



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

Thank you for the years of service



Noble Grand Chris Silver (middle) presents a 70 year jewel to Brother Earl Holt (left) and 73 year achievement award to Brother Jim Baillie (right).

Oddfellows Helping Hand Lodge #34 in River John pays tribute to two (very) long-serving members. Thank you brothers for your many years of service to the lodge in FLT.

Welcome! To Cape John

The Cape John Crab and Seafood Ltd. plant near the end of Cape John will soon be open again. Paul Chen, one of the new owners, will be processing, cooking, cleaning and freezing lobster, Jonah crab, whelks and eels as well as other seafood as available. The plant will be processing, cooking, cleaning and freezing seafood. In addition, there may be a retail outlet for purchasing seafood at the plant.

Fen Bungay, the plant's new manager, told the Pioneer's Chris Giles that the plant has been undergoing "tune-up" work through the winter, mainly under the supervision of Dwayne Innis. Right now, they are awaiting the final hookup of three-phase power.

Paul Chen is the fourth owner of the plant and will soon be looking to hire more than twenty-five people to work there. People who are interested in a position should drop off a resume at the plant, stating any relevant experience. Fen will be going through the application process soon.

Honouring Earl

The community of River John would like to nominate Earl Johnson as Maritimer of the Week. Earl works tirelessly to give back to the community year-round, volunteering his time in a variety of ways to help out his neighbours and to make River John a great place to live.

Most of Earl's efforts are behind the scenes. He helps with any events that take place in the village, including the soup luncheons and suppers that take place at the churches. He also helps with the daily breakfasts during River John Days, regardless of which community group is sponsoring them.

Earl has a wonderfully green thumb, which he puts to use helping with community flower gardens, planting and mowing. He plants a large vegetable garden in his own yard and shares the bulk of it with his neighbours in River John.

He sings in the community choir and participates in the local jam sessions. He's a member of the Oddfellows. In the winter, Earl is a local hero on his tractor. He is up at 5 am whenever it snows, out ploughing his neighbours' driveways. Often he won't finish until late at night. Incidentally, when we say "neighbours," we mean anyone in River John who needs the help; not just the people on his street.

That's what makes Earl Johnson so special. He considers his whole community to be his neighbours.

River John is throwing a party on April 23 at 7 pm at the River John Hub (school) in Earl's honour to thank him for all he does.

All are welcome!



MLA, Karla MacFarlane welcomes Paul Chen, one of the new owners of Cape John Crab and Seafood

Notable quotables

"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light and winter in the shade."
Charles Dickens

"Spring is the time of plans and projects."
Leo Tolstoy

"In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt."
Margaret Atwood

"Spring is nature's way of saying, Let's Party!"
Robin Williams

"Spring shows what God can do with a drab and dirty world."
Virgil A. Kraft

"It's the first day of spring. That means this weekend I'll take down my Christmas lights."
David Letterman

"In the Spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours."
Mark Twain

Lobster Fishing

By: James Thompson (deceased)

It was the year 1927,
we began to fish in May.
We were fishing for Burnham and Morrill
at the mouth of River John Bay.

Our traps were rigged in jig time,
our lines we ran with care.
But when we got the traps all out,
the lobsters were not there.

It was then we began to bull-trawl,
from morning 'til late, and
we could hardly raise a hundred pounds,
with the very best of bait.

The wife won't get that new hat,
you promised before you came.
So she'll have to paint the old one,
and wear it over again.

The girls won't get so many treats,
from the boys they love so dear.
The boys will need a little money
to buy a little beer,
to try to drown old sorrow,
and make a little cheer.

Jim Thompson was born in 1891 and died in 1979; his wife Jessie was also born in 1891 and died in 1956. They had 10 children. Jim was a fisherman and he also sold live and cooked lobsters from his home, beside the River John bridge, where his grandson now lives. His home was one of the first houses, in River John, to have electricity. Jim also did sheet metal work and built and sold Selkirk chimneys. He organized a New Year Day's celebration, by setting up a bull's eye target and friends would gather to shoot for prizes; there were raffles, as well. Jim enjoyed writing poetry.



Karla MacFarlane, MLA

Congratulations to the River John SOS Committee for their nomination at the Collective Better Politics Award. You all worked so hard and are so deserving of this nomination. You are an inspiration to the rest of Nova Scotia and an exemplary example of community spirit.

Pictou West
PO Box 310, 25B Front Street,
Pictou, NS B0K 1H0
(902) 485-8958
pictouwestmla@bellaliant.com



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.

(902) 485-6475
ronald.baillie@munpict.ca
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Community Health Board

The Pictou West Community Health Board (PWCHB) is welcoming new board members. Recently, Marshville resident, Rob Assels, stepped down after two years on the board. He was the only representative west of Pictou. The PWCHB is a volunteer board that acts as an information conduit from local communities to the Health Authority and vice versa.

The PWCHB also distributes annual Wellness Grants. In previous years the PWCHB distributed \$50,000 in grants to support health-minded community groups across Pictou County. It also had another \$50,000 fund to achieve county-wide health initiatives.

