



The Pioneer is published by the River John Community Action Society. It is a not-for-profit community-owned paper.

Celebrating 4H

This year the River John 4-H Club has 26 members and 12 Leaders. Our projects this year are clover-buds, foods, floriculture, gardening, exploring 4-H, fisheries, scrapbooking, crafts, great outdoors, junior leader, welding, woodworking, beef, sheep, rabbit, poultry, light horse, mini horse, goat, market lamb and market turkey.



We do several community projects each year including adopt a highway clean up, donate to local food banks, made boxes for Operation Christmas Child and help fix the parking lot at the Community center. We do fundraisers such as bean supper and donate to community groups.



Our largest fundraiser was our Festival Days breakfast where we served 326 people which our club pulled together and worked as a great team.

We take part in community service on Remembrance Day and in the River John Festival Days parade. We have fun times with a Halloween Party, Christmas skate, trip to Tim Horton's camp and beach BBQ. The club had a wonderful showing at the Pictou North Colchester Exhibition and there were many members who qualified for the provincial show in Truro. The club will be starting up soon for the new year and are always looking for new member and leaders.



Contact

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 Margaret Cripps
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 for more information.

Be part of the decision making process

The River John Community Action Society (RJCAS) has been raising funds in earnest for the past 12 months. The funds were raised to help cover the costs of the H.U.B. (the old school building).

The Municipality of Pictou County has been paying the operating costs of the building for the past year. When the lease came to an end in August, the Municipality offered the RJCAS a lease extension to March 31, 2017. But the council wanted the RJCAS to provide it with a business plan that would demonstrate how it could cover the entire cost of the H.U.B. moving forward.

RJCAS Chair, Robin Campbell, called an executive committee to discuss the Municipality's offer. The executive examined the organization's fundraising efforts over the previous year and determined that the society could not put together a viable business plan. The executive felt that the ongoing costs of the H.U.B. were beyond the community's financial and volunteer capacity.

On September 13, the RJCAS held its monthly meeting. The Chair explained to members that the executive recommended that the RJCAS accept the Municipality's offer to extend the lease and cover the operating costs until March. Our Councillor, Ronnie Baillie also informed the members that the \$50,000 allocated for the lease extension was all the Municipality could provide; if there were emergency

expenses or repairs above that, the lease would be terminated and the building closed.

The question of what the Municipality would do with the building and what the community could ask of the Municipality was discussed. So was the issue of what would happen with the money raised by the RJCAS. To-date, the RJCAS has raised just over \$17,000. This amount does not include its share of the revenue generated from the Chase the Ace lottery (still undetermined but thought to be over \$16,000).

At the meeting, members agreed that the RJCAS should follow through on a waterfront development plan that would see a retractable dock built between the bridge and the Lion's Club building. As a first step, work would be done to ensure safe and easy access to the water's edge.

The dock design is that of Michael Topley, a local engineer. The estimated cost of the dock including the construction of a permanent walkway down from Bissell Park is approximately \$45,000. The RJCAS has a fund of just over \$10,000 that was established when the Bissell family donated the money for river front development.

How the Chase the Ace money and the money raised for the HUB will be used to support the community will be decided at a meeting on October 11 at 7pm at the H.U.B. All members of the community are welcome to attend.

Westerly Estates Vineyards

River John has another new business! Situated on Cape John, a vineyard has been established by long time resident John Baillie. John has built a very attractive warehouse/office at the corner of the property and has already planted over 2 acres of L'Acadie variety of grape, destined to become a medium dry white wine. The first crop of grapes will hopefully be ready for harvest in two years.

John has received advice on viniculture mainly from Sven Von Kintzel of Devonian Coast Winery, formerly the Jost Winery in Malagash. The property itself is on the Cape John Road at Murphy Road. Residents might know the location as the old Murphy place. Because the vineyard is just becoming established, it is not open to the public at this time. In the future, look for updates about Westerly Estates Vineyards, as we welcome this exciting new business to River John.



Contributors to this issue:

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Caldera Distilling update

There's lots of good things happening at Caldera Distilling these days.

Whisky Wednesday is still happening. On Wednesday afternoons, you can enjoy a taste of Caldera served up by Jeremy or Cory, then get ready for a sample of a whisky cocktail. We had Whisky Peach Smash on our visit. While sipping, take time to enjoy their fine surroundings and perhaps take home a bottle of Caldera Whisky. Caldera can also now be purchased in over forty NSLC stores as well as in New York and Alberta.

Caldera has won two Bronze Medals in the North American Spirit Competition in San Francisco, as well as a Silver Medal in the International Spirit Competition in London.

Speaking of London, Caldera is now the official whisky served at the Canadian Embassy there. Makes me want to pop in for a wee dram, eh' what?

Next issue of the Pioneer

A number of businesses have asked us to have the winter issue of the Pioneer distributed toward the end of November so that they their Christmas sales could be included. Normally it is distributed at the beginning of December. To accommodate their needs, we are moving the schedule forward. The next issue will come out around November 21. This means that we will be going to press on November 14 and that the deadline for submissions will be November 1.

That is not so far away, so we are encouraging everyone who plans on providing us with photos, stories or ads to start planning them right away.

Put it in your calendar ...

Pioneer Deadline = November 1



Karla MacFarlane, MLA

A free electronic culture pass is now available to anyone with a Nova Scotia library card. The pass can be downloaded onto a smartphone or tablet and allows the borrower free entry to any of Nova Scotia's museums. The pass can be used as many times as the borrower wishes during the lending period. For more information, please visit:

<http://museum.novascotia.ca/culturepass>

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Ronald Baillie, Warden

County of Pictou

Regular council meeting 1st Monday of every month unless that Monday is a holiday then the meeting is held on 1st Tuesday of the month. Committee meeting is held on 3rd Monday of each month. All meetings are open to the public, all are welcome.

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CENTRAL NOVA

HERE
TO
HELP
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Mae MacKenzie for Councillor

Mae MacKenzie would like to be the councillor for District 4 in the upcoming municipal elections. Mae worked in retail both in New Glasgow and in Fort MacMurray. She also did the hard slog of selling insurance door-to-door for 11 years on 100% commission. That's a tough job for a single mother. That background led her to form her own business. Mae now owns and operates a daycare centre in Alma where she employs six people.

When asked why she wanted to run for municipal council, Mae said she believes the current council is complacent. Most of the councillors have been in the same role for many terms. "Council needs new blood ... and a new vision."

Asked what her focus would be, she said, "Jobs. River John needs more businesses like Jo Dearings and Caldera." She thinks the council's fixation with large corporations is misguided. "They keep trying the same thing and they keep getting the same result."

Mae was born and raised in Welsford. She is a member of the Rebekahs in River John. When asked what attributes River Johners should know about her she said, "I'm honest and upfront. I have energy and determination. If elected, I would encourage small scale businesses to set up in River John by fighting for the infrastructure that business owners are looking for. River John could use a seniors' centre and a day care centre."

Chasing the Ace The odds keep getting better



It's always hard for the Pioneer to tell. Our deadline is the middle of the month. So by our deadline, the Ace had not been found and the jackpot was \$28,000, but there was one more draw before the Pioneer was distributed this month, so for all we know, the Ace has been drawn and someone is a very happy camper ... but if it's not over ... if it's still going on ... then get yourself a ticket and hold on to your seat because this is when the jackpot in other communities started to take off.

