

Taking the Lead

Volume 1:

Discovering Personal Power

**A project of the Writer's Alliance of Newfoundland
and Labrador**

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Questions for Discussion

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Introduction

Taking the Lead is a collection of essays and personal portraits that highlight the struggle and achievements of a diverse array of individuals, groups, and organizations. The common thread among these movers and shakers is the urge to bring about positive change - to refuse to accept an untenable or ineffective status quo. These are stories of hard-working people, many from the margins of society, who have defied the odds in an effort to improve their own lot, and the lives of others.

But there is also a strong personal component to these stories. Mixed in with the practical, concrete goals of improving how we are governed, how our laws are written, interpreted, and enforced, there is always personal growth. Many of those profiled here undergo a marked change in their spirituality and sense of self-worth. They are not quite the same at the end of their journey as they were at the beginning.

The people in these essays are of all age groups, many races, and both genders. There is also a wide variety of subject matter. Many of the stories deal with women, native people, and children. Readers will meet, among others, an anti-poverty crusader, a native Peacekeeper, a Chinese doctor, and a gay rights activist. There is a story of police insensitivity and brutality a profile of a community-minded, unpretentious priest, and a look at the life work of someone who strives for the personal enrichment of the disabled.

Taking the Lead offers stories of people who, either on their own or with others, have fought against what they believe is fundamentally wrong. A catch phrase binding these essays might be: "We're not going to take it!" Or the even more positive: "We're going to make the effort to change it!"

These stories, then, are life affirming in a broad way. They show that positive change, both on a personal and social level, can be brought about by "ordinary" people, that ultimately, we all have to "take the lead."

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Taking the Lead is the fifth in a series of literacy projects undertaken by the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador. Copies of our other projects, including the *Newfoundland and Labrador ABE Social History Series* and *Working Lives*, may be obtained by contacting our office:

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Ron Knowling's Fight for Gay Rights
Agnes Walsh

Word List

Sexual orientation: Whether a person is heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian, or bisexual.

Strategic: Important in its effect.

Statute: Law passed by Parliament.

Amendment: A minor change.

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

Meet Ron Knowling

When Ron Knowling was young he was geeky. He admits it. He read a lot and was more interested in computers than in girls. Some of that has changed. Oh, he still likes to read, but he's more interested in human issues than computers. And girls ... well, he likes girls, but ... he loves a man. Ron is gay. When he looks back he feels he was always gay. Like everyone, he had crushes on his teachers, but for Ron the crushes were always on male teachers. He was never called the names we often hear for homosexuals. Names like "queer" or "faggot." Oh, he heard those words used, but because Ron never stuck out he escaped the abusive names. He was just Ron and Ron was geeky and that was fine by him.

The Man



Photo: Ron Sansome

Ron and Dame Edna at Madame Tussard's Wax Museum in London, England

Ron is a soft-spoken and charming man. He is tall and he carries an air of tranquillity about him. You can also sense an impish quality in Ron. He smiles frequently and gets very excited when he talks about ideas. He lives with his widowed mother in a bright and airy house near the university. His mother, Kathleen Knowling, is a well-known St. John's visual artist. She has always been very supportive of Ron's sexual orientation. She also supports his political activity for gay rights. Ron's father passed away in 1998. When Ron "came out" to his father in 1985, his father was not very understanding. "Dad wasn't loud or angry about it," says Ron, "he just didn't understand. My father was born in 1910 and he wasn't very informed on such matters as sexual orientation." Ron's "coming out" and "being out" were not as difficult as it is for some gays. But he has been beaten up in St. John's and he knows it was because he is gay.

The Activist

When Ron started Memorial University he was like any other teenager asking a whole bunch of questions. Some of those questions had to do with his sexuality. He met a man and became involved with him. He also started to get politically active for gay rights. In the fall of 1987 he started a group at Memorial that he called MUNGALA (Memorial University of Newfoundland Gay and Lesbian Association). It was the only group in the province for a while. It attempted to let the public know that gays were not going away.

The group did little more than put up posters and hold some dances. But what was important for Ron at the time was to have a voice and a public face for gay rights. He wanted people to know that it is not just heterosexuals out there in the world. He was trying to get people to recognize that homosexuals, lesbians, and bisexuals are Newfoundlanders too.

After MUNGALA there was a series of groups that formed and then disbanded. In 1994 NGALE (Newfoundland Gays and Lesbians for Equality) started, and it is still running strong today. NGALE is very politically active and it is also proving to be very effective for gay rights. NGALE runs a phone line as well as talking to students and community groups. It meets with government, and has regular education and support meetings. It also has fun by holding social events such as dances. NGALE is a team of gays and lesbians working together to build a community, as well as educate the "straight" community.

Better Times



Photo: Mike Reid

Gay Rights march, St. John's

Ron feels these are exciting times for the gay movement. Gay rights are being addressed in a way they never would have been 20 years ago. "There has been a lot of violence against gays here," says Ron. "I know there's been a couple of fellows in St. John's who've been killed because of their sexual orientation. It still can be a dangerous place for gays."

But organizations like NGALE are addressing many gay rights issues. NGALE has made itself very politically active in education and the law. One of the good things that has happened in Newfoundland, despite the violence and verbal abuse towards gays, is that now the RNC (Royal Newfoundland Constabulary) is working with NGALE. The RNC is trying to develop a strong relationship with the gay community "They are trying to be sensitive to the needs of the gay community," says Ron. "Right now they are going through a strategic planning process and are talking to us on a regular basis. This is very encouraging."

We Are Gay, and We Are Here to Stay



Photo: Mike Reid

Gay Pride March, St. John's

Is being a gay Newfoundlander a new thing? Were there always lesbians and homosexuals and bisexuals in Newfoundland, or being gay go hand-in-hand with modern times? Did it happen that we got cars, we got electricity, we got Confederation, we got gay? Ron doesn't see it that way.

"Gays and lesbians and bisexuals have always been here. They have formed loving, stable relationships and have won the respect of the people around them." But there are no records of these relationships, or hardly any.

Ron tells of an article in the 1924 *Evening Telegram*. The article was written by Canon William Lockyer of Trinity Bay who often wrote articles about the history of Trinity Bay. This article concerns the relationship of two men in Trinity in the 1860s. It shows that gays have always been among us. "But such records are few and far between," says Ron.

"That is a great tragedy because such records would show the beauty of gay love, and plus they could be an example of how we could all live our lives."

Ron knows that a lot of people believe that being gay is a sort of modern phenomenon. But it is not, Ron believes, merely part of our post-industrial society. It is not something that came from away or something that exists only in urban societies. Fifty years ago people could not talk openly about being gay. Now hatred and discrimination are not so quickly tolerated.

Moving Toward a Better Society

Recently Ron has been doing a lot of work with NGALE to get the government to change the definition of "spouse." The federal government has just introduced Bill C23, which is changing the definition of spouse in the federal statutes. This bill affects 68 federal statutes and gives same-sex couples equal benefits under the law. What this means is that now same-sex couples can claim each other as dependents on income tax. They can also collect survivor benefits under the Canada Pension Plan and can pass RRSPs, Registered Retirement Savings Plans, to their partner without being taxed.

This is an important development in the struggle for gay rights. What it does not do, however, is alter the definition of spouse or marriage. Same-sex couples cannot legally marry in Canada. But same-sex relationships will now be legally recognized as being equal to heterosexual common-law relationships.

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien has deemed the bill an important piece of government legislation and despite strong opposition it looks as if it will be passed.

On the Provincial Level

"Right now the provincial government is a pretty good government," says Ron. He believes it is more sensitive to the needs of the gay and lesbian community than ever before. It has made promises in writing to change the definition of spouse in the province. Provincial civil servants can now get benefits for their same-sex partner under provincial medical plans. Also the government passed a new adoptions act. That bill allows same-sex couples to adopt children.

"I think most of these issues have basically been going in favour of the gay community" says Ron. "But we have to keep after the government. We have to inform ourselves. That is why I went to the justice library last fall and I searched through the statutes of Newfoundland and Labrador for specific phrases or words that affect what we are trying to change." The present definition of spouse really narrows the field of human relationships. There is no room in there for same-sex couples.

Ron wrote up a draft bill. He changed the definition of spouse to also include common-law couples. The provincial government has promised to change the definition of spouse. Ron sees this as important in the larger scheme of things as well as for the gay community "But," says Ron, "it is so important for gays and lesbians because it would mean that suddenly we would have legitimate relationships. These relationships will have to be recognized under the law of the province."

The spin-offs from that affect us all because it would make it easier for gays to be public and communicate with other people in the community It would be easier to educate young Newfoundlanders, and all Newfoundlanders, about the gay community Perhaps then we could lessen some of the prejudice against gays and lesbians.

Into the Schools

In the fall of 2000, NGALE sent several members of their speakers' bureau to Holy Heart of Mary High School in St. John's. They were invited to talk to students about modern ideas of family life. Traditionally family life is seen as a husband, wife, a couple of kids, and a pet. "Well," says Ron, "that wasn't considered normal a hundred years ago. It used to be normal that people would send their children out into service to learn a trade. Or it was normal that if you were from a poorer class you sent your children out to better-off people to work in service. That would be unheard of today"



Photo: Mike Reid

Decked out in their finest for a Gay Pride march.

Years ago a family included aunts, uncles and grandparents, but now families of three or four are common. Now often the mother goes out to work and the father stays home to rear the children. What has also changed is who makes up a family. It is not common to see a lesbian or homosexual couple rear a child, but it isn't unheard of either. "It is not the gender that matters as much as the quality of love," Ron points out. "It is the love that is there in the family, and the mutual support that really makes a family."

When NGALE speaks to students, Ron noticed, the students are more knowledgeable and accepting about gay life. Television and movies are more open on the subject and it is common to have topics of sexuality dealt with in an open and positive manner.

The Only Good Thing About AIDS

"It wasn't until AIDS happened that you really had any consistent attempt at dealing with the issue of sexuality and homosexuality in Newfoundland," says Ron. He believes that it was this dreadful disease that brought people's attention to these matters and helped people discuss them openly. The AIDS Committee started in the late '80s. It forced people to look for more information about sexual behaviour and talk about issues like condom use. The Committee made information available to the general public and encouraged discussion about sexual matters and gender preferences. People had to look at the reality of AIDS because this disease was here in the province and not just on the mainland or in another country. People were talking about casual sex, intimacy, and sexually-transmitted diseases. This horrible disease opened the doors for discussion in a manner that had not been possible before. Homosexuality became part of this discussion.

His Community

Ron's goal is to reach out to and communicate with as many people as possible. For him, being "out of the closet" is a political decision as well as a personal one. The time when it was most important for Ron to speak out was during the Mount Cashel crisis. "That was absolutely nuts," says Ron. "I don't know how much damage it did to the gay community in this province."

Ron saw how the gay community was pointed at when Mount Cashel broke. He saw that people were thinking this crisis had been caused by gays and lesbians when the real issue was abuse and not the sex or sexuality of the abusers. "My God," says Ron, "the horror of Mount Cashel has nothing to do with love."

He went to some of the Hughes Commission hearings and like everyone else he was horrified by the reports. It was during a Roman Catholic Church Commission hearing that Ron had to stand up and speak his mind. "I had to say wait a minute, I am a member of the gay community. These men who assaulted those boys are not members of the gay community. They are child abusers. They are rapists. The issue of sexual preference isn't what should be at issue here." Ron was very strong in his stance on the matter and very vocal. He sees what happened at Mount Cashel as a power issue, an abuse of power, not as anything to do with homosexuality. He sees it as evil. He did not want the gay community attacked and misunderstood for such evil. His comments reached national attention when they were printed in *The Globe and Mail*, one of Canada's national newspapers.

Ron's Philosophy

"When I go to the high schools to talk to the students I ask them what they would like the world to be like when they grow up. I tell them that if they would like the world to be free of prejudice and hatred then they have to act now without prejudice and hatred," says Ron.

One of the points Ron always makes when talking to the students is that he feels there are enough problems in the world, real life-and-death issues. "Isn't the issue really whether we are making someone happy in a relationship, instead of whether or not that person is of the same sex?" he asks.

These days Ron sees a lot of positive energy in the gay community. He is using his energy for productive change: a better quality of life for gays and lesbians. But of course this lessening of prejudice and hatred will make life better for all of us. It will make our world bigger by being more accepting of love regardless of the gender.

"I would love to make a documentary film about the gay community in Newfoundland and Labrador. I think it is a fascinating community with people who are very dedicated and interesting," says Ron. He wants the community to look around and reflect upon the strong lives it is helping to build and support.

But what is most important to Ron is building awareness. "I don't want to just sit here," he says. "I have to do something to make sure that everyone understands that the gay community is here to stay."

Ron's gentle manner and steely determination work to accomplish his beliefs. He believes strongly in creating a better world for the people who come after us.

"They can be our children, or they can be other people's children. It doesn't matter. What matters is that we try and create a better world day by day so that life will be better for others."

Ron knows that trying to end discrimination against gays is worth the work. Just because times are getting better for the gay community it doesn't mean he can rest on his laurels. It means that now it may be a little easier to reach more people with his message of love and hope.

Sources

The writer conducted interviews with Ron Knowling.

Ron Knowling's Fight for Gay Rights

Questions for Discussion

Meet Ron Knowling

1. Discuss Ron's early years.
2. Did his growing up differ from yours?

The Man

1. How does Ron's mother feel about his sexual orientation?
2. How did his father feel about it?

The Activist

1. What group did Ron first get involved with for gay rights?
2. Why is it important for Ron to be politically active?
3. What group is Ron presently involved with?

Better Times

1. Is Ron optimistic about gay rights now?
2. How is the RNC helping the gay movement?

We Are Gay, and We Are Here to Stay

1. Do you think being gay in Newfoundland is a new thing?
2. Discuss the *Evening Telegram* article.

Moving Toward a Better Society

1. What has Ron's main work been with NGALE? Discuss.
2. What is Bill C23?

On the Provincial Level

1. What work did Ron do at the justice library?
2. What would the change in the definition of spouse mean for the gay community?

Into the Schools

1. What did NGALE talk to the students at Holy Heart school about?
2. Discuss the different types of people that make up a modern-day family.

The Only Good Thing About AIDS

1. What does Ron see as the only good thing about AIDS?

His Community

1. How does Ron feel the Mount Cashel crisis hurt the gay community?
2. Discuss what Ron brought up at the Roman Catholic Church Commission hearing.

Ron's Philosophy

1. What is Ron's main goal in his political activism for gays?
2. Discuss Ron's philosophy for a better world.

**Patrick Mulrooney:
Logger and Educator**
Robin McGrath



Word List

Privatization: The movement from national ownership to private enterprise. A privatized industry or business is no longer owned by the public but by one or more individuals.

Heritage: An inheritance. A circumstance, benefit, object, or anything that can be left by one person for another.

Cord: A measure of wood.

Diet: The type of food a person usually eats or is restricted to, general patterns of food consumption.

I.W.A.: The International Woodworkers of America, a loggers' union.

Commission of Inquiry: An official government investigation into specific conditions or circumstances, resulting in a report that is usually released to the public.

Mechanization: The movement from work done by hand to work done by machine.

Artifact: Any object made by man. A gun or saw is an artifact, but so is a stone marker or an axe mark on a tree.

Petition: A written request, usually signed by many people.

Introduction

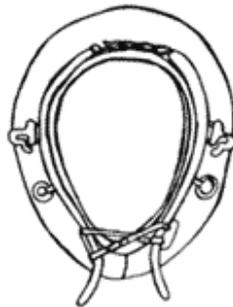
When the Provincial Government decided to privatize some of the parks in Newfoundland in 1997, many of the people who used the parks objected. Many of the people who worked in the parks objected also. One of those park employees was Patrick Mulrooney. Pat worked as a guide at the logging exhibit in Grand Falls-Windsor. He had helped Grand Falls-Windsor to build the Logging Museum and had donated many items to the exhibit. He didn't see how the government could sell heritage items that ordinary citizens had given for future generations. He decided to do something about it. This is the story of Pat Mulrooney's fight to save the Logging Museum.

