



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

“We acknowledge that we live and work in Mi’kma’ki, the unceded land of the Mi’kmaw. We are all treaty people and our nation-to-nation relationship is based on peace and friendship.”

The New River John Sign Looks Great!

By Cindy Langille



A bit of the back story... The River John Action Society received funding for new signage to replace our aging signage and install new signs for our new facilities. When we contacted Shane Langille, the original artist for the River John sign, designed in 2008, he did not have a saved copy of the original artwork. After years in the elements it was faded and blurry. We really liked the original design and we had a dilemma. So in 2023, Cody Joudrie, with Shane’s permission, asked Dylan Langille if he could help with making a new sign. Dylan doesn’t paint like Shane but, as a graphic designer, said he could help. The old sign reminded me of a drawing of the old village so I found it at the River John library. The original artist is L. B. Jenson. With Barb’s help at the library, we scanned and sent a copy (with the appropriate pixelates) to Dylan, who then sent it to Eastern Sign Print... and so this truly is the result of a community effort.

Installing the sign, Cody Joudrie, Brandon Daling and Stewart Joudrie

River John Resident Sheree Fitch Appointed to the Order of Canada

by Monica Graham

When asked about Sheree Fitch, local folks might say she is the writer on Allen Road with the purple shop named after one of her fictional characters – Mabel Murple - who just happens to “live” in a purple house near the shop. She’s the animal lover with donkeys, chickens and sheep at her Happy Doodle-Do Farm. She’s the conversationalist who can nab you for a lengthy, serious, or doubled-over-with-snorts-of-laughter-hilarious, chat at the post office, pharmacy - or anywhere at all. She’s the poet who can rhyme off wacky kid-verse at the drop of a hat, encapsulate the sorrow of a province with her words, or grant stern criticism (usually privately). She’s the persistent protestor on the Save Our School committee; a staunch supporter of Read by the Sea and an advocate for literature and literacy; a voice for women in situations of abuse; and the co-owner, with her husband Gilles Plante, of the barn that was deflated by Hurricane Fiona. Writers all over Canada and beyond, famous or not, count Sheree as a friend, mentor, and inspiration. She is the Honorary Patron of the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick, which offers an annual scholarship in her name; she sponsors a young writers’ prize in New Brunswick; and is Honorary Spokesperson for the Nova Scotia Read to Me program.

Those who know Sheree at all, know that that she’s traipsed her message from sea to sea to sea in this country, from big cities to Arctic “on the land,” from fancy dinners to soup shelters. They may also know that Sheree is a daughter, sister, wife, mother, and grandmother, who’s experienced her share of hard times, challenges, heartbreak and grief, as well as victories and accolades. The accolades include numerous awards for her writing, including the Atlantic Booksellers’ Choice Award, Mr. Christie’s Book Award, Ann Connor Brimer Award, Ontario Library Association’s Silver Birch Award, and the Atlantic Canadian Hackmatack Children’s Choice Award. She was short-listed for the Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal for Humour, and received honorary doctorates from Saint Mary’s, Acadia, and St. Thomas Universities for her literary work as an author, educator, and advocate for literacy. So, should anyone be surprised when, in June, Governor General Mary Simon appointed Sheree Fitch as an Officer of the Order of Canada? Especially as the award cites “her outstanding contributions to children’s literature and to the Canadian literary community, as a writer, poet and literacy advocate.” No surprise there. But Sheree Fitch, OC, was “gobsmacked,” in typical, down-home Sheree style. The actual physical award will be presented at a later date. Congratulations from the village, Sheree.





Lee MacLean and Chelsey Joudrie tied the knot on August 5th, 2023, with the Reverend Michael Koslowski officiating. With intentions of getting married in her grandparents' (Joudrie) field on Mountain Road, the weather had other plans, and they were wed in the River John Fire Hall. They would like to extend their sincerest thanks to everyone for all of their love, support and prayers throughout their nuptials. They are feeling extremely blessed.



Baby: Clint Walker Roeterdink
Born: August 30, 2023
Parents: Tim Roeterdink and Cheyenne McInnis of River John



Baby: Eleanor Margaret Roeterdink
Born: June 8, 2023
Parents: Niels Roeterdink and Beth Kenny
Grandparents: Rik Roeterdink and Shelley Densmore and Loekie Wieringa of River John, NS
Margie Daley and Steven Kenny of Westville, NS



Baby: Jett Willow Dares
Born: August 27, 2023
Weight: 7 lbs 11 oz.
Parents: Grace and Jordan Dares
A big sister for Jade



Congratulations

Congratulations to Terri Lynne Reid, upon completion of a Certificate in Elementary Mathematics Pedagogy, a two-year program offered by St. Francis Xavier University in collaboration with the CCRCE.

Terri Lynne is the daughter of Terry and Linda Reid, who proudly wish her continued success in her teaching career. Terri Lynne teaches at Tatamagouche Regional Academy, where course work will complement her teaching. She is currently on maternity leave, enjoying time at home with sons Maverick and Malcolm.



Congratulations

Dr. Kelly Carolyn Shaw

It is with immense pride that Kelly's husband, Eric Ogilvie, and her mother, Debby Shaw, share the news that Kelly successfully defended her dissertation on October 5th, 2023. Her families also wish to publicly celebrate this accomplishment.

Kelly has now completed a PhD in Education from Brock University. Her dissertation was titled: Tukisiven: Nunatsiavummiut Share Their Experience of Participating in a Nova Scotia Community College Child and Youth Care Diploma.



Baby: Malcolm Henrick Falconer
Born: June 21, 2023
Weight: 9lbs 7oz.
Parents: Blair Falconer and Terri Lynne Reid,
Grandparents: Linda Thompson-Reid and Terry Reid, Fred Falconer and the late Elaine Falconer
A brother for Maverick



Baby: Ella Martha Genevieve Martin
Born: June 12, 2023.
Parents: Emily and Zac Martin, River John.
Grandparents: Carol Anne and John MacKay, River John; Frances and John Martin, Westville



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Obituaries



Lewis and Sandra Wright regret to announce the sudden passing of their beloved grandson, Myles Robert Severn Rae Hall, age 19, at their home in River John, on the evening of September 15, 2023.

Myles was born in Truro on September 29, 2003, and lived in River John since a small child. At the time of his passing, he was employed at Cape John Seafoods. He was an unassuming, kind and gentle young man, quick with a smile, considerate, and enjoyed nature and especially beautiful sunsets, which he delighted in photographing. He enjoyed swimming at the Iron Bridge, camping, hunting and fishing with his uncle Charlie, working in the woods with his "Papa," biking and four-wheeling with his friends. Besides his grandparents, Lewis and Sandra, Myles is survived by his father, Glenn Thompson (Tamie); his mother, Jennifer Hall (Mike); brothers, Joshua, Chase, and Conner; his grandfather, Glenn (Crystal) and their children; his uncles, Bobby, and his son, Jaxon; Charlie and his children, Justin, Dylan, Kelsi, Keith, and Chris; aunts, Holly and her children, Colby (Jessica) who was more like a brother to Myles, Ethan and Raylene, Katie (Caitlyn); Amy and her children, TJ, Camden, Kaydain, Rori, Raven, Payton and Piper; Elizabeth (Jason) and her children, Madison, Lewis, and Madilyn; maternal aunts, Shannon and Charlene; great uncles, Allan and Austin; great aunt, Margie (Mike) and her sons, Jamie (Skye) and Jason (Karen) and their families; special "Aunt" Beulah, who loved him as her own; maternal grandparents, James and Leona Hall, and Connie Donovan; great-great-grandfather, Osbourn Hall; paternal grandparents, Annie and the late Hibbert Brown; special friends, Hayden Matheson, Derek Mason, and Shirley Ann Thompson; and many more extended family and friends, who will miss him sorely.

Visitation was held September 21st in Salem United Church, River John, followed by the funeral service on Friday, September 22nd at 2:00 p.m.

Gone from this life, but forever in our hearts.

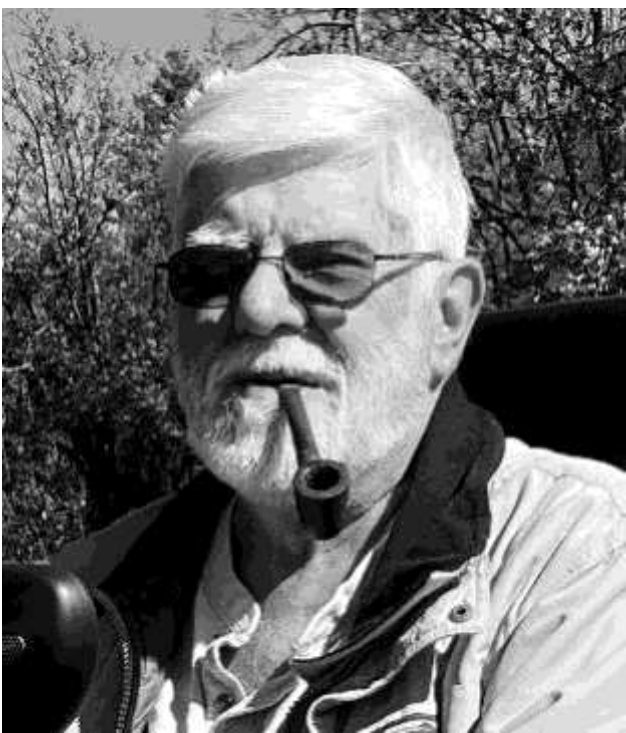
Card of Thanks

From The Wright Family

Lewis, Sandra, Colby and loved ones of the late Myles Hall wish to convey our most sincere gratitude for all the expressions of sympathy after Myles' sudden passing. Thanks to MacLaren's Funeral Home for their sympathetic care. Thanks to Reverend Connie for her comforting words and for a beautiful service and to Cathe and the Community Choir and special thanks to Dana and his music. Thanks to the staff of the former River John School. We were blessed by the many visits, phone calls, and cards, the donations, the food, flowers and all who attended the visitation and the funeral service.

Beulah wishes to thank all who generously donated to GoFundMe. It meant one less worry and concern in a time of shock and sorrow.

Your generosity will never be forgotten. Love and God's blessing to all.



Bruce Shaw August 22, 1952 – July 9, 2023

By Debby Shaw

Some of you may remember, my husband Bruce and I moved to Sadie Craig's Place on Highway 6 in River John three years ago. At that time, I wrote about the joy and peace we felt settling there.

Less than a year after we moved to River John, Bruce was diagnosed with ALS. He died on July 9th, 2023.

Besides me, his wife of 48 years, Bruce is survived by our three children and six grandchildren, a brother and extended family.

Bruce started his career as a salesperson with Windsor Auto Supply (UAP/NAPA) and after several years, he went on to work directly for UAP Corporate Stores. He oversaw twelve corporate owned auto parts stores across the Maritime Provinces. The last fifteen years of his career he worked for Oulton Fuels in Windsor, N.S. as their Operations Manager.

There wasn't much that Bruce couldn't do. If he didn't know how, he learned. Reading Popular Mechanics, Fine Woodworking, or scouring the internet, he'd gather information and then cogitate on the best path of action to create or recreate or repair whatever was needed. One of his hobbies was car racing. Bruce fondly recounted so many stories of the hours spent in his best friend Fred's garage and yard; building, rebuilding and repairing and repairing the race car in preparation for the next great race at Scotia Speed World. Fred was driver and Bruce was crew chief. He was community minded and volunteered for various committees and service groups, and was a Rotarian.

He travelled, initially for work; he and I went on glorious trips all over North and South America. He and his friends went to Las Vegas for a trade show; he and Eric to Daytona 500; he and Kelly to see their favourite Blue Jays play the Yankees at home in Toronto. In late 2019, Bruce and I sold our home in Windsor, intending to travel for a year through Canada and the U.S., living in our truck camper. Unfortunately, four months in there was a pandemic. After reaching California, in March 2020, we quickly returned to Nova Scotia. A few months later, we bought our dream retirement property in River John. Our oldest daughter, Kelly, and her husband, Eric, followed us to purchase a house in River John. This community has embraced us all.

To our new neighbours in River John, this past year would have been much more difficult for Bruce and me without your company and kindness. Bruce enjoyed visits and our family enjoyed meals and treats. Thanks to all of you (and you know who you are), for your generosity. Much love and thanks to our family – there are no words that can adequately carry the love you've shown and the help you have given.



Obituary

John Leonard Murray 1931-2023

The well-respected member of our River John community, John Leonard Murray, passed away peacefully at the age of 92, at the Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital, Tatamagouche, on September 19, 2023, holding the hand of his loving wife, Bonnie.

John was born in River John on June 7, 1931. He served twenty-five years in the Canadian Armed Forces, with missions including the Korean War, NATO operations and multiple United Nations Peacekeeping tours in the Middle East.

After the Armed Forces, John spent over a decade as the Chief Building Engineer for some of Calgary's tallest buildings.

With a deeply ingrained passion for his hometown, John retired 37 years ago and returned to River John to start a new adventure with his bride. Not following the conventional definition of retirement, John and Bonnie dove into their new stage of life, creating a sheep ranch, the Parsonage Tea House, four full-home renovations, along with many initiatives that have become integral in the community.

As a proud Korean War Veteran, John became actively involved as an executive in the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 108, River John. A role that Bonnie passionately partnered with him for many years.

John is survived by his wife, sister, three sons, two daughters, sixteen grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

The last steps of this life can be a challenge for both the person walking them and his family. John's family would like to extend their heartfelt appreciation to Doctor Bush, the team at the Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital, and their personal friends who always reached out with a helping hand. Their overwhelming support was instrumental in the last stage of John's journey.

A Celebration of Life event to toast and reflect on this extraordinary man was held on Sunday, October 22, 2023, at the Royal Canadian Legion, River John.

Donations in his memory may be made to the River John Legion, the Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital, or a charity of your choice.

John Murray will be missed very much.

Editorial — Fall 2023

By Joan Macleod

We feel proud of our community newspaper. However, some issues come together more easily than others. For example, last year, due to the ravages of Hurricane Fiona, when some of our team still did not have internet, we had to postpone our fall edition for almost a month which meant that I was living in Halifax by the time the final mad editing rush was over.

This issue is no exception. I am contending with (snowbird type) moving, some renovations and also a broken arm! Throw in having a new person in layout and also the Pioneer changing our printing company and you can see that life can present challenges. I am so proud of our whole volunteer team who all work hard on each issue but they had to work extra hard this time to also support me with typing and editing. In some ways this issue is a miracle!

A year or so ago, the Pioneer published a letter to the editor, which challenged us to change our name, The Pioneer, because it honours the settlers who came here over 200 years ago and not the Indigenous Peoples whose land this has been for thousands of years. As a way to address this, we as a board, felt we should try to make our content as diverse as possible in representing other cultures and we are proud that we have made a start in having Paul Martin as a regular contributor. However, we also felt that it was time to include a land acknowledgement on the front page. There is a subtle irony that below this land acknowledgement, is a picture of our new River John sign. Wouldn't it be great if we had also had the awareness to include the Indigenous name for River John on it?

We like to think that as an independent publication we can present diverse viewpoints; as a case in point, see the Pride page articles in the June issue. This Pioneer issue, also, has a wide variety of opinions, various articles about feminist conferences,

climate crisis and protests against education policy. We had hoped for an article about glyphosate spraying, Look for this in the next issue.

One of the areas which interest us are the hurdles and difficulties which the various regulatory bodies present to small business owners. We did some stirring of the proverbial pot and even contacted the Health Inspector's office. We welcome hearing from small business owners who have met obstacles and perhaps have had support getting them sorted out.

We always reach out to various community entities for updates, and we confess we were disappointed that we did not hear from a few, prior to publication.

As a group of volunteers on the Pioneer board we have various levels of expertise in the skillsets required to publish our newspaper. This is why we ask contributors to submit their articles and photos in particular formats, and to meet deadlines. We greatly appreciate those who do so. Please review the information in this issue that describes the requirements for submissions. Contact us if you need assistance, or, this Fall, connect with the library's digital literacy worker, Abby Falconer, for help.