At the time we went to press, the number of ticket purchasers was so large that organizers had to open up the H.U.B. As soon as they did, that venue filled up as well (both the school library and the cafeteria).

The funds raised help support the River John Legion and the River John Community Action Society. Ticket purchasers can also support our local Meals on Wheels program by purchasing tickets to the 50-50 draw held at the same time.

Another big winner from the event is the Book Sail (see the ad below). When Chase the Ace added the H.U.B. as a venue, ticket purchasers got a chance to kill some time by browsing the impressive selection of soft cover, hard cover, cds and dvds available for just a fraction of the price of purchasing them new.

Assuming the Chase the Ace is still running, draws take place each Friday at the Legion and now at the H.U.B. Tickets are sold from 6:30-8:30 pm with the draw taking place at 9:00 pm, but you have to be there to win.

If the Ace has been drawn, the Pioneer would just like to thank the organizers and all the volunteers who helped make this one of the most successful fundraisers the community has ever had.

RIVER JOHN H.U.B. COMMUNITY CENTRE



**Gently used books at
bargain prices offered
for sale at the River John
H.U.B. Community Centre
in the former School
Library.**

Open during scheduled events. Check the River John H.U.B. Community Centre Facebook page for further information. All proceeds go toward maintenance and building upkeep. Book donations always welcomed.



Vintage Tractors of River John



Little Grey Fergie on Cape John

It's high time that someone undertook the task of documenting the vintage tractors of River John. These early tractors represent a time when almost everyone farmed. By farming, I mean agriculture that supplied our ancestors with their own food, warmth and shelter, year after year. No small feat.

Tractors first began replacing horse-power in the 1920's and by the Second World War had widespread usage. As labour became more expensive, the tractor allowed one person to farm land that had previously taken three or four. It's easy to see the importance of the tractor, especially at a time when most of us were still on the land. For the next few issues of the Pioneer, I will introduce readers to several of the local tractors that are still operating from that time. Hopefully, we can better appreciate what they meant to the earlier River Johners.

#1 "The Little Grey Fergie" The tractor pictured is a 1950 Ferguson TO20. It was bought in 2011 by Chris Giles from the late Henry Heighton of Cape John. Henry owned two of these tractors and, being a mechanic, worked on them in his spare time. Chris uses his "Fergie" to harvest firewood from a forty-acre woodlot and to move manure. The TO20 was manufactured from 1946 to 1956, and was well-known for its efficient gas engine and three-point hitch, the first of its kind and important in mounting farm implements. Ferguson made a deal with Henry Ford and together they produced the Ford Ferguson tractor until 1946, at which time Ferguson went into production by himself. In 1953 Ferguson merged with Massey-Harris of Toronto, and the tractor's name changed to Massey-Harris-Ferguson. Over the twenty-year period of production, over a million "Little Grey Fergies" were produced. With about 24 horsepower, this tractor is not especially high-powered, but Chris finds it rugged enough to handle the ups and downs of working in the woods. Not bad after sixty-six years!

--Chris Giles

Wellness Grants

The Community Health Boards (CHB) of Nova Scotia, through the Wellness Funds, support non-profit groups in developing healthy communities.

Wellness Funds support projects addressing local community health plan priorities and the social determinants of health, such as income, education, social supports, early childhood development, etc. These funds are provided by the Department of Health and Wellness.

If you are a community organization and would like to apply to the fund, grant applications are available from the CHBs. The deadline for applications is November 1, 2016.

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Thank You



Sam and Margaret Cripps would like to thank everyone who came to meet their sons George and William. Also for all the generous gifts and warm wishes.

Community Health Boards

**Would you like to shape the
Health of our Community?**

Community Health Board members are a committed group of volunteers working together to improve the health of the community.

CHBs partner with Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) by advising on local perspectives, trends, issues and priorities.

CHBs share information and feedback between the community and NSHA.

**CHB members help create
a healthy community by:**

- Learning about the current health status of their community through Community Health Profiles, Community Health Plans and Public Engagement Plans
- Advocating for a Population Health approach to Healthy Communities and by recognizing the social determinants of health
- Actively participating in Community Health Planning
- Sharing their knowledge and experience
- Evaluating Wellness Funds applications from groups that plan to improve the health of their community

Would you like to know more?

The Northern Zone CHBs currently have board membership opportunities in Pictou West and the North Shore Area CHB (Tatamagouche).

For more information please contact

Pictou West CHB Martin Fisher: 902-752-7600 ext 3875 Email martin.fisher@nshealth.ca

North Shore Area CHB Mindy Leblanc: 902-893-1374 Email Mindy.LeBlanc@nshealth.ca

The rising cost of food

The table below shows the prices for a sample of grocery items in August 2016 compared with August 2012. The column on the far right shows the percentage increase. While not everything has gone up, white sugar is significantly less expensive now than four years ago, most things have.

When you look at the top ten items, seven of them are meat. If you divide the list in half, the top half includes the more nutritional foods (meat, vegetables and fruit). The bottom half includes coffee, tea, soft

drinks, ketchup. There are important foods such as milk, bananas, flour and peanut butter that have had stable pricing or actually decreased; however, it is clear that to maintain a varied and nutritious diet costs more than only a short time ago. This is particularly hard on seniors and other people on a fixed income.

It is important that we give to programs that support the most vulnerable among us. The Meals on Wheels program is an exceptional example. So too are the many church and community dinners that are held.

Purchase	Unit	2012	2016	Change
Onions	1 kg	1.69	2.68	59%
Stewing beef	1 kg	11.34	16.92	49%
Blade roast	1 kg	11.36	16.82	48%
Sirloin steak	1 kg	17.31	24.25	40%
Ground beef, regular	1 kg	9.18	12.25	33%
Prime rib roast	1 kg	23.96	31.93	33%
Bacon	500 g	5.15	6.78	32%
Round steak	1 kg	14.18	18.39	30%
Carrots	1 kg	1.92	2.46	28%
Grapefruits	1 kg	3.13	3.96	27%
Canned sockeye salmon	213 g	3.67	4.48	22%
Pork chops	1 kg	10.65	12.90	21%
Potatoes	4.54 kg	5.85	6.99	19%
Wieners	450 g	3.46	4.10	18%
Oranges	1 kg	2.91	3.43	18%
Apples	1 kg	3.73	4.36	17%
Celery	1 kg	2.33	2.65	14%
Baby food	128 ml	0.85	0.96	13%
Butter	454 g	4.44	4.93	11%
Toothpaste	100 ml	2.44	2.68	10%
Eggs	1 dz	3.06	3.36	10%
Soup, canned	284 ml	1.04	1.14	10%
French fries (frozen)	1 kg	2.45	2.68	9%
Chicken	1 kg	7.09	7.71	9%
Bread	675 g	2.78	3.02	9%
Soft drinks, cola type	2 l	1.92	2.08	8%
Baked beans, canned	398 ml	1.23	1.32	7%
Macaroni	500 g	1.49	1.59	7%
Mushrooms	1 kg	8.02	8.49	6%
Tea (bags)	72	4.45	4.71	6%
Tomato juice, canned	1.36 l	2.41	2.50	4%
Soft drinks	2 l	1.88	1.95	4%
Coffee, roasted	300 g	6.09	6.31	4%
Paper towels (rolls)	2	2.57	2.66	4%
Homogenized milk	1 l	2.40	2.45	2%
Ketchup	1 l	3.29	3.35	2%
Bathroom tissue (rolls)	4	2.65	2.65	0%
Shampoo	300 ml	3.95	3.92	-1%
Cooking or salad oil	1 l	4.21	4.14	-2%
Corn flakes	675 g	5.05	4.92	-3%
Deodorant	60 g	4.57	4.45	-3%
Bananas	1 kg	1.71	1.65	-4%
Processed cheese	250 g	2.80	2.70	-4%
Flour	2.5 kg	5.30	5.05	-5%
Peanut butter	500 g	3.85	3.56	-8%
Sugar, white	2 kg	3.15	2.84	-10%

Note: Prices for these items are collected as part of the regular monthly Consumer Price Index survey. Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, table 326-0012 and Catalogue no. 62-001-X.

