

### 1. City Images:

Islanders have mixed opinions about the City. Some are attracted to the perceived excitement, diversity and opportunity presented by the City, while some are repelled, even frightened by its fast pace, noise, pollution, commercialism, perceived danger and unfriendliness. One respondent to the 1973 social survey, for example, commented, "People smile and kids are happy. Here you have a sense of belonging. It is far removed from that cancer called a City."

While perceiving an obvious physical contrast between the Island and the City, some Islanders perceive some social similarities (e.g., diverse population; presence of well-educated, interesting, sophisticated people). Some Islanders, like former Islander Alan Howard, see themselves as essentially "City" people<sup>1</sup> and characterize the Island community as very "cosmopolitan".

Undoubtedly there are both cosmopolitan, sophisticated City-types on the Island, as well as more parochial, local-types who are basically uninterested in (if not repelled by) the City. By living on the Island, as David Amer suggested, "you can be as parochial as you want...or [as] expansive."

### 2. Small Town Images:

Islanders' images of their being socially similar to the City, at least in some respects, are clarified by their images of small towns. Some Islanders see the Island as being "just like a small town". Precisely what this means is not always specified, although

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<sup>1</sup>See Elizabeth Amer's comments below on the differences between the Island and the small town, pp. 217-218.

presumably it means such things as its being perceived as a friendly place where everybody knows everybody else, where people are safe and secure, where people are involved in community affairs and exercise a degree of control over the community and where there is a true sense of community.

Some see the Island as having the benefits of a small town (such as friendliness and proximity to nature), without the disadvantages (such as parochialism, limited shopping, and so on),<sup>1</sup> because it is located so close to a big city. "It's a nice compromise," comments Ron Mazza, "in the sense that you have a small town community sensation attached to all the advantages of a larger city, which you don't have if you are actually in a small town."

But other people deny that the Island is like a small town at all. Elizabeth Amer, who spent a lonely, unhappy year in Newcastle, Ontario, comments on the differences. She admits that, in contrast to on the Island, in Newcastle she was an "outsider", but she obviously feels that the differences stemmed from more than the differences between being an "outsider" or an "insider". She found the house and the physical surroundings beautiful, but the social situation less attractive or comfortable:

Newcastle [at that time was] full of small town people and the Island is full of City people, so although it's a small number of people living together, they're city folks, you know, who, I tend to think are different than small town people. The mentality is different....It was very conformist, I thought.... It was a very lonely year. That was the great thing that one appreciated about the Island, coming back to it, was that there was this opportunity for lots of contacts with people and lots of interesting people....I think [David and I] need to be in the

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<sup>1</sup>Some also see it as having some of the disadvantages of a small town, like nosiness and family feuding. See comments quoted on p. 192.

City in order to find people who are attuned to our peculiar approach to life. We can find people here on the Island. We could find them in the City, I think; but to find our sort of peculiar people who are not in the mainstream, to find associates and friends in a small town is very difficult.

1. Suburbia: Social Images:

Islanders' images of the City and the small town are mixed; but their images of the suburbs (which remain fairly undifferentiated and generalized) are virtually entirely negative.<sup>1</sup> They see suburbia and suburbanites as being, in most respects, the opposite of the Island and Islanders: as homogeneous, conformist, intolerant of individuality, socially uninvolving, and obsessed with cars, status, convenience, neatness, "getting ahead", and material success. Two Islanders reveal their negative images:

Sometimes you get a young couple here who've come here, they've got married and they've come here because it's very cheap and they're saving up for a down payment. Now, what they're really interested in is that split-level or brick bungalow in Oakville or some place and this'll do them until they get enough money together. And it's a decent place to have your kids if you're having kids. But their object is to bank money and get the hell out into where "real life" is taking place, in one of the suburbs. And they can start doing that there, in a wall-to-wall broadloomed, French provincial number. That's what it's really all about: making money and being neat.

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Whoever it was who planned the Borough of Etobicoke - the perfect community - would be intolerant of the "slum conditions" [here] ....I think the conventions and therefore the by-laws of a planned community - if you go along with the Borough of Etobicoke and you're not supposed to hang out your washing, you have to have a dryer and you're not allowed to have a television aerial and you can't have your dog on a leash which is longer than ten feet, etc., if you really subscribed to all that stuff, then it would drive you crazy living over here, because there are just too many people who do not want to go along with that. If you can understand that people can function without having those things and still be interesting people, then I think you can live here....I know people who can live in houses which should be condemned and function in them

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<sup>1</sup>See also Sense of Environment: "Suburbia: Physical Images," pp. 278-279 for a lengthier discussion of suburbia which emphasizes the physical aspects.

and are interesting people. I know people who will wipe off their plastic doormat the minute you come in and they function and they're nice people. They can live here. So you can find people here who would prefer that things be super neat--all the visual stuff--all the things that bombard their senses--they can live here and you can enjoy their company a real lot and realize that they're part of the mosaic.

In conclusion, the first part of this chapter has investigated those aspects of the Island and Island life which draw Islanders together as a group and foster a strong sense of community. The second part of the chapter looks at the relationships between this sense of community and the political history of the Island.

ii. Sense of Community - Defense of Place:

The links between sense of community and defense of place are manifold.

a. Impact of Islanders' Sense of Community On Their Defense of Place:

1. Direct Appeal Based on Community Arguments:

Islanders' strong sense of community has provided a general foundation on which they could build a defense of their Island. Although Islanders and their supporters, as discussed below, have relied heavily on "community preservation" arguments only since about 1973, they have alluded to the strength and value of their community when responding to various threats over the years.

As early as 1937, for example, when 54 West Island Drive (Hanlan's Point) houses were faced with destruction in order to make way for the building of the Island airport, Islanders, in their attempt to find a new site on the Island for their houses, emphasized that in

recent years they had become a "real community"<sup>1</sup> on Hanlan's Point. They had built a clubhouse (1925) and improved their local church, St. Emmanuel's. In a respectful appeal to the City Board of Control, therefore, the Hanlan's Point Association noted:

We want to leave this one thought clearly in your mind that we are a community as a whole and wish to remain that way. The removal of any considerable number out of our immediate section will weaken the whole....

We know you gentlemen are kept busy and the daily problems are difficult of solution, but we want to leave you with the thought that you are dealing with a community that has friendly, co-operative interests and not with an isolated body of residents.<sup>2</sup>

Eventually the City did find a new site, as requested, but not near Hanlan's Point. Algonquin Island (né Sunfish Island) was opened for cottage development.