Pat's Early Years

Patrick Mulrooney was born in Windsor in 1935. He came from a big family. His mother died when he was 13 months old, so he was raised by his mother's sister. He says his family didn't have much but they were fine people. As a child, he had to chop firewood, carry water, and do many household chores. He got only as far as grade three in school because he had to work to help support the family. When he was 14 years old, he went to the lumberwoods to work for a private contractor.



Pat went to work in the woods when he was hardly more than a boy. In those days, logging was harder than it is today. Men had to cut at least two cords of wood a day with a bucksaw. A cord of wood is four feet high, four feet deep and eight feet wide. In summer the flies were terrible. In winter the weather was wet and cold. There was often no proper light in the bunkhouse and there was no way to wash clothes. The men slept in their work clothes, and everybody had lice. The food was poor and there was not enough of it. Pat says there was no garbage in the lumber camps because the men ate it all. Some men couldn't stand up to the harsh living conditions.



The Logging Life

Pat was strong enough to be a good logger. He cut wood in the summer and he hauled it in the winter. He worked in A.N.D camps (for the Anglo Newfoundland Development Company) and in smaller camps run by contractors. He learned to cut as much as four cords of wood a day with only a bucksaw. Pat loved life in the woods, but he saw how hard it was on the men. A lot of men, like his uncle, died early because of the conditions. The constant bending and hauling injured their backs and their kidneys. Men often got hernias and kidney stones and bleeding hemorrhoids. The diet was mostly beans and bread with a little salt meat. The diet made their medical problems worse. The only cure for these

medical problems was rest, but if the men rested their families starved. Instead they worked and lived like horses. They often died young or suffered disabilities for the rest of their lives.

In 1956 the I.W.A union came into the province. They found terrible conditions. Three years later there was a logging strike and a policeman was killed. Pat says "Sometimes a tragedy has to happen before you get improvement." After the strike, a Commission of Inquiry on the logging industry found that the loggers' daily work was "clearly strenuous," "often uncomfortable," and "at times squalid."



Photo: Zena Olynyk/Mulrooney family archive

Pat dresses like an old timer when he is demonstrating the use of a bucksaw at logging exhibitions.

They suggested major changes in the living conditions. They recommended the food be improved and the bunkhouses have electric lights and warm water for washing. In time, many of these things were done. Life in the improved logging camps was still hard, but Pat saw major changes over the next 10 years.

The Logging Museum

Pat Mulrooney worked in the lumberwoods for over 20 years. Then in 1971 he went to work at Beothuck Park. He and Alfred Menchenton were asked to build a permanent logging exhibit to show people the logging life. Most people, even loggers' families, had no idea how they lived and worked. Pat saw the museum as a way to teach people how wood was cut before mechanization. The Logging Museum was intended to inform people of the history of logging in central Newfoundland, to display artifacts from that period and to preserve our heritage.

Pat and Alfred together built the Logging Museum from the ground up. They put up five buildings in three summers. The building process was the first exhibit of the Logging Museum. People came from all over to see the work progress. They built a forepeak, which is the office where the skipper and second hand would stay. They built a cookhouse and bunkhouse. The cookhouse held the galley or kitchen and tables where the men ate their meals. The bunkhouse had field bunks made from spruce boughs and a floor made from sticks on the ground. They built a barn with a forge and a saw-filing shack. They also built a pit-saw and a horse-shoeing frame, and found a river boat and horse sled for

display. Pat donated more than 100 artifacts from his own collection to the museum, and he and Alfred carved and constructed hundreds of other pieces for the exhibit.

The Logging Museum exhibit is intended to show life in the lumber- woods in the 1920s. Some of the camps Pat worked in during the 1950s were no different. A lot of the exhibits show the loggers' humour. The "pissquicks" are cut-down rubber boots that can be slipped on easily. The "pile driver" is a galvanized bucket with a birch bark seat to ease the pain of hemorrhoids. The "pork bitch" is a lamp made from an enameled bowl with a wool wick that burns pork fat. In reality these things were not funny. They reflected bad living conditions and poor health.



Photo: Mulrooney family archive

Pat is not intimidated by celebrities because he knows what he's talking about. Here he instructs former Governor-General Jaean Sauvé on the use of a drawknife.

Before long, Pat himself became a part of the exhibit. When groups of schoolchildren came, Pat would give displays of axe throwing. Pat can split a matchstick from 10 feet with an axe held upside-down and back-forwards. He can do this four times or more in a row to show that it isn't just a coincidence. Pat believes that if you don't have an education, you have to use your brains. He has many examples of how the old-time loggers who couldn't read or count were able to keep track of their work. He showed children how knots in a piece of string were used to measure how much wood had been cut or moved. He also taught them that it is a lot easier to add and subtract using the math they learn in school. In 1993, he was given the George Chafe Provincial Parks Award for his outstanding contribution to the Provincial Park Program and in 1997 he received a merit award from the federal Provincial Parks Council for his work in the Canadian Parks system.

As a park interpreter, Pat Mulrooney met and spoke to lots of famous and influential people. He guided premiers, lieutenant governors and movie stars. He was not impressed by fame. Pat treats all people alike. Every schoolchild who visited his museum got the same polite treatment as the premier. In Pat's view, every child is as important as the premier. Because Pat knew what he was talking about, he had confidence when he spoke to people. He trained lots of young guides to learn about the logging life and to speak clearly and confidently as well.



The Threat of Privatization



Photo: Grand Falls-Windsor Advertiser

When the government tried to privatize the logging museum, Pat asked members of the official opposition to help him fight against it. More than 100 people showed up to support him.

In 1997, Pat was one of many Newfoundlanders who were shocked to hear that 21 Provincial Parks were to be privatized. He didn't see how the Parks Division could sell donated material off to the highest bidder. He was worried that a private museum would not be safe for the many children who visited each year. He was worried that the surrounding plant life would be destroyed through neglect by staff and overuse by visitors. Even though Pat was told his job was secure, he worried that a lot of other people would be thrown out of work. He decided it was time to do something to stop the sale of the museum he had built.

First Pat began to contact donors and supporters of the Logging Museum. He asked them to voice their concerns. They joined with other groups, such as the Exploits Valley Tourism Association. At a meeting at the Mount Peyton Hotel, more than 100 people came to meet with members of the official Government opposition. Pat was one of the spokesmen.

Soon, over 10,000 people had signed petitions to the House of Assembly to reverse the decision to privatize parks. Three days later, Pat had a call from the Deputy Minister to say that the Park itself would be privatized but the Logging Museum would be put under the control of Historic Sites.

Pat Mulrooney's victory is a bittersweet one. He won the battle but lost the war. He was able to save his museum but he was not able to stop the privatization of the Provincial Parks in Newfoundland and Labrador. The primary purpose of a privately owned park is to make money. The primary purpose of a Provincial park is to preserve heritage. Pat's public museum is now part of a privatized park. Once he was able to take children into the woods surrounding the museum and teach them the difference between edible and poisonous plants. Only a short time after privatization, Pat sees the plant and tree life in the park being hurt by overuse. Now the plant life is trampled down and destroyed. But Pat Mulrooney has a great faith in nature's ability to heal itself. With care and attention, the plants can grow back and the woods can be restored. He's not giving up the struggle.

Life Today

A life of hard work in the open air has made its mark on Pat. Sometimes he lets children and tourists believe he is an old, old man, but he is only 65. In the spring of 2000, Pat Mulrooney officially retired from the Parks service. He hopes to return to guiding at the Logging Museum within the year, but in the meantime he is working on his own collection in the log barn he built beside his family home at

Pearson's Peak. Retirement has forced a man who worked to save a public museum to run his own private museum. Pat hopes that all the tools and artifacts he has collected will one day belong to the people of the province.

Today much of Pat's attention goes towards his wife Ina and his young daughter Georgina. He wants Georgina to get the education that was denied to him when he was a boy. Although Georgina is only in her early teens, she is already an accomplished guide and often shows visitors her father's private museum collection. She is an accomplished pianist and has taken prizes in music festivals, and is a national award-winning essayist. "Not bad for a girl living in the woods," says Pat with obvious pride. Pat is himself an example of the fine values you can learn in nature's classroom.



Sources

The writer first met Pat Mulrooney when she brought her children to visit the Logging Museum many years ago. They used to go back every summer. Robin and her husband visited the museum again shortly after the privatization threat and learned about Pat's attempt to save the exhibit. When she decided to write about Pat, Robin looked up articles about him in the *Grand Falls-Windsor Advertiser*. Then she went to the CBC and watched a video about him called "The Logging Life" that had been made for *Land and Sea*. Robin also located an article on Pat in the Fall, 1994, issue of *The Newfoundland Quarterly*. Finally, she read articles about the logging industry and the I.W.A. strike. Once the research was done, she phoned Pat Mulrooney and interviewed him over the telephone. Most of the time, when you write an article or an essay, you put in only a little bit of what you know. Robin says she hopes people who read this piece will go to the Logging Museum and see it for themselves.

Patrick Mulrooney: Logger and Educator

Questions for Discussion

Introduction

1. What industries were there in Newfoundland 50 years ago?
2. What industries are there in Newfoundland today?
3. Have any industries or services in your area been privatized?

Pat's Early Years

1. How old was Pat when his mother died?
2. Who raised Pat?
3. What kinds of chores did Pat do when he was a boy? What kind of chores do children do today?

The Logging Life

1. How many cubic feet is a cord of wood chunks?
2. What is the difference between food and diet?
3. What are the consequences of an unvaried diet?

The Logging Museum

1. Where do you think the names "forepeak," "galley" and "skipper" come from?
2. What museums are in your area?
3. Name three artifacts you can see in your home.
4. What objects have you inherited from your own family? What skills have you inherited?

The Threat of Privatization

1. Why did Pat Mulrooney object to park privatization?
2. What effect could privatization have upon essential services such as health care or education?
3. Who did Pat get to help him fight privatization?
4. Have you ever signed a petition? How effective was it?

Life Today

1. Where does Pat live?
2. What work does his daughter Georgina help him with?

The Keith Crane Case Michael Jones

PART ONE: Crimes and Consequences

1.1 The Arrest

This is Keith Crane's version of what happened. "Keith Crane" is not his real name. In fact all the names in this story have been changed.

At 5:00 PM on Wednesday, July 7, 1993, Crane, a mechanic at a St. John's trucking company, finished a double shift. His partner Vernon Haynes picked him up from work. They drove to the home of George Grant and Nadia Markham on Gower Street. Crane and Haynes lived in Manuels but they were spending the night with their friends in St. John's.

It was Nadia's birthday. Keith had a flask of gin and they all had a drink. At 7:30 they bought a dozen beer and ordered Chinese food. They had a small party. Keith had a present for Nadia.

At about 10:30 Keith and Vernon walked to the Ship Inn on Solomon's Lane, five minutes from George and Nadia's house. They had a couple of beers. Their friend Geoff McAllister joined them. After an hour the three of them moved on to another nightclub, Solomon's, a gay bar on the corner of Water Street and Solomon's Lane.

At about 1:30 there was a disturbance at the bar, a dispute between two men. The bartender called the police, giving the names of the men involved. Neither Keith, Vernon, or Geoff noticed any of this. The two troublemakers left the bar. Soon after this Crane got up to go. After the double shift that day he was tired, and he had to work again the following afternoon. He intended to walk up the hill to George and Nadia's house and go to bed. He went to the bathroom first, then, waving goodbye to his friends, walked out the door.

The bar's exit brought him directly onto Solomon's Lane. He turned left and walked toward the steps that would bring him past the Ship Inn again and onto Duckworth Street. When he got to the steps he looked back and saw two police vehicles and four police officers in the lane. He paused. He thought perhaps there had been an accident. Curious, he walked back down the steps toward Water Street. He noticed that the police officers were staring at him. Crane had heard stories of harassment of homosexuals by police officers in Newfoundland and elsewhere. He was afraid. The fact that one of the officers was a woman made him feel more at ease. But still he was nervous. He started to move away.

The female officer moved towards him.

"What's the matter, faggot, got nowhere to go? We've got just the place for you, faggot," she said. She grabbed him by the lapels of his jacket. Crane was astonished, then frightened. The officer did not release him. She kicked at his shins and continued to call him "faggot" and "queer" as she dragged him toward one of the police cars.

Except for trying to avoid getting kicked, Crane did not resist. The female officer's tone of voice was, he says, "vicious." Because he was scared he said nothing. The female officer and her male partner helped to put him into the back of the police vehicle. They did not ask him his name or where he was going. They did not read him his rights. He was not asked to perform any sobriety tests.

Crane sat alone in the car for several minutes. Then the two police officers got in and drove away.

The verbal abuse continued in the police vehicle, particularly from the female officer. The two constables drove to the lockup where they turned Crane over to the penitentiary guards (not police officers) who were on duty that night.

The police officers left and the penitentiary warders took Crane's belt, shoes and personal effects and placed him in a cell called the "drunk tank." Three other men were already in the cell. He had been arrested under the Detention of Intoxicated Persons Act but no one had told him this.

1.2 The Incident in the Lockup

From the beginning of the incident Keith Crane had been concerned for his physical safety "I felt safer in the cell," he says.

The warder locked the door and walked back to the desk area, a distance of less than 25 metres. Immediately Crane thought of his friends Nadia, George and Vernon. If he did not show up they would be worried about him.

He knew that he had the right to make a phone call. For several minutes he banged on the bars of the cell and shouted out to get the attention of the guards. He could hear people talking but no one answered his calls.

He resigned himself to his fate. After a while he slept. At seven o'clock in the morning he and his cell mates were awakened and lined up at the front desk. Crane was last on the line. He waited his turn. He had a question in his mind and wondered if he dared to ask it. When his turn came the warder gave him back his belongings and asked him to sign a receipt. He hesitated. Then he took the risk.

"Before I sign I would like to know the name of the female police officer who arrested me last night," he said, politely. Hardly were the words out of his mouth when he was grabbed by a penitentiary officer who had been standing behind him. The burly man grabbed Crane's right wrist and twisted his arm painfully behind his back. He came around to Crane's left side and kned him heavily in the stomach. Then he punched him. The punch, according to Keith, "was aimed a bit lower than the spot where he had hit me with his knee."

Keith remembers seeing a woman warder in the lockup that morning. She was reading a magazine at a desk behind the reception counter. When the male warder grabbed him from behind the woman put the magazine over her face, Keith recalls.

The guard dragged Keith back to the cell from which he had just been released. "Maybe another day in here will make you think about signing, fucking faggot," he said. With his arm held painfully behind his back, Crane was pushed roughly, face first, onto a mattress on the floor.

"How do you feel about signing now, queer?" the guard said.

"I'll sign, I'll sign," the prisoner replied.

Of this moment Keith later said: "The ferocity of his attack and the lack of any interference by co-workers made me feel that my life was threatened. Thus I was willing to agree to anything they wanted. I told him as best I could through the pain that I would sign."

He signed with his left hand because his right one was being held behind his back. He asked no more questions. He did not look at the man who had assaulted him.

Out on the street he was overwhelmed by emotions: anger, fear, helplessness. In tears he walked up the hill to his friends' house. He let himself in with the key they had given him. He went upstairs and woke his partner Vernon Haynes and told him what happened.