In these uncertain times, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of neighbours helping neighbours. The community spirit was in full evidence after Hurricane Fiona; however, some folks still fell through the cracks. Trust in your neighbours is of the utmost importance if we are to feel welcome and safe. We encourage everyone to reach out to newcomers and those who may not have a support network. Together we are stronger.

We are so blessed to live in this beautiful part of the world in a county, which unlike so many others, is at peace. Wishing you a safe and healthy Holiday Season.

Thank You to Derek Andrews

Next year we will be celebrating 10 years of publishing our community newspaper.

During a majority of that time, we have had the good fortune to have Derek Andrews as our layout person. As you may appreciate, laying out a paper is a bit like doing a giant jigsaw. We do not want a whole lot of empty white space and there are limitations in the colour pages, and we do need to ensure that our advertisers, who make this possible, are happy with their ads. It was a huge responsibility and Derek even took time off work to do this.

He has decided to step down from this position. Like much volunteer work, it can be very time-consuming and unacknowledged, but so necessary to our organizations.

Thank you, Derek, for all that you have done for all these years to make the Pioneer successful.

The Pioneer Editorial Board.

The Pioneer is published by the
River John Community Action Society
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The views expressed in this newspaper are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editorial board.

The Pioneer is distributed throughout the River John area, including West Branch. We really love receiving your articles and pictures, and appreciate the work you put into contributing to our paper. We reserve the right to edit letters and articles for clarity and brevity. Profanity will not be tolerated and we have the right to refuse to print letters. A big thank you to all those who follow the guidelines below when submitting for publication:

- 1) Submit articles and photos all together at the same time. Articles should be in Word format (.docx,.doc, .otd), and photos in .jpg format. Do not embed photos into the text document.Caption(s) for photo(s) should be added below the article. Check for accuracy. We cannot makechanges once the article is sent to layout.
- 2) Type the complete article, (including the title,) using a plain, basic font - no bold, large fonts, superscript, indents, etc. Our layout department will make sure your article looks good.
- 3) The writer's name should go just below the title, not at the end
- 4) Double check for accuracy.

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Still distributed FREE in the River John area.

Who You Gonna Call?

By Julie Windebank

We at The Pioneer are all volunteers, mostly grey haired and mostly not very techie. We do email, we do some social media, we know some Google things, but most of it we learned five or ten years ago. Nick Gunn tells us he can always tell when The Pioneer is gearing up for another issue, because he starts to hear from us. He has been very generous with his time and patience in support of the Pioneer team. This reworking of the old “Ghostbusters!” song is gratefully dedicated to our tech hero, Nick Gunn. (With apologies to Ray Parker Jr.)

If there's something strange
On your computer screen
Who you gonna call?
Scotia Systems!

If there's something weird
And it don't look good
Who you gonna call?
Scotia Systems!

I ain't afraid of no laptop! I ain't afraid of no lap-
top!

If you're not seeing things
You were sure you'd saved
Who can you call?
Scotia Systems!

Uh, think you better call Nick Gunn @ Scotia Sys-
tems!

Correction

In the last issue of the Pioneer on page 7 in the story “Stranded in the Foodland Parking Lot,” the woman who came to the people’s aid was wrongly identified as Susan Ricco. Her name is Susan Picco. Please accept our sincere apologies.

-The Pioneer Editorial Board

Community Notices





The River John 4-H Club would like to welcome returning and new members ages 7-21 as of Jan 1st, 2024, for the 2023-24 year on Nov 6th, 2023, 7 pm at the St. George's Church hall in River John.

Projects offered this year include light horse, goat, sheep, rabbit, cavy, woodworking, beef, crafts, scrapbooking, foods, heritage, photography, cloverbud, cake decorating, as well as there is a County dairy leader.

The club will accept new members until November 25th. Please contact Christine Heighton at (902) 759-7915, Shar MacLean at (902) 890-6514 or Valrie Suidgeest at (902) 899-5054 for more information.

The club will meet the first Monday of each month for a General meeting, at St. George's Church hall at 7 pm. We request parents to accompany their children to all meetings so that important information is not missed.



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*24-48 hours notice is required



You shouldn't have to worry about how you will get to and from your health care and wellness appointments.

Public Health is partnering with local transportation companies to ensure all residents from Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants and Pictou counties, have access to free transportation to get to non-urgent health care appointments.

Call us today for support.



Christmas Tree Lighting Party

December 2nd at 5:00PM
in Bissell Park

Local entertainment, hot chocolate and cookies

Everyone is welcome!

Hosted by Lions club, RJ Community action society & RJ recreation

NSWalks
Join our free, gentle and friendly
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River John



Wednesdays @ 1:00 PM
River John Legion (2506 River John Station Rd)

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St. George's Presbyterian Church (1855 Sunrise Trail)
Register at: www.nswalks.ca
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Save Our Old Forests

By Joan MacLeod

Nova Scotia needs old forests. Old forests are valuable in and for themselves: They also shelter more life and store more carbon. Slow flooding and improve water quality. Soothe the soul and entice tourists. In 1958, 25% of Nova Scotia's forests were over 80 years old. By 2003, that figure was down to 1.5%. We need to protect the best of what is left, for the health of nature, our health, and the health of our economy. The good news is that our government has made a legal commitment to protect 20% of Nova Scotia's lands and waters by 2030. The bad news is the remaining old forests will be logged before they can be protected. To involve civil society in protecting our old forests that still remain on crown land, the Pictou County SOOF Group is circulating a petition asking our Premier for a pause on all harvesting and roadbuilding in forests over 80 years old on Crownland until 20% of Nova Scotia has been protected. If you would like to help with the petition, please contact: Joan MacLeod email joanmacleod7@gmail.com or Bernadette MacDonald email ndthewaronwomen1951@gmail.com.

River John Meals on Wheels

by Melanie Cote

Our Fall 2023 program will run Oct 25th until the end of March, 2024.

If you or someone you know would like to be added to our list please email riverjohn-mealsonwheels@gmail.com or call Melanie at 902-899-6750.

Toadstock 2023 Card of Thanks

By Nick, Leonard and Shelley Bigney

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support of the "Bikers Down" Toadstock weekend, August 10, 11 and 12 at the River John Old School. Attendance was up this year. The bike competitions were enjoyed by all, along with a corn boil, a barbecue, and Kelly's Pizza, from the new pizza shop. Other vendors sold T-shirts, leather, bike accessories and beautiful beach glass keepsakes.

The bikers made a group trip to Pugwash to explore the area. A large crowd attended the dance at the school auditorium, with an excellent band, "5 Days in May." A draw for a \$2,500 travel voucher was won by Sim Clark. Congratulations, Sim. Everyone had a terrific time and we are now planning for next year. See you there. No bike necessary, just good spirits. Must be 19 years of age.



CHRISTMAS
Craft Sale

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 25TH | 3-7PM

AT THE OLD SCHOOL IN RIVER JOHN
#2 SCHOOL LANE

Community Notice Board.

River John Square Knitters

By Netta Heukshorst

As always, the knitters are busy clicking needles and making pretty squares, as well as various knitted articles for the sales.

The cost of postage has not come down, but squares will still be mailed out to South Africa as this is the purpose of the group, but just not as many. Ten bundles of sixty squares each were mailed recently at a cost of \$908.21.

The squares that were not mailed were sewn together into blankets by our very talented ladies and distributed locally. Eight finished and labelled blankets were given to the Veterans' Unit in Pictou, eight to Tearmann House in New Glasgow, six more to Martha Ferguson for her palliative care patients here in the area, and six to a hospice in Truro. Each blanket consists of thirty-five pretty squares.

In order to raise money for postage, the RJSK attended several markets selling our knitted articles such as hats and shawls; we were at the night market at the Old School and at the Lismore Sheep Farm during Festival Week and Worldwide-Knit-In-Public Day. In September we hosted a table at Woolstock East at the Tatamagouche Rec Centre, as well as at the Lismore Sheep Farm during Open Farm Day. Thank you, Gillian, for always inviting us and keeping us in coffee, (LOL). Tickets are being sold on a lovely home-made cro-hooked afghan. Lovely dishcloths are for sale at the River John Library, The Overstreet Cafe, the River John Post Office and the Country Bread Basket in Brule.

In August we spent a lovely morning knitting at Joan Sutherland's and presenting her with her own blanket to keep her warm on chilly evenings. Some of her squares might have been in that one.

Recently, inmates at the Nova Institution for Women in Truro have joined the RJSK efforts. The women there are so grateful for the opportunity to give back to society and to help those less fortunate. We give thanks to our Nova participants as hundreds of their lovely squares will soon be keeping vulnerable little children warm in South Africa during the upcoming winter season.

Donations of money, yarn and needles are gratefully accepted and may be left at the River John Library during opening hours, where we meet every Friday morning 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Knit, smile and be kind always.



Colt Adams (Miles Morales) and Maverick Falconer (Spider-Man) prepare for Halloween in their Marvel costumes.



About the Order of Canada Award (OC).

By Marg Jones

As I was proofreading Monica's article about Sheree's appointment to the Order of Canada, I wanted to learn more about this prestigious award, so I looked it up on Wikipedia. Here's a little of what I found:

Context

Established in 1967 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Order of Canada is the cornerstone of the Canadian Honours System and recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, and service to the nation. The Order recognizes people in all sectors of Canadian society. Their contributions are varied, yet they have all enriched the lives of others and made a difference to this country. This honour is administered by the Chancellery of Honours at Rideau Hall.

Description

The insignia of the Order is a stylized snowflake of six points with a red annulus at its centre which bears a stylized maple leaf circumscribed with the motto of the Order, DESIDERANTES MELIOREM PATRIAM (They desire a better country), surmounted by the Royal Crown. It is struck in fine silver and is composed of three individual pieces: the snowflake, annulus, and maple leaf. The colour is added by hand through a unique application of opaque and translucent viscous enamel.



The design of the insignia of the Order of Canada dates from 1967 and is credited to Bruce Beatty, CM, SOM, CD. The technical drawings used by the Royal Canadian Mint in this new generation of the insignia were developed by the Canadian Heraldic Authority at the Chancellery of Honours, part of the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General. The insignia is manufactured by the Mint at its Ottawa facility.

The ribbon of the Order is white, 38 mm wide, with red edges (9 mm).

We can definitely confirm that Sheree has done her part in making Canada a "MELIOREM PATRIAM." Congratulations, Sheree, OC!

Sheepskins, Wool Blankets, Sheepskin Slippers, Lots of Yarn, Felting Supplies and much more!

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River John Festival Days Car Show.



Charles Thompson presenting the Ray Thompson Memorial Award for the Best Ford in Show to Billy Joudrey.

by Linda Thompson-Reid

The 2023 Annual River John Festival Days Car Show was a successful event, enjoyed by young and old alike. A total of 74 vehicles registered for the show, at the Old School.

Andre Doucette, owner of the 1974 340 Cuda, received the Larry L. Reid Memorial Award for the Best Dodge in Show. The award was presented by Terry Reid.

Billy Joudrey, owner of the 1972 351 Mustang, received the Ray Thompson Memorial Award for the Best Ford in Show. The award was presented by Charles Thompson.

Dan Wilkins, owner of the 1965 Valiant re-

ceived the People's Choice Award. The award was presented to Joanne Wilkins by David Langille, member of the River John Car Show committee and the event organizer.

Gordon Sample, owner of the 1957 Belair received the President's Choice Award, presented by David Langille.

Thank you to Leonard, Shelley and Nick Bigney for providing their facility for the show. They are accommodating in every way, in order to ensure a successful car show for the participants and the public. Thank you to the enthusiasts, who participated this year; we look forward to their return next year. Many individuals donated a variety of prizes and we appreciate their support. The members of the committee organize the show and work tirelessly to create an event which residents and visitors can enjoy. Many thanks to each member.



.Maverick Falconer enjoying chocolate car made by one of the car show participants

St. Michaels Catholic Church

By Netta Heukshorst

On September 30th, St. Michael's Catholic Church celebrated the 25th anniversary of its opening. On September 29th, 1998, the church was officially blessed and declared open by Bishop Terrence Prendergast. Since the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel on September 29th fell on a Friday and Mass is on Saturdays, the congregation celebrated on September 30th with the priest celebrating a special Mass, followed by a potluck supper, with live music and singing provided by parishioners David Palmer, Brian Holmes and Sheila MacKinnon. It was a wonderful prayerful event enjoyed by many.

A new church sign was erected during the summer as the old one was getting to be in poor shape.

As always, regularly scheduled Mass is on Saturdays at 4 p.m. After Mass a fellowship hour is enjoyed downstairs in the hall where refreshments are served. All are welcome at St. Michael's.

May I Marry You?

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Profile of Allen Carlson.

By Debby Shaw

I sat down recently and shared tea with Allen Carlson at the Overstreet Café. He talked about his interesting life, and I took a few notes to share with you.

Allen's story began when his grandfather moved from Sweden to Saskatchewan in 1912. Allen was raised by his mother and had no contact with his biological father until later in life. When Allen was five years old his mother married, and they went to live in Rose Valley, Saskatchewan, on 160 acres of farmland and 800 acres of woods that belonged to surrounding farms. This soon became his playground. At the time Allen was a boy, as now, Canada was experiencing a lot of immigration. Since Allen's first language was Norwegian and because (even at his young age) he was interested in people and very friendly, he talked to those New Canadians he encountered while shopping in town.

As I began my second cup of tea, Allen explained more about land granting for new settlers. His fine facts and details were fantastic; I learned so much.

After he finished school, Allen went to work at grain elevator construction in Rose Valley. By the time he was eighteen he found he wasn't getting along with his stepdad, and the family had grown. He felt it was time to move on. In 1951, at age eighteen he joined the Air Force. When he was stationed in CFB Greenwood Nova Scotia, he discovered that he liked the mild winters in the Annapolis Valley.

He met his wife, Jannette, in nearby Margaretsville. She was young at the time, looking after younger siblings, but he didn't forget her. He saw her again some time later, when she was

working as a teller at the bank in Kingston, N.S. near the base in Greenwood. He recognized her and they became friends. One night, Jannette went to a dance at the base and Cupid's arrows found their mark. Allen and Jannette were married on the 30th of December, 1955, and celebrated sixty-one years in 2016. She passed away in May, 2017, at age eighty.

Allen told me of meeting his biological father, Chris Andersen, (note Danish spelling) who hired planes in 1961 to take aerial photos of farms as far away as New Jersey. He hired Allen to take those black and white photos then sent them to a lab to be tinted. Allen sold them to the land owners on commission.

By that time, Allen was twenty-eight years old and wanted to come back to Nova Scotia. He left the Air Force in 1962 and, with Jannette and two children, he bought the 100-acre farm in Marshville from his biological father, who went back to Denmark. They sold cream and raised chickens and pigs, but success was elusive. He was an aircraft mechanic from his years in the service, and a self-taught carpenter. Jannette was working at the Bank of Nova Scotia (now our own Overstreet Café) as a teller. By age thirty-four he had three daughters and a son when the Department of Labour offered him Red Seal certification in carpentry.

Allen helped build the Michelin plant in Granston and decided it was a good place to work. He stayed for the next twenty years in production, as an instructor and supervisor. It was a good decision.

Allen has enjoyed his family, Donna, Debbie, Dianne, and his youngest, David, along with his eleven grandchildren, all living within ten minutes



of him. He wishes he was as close to visit his 16 great-grandchildren (17 in March). He sold them land and helped build two of their houses. David had a lavender farm which he sold and is based in Seafoam. In addition, David owned the Carlson vegetable stand (now Gloria's) directly across from the family home where Allen has lived for sixty-three years.

I asked him of his future, and he says he easily meets people from all over and so that's what he plans – and to keep busy with family and friends. If you happen to encounter Allen Carlson, I encourage you to sit and share his stories.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pictou County

By Diane Kennedy

“If you think you are too old, you aren’t,” were the words I heard on a Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pictou County advertisement on the radio late last year. The mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) is to enable life-changing mentoring relationships to ignite the power and potential of young people. They serve the many children and youth in Canada who struggle with societal barriers and face adversities in their lives, things like school and peer issues, mental health struggles, and identity challenges. This comes at a cost to the young person, and to society. With the guidance and support of a mentor, youth are reminded they can be anything they dream of being.