As noted in Sense of History, the major development of the late 1940's and early 1950's was the rapid growth of the winter (and year-round) community. This led to a fundamental change in Islanders' image of themselves (as an established, residential community, rather than as a summer resort community) and in their relations with City politicians (who, for the most part, continued to regard the Island as a summer resort and were reluctant to spend money or encourage year-round

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<sup>1</sup>Hanlan's Point Association, "Brief to the Mayor and Board of Control," Minutes-City Board of Control, 1937, vol. 2, July 28, 1938, Item #321, p. 1. This is the first example of Islanders' using "community arguments" uncovered in this study.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

residence).<sup>1</sup> A winter community on the Island, of course, needed more facilities and services than a summer one--winter transportation, additional fire and police protection, better flood control measures, more educational facilities, and so on. And permanent residents were more likely than summer ones to be both aware of inadequacies and less likely to put up with them. Their Island house, after all, was their permanent home--not their temporary Island retreat. So, as they grew in numbers, they became more demanding and aggressive in their relations with politicians and public officials. These, in turn, became more and more reluctant to spend money on the Island and, ultimately, decided to hand it over to Metro for parkland.

During this same period (prior to Metro's assuming control in 1956), when Island residents were increasingly seeing themselves as a year-round community, City politicians and other interested parties put forward a variety of proposals to radically change the Island. In order to respond to these proposals, and to generally represent their interests at City Hall, Islanders formed the Inter-Island Council (IIC) in 1948, which marked a turning point in Islanders' political behaviour and image of themselves as an established, year-round community.

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<sup>1</sup>For a brief period in the late 1940's when Toronto was in the grip of a severe post-War housing crisis, City politicians did make improvements to such services as winter transportation in order to encourage winter living on the Island, but their encouragement was short-lived. As an example of politicians' regarding the Island as a summer resort, Mayor Lamport in 1952 suggested that there was a health menace because of flooding and threatened evacuation of winter - but not summer - residents. (See p. 145.) And, defending his own proposal in April 1953, Lamport commented, "As long as we have permanent residents on the Island, we will have permanent headaches and permanent deficits." Quoted in "Must End All-Year Residence on Island/ Raise Level - Mayor," Star, April 14, 1953.

Contending that the Island was not only a City park, but "also an integral residential area of the City",<sup>1</sup> the IIC became an active, occasionally aggressive, voice for Island residents and at each stage countered these proposals with suggestions of its own which would have improved the park and housing conditions, but which would have left the existing residential areas alone. During this period, Islanders did, from time to time, allude to the value of retaining the existing community. In 1949, for example, Island spokesmen, supported by over 100 Island residents, objected to a City Planning Board Official Plan proposal to eliminate and replace the existing houses with new apartment buildings and hotels. IIC representative, Mr. A. Whisken, observed that, in contrast to summer homes, "Permanent homes mean that people have a year-round stake in the Island. A permanent 'watchdog' population would be better for the Island in general."<sup>2</sup> and, further, "The greatest protection of the island as a park area is to have an interested community there."<sup>3</sup> Then, in 1951, IIC spokesman Alan Howard opposed the joint Toronto Harbour Commission-City Planning Board plan (Map 23) saying, among other things:

The City Planning Board has stressed the fact that a large city suffers from loss of community spirit vital to the life of a city

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<sup>1</sup> Inter-Island Council, Preamble To Part One of Its Brief Concerning the Future of the Island, April 12, 1948. This was issued several months after the first City Planning Board proposal in 1947 to eliminate existing houses and replace them with new apartments and other permanent housing. (See also Map 22.)

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in "Delegation of Islanders Protests Master Plan, Raps Road Suggestion," Globe and Mail, October 12, 1949.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

and yet here it would wipe out one tightly-knit community that is doing its best to assist civic administration.<sup>1</sup>

But, in these early years, such references were infrequent and low-key. Islanders stressed other arguments in their political struggles.

For a number of years after Metro took over the Island and began demolishing houses to extend the park, whatever sense of community Islanders felt did not translate into taking political action. There was little opposition to the demolitions during the 1950's and the battles for the Lakeshore houses (orchestrated by Islanders' ward alderman and "champion" David Rotenberg) did not employ community arguments, presumably because neither Islanders nor their political supporters had any reason to believe that such arguments would fall on receptive ears. In the late 1960's, however, the general political environment began to change: the "citizens' movement" (which, among other things, grew out of urban renewal and neighbourhood preservation battles) was growing in the City of Toronto, as in other major North American cities. As a reflection of this new mood, the remaining Toronto Island residents (on Ward's and Algonquin) formed a new political organization to succeed the now-defunct IIC--the Toronto Island Residents Association (TIRA), "for the single purpose of preserving the Toronto Island community".<sup>2</sup> In an introductory letter to fellow Islanders to drum up support for the new organization, Peter Gzowski (President of the WIA) and Mark Harrison (President of the AIA)

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Marilyn Bell, "Fear No Place For Tots On 'Incubator Island' In Transformation Plan," Telegram, September 13, 1951.

<sup>2</sup>Draft Constitution, adopted July 30, 1969.

referred to the new developments on the Mainland:

At least one new trend in Toronto politics is worth our paying attention to. It ought to encourage us. More and more, the people who make the decisions at City Hall - the civil servants as well as the politicians - are listening to the desires of various community groups. Rather than telling them what will become of them, they're asking them what should. The cases of Trefann Court and Don Vale are two strong examples. In each case, community organizations were able to affect the future of the communities they represented.<sup>1</sup>

The same letter discussed the virtues of the Island community:

And all around Toronto, as in other megalopolises of the 1960's, town planners are looking for new ways to build the kinds of communities that already exist here, communities that mix together all ages and all income levels, all backgrounds and a variety of interests. What those town planners are seeking are new ways to counteract the sterilizing monotony of today's suburbia. We offer an existing example of what they're spending money to create.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, although in the early 1970's some politicians made references to the value of preserving the Island community<sup>3</sup> and Islanders began increasingly to debate among themselves the justifications for having a permanent community on the Island,<sup>4</sup> Island residents continued to take the advice of their senior alderman, David Rotenberg, not to emphasize community arguments and to simply argue for temporary

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Gzowski and Mark Harrison, "Open Letter To The Islanders," Ward's Island Weekly, July 11, 1969.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>On June 29, 1971, for example, Karl Jaffary told Metro Council, "We should not needlessly destroy a community" as he voted for a lease extension. Alden Baker, "Islanders Get At Least One Year Reprieve," Globe and Mail, June 30, 1971.

<sup>4</sup>For example, during the summer of 1971, the TIRA Executive engaged in several long and heated debates over whether to send a letter suggesting that the Metro Planning Board should investigate whether a permanent residential community should be created on the Island. They finally decided not to.

extensions of their leases (which they obtained in 1970 and 1971).

Community preservation arguments, like historic preservation arguments, only came to the fore after the December 1972 municipal elections. Mayor David Crombie, a large number of City aldermen and a small number of borough politicians, were elected on neighbourhood preservation platforms and a spirit of community preservation was abroad in the City (but, unfortunately for Islanders, not in the boroughs or on Metro Council). After the 1972 elections, therefore, Islanders and their political supporters (see below) have relied heavily on community preservation arguments: i.e., that the Toronto Island community is a strong and distinctive community which deserves to be preserved for this reason alone (quite apart from all the other reasons cited by supporters for why Island homes should be retained-- e.g., because there is a housing shortage or because Islanders make a positive contribution to the quality of the park by adding a touch of diversity or a measure of safety, or because more parkland is not needed at this particular location, and so on). In November 1973, at one of the three public meetings sponsored by the City prior to the Metro Council vote on the future of the Island community (December 11, 1973), TIRA Executive member Peter Atkinson said:

We are a tight-knit community for a number of reasons. The main one is geography. We experience a good deal of isolation from popular forms of city entertainment, so we group together and run our own forms of entertainment....We are also a "together" group because we have lived under the threat of destruction for so many years.