"I was shaking, crying and in a total state of emotional collapse," says Crane. "Vern was unable to calm me down and took me downstairs where we were joined by Nadia and George. I told them what had happened." Haynes immediately drove Crane to the hospital where he was examined by an emergency ward doctor. Although had been assaulted there were no visible bruises. "Whoever did this knew how to beat you without leaving any marks," the doctor said.

1.3 Taking Legal Action

At home in Carbonear in the days that followed, Keith and Vernon discussed the matter endlessly. Why did it happen? They reviewed the facts again and again. Keith was drinking that night but he was not drunk or disorderly. A police officer had verbally abused him and roughed him up while dragging him to a police car. He was not asked his name or read his rights or told why he was being detained.

At the lockup the warders had refused to answer his request to make a phone call. In the morning they would not tell him the name of the female officer who had brought him in. When he had politely asked for that information a penitentiary guard had beaten him up in plain sight of three others, calling him "faggot" and "queer."

Keith concluded that he had been arrested because he was gay. He saw the assault in the lockup as gay-bashing.

It galled him that the other officers on the parking lot and the other warders in the lockup had observed the verbal and physical assaults and had done nothing to stop them.

He was not sure what to do. How could he go to the police when members of the force were the ones who had abused and assaulted him? If they investigated, they would be investigating themselves.

Keith knew that one of his options was to do nothing. He could let the whole thing blow over. "I seriously considered that," he says. "I talked with friends. I took a few days to think about it. But I was still angry I knew that I had to do something."

He went to the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Association for advice. He told his story to Barton Dilby, the Association's president. Dilby advised him to do two things: first, go to the Human Rights Commission and formally complain of discrimination; and second, make a statement to the police.

Section 6. (1) of the Newfoundland Human Rights Code:

A person shall not deny to or discriminate against a person or class of persons with respect to accommodation, services, facilities or goods to which members of the public customarily have access or which are customarily offered to the public because of the race, religion, religious creed, political opinion, colour or ethnic, national or social origin, sex, marital status, physical disability or mental disability of that person or class of persons.

The Human Rights Commission is a government organization that enforces the provincial Human Rights Code. Section 6 of the Code prohibits discrimination in the availability of a service. After talking with Dilby, Keith concluded that the service he was refused was the right to police protection and that the reason he was refused was that he was gay. The officers who watched the incident failed to offer him the service the protection that they provide other members of the public.

But Dilby warned Keith that discrimination based on sexual orientation was not formally written into the Human Rights Code. In other words, it was possible that the Commission would not accept the complaint.

He called John Trainor, a lawyer who had been involved in a number of cases of alleged police misconduct. They held a meeting. Trainor agreed to represent him.

Crane asked Trainor what the legal options were. He already knew he wanted to register a complaint with the Human Rights Commission, but was there any sense going to the police?

The lawyer explained that if Keith complained to the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC), the police would be obligated to do an investigation.

"But they would be investigating themselves!" said Keith. Trainor agreed that nothing might come of the investigation. But he added that even if no charges were laid, Keith could appeal the decision to the RNC Public Complaints Commission.

The Public Complaints Commission had been created the previous year 1992. If his appeal was successful, there would be a hearing. Then Keith would have a chance to confront the police officers who, he believed, had physically and verbally abused him.

But the lawyer pointed out that the Complaints Commission did not deal with cases involving penitentiary warders. If the police did not lay criminal charges against the man who beat him in the lockup, the case would never get to court.

During the next few days Keith wrote out a detailed statement to the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. With Barton Dilby's help he composed a letter to the Human Rights Commission. He submitted both documents on July 19, 1993.

1.4 The System Responds

Ten days later Keith Crane received a reply from Jane Harridon, Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission. Her letter informed him that from her point of view the situation was "not a matter for investigation under Human Rights legislation." Harridon suggested that he pursue the matter in the courts instead.

She stressed that her position was only an opinion. If Crane disagreed and made a good case for it, she would bring the matter to a full meeting of the Human Rights Commission.

He disagreed. He began to study the Human Rights Code. Then, partly out of frustration, Crane decided to go public. He called the newspapers and television stations to a press conference. Both local TV stations gave his story full coverage. There were articles on the front pages of several newspapers.

His life changed. In addition to his job as a skilled truck mechanic he found himself doing things he had never done before. He consulted with lawyers and studied the law as it applied to his case. He wrote letters seeking information under the Access to Information Act. He continued to do interviews with the media.

He suddenly realized that he had become involved in a cause he had not paid too much attention to before: gay rights. With all the publicity it was not long before most people in Newfoundland had heard about him. He had brought an important issue into the public eye.

On August 24, 1993, with help from his lawyer, Keith Crane found out the names of the police constables and penitentiary guards he had run into. The female officer and her partner were Constable Carol Ann Grimes and Constable J. E. (Jack) Skaggins. The other constables on the street that night were Dwaine Hyde and Ivan Pike.

The lockup warder that Keith believed had assaulted him was correctional officer Vincent Albert Cormier.

The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary had begun two separate investigations. The first one was an internal review, an investigation of the conduct of its own officers on the night in question. The second one was a criminal investigation into the incident at the lockup.

In August and September two investigating officers, Lieutenant L. Cuff of the Internal Review Section and Staff Sergeant B. Prichard of the Criminal Investigation Division (CID), interviewed Crane. They also questioned his partner Vernon Haynes and his friends Nadia Markham and George Grant. They found another witness who had left the bar at the same time that Keith had. They took statements from the police officers and the penitentiary warders.

The bartender at Solomon's on the night of Keith's arrest had moved to Vancouver. The RNC found him. His lawyer took a statement and sent it to the RNC.

Keith's comments as quoted in a story in *The Express* on October 6, 1993:

It takes a lot of time. There are times when I wish I had never started this. At first I recommended to everybody that if anything like this happens, report it. And I still say that. But I would have to add that when you do, be prepared to lose all your privacy. Your life becomes an open book. You are up against forces that are a lot more powerful than you are and it can be pretty discouraging.

But filing the complaint was definitely worth it, just to get the issue out in the open. People are aware of the problem, now. I want the cops to have some training in prejudice. I want them to remove the prejudice so they can deal not only with gay people but with any minority group.

I want education for the police department because of the power they hold.

On October 4 Crane replied to Jane Harridon of the Human Rights Commission. He informed her that he disagreed with her opinion and explained why. He asked that his complaint be brought to a meeting of the Human Rights Commissioners.

In an interview with *The Express* on October 6 Crane discussed his case. "There are times when I wish I had never started this," he said. "You lose all your privacy your life becomes an open book. You are up against forces that are a lot more powerful than you are. It can be pretty discouraging."

Keith told the reporter that he had little hope that the RNC would bring charges against its own officers. He predicted that the internal police investigation would come to nothing. And as it turned out, he was right.

1.5 The Appeal

On October 19, Crane received a letter from the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary telling him that their internal investigation was complete. As Keith predicted, the RNC did not find enough evidence to press charges against its own officers. But the letter also pointed out that he had a right to appeal the decision. It was signed by the Chief of Police.

An article in *The Express* the following week quotes the investigating officer, lieutenant L. Cuff of the RNC's Internal Review Section: "You weigh the evidence, and which way do you go? We had to take the evidence from the people that Keith Crane associated with that night. We had to weigh it against the statements given by the officers and the wardens at the lockup."

From the letter Keith Crane received from the Chief of Police, October, 1993:

...During the investigation, statements were obtained from the police officers, correctional officers and persons with whom you associated. The main areas of concern were: Did the police officers have sufficient grounds to detain you under the Detention of Intoxicated Persons Act, and were you physically assaulted or the subject of derogatory remarks directed by police?

On reviewing the statements, I find there is insufficient evidence to substantiate the mentioned allegations.

If you are not satisfied, you may appeal in accordance with Section 25(4) of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Act, 1992.

Lieutenant Cuff admitted that the investigation did not disprove the truth of Keith Crane's statements. But the police officers in question had denied that they had behaved in a wrongful or abusive manner. It was Crane's word against theirs. No charges would be laid.

Crane described the internal investigation as a "whitewash." He filed an appeal with the Public Complaints Commission immediately. On the form provided he wrote, "I feel very strongly that the Chief of Police is deliberately ignoring the severe problem of homophobia and prejudice within his department in an attempt to save face."

He also suggested that if the issue were not addressed, "it could escalate to the dangerous point where some gay man or woman could be seriously injured or killed." So far things had not gone well for Keith Crane. He had been verbally abused and roughed up by police officers on duty. He believed he had been falsely arrested. The next morning he had been assaulted in the lockup by a penitentiary guard.

He had made a complaint to the police but the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary's investigation into the conduct of its own officers had come to nothing. The Human Rights Commission had told him his case would not be considered as a violation of the Human Rights Code.

While he waited for replies to his letters and statements, he lived with the emotional fallout from his experience. He had nightmares. He could not go into a bar without being nervous. He could not forget the beating in the lockup.

And there was something else that worried him. If his appeal to the Complaints Commission was successful and the hearing went ahead, the police officers would give their version of events, too. If the adjudicator believed the police officers, Crane could be ordered to pay the costs of both the investigation and the hearing.

"It was a real risk," says Keith six years later. "The Public Complaints Commission had never heard a case. I would be its first. And their investigator were mostly ex-police officers. Would the process be fair? I had doubts, but I had to take the chance."

The Keith Crane Case

PART ONE: Crimes and Consequences

Questions for Discussion

1.1 The Arrest

1. Where did Keith and Vern live?
2. Estimate how much Keith drank before seeing the police.
3. Why didn't Keith resist the police officer who grabbed him?

1.2. The Incident in the Lockup

1. Why did Keith want to call his friends?
2. Do you think the warders could hear Keith when he called out?
3. What happened after Keith asked for the name of the arresting officer?
4. Why did Keith sign the form with his left hand?
5. What did Vernon Haynes do when Keith got home?

1.3 Taking Legal Action

1. What galled Keith the most about the night he was arrested?
2. Why did Keith think that making a complaint to the police might not be worth the effort?
3. How are the Human Rights Association and the Human Rights Commission different?
4. How was it possible that the Human Rights Commission might reject Keith's complaint?
5. If the RNC did not press charges against its own officers, what other option did Keith have?

1.4. The System Responds

1. Why do you think Keith went public?
2. What important issue did Keith bring into public view?
3. Why did the RNC start two separate investigations based on Keith's complaint?
4. What did Keith want the police department to have?

1.5. The Appeal

1. What reason did the RNC give for not pressing charges against its own officers?
2. What was Keith afraid might happen if the problem of police homophobia was not looked into?
3. What emotional scars did Keith have from the night he was arrested?

The Keith Crane Case

PART TWO: The Struggle in the Courts

2.1 Investigations and Hearings

The RNC Public Complaints Commission received Keith Crane's request for an appeal in late October, 1993. Commission Chairman Dr. Leonard Harvey chose an investigator to re-interview all the parties and prepare a report. The Commissioner would decide on the basis of that report whether or not to hold a hearing.

Crane knew that when the Commission had been set up in 1992 it had been criticized for failing to be independent from the police. There were at least three ex-policemen on its list of investigators, one of them a former RNC officer.

But the investigator appointed by Commissioner Dr. Leonard Harvey was Bob Godfrey, a labour dispute arbitrator, not an ex-policeman. Keith was relieved.

And there was another factor working in his favour: a Commission hearing is not a criminal trial. In a trial the accused person must be found guilty *beyond a reasonable doubt*. There must be moral certainty on the part of judges or juries that the person had committed the crime. If there is a reasonable doubt the accused person is found not guilty.

In a Public Complaints Commission hearing, however, *balance of probabilities* is enough to make a decision. Adjudicators have to be reasonably sure which side is telling the truth, but they can base their judgment on the *probability* that one of the stories is true and the other false. The more serious the complaint, though, the more certain the adjudicator must be before making a decision.

In other ways a Commission hearing looks very much like a court trial. In both, lawyers represent each side of the dispute. The lawyer for the Commission plays the role of prosecutor. The lawyer representing the police officers acts as the defence lawyer. The adjudicator serves as "judge," deciding which side of the story to believe. If police officers are found to be at fault, the adjudicator can discipline them in the same way as a judge hands down a sentence.

In December Crane received his first piece of good news. The Human Rights Commissioners had met and discussed his case. They now agreed that the incidents described in his July complaint were a possible violation of the Human Rights Code. They would bring the matter before the Newfoundland Supreme Court for a decision.

Then there was more news. The CID had completed their investigation into the incident at the lockup. Department of Justice officials announced that a penitentiary officer, Vincent Albert Cormier, had been charged with common assault.

In their announcement the officials called Crane's complaint "relatively isolated." But records showed that there had already been 29 investigations into possible misconduct by staff at the Adult Corrections Division of the Department of Justice. Staff members had been disciplined more than 15 times as a result of these investigations, and three criminal charges had been laid.

By January Bob Godfrey had completed his independent investigation into the actions of the police officers on the night Crane was arrested. Within weeks the Public Complaints Commission announced that a hearing would be held into the allegations Keith Crane had made against the police officers who arrested him.

The hearing would ask:

- Had Keith been falsely arrested?
- Was unnecessary force used during the arrest?
- Were the police officers discourteous to a member of the public through the use of the derogatory terms "faggot" and "queer"?

The hearing was scheduled for July, six months away.

After months of frustration Keith Crane was suddenly part of three judicial procedures: the trial of the penitentiary guard, the RNC Public Complaints Commission hearing, and the Supreme Court review of his complaint to the Human Rights Commission.

2.2 A Criminal Trial

In May the trial of the lockup warder Vincent Cormier began in provincial court. The judge was James T. Bradley, the Crown Prosecutor was George Harris. Cormier's lawyer was Len Michaels.

Cormier's supervisor at the penitentiary testified that Cormier was a model warder with an excellent record and above-average scores on his annual evaluations.

On the stand the complainant Keith Crane repeated the testimony he gave in his statement to police: when he had politely asked for the name of the female police officer who had arrested him, he had been beaten by a penitentiary guard at the lockup.

Crane also recalled that there was a female warder in the lockup the morning he was assaulted.

"There were several people in back but the woman I noticed specifically. I saw her take a newspaper or a magazine off the table where she was sitting and put it over her face. I remember thinking, 'Oh my God, I'm really going to get it. Whatever is happening, she doesn't want to see.'"

A female warder, or "matron," was there because there was a woman prisoner in the lockup. The matron, Phyllis Overton, took the stand. She testified that she had been "seven or eight feet" from Crane when he asked for the name of the officer who had arrested him. Crane, she said, had a normal tone of voice. She was sure that he did not shout or scream or pound his fists on the counter.

If there had been loud noises she would have heard them anywhere in the lockup, she said.

She seemed to be saying that Keith had made no fuss at all that morning. Then she backed off. She said she might have been out of the room when the shouting and fist-banging occurred. It was a key moment in the trial.

Keith remembered being kicked and punched by the male warder immediately after he had asked for the name of the arresting officer. Keith remembered being kicked and punched by the male warder immediately after he had asked for the name of the arresting officer.

Even the other warders' testimony supported this. Keith wondered how the matron could hear him ask for information in a civil manner and then know nothing of what happened immediately afterwards.

Crown Prosecutor George Hanis questions Phyllis Overton:

Q. Was there any noise in the lockup at that particular time?

A. No, Your Honour not that I know of There was not.

Q. Could you describe for the Court what sort of tone of voice he [Keith Crane] used?

A. Well I never noticed anything different in his tone of voice when he asked.

Q. ...OK Did this person at any time shout or scream?

A. Not while I was there, Your Honour

Q. OK, while you were there did this person at any time pound his fist or hands on the counter area?

A. Again, I didn't hear him or see him.

Q. Okay, well did you see anybody do that?

A. No, because I don't know. You know, like, I'm saying I don't know. If he did it, I could have been left the office. I don't know. I didn't hear him or see him or anything.