What I heard on that ad was a surprise to me, because I thought that I was too old to be a mentor. After living for many years in other parts of Canada, we moved back home to Nova Scotia in 2019. As much as I love our beautiful home on Cape John, I really missed interacting with kids. I had been working as a teaching assistant in a Montessori school for several years before our move. My husband would tell you that I’m a kid magnet – if there is one around, I will be talking to them. Kids just naturally know when someone likes them, and I do!

After hearing the ad, it didn’t take me long to contact Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pictou County. At an initial meeting I learned more about their programs, and we started the approval process. “Between Generations Mentoring” matches a mentor from the 55+ community with a young person in need of support and friendship. Mentors are enrolled for either a community-based 1:1 program



or an in-school program that is one lunch hour a week during the school year. The latter program seemed like a good fit for me, given my school background and my busy summers.

I was leaning towards the in-school program, but after all my paperwork and security checks were completed, things changed. The staff told me about a young girl with a brother who had a Big Brother, and who was anxiously awaiting a Big Sister. After I heard her story, my heart opened up to the possibility of this 1:1 match. The family was contacted and the match was made. We met for the first time in February at the Hector Arena in Pictou and we were both a little nervous but also excited. I will never forget her first words at the meeting, “I can’t believe someone wants to spend time with me, and for years to come!”

Every child deserves to have a special friend in their life who is committed to focus on them, understand the things they enjoy, spend time with them to visit, play, listen, and learn from each other. BBBS of Pictou County has many young people waiting for a mentor. You have the opportunity to make a difference in a child’s life, and you are NOT TOO OLD! I encourage anyone who has the time and desire to learn more at pictou-county.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca and reach out to BBBS of Pictou County. There is a young person in Pictou County who is waiting for you!

Rural Carpool Update

By Michael Jensen

As of mid-October, the North Shore of Nova Scotia Rural Carpool has 90 regional members, with 60+ of them in the Pioneer’s region (River John to Malagash to Earltown). We’ve improved the interface significantly, and now have systems to help Commuters (Truro, Debert, Pictou, New Glasgow, etc.) self-organize shared trips and costs. By the time you read this, you should be able to choose phone-text alerts, as well as emails. Trip Chat is better than ever, and the Dashboard and Calendar now includes Special Events. Join Rural Carpool today! Go to <https://ruralcarpool.com>—the Sign Up link is at the top of the page. It takes only a few minutes: add a few bio details (and decide how public to be with them), and then add an upcoming Trip or two you already had planned. No obligation, and it could save you \$\$\$ and reduce CO2!

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Will the Real Falcon Please Stand Up

By Maggie Howatt

Sparrow Hawk, Grasshopper Hawk, Killy Hawk, Kestrel: that’s a lot of monikers for Nova Scotia’s smallest predator bird, and not a hawk at all but the second smallest falcon in the world. They are a gorgeous little bird, the male in particular, with chestnut back and head, and bold black stripes on front and back of its head. The black spots on the back of the kestrel’s head are called ‘ocelli’ and it’s believed that these markings serve a purpose, resembling eyes. When the hawk is bent over devouring its prey, those “eyes” fool both predators and mobs of small birds into believing they are being watched, thus keeping them at a distance. I guess it doesn’t always work, as I have often watched a flock of swallows “escorting” a kestrel out of their territory as it was traveling back and forth from its nest in the corner of our barn with a meal for the two chicks. The Sparrow Hawk doesn’t actually catch that many sparrows but has a varied diet of grasshoppers, dragonflies, butterflies and moths, voles and mice, spiders (yuck) and amphibians, which is mostly a great benefit to farmers. One summer afternoon I spied a hawk flying across the field with a small snake dangling from its beak. Hunting during the day, it is a delight to see them perched on the telephone wires, scouring the fields, meadows and ditches for prey. From this great height they can relax and wait for the action. It is believed that they can see the UV light reflected from trails of urine left by rodents – especially voles, their most common prey, as they travel along the ground. They can also be seen almost hanging in the air, called kiting, over the fields, facing into the wind; they are almost stationary as they prepare to pounce on an unsuspecting meal. The Killy Hawk, called this due to its shrill “killy-killy” cry, also cache their prey to be eaten later in times of need,

hiding their catch in tree roots, cavities and clumps of grass. The American Kestrel ranges from South America to Alaska and from east to west coasts. They arrive in Nova Scotia mid-April and the male starts house-hunting. They will drive squirrels and woodpeckers out of their nests if they can’t find rock crevices or abandoned holes in old trees. The female makes the final choice and they set to brooding 4-7 eggs. It takes about 30 days to incubate and another 30 to raise the chicks in the nest. The hen stays with the chicks the first couple of weeks to protect them from cold and predators, while the male provides food for both mother and chicks. Chicks can eat the equivalent of three voles a day - they are little guys with big appetites! Messy housekeepers, the nest can be littered with bones and feathers with a little latrine off to one side. But it doesn’t stop them from returning to the same nest year after year. In the wild, a Kestrel generally lives up to 5 years. The oldest banded bird was close to 12 years and a captive bird can live 14-17 years. The Grasshopper Hawk is the most common falcon but the population, as in many species, has been slowly declining since the 60s with the introduction of DDT, the loss of standing dead trees which provide nesting cavities, and farming practices which include removing trees, brush and hedgerows. The use of pesticides impacts the insect population necessary for much of wildlife’s ability to succeed. Similar to Snowy Owls, the quantity of voles available during the winter season has a direct link to the success of that year’s breeding season. Come mid-August the Kestrels leave our beautiful province and head south to their winter grounds, living separately, but come spring they will join up again and hopefully raise another brood or possibly two in the forest of Nova Scotia. I had a brief chat with Hope Swinimer at Hope for Wildlife in a follow-up to my last article after Fiona. Hope for Wildlife received 5100 patients so far this year which was within 1 percent of the usual

influx, but the most interesting fact was the increase in species, from 203 last year up to 250. There were more injured wildlife brought in after last summer’s flooding than both the fires and Fiona combined. Hope for Wildlife is always looking for volunteers in our area to pick up or report injured wildlife. See their website at <https://www.hopeforwildlife.net/> volunteer or their Facebook page. Contact Hope for Wildlife by phone 902-407-9453 for information or email info@hopeforwildlife.net. There is a 24/7 injured wildlife drop-off at 5909 Hwy 207 in Seaforth. I just finished reading “Woman, Watching; Louise de Kiriline Lawrence and the Songbirds of Pimisi Bay” by Marilyn Simonds; it traces Louise’s life from early childhood in Sweden to her life in the woods in Northern Ontario, and her growing love and appreciation for birds. A fascinating woman who lived an extraordinary life.



Brule Community Centre and Tatamagouche and Area Service Klub

by Steve Williams, President, Brule Community Centre Association

Around 1973, the Presbyterian church in Tatamagouche built a summer camp for kids on the Brule School grounds. It was called Holiday Ranch. It had a log chapel, a staff house, the minister's cottage, a motel-type building for about fifty campers and a barn on the other side of the river where they kept the horses and ponies. They rode the horses, learned to canoe in the river, swam and had campfires on the beaches. They also used the school for crafts and indoor activities, and the present community hall as the dining hall.

In 1994, the Brule community inherited the former Holiday Ranch property. Many of the deteriorating buildings had to be removed, leaving only the old school and the present Community Centre building.

Over the years we have upgraded this building with a state-of-the-art kitchen, accessible washroom, upgraded wiring, new siding and many more improvements. We have also cleared and landscaped the grounds to include a children's playground and "The Acadian River Trail," a picturesque, accessible trail which winds along Semple's Creek.

Inside the centre we have had many activities including dinner theatre, big screen movies, church services, card parties, bridge nights, regular VIP (Very Interesting People) talks, community brunches and dinners, flea markets, numerous private parties, sewing bees and weddings. For a number of years, we hosted the Brule Fossil Collection in the school building, but it has since moved to the Creamery Square in Tatamagouche.

The Brule Community Centre has grown to be



Meals for seniors in June, 2023

an integral part of the Brule landscape and community, at least until COVID-19 appeared two years ago which halted most communal activities. In trying to start activities again, we found that we had fewer members due to the passage of time and our inability to meet to gather new ones. We have, however, managed to find a new local organization: TASK - Tatamagouche & Area Service Klub with similar goals of helping and growing the community. They have been very helpful and have agreed to become partners with us.

The TASK club motto, "If you need help, just ask, we'll take it to TASK," symbolizes our desire to help out in the community in any way we can. Given the high volume of seniors in Tatamagouche and surrounding areas, one of our primary areas of focus is on supporting seniors. We helped to deliver Meals on Wheels, assisted in garden chores and other maintenance activities. We have signed on to the Adopt-A-Highway program and are partnering with the RCMP with their Citizens on Patrol program. We have also been fortunate to partner with the Nova Scotia Community Links organization (<https://nscommunitylinks.ca/>). Through their provincial grant funding opportunities, we have been

able to provide meals for seniors in the area from River John to Wallace several times over the past year.

Since partnering with the Brule Community Centre, we have helped rehabilitate the Acadian River Trail, and are still in the process of clearing up debris from Hurricane Fiona. This past summer we have been preparing the Community Centre for use as a Comfort Centre. At the same time, we were very fortunate to have support from the Engineering team at CEF Pictou to install our new metal roof.

We have insulated the plumbing to withstand winter, built a second washroom with a shower, installed a propane generator, new baseboard heating and a heat pump, and are adding internet and a new phone system. We now have a fully certified kitchen to prepare meals for the community and private events. There are more plans: to paint the interior, and to make the old school building into a kayak and canoe building facility. In the meantime, check us out on Facebook,

Brule Community Centre: <https://www.facebook.com/BruleCmtyCentre/>

TASK: <https://www.facebook.com/TataAreaServiceKlub/>

If you are interested in helping us provide any of these services, contact Steve at (902) 932-4995 or just drop in to one of our meetings at 7 p.m. on the 2nd or 4th Wednesday of each month at the Brule Community Centre to meet us and hear more about what we do.



CEF Pictou with new roof install

Update on the River John Old School

By Nick, Leonard and Shelley Bigney and Joan MacLeod

As many of you know our beloved school, River John Consolidated (P-9) was closed by the school board in 2015 after a contentious debate and vote. At the time of the closure there was a decline in the number of children. Since then, regular Pioneer readers will realize that there has been a huge increase in births in the area. This had been projected at the time of closure. Sadly, for our children they were divided into three different schools. It has been a big loss for the community to have our children taken from us.

For the first several years we tried to keep it as a community centre, but this was not viable. In 2018, the Bigney family came forward and took over the school for a business centre and storage facility. We are very grateful that the community has the use of such wonderful facility.

These are the businesses underway at the school. ACU Books, run by Brittany MacLellan and Amanda Redmond; Mike MacMasters Surveying; The Thread Store upstairs, recycling and giving a second life to fabrics and sewing accessories; Old School Shine Car Detailing, run by John Allen; Kelly's Pizza; and River Johonor private gym.

Gloria's Market will be at the Old School on Sundays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and Wednesdays from 12 p.m.-4 p.m. There will be a Christmas Craft Sale on Saturday, November 26th from 3-7 p.m.

The Bigneys would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for all their support in making River John Old School the success it is becoming. They also wish to thank all the people who rent storage space. Last but not least, a thank you to the roofer Alley, who has been working with them and making a big difference getting the roof patched and sealed.

RJCAS

Join the River John Community Action Society and Make a Positive Impact in Your Community!

By Gillian Joudrie

The River John Community Action Society (RJCAS) is a group of volunteers who help to make big things happen in our small community.

This group helps to look after Bissell Park, including grounds, washroom, benches, deck, and dock.

Roger's Landing also falls under the hat of RJCAS, including securing funding for the creation and upkeep. The group makes financial donations to other community groups, including The River John Festival Days committee, to help with their week-long event, the Lions Club Christmas Dinner, and hiring a Recreation Committee summer student to help with park maintenance and day camp.

Here are just a few things that RJCAS have been up to this year:

Fundraising efforts including a BBQ, Kayak Raffle, and Christmas Raffle Basket.

Installed a Kayak Launcher at Roger's Landing in memory of Elaine Falconer.

The docks at Bissell Park and Roger's Landing have been removed for another season.

Cleaned up Bissell Park during the hot summer months.

Installed the new River John sign in the village.

RJCAS meets at the Lions Den on the second Tuesday of each month at 7p.m. (except July & August). All village and area residents are welcome to attend, and new members are encouraged to join. Your input and participation would be greatly appreciated!

Furthermore, come on out to our Annual Tree Lighting on December 2nd at 5 p.m. Take in some

Christmas music from some local, talented artists and enjoy some delicious complimentary treats! We are also selling tickets on a Christmas Raffle Basket, thanks to many local businesses for donating gift cards, prizes etc. with all profits going back into our community.



Hector 250 Celebration

By Mary Beth Sutherland

For nearly two years I have been on two committees helping plan the Hector 250 celebrations; the focal point was Sept. 15, 2023, exactly 250 years to the day of the arrival of the ship Hector from Loch Broom, Scotland to Pictou Nova Scotia. The start of direct Scottish emigration to Nova Scotia, it has been a busy time but led to a wonderful time of celebration.

All summer, the DeCoste Centre has presented musical entertainment in the Caladh Marquee tent along Pictou's waterfront, what a venue that was. Most of these concerts were free, with musicians coming from far and wide. and I hope many of you took advantage of these.

The new book, "Distinguished Descendants," written by John Ashton and Brenda Hutchinson, was launched in late August and it profiles many descendants of the Hector passengers. Among the individuals featured is Captain James Kitchin Jr. (shipbuilder, entrepreneur, politician) of River John. It is interesting to read the profiles of descendants and their successes and contributions to life in Canada and the United States of America.

The "Ship Hector Passenger Descendants" group organized events from September 9th – 15th celebrating the Hector passengers. Over these days there was a "Ships to Shore Genealogy Conference," talks and tours through three cemeteries where Hector passengers had been buried, fabric fibre art demonstrations, author readings, bus tours and various other events. The finale of this session was a wonderful "Descendants and Friends" banquet at Summer Street Industries in New Glasgow. With 250 tickets sold for the dinner, folks in attendance were from across the USA and Canada. The evening's musical entertainment was provided by talented Pictou County musicians. It was a great evening to gather, celebrate our ancestry, and for some, to meet relations.

The Saint Andrew's Society of Pictou County (SAS) organized a church service on September 10th at the Log Church at Loch Broom. The Mi'kmaw, Gaelic and English languages were spoken during the service and singing was in Gaelic and English. The church benches were filled, so people also sat outside on lawn chairs. The Log Church is a replica of the original church built by Hector passengers, who settled the area. The day was warm and sunny, so following the service, a large crowd

stayed to enjoy social time outside on the lawn and met new friends.

The main celebration was held from September 14th to 17th. The ship "Bluenose" sailed into port for the weekend, planning for public on-board tours. A local production of the play "Voyage - A journey of Hope," written by Sandy MacKay, had great reviews.

September 15th was the actual 250th arrival anniversary, with the Hector Quay hosting the opening ceremonies, with many dignitaries present. Governor General Mary Simon, Premier Tim Houston, Sean Fraser MP and Chief Andrea Paul were some of the guest speakers. Following the speeches, the replica Ship Hector was open to tour. It was the first time in several years that people have been able to go on board, as it has been a construction zone. It was interesting to see the progress of the rebuilding. Also, on site that day were blacksmith demonstrations, and Todd and Melissa Labrador giving a demonstration on the art of making a birchbark canoe.

That afternoon, the Saint Andrew's Society of Pictou County organized the re-dedication of the Hector Pioneer Monument which stands in Pictou's Market Square. In 1923, the statue was originally commissioned by the SAS for the 150th anniversary celebrations, and unveiled by Governor General Lord Byng. This monument was designed and created by John Wilson, a native of New Glasgow, who was well-known here and in the USA for his sculpture work. For the 250th anniversary there was restoration work needed to the monument, after one hundred years of exposure to the maritime weather. This work was performed by Todd Vasallo and his team; now the monument looks like new again.