Our viable community may be on the verge of destruction. If our point is not understood and appreciated at meetings such as this, the bulldozers may very well bury the last remnants of a strong

community.<sup>1</sup>

Later that month, TIRA Chairman Maureen Smith presented TIRA's Brief to the Metro Parks and Recreation Committee. Noting that she was "here on an emotional errand", she tried to counter various charges commonly laid against Islanders (e.g., that they were transient or rich or greedy and so on) and made a strong plea not to destroy "a living community":

If we had to move, some of us would find it very hard to find new places to live, at prices that we could afford to pay and this particularly applies to old people, of whom there are quite a number on the Island. You know, it is all very easy to be a planner and say "we'll have to clear these houses off. They're in the way." But these are not just squatters' shacks, as some people, who should know better, claimed. It is not houses we are talking about. Not their lots. Not a prime piece of real estate. It is a living community, whose character has been shaped over the years, generations in some cases, by the people who live there....We are, I agree, somewhat independent - free spirits perhaps - in an increasingly confined world. We like to make our own pleasures. We support our own community centres which we built and on which we pay taxes. We do things there which sometimes seem to people more like the activities in a small village. There are a lot of craftsmen on the Island - potters, weavers, artists - and next week the community centre will become a Christmas bazaar. But I've said enough about what kind of people we are. I want to make it clear to you that we are not some kind of freaks or opportunist squatters or rapacious land speculators - just ordinary people. We want to stay on the Island because it is our home and because it seems unreasonable to destroy a community at this time. We in fact occupy very little of the space on the Islands and we know that we don't get in the way of people from elsewhere in Metro enjoying visits to the Island Park. I've borrowed some aerial photographs which I'd like you to look at and they show what a small part of the Island our community does in fact cover. Does it really have to be destroyed?

Their plea, however, fell on deaf ears at Metro.

As is evident from the rest of this chapter, Islanders have continued to stress such community preservation arguments.

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Atkinson, Speech, November 14, 1973.

## 2. Refusal To Split The Community:

In addition to leading to such direct appeals based on community arguments, Islanders' sense of community has affected their political behaviour in a number of other ways.

It has caused Islanders to react strongly against any attempt to "divide and conquer" their community. For example, it motivated them to reject a proposal of the Metro Parks and Recreation Committee in June 1971 to terminate Ward's Island leases but to extend Algonquin leases for a year. Maureen Smith describes Islanders' reaction to this attempt to split the community:

The community just went ZINK! We're not going to be divided. It was fantastic, you know....There was a meeting in the WIA Clubhouse that night and somebody said, "Are we prepared to accept it?" And we said, "No! All or Nothing!" And it was really the first time in years that the two Islands had said, "We're in it together, through thick or thin."...Maybe, probably the odd voice in private [favoured accepting it]....There were a few Algonquin people who said, "Let's not jeopardize our year by supporting them". And they just got literally flattened by other Algonquin Islanders....We said [to Rotenberg], "No way." And we said, "It's just stupid. We can't take that. That's crazy." So, he said, "Don't worry. Don't worry."

TIRA rapidly put together a strongly-worded brief which stated emphatically that Islanders "consider themselves a single, united community",<sup>1</sup> and "to destroy half the houses would be to kill the community."<sup>2</sup> For the first time at Metro Council, Islanders developed a community argument which emphasized the social mix, the value of the community to the park and the historic nature of the community:

The car-free environment; the combination of residential and park

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<sup>1</sup>Toronto Island Residents Association, Brief To the Members of The Executive Committee and Council of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, June 29, 1971.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

uses of land; and the variety of ages, incomes, interests and occupations of the residents make the Island the kind of community that many modern planners are trying to create.

For 125 years the presence of this residential community has provided mainland visitors with variety, contrast and human interest. Countless mainlanders have been rescued from drowning by Island residents. The absence of these residents will result in an increased and needless loss of life.<sup>1</sup>

"To destroy needlessly a century old community", they concluded, "would be irresponsible and immoral."<sup>2</sup> On this occasion, Metro Council voted to extend all the leases of residents on both Ward's and Algonquin Islands.

Islanders' strong sense of community also enabled them to fend off attempts by Metro in 1974 to threaten and seduce Islanders into leaving the Island before the August 31, 1974 deadline (set by Metro Council on December 11, 1973).<sup>3</sup> TIRA sent out the following appeal to Islanders' sense of community:

TIRA has managed to get a copy of a letter which will shortly be sent to you by Metro Toronto. These letters are being sent out by Metro on a street by street basis.

#### DON'T PANIC

You will notice that the letter is a direct appeal to you personally to book and leave early. If you believe the community should stay, as TIRA executive does, and as the vast majority of residents of the City and Boroughs do, you will want the community to act as a whole and not on an individual basis. Metro of course wants

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. Nevertheless, this was only one of many arguments (lack of need for additional parkland, lack of park plan, housing shortage, access problems, lack of money for developing the area) and they still shied away from suggesting that there should be a permanent community established.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> For example, in January 1974 Metro sent a letter warning Islanders to book the ferry so they could be sure of being able to remove their possessions and offering assistance in finding housing elsewhere and offering to return part of their rent and taxes if they left early.

to divide and conquer and will probably be doing other things in the future to try and get people on an individual basis.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout their 1974 Spring Campaign to reverse the Metro decision of December 11, 1973 (to evict Islanders on August 31, 1974), Islanders took pains to demonstrate to the public and the politicians (as well as to themselves) that they were united--to project an image of solidarity. For example, in April, they had a meeting with Metro Chairman Paul Godfrey to put pressure on him to change his position against them and, failing that, to demonstrate to him that Islanders were a "solid community",<sup>2</sup> were determined "to preserve their community"<sup>3</sup> and therefore would not leave easily. The meeting was an abrasive one and, although Islanders disagreed over whether the approach they had adopted was the most appropriate one,<sup>4</sup> they did agree that they had succeeded in getting the community solidarity message across.<sup>5</sup>

More recently, Islanders' strong sense of community and refusal to be split has motivated Islanders to reject Provincial legislation which, if passed, would enable present residents to remain on the Island until they moved or died, whereupon their houses would be transferred to Metro, which could either demolish them to extend the park in piecemeal fashion (or in one fell swoop at some future date) or keep them to provide summer housing for such needy people as senior

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<sup>1</sup>Toronto Island Residents Association, Letter to Community, January 25, 1974.