Q. Did you get up and leave the office?

A. I could have.

Q. Did you?

A. I'm not really sure.

Q. You don't know, is that what you're saying?

A. You know, I could have went inside. I could have went in - I don't know. I really don't recall.

Q. ... Wherever you were in the lockup, would you have heard such noise if it occurred?

A. If the noise was loud, I would have to hear it.

Q. ... All right. And on that particular morning, ma'am, did you hear any such noise?

A. No, Your Honour

The defendant Vincent Cormier took the stand and presented a version of events different from both Crane's and Overton's. Cormier said that Crane had complained loudly about everything from the moment he was brought in by police. After Keith had been put in the cell, Cormier said, he shook the bars and annoyed the other inmates for almost an hour.

In the morning the four inmates were brought from their cells and asked to sign out to get their personal effects back. There seemed to be no problem with the first three people, Cormier testified. But when Crane came out he was still "going on about.. .being arrested because he was gay and people calling him queer, faggot, and so forth." Cormier told the Court that Crane swore and banged his fists on the counter. When Cormier laid his hand on Crane's shoulder Keith had "violently" pushed him away. The prisoner, in other words, was out of control and had to be subdued. "I got him in an arm-hold and placed him back in the cell until he calmed down and was willing to sign the form," said Cormier.

From the transcript of Vincent Cormier's testimony at his trial:

Mr. Janes [another warder on duty] just told him, you know, to sign for his property. He asked for the arresting officer I heard Mr. Janes give him Constable Skaggins's name. He started going on banging his fist. "But I want the name of the officer who called me a queer and a faggot." And he said, "I want the female officer's name." Mr. Janes at the time told him that, you know, "I've given you Constable Skaggins's name. I don't have the female officer's name..." Mr. Crane was not satisfied with this. He banged on the counter again. He said, "I'm not signing nothing." He swore at Mr. Janes. Mr. Janes told him he'd have to go back in. He said, "I don't give a fuck." At that time I came out from behind the counter I laid my hand on Mr. Crane's shoulder I said, "Now, Mr. Crane, you're going to have to sign for your property or you'll have to go back in the cell." He violently pushed me away....

The two other male warders supported Cormier's testimony. It seemed an open-and-shut case. The matron's admission that Crane had been polite and civil had been the only glitch. Keith says: "If she had not backed off, not claimed she couldn't remember where she was at the time, things could have turned out quite differently."

On May 13, 1994, Judge Bradley gave his decision. He told the court that he did not find clear evidence that more force than required was used by the penitentiary officer.

He also noted that Crane had been examined by a doctor shortly after the lockup incident. There was no medical evidence of the injuries that one would expect from such an assault.

"I cannot find any intent on the part of the accused to act illegally. He was following directives given him to follow," Judge Bradley said. He added: "I cannot say Mr. Crane has been untruthful. I believe he believes that what he says did happen. Some events he described are just not substantiated. The accused's evidence is also to be equally believed and the benefit of the doubt must go to the accused."

It had been Crane's word against Cormier's. Since the other warders had supported Cormier's story the court could not find the accused guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Although the result of the trial was what Keith expected, he was disappointed. He prepared himself for the next step: the RNC Public Complaints Commission hearing.

2.3 The Public Complaints Hearing

The hearing officially began on July 5, 1994, but witnesses were not called until July 12. Lawyer Norman O'Brien represented the Commission. He played the role that the prosecutor would in a criminal trial. That is, his job was to question the witnesses on behalf of the complainant, Keith Crane.

Bill Warshaw was the lawyer for the police, playing the part of defence lawyer. St. John's lawyer Don Ebsary had been appointed adjudicator. He would judge the case and present his findings in the form of a "verdict."

In a newspaper interview Keith announced, "I want to address a great injustice. I am not seeking vengeance." He said he hoped his appeal would result in human rights training for members of the police force as well as warders at Her Majesty's Penitentiary. In an opening statement the lawyer for the Commission, Norm O'Brien, seemed to agree. He suggested that Keith Crane's case was about "setting a standard of conduct and behaviour for police officers."

Commission lawyer Norm O'Brien in his opening remarks to the Complaints Commission hearing:

It is a serious matter, but more than anything else it is a matter of consciousness-raising and education and tolerance and setting a standard of conduct and behaviour for police officers. In the conduct of their duties police officers should use sound judgment and exercise a high degree of care toward the public. In Keith Crane's case, these officers fell far short of that goal.

The first witnesses, one of them Geoff McAllister, testified that Crane did not seem intoxicated on the night in question. Then an expert witness, a neuroscientist, said that Crane might have been tipsy but was probably not drunk. He had six to eight beers and two drinks over a nine- or ten-hour period, and he had eaten a full meal.

Keith took the stand, saying again that he did not think he was drunk that night. He believed he was arrested because he was gay. He reminded the court that he was not asked his name, address, or where he was going. He was not asked to perform any tests to determine if he was drunk. He was not advised of the reason for his arrest.

Again he said that he was afraid to resist or protest because he feared he might be physically injured by the officers.

Although the behaviour of the lockup warders was not an issue in the hearing, they were called as witnesses. Correctional Officer Harold Dingwaf, who was on duty the night Keith was brought in, testified that Crane was too drunk to make a phone call. Commission lawyer Norm O'Brien found it odd that Crane, supposedly that drunk, was able to stand in the cell, rattle the bars, and call out in an attempt to get attention.

Vincent Cormier testified, as he did at his trial, that Keith was loud and belligerent when brought in by Constables Jack Skaggins and Carol Grimes that night. "He was very agitated. He demanded the name of the female officer who had called him a faggot and a queer."

O'Brien asked, "Why didn't you simply tell him it was Carol Grimes?"

"If I had given him her name it would have been like I was agreeing that she said those things," Cormier answered.

Constable Carol Ann Grimes was called to the stand. She gave her version of what happened. She and her fellow officers were outside Solomon's Lounge that night because the bartender had called the police. There had been a disturbance caused by two men.

Before going into the bar, Grimes testified, she noticed a man on the steps in the alleyway. He appeared to be very drunk. She pointed him out to her partner Constable Skaggins and told him she was concerned for the man's safety. The officers did not approach the man, however. Instead they entered Solomon's where the bartender told them the men who caused the disturbance were gone. The officers told the bartender to call them again if the men returned.

The officers left the bar. According to Constable Grimes they saw a man in the alleyway. Constable Grimes pointed him out to Constable Skaggins. It was, Grimes believed, the same drunk man they saw before on the steps.

Excerpt from Constable Carol Ann Grimes's testimony at the RNC Public Complaints Commission hearing:

We started walking up to him. He got closer to the bar door and I believe he even opened it just a little bit, or had a hold of the door handle. When I was just about up to him, he yelled out, "What's this, police harassment?" I said, "Sir.." and I started to say that he was drunk in public.

He never let me get it all the way out and he started calling out, "This is fucking police harassment" and he continually yelled it in a very, very loud voice in the alleyway I put my hand on his shoulder and said, "Sir you are being arrested or detained for being drunk in public. It is an offence. We are going to give you a place to stay for a couple of hours and when you are sobered up you will be released." At this point in time he was still yelling and swearing....

She yelled out to the gentleman, "Hold on a second!" The man looked her way but continued to walk toward the entrance to Solomon's. She and Constable Skaggins approached the man, who yelled, "What's this, police harassment?"

The man began to swear. She put her hand on his shoulder and told him he was being arrested for being drunk in public.

Constables Skaggins and Pike took him to the patrol vehicle, Grimes said. The man they arrested was Keith Crane.

Commission lawyer O'Brien asked Constable Grimes why she did not read Crane his rights. Grimes replied, "He was too busy making a disturbance." Then Grimes denied that she called Keith Crane a faggot and a queer when she and Constable Skaggins arrested him.

O'Brien asked Grimes: "Can you distinguish between the following terms: queer, faggot, gay, homosexual." Grimes replied that the terms were much the same to her. The other constables' testimony supported Grimes's version of the incident. The hearing adjourned.

There were serious discrepancies between Keith Crane's testimony and that of the police officers. Who would the adjudicator believe?

2.4 Results and Outcomes

Keith waited anxiously for six weeks. The decision came on August 30.

Adjudicator Don Ebsary read his decision. He did not believe that unnecessary force was used by Constables Grimes and Skaggins when they arrested Crane.

However, he found that the arrest itself had been made without sufficient cause. He took the officers to task for their interpretation of the Detention of Intoxicated Persons Act.

To make an arrest under the Act it must be seen by police that a person had drunk enough alcohol to harm themselves or someone else, or that they were a common nuisance. Don Ebsary did not believe Keith Crane was drunk enough to do any of these things.

The officers, he found, had not applied the Act correctly. He recommended further training in the interpretation of the Act for all members of the RNC.

Perhaps more importantly, Ebsary also found that, on the balance of probabilities, Constable Grimes *had* made derogatory and homophobic remarks to Keith Crane.

From Constable Carol Ann Grimes's Letter to the Editor:

Out of all the allegations [Keith Crane] made, only two were substantiated on a balance of probabilities, instead of beyond a reasonable doubt. The testimony of one intoxicated individual was accepted over several sober professionals (police officers and correctional officers).

The charges against the correctional officers were found to be unsubstantiated, and thus they were acquitted through a provincial court trial. Under the Public Complaints Commission Act, a police officer can be found guilty on probabilities instead of solid evidence.

I am not homophobic, nor would I allow my personal biases to affect my professional manner. I pride myself in being a good police officer and all my evaluations exemplify this. I have friends and family who are gay and are in disbelief that these allegations were made against me. I have no alternative but to accept the sentence and penalty. However I will always declare my innocence and avow that the decision reached in this matter was an error.

Keith saw the decision as a triumph. "I didn't expect to win anything. I went into it thinking it would be a victory just to bring it to public attention and make the police think twice about doing it again. It is a victory for the entire gay community and for any minority community," he said.

Constables Grimes and Skaggins were unhappy with the results of the hearing. In the middle of September they appealed the decision to the Newfoundland Supreme Court.

The *Telegram* printed a letter to the editor from Constable Carol Ann Grimes. It was written, she said, "against the advice of my lawyer."

In the letter she denied having referred to Keith Crane in any derogatory manner during his arrest and detention. She was not homophobic, she said. "The testimony of one intoxicated individual was accepted over [that of] several sober professionals."

Grimes was disciplined by the RNC for writing the letter.

A year later Justice Richard Haynes of the Supreme Court upheld the decision of the Complaints Commission adjudicator Don Ebsary. Jack Skaggins and Carol Grimes were given short suspensions without pay. The case was closed.

There was one final development for Keith. It was perhaps the most important result of his efforts. The Human Rights Commission had brought his case before the Supreme Court of Newfoundland in 1994. On August 23, 1995, two years after Crane's night of terror, Justice Lester Baird announced the Court's decision. He ruled that from that moment on, discrimination based on sexual orientation must be included in the province's Human Rights Code.

Before this decision the Code did not offer specific protection to gays and lesbians who were discriminated against because of their sexual preferences. In his ruling Justice Baird called this "a glaring omission" in the Human Rights Code.

The executive director of the Human Rights Commission, Jane Harridon, said that the ruling now gave full protection under the Human Rights Code for people who are gay.

Keith Crane said, "We are now protected under the Code, which the original legislation didn't have the nerve to do."

Keith, Vern and their friends celebrated the victory. After a while life returned to something like normal. At the start of the new millennium Keith Crane and Vernon Haynes were still living in Carbonear.

They are living happily ever after, we hope.

2.5 Epilogue

There is one more piece to this story.

Several years after the events described here Keith had visitors from the mainland. He and Vernon showed them around, like you would. They drove along Marine Drive near St. John's and stopped at the famous beach in Middle Cove. They drove into town and visited a museum on Duckworth Street.

A female security guard stood near one of the exhibits. Keith thought he recognized her. "Do I know you?" he asked.

She gave her name, Phyllis Overton. She was the female warder who had testified in the Cormier trial. Keith felt himself get weak. His knees began to shake. A wave of nausea came over him. He went outside and threw up on the sidewalk. His friends took him back to the car where he sat trembling and unable to speak for some time.

Phyllis Overton had watched all this. She followed Keith and his friends outside. She was puzzled. She approached the car and asked him what had happened. Why was he ill?

"I got sick when I remembered what you did to me during the trial," Keith told her. The former warder suddenly recognized him. She became quite upset, says Keith, and protested that she had done nothing wrong.

But Keith could still picture her eight feet from him in the lockup seconds before he was punched and kicked by a corrections officer. He could still picture her burying her face in a magazine at the crucial moment.

As he and his friends drove away Keith had a flood of painful memories: the penitentiary guard Vincent Cormier denying under oath that he had assaulted him, the other corrections officers supporting Cormier's story and the moment the judge had given his decision, acquitting Cormier.

And he remembered Constable Carol Grimes insisting she had never used the terms faggot and queer while arresting him. He recalled her letter to the paper saying so.

Phyllis Overton had at least admitted that Keith had asked in a civil manner for the name of the constable who had arrested him. But then she had denied that she saw or heard anything more in the lockup that morning.

Overton's denial seemed to him the unkindest cut of all.

Nadia Markham, friend of Crane's for 14 years, describes Keith the morning after his stay in jail. "He was distressed, crying and traumatized. I had never seen him like that before."

Now, at the end of this story, some questions must be asked. The main question is obvious. Did Keith Crane dream all these things up? Did Keith lie to his friends when he got home from the lockup that morning? Did he lie to the doctor in the emergency ward? Did he invent his statement to the Constabulary? Did he lie to the reporters who interviewed him? Did he go on radio and TV and lie to the public? Did he lie to Barton Dilby at the Human Rights Association and later to the Human Rights Commissioners?

Did he then lie under oath to the Judge in a criminal trial and again to the Commissioner of the Public Complaints hearing?

We have to ask: did Keith Crane make it all up?

We must, to be fair, ask similar questions about the police officers and lockup warders Keith Crane encountered.

Sources

The writer conducted interviews with Keith Crane and his friends. He also consulted Court documents, as well as newspapers and other media reports relating to the case.

The Keith Crane Case

PART TWO: The Struggle in the Courts

Questions for Discussion

2.1. Investigations and Hearings

1. What would Leonard Harvey use in deciding whether or not to hold a hearing?
2. Why did Keith Crane feel good that Bob Godfrey was on the case?
3. In what important way is a hearing different from a trial?
4. Who is the "judge" in a Public Complaints Commission hearing?
5. What three Department of Justice matters was Keith no part of?

2.2 A Criminal Trial

1. How highly was Vincent Cormier rated by his boss?
2. Why was there a female warder on duty that night?
3. Why was the matron's testimony so important to Keith?
4. What reason did the judge give for acquitting Cormier?

2.3. The Public Complaints Hearing

1. How did lawyer Norm O'Brien seem to agree with Keith Crane?
2. Why did penitentiary warders appear at a hearing into the behaviour of police officers?
3. How did Constable Grimes portray Keith on the night he was arrested?
4. What do we learn about Carol Ann Grimes from the way she answered Norm O'Brien's question?

2.4. Results and Outcomes

1. How many issues were considered by the Complaints Commission hearing? Which ones were decided in Keith's favour?
2. Did Constables Grimes and Skaggins accept the adjudicator's decision? What did they do?
3. What major difference between a trial and a hearing did Carol Ann Grimes mention in her letter to the editor?
4. How did Keith's case change the Newfoundland Human Rights Code?

2.5. Epilogue

1. What was Keith's reaction to seeing Phyllis Overton?
2. What was Keith's most painful memory of Cormier's trial.
3. What do you believe actually happened to Keith on the night of his arrest and in the lockup the morning after?

