

## Your History Needs YOU!

Saint George's Church, Halifax is a unique example of a sophisticated circular Palladian church built in wood by a pioneer community in 1800. Its spectacular design was influenced by Edward Duke of Kent, father of Queen Victoria, and emerging as it did from the first Lutheran congregation in this country, it has played a vital part in the history of the City. The church was badly burned June 2. Since that date, Canadians from all walks of life have made it clear they wish this part of their history restored. The campaign to restore Saint George's is gathering momentum and support like a snowball. Although the official fundraising campaign will not be launched until early 1995, governments are on side and the grassroots support that was obvious the day after the fire continues. People want to help.

However, the restoring of this National Historic Site is a major project which will involve help from the historical and heritage community--knowledgeable Canadians who care about our roots. Be warned, in the next issue of the Bulletin, you will be asked to make a contribution to help restore this

beautiful and significant monument to our nation's early history.

Meanwhile, indicators are good for the project. Cash donations of more than \$200,000 have flowed in from sources as diverse as local grade sixers whose bake sale raised \$72 to a lady in California who sent U.S. \$5,000. Practical help ranges from the design and printing of a brochure to concerts, art shows, car washes, and fundraising dinners. Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia is making a special appeal to its members and the Nova Scotia Architects' Association will mount an exhibition about the church in February.

Members of the congregation have pledged more than \$170,000 towards the restoration and, at the practical level, have invested over \$100,000 in a cocoon of steel and plastic to prevent further deterioration. With the building safe, the congregation is now working to find the money for the restoration. The preliminary cost estimate is \$6 million, of which half is expected to come from insurance and government, leaving \$3 million to come from people.

All three levels of government are very committed to the restoration. Soon after the fire, Parks Canada experts established that the 60 per cent of the building which remains is of heritage value and Minister of Canadian Heritage Michel Dupuy travelled to Halifax to announce that the church is eligible for the National Cost-Sharing Program. Negotiation of a cost-sharing agreement is now going on, with the help of heritage consultant Harold Kalman, author of the recently published *History of Canadian Architecture*.

An application for an Infrastructure Works Grant has been recommended by the provincial Municipal Affairs Department and the City of Halifax gave \$25,000 to help with the cocoon and is committed to find special funding to help with the restoration.

For a not-very-affluent congregation, responsibility for a National Historic Site is an onerous task at the best of times, but when that site is badly burned, the task becomes enormous. However, the vital signs are good. With your help, Saint George's will rise again!

Anne West