All Seniors Invited

Time Out dinner for Seniors

at
Royal Canadian Legion
on
Wednesday October 26, 2016
RSVP
Call Joanne before October 13 at 351-2143

Roast Pork dinner

dessert
Tea and Coffee

Meals on Wheels

will start October 31, 2016
Interested?
Call Joanne at 351-2143

Harvey Henderson for Municipal Council

Harvey Henderson would like to be your Councilor in the upcoming municipal election. The Pioneer interviewed him to understand why he's running and what his focus would be.

Harvey is retired. He was a teacher for 30 years and was even on the faculty of the Nova Scotia Teacher's College. He also owned a heavy equipment company for nine years and so has an understanding of how tough it is to run a business and employ people.

Like many River Johners, Harvey goes to Tatamagouche for his health needs. He's 71 and still fit. He talked about the Wellness Centre in New Glasgow and suggested it is a white elephant - overpriced and underutilized. He noted that it is of no use to River Johners. "Seniors in River John will never be able to take advantage of the facility."

Fiscal responsibility is one of two focuses Harvey would bring to the council. He questions some of the decisions the current slate of councillors have made, particularly when it comes to travel to conferences and training opportunities. "They need to come back and be honest with the council and let them know if it was a waste of time or not."

Another issue that he will raise is the attitude of municipal workers. He would like to see them adhere to higher standards of public service. "At a minimum, they need to be polite to the people they serve."

Harvey says that he was asked to run by so many people who were against amalgamation but were concerned that those in favour of amalgamation might try to do an end-run and find another way to introduce it. "Amalgamation is dead. It's been defeated. It won't be allowed to raise its head again on my watch."

When asked what he knows about District 4, the region he would like to represent, Harvey said, "I've lived nearly all of my life here. I lived in New Glasgow for a short period of time and I was in college in the US for two years, but the rest of it, more than 60 years has been right here."

When the Circus came to the River John Town Hall

(story related by Earl Holt)



Back in the 30's and 40's there was a large Town Hall on the west side of the river, beside where Blaine Gammon now lives. It was a huge structure that even housed a jail and a caretaker's apartment. It burned down in the 40's. (I have never seen a picture, has anyone?) The top floor had a large hall, which hosted many functions (at one time, bridge parties).

This story is about the travelling circus sideshows, which did the rounds of all the communities. In 1936, Myron Mingo and I were a couple of young, 12-year-old whippersnappers, who were able to get around because we had bicycles. Our admission was 25 cents. Among the acts was a boxing kangaroo that was fitted with boxing gloves. There was a pair of gloves for the fellows to put on and if you could stay in the ring with the kangaroo for 5 minutes you could win \$5. If you hit the kangaroo too hard he would hit you harder. So a lot of the older fellows were having a go at it. No one succeeded.

After a bit the kangaroo was getting tired. The ringmaster was saying, "What am I going to do with the kangaroo now?" He looked over at us and said, "Will you take the kangaroo over to Ollie's barn?"

"What will you give us?" we asked.

25 cents each was the agreed upon price, which delighted us as it was the price of admission.

The kangaroo was fitted with a bridle, but Myron had to hold its tail down or it would be able to hop away. The road at that time was a dirt road. Just down the road on the left, adjacent to the Pioneer Cemetery, was a big red 2-storey building which was the old mill. "Mitchie's Mill", we called it, (owned by Will Mitchell). A little further along, past the cemetery, was an iron bridge. The kangaroo clip-clopped across the bridge. (This has long ago been replaced by a causeway/culvert.) Then we arrived at Ollie's barn, which at that time was much closer to the road. There was hay and a bucket of water. The ringmaster had made prior arrangements with Ollie (Logan) to store the kangaroo there. I was used to animals and had no trouble tying him up. When we arrived back at the Town Hall, we told the fellow everything was all right and he gave us our 25 cents. Even at that time I said to myself, "One day no one will believe this!"

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Mental Health and Farming

I am thankful when mainstream media presents news stories on topics we seldom hear about. In this case, a few months ago I heard about a new study on farmers that has just been completed. A team of researchers at the University of Guelph headed by Dr. Andria Jones-Bitton, a professor in the Department of Population Medicine, analyzed more than 1,100 responses from farmers across Canada nationwide to an online stress and resilience survey answering questions about mental health, conducted from September 2015 to this past January. The early findings indicate, "Farmers are among the most vulnerable when it comes to mental health...stress, anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion and burnout are all higher among farmers than among other groups." It finds that Canadian farmers are more stressed than farmers in other countries and other groups of workers.

Some statistics from the initial findings include: 45% of survey respondents had high stress; another 58% were classified with varying levels of anxiety and 35% with depression; 3% had high levels of emotional exhaustion and burnout are all higher among farmers than among other groups." It finds that Canadian farmers are more stressed than farmers in other countries and other groups of workers.

Other research has concluded that there is quite a causal pathway of multiple risk factors leading to mental illness—a continuum of risk factors from global uncontrollable factors, such as weather, disease, and government regulation, to more controllable factors at

the farm and farmer level, such as managing workloads, finances and their physical health.

Compounding the issue is that in agriculture a stigma is associated with mental health treatment. It can be thought of as a sign of weakness and tied to a poor work ethic. Isolation in the winter months can be a contributing factor, perhaps more pronounced in regions in the West where farms are significantly larger than those found in the Maritimes.

With today's greater concern and interest in food and food production systems often connected to the concern of climate change both here and in other countries, there is more scrutiny of farmers. The increases in mental health issues arises from many factors. For example, the loss of the family farms where the last generation of what was traditionally a farming family is coming to an end, the need for existing farms to ever increase in size due to needing to take advantage of economies of scale which also brings larger costs (equipment, inputs, stricter regulations, etc...). It doesn't help that so often people complain that food is expensive when in fact it is cheaper than it has ever been until just recently when some food item costs have increased. Consider that we used to spend almost 20% of our household income on food, e.g. in 1969 18.7%, in 2009 it was 10.7%, and in 2013 it was 13.7% (See Statistics Canada). We need to consider the money trail in farming. Are the primary producers the beneficiaries of the wealth attributed to farming, or perhaps it is the secondary.