My Life in the Fishery: Carol-Ann Mulrooney Agnes Walsh

Carol-Ann Mulrooney was born in Placentia and grew up there. Her husband, Austin, is from St. Joseph's in Placentia Bay. He moved into Placentia as part of the resettlement program in the 1960s. Carol-Ann and her husband have three children and one grandchild. They live in Jerseyside close to an arm of water that runs out into Placentia Bay. Carol-Ann is a soft-spoken woman with the calm of a Buddhist nun. One would never say that beneath all that calmness runs a fiery conviction of how people, and especially people in the fishery, should be treated. In the following pages, Carol-Ann tells her own story, in her own words.

When the Fishery was Good

I left school in grade nine to go to work. A lot of us from my generation left school early because there was a lot of work in the fishery then. I went to work in the fish plant in Jerseyside in 1978. My first child, Janice, was six weeks old at the time. There was lots of fish and lots of work. There were as many as 350 people working at the plant the first years I was there. Boats came in from all over the bay and we did all species of fish in the plant. We did herring, mackerel, lump roe, and salt fish. One year we did all salt in the plant. Another year we did squid. We dried the squid there, too, in ovens we had upstairs. We dried them and packaged them and sent them off to Japan. Then we did capelin, catfish, and we spent a whole summer on nights doing dogfish.

The plant had a lot of different operators. When I started there in 1978 it was run by Newfoundland Quick-Freeze. That's when we had the biggest crowd of people working there. I worked there for 15 years but over the last ten of those I saw it come down from that peak of 350 people to when there were 40 to 50 people left. That was when the moratorium came in.

We could see the fish dwindling over the years. I was shop steward for the union at our plant so I spoke about it on a number of occasions. A major problem at the plant was that we had so many different operators we couldn't get a good contract. I remember one old lady who worked there for years, right from the time the doors opened, and when she walked out of there she walked out with nothing. She wasn't eligible for a pension after spending her whole life down there in the freezing cold. We got her a watch just to show our appreciation.

It was always such a fight with the operators. I remember one incident where the operator told us that he couldn't get any fish. He said there was no fish to be had. So myself and another woman got aboard the car and we went out to the Cape Shore. There were fishermen coming into the wharf and we asked them about the fish. They told us that they were never approached by this operator to buy their fish. So we went back to him and I flew into him. He said he was going to fire me and I had to get the union out from town to back me.

The operators were always putting the fear into the workers, telling them they couldn't afford to run the plant and that the workers would have to take a cut in pay. Even though I was with the union some of the plant operators would try to get me to convince the people to see it their way. But you know what killed me was some of the backbiting that went on among the people I was trying to help. I'd be negotiating for a month to try and get a good wage for the worker, and then I'd turn around and find that they were after going and telling the operator that they'd work for \$5 an hour after I was trying to get them \$8 or \$8.50.

The Inside Struggle

There was so much backbiting that by and by I couldn't take it anymore. I couldn't represent people who were telling me one thing and then going behind my back and saying something else. When it came to the point where I was going to be fired and nobody stood up for me, I said enough is enough.

When I had to go to meetings and seminars with the union it seemed some got jealous. They used to say that the union people didn't have to work then and that the plant couldn't penalize us. It was union business we were on. We were representing them and fighting for their rights.

I remember one time we spent three weeks in with an arbitrator fighting for a man who was fired and we managed to get his job back and his back pay. Another time I remember the plant workers were complaining about one of the operators. We wanted him out of there because he was giving us such a hard time. So everyone signed a petition saying that they wanted him gone. Well, when I brought the matter up to the operator he said that the workers told him they didn't sign any petition. He told me I wasn't representing the people. So I went and got the petition and individual papers and showed him. He was ready to fire me. The people turned on me then saying I shouldn't have shown him the papers. But I said if you're going to sign something, back it. I told them that he can't fire us all.

Right after that I was out to a union meeting in Clarendville and a call came telling us that the operator had closed down the plant because he didn't want to pay double time on Sunday.

Everyone was in a panic. He told the workers that he was going to truck the fish somewhere else because he couldn't afford to pay them the double time. So everyone was waiting for the union to get back and then they flew aboard of us. They said that they were going to work for whatever he wanted, because if they didn't he'd shut down the plant.

Well, I had seen the trucks up on the hill when we were rushing back from Clarendville. Those trucks were sitting there waiting, just waiting for the workers to go back in and work for whatever he wanted them to work for. I told them about the trucks up on Jersey side hill but the workers got scared he'd close the plant. We had to go along with them. They said they'd go back and work for \$6 an hour - they didn't care. I told them it was only a ploy and that the trucks were there waiting for the union to give in. What could I do beyond tell them what I saw?

Life During the Moratorium

The fishermen told the government what was happening with the fish in the 1970s. They were there on the water every day so they knew what was happening to the fish. We were in the plant so we knew. We could see the different sizes of the fish. When I first went to work at the plant they were huge. Then all we started seeing were small fish so we knew it was dying. We tried to get the government to listen and do something but nothing was done.

I worked at the plant right up until the end in 1992. Six months before it closed I knew the fishery was gone so I decided to go back to school. Some of the other ladies in the plant went on the make-work projects. I knew the fishery was finished so I tried to start another career for myself. I went to trade school for upgrading and while I was in school the first of the programs for the fishery came out. It was called NCARP, Northern Cod Adjustment Recovery Program.

I stayed in school instead of going for the program. I wanted a career. NCARP was a compensation package for the fishery workers and when I found out that my name wasn't on the list for compensation I got on the phone about it. After all, I spent 15 years at the plant.

I called Ottawa directly. I called the Department of Human Resources. I called the Department of Fisheries. I needed an income just the same as anyone else who worked in the fishery. Why was I left out? I poured my heart out to Ottawa on the phone. I wanted to know why my name was taken off

the seniority list when they sent in the number of workers from the plant. I told Ottawa I was only going to school to better myself and that I didn't want a make-work project. I didn't think they should take me off the compensation list for that.

Well, they listened to me because I got all my back time of compensation that I had missed. There were about seven or eight cheques coming to me. I didn't know who took my name off that list. I was upset because here I had represented the workers at the plant with the union for 15 years. It just so happened that one of the workers from the plant called me and told me that my name wasn't on the list. I stood up for myself and won what was mine.

There was so much government money pumped into those plants, and then when the government money ran out the operators left and they didn't care about the community or the people. Another operator would come in the next year, and he'd get a grant for a year and so the same thing would happen again over and over. And that's the way it went towards the end of it.

The men fared a bit better when the moratorium came in because you'd get good money if you made good money, so the fishermen and skippers were making top money. It was hardest on the plant workers. The hard part was that when the moratorium came in the money you made was based on the last three years working, and the last three years at the plant were the worst years we ever had! The government knew that and didn't do anything. It meant less money they had to pay out.

For us here in Newfoundland the big losers are the inshore fishermen, but if you want to come right down to it, it's the plant workers that lost everything. The fishermen still have some kind of livelihood to go back to, but we don't. The majority of plant workers were women. I'd say 80% were women and maybe more.

School is Not for Everyone

NCARP went on for two years until 1994 and then they announced TAGS, The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy program. The government tried to convince people to go back to school and I really felt sorry for the older people in the fishery. A lot of them didn't get any education. They came out of school in grade two or three and went fishing with their fathers. I don't think they should have been forced to go back to school.

I heard of people who were told that if they didn't go to school they'd lose their compensation. It put a lot of fear in the older people. I don't think that was right. It's fine if someone wants to go to school, like I wanted to go, but I wouldn't want somebody to force me to go if I didn't want to go. I was out of school then 20 years but some of the people were out for 40 and 50 years. It made people feel like they were stupid. By the time people were retrained they were of the age to retire!

We complained about it, we wrote letters and informed the government that they were just wasting money to put the people in the schools when it was of no benefit to them. These people were up in years and our young people were being left out. So then we started having the backlash from our younger people who couldn't get into school. They were saying that the fishery crowd were in taking over the schools.

The schools jumped on it because there was money there and large numbers of fishing people that they could stack in those classrooms. I saw it happen. People told me about all the computers that were in the trade schools but they weren't allowed to touch them. Those machines were bought with TAGS money so what was the purpose of it? The equipment was left in the schools.

I knew of one school that was started up because of the moratorium. That school was given a lot of money and when the fishery people weren't going any more the schools kept everything. It did take some fishery people at the beginning, but they've gone on to non-fishery people and they have a

whole school fully equipped. That went on in a lot of communities because I talked to people in other places and they told me the same thing.

It was sad the way the fishing people were played with. A lot of schools just took the money and used people to their advantage. That's when we saw the general public start to turn against us. They were saying we were getting it all. That we were getting compensation and getting in the schools and forcing the younger people out. You could hear the comments in the small communities.

I was in the drugstore one day and I heard two people talking about the compensation package saying, "Oh, God, they got it made, making 600 and some odd dollars a week." I had to go up to them and let them know that we weren't getting \$600 a week. That was for 4% of the TAGS people who were fishermen with big vessels. They were getting the top money. We were getting \$200 a week. I had to go up and tell them because this is the way things spread around.

We were going through a lot of rough times in those years. One particular year it was the first time in 30 years that my husband couldn't find work and his unemployment insurance ran out. So a family of five was left to live on \$200 a week, my income. We were just getting enough so that we couldn't get any social assistance. Now you try and pay your mortgage and all of your bills out of that.

I thought a lot of us would crack but it just goes to show that we must be strong. We didn't know what was going to happen in those years following the moratorium. My husband and I wondered if we should leave. But where were we going to go? When it all happened it came to me so often about how the older people must have felt when they had to resettle out of the islands in the Bay. I swore then that it wouldn't happen to us. I wanted to stand up for myself and stay.

Improving Our Odds

John Crosbie said that NCARP was put in place as a desperate measure to try and help people with some kind of income until they could figure out how bad the fishery was. They were hopeful that in two years time they'd know how bad it was. In 1994 they found out that it was in desperate shape. So they announced the TAGS program which was to last five years. They brought in a program they called *Improving Our Odds*. This was under the fishery. It was meant to help us talk out where we were going from there. It didn't look like the fishery was going to come back for a long while and we were encouraged to talk about what we wanted to do with our lives career-wise.

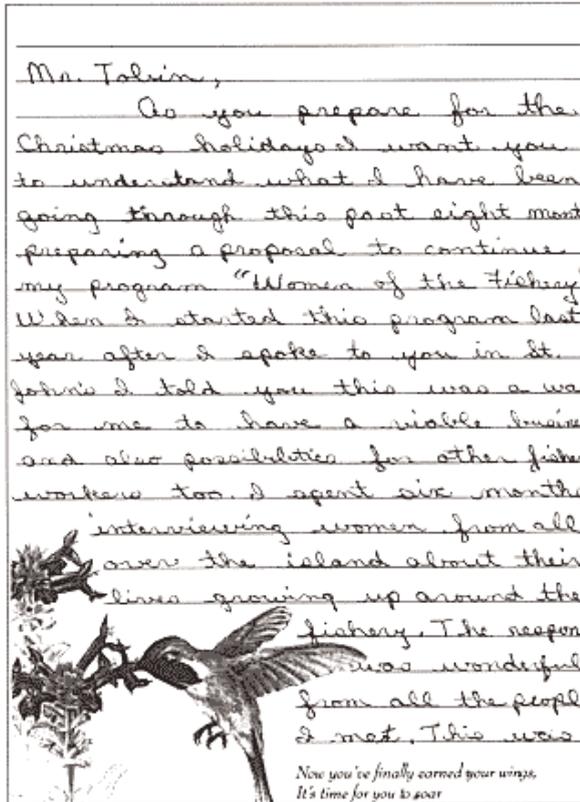
We were all a bit skeptical about it because here was yet another costly program that was using fisheries money. It was around \$4 million that was supposed to cover the programs. I questioned it and then went to see what it was about. I came to realize that it was a good program when I got into it. Now some of the ladies in the fishery didn't. It didn't work for everybody.

What we did was we'd go up to the old school here in Jersey side in the daytime and we had two instructors and 20 people in the class. We'd talk about the crisis in the fishery and about where we would go from there. I thought it was good because we talked through a lot of frustration. When we worked in the plant we had each other to talk to every day about the work and what was going on. We felt so isolated afterwards, so this helped a lot. It was a six-week program and, as I said, I was skeptical at first. I wanted to work and I wondered why they weren't using this money to create jobs for us, or training that would lead to jobs. But I came to see that there were good aspects to it

Taking Action

The last week of the course the government announced the TAGS program was coming to an end. We saw this as an opportunity to go into St. John's and voice what we were going through.

We talked about it in class and some said we wouldn't get past the door. They said look what



happened when John Crosbie announced the moratorium. They barred everybody out of the room.

I said I didn't think they would do that this time. The name we had on our group was *Controlling Our Destiny - C.O.D.* We did up a few placards and posters and planned what we'd say. We wanted the government to know what we were going through. When we got into St. John's there were over 500 fishermen and fish-plant workers there.

So, the press conference was open to us and I was delighted about that because I had prepared what I wanted to say the night before. I was nervous and I hoped somebody would stand up with me but no one did.

When they finished the announcement about the TAGS program I said to myself, here's my opportunity to let them know what I've been going through for the past two years under the NCARP program. I wanted to tell them so the same mistakes wouldn't be made with the new program. These people were making all the decisions about us, who we were, and what we were going to do.

Brian Tobin was Minister of Fisheries then and he said that 25,000 fisheries people were laid off. That was the biggest lay-off in Canadian history That's when I knew I had to say something. The group had made some recommendations and one of them was not to force people into school if they didn't want to go. I didn't like the part in TAGS about the money for relocation. To me that was telling us to go where the jobs are. Some people took it. Some went away and had to come back.

So anyway I stood up and said what I had to say and it was mostly about what we had gone through. It was the first time I had ever stood up in public like that but I was so fed up I had to. There were a lot of reporters asking questions but the reporters didn't know what we had gone through. They couldn't speak for us. Afterwards a man from Petty Harbour came over and hugged me and told me that I said everything that had been on his mind since the moratorium.

A lot of reporters came around to talk with me and there was one fellow there from *The Globe and Mail*, Canada's national newspaper. I had read some of the stuff that the *Globe* was saying about the fishery and the plant workers, how we didn't deserve any of this compensation. So when he asked to interview me I asked him if he really expected me to let him. I told him he wouldn't write what I would tell him, only what he wanted to write. I told him how I had read all the articles the *Globe* printed on our fishery and that I didn't think much of it. He promised me that he would write what I said and only that so I let him interview me. I told him that I'd come after him if he didn't do what he said he would.

So when we came back from St. John's the next day we had only a week left in the *Improving Our Odds* program. I wanted to go further with it. I thought: here we have 25,000 in the fishery and if there was some way we could connect we could do a lot. We could let the government know just what was happening with us. So we wrote some letters to Ottawa seeing if we could extend the program. After all, we had the fax machines and the phone lines set up, and if we could keep things running maybe we could get a network going or a platform for our ideas.

Some other fishery people called us. They came out in two busloads to meet with our group and see where we could all go from there. The interest was there. However, the government wouldn't extend it.

Oh, I was so disappointed. I think that the government knew about us banding together and it made them nervous. They were afraid that it was going to be too radical. Perhaps they saw it as a threat, because if all the fishery workers had to unite we would have told them the way that we wanted the money spent. Maybe that wouldn't have been the way the government wanted to spend it.

Trying to Keep Working

It wasn't long after we lost that program that I did up another proposal. I wanted to do research into women in the fishery So I gave the proposal directly to the Minister of Human Resources himself, Mr. Lloyd Axworthy. I felt it was no use applying locally. I told Axworthy that I wanted to work on a long-term basis but was told that projects were only funded on a six month basis. So I said O.K., I'll start with that if it looked like I could continue. I was assured that if it went through, then it would continue.

