

Conall's *Rock in the Water* on Leacock Medal short list

by Jim Morrow

Tarbot's Bill Conall has been short-listed (one of five) for the prestigious Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal for his book *Rock in the Water*.

Mr. Conall's book is set on Quadra Island situated between Vancouver Island and the mainland of British Columbia and is a collection of vignettes about the people and situations they find themselves in as they try to make their way through the day to day of Island life.

There is a sense of familiarity with or perhaps a faint echo from the stories in *Rock in the Water* and Stephen Leacock's famous *Sunshine Sketches of a Small Town*.

Mr. Conall admits that, "when I began to write the book my only goal was to make that list, and it has happened. Winning the big prize would be nice, but almost anti-climactic."

When asked if there were any similarities between the people and places on Quadra Island and those on Cape Breton Island Mr. Conall replied that "on the west coast the trees and the mountains are taller, but the people are about the same size. The spoken language of Cape Bretoners clearly reflects two hundred years of Gaelic history. I

don't recall any particular dialect specific to Quadra or the other Gulf Islands though the mind-set of many of the people is the same. And on the west coast one is much less likely to trip over a fiddler every time you turn around."

Tarbot was chosen as his place of residence, Mr. Conall said, "because we wanted to live in a smaller community and away from south-central Ontario. We like living out in the bush in Tarbot. Rosemary went to work at the Freshmart in Baddeck and met the townies; I play cribbage and darts and met our North River neighbours. While we will always be 'from away', we have been welcomed in the community and have made some good friends. We are great fans of the abundant wildlife (animal variety, of course)."

Bill Conall is also known locally for his singing and songwriting which he compares contrasts with his fiction writing by saying, "In the writing of songs (or poems) there seems to be a bit more urgency to capture the concept or theme quickly, to get the essence down right away and then refine it from there. Every word is important and too many can hobble the effectiveness of the piece. In a story there is much more

leniency and a good deal more 'cooking' time. My writing style is usually to make a short story long so I tend to ramble, shuffle back and forth, digress, follow tangents etc. It seems to be effective with stories but would not work nearly as well with songs.

"As to the music and writing similarities, I would say that having a strong background of music makes a definite difference in my writing. In songwriting sometimes a lot of descriptive background information is implied rather than expressed and this is a very effective technique in 'real' writing.

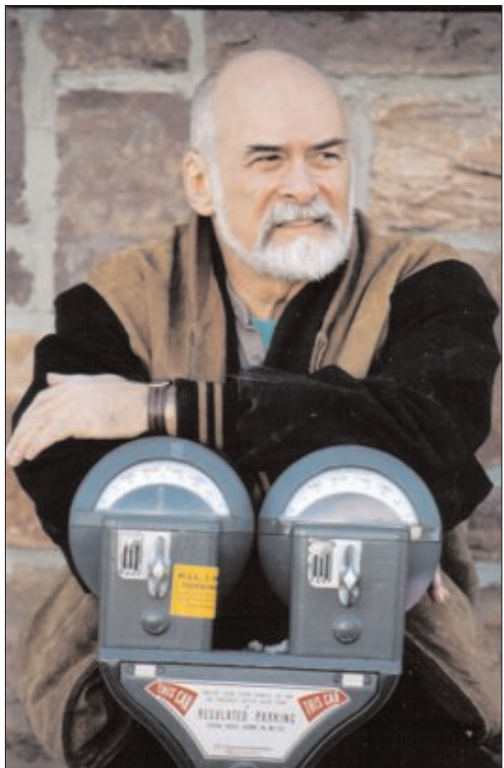
The Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal has been awarded every year since 1947, with the exception of 1959. A short list of five books is published in March and the winning book is announced in April. The Medal and cash award is presented at the Award

Dinner held in late May or early June, in Orillia, Ontario. The award has attained an international reputation and is the only award of its kind for Canadian humour.

The Orillia-based Stephen Leacock Association awards the annual literary prize to the book judged to be the most humorous one published in Canada, by a Canadian, in the previous year. This national award carries a \$15,000 cash prize courtesy of TD Financial Group and the winner also receives a silver Leacock Memorial Medal. The four runners-up will also receive cheques for their efforts.

Six national judges from across Canada and a group of 11 readers in Orillia will select the winner, to be announced April 29th at the Stephen Leacock Museum.

Mr. Conall will be in attendance.



Author, Bill Conall

BADDECK, NOVA SCOTIA

Part Time Customer Service Associates

- Flexible Schedules • Employee Discounts • Scholarship Program

Couche-Tard store customer service associates are all different. But they have something in common: a radiant smile and the desire to satisfy customers! You will see just how much you play a major role in the lives of people in your neighbourhood.

Please apply online at www.couche-tard.jobs/en or e-mail your resume to jobs.ns@couche-tard.com



MACRAE'S ESSO
Baddeck • 295-2370



Canadian Cancer Society

Relay for Life

The Canadian Cancer Society
Relay for Life

will be held in Cheticamp, Cabot Trail Arena on June 4th and Sydney, Victoria Park, Port Hawkesbury, Tamarac Education Centre and Arichat, Ecole Beau Port on June 11th. One of the most memorable moments of this spring event will be the Luminary Ceremony to be held at dusk. During this heartwarming ceremony candles are lit and placed on the track in honour of cancer survivors or in memory of those who lost their battle with cancer.



Acadian, East Coast and
St. Joseph's Credit Unions
are holding a special

LUMINARY DAY

Wednesday, April 28th

in support of the Relay for Life. Visit any Credit Union branch on that day and purchase a luminary to be placed on the relay track and lit during this special ceremony. Come out and witness the stunning sight of thousands of candles lighting the track throughout the night of the relay.