Under the current government, only the Wellness Grants remain and its funds were cut to \$33,000 annually. These grants have helped the outlying communities in a variety of ways. For example Meals on Wheels has received a grant the past three years. The Pioneer newspaper's first edition was funded by a Wellness Grant. Anyone wishing to get involved, should contact the PWCHB's coordinator, Martin Fisher (902) 752-7600 ext 3875

Salem United Church

April 2nd

- Meal 4-6 Fish cakes, beans and Lemon Pie \$10.00
- Silent Auction 4-8
- Musical Entertainment Blaine Brown and friends 7-9
- Donation at door

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Mission Awareness

The Atlantic Mission Society of St. George's Presbyterian Church is hosting a Mission Awareness Society Sunday April 24th 11am at St. George's Presbyterian Church in River John.

The guest speakers will be Marjorie Fraser and Mona MacDonald and their topic is on the life and mission work of the late Pearl Gertrude Young formerly of Millsville, Pictou County. She served in the mission fields of China and Taiwan until her death in 1986.

Congratulations one and all!

RJSOS was one of three finalists nominated as Movement-of-the-Year in Nova Scotia for its vision in creating the HUB development proposal and its grassroots effort to keep the school open. This gave rise to a larger movement, engaged citizens to challenge the status quo in education and fight against

the school closure process. It shone a light on small rural communities. This was Springtide Collective's Annual Awards for Better Politics. Karla MacFarlane was nominated for Rising Star as well as Legislator-of-the-Year. The RJ contingent was happy to be there to applaud!



Left to right : Santina Weatherby, Sheree Fitch, Karla MacFarlane, Marilyn Heighton, Jill Munro, Valrie Langill Suideest and Linda Thompson Reid.

SEAN FRASER, MP
CENTRAL NOVA

HERE
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HELP
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(902) 752-0226
Sean.Fraser@parl.gc.ca

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River John Hub Community Centre
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Pioneer getting new rate card

The Pioneer has had the same advertising rates since its inaugural edition (Summer of 2014). The publication is a non-profit endeavour that is intended to be self-sustaining without being a burden on local businesses. The need for a new rate card is for simplicity. It will be based upon column inches and the type of advertising:

The new rates will reflect three types of advertising:

- Government and political. These advertisers will pay a premium (\$10/column inch);
- Commercial. These advertisers will pay standard rates (\$7/column inch); and
- Non-profit (e.g., churches). These advertisers will be able to advertise for free (when space allows).

The paper also has a mandate to help new businesses, so discounted rates (below commercial rates) may be warranted. If you are a business start-up, please let us know and we will do what we can to assist. Furthermore, all job postings in the Pioneer are free of charge.

Businesses in our area need to stretch their budgets as far as possible, so while we are changing the method used to calculate the cost of ads, we fully expect the cost for most advertisers to remain the same or possibly be reduced.

What will change is that we are moving away from the practice of providing a discount for purchasing four consecutive ads. This has been a burden for our volunteers in terms of having to track separate renewal dates for each advertiser.

The new rates will kick in for the Summer 2016 issue. If you have any questions or concerns, contact Rob at 902-351-1476 or r.assels@malatest.com

To give you a rough idea of the cost of advertising, if this article was an ad, in July it would cost a business \$63.

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Don't Forget to Recycle

You can drop off old clothing at the clothing recycling boxes located outside Simpson's. You can also recycle old batteries at the drop box inside Simpson's front door.

Opinions ... On Amalgamation

... The Case For

The MOU Steering Committee submitted numerous reports to the Utility and Review Board that outline the evidence in support of amalgamating Pictou County and the towns of New Glasgow, Pictou and Stellarton. This evidence creates a compelling case for bringing our four municipalities together in a new governance structure:

- Improved municipal planning and economic development through a united effort.
- \$1M in savings each year during the first five years, at minimum.
- Lower taxes with the same or better services.
- Save \$220,000 each year by moving from 31 to 11 elected officials. There will be a mayor and ten councillors. Each councillor will represent about 3,000 people.
- Less duplication with 16 fewer full-time equivalent positions, half from management.
- Unprecedented investment of \$69M in capital projects to address infrastructure deficiencies across the region, including a large capital project in the county.
- At the end of the next five years the New Municipality will retain \$5.5M in reserve, even while lowering taxes and investing in infrastructure.
- Stable equalization funding from provincial government for the next five years at a time when this funding formula is likely to change and not in our favour.
- Ensure fairness by keeping reserves and savings of the participating municipalities in their respective communities and each former municipality maintaining responsibility for its own debts.
- While there are more than simply financial benefits if amalgamation proceeds, I want to be clear that those outlined above were reviewed by chartered accountants and deemed accurate.

Now that the board hearing is over, we are looking forward to hitting the road to share this information with citizens and answer questions. I invite you to attend an information session at the River John HUB Community Centre on April 13, 2016 at 6:30 pm. The MOU Steering Committee would also be happy to host an open house where citizens can drop in and have one-on-one conversations. Please contact me if you would like to arrange an open house at (902) 351-2764.

I look forward to speaking with citizens at upcoming events, which will be announced via local media and on onepictoucounty.ca.

--Ron Baillie, River John

Contributors to this issue:

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... The Case Against

This is a revised version of a presentation made to the UARB hearing on March 8.

I believe the amalgamation process to date has not asked the right questions. It has looked almost exclusively at financial impacts, whether money can be saved, and it has answered that question in a very narrow context, using the usual “envelope” approach.