<sup>2</sup>Notes For Meeting With Chairman Godfrey, April 16, 1974, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 1

<sup>4</sup>TIRA Executive Meeting, Godfrey Post-Mortem, video tape.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. and TIRA Newsletter, April 19, 1975, p. 3

citizens. Present residents could continue living on the Island; but, eventually, the Island community would be eliminated.<sup>1</sup> Ron Mazza, Chairman of TIRA, expressed most Islanders' sentiments when he said at a public meeting in October 1979, "They [the Province] seemed to have missed the point that it's the community that we are trying to preserve, not our own individual rights to live here."

As pressure to accept the Provincial legislation became more intense (when Metro Council voted in February 1980 to proceed to evict Islanders if the Provincial legislation was not passed by June 30, 1980), Islanders continued to stand firm. At another meeting in April 1980 to discuss, once again, whether to accept the proposed legislation, one Islander argued against accepting it and echoed Mr. Mazza's earlier comment, "If you want to save your house vote to accept the Bill. If you want to save the Community vote to reject it."<sup>2</sup> Islanders voted overwhelmingly to reject the Provincial Bill (only 10 of the 200+ voted to accept it). They reconfirmed that decision by a smaller (but still large) margin at a long, emotional meeting on June 16, 1980.

### 3. Social Mix:

Islanders' strong desire, described earlier in this chapter, to live in a community with a "social mix" (rich and poor, potters and professionals, summer and year-round, young and old) has also had a marked impact on their political behaviour.

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<sup>1</sup>Maureen Smith has emphasized that since 1970 when Metro adopted a similar approach and included an "attrition clause" (i.e., no selling or transferring of Island houses) in its lease conditions, Islanders have rejected this approach, because it was a sure way of killing the community gradually, but inexorably. Islanders, therefore, have continued selling houses rather than turning their leases into Metro when they moved.

<sup>2</sup>TIRA News, April 22, 1980, p. 1.

As already indicated,<sup>1</sup> Islanders have made a point of emphasizing the social diversity on the Island in their public statements. During the Spring Campaign in 1974, for example, they worked hard to get this message across. In their Save Island Homes booklet, in response to the question "What kind of people live on the Island?", in order to counter the "rich elite" image projected by opponents (see below, pp. 245-246 ) and as a reflection of their own image of themselves as socially diverse, they wrote:

All kinds of people. There's a little of everything on the Island: printers, writers, general handyman, architects, students, teachers, caretakers, lawyers, cashiers, secretaries, old-age pensioners and people on welfare.<sup>2</sup>

And David Harris describes the message he was trying to relay in a slide presentation (showing Island residents standing solemnly in front of the houses they were about to lose if Metro Council did not change its policy):

What we wanted to show people in the City [and Metro] was...that there were real people that lived in those houses; that these real people had children...the tremendous mix that you would get from the whole thing: now there's an old couple in front of their house...here are some young people and here's a family...just to have all of these.

The high value Islanders place on maintaining social diversity on the Island has led many of them to accept the necessity for price controls on housing in order to provide the conditions necessary to maintain that mix (as well as to gain political support). This became an issue only in 1973 when Islanders were optimistic about winning

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<sup>1</sup>For example, Maureen Smith's remarks before the Metro Parks Committee in November 1973 (p. 226 ) and the 1971 TIRA Brief to Metro Council (p. 228 ).

<sup>2</sup>Toronto Island Residents Association, Save Island Homes (Toronto Coach House Press, 1974), p. 17

longer leases and when a number of "reform aldermen" (like Dan Heap and Michael Goldrick) were now on City Council. As early as January 1973, Islanders were discussing "Possible Threats" of more secure tenure on the Island:

1. greater permanence will raise market value of houses.
  - a. Islanders at present renting houses may be forced off the Island if their houses are sold at prices that they can't afford.
  - b. Most new owners will tend to be wealthier than the present average.
  - c. Thus the present socio-economic mixture of the community will be destroyed and the Island may become an expensive district inhabited by the wealthy.<sup>1</sup>

And, after a series of block meetings later that spring, Islanders drew up a list of "community aims", which were later submitted to the City, with the following comments:

There was general agreement [at the block meetings] as to the "community aims". In the case of suggestions concerning maintenance of the Islands' socio-economic mix and price controls, there was widespread - though certainly not unanimous - agreement with the underlying principles involved. The main objections were on the grounds of impracticability of implementing the suggestion.<sup>2</sup>

Support for price controls in order to maintain the social mix grew after this time.

Islanders' commitment to social diversity (as well as their general opposition to any form of splitting the community, which was discussed above) also influenced their reactions to the idea of forming a non-profit housing association or cooperative and coloured the

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<sup>1</sup>TIRA, Agenda of TIRA Meeting, January 7, 1973. See also Sense of Control: "Reactions to Housing Cooperative" for additional comments which reflect Islanders' concern over possible negative side-effects of long tenure.

<sup>2</sup>City of Toronto, Toronto's Island Park Neighbourhoods, op. cit., Appendix C, p. 1.

particular type of association they have been willing to accept.<sup>1</sup> They have been highly reluctant to accept a form which would eliminate either summer residents or wealthier residents.<sup>2</sup> For example, life-long, year-round Islander, Jimmy Jones comments:

I didn't care one way or other [about INPHA] as long as we got to stay. But I didn't want it to be a thing where you weeded out people either. If part got to stay, I think we all should have got to stay. Because [diversity] was the thing that made the Island in the first place.

And, more specifically on the issue of income limitations, Freya Godard told the April 29 meeting called to discuss (and adopt) INPHA why she was opposed to such limitations:

I'd like to speak to the item concerning future residents. I know a lot of you may think, "Well, it doesn't matter what you do to the future residents, because we're here and we're safe." But I'm concerned with the upper limit of \$18,000 a year. I'm not making \$18,000 a year and I don't feel personally threatened by that except in the way that it will undermine one of the strengths of the Island, which has been its diversity - the possibility of living next door to just about any sort of person, whether rich or poor.

For similar reasons, Islanders seriously considered rejecting Mayor David Crombie's last ditch effort to save most—but not all--

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<sup>1</sup>In March and April 1974, the Island Position Committee developed a proposal for the Island Non-Profit Housing Association (INPHA) as a basis for approaching Metro Council to change its position. INPHA would have let summer Islanders continue living on the Island as long as they rented their houses in the winter, but would have required all future residents to be year-round ones; and would have let richer Islanders stay, but might have placed an income limitation (like \$18,000) on future residents. After a long debate on April 29, Islanders (primarily to gain political support) adopted this proposal. Metro Council, however, showed little interest.