Part of the problem stems from outside of the industry where romantic notions of farming still prevail, considering the far greater urban population of Canada as compared to rural. Many people often believe it is an idyllic lifestyle where you can be your own boss, set your own working hours, work in the

great outdoors, providing much needed goods for consumers. Each generation has had its back to the landers movement but how many folks actually stayed committed to the goal after a few years of never-ending hard work, failures due to Mother Nature (and now the ever-increasing impact of climate change) and thus factors beyond an individual's control; financial worries due to often being indebted as a result of entering the world of farming (see previous articles about the costs involved in this) and volatile commodity markets.

With a focus in Ontario, Prof. Jones-Bitton is bringing together "a team of producers, industry representatives, veterinarians and mental health professionals in order to create, deliver and evaluate a mental health literacy training program for farmers. This program would train people to recognize and respond to mental distress, and reduce stigma around mental health issues in Ontario's agricultural sector." She finds that a majority of respondents would be open to accessing mental health services. Perhaps Nova Scotia needs to consider these research findings and find ways to address this important but often neglected aspect of farming.

-- Wilma van der Veen

Your free public library!

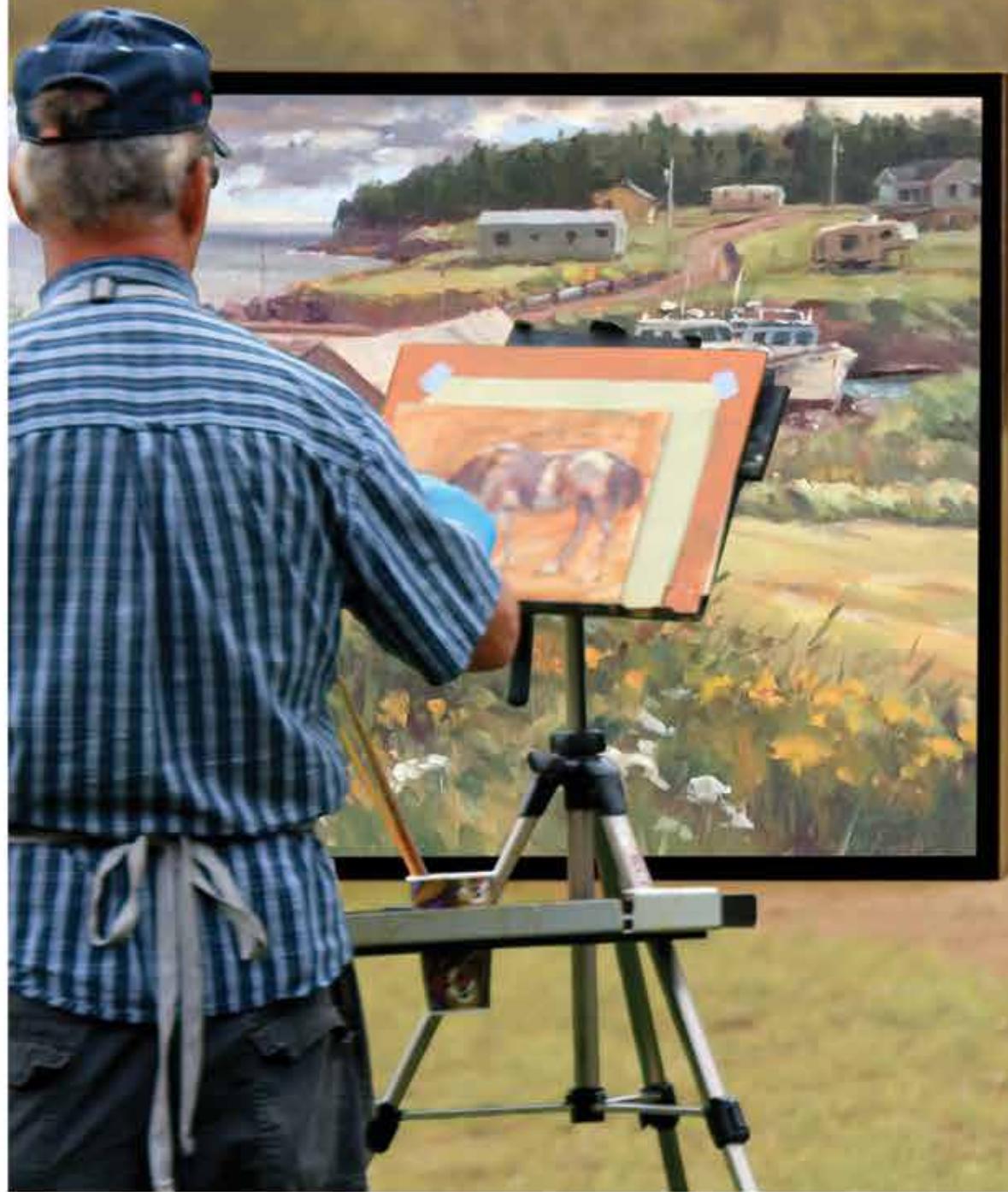
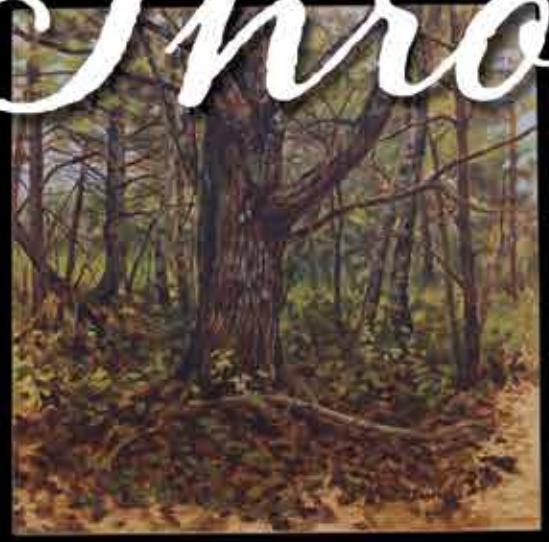
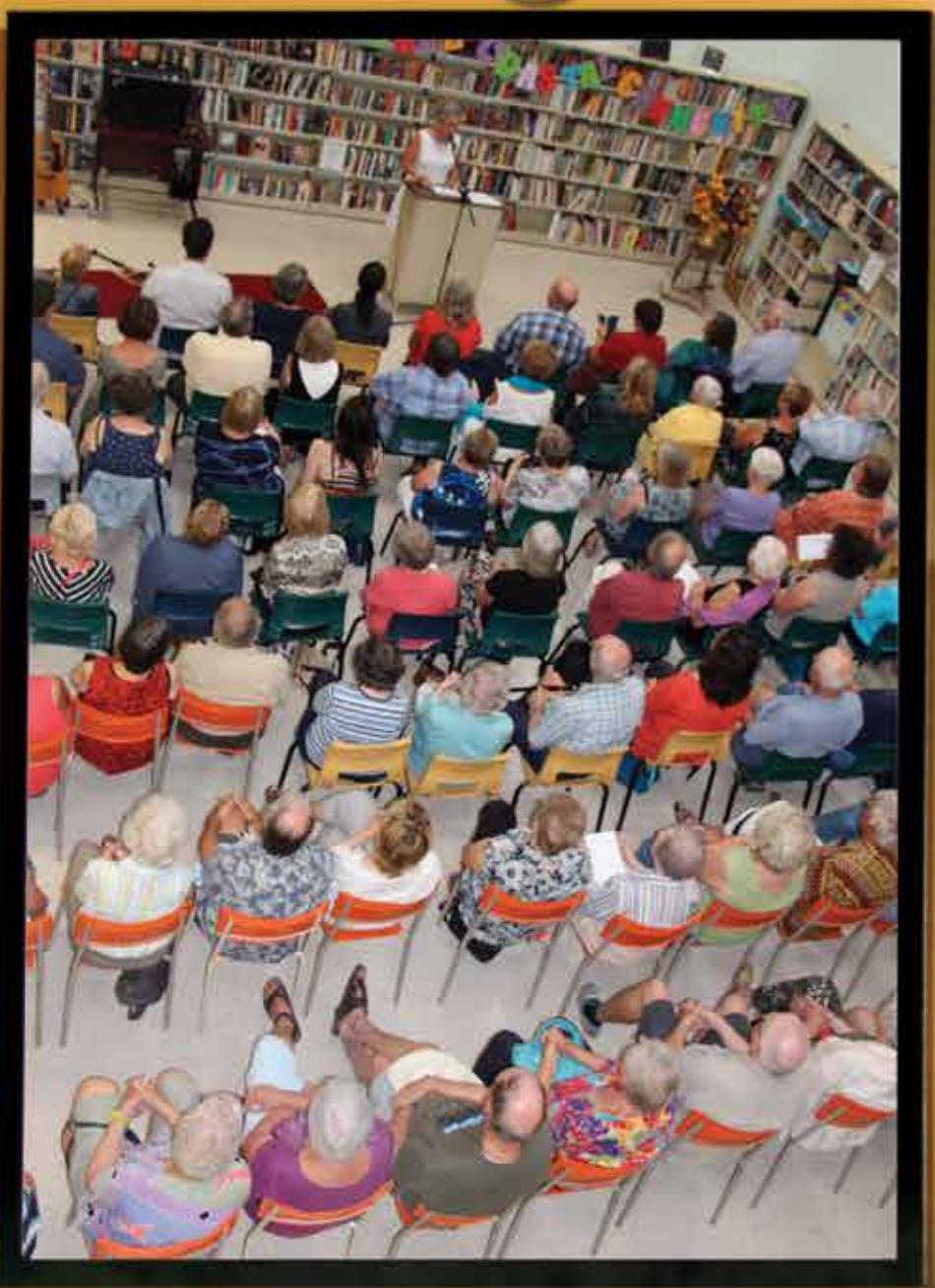
Wireless Hotspots & free public internet access, meeting rooms, local history information & much more!