I have not seen any evidence that the present process has evaluated the potential costs and impacts of amalgamation on the principally rural areas represented by Municipality of the County of Pictou. Will amalgamation strengthen or weaken rural areas and rural life? That is the point I would like to address tonight. I am not implying that this is the only issue which has not been addressed, but I will leave other issues to others.

Rural areas differ from towns in many ways. Rules and regulations which are appropriate and help rural areas thrive may well be different from the rules and regulations appropriate for towns. Priorities for rural areas and rural ways of living may differ from those of towns.

Amalgamation into a unit in which the voice of rural areas will always be a minority could easily result in decisions that work against thriving rural communities. It is easy to imagine the rural areas of Pictou County as square pegs being forced into the round holes of a Mega-municipality’s rules, regulations, planning standards and values. This has already happened in other areas, including HRM.

We need both healthy towns and healthy rural areas. The assets and contributions of town and rural areas complement each other. There is a significant risk that amalgamation could have unintended, though predictable, long-term harmful consequences on rural areas that will be very difficult, if not impossible, to reverse.

I conducted an informal consultation at our local coffee hour last week. When I asked my neighbors what they thought about the proposed amalgamation, they all expressed concerns that it would hurt the rural areas. One woman described her experience in Ontario, where after amalgamation the character of her rural area changed completely, becoming little more than an extension of the town.

We’ve all heard the phrase, “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” I have not heard any evidence that the County (by which I mean the area represented by the County Council) is broken. It is not at all clear how or if amalgamation would benefit county residents. Taxes in the county are lower than in the towns, there are no external debts, there are no pressing infrastructure challenges.

The County already covers a broad area and councillors from different areas work together to make decisions which benefit the county. They share, and work from, an understanding of the rural culture and needs of our area. The County already appears to function efficiently and serve its citizens well.

The closer the level of government is to its citizens, the more likely it is to be responsive to citizens’ needs and the more likely it is to take leadership in envisioning new possibilities that are appropriate to the community. Innovation often begins at the municipal level.

In Nova Scotia, the smoke-free NS campaign began in Wolfville, then spread to other municipalities and finally to the whole province. (I know not everyone will agree this was positive...) River John’s H.U.B. School model is being applauded by educational experts across the country as the model of the future. It was developed through citizens imagining how to

serve the interconnected needs of a small rural community. And it has been supported all the way by our present Council.

The provincial government wants this amalgamation to happen. It embraces the “bigger is better option” and is offering hundreds of thousands of dollars to make this one option, and only this option, become a reality. It is doing so in the name of efficiency.

I would argue that bigger is not necessarily better and that we need to ask, efficient in what way?

Fast food chains are efficient in making hamburgers and fries – but they are not efficient in stimulating local economies, providing nutritional food, or encouraging sustainable agriculture.

Governments are using the Efficiency word as if it is a value in itself that cannot be questioned. But efficiency can serve a variety of ends and lead to a variety of consequences.

There is no evidence that cookie cutter megamunicipalities are the most efficient way to encourage resilient, flexible, innovative communities. Merging into one large municipal unit is not the only option. Co-operation and joint undertakings might well be helpful. It does not need to be all or nothing, although that is the choice that is being presented to us.

Over a decade ago, the Rural Council of Ontario described amalgamation as a costly experiment that failed, with rural townships worse off than before amalgamation (<http://www.ruralcouncil.ca/amalgamation.htm>). Why are we even considering following this failed example?

In the coming years, starting now, along with everyone else in the world, we are going to have to transition to a low-carbon economy and way of life. Even as we make this transition, we are going to face the increasing challenges of a changing climate. We know that resilient and innovative communities, both rural, town and urban, will be needed. The wisdom of experts around the world points to the importance of rural communities in providing affordable local food, as well as carbon capture in trees and healthy soils. The Ivany report underlines the importance of expanding agriculture and tourism for the provincial economy.

The question we need to ask is what government structures are best suited to create thriving rural communities and towns in the context of all the challenges we are going to face.

This process has not addressed the potential costs and impacts on rural areas of eliminating the County and creating a mega-municipality. I would ask the UARB not to approve this application until a full study of potential impacts on rural areas has been made and there has been opportunity for full consultation and discussion.

--Barb Harris, River John

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CGIT Vesper Service



The 100th Anniversary of the Canadian Girls In Training (CGIT) was celebrated in River John with a traditional Christmas Vesper worship service on Dec. 6, 2015 at Salem United Church. There were 34 former CGIT members and leaders who took part in this service, one was even a member of River John's original group of 1942.



The CGIT service was well attended, there were also former CGIT members in the congregation enjoying the memories the Vesper service evoked, especially the candlelight rendition of Silent Night.

The service was well done and appreciated by those who attended as well as those who participated in the evening. There were comments afterwards such as "we hope you do it again next year because it was a

beautiful service." It was a great start to the Christmas season.



A huge thank you to all who gave of their time, talents and energy to make the worship service so meaningful to the members, the leaders and the congregation.

