few minutes. His wife and their two small children were shocked by the unusual event and they were afraid to have a corpse so close to them, so he removed the baggage from the trunk of the car, placed the corpse there, and put the valises and other luggage in the back seat.

THEY WERE many miles from any town or village so they drove to the nearest centre to telephone police and an undertaker and make other calls that seemed necessary under the circumstances.

The man went to the telephone when he reached the nearest business establishment, and his wife and children followed him as they fled the car of death in something close to panic.

But imagine the man's shock when he emerged from the telephone booth and found that his car had been stolen - with his mother's body. The Montreal man who returned home with his family by plane, has not seen or heard about either since, though it happened about six months ago, Mrs. MacDonald told me.

THE AUTOMATIC meal servers - they provided coffee black, with cream, or with cream and sugar as you demand - caught the interest of many. The man in charge told me Tuesday night that 10,000 units had been dispensed in the first two days. But the thing that interested me most was the equipment that changes a dollar bill.

"Put the bill in the slot with the Queen's head up, and be sure she is facing you." I was told. I did as instructed and out came four quarters to use in the food vending machine nearby. It interested me so much I called Mrs. Matheson and did it again for her benefit.

A group of people put a two-dollar bill into the machine just for fun, but got only a dollar in change, and that proved, apparently, that the thing is not human. A machine attendant gave them the other dollar that the machine failed to deliver.

Heavy Horse Teams Are Colorful

THE SHOW teams of big Clydesdale horses always interest me. These huge animals make an unusually colorful picture with their showy harness and rigging.

When I asked Don Oland how much a set of the harness costs, he told me "we paid \$1,200 for a second hand set in 1942," and that, I suggested, would probably amount to \$2,500 or more today. But I forgot to ask him if the price was for a four-horse or six-horse team. I saw several of both at the fair.

MR. OLAND told me that a great many of the big show teams are being brought into this province, and they cost up to \$1,200 per team, I was told. And the big four and six-in-hand hitches present one of the most colorful pictures at any fair. I like horses anyway but I can't imagine anyone not being attracted by the sight of those handsome animals with their attractive trappings.