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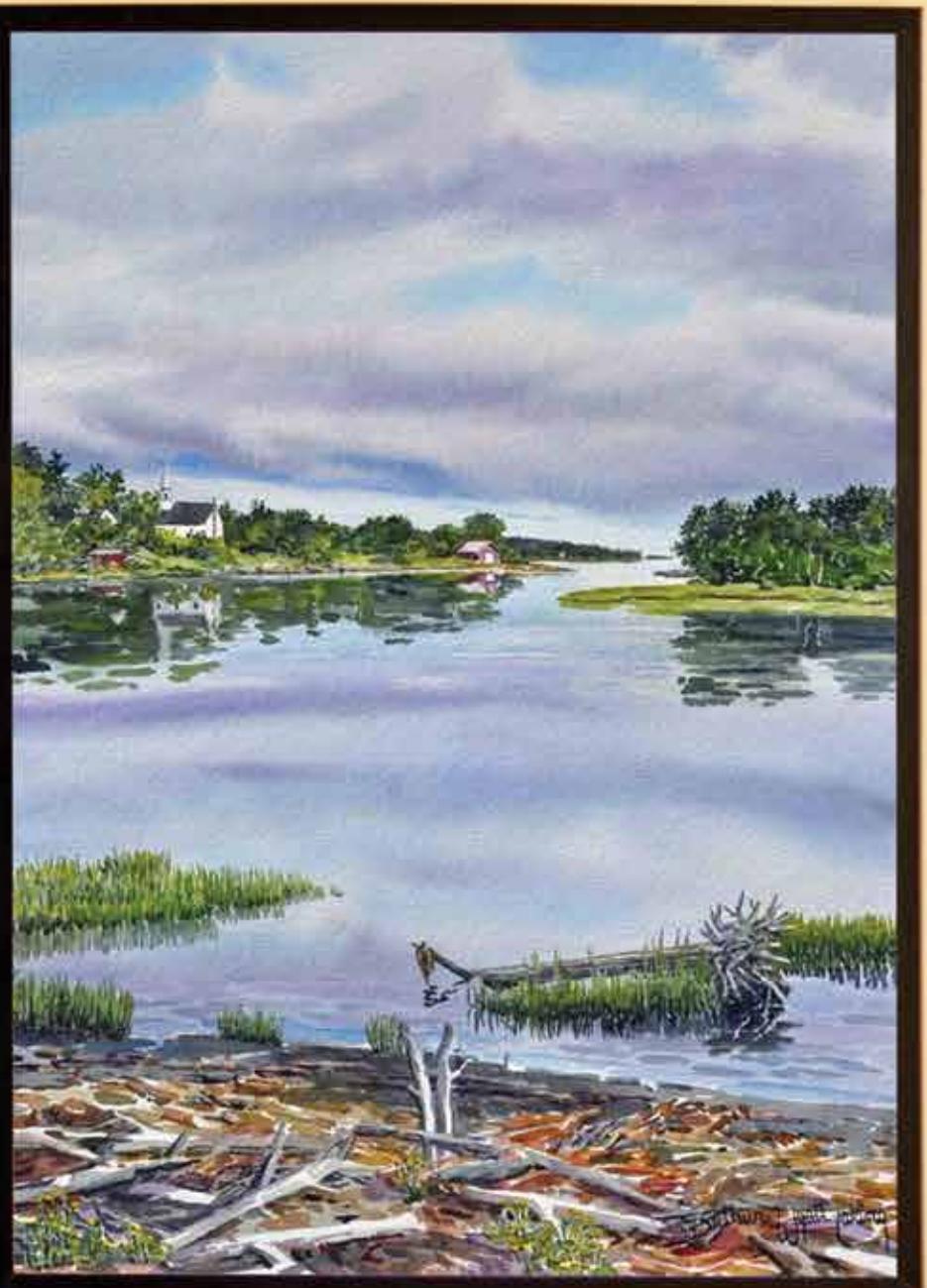
Antigonish ... 863-8233 New Glasgow ... 752-8233 Pictou ... 485-5021
River John ... 351-2599 Stellarton ... 755-1638 Trenton ... 752-5181
Westville ... 396-5022



River John: Through



Through Our Eyes



In August a group of artists gathered in River John for a week to celebrate rural Nova Scotia. The week-long artist colony included painters, sculptors, composers, photographers and writers. The visiting artists included Joy Laking, Chris Gorey, Susan Paterson, Rosalee Peppard, Dawn MacNutt, Bill Rogers and Laurie Gunn, who spent a week in the community, capturing with their art the essence of the area and the spirit of the residents who live here.



