

IN THE BEGINNING

Canadians travel. And they travel to the United States in greater numbers and with greater frequency than to anywhere else. The neighbourhood is a shared one. As a former prime minister remarked, "We are not in the same boat, but we are pretty much in the same waters."

We may easily forget that the border — mainly the 49th parallel — is an international frontier. The United States is a foreign country.

It is simple to cross the border. It is equally easy to use the new arrangements for North America-wide business and commerce. In fact, the day is not far off when many Canadians will use something the size of a credit card to complete U.S. entry formalities in seconds.

Still, many Canadians do not make adequate preparations for entering the United States. As a result they encounter serious problems. What was meant to be a visit for pleasure or profit becomes a difficult, nightmarish and (for some) a tragic experience.

The Consular Affairs Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and Canadian diplomatic missions in the United States help thousands of such Canadians. Their problems range from the simple ("I'm in West Virginia; how do I get out?") to the complex ("I have been arrested").

U.S. entry requirements and procedures could change or differ from some of the information provided here. If you have an unusual situation concerning entry into the United States, you should obtain authoritative