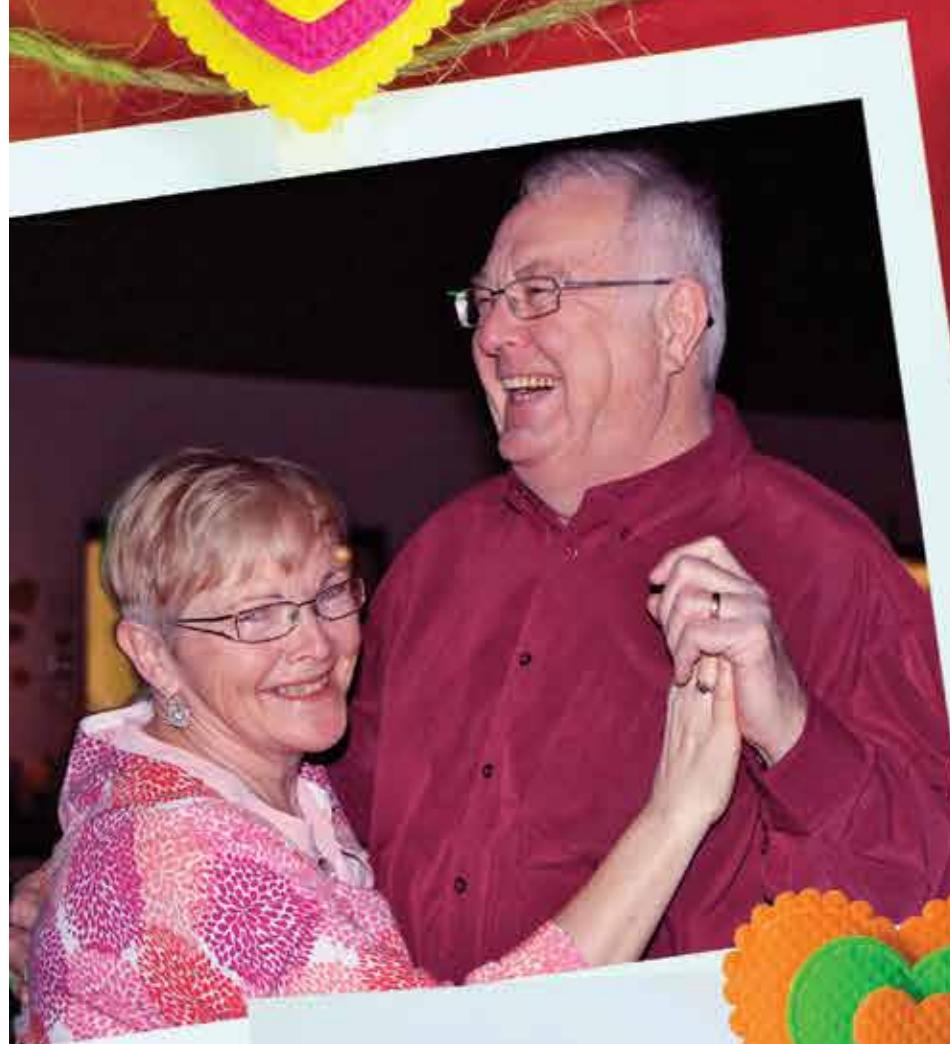
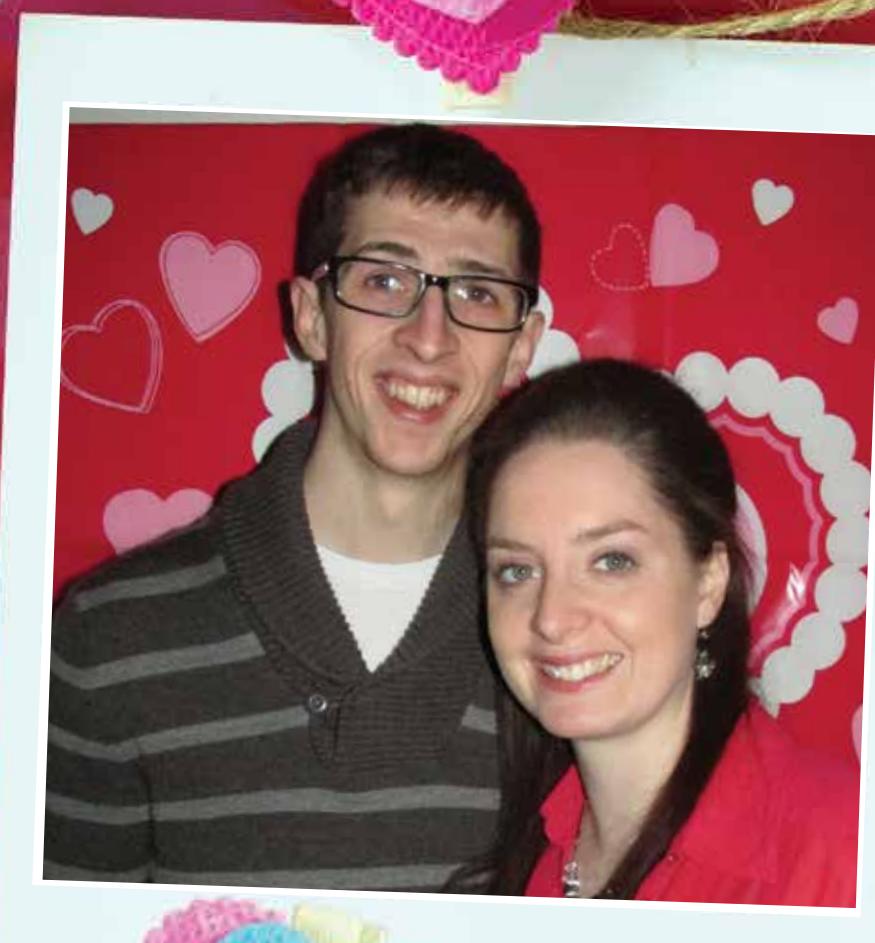


Following the service, all were invited to celebrate the evening and 100th Anniversary of CGIT with a social time and of course Birthday cake.