On Friday August 19, the community gathered to see and hear the results. The visual art was a breathtaking display and the evening included stories and song, reflecting on the past and looking to the future. Many thanks to all the artists who participated, especially Joy Laking for her strong support of rural coastal Nova Scotia and organizing this wonderful way to bring the community together through the beauty of the landscape. [Editor's note: The sales from the artists' work helped raised over \$3,000 for the community]

Ronnie Baillie re-offers for Councilor for District 4

Ronnie Baillie is re-offering as county councilor in District 4 for the Municipality of the Pictou County. I have had the pleasure of representing the residents of District 4 for the past 19 years and I am looking forward to the opportunity to continue to do so. Over the past 8 years I have had the pleasure of being Warden. I will continue to be open, transparent and bring my constituents issues forward as we work together to make the communities of the district more vibrant.

I have been a volunteer in this area for the past 45 years through many organizations and committees. Presently I am a member of the River John Action Society, Friends of the Library and Board of Stewarts for the United Church.



I remain committed to looking for ways to lower/maintain tax rates; looking for ways to create growth in both the residential and commercial sectors throughout the municipality; and working with our communities

to make us all stronger. I will continue to work with other levels of government to obtain funding.

While we have had many positive projects occur over the past number of years, the district also has faced many challenges and I will continue to work diligently to overcome them and see the district improve.

Norma and I are lifelong residents of this area and have 3 grown boys and 7 grandchildren. I worked at Michelin for 34 plus years before retiring in 2007. District 4 needs a strong voice on County Council, so residents can be heard and issues addressed. I am looking forward to talking to the residents leading up to the election on October 15th.

Notable quotables

“Changing is what people do when they have no options left.”

Holly Black

“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”

Leo Tolstoy

“Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change.”

Mary Shelley

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

Barack Obama

“Those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”

George Bernard Shaw

“Fashion changes, but style endures.”

Coco Chanel

“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”

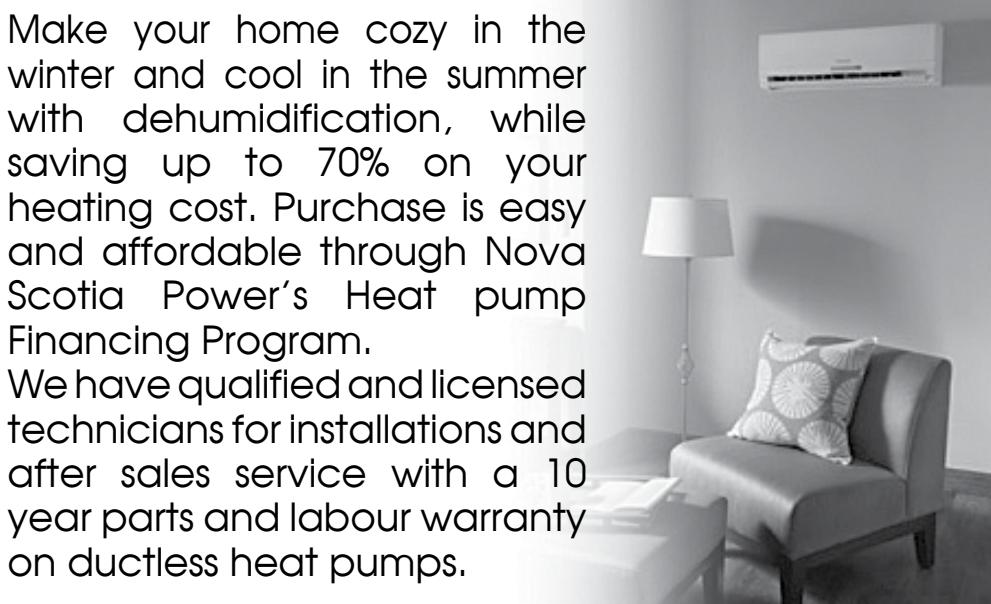
R. Buckminster Fuller

“If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write.”

Martin Luther

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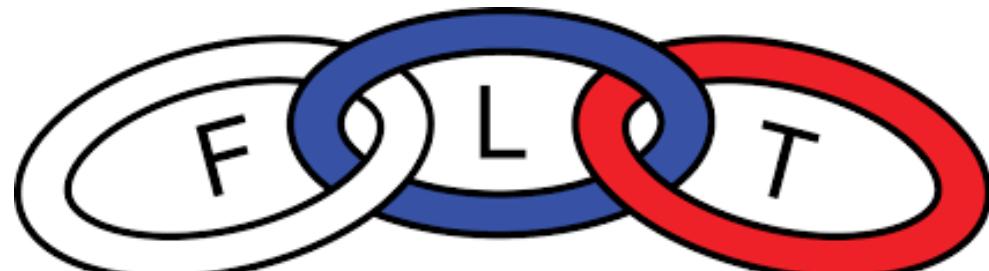
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Hard Winter?

I can't help it. It's September and my thoughts tend toward winter. I know I shouldn't "wish my life away" and "live in the present" yadda, yadda, but one has to be prepared. "Accuweather.com" notwithstanding, I was wondering if nature might give any hints as to what's in store. After studying the 'net, I have come up with a short list of weather prognosticators.

In favour of a hard winter:

- Lots of fruit on trees, so much that it's been breaking the branches;
- Lots of orange berries on the mountain ash;
- Early flocks of birds, including Canada Geese; and
- A wasp's nest on the ground. (This may just be related to species)

In favour of an easy winter:

- Woolybear caterpillars that have a large, orangey-red band;
- Ant mounds not especially high;
- Squirrels not especially busy gathering nuts;
- Dogs and cats that do not seem to be growing fur any faster than normal;
- Corn husks and onion skin do not seem to be any thicker than normal; and
- Evergreen trees have normal size pine cones.

So that's, four against and six in favour of an easy winter ... Hurray for us!

-- Chris Giles

Through our Eyes

Lynn MacLeod was one of several speakers at the Through our Eyes event on August 19. Here is what she told the audience of well over 100 residents, guest artists and politicians.

Hi. I'm Lynn MacLeod and I live here in the Community of River John. What an honour to have such distinguished guests in our midst for the last several days. We are so pleased that you chose River John to not only portray your wonderful artistic work but to capture some of our amazing scenes in this community. And that is what I would like to briefly touch on - our Community and our community spirit.

I have lived here for 61 years out of the 65 I've been blessed with. In a small community such as River John you get to know everyone, their children, their names. I even know their grandparents. We celebrate each other's joys and achievements. We are sad when they are sad, we weep when they weep, that is community spirit.

When there is a common goal that we are trying to achieve to benefit our community, and examples are our bank, our grocery store and lastly our school, this community came together as ONE; we took a stand - we were River John Strong - that is community spirit. To me, it's like standing on a podium and knowing you have the whole community supporting you. The bonds that people create within this community generate an electricity that reinforces our community spirit.

I am so proud of this community, so happy that my husband and I live here and have brought up our children here. Rural communities are the backbone of this province and we need to stay strong, not only to maintain them, but to help them grow. To our honoured guests, again, thank you for choosing River John, my home, my community.