<sup>2</sup>TIRA has always seen its mandate as being to protect the entire community (summer as well as winter, rich as well as poor, renters as well as home-owners, new as well as old).

of the community in June 1974.<sup>1</sup> Freya Godard, who would have been saved by the motion, was again strongly against the approach adopted. She explains why she was opposed:

He was dividing the community. You see, he was going to remove people who were already here and who were completely settled and active members of this community....It was going to eliminate some valuable members of the community and I couldn't really have supported that....I think every time you eliminate someone like that [students] that you are limiting the breadth of experience that you get on the Island, cut out people like that and you're cutting out the experience of knowing very wealthy people on the Island.... If there is no temporary winter housing like that, then you probably eliminate the possibility of perhaps students...moving here in winter. You're limiting the range of people....I think everything should be done to enable every type of person to live on the Island and not to have one group becoming the model. I wouldn't want everyone on the Island to be professional or very wealthy. But I could not support doing away with people like that.

She was not alone in holding this opinion, but political pragmatism ultimately triumphed and Islanders on this occasion did not oppose the motion (nor did they enthusiastically endorse it). Metro Council, however, rejected it anyway on June 18, 1974. After this rejection by Metro Council, one Islander commented with some relief at a public meeting that evening, "If you're an optimist, there's one good thing about today's meeting and that was that we're all in the same boat again." There was no possibility of splitting the Island community.

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<sup>1</sup> Mayor Crombie's motion was designed to counter negative images of the Island community (as "transients" or as a "rich elite" or as a "summer cottage resort") and to de-emphasize the people on the Island (whom some Metro Councillors personally disliked) by setting criteria for future residence and by talking about preserving the houses (not the present "community"). His motion set certain residency requirements for future residents: they would have to be year-round residents and they would have to have a "low or moderate income" or they would have had to have lived on the Island for at least 5 years or they would have had to be 55 years or older. He hoped to catch about 90% of present residents in his net.

This same social mix, however, has had some negative influences on the political campaigns to preserve Island homes. Community organizer Dale Perkins, who was hired to help with the Spring Campaign of 1974, comments generally on the political problems associated with trying to unite together different factions or groups:

This was the thing about the Island. Because we had divergent styles, lifestyles, there, and ways of doing things... trying to develop a united approach to dealing with issues was really difficult. The hope was that the issue would be intense enough that it would force a discipline on them. I think that was basically true.

Nevertheless, friction did arise among groups and strong differences of opinion over political strategy and tactics emerged from time to time, notably between "old" and "new" Islanders and "summer" and "year-round" Islanders. (As noted earlier, there is a good deal of over-lap between these groups: many summer Islanders are among the older, more conservative longest-resident members of the community.)

Year-round Islanders have had ambivalent attitudes toward summer residents. (See pp. 213-214.) Generally, any negative feelings have been kept quiet, but, occasionally, under stress, they have floated to the surface. Perhaps one of the most extreme examples of public hostility toward summer residents occurred at a meeting on June 13, 1974 (when Islanders were discussing the Crombie motion, which would have eliminated summer residence). In response to one old gentleman who called out, "How about summer residents who have come here for fifty years?", another year-round Islander responded in almost vituperative terms:

You've got a house in the City....Are we going to worry about some guys coming over for 50 years? If that's brutal, OK. I don't have another house. I was first on Algonquin. There was one family on Ward's and that was mine....It's going to be dog eat

dog. Save the homes [by accepting the Crombie motion] and 90%-95% of the community may be brought along with them.

Throughout the Spring Campaign and the rest of that summer a certain amount of friction arose between TIRA and the WIA.<sup>1</sup> Some WIA members, for example, were unhappy about TIRA using its small clubhouse as the headquarters for the Spring Campaign; and the editor of the Ward's Island Weekly once refused to print TIRA news in the summer of 1974 until instructed to do so by the WIA Executive. Two year-round, life-long Islanders comment on the "we-them" mentality that developed among some older, often summer, residents:

\_\_\_\_\_: Well, there's lots of people who can't associate the fact that we're all members of TIRA and still members of our own respective clubs out there - Ward's Island Association and AIA. And they will cause great arguments when, say, TIRA wanted to use the small Clubhouse, people would say, "Well, TIRA cannot use that small clubhouse" because 'they' - like they were somebody else, not realizing that they were all part and parcel of TIRA. \_\_\_\_\_ was one of those who was really, really angry about TIRA using the small clubhouse as an Executive headquarters - the telephone and that sort of thing. She was really against it all and caused a big rift in the community.

\_\_\_\_\_: Ya. And it was all "they" - and "we" and "them" - like there was just three different sections. There was TIRA; there was the Ward's Island and there was Algonquin. You classified yourself as one. And I finally said to her, "Well, who are 'they'?" "People in TIRA." And I said, "Ya, well, who are 'they'?" She said, "TIRA." I said, "Well, it's you." It was only then that everybody started to go, "Oh, ya."

Some summer residents and some "old" Islanders remained relatively uninvolved in the campaign. (Some, however, were deeply involved.) One summer resident, for example, said that she had not even

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<sup>1</sup>The WIA was established in 1917 by summer residents and it still found some of its most loyal supporters among older Islanders, especially summer residents, who regarded TIRA sceptically - even jealously--as somehow trying to usurp the WIA's position of respect and importance in the community.

gone to many TIRA meetings during this critical period, because "My bowling takes up so much time. They always seem to be on bowling night." And one life-long Islander, who had become involved, commented on her husband's attitude (he was in his late 30's and had also lived on the Island all his life):

My husband doesn't like me to be involved. OK, he is very much a doesn't-like-to-be-noticed kind of thing. Doesn't like to put anybody out or be put out. He likes to live in privacy....I think if I carried a placard or became involved in that way, I would have to do it and not tell him....He prefers me not to do anything like that [telephoning]. I've done it and been hassled as I was doing it.

These differences have carried over into attitudes toward political style. Older Islanders, for example, have tended to oppose demonstrating at City Hall and elsewhere. One elderly lady ( a year-round resident) said, "The demonstration at City Hall. We're of a different generation. It isn't our way of doing things." And the summer resident who did not want to miss her bowling commented, "A lot of their approach I haven't gone for....We had one ass throw something at [Scarborough Controller] Mallette [on May 31, 1974]. I think that was absolutely uncalled for. It is a nice community, a conservative community. They should have behaviour. I don't believe in demonstration." But other residents have agreed with one newer Islander who told a public meeting on May 29, 1974,<sup>1</sup> "It's time to stop being polite [to politicians]. Otherwise they're just going to politely push us off the Island!" and have advocated a more aggressive approach to politicians. This has been a recurrent debate over the years.

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<sup>1</sup> Islanders were discussing whether and how to picket outside Queen's Park on May 30, 1974 and how to behave at the forthcoming meeting at Metro Council on May 31, 1974.