The CGIT purpose is cherish health, seek truth, knew God and Serve others.



Love WAS IN THE AIR



190



Musings about food

I'm sure we are all aware that the price of food is rising and this is going to be an ongoing trend. Let's please not blame the independent farmers – they are not the ones benefitting from price increases; farmers are having to pay more for their operating costs as prices of all goods are increasing. Just because the price of fuel is low at the moment doesn't mean they are raking in the savings. Farmers are subject to the ups and downs of commodity markets. For example, beef in the grocery store has been very expensive as of late which was helpful to beef farmers but we are already seeing the signs of price declines as of late. This is just another pattern of the ups and downs of commodity markets where in the case of food the winners predominately are still the corporate food producers/owners because of their ability to take advantage of economies of scale.

There is a complex web of regulations when it comes to food that we are subject to by virtue of the fact that we are so many; coordinating the operation of a society, either a city or a rural town, can be challenging. And so we have this thing called government and all its related entities that do this coordination. Along with this comes government regulations which are meant to protect the public, but when do they go too far in controlling us – limiting our consumer choices? Capitalism is all about the freedom of choice or so we are told. Supply and demand determines what is produced and consumed. Of course you only have so much choice as what you can afford. Focusing on agriculture, often regulations come into effect because of the 'bad operator,' so how do we penalize the small minority but not at the expense of the majority? The recent history of disease outbreaks in our food supply clearly stemmed from large scale producers-agribusinesses. There is ample evidence to demonstrate that regulations in effect protect the markets for agribusinesses despite the corporate mantra of 'free' trade and consumer's freedom to choose.

In rural areas there is a rich tradition of folks acquiring farm produce through sharing, bartering and direct purchase, without the intermediary of a grocery store. How many of you have had access to a supply of raw milk or 'unwashed' fresh eggs, or 'home raised and processed by someone you know' meat? I'm sure we have all heard about Gordon Fraser and his turkey processing facility being shut down in 2014. The shut down of small abattoirs had already taken place in BC (2007 saw new regulations reducing the number of abattoirs by 75%) & Ontario (2005 regulations have seen an 85% reduction), with a side effect of closing many small scale meat farming enterprises due to the increased cost of transporting the animals to distant meat processors. These changes in regulations all in the name of public safety in actuality catered to the few corporate meat processors. Of note is the related case of Michael Schmidt of Glencolten Farm in Ontario, the 'raw milk warrior' (<https://thebovine.wordpress.com>), who has been mired in a 22 year legal battle with the Ontario government over his raw milk sales. Similar to 'Community Supported Agriculture' (CSA) programs where consumers purchase a share in a farm for a season and receive in exchange a weekly box of fresh produce for the length of the growing season, there is what are called 'herdshare' (aka cowshare, goatshare) programs which Mr. Schmidt has implemented. Here consumers pay a farmer a fee for boarding their cow or goat or sheep, (or share of said animal), caring for animal and milking them. The herdshare owner then obtains (but does not purchase) the milk from his own animal. (<http://www.realmilk.com/herdshares/share-agreements>). There is no law that prohibits this – yet.

Localizing the economy (or 'localnomics') is one key way more control over food supply can be kept in the hands of the people – having local producers and processors who are supported by local consumers. "[It] is essential if we are to buffer ourselves from speculative bubbles and escalating food and energy prices... shifting the power from channels of accumulation for the few into channels of distribution for the many." (Gay Nicholson, 2011) Michael Shuman, <http://michaelshuman.com>, the keynote speaker at the 2015 Local Prosperity conference in Annapolis Royal, spoke of the research that for every \$ spent locally there is a rate of return anywhere between 45-65% (simply put, if you spend a \$ in a local independently owned business, \$0.45-.65 stays in the local economy) where for every \$ spent at a non-local business, e.g. Walmart, there is less than 20% return to the local economy. Put another way, research has clearly shown that every dollar spent at a locally owned business generates two-to-four times the economic development impacts of a dollar spent on an equivalent non-local business. This means that every dollar spent locally produces two-to-four times the local jobs, two-to-four times the local income and wealth effects, two-to-four times the local taxes and two-to-four times the local charitable contributions. Shuman challenges the Ivany report as prioritizing exports, not favouring locals, arguing instead we need to maximize local self-reliance and local ownership of business and use triple bottom line success indicators (economic, ecological and social).

In various locales on the North Shore, there has been discussion for many years to establish some sort of community food hub (see the Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-op, <http://pancapebretonlocalfoodhub>.

harvesthand.com and <http://cblocalfood.ca/hub>). Such a hub has many purposes: to coordinate the producers to fulfill consumer preferences to distributing the bounty to organizing consumer purchasing of produce. A (paid) coordinator takes care of the administration and coordination of the hub. Producers benefit by having a place to bring their harvest and consumers benefit by having a place to do the bulk of their grocery purchases. According to Alicia Lake, the CB Hub administrator, the amount folks spend on local producers has grown from less than \$20 to more than \$60 – about 1/2 of an average family's weekly spending on food. This would seem to be a great use of some portion of the River John HUB. Anyone interested in getting involved in such a project then contact me.