So the Minister's office called the local office and it went through. Fisheries Minister Brian Tobin called me into his office and said he wanted to know the issues concerning the fisheries workers as I saw them. He asked me what I wanted to do. So I had a copy of my proposal for the research into women in the fisheries that I handed over to him. I told him right there and then that my goal was long-term.

Well, we got our proposal accepted for a six-month stretch. The idea came from three of us, myself and two other plant workers. We hired on a co-ordinator to videotape our interviews. Our idea was to go out and interview the older people, the women, and get them to tell us about their life in the fishery. So anyway when we did the program we set it up as a business because we wanted to learn the ropes.

We called the project *Baymen*. We were thinking about rural communities and bay people so that's what we named it. You never hear of baywomen, do you? So our budget for the project was \$25,000. We didn't actually have it in hand, of course — it was in the bank. We went out and bought two desks and chairs. We got a computer and a fax machine and we had a budget for phone calls. So we worked from our office and started going around to different areas to interview the people. We started at the seniors' home in Placentia and then we went out to Branch and all around the Cape Shore. After that we went to Marystown and St. Lawrence.

When the six months were up we stopped the interviews. Then we started to plan our second phase. There was money allotted to hire a consultant to do up the second phase. We saw our project in three phases: the first was the interviews, the second was to do up a book of the interviews, and the third was to start up a theatre around the fishery. Sadly, the last two phases didn't work out.

They told me to do up another proposal after the interview part was up, but then they told me the money had run out. Here was the government pushing for long-term employment ideas, and here we were gearing this project towards just that. As far as I'm concerned it was another make-work project. That's what it ended up to be. They came and took all our equipment — the chairs, the desk, the fax machine, the computer, everything was brought back to the Human Resources office. I wasn't finished what I wanted to finish on the project and I got so upset because they never even called to ask if we were finished.

So I called Mr. Axworthy's office and he phoned and told them to release the equipment. So they had to release it. I had to sign a piece of paper saying that I would have it back exactly one week from the day. They had even taken the videotapes so I had to go over and ask for them back. It was my project and I wanted them back. So they didn't refuse. I got the tapes back.

What did they want with them? I called them up and told them that I wanted to continue with this project. They told me that I had to take the unemployment insurance because it would take me off TAGS for a year. So it makes you wonder what that \$25,000 project was all about. Was it to give us stamps so they could take us off this program and put us on another one? I don't know, it just makes you wonder.

I called them and told them that I didn't want U.I. But they told me I had to go on the U.I. So I drew out the U.I. and then I went back on TAGS, so what was the purpose? I kept trying to continue on with the *Women in the Fisheries* project. I'd do up a proposal and Human Resources and Development would give it back to me telling me to revise it. I revised it five times. I think the local office didn't like that I went over their heads, that's what I think.

From Jersey to Beijing

It wasn't long after that I got a call from Memorial University. There was a group of women going over to Beijing, China, for the Fourth World Conference. This was a conference of 30,000 women from all over the world meeting and talking about the lives of women from every country in the world. A woman from Memorial asked me if I would go to the local trade school and link up through teleconference with other women in the fishery in all areas of the province.



Photo: Mulrooney family archive

Carol-Ann (third from left) with other delegates at the Fourth World Conference.

The idea was to get a good outlook and understanding of what women were going through in regards to the crisis in the fishery.

We spent about six months on the phone getting familiar with each other's lives and problems. We were from rural communities. We wanted to tell our stories about what was happening with the destruction of the fishery. We wanted to talk about how it had affected our lives and our families.

Now the conference wasn't totally about the fishery No, it was women's issues in general. When we got to the conference in Beijing and I heard some of the stories from the women, I thought to myself

that our place is not as bad as others. I mean there were women who had been tortured and raped and mutilated.

You know, you have to go somewhere to appreciate what we have here. I can speak out about the government here. Some of those poor women never got a chance to speak out.

It was a big experience for me because I had never been outside of the Avalon Peninsula before, let alone to the other side of the world. We did workshops for the ten whole days we were there. Our group concentrated on the fishery of course. The name of our workshop was "Women Healing Oceans." We talked about our communities and what was happening. We heard how the same destruction that had happened here had also happened to their families and villages.

Out of My Shell

No matter what, I'm glad I went with the union, because it brought out a lot in me and made me strong where I was never strong before. The first years that I was in the plant I let the bosses walk all over me. The more you did, production-wise, the more they wanted you to do. When I said enough is enough, and got the union behind me, I never looked back. It made me stronger to be able to face a lot of things like getting up there and saying what I did when the moratorium came down. A lot of women down at the plant used to tell me how quiet I was one time, and I was. But I had to come out of my shell. It was never easy for me. That day in St. John's when I went in to listen to the TAGS announcement I was scared to death. I thought I was going to pass out. There I was face to face with the federal government, and I thought, well it's now or never, Carol-Ann, so I did it. To this day I'm glad I did. I'd do it again if I had to.

Sources

Interview with Carol-Ann Mulrooney.

My Life in the Fishery: Carol-Ann Mulrooney

Questions for Discussion

When the Fishery Was Good

1. Describe what the fish plant was like before the moratorium.
2. What was the major problem at the plant? Discuss this.
3. How did the operators try and get the plant workers to do what they wanted?

The Inside Struggle

1. Discuss Carol Ann's work as shop steward.
2. What was happening up on Jersey side hill?
3. Discuss Carol Ann's difficulties as shop steward.

Life During the Moratorium

1. Why did Carol-Ann go back to school?
2. Why did Carol-Ann call Ottawa? Did Ottawa help her?

School is Not for Everyone

1. Why was it difficult for some of the older people to return to school?
2. Discuss how you feel about the fishery workers going back to school.
3. Why were the younger people angry about the fishery workers going back to school?
4. Do you think the fishery workers were getting fair compensation from TAGS?

Improving Our Odds

1. Describe the *Improving Our Odds* program.
2. Why did Carol-Ann think it was a good project?

Taking Action

1. What did the group do in St. John's?
2. What did Carol-Ann say to the *Globe and Mail* reporter, and why?

Trying to Keep Working

1. What was Carol-Ann's next project?
2. Who did she talk to about her project, and why?
3. Describe the steps in the project.
4. Do you think it was a good project?
5. Why was Carol-Ann frustrated after the first phase?

From Jersey side to Beijing

1. What was the Fourth World Conference?
2. Why was Carol-Ann chosen to go to China?
3. What did Carol-Ann find out about women in other countries?

Out of My Shell

1. How was the union good for Carol-Ann?
2. How is Carol-Ann a strong person?

**Gerry Rubia
and the 'Longside Club:
Step to the Music That You Hear**
Ed Kavanagh

*In order to live, one portion is enough... .A single finger,
a single piece of wing, can start the body on its total flight.*

Miguel Hernandez
Spanish poet
1910-1942

Word List

Osteomyelitis: Inflammation of the bone or bone marrow due to infection.

Even today, it is a serious disease and can lead to amputation.

Prognosis: A forecast of the situation a disease or other medical condition may lead to.

Penicillin: An antibiotic used to kill disease-causing bacteria.

Prosthesis: An artificial limb.

Chronic: Lasting for a long time. Often applied to an illness.

Introduction

It started with an ankle that always seemed to be tired and aching. At first, it didn't seem too serious. But that soon changed. Doctors told 13-year-old Geraldine Chafe that she had a chronic bone condition called osteomyelitis. She didn't know it, but the normal childhood she had been leading was about to end.

Geraldine had to go into the old General Hospital. And not just for days or even weeks. She would be in the hospital for years. She wouldn't come out again until just before her 18th birthday.

The nurses and patients began to call her Gerry, and she has been mostly known by that name ever since.

Early Days and Life in a Hospital



Photo: Rubia Family Collection

Gerry doing embroidery at the Orthopaedic hospital around 1946.

Gerry was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1929. Her parents had moved from Newfoundland to the States hoping that her father would find work. But the family did not stay. When Gerry was three they came back to Newfoundland. She went to school in the Goulds, where her father was from. When she was 13, her family moved to St. John's. She went to St. Patrick's School for grade eight. She had been there only a few months when her left leg started to act up.

Gerry became very sick. She ran high temperatures. "The leg would be in a real state," she says. "There were abscesses, swollen and full of pus, and I had to have a lot of operations." Because there was no penicillin then, the infection spread to her arms, shoulders, and one hip. The main treatments at first were hot compresses and a medicine called sulfathiazole. Sometimes the doctors had to operate so the abscesses could be drained. Gerry's condition was serious and the prognosis was not good.

Gerry tried hard to not let her illness get her down. "I was the sort of person that, instead of getting mad about it, I prayed that things would get better," she says. "I used to be really scared I was going to die, but at the same time I was hopeful. I guess it's just believing there's some power up there that could help me out, that could take care of me."

While other children were enjoying their teenage years, Gerry was fighting a stubborn, painful disease. During her four-and-a-half years in hospital she was let out only twice - once for a day to go to the Goulds to celebrate her 15th birthday, and once for two weeks during the summer she was 17. But Gerry kept a positive outlook.



Photo: Rubia Family Collection

Gerry celebrating her 15th birthday with family and friends in the Goulds, 1944.

"I never felt bitter about those years I spent in the hospital," she says. "I really don't know how that time affected me. I don't think it did me any harm to miss the ordinary activities of adolescence."

One of the ways she kept busy was by reading. "I didn't have access to much in the way of books," she says, "but I read whatever I could get. Dad used to bring me books and paperbacks from Fort Pepperell, the U.S. base where he was working." When she was 18 she was finally released, but her condition had not improved much. Penicillin had reduced the number and severity of abscesses, but her leg was unable to bear her weight and she had to walk with a crutch.

Gerry took her first job as a cashier at P.J. Lewis's Meat Market on Prescott Street. Unfortunately, she developed another abscess. She had to go back into the hospital. She became depressed and scared. During this time, Gerry changed doctors. Doctor Bernard Maher was her new doctor.

"I think my Guardian Angel must have been responsible for my meeting with Doctor Maher," she says. "The first thing he said to me was, 'Have you ever thought of having your leg amputated?' Up until then, my doctors had believed a bad natural leg was better than a good artificial one. My father used to say that the leg should come off, but the family used to shush him up. They believed the doctors who said it was better to save the leg. So I had never considered amputation. But I remember Doctor Maher saying, 'No one can guarantee that any of us will live another 20 years, but I think your chances will be better if that leg comes off.' At that stage, I was expecting to die at any minute anyway, so I told him to go ahead."

Gerry had the operation when she was 21. "That finally took care of it," she says. "There was no guarantee that it would, but it did, thank God. A few years after the operation, Doctor Maher died. He was a relatively young man when he died, and here I am still going strong because of him."

Even after Gerry's leg had been amputated there was still a chance that the disease might flare up in other parts of her body. Luckily, this did not happen.

Once she had healed, Gerry had to learn how to walk again. First, she had crutches. Then a kind of peg-leg. Finally, she got a prosthesis: a laminated wooden leg. She also had to use a walking cane as her right leg had been weakened by the abscesses.

Education and Writing



Photo: Rubia Family Collection

Gerry reading poetry at the Newfoundland Writers' Guild Cabot 500 Waterfront Writing Festival in St. John's, 1997.

Even though Gerry had spent so much time in the hospital, she managed to complete her high school education. During her first year in hospital she did not have a teacher, but that changed in her second year. "They hired Mercedes Marshall to teach children like me who were missing out on their schooling," she says. "Thanks to her I was able to complete my high school grades and write the examinations."

Besides being an avid reader, Gerry had always enjoyed writing. When she was only 12, she filled in an aptitude test for a correspondence course in journalism offered by the Newspaper Institute of America. "Don't you think you're a little young?" was the response she received.

Gerry may have been young, but she didn't let that put her off. When she got her first job, she applied for the course and completed it. "Looking back," Gerry says, "I think there must have been something hereditary in my interest in writing. There wasn't much else that could have stimulated me at that early age. We had no electricity, no radio. But my grandfather McDonald wrote 'The Valleys of Kilbride,' so I guess it was in my blood." "The Valleys of Kilbride" is a well-known Newfoundland folk song.

Gerry wrote all kinds of things: poems, stories, and songs. Writing would come to be one of the most important parts of her life.

Jobs

Once she was able to get around, Gerry went looking for a new job. She first found a job with the Newfoundland Tuberculosis Association. She worked as a secretary using the shorthand she had learned from a patient in the hospital, and the typing she had learned at home. After a year, she took

a job with Bowring's department store writing newspaper commercials and advertising jingles. Gerry really enjoyed the writing.

After two years with Bowring's she moved on to jobs at an insurance company and at the Holyrood Rubber Co. "I didn't like the work a great deal," she says. "But I liked the people, and I made many lasting friendships."

In 1955 she took a job as a counsellor with the Rehabilitation Division of the Department of Health. It was a job she was well suited for. Having gone through so much herself, she was the perfect person to help people with similar problems. She would hold that job for 30 years. Her writing talent came in handy. For a time she wrote a weekly newspaper column addressing disability issues. She also wrote items for the radio and gave speeches to various groups about topics relating to disabilities.

Gerry's Writing Blossoms

Gerry continued to write short stories, poetry, and plays in her spare time. In the early '60s, she took her first creative writing course. The instructor was Paul West. "He stimulated my mind," she says, "and taught me not to be afraid of trying new things." Gerry began to win prizes for her writing in the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts and Letters Competition. Together with other writers, she helped found the Newfoundland Writers' Guild. In the Guild, writers come together to read and comment on each other's work. She is also a founding member of the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1967, Gerry married Leo Rubia from Deer Lake and eventually had two children. She continued to write. Many of her stories, essays, and poems were published. Her radio plays were produced both locally and nationally. Two of her plays were performed on stage in St. John's. She published two of her own books and helped edit others. She also taught creative writing courses at Memorial University and conducted writing workshops. In the early '80s Gerry turned her attention to something that had been on her mind for a long time. In 1983 she founded the 'Longside Club.

The 'Longside Club

Gerry had always believed that just because someone had a disability it didn't mean they couldn't be creative. After all, she had always been creative. Her writing had enjoyed a wide degree of success. It had helped enrich her life. Many of her friends were also writers. But Gerry knew that disabled people had few outlets to explore and express their creativity. Governments and social agencies had come to see the importance of vocational training and special technical and medical facilities for the disabled. That was all well and good. But Gerry felt there was a need for a place where disabled or disadvantaged people could meet to socialize and explore writing, acting, singing -- whatever interested them.

"There was not much opportunity for the disabled to build up self-esteem, self-confidence, or for involvement in the performing arts," Gerry says. "The government was not doing anything about that. Most disabled people had low paying jobs - or no job - and could not afford much by way of leisure activities, so there was little chance for them to do anything about it." In order to address these needs, Gerry and a group of friends started the 'Longside Club.

The Club offered a welcoming place for people to socialize. Activities included arts and crafts, darts, movies, and pool. A theatre group, the 'Longside Players, and a choir, the 'Longside Singers, were formed. "These things help build up confidence," Gerry says. "I would often hear some of the members say, "I always wanted to be in a play, sing on stage, be in a choir, but I don't know if I can do it."" One of the aims of the 'Longside Club was to give people the opportunity to find out.



Photo: Rubia Family Collection

Gerry outside the club she started in St. John's.

Job-training and a Literacy Centre



Photo courtesy of Gerry Rubia

The 'Longside Players' rehearse a scene from 'The Golden Acorn'.

Once the Club had been operating for a while, it became clear to Gerry that many of the Club members had trouble finding jobs and getting worthwhile job-training. Soon the 'Longside Club' was offering special training in crafts, office work, and woodworking. People were paid through short-term government programs. In the last number of years, a short-order cooking program has been a big part of the Club. In this program, people who are on income support are trained as short-order cooks and then given job placements. The success rate for the program is high. More than 80 percent of the cooking students have moved on to full-time work.

