

**Reflection on the Annual Meeting of Maritime Conference  
June 23, 2013**

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There were two theme speakers at the Annual Meeting of Maritime Conference. I will tell you something about what one of those speakers had to say. But I will preface that by saying that quite a bit of the meeting was indirectly or directly involved with getting more people involved with helping to pay for the new Maritime Conference Centre. It contains the Conference Office and the Conference Staff and various spaces for different kinds of meetings, and a state-of-the-art Archives facility.

The speaker I will highlight was Margaret McCain, the former Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick and one of the Florenceville McCain family. She told how she grew up in Sackville, attended a United Church there, went to Mount Allison University, married a McCain, and moved to Florenceville, and since then has attended an Anglican church, where she has been organist for many years. She said that she had mostly lost touch with the United Church.

Recently, she was approached by a long-time friend from Mount Allison days - a United Church minister - as to whether she would contribute to the campaign to pay for the new United Church Conference Centre and Archives. She said no. Why would she give money for an Archives? Well, she pondered that question herself, and chose to search for information about the United Church. What she learnt impressed her a great deal. She learnt how the United Church had been in the forefront of so many human rights and social justice issues -- and was the first and, in some cases, only church to be involved. I felt it to be a marvellous account of the forward-thinking activities of this United Church of ours.

In short, I was impressed, and felt good about our church. After her searching, Margaret McCain changed her mind. She felt it more than vital that the United Church story be preserved for posterity -- and yes, in an archives building. She committed \$150,000 to the \$3 million campaign. She urged us delegates to "go out and tell the United Church story with pride!"

We do have a remarkable story to tell. We need to be open and forthright with it -- and we need to know that its details are preserved in an archives. I should say that the story of Forest Hill United Church is to be found in the archives. We send our records periodically.

I should tell you more about the fundraising campaign for the new building. So far, the effort has largely been directed at individuals in the church. It was felt that solid backing from the people of the church was needed before going outside the church for support.

Towards the end of the meeting, a motion was carried to include not only individual commitments, but also commitments from Pastoral Charges. Further, that indication of the level of the response should be made before the fall meeting of the Conference Executive. The Executive was given power to adjust the 2014 Conference Allocations - the amounts the Pastoral Charges are required to pay - so that mortgage and down payments may be made without incurring additional debt in 2014. So, if Forest Hill is willing to make a commitment over, say, 3 or 5 years, it should do so by early fall THIS YEAR.

If Margaret McCain finds reason to support the campaign, maybe Forest Hill should too.