#### 4. Suburbia:

Islanders' image of suburbia (e.g., as more conservative, less socially diverse, less socially involving, less tolerant of unconventional behaviour, less community-oriented) has also influenced their political behaviour. During their 1974 Spring Campaign, Islanders made over 200 visits to the boroughs in order to gain signatures on petitions (ultimately they amassed 30,000 signatures from across Metro) and endorsements from a variety of residents' and special interest groups. (See Appendix J, "Public Support: May 1974".) In addition to presenting the facts and arguments in the most appealing light, Islanders also tried to present themselves in the most acceptable manner. Periodic calls went out in the TIRA Newsletter for "volunteers from the respectable 'Over-40's Club'",<sup>1</sup> as East York Borough Captain Mary Anderson phrased it, to join the delegations. This concern for creating an image acceptable to suburbanites (as Islanders perceived them) extended even to matters of dress. For example, on the way to a borough meeting, one Islander, who usually wandered around in an ankle-length granny dress and sandals, announced that she had put on her "suburban dress" for the occasion and another Islander bought a suit for the first time in years for his expeditions into North York.

Throughout this Campaign, Islanders propounded community (as well as other arguments), although they did not always feel that they

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<sup>1</sup>TIRA Newsletter, March 1, 1974.

were able to get their message across in the suburbs.<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Amer commented, "[A slide show of community life] works really well in the City itself. But maybe not as much in the suburbs." And Ron Mazza said more emphatically:

Whenever we mentioned "community" [to suburban residents' groups], we always knew that they didn't know what we were talking about.... When you talked about the value of maintaining the community, they just didn't know what a community was, which I found really frustrating, because to my mind, that was the strongest argument.... They just weren't into saving houses just for the sake of saving the way of life that is associated with it.

Islanders, therefore, certainly came away from their campaign in the boroughs with the feeling that their own sense of community was much greater than--or significantly different from--suburbanites' sense of community.

5. Foundation For 1974 Spring Campaign:

The Spring Campaign was a massive undertaking, which relied on an extremely high level of participation by a large number of

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<sup>1</sup>With regard to suburban politicians, some of the Islanders' political supporters held similar, complementary attitudes. For example, John Sewell made the point that in the past Islanders had "played to the wrong issue, i.e., what a nice community the Islands is. Politicians in the boroughs don't understand the 'community argument' - they are free enterprisers, every man for himself." John Sewell, Brief to Islanders, January 20, 1974. And, at a meeting in late April 1974, City Alderman Dorothy Thomas made an interesting related point, which also suggested that suburban politicians not only did not understand or were not as concerned about the community preservation ideas, but, she told Islanders, they were actually antagonized by any such argument:

One other point is this business of the "elite". For your publicity campaign, one of the things that you seem to be pushing is the Island as a community, which I can certainly understand, but if you talk to some of these borough politicians, if you say "community", they hear "elite". They hear you saying, "We want to preserve our elite community"...I guess what I'm saying is you have to soft-peddle the community stuff, even though it may be one of your primary considerations - and it should be.

Islanders. (By the end of the Campaign, only about 10% had done "absolutely nothing" to contribute to the cause, according to one TIRA insider whose job was to involve people.) Islanders' strong sense of community provided a solid foundation on which to build this massive political campaign.<sup>1</sup> Most Islanders felt that they had to contribute in some way. Organizers could use and elaborate on the existing communications system (interpersonal networks, ferry telegraph, newspapers, hand delivery of notices, block captain system, public meetings, etc.) in order to transmit information quickly and mobilize people rapidly (in a matter of hours if necessary to attend meetings or make community decisions or attend demonstrations and so on). Organizers could readily tap the diverse talents of the community, because they began the campaign with a fairly good idea of the resources which existed within the community (knowing who the printers, typists, lawyers, public speakers and so on were). In short, Islanders were able to mobilize their forces and mount a much larger campaign in the short time available to them in the spring of 1974 than would have been possible if they had not had a strong, existing community base on which to build. And they have been able to continue to capitalize on this since that time.

b. Politicians' Responses:

Most of the Islanders' political supporters would probably

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<sup>1</sup>For example, in order to spark Islanders to attend and bring their friends to the public meetings in Scarborough and York, the April 26, 1974 TIRA Newsletter appealed to their sense of community: "We need a strong show - if you know anyone from Scarborough or York get them there. We are a strong, cohesive community. LET'S SHOW THEM!" (See also the appeal of January 1974, which was quoted on pp. 228-229.)

agree with Alderman Karl Jaffary's statement, "The argument that says the most to me about preservation of the homes on the Island is that it does seem to be such a well-functioning community." Again and again, especially since 1973, pro-Islander politicians have propounded community arguments. For example, Mayor David Crombie, during the first Metro Council debate on the subject after the 1972 elections, in May 1973, argued emphatically, "It's a residential community in the City of Toronto and the City of Toronto Council is dedicated to the proposition that residential communities should be preserved." At the same time, Alderman William Kilbourn spoke in favour of preserving the Island community because it is so distinctive and different from other communities:

I am committed to seeing that this remains a community. Alderman Beavis talks about conformity. I think it's to the glory and goodness of Toronto that it has diversity and it has character....I think we should not destroy a very precious, unique asset, simply because we want to import some abstraction of conformity.

He, and other politicians sympathetic to Islanders' particular sense of community, want to preserve the community precisely because it is so "different". He elaborates on this theme in a 1975 interview:

My strongest motive...[is that] it does represent a different lifestyle. It does give kids and everybody an opportunity either to be or to see a different kind of community, a community without the amenities so-called and therefore some of the problems and hardships....It's a different community. The very reason that I think ultimately threatens members of Metro Council who hate the Islands is the main reason why I want to preserve it.

And, during that same May 1973 debate, North York member, Ken Lund, echoed this theme and made an emotional appeal in favour of retaining the community:

I can only conclude that there is something other than size here, which makes this park, this piece of Toronto Islands something special within our city and I accept that all Islanders are

different, all Islanders are special in some way, and I must conclude that there is something extra-special within our Metropolitan area about this particular piece of island and I conclude that we look back or look to it in nostalgia, looking back at this small remnant that still exists of our small town past and the people who dwell there certainly exist as a community....This impresses me all the more because, as representing a suburban area, I know how difficult the concept of community and the actuality of community is to nourish and so I look with admiration at this flourishing on Toronto Island and conclude that every step that is reasonable ought to be taken to give it an opportunity to survive ....This group seems determined to hang on to its communities of the past and I think we should support any reasonable method which would enable them to do this.

At City Council in November 1973,<sup>1</sup> Alderman Jaffary spoke of the need to develop effective controls on Island housing (notably to prevent escalating house prices and "windfall profits"):

I think it is important for the Council to say... simply saving the houses is not enough. It's the community [with its social diversity] that we want to save. We think the pressures that will be placed on that community if the houses are simply saved and nothing more is done, will be intolerable and it will change. This Council would like to work with the community to make sure that does not happen.