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Story Boards, ...Researching, writing & presenting community history and stories (with John Ashton)

Tuesday October 4, 6:30pm-8pm

• Pictou Public Library (902-485-5021, pictou@nsnpg.library.ns.ca)

Join author, columnist, historian and visual artist John Ashton, as he takes participants on a journey of discovering community history. Mr. Ashton has worked with many Pictou County communities to present their histories by means of graphics, text and photos on interpretive panels. Learn the different traditional and online methods and sources of historical research. (All ages welcome)

Multimedia Writing (with Chris Benjamin and Jon Tattrie)

Saturday October 8, 1:00pm-3:30pm

• New Glasgow Public Library (902-752-8233, newglasg@nsnpg.library.ns.ca)

"The medium is the message." The medium we use (video, internet, magazine/newspaper page, book etc.) is more than just a way to get our message out. It changes how we tell our story and even the story itself. This session will explore how each medium shapes story, and how as storytellers we can adapt our tales for maximum impact and reach. (All ages welcome.)

WORD Boot Camp for Adults (with Sheree Fitch)

Saturday October 15, 1:00pm-2:30pm

• River John Public Library (902-351-2599, riverjh@nsnpg.library.ns.ca)

Whether poetry or prose, whether writing for family or business or publication, whether the audience is children or adults: every word matters. Participants write, discuss and try out surprising strategies that will sharpen their own word mastery. Focused guided exercises lead to effective writing and pages with energy, authenticity and sparkle. No experience necessary. Bring sense of humour. Wear comfortable clothes. (*This is a workshop for those 18 and over.)

Creating Characters in Fiction (with Linda Little)

Saturday October 22, 10:30am - 12:00pm

• Westville Public Library (902-396-5022, westvill@nsnpg.library.ns.ca)

Enliven your fiction by enlivening your characters. Pick up a few tricks of the trade that will help you develop your characters into people who will entice your readers. The characters make the story! This session includes tips and exercises. (For novice or practiced writers.)

Writing Non-Fiction: news releases, memoirs, opinion pieces, & autobiographies (with Monica Graham)

Saturday October 29, 1:00pm-2:30pm

• Antigonish Town & County Public Library (902-836-4276, antigoni@nsnpg.library.ns.ca)

Join us for a workshop on basic writing tips of non-fiction stories. Learn how to write a good lead/hook, the verb 'to be,' fact-checking, and research tips. The session will include a writing exercise, with a group critique. Participants could come prepared with some non-fiction piece they've been agonizing over, to use as an exercise object. (All ages welcome.)

Stories.
Connect.
People.

Funding for this program was provided by an endowment from the former Pictou County Writers Group, and a New Horizons grant from the NS Department of Seniors in partnership with the Town of Pictou Parks & Recreation's "Each one, Teach one" intergenerational learning program.



Friends and Neighbours

Earl Holt, Nice Guy, Nonagenarian, Survivor of the Battle of the Atlantic

by Joan MacLeod

Earl is a senior citizen from River John who has led a most interesting life.

Earl was raised on a farm on Mountain Road (south of the present large dairy farm). Like present day families, his father, Smith Holt went away to work. Working as a carpenter on a smelter in Trail BC to raise the money to buy the farm. The whole family went away together, leaving when he, Earl, the baby of the family, was 2 1/2 and returning when he was 7. He had a brother Fred who was 16 years older, a sister Misie, 8 years older and a sister Kay, 1 year and 11 months older. At 92, he is now the sole surviving member of his family. He loved living on the farm even though it had no electricity and he especially liked working with animals.

He was called the baby of the family and may have been a little spoiled because if he wanted the car on a Saturday night, he got it. He and Jim MacDonald and a couple of the other fellows would pick up some girls and go to a dance somewhere. His parents knew they could trust him because he didn't drink or smoke. He left the farm when he was 16 to work on the railway but also to help his parents out financially. He felt he had to grow up fast and took on the responsibility to help his family at such a young age. Everyone was hard up in those days.

He would have stayed on to keep the farm, he and his father discussed this and they decided to sell because there was no money in it. They sold the whole thing to a bachelor for \$800 and moved to River John, where his father bought and sold a number of different homes.

From 1941-1943 he worked at the Pictou shipyards building freighters for the war effort. They built one a month.

On his 19th birthday, September 10, 1943, Earl joined the Royal Canadian Naval Voluntary Responders (RCNVR). Four of them: Earl, Jim MacDonald, John Langille and Laurie MacKinnon, all took the ferry from Caribou to Wood Islands and then the bus into Charlottetown to sign up. Three of them passed their medical, except for Jim MacDonald, he was colour blind. They sent them home to wait for the next class. Then they went by train to Borden. The train drove right on the ferry and took them straight to Charlottetown.

They did their basic training there, aboard the HMCS Queen Charlotte. Then after two months they were sent to Cornwallis in the Annapolis Valley for specialized courses. He liked cooking and so if asked what course he would like to do he was preparing to say "cookery." There was a bunch of about ten new recruits standing around and an officer came along and said "Here's a bunch right here I want for gunnery." So that was it, he was a gunner.

Earl was first on a corvette. It was a terrible thing, a hard scrabble. It rolled a lot and would go nearly underwater. A lot of guys were seasick the whole time, especially if they had had greasy food the night before or had been drinking. Earl didn't drink or smoke, so he was usually ok. There was one trip from Halifax to Boston in which he was sick, he just lay under the gun deck the whole trip.

Later, Earl served on a frigate. Comparing the corvette to the frigate was like the difference between a Model T and a Cadillac. It was solid. It didn't rock

and roll and your feet were not wet all the time. In the corvette you had to be careful when you used the head (toilet) as the toilet water would splash up and wet your backside.

Earl was on a frigate during the Battle of the Atlantic, when the "Shawinigan" went down. Their ship was one of the first ones to come along and recover

was hard to get plumbing materials. So after a year, Earl decided there was not enough money in the business for both of them, so Vic bought out Earl's shares and Earl joined the throngs who went to Ontario in search of employment. Marion stayed behind, until Earl got settled.

The first job Earl got was in Wawa Ontario working with diamond drillers. Then he got in with Algoma Corp as a miner. He earned \$12.00 a day, which was huge money. Rent was only \$25 a month. Marion joined him then and she got a job at the drugstore. Earl worked at that for four or five years. In 1959 they moved to Woodstock Ontario where Earl worked for Beaver Lumber. A lot of Maritimers were living in Woodstock at that time.

In 1951 they moved back down east. Marion's brothers owned a company called "Eastern Woodworkers" and also a subsidiary company called "Go mac Construction". This company had a contract to build 150 new houses in a new subdivision in St John's Newfoundland. They needed carpenters and they trained Earl to be a carpenter. The couple lived in New Glasgow, Newfoundland and Halifax over the next four years while Earl worked for Marion's brothers at Eastern Woodworkers.

One day, Earl saw an ad in the paper, that Truro were looking for police officers. Earl phoned and left his name. He forgot about it when he had not heard for a while. One day Marion got a call from the Truro police, saying they wanted to talk to Earl at his earliest convenience. At that time, Earl and Marion often would spend the weekend at Harry Tattrie's as his wife, Louise, was Marion's sister. Earl wondered if he had been caught in a speed trap on his return home. Instead, the Chief of Police wanted to hire Earl as a policeman. When Earl told his former boss about his new job, giving him two weeks notice, his boss said he would starve to death, as he was going from a salary of \$300 a month to \$185! Earl had not liked carpentry work. He told them that if you don't like a job it is hard to do it.

