

[Page 70 - Joe Nugent, Inspector of Mines, Ret'd](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 70](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1996/6/1

So I stayed in Number 18 Colliery for pretty near twenty-five years. In the fall of 1963 I was transferred over to the Glace Bay pits. Over in Number 2 Colliery, or Number 20, it was one of the best seams of coal that was ever mined anywhere. A great seam of coal. They must have made a fortune after that. The evidence was there everywhere. The grading of the mine was excellent for walking, working, height, and the coal was really, really good. It was called Phalen, on the Phalen seam. It was a good type of coal for domestic use. They could use it for just about anything, but not for steel. The good coal for making steel usually came from Number 12 Colliery and Number 14 when it was going, and from 26 and 20. That was the best types of coal. The coal seams that are above the Phalen seam was called Harbour. The Harbour seam coal was always the best for making steel. Better quality coal, less ash. Sometimes you'd be wondering what the hell they were talking about when they were complaining about the bad coal that was coming from those pits. So I stayed there from 1963 'til 1965 and then I left there and I got a job with the Provincial Government as a Safety Inspector for the coal mining operations. I always had in my mind safety in the mine ever since that telegram that came so many years ago and my grandfather was telling me A FILL SHOT Children and adults with heart disease, asthma, diabetes, cancer, renal disease, anemia, AIDS or other diseases of the immune system • AND • everyone 65 years or older should have an annual Flu Vaccine in October/November. Be Protected. Call your doctor today. Nova Scotia "fish" Department of "W Health and Community Partners about the dangers in the mine. How to detect gas, how to avoid gases, what should be done, all that stuff. He knew it all, you know, and he'd tell me. So it always stuck with me, and it was true, I was never careless in the gas. Every time there's been a coal mine explosion disaster--and there's been numerous ones--there was Number 12 in 1917, there was the Allan Shaft in Stellarton in 1918, 88 miners got killed in that. I had two cousins working to that and they escaped.... And they tell me the same thing. If the gas conditions are not immediately addressed and reduced to the requirements of Coal Mine Regulations Act (which) requires that methane gas in any working area must not exceed 1.25%. When it reaches 1.25% the electricity must be shut off. That means there's no act of mining going on. The only thing about it is that the miners and many coal mine officials did not have too much concern about methane gas until they get up to around 3%. The lower explosive limit of gas is 5%. but 3% burns. And too bad they didn't have that experience to see that 3% burns. But, you see, when 1.25% is the cut-off limit, that doesn't give the whole story. Actually at one point 5% of methane gas is the cut-off limit for Coal Mines Regulation Act. Actually, what happens when a fellow finds 1.20%? He's only 5/100s of a percent away from being out of compliance right away. They do operate sometimes at a risk. It is a risky pursuit of coal. Just about every mine explosion that ever occurred-- except in some places that I can think of, England and a few places--every one usually • LAND FOR SALE • Mira Area (all lots minimum 1/2 acres in size) WATER FRONT Lots starting at



\$20,000.00 Lots with WATER ACCESS starting at \$10,000.00 ALL LOTS LOCATED ON BRICKYARD ROAD (15 MINUTES FROM SYDNEY) Contact (902) 849-1121 Building Supplies " Makita Power Tools Mason Windows Donat Flamand Windows All Types of Cedar Sidings CGC Gypsum Board Iko Roofing Plywood Peach Tree Steel Door Systems Vinyl Replacement Windows Stanley Entrance Systems Pressure Treated Lumber Cedar Lumber SICO Paints & Stains Kaycan Vinyl Siding Fibreglass Pink Insulation 199 Townsend Street, Sydney 564-5554 70