As noted earlier, because Islanders themselves have shared this fear and have had a strong desire to maintain a "social mix" on their Island, they have agreed that such controls are necessary. Then at the crucial Metro Council debate on December 11, 1973, North York Controller Barbara Greene spoke passionately in favour of preserving

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<sup>1</sup>In September 1973, the City planning staff issued Toronto's Island Park Neighbourhoods, which, among other things, strongly recommended that the Island community be preserved and, in order to accomplish that end, that the residential portions of the Island should be transferred back to the City. At this November 1973 meeting, City Council voted overwhelmingly (17-2) to adopt this report, with only minor changes and, although for pragmatic political reasons City politicians did not press for either permanent status or a land transfer at Metro Council on December 11, 1973, this report has remained the basis of the City position ever since. And since 1975, the City has made repeated, but unsuccessful, attempts to have the land transferred.

the Island community:

I am going to be brief. I think it is absurd that we are even considering destroying a community that is as healthy, as happy, as politically active, as capable of lobbying us to this extent, as capable of getting these kinds of numbers out to a meeting. I think we should feel, be awarding them a medal today. I think that this is a community which deserves to be saved and I see absolutely no justification for including 29 more acres in the Toronto Islands. I know of no other park which does not have residential houses near it....Well, my God, if you're here to preserve communities, I really cannot possibly see how you can possibly justify destroying one of the best communities in this entire Metropolitan Toronto area.

Politicians have put forward such community arguments literally dozens of times throughout the political history of the issue, right up to the most recent stage, the entrance of the Province into the debate. For example, referring to the legislation put forward by the Provincial government in October 1979 as "death by asphyxiation of the Island community",<sup>1</sup> N.D.P. M.P.P. Richard Johnston said in Committee of Supply on October 15:

Our party remains committed to maintaining the island community. I would like to emphasize the word "community", not just the particular houses of individuals....

I do have concern that what is seen to be a compromise is, in fact, just a very easy way of bringing about the destruction of the community while maintaining individual homes for a brief period of time.<sup>2</sup>

Most recently, at a public rally to demonstrate public and political support for the Islanders on July 1, 1980, a number of politicians emphasized the importance of preserving communities like the Island community. Toronto Mayor John Sewell received a standing ovation when he told the 2,000+ supporters, "The Toronto Island

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Johnston, Statement: Toronto Island Homes, October 16, 1979. p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Hansard.

community is here to stay" and emphasized "that this is a fight we're all in....It's a fight that we all have to pay attention to because we know that you can't go around destroying communities. [If] they destroy this one, they'll destroy others." N.D.P. leader M.P.P. Michael Cassidy echoed this sentiment, saying, "This is a battle not just for one community, but I believe it's also a continuing part of the battle to keep communities alive and to maintain a diversity of communities across Toronto and across this whole province of ours." He also brought the news that the 1,300 delegates to an N.D.P. party convention had just passed unanimously the resolution "that the New Democratic Party of Ontario supports the struggle of Toronto Island residents to defend their homes and community." Bringing greetings from the "land-locked [Federal] riding of Broadview-Greenwood", M.P. Bob Rae spoke more philosophically about the value of communities:

T.S. Eliot once wrote that: when the stranger asks what is the meaning of this city, what will you answer? Will you answer we huddle together to make money from each other or will you answer that this is a community? It seems to me that this is a battle going on here, and in other parts of the country...of people saying that their city is a community...and that notion of community and that sense of community is far more important than those people who think that a City is merely a place where people come together to make money from each other. I simply want you to know that you people on this island are not alone...[This issue] affects people all over Canada. Whenever a government decides a community will no longer exist, the community has to speak for itself and say: You can't take away our existence. We exist. You're the ones who have problems justifying your existence. Not this community.

Finally, Scarborough Controller and Metro Councillor Joyce Trimmer spoke in a more personal vein, recalling her first home in Canada 26 years earlier--a small apartment in an "immaculate" clapboard house on Chippewa Avenue--when she had become "part of a community--and a very warm and welcoming community it was 26 years ago". She

concluded somewhat ruefully:

As a politician, we have thousands of by-laws that supposedly help us to produce the perfect community. And how ironic it is that when we have the perfect community in mind and spirit and people, we don't recognize it and the first thing we want to do is destroy it.

Over the years, Islanders' supporters and opponents have tended to hold very different images of Islanders and their community. Indeed, it is sometimes hard to believe that the two groups are even discussing the same people and the same place. While Islanders' supporters have tended to give great weight to community arguments and to have a positive image of Islanders and their community (e.g., as mostly year-round, socially-mixed, egalitarian, distinctive, well-established, charming, deeply rooted and so on), Islanders' opponents have tended to either ignore community arguments altogether (to discuss, for example, impersonal "housing conditions" rather than the people who live in a "community") or to discuss Islanders and their community in negative terms (e.g., as a rich elite, squatters, privileged few, rip-off artists, media manipulators, transients, summer cottagers with second homes, primitive, run down, unhealthy and so on). On the positive side, for example, Alderman Karl Jarrary described his impression of the Island community (in 1975):

The community issue, I guess, is the strongest [reason for my support] and my having become persuaded that the number of people who were using the Island for summer cottages and nothing more were really very few in number and that there were a lot of people [who] had real traditions of using the Island year-round....I'm really impressed with the community and have liked Islanders very much. The argument that says the most to me about the preservation of the homes on the Island is that it does seem to be such a well-functioning community. And I guess the egalitarianism of the thing is what appeals to me as much as anything else. Great ranges of incomes with everybody living in essentially the same kinds of houses, not having cars and dressing in sort of the same kinds of clothes because they have to walk through the mud and so most of the indices of wealth that stratify other communities just aren't

there and that seems to be really appealing and I just find that a very healthy thing.

On the negative side, Scarborough Controller (later Mayor) Gus Harris comments (in 1975):

I think there's a great misunderstanding about the Island community. They've tried to convey the idea that it's a mixed group of various people all living together very happily, etc., etc.. It's my opinion that it's just developed into a smaller group of people that's very well-heeled financially and have other accommodation elsewhere that would like to have this kind of thing for weekends and summer holidays and renting it to others etc.. And they're sufficiently well-organized and well-educated that they've been able to dig their heels in and get the rest of the community to come along with them for self-preservation mostly and they're putting on tremendous pressure in order to stay there....I don't know that there are that many permanent ones....Maybe 20 or 30 families ... are living there permanently.

Islanders' opponents have also tended to see Ward's and Algonquin Islands as "parkland manqué"--i.e., because the area is designated as "parkland" on maps and in various plans and proposals, it is "really" parkland, not housing, and the remaining houses are merely an obstruction to attaining that desirable state. By contrast, Islanders' supporters, of course, have tended to see Ward's and Algonquin Islands as a "well-established, distinctive community" located on land that has never been parkland. This theme is discussed at greater length in the next chapter.

c. Impact of Islanders' Defense of Place On Their Sense of Community:

Islanders, as a number of them point out, have been a community under siege for many years.<sup>1</sup> This outside threat, combined with the actual process of defending the Island against a series of severe

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<sup>1</sup>See for example Freya Godard's comments on p. 199, Peter Cridland's comments on p. 190 and Peter Atkinson's comments on p. 225. See also Sense of Change: "Community Under Siege", pp.361 ff.

threats, has had a marked, largely positive effect on Islanders' sense of community. (See Illustration 28.)