Our family has not really been impacted by the rising food prices but that is because we grow much of our own, eating fresh when in season and preserving the harvest to enjoy the rest of the year. We are fortunate enough to have the know-how, the land and tools to do this. There is much land on this north shore that is not being used for productive purposes. Having the family garden, standard practice in the previous generations, does not occur to the extent it once did. Do you remember your grandparents or parents having a garden? Did you or do you have a garden now? Out of necessity we are going to be seeing a return to more folks having their own gardens, using community kitchens to preserve large quantities of food (many hands make less work), bartering and sharing surplus produce. Happy planting.

--Wilma van der Veen

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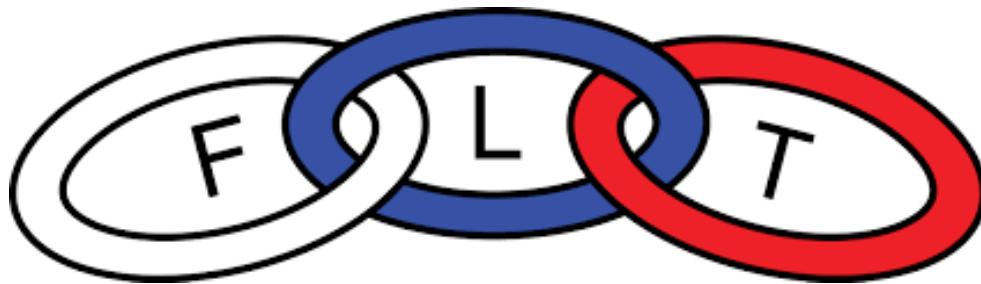
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2015-16 Noble Grand Chris A. Silver

A big Thank You

Rural communities rely on and celebrate the contributions of a wide variety of people who help enrich our lives by volunteering. From our firefighters to the folks delivering Meals-on-Wheels, there are countless community-minded residents. However, it is also important to acknowledge the contributions of local businesses. In this edition, the Pioneer salutes the contribution of Simpsons, which has been running a clothing recycling program for the past two years. It has also recently added a much needed battery recycling program. According to Daniel Ferguson, Manager of Simpson's, the clothing boxes are so well used they sometimes need to be emptied twice a week.



The River John SCORE Preschool and School Age program is an all-inclusive centre and we are now accepting children ages 3-12 for the remainder of the school year as well as applications for next year. We are located in the River John H.U.B Community Centre. The preschool program ages 3-5 is \$30.00 per week and runs Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9am till 12. Our Afterschool Program runs 3pm-5pm Tuesday to Friday \$12.00 per day. Please contact Karin Fraser to get more information or to pick up a registration package 902-305-3554



River John Sunday market will be back in the summer.

Beginning July 3, every Sunday 10 am – 2 pm

Vendors with produce, baking, preserves, woodworking, artwork, knitting, felting, jewellery, birdfeeders, photography and more.

Music, barbecue and wagon rides.

Lots of fun for everyone!

We always welcome new vendors. If you have something you grow or make and would like to be an occasional or regular vendor please call Gillian at 351-2889 to book your space.

The market is held at Lismore Sheep Farm.

1389 Louisville Road,
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Pictou County & Pancho Villa

A Pictou County man had a ride of his life back in the early 1900's when chased by the famous Mexican warlord and revolutionary Pancho Villa and his bandits.

A young Earl E. Gammon of River John, Pictou County was running cattle through Mexico for sale in California when the run occurred. Family members described how Earl and other riders "never took the saddle off their horses" because "they were ready to ride any minute." Earl Gammon survived Pancho Villa and went on to have an outstanding and a very interesting life. He was described as a "colourful pioneer of Western Canada."

At the young age of 17 Earl Gammon left his River John home and moved out west where his many careers began, first as a horse tamer, then as carriage agent, Canadian Pacific Railway employee, World War One soldier, building contractor, coal mine operator, cattle runner, student, professional boxer, coachman and hotel owner.

Eventually Earl Gammon settled in Banff, Alberta where his exploits were and still are legendary. He helped to grow the town of Banff, where he was described as a man of "Alberta firsts." Earl Gammon built the first asphalt highway in Alberta, paved the first runway in Canada, he owned the first fleet of trailer trucks in Alberta and he was in charge of building the first bus for the Brewster Transport Company of Alberta. Earl also had the privilege in 1951 of escorting Queen Elisabeth and Prince Phillip around the community of Banff on the old stagecoach that ran from Truro to Pictou in the mid-1800's, and worthy of note, Earl's River John ancestors were coachmen with the Hiram Hyde Stage Coach Company of Nova Scotia.

In 1924 he married Miss Doris Smith of Wales, Great Britain. However Doris' mother had other ideas: she travelled from Wales and took the new bride back to the old country and had the marriage annulled. Doris went on to become an accomplished musical theatre performer throughout Great Britain.

True love found its way. Earl remarried and when his second wife Enid (Moore) died, Doris Smith moved back to Banff in 1967 and married Earl. Banff pioneer and our Pictou County born Earl E. Gammon passed away in 1969 at the age of 76.

Info from: Past Times Historical Stories of Pictou County by: John Ashton (2012)

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Help support the H.U.B.