It also became clear that many of the Club members would benefit from some literacy upgrading. In 1989 the 'Longside Club joined with Avalon Community College to start the Community Learning Centre. The Centre, which was on the Club premises, offered literacy upgrading to disabled adults. The Avalon Community College provided a qualified teacher. Often, local writers and other speakers would come to the Centre to give talks. Unfortunately, lack of funding led to the closing of the Learning Centre.

A Typical Day at the 'Longside Club

The 'Longside Club is a bustling place. As soon as the doors open in the morning, people start to arrive. All kinds of people come to the Club. Some are very disabled. They use special wheelchairs and need attendant care workers. Others can get around on their own. Some of the Club members are not disabled at all. They come for the social contact and friendship or just to help out.

On any given day at the Club there may be bingo, darts, drawing, and arts and crafts. The 'Longside Singers may be having a sing-a-long. The 'Longside Players may be rehearsing a play. In the well-equipped, modern kitchen the cooking students are busy learning something new. Sometimes they cook up tasty meals for the members. In summer, there are outdoor activities including softball tournaments and visits to parks, festivals, and historic sites.

Over the years, hundreds of people have come to the 'Longside Club on a regular basis. The Club gives them the chance to try new things. Some people have found out that they are born actors. But no matter what their talent, the Club encourages them to express themselves. The 'Longside Players One of the big success stories of the 'Longside Club has been the 'Longside Players. Gerry had done some amateur acting herself in the late '50s and early '60s. She knew how much fun it could be. And she also knew that it could help build up a person's self-confidence. So an acting group was one of the main things she wanted to see at the 'Longside Club. She didn't wait long.

The Players performed their first play, *Of Mice and Elephants*, in 1984. Since then there have been many productions. Thousands of people have seen a 'Longside Players play. Some of the shows have toured around Newfoundland.



Photo: Carla Krachum
Gerry Rubia today.

A book of 'Longside Players plays, *The Cat's Meow*, was published in 1990. More than 70 people have appeared in 'Longside Players productions. Many have found it a great way to boost their self-esteem and confidence.

Gerry Today

Gerry still continues to work hard for the 'Longside Club. It is always a struggle. The Club operates mainly through its own fundraising. There is a big rent bill to pay every month. Money is needed for other activities as well. At the 'Longside Club it's a full-time job just to keep the doors open. Over the years, Gerry has been involved with many community organizations: the Tourette's Syndrome Foundation, Newfoundland branch; the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, Newfoundland branch; the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities - Newfoundland and Labrador; and the Brain Injury Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Photo: Rubia Family Collection

The Honourable Jake Epp, Minister of Health & Welfare, presented Geraldine Rubia with the Canada Volunteer Award certificate of Honour and a Gold Medal in Ottawa, 1987.

Gerry's work has earned her a lot of awards and honours. She was given the Canadian Citation for Citizenship Award in 1994. She has also won the C. Douglas Taylor Award offered by the Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled; the C.A. Pippy Award for disabled person of the year; the St. John's Jaycees' Citizen of the Year Award; and the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council Arts Achievement Award.

Gerry continues to work on her writing. In addition to her poetry she has written a full-length musical. She is also working on a novel. Sometimes, when she gives readings from her work, she sings some of her original songs.

She has a serious side, but much of her work is playful and funny. Gerry has suffered from bouts of anxiety and depression throughout her life, which she says are more of a problem than her physical disabilities. In spite of this, a lot of her songs and poems are about love, friendship, joy, nature, and spirituality. Her song "Stay Alongside" expresses some of the main ideas behind the 'Longside Club.

Stay Alongside

If you walk in front of me
I may not follow
If you walk behind
I may not show the way
And we can't go far
by gazing at each other
But side by side
we'll get there come what may

chorus

*Stay alongside
my sister brother
Stay alongside
close enough to touch
Stay alongside
we'll guide each other
Stay alongside
over smooth and rough*

There is so much fun
that we can have together
There is so much we can do
and feel and say
Our joy can only grow
the more we share it
While side by side
we're flying all the way

chorus

When a light goes out
we will not curse the darkness
When a traveller falls
we will not turn away
We will light each other's
path through life's adventure
And sing with shouts of gladness
every day

"Why I Never Went to Lourdes" is one of Gerry's poems that deals, in a humorous way, with her attitude toward disabilities both real and imagined.

Why I Never Went to Lourdes

My phantom foot is stepping out
My deafened ear is ringing
My meagre bosom swells with love
My quinsy throat is singing

My underactive thyroid gland
sends energizing surges
and gustier than in girlhood days
rise elemental urges

Neurotic notions laugh to death
and my astigmatic vision
transforms the merely beautiful
with exquisite precision

The heart can only hold
so much of joy within its border ---
I fear I'd flip if all my parts
were present and in order



Photo: Rubia Family Collection

*Photo from a postcard advertising a short film by
Anita McGee, in which Gerry narrates her poem
"Out on a Limb" (1993)*

Sources

Interviews with Gerry Rubia. I also consulted articles about Gerry in *The Evening Telegram*, *The Express*, and *The Newfoundland Herald*. "Stay Alongside" is printed with the permission of the author. "Why I Never Went to Lourdes" appears in *Skating Among the Graves*, Killick Press, 1991, and is reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Gerry Rubia and the 'Longside Club: Step to the Music that You Hear

Questions for Discussion

Introduction

1. What were the first signs of Gerry's illness? What is it called?
2. How long did Gerry have to stay in the hospital?

Early Days and Life in a Hospital

1. What were Gerry's parents doing in the United States in 1929?
2. What grade was Gerry in when her leg started to act up?
3. Describe how osteomyelitis affected Gerry. What did the doctors do to help her?
4. What was Gerry's attitude toward the disease?
5. Did the lack of a normal childhood depress Gerry? How would you feel if you were forced to spend that long a time in hospital?
6. How did Gerry occupy her time in the hospital?
7. How did Gerry get around once she had been released from the hospital?
8. Why did Gerry decide to have her leg amputated? Was this a good idea? Would you have made the same decision?

Education and Writing

1. How did Gerry manage to complete high school?
2. What kind of course did Gerry apply for when she was 13?
3. Who wrote "The Valleys of Kilbride"?

Jobs

1. Describe one of Gerry's early jobs that she liked.
2. Which of Gerry's talents came in handy for some of her jobs? How?
3. Gerry finally took a job that she kept for 30 years. What was it?

Gerry's Writing Blossoms

1. What did Gerry do in the early 1960s that helped improve her writing?
2. What types of writing does Gerry do? Has she been a successful writer?

The 'Longside Club

1. Why did Gerry start the 'Longside Club?
2. What kind of activities happen at the Club?
3. Why did Gerry think that an acting group would be a good thing?

Job-training and a Literacy Centre

1. Why did the 'Longside Club start to offer job-training?
2. Describe one of the successful job-training programs that happens at the Club.
3. Why was the Community Learning Centre forced to close?

A Typical Day at the 'Longside Club

1. What kind of people come to the Club?
2. Describe some of the programs that happen at the Club.

The 'Longside Players

1. Do you think that acting in a play would help improve a person's self-confidence? Why?
2. What is the name of the 'Longside Players' book of plays?

Gerry Today

1. How does Gerry keep busy today?

The Expanding Life of Carol Devine
Ed Kavanagh

Word List

Renal: Concerning the kidneys.

Dialysis: A medical procedure that cleans the blood, used by people whose kidneys are not working properly.

Diabetes: A disease in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin (insulin turns food into energy). Symptoms are thirst and weight loss.

Edema: A condition in which a lot of watery fluid builds up in the body's cavities or tissues.

O.R.: Operating room.

Prednisone: A drug used to prevent the body from rejecting a transplanted organ or tissue.

Analgesic: A drug used to reduce pain.

Incision: A cut made during a medical operation.

Biennial: Every two years.

Laser surgery: Surgery in which cutting or shaping is done with an intense beam of light (a laser).

Retina: A part of the eye at the back of the eyeball.

Apparition: An unusual or unexpected sight, especially of a ghost or vision.

Mandate: Guidelines given to a person or organization to carry out a task.

Introduction

Carol Devine was born in St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1950. She attended Winterton School, Mercy Convent, and Holy Heart of Mary High School. She attended Sacred Heart Convent in Halifax for a year, and studied Social Work at Memorial University for two years. She has completed courses offered by the Early Childhood Development Association. Over the years she has worked as a sales clerk, a daycare teacher, and a provincial government clerk. Carol sounds like a typical person. But her life has been anything but typical.



Carol (far left) and other transplant recipients at the 1999 World Transplant Games in Budapest, Hungary.

Carol was diagnosed with diabetes when she was 10 years old. In her mid- to late -twenties she developed serious medical problems related to her disease. In 1977, her right eye was removed. Carol also had surgery, including laser surgery on her left eye. Before these operations she was legally blind; after them, the sight in her left eye was saved.

Carol leads a full and active life. In 1978 she had a kidney transplant. The transplant gave her a new lease on life. Since then, Carol has never looked back. She has accomplished much, and continues to accomplish more.

One of Carol's special interests is raising awareness about the need for organ donors. She has worked tirelessly over the years to let people know how important this is. She has also been involved in the World Transplant Games. Carol competes as a swimmer and in other sports.

In this piece, often in Carol's own words, you will learn about the long and sometimes difficult road she has travelled. But you will also discover a joyful person who never dwells on the negative.

A Child Diabetic

It happened when she was 10 years old.



Photo: Courtesy of Carol Devine

Carol at age 10, just after her diabetes was diagnosed.

"I was feeling really healthy - didn't notice anything myself," Carol says. "But my mother noticed that I was losing weight, which I had never done as a child. And I was drinking an amazing amount of water. I was always thirsty always asking for more water."

Carol's mother knew the symptoms of diabetes. One of Carol's little cousins had already been diagnosed with it. Her mother took her to the doctor. Her blood sugar level was found to be above normal.

So Carol went into St. John's' old General hospital for six weeks. She was put on a special diet. She was given insulin by needle. Carol didn't mind them, however. After a few weeks, in fact, she was giving herself her own needles. In the beginning, she only needed one injection a day.

Carol had "Child Onset Diabetes: Type 1." Soon her pancreas stopped working completely. Every few weeks she would go to the lab and get a blood sugar reading. But the reading didn't always give a true indication of how Carol was doing. The reading only told the doctors what Carol's blood sugar level was for that day, which was not the full picture. Today, blood testing by finger pricking can be done much more often, and at home. By using a small home monitor a few times a day, diabetics are much more aware of their blood sugar readings.

Teenage Years

Once Carol started taking insulin, her health improved. "I didn't have any problems at all until I reached 12 or 13," she says. Then she entered puberty. She was growing up. Her body was changing. This, combined with her diabetes, caused very low blood sugar levels. "I'd wake up in the middle of the night covered in orange juice," she says. "I was having convulsions, and my parents would be pouring orange juice down my throat to build up the sugar level." Still, Carol tried to lead a normal life. And from the ages of 15 to 22 her life was pretty normal. "There were lots of sports activities that I was interested in," she says.

Things changed when she was 23. "I started to lose a lot of weight again," Carol says. "My health started to go down. I didn't have much energy. My kidneys were starting to fail. Also, I was in for a lot of eyesight problems. That's one of the unfortunate side effects of diabetes."

By the time Carol was 27 she was blind in her right eye. She had laser surgery to stop the internal bleeding, at St. Michael's hospital in Toronto. Eventually, her right eye was removed.

She had been working at a day-care centre. "That was my favourite job," she says. "I will always treasure those times. It was a special part of my life because I met children who weren't brought up in the same manner I was. I saw some problems there and I was able to intervene. But I had to be careful how I did it. It was a bit tricky at times with some of the parents. A lot of the natural social worker in me came out. I took social work for two years but I never did get a degree."

But Carol's health was getting worse. It was hard to eat. "I had no appetite whatsoever," she says. "I was getting tired and weaker. That was the beginning of the renal failure, but I didn't know that. And I wanted to keep my job because I loved it. But I just didn't realize how sick I was."

Carol was very sick. She was so sick that she would need a kidney transplant.

What Is a Kidney Transplant?

In 1978, Carol's doctor, Henry Gault, told her that she was not yet at the end stage of renal failure. "But you're going to need a kidney transplant at some point," he said.

"A what?" Carol said. She didn't know what a kidney transplant was.

Dr. Gault explained the procedure to Carol. He told her one of her kidneys would be replaced with a kidney from another person — a donor. But it couldn't be just any kidney. It would have to be a good kidney for her — a good match. If it wasn't a good match, her body would reject the new organ. The kidney would probably have to come from someone in her immediate family.

Dr. Gault also told Carol that before she could have the kidney transplant she would have to undergo a treatment called dialysis. He explained to her that a machine would take the blood out of her system and clean it. The blood would be returned at the same rate it was taken out, so her blood level would not change. "In those days dialysis was not nearly as sophisticated as it is now," she says. "I was only on dialysis for six months — which is a very short time. Some people are on it for years."

Carol's family members were tested to see if they would be a good match for her. "Dad began to have pains in his heart," Carol says. "Because of his age and because he wasn't known to have heart pains, it was obviously stress related. He really wanted to give me his kidney, but they ruled him out. Mom was ruled out automatically because our bloods were not compatible. That was difficult for her, because she really wanted to donate. It was one of the most difficult things she ever had to go through."

As it turned out, it was Carol's sister Brenda who would be her donor.

The Transplant: In Carol's Own Words

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Photo: Courtesy of Carol Devine

Carol reached a special peak in the Austrian Alps during the Innsbruck World Transplant Games.

In addition to saving my life, bringing me good health and everything that the Gift of Life can bring, improved eyesight was another spectacular bonus of our transplant. After the good result of the eye operations and laser treatments, we were able to save the sight in one of my eyes. The other one was removed long before dialysis due to a detached retina. It was already permanently blind and was putting the sight of the other eye at great risk due to infection. Can you imagine the wonderful things I have seen with one eye all these years since the return of my sight? All the things I have been able to do? I urge you all to believe that you are a beautiful sight to yourselves and to others.

...

Brenda had come home for Christmas. One day she offered to drive me to dialysis at the old General hospital. When we got there she said she'd come in. So far everything was normal. Then she said there was a blood test appointment set up for her. A look passed between us. That look was full of realizations and emotions. All I managed to get out was a simple, "Okay." She had seen the sparkle of hope in my eyes, the relief, and most of all the gratitude. She had more testing and then it was time for her to go back to Toronto. I soon followed in order to begin dialysis and have an eye operation.

It was later that we finally knew that she was able to give. Then I had to make a decision. She had already made hers. I carefully thought through everything I had learned about transplants. The importance of it all put me into a state: nothing seemed real. But mostly I was logical and clear-headed. I spent hours thinking thoughts like, *What if it doesn't work? She would have gone through all that pain. What if she dies during the operation? What if I do? I wouldn't be there to comfort her for the rest of her life. And what if something happened to her one remaining kidney and she ended up needing dialysis and a transplant herself?*

Then there were all the positive things to think about. *What if it all went well?* There was so much to be gained. I could have gone on with these "What ifs" forever.

Then I asked myself a simple question. Would I do the same for her? Knowing the answer more surely than anything I had ever known before, I was able to make the decision. I told her yes. I had only one condition. She was allowed to change her mind on the way to the operating room. I would still love her just as much and I would always understand. There were long involved discussions about the risks involved — the pros and cons. Our parents were an ever-present source of strength and support. They had both wanted to give so much. But the decision was clearly ours to make.

. . .