This has been particularly evident since 1974. At that time, the severity of the threat increased sharply: as a result of Metro Council's December 11, 1973 decision, Islanders were no longer protected by the security of even a short lease extension and unless they took quick action to reverse or circumvent that decision, they would lose their homes, community and Island on August 31, 1974. And, in response, Islanders mounted a major campaign to deal with the situation. Islanders faced two basic tasks as the August 31 deadline approached inexorably: first, to reverse the Metro decision; and second, to maintain community solidarity. Although they did not attain their first goal of reversing the Metro decision (they lost resoundingly at Metro Council on both May 31 and June 18), they did go a long way toward achieving the second goal (there was no mass exodus from the Island prior to the August 31 deadline) and laid the groundwork for continuing the fight beyond this deadline. During that Campaign, almost every Islander got involved in some task to contribute toward attaining the common goal of preserving their homes and community. There were frequent public and committee meetings; on-Island communications were improved (e.g., a newsletter was begun and the Block Captain system was rejuvenated); and frequent appeals were made to Islanders to help defend the community, to act like a community and to present themselves as a solid community. As a result, there was a heightened sense of common purpose and common action--and a heightened sense of community.

Although they failed to achieve their political goal of reversing the Metro Council decision, for many Islanders, like Enid Cridland

ILLUSTRATION 28

COMMUNITY POLITICAL EVENTS



1974 Winter Carnival



"New Year's Eve" Parade  
August 31, 1974



Meeting The Sheriff  
July 28, 1980



Rally, July 1, 1980

who observed that the Campaign "held the community together", the main value of that Spring Offensive was that it demonstrated to Islanders themselves that they were in fact a community and that if they stayed together, they would be a strong political force. Two Islanders comment on this aspect of the 1974 Campaign. First, Bill Metcalfe (in the winter of 1975) discusses how important the outside threat (of Metro's demolishing Island houses) has been in creating and testing Islanders' community and sense of community:

I learned [from the political campaign] about the community that it really was. It was not just a community in name. That it had a great resource when the situation came along that forced it to use it. That it wasn't just a fantasy. You can talk about it a lot and "this community, blah, blah, blah". That there really was a sense of community. And a sense of community really only shows up when things are really extreme. You can live in a nice place and say that you're in a community and make all sorts of assumptions about it, fantasize about it, but when it really comes to the crunch, we really had a community. They had their ass against the flame and they were prepared to stand there and try to put out the fire.

He goes on to comment on the importance, politically, of remaining a solid group:

I feel that we are a political force, because we are a bunch of people, in a well-defined area and I'm quite confident that the politicians are going to have a hell of a job getting rid of us because of that....So what I learned about politics is that groups of people can be a political force as long as they remain a solid group. And I think we still are.

Jenny DeTolly (in the summer of 1975) echoes these sentiments in her evaluation of the Campaign:

The entire value in that exercise [the Spring Campaign] is that we worked together. We got to know one another....The fact that we worked together, that we got our message across to a couple more people, the fact that people realized that we were around was the most vital thing....I think in the past three years [c.1972-], the Islanders have assumed their own identity, leadership and strength....If all 600 are fairly solid, I still feel we've got a fair chance.

The 1974 Campaign had both positive and negative effects on the social splits within the community. As noted earlier, during that Campaign Islanders extended the range of their acquaintances and became a more cohesive unit: e.g., people from Algonquin Island got to know more people from Ward's; "old" Islanders got to know "new" Islanders; and so on. As a result of their defense of place, therefore, Islanders overcame some of the long-standing splits within the community such as the AIA-WIA rivalry. "It's all really one now since TIRA has been formed," commented Wendy Hanger in January 1976. "It's really one community now. I think it was [more separate before]." But, on the negative side is the fact that under extreme stress, deep-seated differences sometimes became sharper, more acrimonious and, unless dealt with very carefully, explosive and damaging to community solidarity. (See for example, the comments of the year-round Islander which were directed at a summer Islander in June 1974, pp.235-236.) Many sharp exchanges between people holding radically different views on appropriate political strategy, tactics and style occurred during this period. This has continued to be true. For example, in the course of a long, emotional debate in June 1980 over whether or not to accept an amended version of Provincial legislation, Peter Atkinson felt moved to try to bridge the gaps and appealed to Islanders' over-riding sense of community:

I'm a little bit concerned about the divisiveness and the antagonism that was present in last night's meeting and that is present in tonight's meeting. We seem to have two camps, obviously. Both sides feel that the other side doesn't feel any loyalty to the Toronto Island community or that their acts are activated by personal interests. I just don't think that's true. I think that everybody who is here really feels very, very strongly about the Toronto Island community. We've all fought for it.

We all want to maintain it....I hope that after this vote is taken, no matter which way it goes...we can come back together and pull together. If we [vote to] go to the blockades, then let's go together. And let's put aside this personal antagonism that's creeping in.

The 1974 Campaign was followed by several years of legal battles, when the sense of threat was reduced. By June 1980, however, Islanders were once again under the gun--faced with imminent evictions and the need to pull together in order to try to avoid that end. At the aforementioned June 16 meeting, life-long Islander Pat Coyle appealed to Islanders to act together as a community and, in so doing, indicated the extent to which Islanders had become more of a community in the years since 1968 as a result of working together to defend their special place:

I, too, lost a house at Centre Island. We had to move in 1968. And Bill [Ward] pointed out...that people at that time didn't stick up for each other. There was no solidarity. We lost. That's because we were all divided. And the ironic thing is, if you go for this Bill, which he's pushing so hard, that's exactly what's going to happen again. We won't have solidarity. We'll be individuals again. And what Bill Ward's gone through before, he'll have to go through again. And this time, it'll be the end.

As the threat of eviction became ever more severe over the next few days, so did Islanders' statements of community solidarity. On June 25, TIRA Chairman Ron Mazza emphasized that Islanders intended to face the sheriff as a group, not as individuals:

When the sheriff comes to take away [any] house, [he'll be] dealing with eviction and destruction of the whole community. The community views every house as equally important. The community views every house as collectively theirs. There is no individual who is facing the sheriff alone. Each individual will be facing the sheriff collectively for the sake of the community. We don't want anybody to get hurt. But we're going to do everything possible short of violence to protect the

community.<sup>1</sup>

And TIRA Executive member Peter Dewdney, who organized a major public rally (which attracted over 2,000 people on July 1), commented on Islanders' morale, "The community is tighter now than I've ever known it in the eleven years I've lived here. It's a tremendous feeling of togetherness."<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion, there is little doubt that over the years, Islanders' defense of place has significantly reinforced and strengthened their sense of community.

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<sup>1</sup>CBC Radio, 7:30 A.M. News, June 25, 1980. This statement was designed both to reassure and calm individual Islanders who were nervous about facing the sheriff and to warn Metro that even if Metro tried to evict only a few households at a time (e.g., summer residents or wealthy residents), other Islanders were still planning to come to their defense. They would not stand idly by and watch even one house be taken.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Paul Dalby, "Islanders Call Allies To Dominion Day Rally," Star, June 30, 1980.