The re-dedication of the monument was preceded by a parade of members of the RCMP, military, pipe and drum bands, highland dancers, dignitaries and individuals wearing their tartans. The parade started at the Hector Quay and ended at the monument; the sights and sounds of the pipes always add to an event and this was no exception. The dignitaries included His Honour Lieutenant Governor Arthur J. LeBlanc and Her Honour Mrs. LeBlanc, Karla MacFarlane MLA, Warden Robert Parker, Mayors from the five towns, and Lewis MacKinnon of NS Gaelic Affairs. The event MC was Robbie MacInnis and Amelia Parker provided music on her fiddle. Following the speeches, a new information panel was unveiled by His Honour Lt. Gov. Arthur J. LeBlanc and Karla MacFarlane MLA. The panel was designed by Teresa MacKenzie and the stand was created

by Todd Vasallo. Next time you are in Pictou, check this out in Market Square.

Following the ceremony, there was a reception at the Pictou Royal Canadian Legion, hosted by the SAS. We were thankful that the Legion Branch was able to provide us with this space on short notice, as the marquee had to be taken down with Hurricane Lee heading towards Nova Scotia.

The weather on Satur-



On September 15, 2023, His Honour, Arthur J. LeBlanc, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, and the Honourable Karla MacFarlane, MLA for Pictou West, unveiled the new plaque, which stands alongside the Hector Pioneer Monument in Pictou's Market Square.

day greatly affected events. The Gaelic program, on-board tours of the Ship Hector, and the Quay were closed down soon after noon on Saturday, due to increasing winds. The Scottish tea at First Presbyterian Church went ahead and was an enjoyable and yummy stop, with the Hector Tartan decorating the room. The play "Voyage - A Journey of Hope," which was moved to the United Church, proceeded, with the power going off almost as soon as the play ended, and the evening ceilidh was cancelled.

Sunday's weather improved and the power was back! The "Worship with a Celtic Flair" at Pictou United Church was a go, with students from Pictou Landing First Nation performing the Mi'kmaq Honour Song on their drums. There was lots of music and singing as part of the worship service, and Gaelic too. Following the service they hosted a social time, serving oatcakes and tea.

The Hector Quay was open again for tours, but Bluenose stayed closed.

For the grand finale of the celebrations, they combined elements of the Tattoo and the Ceilidh, which proved to be a wonderful show. There were pipes and drums, Gaelic singing, Highland dancing, many local and very talented musicians and singers performed, Piper Robbie MacInnis played a tune he had composed especially for the Anniversary. Pictou County is so full of talent! A highlight for many was the surprise appearance of the famous and multi-talented Barra MacNeil family. The evening concert was a tremendous ending to this 250th anniversary celebration. It was also live-streamed, so many were able to attend virtually and enjoy this spectator evening.

So, despite Hurricane Lee coming to the celebrations, without invitation, the planning team were still able to put together a memorable weekend. The Caladh Marquee was to have hosted many of the events, but weather forced it to be taken down and alternative locations found.

I hope we will see the replica Ship Hector back in the water again in a couple of years, then it will be time for another celebration!



Loch Broom Log Church service, September 10, 2023

Kids First Association

By Michelle Ward, Executive Director

A concept called “third place” says that all humans benefit from having somewhere separate from home (first place) and work (second place). At its very core, a third place is one in which you feel welcome when you come and missed when you are gone, and if you do not show up your absence is noticed and someone checks up on you to make sure you are okay.

In communities, the third place might be your local café, church, corner store, the legion or a park. Whatever the place may be, it provides a sense of comfort and welcoming, where our basic human need for acceptance and fellowship is found. River John has worked very hard to create these third places as an essential anchor for their community.

In 1993, a self-described “low-income women’s group” in Pictou County called Taking Control Making Changes (TCMC) dreamed of creating a third place where families could gather and create friendships without income or life circumstances being a barrier. A place where they felt welcome and accepted. At the same time, the Health Promotion and Social Development office of Health Canada invited community groups from across Canada to apply for funds through the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC). The TCMC applied for funding under this initiative and was successful. Conditions of the grant required that the group in Pictou County reach out to Antigonish and Guysborough Counties to ensure access to programs

there. In June of 1994, a foundational tri-county Board of Directors was created and the rest is history. Kids First was launched.

Almost thirty years later, Kids First has grown to a large tri-county organization with four permanent resource centres, (New Glasgow, Antigonish, Guysborough and Sherbrooke), and over twenty outreach locations in communities from River John to Canso. Employing over twenty-five people, the organization has grown from offering playgroups to families to an in-community resource with pre- and post-natal programs and supports, home visiting, parent education programs, giving cupboards and general support for families. Kids First is also host to an exciting new project called Cultural Connections. This will involve working with the African-Nova Scotian community, exploring systemic racism, and supporting opportunities for participation in services and programs which recognize and celebrates their 400-year-old history in Nova Scotia.

Two years ago, a group of moms from River John was travelling to Pictou to attend the Kids First playgroup there. Staff learned of a small playgroup started in River John, being led by a young mom, Grace Choi. New to River John, Grace had recognized a need for kids and young families to come together. Given the success of Grace’s efforts, Renee Buell, Kids First Outreach Coordinator, visited the village to look for space and to have conversations with people about what was needed. Renee made one of her stops at Meh’s, and it was there that she learned more about River John and surrounding area. With an introduction to Maureen

Topley at the River John Legion, the organization not only had a perfect space but connections to community members. Further support from Cindy Langille with St. George’s Presbyterian Church provided another place for drop-off programs for younger children.

With funding from the Aberdeen Health Foundation (AHF), Kids First is excited to be invited back to the community this fall. The AHF was looking to invest in programs and services in rural communities to improve health and well-being. Kids First is so thankful to River John for welcoming us to provide programs for young children to do what they do best – laugh, sing, dance and play. These fundamental experiences in the early years help in the development of youth and adults with empathy, emotional regulation, positive social skills, improved mental and physical health and strong ties to their community - not to mention what it does for parents and caregivers.

When you see a crowd of families at the River John Legion on Monday mornings from 9:30 - 11:30, take a peek in and see what all the excitement is about. There are great things happening. Whether you are a grandfather caring for your grandchildren or a young mom with a new baby - all are invited. The Drop-in program is free and open to anyone with a child under the age of six. You may just find that third place - a place where you and your family have fun, relationships are warm and everyone is welcomed.

Contact for 902 755 1213 for more information.

Congratulations on a Successful Season

By Linda Thompson-Reid

Congratulations to Julia Reid-Howell, of Fredericton, on an outstanding year of running!

Julia participated in various track races during the summer months, as well as eleven road races, from April to October. She claimed the provincial champion title in the 5k, 10k and half-marathon.

Julia currently has the fastest female times for the 5k, 5 mile (8k), 10k and half-marathon for the province of New Brunswick. She is coached by a well-known coach and is a member of a local Fredericton all-women’s team.

Julia is the daughter of Terry and Linda Reid, of River John. Her family and friends wish her continued success, as she pursues her passion for track and road races.



Florence Craib was not impressed when she noticed an ugly alder bush growing out of a drain and obscuring her cousin’s memorial stone in Bissell Park. Florence’s cousin was Chalmers Bigney and he was famous as the River John Strongman. Without any training, he was able to lift incredible weights. He was the grandfather of Leonard Bigney, local fisherman and business owner.



Florence and her husband, John, donated a burning bush shrub. With the assistance of the park committee and some helpful park visitors, the alder was removed and the burning bush was planted to the left of the monument.

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Climate Change Action in Pictou County

By Ed Kennedy and Violet McCulloch

Under the direction of the Municipality of Pictou County (MOPC) Council’s Climate Change Advisory Committee, several sub-committees have been formed to develop plans for and implement climate change adaptation and mitigation activities. As citizen volunteers, Ed Kennedy (a Cape John homeowner) and Violet McCulloch (a Grade 11 student at Northumberland Regional High School) are active participants in sub-committee work.

The Tree Planting Sub-Committee has developed projects in 2022 and 2023 to capture carbon through planting tree seedlings. In the last two years, the Sub-Committee has organized spring mass planting of softwood seedlings on properties (typically abandoned fields) provided by land owners. In May 2023, twice as many seedlings were planted than in 2022, including by students on eight school properties in the County. In the fall of each year, the Sub-Committee has also organized the distribution of hardwood seedlings to County homeowners for planting on their properties. While the demand for these seedlings quadrupled in 2023, the supply of seedlings was more limited, in both cases primarily due to Hurricane Fiona.

The Education Sub-Committee has focused primarily on providing information to the public on Advisory Committee activities, with the support of the MOPC Communications Officer (e.g., development of tree planting flyers and posters, social media posts, engagement with citizens at the New Glasgow Farmers Market, etc.). The Sub-Committee has also visited schools in the County to encourage participation in climate change activities and, on behalf of the Advisory Committee, has hosted public interest presentations in River John and Lismore on coastal erosion and climate change

impacts by Dr. Tim Webster, an expert in the hazards of climate change along the coast.

The Action Plan Sub-Committee has recently embarked on the development of a five-year Municipal Climate Change Action Plan for the Municipality of Pictou County. The Advisory Committee has approved a work plan and schedule, and five adaptation and mitigation priority action areas on which the plan will focus. While the Advisory Committee has launched several climate change activities over the past two years, a comprehensive action plan with concrete goals backed with implementation resources has been missing. Ed Kennedy is leading a team of Advisory Committee volunteers to develop the plan over the next year. Engagement with business and not-for-profit communities and County citizens is planned in Spring 2024 to provide a forum for discussion of climate change action priorities for the County.

The Municipal Climate Change Advisory Committee believes that our community must safeguard the Earth for future generations. Youth, who are already experiencing the many effects of climate change in our community, have a unique perspective on climate-related issues, due to their present concerns and growing awareness of the impact of human activities on the environment.

Involvement in environmental committees from a young age also fosters a lifelong commitment to environmental sustainability, ensuring that the climate will improve over time.

As a young member of the Municipal Climate Change Advisory Committee and the tree-planting sub-committee, I have the privilege to participate in crucial discussions and planning of municipal events. This opportunity to voice my opinions and

ideas has allowed me to share my perspective and advocate for environmental issues affecting youth. It is important to have youth representation in these committees to ensure that the concerns of all perspectives are addressed in municipal planning. I am glad to be involved in such an important cause.

I have personally participated in various tree-planting events, which include planting and handing out trees. Tree planting is an essential tool in our efforts to sequester carbon. It also allows individuals to engage in activities that enable direct contact with the ecosystem, leading to a greater appreciation for the environment and an obligation to protect it. Planting trees can bring people together and create a sense of pride and accomplishment as tree planters understand that they are contributing to the mitigation of environmental damage. These efforts demonstrate that we can make positive changes and it is never too late to start.



Ed Kennedy and Violet McCulloch working at the Pictou County Wellness Centre with a group of volunteers to deliver seedlings to County homeowners.

River John Pickleball Club News, Fall 2023

By Sherry Keen

Exciting times in River John - pickleball courts on track to be completed this fall!
To the River John and surrounding communities - thank you for your support this summer. It’s been a very busy time as we started the construction of our 3-court facility, participated in River John Festival Days, continued with fundraising efforts and began our planning for RJPC operations, while managing the schedule and demand for pickleball at the one indoor court at the River John Firehall.
Local interest in pickleball continues to grow. We now have more than 80 River John Pickleball Club members and 300 Facebook followers. Since last November when it was first introduced to our community, more than 193 people played at the indoor court. All this pickleball at the River John Firehall has resulted in a \$5,835 contribution to the River John Fire Department, through a \$2 drop-in fee. And the stories from players are heartening as we hear of new friendships being built, social events occurring, people’s health being positively impacted by becoming more active, and people getting involved in volunteering to further develop the club.
Thanks to the RJ Fire Department for the use of the hall, the community for the continued support and the many club volunteers making it all work. Join/watch the RJPC Facebook site for information on play times and Learn to Play sessions.
We’re very fortunate that we’ll soon be playing this great sport outdoors on the local Legion’s picturesque property, surrounded by trees, gardens and a pond. Construction continued into late Octo-

ber, with finishing touches such as surface coatings, concrete walkways, and fencing being done – all in preparation for courts to open next spring. Stay tuned for an opening ceremony announcement for the spring.
This sport and the RJPC courts are for all ages, abilities and levels of players. We look forward to working with the Pictou YMCA as they coordinate youth pickleball sessions on our courts next year. The community will also be invited to participate in beginner training sessions and join the Pickleball Club.
Access to the courts will be through membership in our Pickleball Club, which will require being a member of Pickleball Canada at a very low fee. Details of membership can be found on our website at <https://secure.pickleballcanada.org/club/river-john-pickleball-club/32284/>, or you may address questions to riverjohnpickleball@gmail.com.
Fundraising for phase 2 will begin this winter, with hopes of adding lights, a shade structure and upgraded washrooms in the future. All contributions are welcomed and donations can be made by contacting John Carruthers, Treasurer, at jcar-ruthers@outlook.com.
Thank you once again to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 108, our partner in this project, for their continued support. We encourage the local community to join our local Legion at www.legion.ca.
RJPC looks forward to creating a club that is welcoming to all and promotes health, friendship, good sportsmanship and fun... see you on the courts!



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Congratulations Olivia O'Brien

Olivia Unna Isobella O'Brien, daughter of Rose Bezanson and Kevin O'Brien of West Branch, graduated from the University of Prince Edward Island in May, 2023, with a Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in Biology. Olivia is continuing her education at St. Francis Xavier University, enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program.



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Veterans Banners

By Joan MacLeod

If you take a drive around River John in the fall, you will notice colourful banners which honour our veterans. This project, started in 2019, is the brain-child of Anne Patriquin, who first saw these banners in River Hebert. We started with 36 banners and each year more have been added, so that now we have 54. The two new banners this year are to honour Joseph Aurel Blanchard (Joan’s uncle) and Edith Colter Nassar (Julie Windebank’s great aunt). This is the first time we have honoured a woman veteran. All of the veterans except for one have a link through family with River John.

If you would like to purchase a banner in memory of your loved one, it should be ordered in the summer from Anne Patriquin at: anne.p@xplornet.com The banner committee consists of Anne, her son Willie Patriquin and Marilyn Heighton.

Edith Colter Nassar

Edith Margaret Colter was born in 1901, the fifth of nine children of Albro Colter(station master) and Elizabeth Gertrude (Salter) Colter. She and her siblings were raisedin the residence above the River John station. She married John Nassar of Pictou, andthe young couple settled in a home on High St but John died tragically, not long afterthey were married. Edith moved to New York and became a nurse. When the USjoined WW 2, Edith signed up with the US Army Medical Corp and obtained the rank ofLieutenant. She was a nurse in England and France in the midst of the fighting.During her time in New York, Edith served as a private nurse to Eleanor Roosevelt, firstlady from 1933-1945. She also became an avid and lifelong NY Yankee fan.Edith travelled home to Pictou Co regularly to visit family, and retired to Pictoufollowing her long career in the US. She was known for her great sense of fashion andcompetitive bridge game. She loved a drive to River John and participated in manychurch and social activities in the village. She is remembered for her sense of duty aswell as generosity and thoughtfulness, especially to her family. She died in 1997

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River John and surrounding area have much to be proud of. I have seen first hand the important work that community volunteers and advocates continue to do to make your community a great place to live and visit.

I hope you all enjoy the months ahead.

#HERETOHELP

The Soldier

Written by Ria Suidgeest

The Soldier

This goes out to the soldier
To the one who fought
To the one who risked their life

For our country
And our home
To the one who knew what was right
And kept us safe

To the one who left their family
To fight for us
For them
And for our country

To the one who knew the risks
But went to help anyway
Knowing they may not come home
They did it for us
So, for that, we are thankful

So, this goes out to the soldier
The one who saved the world

Ria Suidgeest is the daughter of David and Valrie Suidgeest of River John, and the granddaughter of John and Ethel Langill (River John) and Mary Suidgeest (Shubenacadie).

Ria attends Tatamagouche Regional Academy. She wrote this poem in 2022, when she was in Grade 10, for the Tatamagouche Legion #64 Royal Canadian Legion Remembrance Day Literacy Contest. She won 1st place in Senior Poetry.