At the time of our transplant, doctors were in the habit of predicting how long the transplanted organ might last. They were speaking, of course, based on what they'd seen. In our case, the estimated time of the organ continuing to make that necessary fluid I fondly call "liquid gold," ranged from six months to three years at the most. And it's been more than 20 years! Each Christmas I'm overjoyed to send a thank-you card to St. Michael's hospital, and once again give them truly glad tidings. I know the reality is that I will not always be able to send such a card. But, in the meantime, I am making the best crop of hay whether the sun shines or not. Nowadays, because so many things are known to play a part in how long a transplanted organ will last, and there is so much left to learn, the doctors tend to not put a time limit on it. I think that's the best way to deal with the question. Patients deserve honesty all the way — what can go right, what can go wrong. They need guidance in learning how to be optimistic and realistic at the same time. It's a good marriage and it works for me.

. . .

The eve of the transplant came. We were calmly afraid. We were positive. We were hopeful.

The night before the surgery we visited in my room. We had very little left to say. But we talked for a long time. And then we hugged and I said thank you. We said good night and a human angel walked out my door. It was then that hard -hitting panic struck me. It was the thought that I might never see her again. Then the thought vanished as quickly as it had come.

I slept well that night and so did she. The next morning I left a note on my bed so the nurses wouldn't think I'd lost my nerve and fled. I went into Brenda's room in the very still and quiet darkness. She was sleeping. I stood there for a full 10 minutes. I realized she shouldn't be awake any longer than necessary. So I left. I said good-bye in my head — just in case. I managed to talk to her once more by phone before the jolly ride to the O.R. in my matching blue hat and dress of paper. They gave her a suit too. Blue was always our best colour.

Everything came together: the surgery, the post-surgery care, fate, the Grand Plan, and the prayers of hundreds thrown in for good measure. Reports from the doctors were that everything had gone well for both of us during the surgeries. Once the plumbing had been completed, it pleases me to say that my new kidney, although 13 months older than me, spewed out a fountain of hope right there on the operating table. It's always strange for me to remember the funny parts that followed my own surgery because they were definitely not funny for anyone else.

A few hours after the surgery a serious problem arose for me. Serious things were done by men with serious voices and serious eyes peeking over masks. I asked them why they were acting so seriously. My life was in danger, but because of the morphine I did not detect a problem. I just wanted them to cheer up. And then I fell back to sleep. I cannot even remember thinking about Brenda. Nor did I see my mother's terrified face in the little window of that tiny operating room door. Hours later I was out of danger thanks to the efforts of the surgical team.

When I awoke you can guess who I wanted to call first. But Brenda was not in any state to telephone chat. I was comforted by the much -needed help her morphine could give her. I didn't call until she'd said she was able to talk. My parents became the messengers that day and the next. They took a lot of elevator rides. I guess that's what the doctors meant when they talked about the ups and downs of transplantation.

To return to my concern for Brenda. I soon learned the truth of what we'd been told. It is easier for a person to have an organ implanted than it is to have one removed. This is because the recipient just has to have an incision made in the belly — in the case of the kidney transplant — and have room made for it by pushing the other soft organs aside. In the donor's case, it is taken from the back. The rib cage has to be shifted to get the kidney out. Brenda needed analgesics for several days longer than I did. This saddened me greatly. But I had known this was normal for the donor. I kept telling myself that as time passed and with the help of painkillers, she would improve. But I was not expecting the good thing that happened next.

For several days after the surgery we were not allowed in the same room. This was so we wouldn't pass any undetected infection to each other. After just a few days, Brenda called me as usual. But she had an unusual request. She told me to put the phone on the bed and go to the window. I was to look out until I saw a surprise. I thought she had arranged one of those flying things that say "congratulations" in big letters. I wished I had thought of that.

I waited and waited until finally an apparition — or so I thought — appeared. It had blowing blond hair and flowing lingerie. It was on the tarred roof two floors below me. Alone. In the sunshine. Waving and shouting as loudly as she could. Windows that were already open on that glorious June day were filled with inquisitive faces. We laughed and cried and I ordered her back inside. She had come out by herself, knowing that no staff person would ever agree to such a thing. I watched her make her way back over the gravel and disappear. I picked up the phone. We were still laughing and crying. I later learned that she had torn one of her stitches when she tripped over a step on her return.

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Each day brought improvements for both of us. I was always happy to go to bed, because I was sleeping through the night for the first time in over a year. It also meant that I could have a non-renal diet for breakfast, and the sooner I went to sleep the sooner I could eat again. The first thing I wanted was a fresh orange. Then a banana. Then bacon. And then pizza! I was encouraged to drink as much as I liked. I no longer had great itchiness, nausea every day, headaches, and high blood pressure. The aching in my legs and the restlessness in them at night disappeared. Each day brought a new thing I could identify as gone. Brenda got stronger too, but it took a long time. Her appetite came back slowly. She was went home before me. At home she rested and recovered her strength. My other sister, Anne, was there to help her. She had been a daily visitor to the hospital and was an untiring support and source of love. My youngest sister, Kathy, sent her encouragement and love through daily letters and phone calls from home. Brenda and I had both received cards and letters and flowers from everywhere. It made me wonder how people who are alone in the world get through each day. Brenda and I still chuckle when we remember what a friend of hers said when she heard what Brenda had done: "My. [Big pause.] That was overly generous of you."

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I spent hours a day admiring my kneecaps and ankles. They had reappeared now that the edema had disappeared. It was difficult to like my face, though. I had a moon face caused by high doses of prednisone. As the months passed a decrease in the drug allowed me to look like I used to — except now my colour was good, not yellow.

I had forgotten what it was like to feel well. Living was full of life. I told Brenda and my family that even if the kidney only worked for a week, it was still worth the experience.

The Transplant Games

"I learned about the Games from a friend of mine in St. John's who had had a kidney transplant," Carol says. "They were called the Kidney Transplant Olympics then. This was in 1980. I decided to enter. It was just two years after my transplant. Brenda was living in Toronto then, and the Games

were being held in New York. So she was able to come with me. It was wonderful for her to be able to see me hold the flag and walk down with the rest of my small team."

Carol is a swimmer. She had learned to swim when she was just seven or eight. "That's my main thing at the Games," she says. "I've also dabbled in table tennis, badminton, and ball throw. And I've taken part in the swimming relays." Carol usually competes in the short races: 50 metres. "I'm more of a sprinter in the pool," she says. "My oxygen is in short supply because my veins are clogged due to the diabetes. I don't have much stamina and endurance. But I'm fast. So I just do the 50 metres."



Photo: Courtesy of Carol Devine

Carol takes a medical exam before she leaves for the World Transplant Games.

The only Games Carol has missed so far were the 1991 Games in Budapest. "I was about to go and I was sitting up on the table while the doctor was examining my foot," she says. "My circulation had gotten so bad that I was having to have some amputations. I decided to do it little by little rather than more than I needed to take off. My doctor agreed. He could understand why I wanted to do it that way. I had already had a couple of toes removed, but now I had another infection. He told me he thought there was enough time for me to go to the Games and get back before my foot really got into trouble. But when I swung my legs down to sit at the table and chat with him, the colour of my foot changed. It was purplish-grey- off-colour. He knew that gangrene had already set in. He said I couldn't go. So that's why I missed those Games."

But Carol has been at all the other Games, and she's often taken home medals. And not just the ones she's won. Sometimes people give her their medals, too. Even more memorable than this, Carol always remembers the special words from Dr. Maurice Slapak, who started the World Transplant Games in England in 1976.

Dr. Slapak attends each Games, which are held every two years. He always repeats the Games' mandate: to show, in no uncertain way, that transplants do work. He always says, "There are all winners here today. You, above all people, have won just by what you have achieved in being here. We must all remember the donors, living and dead, who made it all possible."



Photo: Courtesy of Carol Devine

Carol with Team Canada members at the 1993 Vancouver Transplant Games.

Carol has always believed in the value of the Games — how they can really make a person feel alive. A photo taken of her at the completion of one of her swimming races in the Sydney Games shows this. The picture was featured on the front page of the *Medical Post*, a journal that is sent to all medical doctors in Canada. A story in the journal featured Carol and other members of Team Canada.

In 1987, Carol was a founding member of the Canadian Transplant Association in Innsbruck.



Carol on the cover of the Medical Post.

Carol Today



Photo: Courtesy of Carol Devine

Carol Devine today.

Over the years Carol has had other medical concerns. She periodically experiences minor rejections of her kidney; medication helps her deal with this. Due to circulation problems, she has had 11 amputations, ending at the present time with a below-knee amputation.

But Carol has never let her medical problems keep her down. The range of her volunteer work and community involvement is truly amazing. Her work has touched and enriched the lives of many people and sends a strong message that, in all things, action is better than non-action. Here is a sample of some of Carol Devine's many activities.

Carol is regional coordinator of the Newfoundland and Labrador Branch of the Canadian Transplant Association. In this role, primarily through public speaking, she promotes organ donor awareness. She also recruits participants for the biennial World Transplant Games and is involved in the fundraising that enables Team Canada to attend.

Carol sits on many boards and donates her time to numerous causes. In 1978 she became involved with the Kidney Foundation of Canada at the chapter level, and has served several years on the board of directors of the Newfoundland and Labrador branch. She volunteers by organizing socials for patients of kidney disease and their families and friends. She is also active in friendly visiting and peer

support. She helps with fundraising for the Kidney Foundation through the "March Drive" and the "Fall Campaign."

She is a member of the Canadian Diabetes Association and a founding member of the Deaf/Blind Association. In the 1980s she volunteered at a camp in Lake St. Joseph in Northern Ontario as a guide and intervenor

Carol Devine is also a fine writer and has many literary accomplishments. She has written personal collections of poetry and prose and has contributed to CBC Radio Noon's "Personal Time" segment. She is a member of the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador and a local book group. She has also been published in *Life Sentences*, a collection of writings published by the Writers' Guild of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Carol is co-editor and contributor to "Renal Community," the newsletter of the Newfoundland and Labrador Branch of the Kidney Foundation of Canada. She also writes for "Living Proof," the newsletter of the Canadian Transplant Association.

But Carol's volunteer work does not stop there. Over the years she has found time to volunteer at the Hoyles Home and has earned a five-year volunteer certificate from Glenbrook Lodge. She has also volunteered for the Cancer Foundation, the Huntington's Foundation, the Arthritis Foundation, and the Janeway Hospital. At the Janeway, Carol visited cancer patients and looked after babies when parents and nurses were unavailable.

With so many interests it might seem that there would be little time left in Carol's life for anything else. This is not the case. Carol has many other interests including para-sailing, ballroom dancing, sewing, walking, camping, and swimming.

Her personal philosophy explains what allows her to be so active:

"We all have a certain amount of control in our lives. What we cannot control, we can still make choices about. It comes down to asking yourself, "Do I want to be happy or unhappy most of the time?" The response, being obvious, you teach yourself ways to accept what you no longer can do, be, or have, and find replacements in many directions and places.

"Your life expands. So do you."

Carol's energy commitment, and refusal to say no to life — even at its most challenging — make her an exceptional role model. Like anyone she is subject to low times and fear. But Carol realizes that these are natural occurrences and can always be worked through.

Through her many activities and positive community profile, Carol Devine has shown that an optimistic, life-affirming attitude is of great importance in attaining personal goals and making a lasting change in the world. She also recognizes that without the constant encouragement, love, and support of her family, friends, and the medical community she would not be the person she is today.

Carol's attitude towards life proves to all that adversity cannot only be overcome, but can be transformed into a positive, radiating force that enables people to be the best they can be. As one woman awaiting a transplant said to Carol, "You give me the courage to keep on going."

Sources

I conducted several interviews with Carol Devine, and consulted articles and stories by and about her. In my conversations with Carol, she made a point of thanking me for writing an article about her for *Taking the Lead*, because of the great value she places on the spoken and written word.



The Canadian Transplant Team Needs You!

WHY?

To represent your country and province at the IX World Transplant Games in Vancouver, B.C., from July 4 to July 10, 1993. More than 1,000 transplant athletes from 34 countries will meet to compete in an exciting and memorable event. The IX World Transplant Games is the largest event held to date to demonstrate the success of transplantation and to emphasize the need for organ donation.

HOW TO QUALIFY?

- You must be a vital organ transplant recipient (kidney, liver, lung, heart).
- You must have your transplant for at least 1 year at the time of the Games (exceptions may be made for those who have had a transplant between 6-12 months).
- You have obtained a written certificate from your transplant physician.
- You have trained in the sport(s) you will be participating in (e.g. track & field, swimming, tennis, golf, table tennis, badminton, cycling, and lawn bowling).

HOW TO SIGN UP!

- Write to the Canadian Transplant Games Association at P.O. Box 46, Station U, Toronto, Ontario, M8Z 5M4, or phone 416-451-6098, for your registration package or
- Contact a CTGA Regional Co-ordinator in your area (see back of flyer for list)

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

- Competitor = \$807.00, includes accommodation, meals, local transportation & registration fee for 7 nights.
- Accompanying person = \$700.00
(Please note that these prices could be less if you do not require accommodation or meals.)

WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING?

Beginning in late March 1993, a donor card will be carried from Newfoundland to Vancouver. Contact the CTGA Regional Co-ordinator in your area for more information, or write to CTGA directly.

**JOIN US FOR THE TRANSPLANT GAMES EXPERIENCE AND
BE A PART OF THE TRANS CANADA RELAY**

Athlete recruitment poster for the Canada Transplant Games.

The Expanding Life of Carol Devine

Questions for Discussion

Introduction

1. Name some of the jobs Carol had before she became seriously ill with kidney disease.
2. How did diabetes affect Carol's eyes?

A Child Diabetic

1. How old was Carol when she was diagnosed with diabetes?
2. Why was Carol's mother familiar with the symptoms of diabetes?
3. What kind of diabetes did Carol have? How was it treated?
4. How are today's tests for blood sugar levels better than when Carol was a child?

Teenage Years

1. Why did Carol's serious diabetic problems start when she was 12 or 13 years old? Do you think the same thing would have happened to a boy?
2. What happened to Carol when she was about 23?
3. Why did Carol go blind in her right eye? What special kind of surgery did she have?
4. What was Carol working at when she became severely ill? Did she like the job? Why?

What Is a Kidney Transplant?

1. Which people make the best matches for those who need kidney transplants?
2. What does dialysis do?
3. Who in Carol's family was found to be the best donor match for her?

The Transplant: In Carol's Own Words

1. How did Carol find out that Brenda was thinking about donating a kidney to her?
2. Why did Carol decide to accept Brenda's kidney?
3. How long did Carol's doctors think her new kidney might work? Were they right?
4. How did the transplant operation go?
5. How does a transplant operation affect the donor?
6. Why were Carol and Brenda kept apart after the operation? Do you think they found this difficult?
7. Why did Brenda call Carol and tell her to look out the window? Do you think Brenda's action was wise?
8. After the transplant operation, Carol started looking forward to breakfast. Why?
9. How did Carol and Brenda's family help them through their recovery?
10. How do you think Carol would have felt if her new kidney had lasted for only a short time?

The Transplant Games

1. How did Carol first hear about the Transplant Games?
2. What is Carol's main sport?
3. Who went with Carol to her first Games?
4. Why did Carol miss the 1991 Games?

Taking The Lead

Discovering Personal Power

5. Why do you think people who have had transplants want to compete in their own Games? If you had a transplant, would you choose to compete? In which sport?
6. Who started the World Transplant Games?

Carol Today

1. How is Carol's health today?
2. Why do you think Carol has been involved in so much community and volunteer work?
3. Name some of the organizations Carol is a member of.
4. How does Carol exercise her artistic side?
5. Why do you think Carol continues to say "yes" to life, when it has so often said "no" to her.
6. Put Carol's personal philosophy in your own words.