

50th Anniversary of Owl's Head Ski

**Over 75 years in our community
by Sandra Jewett**

In the name of Potton Heritage Association, I am happy to add our best wishes to the many in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Owl's Head Ski in our community. The contribution that Fred Korman, both personally, and through his business enterprises, has made to the economic, social and community life here in Potton is significant, and deserves praise.

The Committee for Culture and Heritage of Potton, on the recommendation of our Association, awarded the Culture and Heritage Prize for 2012 to Fred Korman. This prize is awarded to a resident of Potton, who, in the opinion of his peers, has made a significant and enduring contribution to the cultural life here, in addition to helping to preserve the heritage of our Township:

Fred Korman was Mayor of Potton from 1965 to 1969, at a time when our Province Hill covered bridge built in 1896, was to be replaced by a more modern one. Without notice or consultation with local municipal authorities, the Ministry of Transport determined that the historic bridge was to be dismantled and removed – a practical decision which ignored both the uniqueness of the structure and its importance to Potton's heritage as part of the

living memory of our community.

Mayor Korman acted very quickly on site: the intended demolition ceased and the MTQ authorities were convinced to leave the majestic old wooden bridge intact. Today, the Pont de la Frontière is one of the few remaining covered bridges in Quebec, of the hundreds which once dotted the landscape, and one of the six once found in Potton. Preserving heritage was hardly the social preoccupation of 50 years ago! We are grateful to Fred for his forethought and courage in opposing the MTQ decision those many years ago. Thanks to him, the Pont de la frontière, is still a valuable asset in the tourist offering in Potton, and much effort is now being devoted to its restoration.

The Korman family name is well known in the contemporary history of Potton. It is one synonymous with tenacity, innovation and hard work. Fred is a native son, brought up and educated in Mansonville. His family were market gardeners, growing and selling



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speciality produce to urban & local shops long before the notion of buying local became so popular with the consumer.

When rural electrification was introduced in Potton, in the late 1940's, it was a young Fred Korman, under the tutelage of his father, who helped to wire most of the businesses and homes in our Township. In addition to being our Mayor, Fred was also the Chief of the Fire department. In a time of a far less significant municipal tax base, it was Fred who insisted that funds be allocated to provide at least minimal safety equipment to the volunteer firemen, a fact that is still remembered.

Fred Korman, has long been considered a man ahead of his time, well respected as much for his entrepreneurial skills, as for his business acumen. With others of the Korman family, he helped to found Mansonville Plastics Limited in 1958, which gave significant economic boost to this municipality. The company is now owned by NexKemia Petrochemicals Inc.

Concurrently, Fred also began his electrical division, Fred Korman Inc., which specialised in the building of substations for Hydro-Québec in northern Quebec. His enterprising spirit continued with the acquisition of Owl's Head Mountain, and the making of Owl's Head Ski, the 50th anniversary of which is now celebrated. Eventually Owl's Head Owl Golf joined with Owl's Head Ski to offer employment opportunity and year-round economic advantage to the region.

With his wife Lillian and his daughter Carol, Fred and family personify the adages of "shoulder to the wheel" and "nose to the grindstone". Few are the days when they are not 'on the job'!

This family have consistently demonstrated community spirit. From the humble church supper of the 1950's to the sophisticated music festivals of the 2000's, to hosting community sponsored golf tournaments, Fred and Lilian have always aided in the promotion of our Township. Owl's Head and Fred have supported the aims of Potton Heritage Association, first by sharing the production costs of Potton's bicentennial activities and the publication, in 1997, of *"Potton d'antan-Yesterdays of Potton"*, still our most popular book. By sponsoring Autumnfest, now called Festival de Plein Air, and Oktoberfest, through hosting a benefit supper for the preservation of the round barn in Mansonville, Fred Korman has generously promoted the preservation of our history and heritage.

A business man of considerable acumen and experience, Fred Korman is one of Potton's most influential personalities and is truly a home-grown success story: a modest man who is both known, respected and admired by his fellow citizen. I am privileged to thank you and congratulate you and your family, in the name of Potton Heritage Association and your fellow citizens, on these 50 years of accomplishment.