Ria's poem then advanced to the Provincial Remembrance Day Literacy Contest of the Nova Scotia/Nunavut Command, where she also placed 1st in Senior Poetry. The poem was printed in the Nova Scotia/Nunavut Command, Royal Canadian Legion's 56th Convention program in May, 2023.



Lest We Forget

Award Winning Poem Written by Lucas Byers

Lest We Forget

Lucas Byers

Lest We Forget

Soldiers walking into war
Not knowing
What lies ahead
Violence
Trauma and death.
This is why
On the eleventh hour
On the eleventh day
Of the eleventh month
We take a moment of silence
To remember
Those who fought in war
For country
Freedom and lives.
Lest we forget



Lucas Byers of River John is a Grade 7 student who attends Tatamagouche Regional Academy.

He is the son of Tiffany Butler.

Lucas enjoys basketball, reading, video games and is an air cadet in Tatamagouche Air Cadets Squadron.

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Addictions Services...800-922-1122



Lest We Forget

Remembrance Day
November 11

LGBTQ2+

by Joan MacLeod

It saddens me to see the divisive politics of the USA creeping into our Canadian cities. The recent marches (1 Million March 4 Children) in every major city were orchestrated by far-right organizations. These organizations, whose mission statements claim that they want to “transform our country to better reflect biblical principles,” protest inclusivity in schools, and educational policy on gender identity.

Teaching children about diverse sexuality is not the same as indoctrination or promotion. Sexual education is important for a multitude of reasons. Failing to do so leads to adverse outcomes such as not learning about consent.

This whole argument sounds like homophobia and hate-mongering, and not accepting people’s own lived experience. With sex-role stereotyping so rampant, it is no wonder that some children become non-binary or trans-gender. It is a reaction to the strict expectations based on whether one is male or female. In my opinion, there is nothing wrong with gender fluidity.

One cannot enforce heterosexuality and demand a return to biblical times. Will stoning be next? I for one am glad that I live in a country where hu-

man rights are valued and diversity is celebrated.

The other aspect of this is that all children do not come from heterosexual nuclear families. There are many variations in real life and combinations with multi-generations or single parent families. Teaching children that sexuality can be diverse may affirm their lived experience. As a case in point, our grandchildren enjoy the love and attention of their lesbian grandmothers. It is important to note that not all children live in safe situations so there needs to be a place where they do feel safe.

I like to think that Canadians are better than that. We are polite, we embrace difference, we welcome refugees, and try to make amends to our past horrific policies towards Indigenous people, born out of colonialism. We are a complex cultural mosaic. Education policy may be ideological and messy but it needs to be in order to be inclusive.

One of the signs held by a protester in the march read “Leave our children alone.” This reminded me of the words of the Persian poet, Kahlil Gibran, who said in his book, The Prophet: “Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life’s longing for itself... You may give them your love but not your thoughts for they have their own thoughts... For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.”

Book Review of “The Hobbit” by J.R.R. Tolkien

By Joan MacLeod

“The Hobbit” written in 1937, started as a bedtime story for Tolkien’s children. It is a rollicking adventure story about a hobbit named Bilbo Baggins who joins with thirteen dwarves and a wizard named Gandalf on a trip to recapture the dwarves’ lost family fortune. A hobbit is a little person, smaller than a dwarf. Unlike dwarves, hobbits do not grow beards. They tend to be fat in the stomach and like to wear bright colours, chiefly green and yellow. They wear no shoes because their feet grow naturally leathery soles and thick warm brown hair. They are good natured and laugh deeply, especially after dinner.

On their adventurous trek across the countryside to the treasure, they encounter trolls, wargs, elves, goblins, and giant spiders, whom they need to outwit so that they can reach the dragon who is guarding their gold and jewels in a cave. They are captured and released multiple times either by Gandalf’s magic or the hobbit’s trickery and conniving. He is aided by finding a ring which makes him invisible.

Although the book requires you to suspend disbelief to enter a wonderful world of fantasy, there are still life lessons to be learned. As the group works as a team, leadership, bravery, loyalty and teamwork are shown in this engaging story.

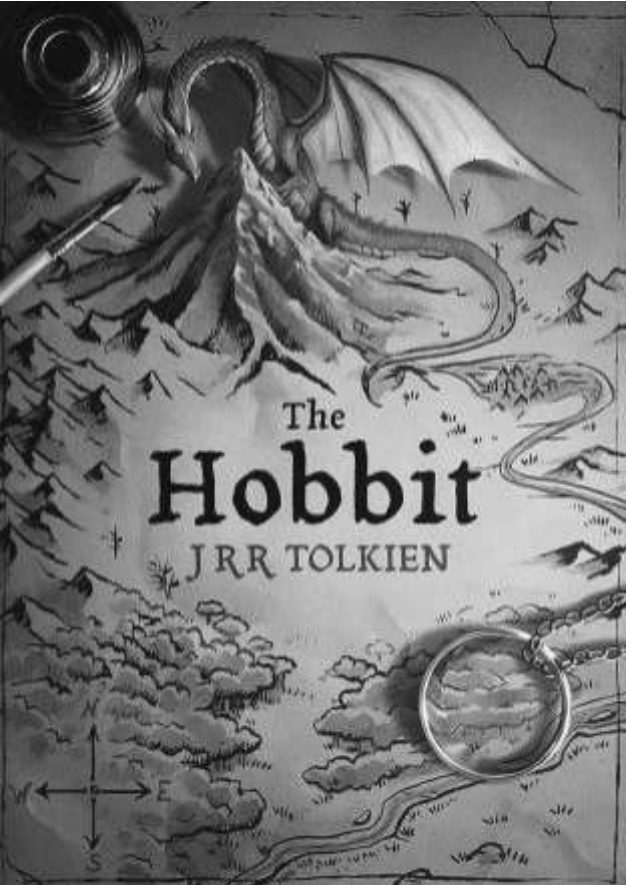
I first read this book in the 70s. It is as much fun again on a re-read. Now I am enjoying it as a bedtime story for my grandchildren. My one criticism is the lack of female characters, but it was written in the 1930s. It has been followed by three more volumes called “Lord of the Rings.” They all have been made into movies. I highly recommend this book as fun escape literature for all ages.

Cheesy Garlic Bread!

By Christiane Gill

The festive season is starting with lots of visiting and hosting family and friends so how about an easy, make-ahead, freezer-friendly side/appetizer or main.

Recipe
Preheat the oven to 350°
Use Uncut, long-ish, slender-ish bread (sub sandwich, hot dog bun, baguette)
Slice 2/3 down from top to bottom, about 1 inch apart.
Brushing/dipping sauce:
4 tbsp butter
4 tbsp margarine, or olive oil
1/2 tbsp granulated garlic
2 large cloves garlic, finely chopped/crushed
2 tbsp Italian dried herbs
Ground pepper to taste
Chili flakes (optional)
A few dashes Accent (optional) or 1/4 tsp sugar
1/2 tsp salt, adjust as needed (depending if butter is salted, the kind of cheese, if you add salami slices, ham slices, cooked bacon, tomato bits, bell pepper bits, spring onions, etc.)
Microwave the butter, oil, spices and aromatics together until the butter is melted.
Now with a small spoon or pastry brush get some of the aromatic butter onto one side of each slice of bread, aiming not to break the bread. This makes sure that the cheese gets better caught in the little holes of the bread.
Stuffing
Your favorite cheese slices or from a cheese block shredded cheese (store bought shredded cheese is coated so it won’t melt well)
Salami slices, ham slices, cooked bacon, whatever you feel like
Tomato bits, bell pepper bits, whatever veggie bits you want
Now carefully stuff with your choice of stuffings. All are optional but the melted ooey-goey cheese is definitely the kicker.
At this point you can wrap it well in cling wrap and freeze it. Take it out and let thaw on the counter top for at least 2 hours.
If you do want to put it straight into the oven start at 300°F, turn the oven off after 10 minutes and let sit until the cheese is melted and the top crispy.
Carefully transfer your cheesy garlic bread onto a lined baking tray, slather the rest of the aromatic butter on top of the bread and put it into the oven for about 10 minutes. Then turn off the oven and let it sit until the cheese is melted and the top has become crispy.
Smaller “loaves” such as Hot Dog buns or halved sub buns make great individual pull-apart appetizers or sides. With a soup or salad this makes a great meal.
You find all this cutting and stuffing and baking too much work? Then just dip your bread or whatever you fancy into the aromatic butter and enjoy.
By the way, this aromatic butter works super well on baked potatoes as well.
Find your favourite way and enjoy.
Bon Appétit



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The Sixties Scoop

By Paul Martin

By now you should have heard of the “Indian” Residential Schools that operated across Canada between the 1870s and 1900s. For around 120 years this network of boarding schools functioned solely to isolate Indigenous children from their own culture, religion and families in order to assimilate them into the dominant Canadian culture. Approximately 150,000 children passed through this system with upwards of 30,000 deaths occurring while in the “care” of these government sponsored institutions. The true numbers of deaths are not known because of incomplete or missing school records and because new burial sites continue to be found.

At Residential Schools children as young as 4 years old were forced into these institutions where, on their first day alone, they were stripped of their clothing, made to shower and then had their hair cut short. These innocent and powerless children were so frightened that even being made to shower was traumatic because they had never seen... “water coming out of the walls”. The atrocities that then followed for years are unspeakable, yet society was unaware and many simply turned a blind eye.

Another rather demeaning and cowardly attempt at irradicating the Indigenous Peoples of this country is referred to as the “60s Scoop”. It is a little-known insidious movement that paralleled and overlapped the Residential Schools’ time frame. The “Sixties Scoop” refers to the large-scale removal or “scooping” of Indigenous children from their homes, communities and birth families as early as the 1950s, and continued on into the 1980s. This was a period in which policies were enacted in Canada that enabled child welfare authorities to take or “scoop” up Indigenous children from their homes and often directly from their mothers’ arms as newborns. Again, this was a government-sanctioned operation that went on without the awareness of the average Canadian and one to which all parties involved turned a blind eye. Was this movement intentionally kept a secret? If so, why? To

the best of my knowledge, it was certainly never taught or mentioned in school curriculums.

Across Canada it is estimated that 20,000 First Nation, M’etis and Inuit children were taken from their homes, (again, many newly born), often without warning, consent or even knowledge of the children’s families. In Canada alone it is estimated that roughly 78% of these children were adopted out to non-Indigenous families and often sent out of province or country, far from their homes, (this 78% also included orphans). While in these homes, there were restrictions placed on kids that further separated them from their own identity; siblings were split up and sent to different homes, they did not know their own nationality, who their parents were or even where they came from. Additionally, these kids were not allowed to speak their native tongue, practice any elements of their culture or be taught about their history. Sadly, families were rarely notified as to the whereabouts of their child and many families and children, who are now grown, are still searching for their relatives today.

The term “60s Scoop”, is a cute little phrase used to smooth over the words “genocide” and “kidnapping” which I feel would be appropriately applied in these situations. These cruel and inhumane practices went on for roughly 40 years in this country and were sanctioned by the very people who claim to uphold the moral and legal laws. The intergenerational trauma of these despicable atrocities on the Indigenous community at large is immeasurable, spans future generations and presents barriers that are, and will be, difficult to overcome.

My article can only serve as an introduction to, and make others aware of, this little-known dark phase of Canadian history, as sociocultural impacts of this movement on generations of Indigenous people are too extensive to cover in a short article. To learn more about the 60s scoop there is ample material online and it is also addressed and discussed by CBC’s Rosanna Deerchild on her radio show “Unreserved.” Her 60s scoop show can be accessed through archived radio at <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-105-unreserved>.

Apologies followed by monetary compensation seems to be what society feels will make things right. This typical approach is superficial and pathetically shallow. It is interesting that a great majority of the victims are identified through published pictures and names and their stories are readily told. It is as if there is only one side to the story. The questions that always haunt me as I read and learn more about this despicable part of Canadian history are: Who is responsible for coming up with this idea and making it policy? Who are the people that supported this “policy” and ran this program? Who are the individuals that actually stole or kidnapped these young children? Why aren’t these people identified, held accountable and brought to justice? After all, do we not live in a just society? Why should these people be allowed to live out a peaceful life while their victims live the nightmare every day of their lives? Is it because society still wants to ignore it? By ignoring it are we also unknowingly sanctioning what happened? The guilty are not all gone - some still exist among us. Are we not interested in upholding the law? The TRUTH must be told and made widely known while RECONCILIATION must be real and effective as agreed upon by the effected individuals and groups... and I feel this should include further investigation and prosecution.

Please take a moment or two to consider the impact on your own family and relations had you been victimized in this fashion.

Wela’lin.

Saint George’s Presbyterian Church

by Cindy Langille

I am so pleased that River John Vacation Bible School (VBS) was so well-attended July 3-7, 2023, with over twenty-six children and four infant siblings.

They learned about “Heroes of Faith” through Bible stories, songs, crafts, movies and activities. We were blessed with eight adult leaders and several youth helpers, along with two summer recreation workers. I would like to thank them all for their time and talents.

I would also like to thank all the parents who stayed to help. VBS would not be possible without you. I especially want to thank everyone who made it possible for these children to come and learn more about Jesus and some of the other “Heroes of Faith.”

Sunday School has resumed. We meet at church at 11 a.m. and proceed to Sunday school after the Sunday School story. We have a preschool/ kindergarten class and an elementary class. All children are welcome and assistance is greatly appreciated.

For more information you may call or text Cindy Langille at 902-899-5302.

West Branch and Area Community Association

31 West Branch Rd., West Branch
by Reg Crewe, Director/Treasurer

The West Branch Hall was built in 1933. The hall is a registered “Comfort Centre.” The association and hall are run by an elected board of seven volunteer community members. We received a New Horizons for Seniors Program grant for \$24,216, and have made many improvements to the hall, including two commercial fridges, 60 banquet chairs, many kitchen utensils, range hoods, kitchen carts, AV equipment and outside picnic tables. We recently received partial funding from the MOPC to replace a failed Automatic External Defibrillator (AED). Our thanks to the granting organizations for providing the necessary funding to allow us to keep our hall in great operating condition and supply necessary programs and events for the community. The hall hosted West Branch Wednesdays in 2022 and we are currently planning two more events in November, 2023. An interested community group is applying for funding for a more regular get-

together with community members. The intent is to provide social networking, meals and info sessions. We held our annual Maple Syrup Festival on April 29, 2023. We are holding a Fall Supper October 28 to help raise funds to pay our regular upkeep and pay the remaining funds required to purchase the AED. The bi-weekly music jams are continuing. The hall is accessible and available to any interested community member or group. We seat sixty people and have a fully equipped kitchen. We would like to extend a warm welcome to all newcomers to the area and encourage anyone who would like to participate or contribute to the West Branch and Area Community Association to contact one of the board members. We appreciate any help anyone has for the betterment of our community. The hall is available for private events, anniversaries, birthdays, celebrations or meetings. Please call for details, 902-351-2260.

The Bittersweet

Kaitlyn Heighton was 7 years old in 2008 when she started her 15 years in 4-H as a cloverbud, in the River John 4-H Club, finishing in 2023 at age of 21.

Over the years she has completed many projects such as woodworking, crafts, scrapbooking, sewing, foods and goat. She completed her official 4-H year at Achievement Day in July, but continued on to the Pictou North Colchester Exhibition in Pictou to compete against fellow county members for the honour to represent Pictou County at the Nova Scotia 4-H Provincial Show. Kaitlyn made the River John Club proud to represent Pictou County at Pro Show with her Champion scrapbooking project, 1st in Senior scrapbooking competition and 1st in Senior craft competition.



Kaitlyn at Pro Show at her Scrapbooking competition.

This year, the Pro Show, as it's called in the 4-H world, was held in Windsor, Nova Scotia, on the weekend of September 29th to October 1st. This is when the top members from each county compete for the honour to be top members of that particular project in all of Nova Scotia. Kaitlyn did very well, placing 3rd with her project, receiving 2nd in scrapbooking competition and 7th in crafts competition out of all of the 18 counties competing at the show. Making it to this stage was a big accomplishment in itself, so we are all very proud of Kaitlyn.

As the saying goes, "When one door closes another one opens." Kaitlyn has decided to continue working with the members in the River John 4-H Club as a leader for the crafts and scrapbooking projects.



