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kesbury stumbled on a brilliant promotional idea, executed it just once, and misguidedly allowed it to die. The Great Paper Boat Race of the World The Great Paper Boat Race of the World sprang full-bodied from the head of Bill Martin at 12:41 P.M. on March 7, 1984, in the Industrial Commission Board Room. Martin was thirty-seven, a bearded extrovert given to quixotic ventures. His 1981 campaign for the provincial legislature was typical of NDP campaigns in rural Nova Scotia: he was drowned by hereditary Grits and Tories. When he left his job as manager of radio station CIGO, however, he successfully established a weekly newspaper despite the existence of an award-winning weekly. The Scotia Sun. By 1984, the paid circulation of The Report-er was 6,700. The Surfs was 6,300. Martin made his suggestion at a luncheon meeting of the Port Hawkesbury Chamber of Commerce, which was considering what to do about the Festival of the Strait, held annually on the Canada Day weekend. Founded by the Chamber of Commerce, the festival evolved into an independent organization which was regularly pelted with editorial tomatoes by Bill Martin. Lighthouse Electrical Services Ltd. 155 Peppett St. NORTH SYDNEY Prop. David Mulley Commercial ; • Residential • - Marine and Industrial Electrical Complete Line of Electric Heating Products including Radiant Ceiling Heat 24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE Serving All Cape Breton Areas 794-2652 AGift "four Can Keep Opening... The Nova Scotia Government Bookstore has hundreds of unusual & interesting titles in stock. Micmac Quillwork...Following the Sea...Birds of Nova Scotia...The Maritime Provinces Atlas...Children's Books...Recipes...Maps and more We sell these and many more exciting and informative publications at the: Nova Scotia Government Bookstore 1700 Granville Street, Halifax For a free catalogue listing government titles available, write us at: Nova Scotia Government Bookstore, P.O. Box 637, Halifax, N.S. B3J 2T3 or call us toll free 1-424-7580. Nova Scotia Government Bookstore Its directors all resigned and told the Chamber to take it back. The Chamber called a luncheon meeting. Martin attended. Martin, you big-mouth, said the members, now what do we do? Bill Martin got up and said: "Hold a paper boat race." He was as astonished as anyone else. The idea had never occurred to him until that moment. The Great Paper Boat Race of the World was set for Canada Day. Entries were to be constructed "principally of paper," though screws and other fasteners were allowed. They had to be propelled by muscle or wind, not by engines. Sails, if any, had to be paper. Paddles and oars could be of any material. There were no restrictions on size, design or type of paper. But each boat had to carry a crew of three. Jim Organ was a pipefitter at Stora Forest Industries. He got the assignment of building Stora's entry. Jim Organ's diary, May 15, 1984: "Paper boat approved. Seems like it's all in my lap. Decided to sit down and draw some working prints... Long time drafting, as I had to build in my head and then transfer to paper. Have to design a craft which takes into account my limited abilities as a shipwright." Breton Marine was building a vessel. So were Mulgrave Machine and the local Knights of Columbus. Several other entries were rumoured, and at the heavy-water



plant the entire engineering department had gone daffy, producing fifteen designs. Jim Organ's diary, May 24: "Solved the curvature problem of yesterday. So simple I couldn't see it... We have a 3-man crew so far, all union, need a rep from the company. Try for Ralph Keef. He got me in this mess anyway. If I go down so does he..." Across the Strait, the owner of Mulgrave Machine, Bob Reid, had "come into the office in a jolly mood one morning," said his colleague Jack Hoben, and declared that the company would build a boat out of Sona Tubes, the heavy paper cylinders used to form concrete pilings. The design evolved from the materials: a multihulled sailboat. Michael Breen and John Bunyan worked two solid weeks on Mean Machine, as the 21-foot trimaran was christened. They reshaped the tubes using Industrial paper towels soaked in fibreglass resin. For a sail, they sandwiched a smelt net between two layers of towel; for a mast, they used cardboard cores from Stora newsprint rolls. Breton Marine and Stora made similar masts and sails. Jim Organ's diary, May 25: "Went over town to see Bill Martin. Any kind of ballast allowed. Shipyard has model of Bluenose, will be hard to beat. Went to Mulgrave..." Paul Osborne was the shipyard's mechanical engineer. At twenty-six, he was underwhelmed by Port Hawkesbury's throbbing night life. But he stayed because he had an interesting and useful job; besides, his father owned the shipyard. Paul and his buddy, Billy Butts, began building partly because "it gave us something to do in the evenings." Nova Scotia was hosting the Tall Ships that year, a moment of glory which led the race committee to

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