This day in ... River John

Each year, faculty from the Nova Scotia Community College (Waterfront Campus) get together with their first and second year photography students and identify a community in Nova Scotia to document for a day in a book they call "This Day in ..."

According to David Campbell, who is in charge of the project for the NSCC, this year they have chosen River John and will be contacting local residents to begin the process.

This project is accomplished with absolutely no monetary commitment from the village of River John. The project is part of the NSCC's commitment to service learning and is provided each year at no cost.

The first step in the process is to travel to River John for a scouting session. They hope to meet with a number of villagers to get a feel for the place before they come for the photo shoot on April 12.

You can go online and see their past work in other communities at www.blurb.ca/b/1830827-this-day-in-new-ross

www.blurb.ca/b/2988940-this-day-in-lockeport

www.blurb.ca/b/4810936-this-day-in-annapolis-royal

Let's make sure they have a great time and get them the perfect pictures. Fingers crossed for a sunny day. While we're at it, fingers crossed for a sunny spring!

H.U.B. Café Opens



The H.U.B. Café is now open in the former River John Consolidated School cafeteria. Hours of operation are Tuesdays only from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Enjoy a breakfast sandwich; have a coffee or tea with a fresh baked muffin; or come for a light lunch. The Café is operated by volunteers on behalf of the River John Community Action Society with all profits going to the River John H.U.B. Community Centre.



5-Star Chef, Robin Campbell, works some morning magic.

We are pleased to announce the opening of the River John Strong Community Resource Centre on April 25th 2016. Please join us for our Open House with food and refreshments at 11:00 am, and located in the River John H.U.B. Community Centre

The Community Resource Centre will bridge the gap between the younger population and the older population and will provide information and workshops, in a comfortable and friendly atmosphere. Seniors, healthcare professionals and community members will be able to access credible health information, community resources and individualized supports. This will grow and further our community education services through education sessions, classes and workshops on child, youth, seniors and family health and wellness for body and mind. River John is part of Pictou County, the centre will work closely as an outreach location for various associations and sessions in the county.

If there are any community groups or businesses who would like to leave their information with us, or would like to help out our Centre, please contact:

Karin Fraser 902-305-3554

riverjohnstrongcrc@outlook.com

Sheree Fitch 902-351-3285

The Year Without Summer

Historical fiction: by Chris Giles

This story really begins in 1883. Pretty near everyone in River John lived on a farm and with the end of a normal summer upon us, there was lots of harvesting going on and always animals to take care of. It was also a time to sneak away for some "horsing around" with my friends on the beach and in the woods. I went to Westerly School, out on the Cape, just past John Gass' farm. At the time, I was ten. I would be at the Westerly School on Cape John for two more years, then, if I kept going, I would be walking into River John for school. For now, my teacher was Mr. J.P. Gollan. He taught all grades at Westerly and I liked him a lot.

In last part of August, by God, I remember that there were fantastic sunsets that would turn the whole sky red and orange and yellow. From the west side of Cape John we had a clear view right across the water to see these fantastic displays. I had never seen anything like it before. It sounds funny for a ten year old, but after supper most evenings, I would wander down with everyone else to MacGregors Point to watch. For sure, I can remember looking forward to the sun going down. The sunrises were just as spectacular, but there wasn't much time for watching, as there were lots of chores to do before heading to school.

This twice daily heavenly event went on well into the school year and it wasn't long before someone asked Mr. Gollan the reason. He kept copies of The Pioneer, our River John Newspaper, and he read to us from one dated August 27, 1883. It was a story of an eruption of a volcano called Krakatoa in a place called the Dutch East Indies. On our globe we found it on the other side of the earth. The volcano blew itself up and when that happened there was a huge bang, as well as a tidal wave 120 feet high that killed thousands of people! It was the biggest explosion in history, so big, Mr. Gollan said, that in River John we have beautiful sunsets from all the volcanic ash in the sky. The newspaper called this an "equatorial smoke stream" that went around the world.

These skies lasted into February and everyone thought that this would be the end of it, but the story continued into the summer of 1884 and the next two years as well. We were faced with late springs and early falls. From the usual 140 day growing season, we were reduced to just over 110. Thirty days might not seem important, but you need at least 100 days to



grow barley, peas and oats, and for potatoes and corn even more. Well, you can see that most farms around here were hard pressed to get a decent crop in that summer as well as making for some lean times in the coming winters. For us, we had to sell off a lot of our stock because of less hay and feed.

As for me, I remember that for the next three summers there was a lot less "horsing around." I had to help out my uncle more with fishing. Papa also

wanted me to work some with Big MacKenzie, in his blacksmith shop, so we could trade labour for food, but that's another story.

"When this volcanic dust ceases to glorify our skies at dawn and eve, we shall part with what has probably been the most remarkable and picturesque accident to the earth's physical life that has been known with the limits of recorded history." N. S. Shaler April 1884 Issue "Atlantic"



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Anne-Marie & Tara**

River John & Area Historical Society

The members of the River John and Area Historical Society are preparing for the upcoming summer season and the museum displays. If anyone has items, historical writings, photos, etc. that you would lend, it would be greatly appreciated. You can contact Beulah Wright, Linda Thompson Reid, Doug White, Mary Beth Sutherland or any other member for more information. If you are cleaning the attic or basement and you have an item of possible historical significance or connection to the area, please DO NOT throw it out. If you don't want to keep it any longer, call one of us first, it might be a wonderful addition to the museum.