Earl stayed in that job for 11 years, the last five as a plain clothes policeman. He made a good policeman, because he had the attitude that he was always trying to help people. One day a judge told him that he was in the wrong profession. He should become a Probation Officer. There were openings, so he switched professions and stayed in the occupation for 25 years. He has been retired for 30 years.

Earl at one time lived in a house in Brule, which he bought initially as a holiday home. When his wife and son Kenneth saw it they insisted in moving there. Kenneth went to school in Tatamagouche, from where he graduated. Earl's second wife Ann also lived there until her death in 1992.

Earl presently lives with his son, Kenneth in Westville. He still drives his own car!

Railway worker, ship builder, naval gunner, plumber, miner, store clerk, carpenter, police officer, probation officer. Not many people could ever boast such a varied career and through it all be one of the nicest guys you would ever meet. Earl Holt is quite the River Johner!



bodies and pieces of bodies. Earl will never forget what happened when his boat hook caught on to a life jacket. He was very solid. He called for help and when they hauled the huge fellow in and turned him over, it was Ned Garrett. He had been a hockey player for the Maple Leafs and he and Earl had bunked together at Cornwallis. It was such a shock, it almost made Earl sick. At that time there was no recognition of or treatment for Post Traumatic Shock Disorder (PTSD).

Another instance, Earl and a friend went out to a restaurant in Halifax, the Green Lantern. They had a nice meal and were feeling good and then the friend asked Earl if he was going to be available for a certain weekend in November. He wanted to marry Earl's sister Kay at that time. Three or four days later, he too was blown up on the Shawinigan.

Earl had an unfortunate incident happen. He was firing a star shell. (A star shell was 2 feet long and weighed 50 to 60 pounds. They would be set off two at a time and would light everything up.) He tripped and fell over the huge brass casing. He hurt his head and his back and he probably also had a concussion, but again that would not have been recognised in those days. Earl went to sick bay, but the doctor who treated him was drunk. He gave him a handful of pills. No documentation was ever done.

Earl married Marion Mingo in 1944. Marion was a Mingo from Middleton and a school teacher. He was 18 and his father had to sign for permission for him to marry. They were married 12 years before their only son Kenneth was born.

Earl was discharged from the Navy in 1945. He went to plumbing school in the Valley for one year and then he and a friend named Vic set up a plumbing business in New Glasgow, where he and Marion found an apartment. It was just after the war and it



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VOTE

Registered voters can vote in the municipal council and school-board election on October 15. Residents have the option of advance electronic voting online or by phone from October 3 (starting at 8am) until October 11 (closing at 8pm).

Residents will receive an information letter several days before the online and telephone options are available. It will include a PIN # you will require for the electronic voting option. The letter will also identify the polling location where you can vote in person on October 15 from 8am to 7pm.

WHATZITT?"

Here are some of the many articles you can find in the museum run by the River John Historical Society. Do you know what these items are? Answers on the back page ... or you could visit the museum.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



A look back at River John Festival Days 2016

Another summer is coming to an end with a successful Festival Days behind us. This year we had a lot of former committee members retire and new people stepped into their shoes. There were a few hiccups along the way but for the most part things ran smoothly.



We would like to thank the businesses in River John, Tatamagouche and Pictou that generously sponsored events. We cannot do this without their help and support. I am afraid to leave someone out so that is why I have not named them here. But they know who they are and hope they know we value their help.



Some highlights of the events include a great parade with great participation. There were a lot of positive comments calling it one of the best parades in years. There was a huge crowd at the lobster crate races and a lot of fun and laughter, making it a real crowd-pleasing event. Washer toss seemed to be the biggest hit with 36 teams showing up to participate on a sunny afternoon. A new event this year was the fishing derby with a lot of fishermen and women casting lines.



The breakfasts were another big hit and as always drew large crowds. The church and fire department suppers were also a success. We certainly enjoy our food in River John. Overall the events were well-attended.



What would Festival Days be without an amazing fireworks display? It was spectacular, drawing many positive, happy comments from the spectators.

Thanks to Linda Thompson Reid for chairing the committee this year and to all the members for being a great team. Everyone did a terrific job and a lot of effort was put into the events. Volunteers make our Festival Days happen.

-- Dan Ferguson, Co-chair, Festival Committee

Answers to WHATZITT

1. Large clamps used in shipbuilding.
2. Early (1876) Bissell wooden carpet cleaner
3. Carpenter's angle
4. Clothes wringer, for squeezing out excess water
5. Tool for hooking twine

Deep, Personal and Filled with Meaning

The eyes of the film world were on a north shore filmmaker in September when Catherine Bussiere's film *Self Portrait in May* was screened at the Atlantic Film Festival. *Self Portrait in May* is an inspiring film that uses images of nature interwoven with music and personal interviews to explain how Bussiere and indeed most Nova Scotians are tied to the land, the animals, the trees and each other.

The film touches on all aspects of life from creation to death. Shot almost entirely on her property in Beckwith (just west of Pugwash), *Self Portrait* shows Bussiere's husband and three children living off the land and giving back to the land. It captures the true sense of the word "stewardship."

There are many remarkable scenes and even more remarkable cameos by forest animals. We get up close and personal with beavers, skunks and porcupines, but the real stars are Bussiere's two cats, Buster and Charlie, who seem like they were scripted to be in the film, but who Bussiere says were just following her everywhere while she was filming.

The reason that the land, people and animals, even the plants seem to be both part of the background and foreground in the film is Bussiere's brilliant use of silence. There is dialogue and there is a musical score but there are more scenes in which all we hear are the peepers and the sound of a beaver's tail splashing.

The film was 75 minutes long and was a stunning treat for the eyes. It certainly caught the eye of many big names in Atlantic filmmaking. Barbara Doran, one of Atlantic Canada's most important documentary filmmakers was in the audience for the screening.



Charlie the cat, showing the depth of his acting skills
Photo: Catherine Bussiere

Almost as inspiring as the film itself was the fact that it was shot entirely in the month of May and for only \$1,000. The sound quality was exceptional, not surprising as our own sound engineer, Ron MacNutt from Wallace, was an advisor to the project.

Self Portrait in May is a deeply spiritual film. Bussiere asks all the questions we ask ourselves when we are alone: Who are we? Why are we here? Where are we going? But rather than interviewing academics and philosophers, she asks her children, her neighbours, her husband. Farmers, bakers, musicians, students ... and they all provide insightful answers. Her neighbour recommends that we read the Bible if we want insight into human nature ... "There's something for everyone in that book." Then a moment later she adds with a grin "Don't take it word for word right? It's a story that has meaning for all of us." One of Bussiere's friends, Dot, who has possibly the best

smile ever filmed, says she sees within herself a person of different ages each hour of the day.

The Atlantic Film Festival showcases the best films Nova Scotia has to offer. We should be proud that one of our own was recognized for a profoundly meaningful film.

With such a promising debut, it is safe to say we'll hear (and see) more from Bussiere. The Pioneer's fingers are crossed that we can get her to come to River John and showcase this and other films in the future. Let's hope that movers and shakers at the Atlantic Film Festival, having discovered her, will fund her and let her explore. If this is what she can do with \$1,000, imagine what she could do with some backing.

-- Rob Assels



Catherine Bussiere with microphone and headphones
listening to the forest

Photo: Haley MacPhee