Collection of Kaitlyn's 2023 projects.

River John Garden Club

By Joan MacLeod

You may not realize that River John boasts its very own garden club. This is our second year of existence and we feel we are beginning to make our presence felt as we try a little bit at a time to beautify the village. We started last year with the raised bed below the River John sign when we planted the bed with yellow and blue flowers in solidarity with Ukraine. We continued the colour theme this year. Then we were asked to tidy up around the Bellevue Cemetery sign, which we did, and planted in perennials. Then one of the members noticed that there were two planters growing up in weeds, at the end of Cape John, so we planted those out as well. Our plans for next year are to be more selective in choosing plants for each environment/display, and, hopefully, create more permanent displays. Also, we do need to figure out a way to care for the plants after they are planted, especially in a dry summer.

We had lots of fun meeting, and also swapping plants. But our highlight was touring each other's gardens. At one house we saw a beautiful painted driftwood wreath as an outdoor wall decoration which I have been busy trying to emulate.

We meet in the Library at 1:30 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from May until October. New members are always welcome.



Maureen Topley and Margaret Barry at the Bellevue Cemetery sign.

News from River John Legion

By Mike Topley, President

Our Legion is back into fall mode and soon to be winter mode after a nice (but wet) summer. Some of our major summer events and activities included Read by the Sea, Festival Days activities, Summer Day Camp and providing a home base for the village's summer work students who were led this year by Recreation's coordinator, Ashley Langille.

The pickleball courts construction is well underway and several members of the pickleball club have joined the Legion, along with folks who have been introduced to our branch through Saturday evening's weekly Karaoke. Such new members inducted at our October meeting include; Morgan Kappes, Bradley Kappes, Sherry Keen, Bob Keen, Mae McIntyre and Wade Taylor.

It is with sadness, however, that we recorded the passing of John Murray with a Celebration of Life on Sunday, October 22nd. Many friends, Legion comrades and family attended and our Chaplain, Mary Beth Sutherland, officiated. With John's passing we lost a valuable and longstanding member of our Legion. John served twenty-five years in the Canadian Armed Forces with missions including the Korean War, NATO Operations, and multiple United Nations Peacekeeping missions in the Middle East. John and Bonnie retired from Calgary to River John in 1986 and for the next 37 years they were fully engaged as local entrepreneurs and community leaders. As a proud veteran, John became actively involved on the executive in the Royal Canadian Legion, River John Branch 108. This was a path that Bonnie passionately partnered with him for many years. Our heartfelt condolences go out to Bonnie and their family.

Remembrance Day may have come and gone by the time you read this. Thanks to all who donated

for a poppy or wreath and attended either our 11a.m. Ceremony, the church service at St George's Presbyterian Church or our evening banquet.

We are fully registered with MOPC Department of Emergency Services as the River John Comfort Centre and we have made application through MOPC for a portion of the recently announced ACOA grant for comfort centre supplies. Our new generator is ready and waiting.

A recent visit by the county Fire Marshall found a few deficiencies which have all now been corrected. For anyone visiting our Legion, you should know that the muster station in case of fire evacuation is the white arch entry to our Memorial Gardens, located in the parking lot.

The Meals on Wheels program has restarted in our kitchen and volunteers deliver some forty hot meals every Wednesday under the care and control of Melanie Cote and Sandra Patriquin. The very successful Kids First playgroup program continues on Monday mornings.

Don't forget Karaoke every Saturday night starting at 8 p.m. Doors are open at 7 p.m. and singers have a selection of over 1500 songs to choose from. Admission is \$5 and each week there is a 50/50 draw plus singers qualify for a chance to win the Chase the King prize that builds until the King of Clubs is drawn.

Finally, anyone wishing to book our facility should call Maureen at 902 351 2261.

Down-Home Cooking

End of November way-back-when as remembered by Janice Murray Gill in her Nova Scotia Down-Home Cooking 1978 (submitted by Christiane and John Gill)

November

The last day of November was my friend's birthday (Mary Reid), and this always seemed to coincide with the first snowstorm of the season. After school, we would go up to her house for her birthday party, and when the last game had been played, and the birthday cake eaten, we would leave the big, warm kitchen for a white, snow clogged walk home. It was winter at last and Christmas was coming!

Season's Greetings to all of our readers.



Mary Reid, Janice's Friend

Share The Journey

by **Melanie Cote**

I found a love for walking in my early teenage years when life got really challenging for me. Walking has always been my thing, it is something most people can do and best of all it costs nothing. In my opinion it's the best and cheapest therapy available, you just have to be willing to get outside and take the first step.

At first, when I was asked to write about my most recent experience of walking the Harvest Trail, I really didn't want to because it's such a personal experience. After some thought, and realizing not everyone knows about Camino NS, I wanted to share so that maybe someone else can be encouraged to take part in this life-changing experience.

What is a Camino/Pilgrimage?

My friend, David explains this well and you can learn more about him and his stories at <https://davidgriffiths.ca/>

1.The "camino" in Spanish is both a noun ("the way") and a verb ("I walk"). That suggests it's as much a process as a "thing". I like to think that science now understands matter is not necessarily solid, but can be energy in motion.

2. In the Western tradition we think of pilgrimage as linear - walking to an end-point. In Eastern traditions, especially in Tibet (where it is called a "kora", which means "circumambulation"), pilgrimage is circular, always ending up where you started.

On September 25th, 2023, I met with 16 strangers (turns out I knew one, small world!) in Kentville, Nova Scotia, whom I was about to take on this not only physically but mentally challenging task of walking from Grand Pre to Annapolis Royal (110 km in 5 days). Camino NS organizes the event, providing meals and shelter in local churches and community halls. We sleep on the floor for the most part and shower if we are lucky once or twice along the journey.

We experience the land together, in community, supporting one another as we learn about the land and each other along the way. It still amazes me that we are strangers in the beginning but by the end of our trail we are hugging and saying our "until we meet again" goodbyes at the end of day 5. If you want to learn more about Camino NS, check out their website www.caminonovascotia.ca. They have several organized walks throughout the year on different trails across the province, including one right here in our backyard from Pictou to Pugwash.

Why walk a camino?

An unforgettable experience that can't fully be explained. You start feeling very excited, full of strength and expectations. It's something very different compared to our normal day routine. You have no distractions and no responsibilities other than to walk.

To meet new people.

As I mentioned above you arrive most likely not knowing a soul. Even after all the pain and suffering you experience together you will miss these people. You will miss their stories, their life experiences and wisdom. As hard as people make life, they also make life so much better and more interesting. "Two are better than one." (Ecclesiastes 4:9)

The physical challenge- leaving your comfort zone and digging deep, focus on taking one step at a time which is similar to how everyday life should be. Try not to rush, enjoy the journey.

"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."(Matthew 6:34)

To see the beauty that surrounds us and discover new spaces.

Connecting to the land, its heritage and the local people, history and culture.

Unplug - Self awareness-consciousness. Get to know yourself, reflect on what you really need, want and what makes you really happy and what doesn't.

Connect with your most spiritual and religious side. Meditate and grow your relationship with God.

There are so many reasons to walk a camino and some may not be clear until you are on the trail or sometime after you have completed the journey. Personally, I absolutely love everything about being a pilgrim. From my experience, each camino is different, the camino doesn't give us what we want, it gives us what we need.

To give you a glimpse of our day we started with a morning intention, for example:"All streams flow to the sea because it is lower than they are. Humility gives it its power."(Lao Tzu, the Tao Te Ching).

"The Struggle and the gift of pilgrimage is that it is not only the journey of life in microcosm, but also society in microcosm."(EileenC.Sweeney, Boston College) and "Consider the Ravens; they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse or barn, and yet God feeds them" (Luke 12:24).

"to inhale suffering and exhale compassion." (Jesse Dymond Bishop's, QC)

"They can be like a sun, footsteps. They can do for the heart what light can do for a field." St.John of the Cross, Love Poems from God (trans. Daniel Ladinsky;mod MA).

"You show me the path of life, O God, In your presence there is fullness of joy." (Psalm 16:11).

We would have breakfast together, worship and stretch before packing our bag for the day. After breakfast we packed up all our belongings so they could be ready to be transported to the next location. Usually by 8:30 a.m. we would all leave together to get on the trail to walk, which was approximately 22-30 km a day. Throughout the day you sometimes walk and talk with others but if you wanted to be on your own you could choose to do so, everyone walks at their own pace. After our journey each day, we would meet at our next "home" for the night and set up our sleeping quarters. Supper was usually ready and waiting for us; we ate together and cleaned up afterwards together. The day always ended with some reflection and group discussion. Lights out about 9:30 in order to get some rest for the next day of the walk.

The camino provides a path to true empathy, gaining new perspectives, remembering that you are never alone, joyfulness, seizing the day, taking time to just be, remembering to laugh, being grateful, and seeing beauty all around us. After completing the Camino NS I felt exhausted physically but renewed mentally. This was not my first camino, nor will it be my last, as I have a dream to complete the 800 km Camino de Santiago in Spain.

After five days of walking, many blisters, lots of laughs and some cries, I was really happy to be home. Nothing like a hot shower and a good night's rest in your own bed. Now that my feet have healed, I feel it is time to start walking again.

Let's Go for a Walk!

Recently, Victoria Barry Kia and I have started a walking group through Walk NS, a program that encourages people to get out and walk in groups. You can find a list of all of their walking groups throughout the province on their website at <https://www.hikenovascotia.ca/ns-walks>. I hope you register to join one or take their leader course and start one in your area.

Our group (NSWalks-River John) currently meets every Wednesday at 1 p.m. at the River John Legion; the second and last Friday of every month at St. George's Presbyterian Church, River John at 6 p.m. and every Sunday at 12:30 p.m. at the Overstreet Cafe in River John. The walks are generally 30-45 minutes and are for everyone, (no pets allowed, for safety reasons). No-one will be left behind so please don't be overwhelmed with fear of the unknown, take the first step and meet us for a walk. Follow our group on Facebook to stay up-to-date with times and locations, or if you have suggestions, please feel free to reach out. We plan to put a poster up each month at the library and drug-store for those not online. Also, we hope to organize some group hikes and/or snowshoeing.

Walking, especially walking in groups, is the perfect activity for a person's physical, mental and social well-being. Connecting with people in your community and moving your body means you are better able to do the things you love.

Good Trails to you!



River John Recreation Association Report.

Celebrating Our Exceptional Summer Students and the Vibrant Community Spirit

By Ashley Langille, Community Coordinator Volunteer

Hey there, fellow community members!

It's time to give a big shout-out to our outstanding summer students who have done an incredible job. Firstly, a huge thank-you goes out to Jared Langille, Mike Law and Olivia O'Brien, our three university summer students. Despite the challenging start with the Fiona clean-up, they tackled the tasks with positive attitudes and an awesome spirit, making it look effortless. Their fourteen weeks of dedicated community work have truly made a difference.

We also want to express our gratitude to the summer students who joined us later. Cohen Cameron, Ryan Clough, Connor Langille and Jack Reid - your hard work over the eight weeks of summer is

greatly appreciated. Throughout the summer, these hardworking individuals have been busy bees, diligently taking care of various projects and making sure our community looks absolutely amazing. From maintaining parks and green spaces to beautifying public areas, they have truly gone above and beyond to keep everything in tip-top shape.

Also thanks to our students for their incredible support in making summer Day Camp a blast for the twenty kids who participated. Your efforts in planning activities for the week of Festival Days and keeping the fun going all summer long are truly commendable. Thank you to the three young ladies who stepped up and volunteered their summer break time to help as Junior Leaders at day camp; you all added a heart-warming accent to our summer fun and we look forward to your return next summer.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the continued support of our amazing community members and organizations. Your unwaver-

ing support is what keeps our village thriving and vibrant. We are grateful for your dedication and commitment to our shared goals.

If you see the individuals mentioned above, in and around the community, please express your appreciation for their hard work, positive attitudes, and outstanding spirit. They have made a lasting impact on our village.

As I reflect on my first year as the Community Coordinator, I can't help but feel immense gratitude for the incredible support I've received from all of you in the community. It has been a year of learning curves and growth, but with your unwavering support, we have achieved so much together.

I would like to give a special thank you to Santina Weatherby and Jay Reid. I appreciate you both!



Salem United Church News

by Rev. Connie McNamara

Salem United Church congregation, part of the River John West Branch Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada, has been quite busy since my last comments in the June edition of The Pioneer. We once again hosted a delightful ecumenical worship service to begin River John Festival Days on Sunday, July 23rd. We opened our doors as part of the "Doors Open for Churches," sponsored by the Nova Scotia Heritage Trust on Monday, July 24th, and enjoyed sharing the beauty of our sanctuary, information about our historical artifacts, and cookies and conversation with those who stopped by for a visit. Thankfully, August was a more relaxed month, because in church circles, the last four months of the year are always filled with busyness.

Indeed, this past September, Salem UC celebrated the "Time of Creation" with three special "Camp Fire" worship services, albeit indoors without flames or smoke! Still, the themes for these special Sundays enabled us to call to mind the joy of sitting around a camp fire sharing with family and friends - and share we did! The first Sunday, we shared in singing as we honoured creation and joined our voices for On Top of Spaghetti, All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir, [There's a Hole in the Bucket](#), This Land Is Your Land and many more camp fire classics. The second Sunday we shared connections to creation using Lectio Divina and Visio Divina - listening and looking for what creation is saying to us. And on the third Sunday we shared our stories of creation - hearing of profound, peaceful, and playful events that helped to enhance our understanding of the need to both appreciate and protect creation.

World Communion worship took place on Sunday October 1st, and was a rather historic gathering as seven congregations from three denominations gathered at St. John's UC in Wallace for a service that called us "Back to our Roots." The service included special music by Carol Campbell Smith and Denise and Jim White, an ecumenical choir, participation from people of all ages, and was followed by a wonderful time of food and fel-

lowship.

Looking ahead, All Saints Sunday on November 5th is scheduled to be a celebration of the inspirational people in our lives, as we give thanks for those who have gone before us. And while the planning for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany is yet to happen, I do know that we will gather white gifts one Sunday, we will honour 'blue Christmas' one evening, and on Christmas Eve we will celebrate the old, old story of Jesus' birth.

Outside of worship, Salem UC stewards continue to look at the need for repairs to our church building, and while most of the work will have to wait until at least 2024 or beyond, there is still progress being made in terms of prioritizing and moving forward. Reviewing what we have done, and looking ahead to what we can and will do, is an important part of living faithfully - may we be truly grateful for the opportunities and the courage.

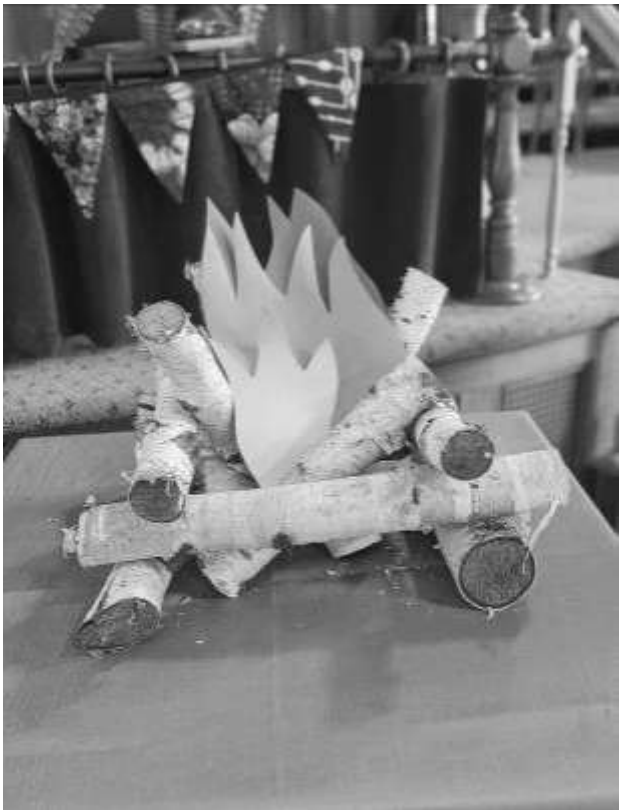
Blessings, Connie



The ecumenical worship for World Communion at St John's United Church in Wallace. Carol Campbell Smith and Jim White offered special music that day.



