

Editor's Note

Boards of education have not always been kind to historic schools under their jurisdiction. Their priorities—ensuring good teaching, high academic standards and providing facilities that meet students' needs—sometimes put boards unnecessarily in conflict with preservation. In recent years, we have witnessed a terrible loss of school buildings of historic, architectural and social value. Canada is not alone. In the United States, the situation had become so alarming that last year the National Trust For Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C., placed neighbourhood schools on its annual list of Eleven Most Endangered Properties.

Our feature on the Lunenburg Academy by renowned author and Lunenburg resident Marq de Villiers tells a different story. The school, which recently completed a major restoration, has been in continued use since it opened in 1895. Mr. de Villiers describes how, during its long history, the Academy survived reduced numbers of students, safety concerns, general deterioration and political overtures for a more modern building. These problems are not uncommon to many other old schools and often lead to their demise. What made the outcome different in Lunenburg, he noted, was a community that treasured its school as part of its heritage and worked to save it. It's an uplifting story.

Historian Julie Harris, in our second feature, discusses the promise and pitfalls of Web site creation by heritage organizations. Given our own experience with a new Web site design, we wish we had had this information previously. Ms. Harris provides a number of suggestions which will benefit those groups that are just getting started.

Veronica Vaillancourt