We are planning our Heritage Circle on July 29th, during Festival Week. It has proven very popular the last two years.

The organizers of Read by the Sea 2016 have lined up another summer's worth of Canada's best authors and poets for literary festivals in Tatamagouche and River John.

WordPlay, a fun-filled literary event for children of all ages, comes first on June 18 at the Performing Arts Centre at Creamery Square in Tatamagouche. Beginning at 9 a.m. and running until about 1 p.m., children's authors Lisa Dalrymple, Kate Inglis and Nancy Wilcox-Richards will read chosen excerpts from their books.

Author and photographer Kate Inglis lives in Nova Scotia, where she was born. In 2009 her first novel was published - *The Dread Crew: Pirates of the Backwoods*. It was nominated for a Hackmatack Award in Nova Scotia and a Red Cedar Award in British Columbia. The sequel, *Flight of the Griffons*, was released in spring 2014. New for 2016 is her third book, full of monster poetry, called *If I were a Zombie*.

Lisa Dalrymple lives with her family in Fergus, Ontario, but she has lived with chickens in South Korea, cats in Scotland, lizards in Thailand, her two sisters in England, but never with a polar bear. She swam with sharks in Thailand and fished for piranha in the Amazon. She has eaten - or tasted - cockroaches, deep-fried grasshoppers, octopus head, haggis, silk-worm larva, guinea pig and, of course, piranha. Her first mystery adventure book, written at age ten, was turned down by Grolier. Since then, she has written *Bubbly Troubly Polar Bear*, *Skink on the Brink*, *A Moose Goes a-Mummering*, and *Be the Change*.



Nancy Wilcox Richards was born in Boston in 1958 and moved to Lunenburg, Nova Scotia at the age of two. She graduated from Nova Scotia Teachers College in 1979 and later studied education at Mount Saint Vincent University, earning two degrees. She taught elementary school for thirty years and now lives beside an almost-perfect Nova Scotia lake with her husband, two children, a golden retriever and a cantankerous cat. She wrote the Farmer Joe series, as well as other children's stories and resources for teachers.

River John author Sheree Fitch will serve as Mistress of Ceremonies for WordPlay.

As well as stories, the event features lively music

and movement, story-related activities and chances to meet the authors and ask questions and to buy autographed copies of their books.

There is no admission fee. WordPlay takes place at the same time as, and next door to, the popular Tatamagouche market. Children are encouraged to bring their parents!

Read by the Sea's main stage takes place Saturday, July 9, at the Royal Canadian Legion's memorial garden in River John, beginning at 11 a.m. Rain venue is the River John fire hall. The four featured authors are James Laxer, Susan Paddon, Jennifer Robson and Kim Thúy.

Kim Thúy is a Vietnamese-born Canadian writer whose first novel *Ru* won the 2010 Governor General's Award for French language fiction. It was also shortlisted for the 2012 Scotiabank Giller Prize. Her second novel is *Man*. Both were written in French and translated by Sheila Fischman. Born in 1968 in Ho Chi Minh City in Viet Nam, Thúy immigrated to Quebec with her family in 1979. She was educated at Université de Montréal and has worked as a seamstress, interpreter, lawyer and restaurant owner. She lives in Montreal where she devotes herself to writing.

Jennifer Robson first learned about the Great War from her father, historian Stuart Robson. She later served as an official guide at the Canadian National War Memorial at Vimy Ridge, France. She studied French literature and modern history at King's College at the University of Western Ontario, then obtained a doctorate in British economic and social history at Saint Antony's College at the University of Oxford. For a number of years she worked as an editor but now considers herself fortunate to be a full-time writer. She lives in Toronto with her husband and young children and shares her home office with Ellie the sheepdog and Sam the cat.

Political economist James Laxer has written several books and has provided regular newspaper, television and radio commentary on national and global affairs. His long list of titles includes *Stalking the Elephant: my Discovery of America*, *Decline of the Superpowers*, *The Border: Canada, the U.S. and Dispatches from the 49th Parallel*, his childhood memoir *Red Diaper Baby: a Boyhood in the Age of McCarthyism*, which won the Canadian Jewish Book Award for best 2005 biography/memoir – and a Gemini award-winning documentary series on the changing global economy. His latest book is *Beyond the Bubble: Imagining a New Canadian Economy*. He co-founded the leftist Waffle group, ran for leadership of the New Democratic Party and crusaded against big oil. Originally from Montreal, Laxer is a political science professor at the University of Toronto.

Susan Paddon was born and grew up in St. Thomas, Ontario, attended McGill and Concordia universities in Montreal and lived in Paris and London before settling in Margaree, Nova Scotia. Her poems have appeared in *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *CV2*, *The Antigonish Review* and *Geist*, among others. She writes poetry, short fiction and screenplays and is currently working on a novel.

Read by the Sea also features local musical artists, a book stall, the opportunity to meet the authors and get their autographs and more. The audience is encouraged to bring lawn chairs, sun hats and sunscreen. Food concessions will be available, or people may bring a packed lunch. There is no admission charge.

"Read by the Sea is now in its 17th year of bringing Canada's best authors to Nova Scotia's North Shore and the festival keeps growing all the time," said committee member Monica Graham.

Both Read by the Sea events are funded by a variety of government agencies and private contributions.

For more information: www.readbythesea.ca.



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