"Open Doors for Churches" on Monday July 24. Rev. Connie McNamara, and Margaret Herdman, the representative from the Nova Scotia Heritage Trust.



Our celebration of the time of creation with an "indoor campfire."

Bryton Gammon #234 Motocross 2023



by Linda Thompson-Reid

The 2023 Motocross season in the Maritimes is over, but not for 16-year-old Bryton Gammon from Valley, Colchester County. Bryton is a grade 11 student at Cobequid Educational Centre, Truro. His bedroom is a testament of how busy he has been since he began racing. Every inch of space on his bedroom walls is filled with plaques and trophies. Bryton got his first bike, a Yamaha 50, when he was five and he has never looked back. He began racing competitively when he was eleven years old, and over the past five years he has kept his family on the move competing across the Atlantic provinces, Quebec, 207 MX in Lyman, Maine, and Dublin Gap MX in Pennsylvania. Bryton also

spent two weeks training in Georgia, at the Millsap Training Facility in March of this year. Bryton’s future plans are to spend a month training in South Carolina. Bryton is heading back to Lyman, Maine, and The Wick 338 in Southwick, Massachusetts for races in October, 2023. He travels the circuit with his father, Billy, who is his mechanic, coach, and chauffeur. His mother, Marci, spends her time making sure his uniforms are ready for the next race, creating his name and number, and affixing GAMMON 234 on his moto gear. Bryton’s twin sister, Baylee, is his biggest fan. Bryton loves being at the track, with his friends and all of his competitors.

Life as a motocross racer isn’t a sport for the faint of heart. Bryton jumps distances over one hundred feet, flying through the air and reaching speeds of 70 km/hour and above. He is active on social media; give him a like, and follow him on TikTok @bryton_234, and on instagram bryton_234. He usually posts clips from his races for everyone who is interested in watching - young and old. Bryton has two KTM 250 two-stroke bikes, a 2023 and 2024. He always needs a spare, just in case there is a problem and he requires a quick change.

Bryton is busy looking for sponsors for the upcoming 2024 season. If anyone becomes a sponsor, their name will be displayed on his bike trailer and bike, as well as announced at the starting line at the beginning of Bryton’s race. When the 2024 season begins, he will be moving up to the Intermediate class and do motos in two different classes. His weekends at the tracks are a busy time for his family, as well.

Bryton is the son of Billy Gammon and Marci

Heighton-Gammon, former residents of River John. He also has many family members living in the area, including his grandparents, Eric and Maxine Heighton, who never miss a race, Patsy Jollimore of Halifax, and numerous aunts and uncles.

Bryton would like to thank his sponsors for their support, and he hopes to see all of you next year at the local tracks. When asked how he chose the number #234, he told us it was his birthday, the 23rd of the fourth month - April.

Good luck, Bryton in your future motos, and safe riding! #234



Sunrise Trail 4-H 2023

By Bonnie Allen, General Leader

The Sunrise Trail 4-H Club was made up of Cloverbuds & Members from Tatamagouche to Lismore and communities all along the Sunrise Trail.

There were 4 Cloverbuds,(7- and 8-year olds). The Cloverbuds spent the year learning about the projects available to them in 4-H, also how to judge & give reasons as well as how to do a speech or demonstration. On July 25th at our Achievement Day, they had their boxes displaying all their work from throughout the year.

The Club was made up of nineteen families & twenty-three Members, 9-21 years old. Their projects included: Alpaca, Beef, Cake Decorating, Dairy, Dog Obedience, Fisheries, Foods, Goat, Great Outdoors, Heritage, Horse, Photography, Rabbit, Scrapbooking, Sheep, Small engines, Welding & Woodworking.

The Club had fun at their Hallowe’en Party, enjoyed a Holiday Social with their Special Friends, Adopted a Family at Christmas - went shopping for a family of four, wrapped gifts for them & provided them with a Christmas dinner. All members completed their communication work with speeches & demonstrations. In May, they sold tickets on ten dozen lobsters, which were very generously donated by local fishermen. The money from the ticket sales assisted seven members to attend Camp Rankin in Cape Breton.

Members helped in their community with the Chicken Barbeque in Toney River and Festival Days breakfasts - their own on Monday and the County one on Wednesday.

Registration for the new year took place on Monday, October 9th at the Toney River Community Hall. The club welcomed new families & new Cloverbuds.

Final registration will be at the November 13th club meeting. The Club meets on the second Monday in the month at 7 p.m. at the Toney River Community Hall.

November is 4-H Month and in 2024 we look forward to celebrating One Hundred Years of 4-H in Pictou County.

We want to thank the community & our fishermen for their support throughout the year.



T-Ball Review



By Jay Reid

As we turn the page from summer to fall, writing a review of the T-Ball season in River John seems commonplace now. I don't mention that with regret or negativity. I'm happy with the program becoming ingrained in the community. It's less of a novelty act now, and more of a recreational activity that the kids can count on being available. It took a few years. It took countless volunteer hours and donations from the community. But now, when the school year is out, local kids can expect to roll right into T-ball/baseball season and have some fun on the field.

A positive trend that deserves mentioning: each year has seen our registration numbers grow. This year we had over ninety kids registered in two separate age ranges. Ages 3-6 and 7-11. The bulk of the participants were in the younger age category, predominantly in the 3-4 ages. Having that many little sluggers dominate the ballfield amplifies the cuteness factor of our program, but requires capable, energetic adult volunteers. Thankfully we had those in large supply.

The program for the younger players consisted of activity stations that focused on specific baseball-related skills. There were batting cages, accuracy stations to develop throwing, obstacle courses that helped with co-ordination and dexterity, and fielding drills that helped introduce basic baseball concepts to these burgeoning athletes. We divided the kids into manageable groups, kept them at stations for no longer than 8-9 minutes and rotated them through 4-5 different stations. This was done so that they all could develop different skill sets without getting bored or taxing their limited attention spans. On paper that sounds technically sound and straightforward. In reality it was occasional pandemonium. Kids love playing in dirt. Climbing fences. Throwing rocks. Crying into their mom or dad's shirts. All these things happened, but were the exception, not the rule. For the most part things ran smoothly, and kids looked forward to the next "practice."

The older kids' program was a little less structured and focused more on just creating game situations and developing skills so that the participants got better than they were the year before. Pat Mulholland was instrumental in keeping the older kids entertained and moderately trained. They may have even learned a few new words and baseball expressions. The season itself was hampered by wet weather and we were not able to follow through on potential exhibition games with other Pictou County teams. We did, however, have a parents-versus-kids game that was enjoyed by all who attended. There were some big hits, some laughs, and maybe a few defensive plays? Defense will be a larger focus next year, that is for sure.

Kids that exhibit higher skill levels at this age usually register in leagues or on teams that compete at a higher and more consistent level. Unfortun-



nately, River John doesn't yet have the numbers to create one of these teams or commit to one of these leagues. YET. I say yet, because as we continue to introduce local kids to the game of baseball, and our numbers continue to grow, we will soon be able to field a team or teams that have aged and played together in our programs. Next year I am leaning on creating a 4-team league that operates on a weekly basis. More on that to follow. There is promise here, and we just need to keep developing our youth and our programs so that these kids have the potential for recreation as well as elevated competition.

Lastly, as our enrollment continues to trend upward, our facilities need to stay on par with our ambitions. Plenty of work has gone into maintaining our field. We have had drainage issues as well as some structural issues with dugouts, etc. Going forward, we will need specific dirt, new drainage, fencing and dugout development. All of this costs time and money. I have had donations of time from plenty of parents, and money from individuals who do not even have kids involved in the program. Justin Cormier's daughter, Layla, participated in the program a couple of years ago, and through her he was able to donate funds that helped purchase more soil for the infield. Philanthropic individuals help make this program a success. Seeing the very generous financial support that the government has provided for the pickleball courts in River John, I am cautiously optimistic that we can also secure similar funding to elevate the level of services we provide to our children.



River John Volunteer Fire Department News

By Krysta MacLellan

As you may know, we as a department have had an extremely busy summer. We would first like to send out a huge Thank You again for your continued support through the Firefighters 50/50 draw. Because of this, we are able to purchase some very helpful and life-saving equipment. July was a very busy month for the department, to say the least. We owe many thanks for everything, starting with the yard sale. Thank you to all the vendors and for the donations to the firefighters' table. It was a great success and we are looking into making it a yearly event. Next came our lobster dinner, which was sold out. We appreciate everyone that came out and enjoyed the meal. Our Open House made a comeback this year, and we've had lots of wonderful feedback from parents and kids who attended. We were happy to see everyone and hope everyone left with some knowledge about the department and safety as well. Then came our 3rd Annual Firefighter Competition. We would like to congratulate the teams that entered and also the ones that placed. Everyone was very supportive of each other, and it was lots of fun. We would also like to acknowledge and thank our wonderful sponsors who donated prizes towards the competition. Thank you to Michelin, Eddy Group, Nova Arc Welding, Melville Corner Homestead, Seafoam

Seawalls, Tatamagouche Brewery and Krysta MacLellan.

We also would like to send out a huge thank you for supporting us with our signature Lucky Duck race. The weather wasn't as cooperative with us this year, but we still made the best of it and got the race done. Congratulations to Elizabeth Bezanson for winning the top prize of \$500, Allison Falconer placing second for \$250, and Alice Rushton on her \$100 third place finish. The next item on our list was our 4-Wheeler draw. Due to a lot of events going on all at once, we postponed the draw for a month. The draw was held on a live Facebook post and the winner of the 4-wheeler was Audrey MacLellan. Second prize of \$500 went to Paul Gordon and third place prize of \$250 went to Catherine Brown. Congratulations and thank you.

The last item on our thank-you list is the Chicken Barbeque on August 20th. We sold out in record time. A huge thank you to the community and surrounding areas for this wonderful support! During the month of September, the Pictou County Fire School and all the Fire Departments participate in a weekend get-together, and host training courses throughout the county. We are fortunate to have a few members who take time to go and extend their training out-of-house. This is also a great experience to train with other

members of surrounding departments for mutual aid calls.

In the last couple of months, we have been very fortunate to have new members join, as well as junior members who join the Junior Program offered through the schools. We also have 2 newly certified Medical First Responders (MFR), as well as members participating in Level 1, provided through the county.

The month of October hosts Fire Prevention Week. This is a great opportunity to remember to check your batteries in your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. It is also a great time to clean your flues to prepare for the months ahead.

You can also stop by and visit us on Halloween night; we will be set up at the River John Motor Co. (across from fire hall), passing out treats again this year.

In the coming months, we will be having our annual Santa at the Fire Hall event.

Date will be posted in the future. We will also be hosting a New Year's Eve Dance at the hall. Advance tickets will be available, so get your tickets early when they come out.

River John Odd Fellows and Rebekahs

by Jacob Leegwater

Summer has come and gone and autumn has arrived with wet weather. Both Odd Fellows and Rebekahs have resumed their regular meetings. The Odd Fellows meetings are held each Monday at 7:30 p.m. and the Rebekahs on the second and fourth Friday at 2:00 p.m.

Our Festival Days breakfast on July 27th was very well-attended, having served 223 meals.

At our meeting on September 11th, the following officers were elected for the upcoming term. Noble Grand: Brother Brian Emoff, Vice Grand: Brother Rod Hayman, Recording Secretary: Jacob Leegwater, Financial Secretary: Brother Steven Craib, Treasurer: Brother Earl Johnson. All other officers will be appointed when installation is held.

The Rebekahs held their installation on October 13th. The following officers assumed their station. Noble Grand: Brother Jacob Leegwater, Vice Grand: Sister Annie Scott, Recording Secretary: Sister Greta Langille, Financial Secretary: Sister Joanne Ferguson and Treasurer: Brother Peter Richardson. Other officers were: Warden: Sister Chris Patterson, Conductor: Sister Audrey MacLellan, Right Supporter of Noble Grand: Sister Mattie Dwyer, Chaplain: Sister Agnes Murray, Inside Guardian Sister: Janet Baillie, Color Bearer: Brother Dan Ferguson, Right Supporter of Vice Grand: Sister Sylvia Stewart. We were pleased that the installation team was led by the District Deputy President Sister Joanne Ferguson of our lodge.

The Rebekahs are currently selling tickets on an accent table made and donated by Gerald Murray. Tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5. Ticket sales

are at Sobeys, Foodland and Overstreet Cafe or from any Rebekah. Draw date is December 2nd.

On October 2nd we were privileged to have visiting Grand Lodge Officers. Present were Grand Master Brother Dave Estey, Deputy Grand Master Dan Ferguson, Grand Warden Brother Jeff Dewti, Grand Chaplain Brother Jacob Leegwater, District Deputies Brother George Dewtie (District #40), Brother Dave Thorton (District #14) and Junior Past Grand Master Brother Peter Richardson.

We were able to support two students with a grant of \$100, courtesy of a donation from Stuart Cresswell to honor his great uncle who served in the First World War and was an Odd Fellow in England. Recipients were Demetria O'Brien and Victoria Langille.

The Odd Fellows Home 100th Anniversary was a big success with many of our members attending on July 5th at the home.

We were able to provide Sobey's gift certificates to a member of our community who was in need.

This year is our fifth annual coat drive. Gently-used winter clothes can be dropped off at the hall on Fridays and Saturdays from 12 to 5 p.m. with the cut-off date to be December 2nd.

We are still collecting bottles and scrap metal. You can call Willis Langille at 902-897-3883. You can always check out our Facebook Page at HELPING HAND LODGE #34. Hope you all have a happy and healthy fall and holiday season.



These members of the Rebekah Frazee Lodge and the IOOF Lodge cooked up a delicious breakfast during River John Festival Days.

Pictured here are: Front row: Greta Langille, Margaret Langille, Agnes Murray, Peter Richardson, Bob Dwyer, Jacob Leegwater

Back row: Jamie Craig, Earl Johnson, Brian Emoff, Steven Craib, Patrick Heighton, Daniel Ferguson, Rod Hayman, Chris Patterson and Joanne Ferguson

Open Farm Day 2023

By Gillian Crawford

Lismore Sheep Farm participated in Open Farm Day again this year. It is an event held, annually, (usually on the third Sunday of September) across the three Atlantic provinces organized by the Federations of Agriculture. It is a chance for farmers to open their gates and welcome visitors to their farms. There are often demonstrations, displays, hands-on activities, sampling and just a chance to get closer to the animals, the plants, the crops, the machinery, and in some cases purchase some fresh food.

This year the event was held on September 24th (moved forward thanks to tropical storm Lee!) and Lismore Sheep Farm welcomed visitors between 10 and 3. The barn was open so everyone could meet some lambs, see displays about wool and how it is processed, and learn about the equipment needed to care for sheep. There were demonstrations of felting and knitting. Visitors were able to try felting, with some help from Tina Maclean and Eva Jollymore. The younger folk were able to make their own woolly sheep to take home.

A couple of the River John Square Knitters, Netta Heukshorst and June Kirjavainen, set up a display to share their knitting skills with some beginners, as well as raise a little money with their knitted goods for their non-profit group.

In the barn there was a display with a close-up look at some of the crops that are now grown on the farm including oats, barley and soy beans. Many people have asked what crops they have seen growing in the fields around River John, so now they know.

We had visitors from near and far, young and old, and everyone seemed to enjoy their visit to the farm. Many toured the wool shop to see the variety of products made from wool. Some sampled the lamb sausages and others purchased some to cook at home.

We were lucky the weather co-operated so it

was a beautiful day to be touring our local farms.

Seafoam Lavender farm also opened their gates to visitors and we know many people took advantage of the day and visited both farms.

It is a great chance to Meet Your Farmer, learn a little about where your food comes from and how it is produced, and the day even provides you with a chance to shop local.

Watch for "Open Farm Day" next year and you can join in the experience too.



Read by the Sea 2023



Whit Fraser and Joan Baxter

By Jackie McKeen

Volunteers, partners, committee make literary festival a success.

The 2023 Read by the Sea event was a resounding success.

Co-operative weather, an appreciative audience, dedicated committee members and a fabulous panel of authors all combined to make the 2023 event one of the best yet.

Long-time committee member Monica Graham said, “It was the most relaxing Read by the Sea that I experienced in years, thanks to the number of volunteers and their attention to the details of their various tasks. Y’all come back, now. We are already planning for 2024!”

Read by the Sea was held July 6, 7 and 8 and featured eight amazing authors who, this year, all hailed from Atlantic Canada.

The festival began in the Legion Memorial Gardens with WordPlay, aimed at the younger generation. It was presented by children’s authors Lana Button, who read from “The Cow Said

BOO!” and Olga Manzoni who delighted the audience by reading from her book “Mondays with Nonna.” Michelle Robinson was emcee.

OnWords, dedicated to books and authors for pre-teens to young adults, featured authors Lynette Richards reading from “Call Me Bill” and Andre Fenton reading from “The Summer Between Us,” “Annaka,” and “Worthy of Love.” Internet sensation Wild Willie was emcee for this event.

A family storytelling campfire held on the patio at Caldera Distilleries wrapped up the first day of the festival.

WriteWords, a workshop all about writing for children and held at the Anglican Church Hall, got the festival off to a start on July 7. Children’s author Michelle Robinson, a UK writer currently living in Tatamagouche, led this informative and relaxed workshop. It was followed by an open mic in the same location where members of the Pictou County Writers’ Group shared samples of their works.

Heritage Story Walk was held at the same time at the River John Heritage Society Museum, hosted by the Heritage Society members.

About a dozen prospective authors had an opportunity to promote their unpublished manuscripts on the last day of the event during Pitch the Publisher at the Legion. Sponsored by Read by the Sea and the Atlantic Publishers Marketing Association, this “Dragon’s Den” style of event drew a large crowd. John Ashton moderated this crowd-pleaser again this year.

A blazing sun helped draw a record crowd to Main Stage, held in the Legion Gardens on Saturday, which was emceed by Rebecca Silver Slater. Morning sessions featured indie novelist Bruce Bishop reading from Undeniable Relations, and poet, activist and TedX speaker Angela Bowden reading from UnSpoken Truth: unmuted and unfiltered.

Authors Whit Fraser, a superb storyteller and former broadcaster, and Nancy Regan, former TV host and professional speaker, drew the festival to

a close in the afternoon. Fraser read from his novel “The Cold Edge of Heaven” and Regan from “From Showing Off to Showing Up.”

Joan Baxter and Lana MacEachern interviewed the authors following their readings before the presenting authors engaged in an all-author panel. The audience enjoyed getting their books signed by the writers and spent time chatting with them following the Main Stage presentation.

Carol Campbell-Smith and Jim White provided musical entertainment between the morning and afternoon author readings.

A large part of the event’s success was, without a doubt, due in part to the amazing volunteers and community partners. For example, the Bigney family took care of putting the tents up and taking them down; lodgings from local establishments – along with Balmoral Motel in Tatamagouche – helped the featured authors feel welcomed and relaxed; Dale Skinner and Steven Craib looked after the streetside banners; Sobeys and Meh’s went above and beyond to feed the authors; Carol Smith and Jim White provided music; Chef Andy’s food truck was a tasty hit, and without venue accommodations from the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 108, River John Fire Department, Caldera Distilleries patio and the Anglican Church Hall, the literary presentation would not have been possible.

The committee is currently seeking volunteers to help put together the 2024 Ready by the Sea. Email contact@readbythesea.ca to express an interest in helping to bring Canada’s finest authors and poets to the fabulous North Shore.



Authors: Nancy Regan, Angela Bowden, Whit Fraser, Bruce Bishop and interviewer and journalist, Joan Baxter



Angela Bowden, poet

St. John’s Anglican Church

By Mary Tothill

Some time ago, Jocelyn Heighton and Mary Tothill at St. John’s Anglican Church came up with an idea for Thanksgiving Sunday after hearing a wonderful message Denise White gave on a particular Sunday about charity.

We decided everyone would bring in non-perishable food items to decorate the church instead of leaves, for the next few Sundays; it was remarkable the outpouring of giving of things that came in. All these items were to be donated to the River John Community Food Bank.

Prior to Thanksgiving Sunday, Denise, Carol

and Norma decorated the church with all the food items; it was very attractive. Following the Thanksgiving service conducted by Reverend John Morrell, with Carol and Jim providing special music, Christyann Langille collected the donations. Thanks to everyone for their kind gesture; it is always nice to help others.

On Sunday, October 15th, Jim White organized a gospel evening at the church. It was an enjoyable evening of gospel & contemporary singing and music, with a great attendance. A freewill offering was received and went to the church roof fund. Thanks to all who came and also those who volunteered their talent.



Two Sisters Journey to Better Hearing

By Lesley Pretty & Sally Jackson

Hearing loss has always been a big part of my family’s life. My father dealt with hearing loss from a young age which made his life difficult in numerous ways. He struggled with society’s non-acceptance of a person with an invisible disability. This made it difficult for him to hold down jobs he was passionate about. Just hearing on the phone, hearing the television, hearing a familiar voice only a couple of feet away was next to impossible for him. As his hearing loss progressed, the more he felt isolated from everyone. I’m sure many of you can relate to these situations.

My sister Sally and I followed in our father’s footsteps. Our hearing loss entered the severe to profound range. We were experiencing everything our father had, like not socializing as much as we would have liked and everyday just became a struggle to hear in most situations.

I started wearing hearing aids over 34 years ago and my sister Sally has worn hearing aids for over 45 years. Our hearing aids just weren’t helping us like they used to. Our hearing just continued to decline. It was time to do something about it.

Sally’s audiologist suggested she be assessed for a cochlear implant. I followed suit and got assessed as well. After our assessments, we were both deemed candidates to receive a cochlear implant and coincidentally we learned this news on the same day, Sally in Calgary and me in Nova Scotia.

In September 2022, Sally had surgery and her left ear was implanted. Her surgery was a complete success. This gave me the courage to go through with the surgery for myself. My friend Sim Clark also had this surgery a few years ago and after seeing his success, this had given me even more courage to go through with the surgery. My surgery was in February 2023 and I also had success.

During this surgery, a magnet, computer chip and an array of electrodes are implanted under our scalp, above our ear. The electrodes are inserted into our cochlea. The processor that sits on our

ear, similar to a hearing aid, takes in the sounds and sends them to the computer chip and then to the electrodes in our cochlea and onto the auditory nerve and then to our brain. It is an amazing feat of science.

After the surgery there is a waiting/healing period and then the day finally comes that our implants were activated. It was an exciting but scary day. We didn’t know what to expect for sure because everyone has a different experience on activation day. Most of us have experienced robotic sounding voices on the first day or so but voices become normal sounding in the days to follow.

We can all talk on the phone now. We hear the birds chirping. Who knew that squirrels make a noise! We can hear a pin drop in a quiet room. How cool is that? I could go on and on about all the things we can hear now. We are still listening and learning new sounds our brain hasn’t heard for decades, sounds most people take for granted.

If you ask Sim, Sally or me, we will all tell you the same thing. Getting a cochlear implant is the best thing we have ever done for ourselves and it has changed our lives. It has helped our confidence and we are certainly more independent and social. It is amazing to say the least. I should add that my husband and daughters have noticed how I have changed. I tend to engage in conversation now more than I used to. I will strike up a conversation with a check-out clerk at the grocery store for example, something I would never have done before the implant. I don’t have to nod, pretend and smile like I heard what was said in a conversation because now, I can usually hear the WHOLE conversation. I find myself speaking more softly and quietly now, because I can hear my voice so well. I must have been screaming before the implant! The cost of a cochlear implant (surgery and equipment) is covered by Nova Scotia Health for eligible candidates. Later on, a person is responsible for the cost of new batteries or repairs, once the warranty runs out. Being assessed for an implant doesn’t commit you to going through with the surgery. Speak to your family doctor or audiologist if you think this might be for you.

For more information about cochlear implants, visit this website:www.cochlear.com/

River John Motor Company Set to Open Soon

By Cody Joudrie

Exciting news! River John Motor Company is opening up shop at a new location in the near future. We offer repair services for a wide range of equipment, including compact diesel tractor maintenance, small engines, lawnmowers, chain-saws, snowmobiles, marine, trailers, and many other recreational needs. We'll also have a retail front where you can purchase batteries and other mechanically-related gear or parts. Our long-term goal is to establish a rental service for marine, trailers, and other equipment.

For those of you who don't know, River John Motor Co. bought Ross’ Recreational & Small Engine. We want to give a big shout-out to Murray Ross and his family for all their wonderful years of service to Tatamagouche and the surrounding areas. Thanks to them, the transition of the business has been incredibly smooth. Next month, you will be able to find us at our brand-new location at 2755 River John Station Road in River John. In the meantime, we are currently working out of Ross’ Recreational & Small Engine in Tatamagouche.

We're excited to see familiar faces and meet new ones!

I also want to add that Murray’s right-hand man, Brad Hayman, mechanic, who has been a great asset through this whole process will be continuing his career with River John Motor Co.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions.



River John and District Lions Club News 2023

By Lion Cheryl Frizzell

The River John & District Lions Club members have had a busy summer. The early part of the summer was spent preparing and painting the Lions deck and picnic tables for the Lions annual chicken barbecue, Festival Days, band performances and other summer community events. The chicken barbecue was a great success as was our pancake and sausage breakfast. The Lions Club joined up with the River John Community Action Society and River John Recreation Association to sell hot dogs during the lobster crate race in Bissell Park.

The club would like to thank the Municipality of Pictou County for the donation of a toy box which has been placed in the Lions Children’s Park for all to use. The Province of Nova Scotia has recently approved a grant to fix the fence and repair the gate at the park, with the aim of this work to be completed this Fall.

Our bottle recycling has been very successful once again this year. Thanks to the many people who have dropped off bottles. This helps the Lions Club continue to better serve our community as well as helping the environment.

The club welcomed trick-or-treaters on Halloween. Along with other Lions Clubs in our area, we

will once again be hosting a Strawberry Sundae Social at the Sutherland Harris Memorial Hospital, Pictou, in November. On December 2nd, the club will be happy to join up with the River John Community Action Society and the River John Recreation Association to light up Bissell Park for Christmas. Also, December will again see the club members hosting their annual Christmas Dinner (December 25), delivered free of charge to seniors and anyone in need living in the area. Note: We do try to keep it to 2 meals per household. You can get your name on the dinner list by calling Anne Patriquin 902-351-2898, Cheryl Frizzell 902-242-

2695 or Paul Richardson 902-4791948.

The [Lions](#) Club is starting to rebuild internally since the onset of the COVID pandemic, so the community will start to see more members out and around. Anyone interested in joining the club or just volunteering to help at events, please contact Membership Chair Bruce Frizzell 902-324-1332.

The Lions Club would like to thank all those who have donated or helped us in anyway.



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Cape John Community Pasture

By Beulah Jane Wright

What herd of beef cattle would not be happy to be trucked to Cape John in early spring, to experience lush, green grass, clean, clear water, ocean breezes off the Northumberland Strait, and lots of company, both bovine and human? A summer resort indeed!

In the early 1950s, the Department of Agriculture was eager to do something for young farmers with beef cattle, who did not have enough acreage for summer grazing. Land was purchased and developed to provide community pastures in Nova Scotia. Eventually there were seven of these pastures. The one on Cape John consisted of 352 acres, plus a recent purchase of 125 acres in 2022, making it the second largest one in the province. This venture was welcomed by beef farmers, freeing up their own land to grow other crops, providing rich grazing, and also providing excellent care. Cape John became one of the busiest pastures; this summer about one thousand head of top-quality cattle plus over ninety little calves came to Cape John. In the fall, the cattle are rounded up and trucked back to their farms, some quite a distance away, marking the end of summer for both local residents and cattle.

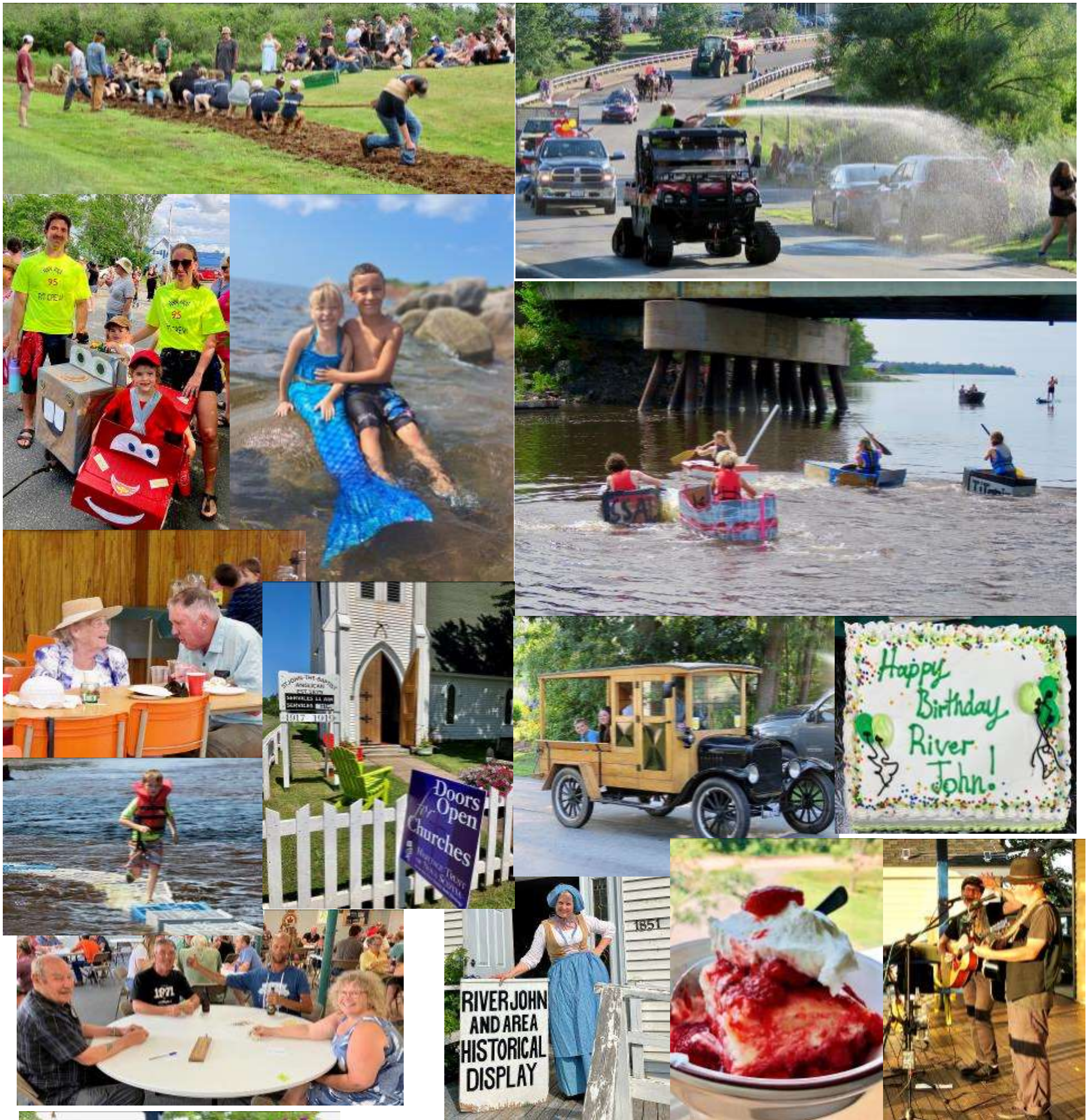


Lovely setting for cattle and visitors!



Mothers and their calves

River John Festival Days 2023



From a tug o'war to strawberry tea, breakfasts, lobster crate run, cardboard boat competition, theWarden's tea, cribbage tournament, children's parade, historical walk, scavenger hunt, as well as theFestivalparade and fireworks, a good time was had by all.

River John was certainly the place to be from July 21st-29th for the River John Festival Days!

The Festival Committee would like to extend sincere thanks to so many people, starting with those who attended and participated in events; without you all, we would not have a reason to plan such an amazing week.

Thank you to the organizations, businesses and individuals who plan and facilitate their own events and help to make this festival what it is. We would also struggle to provide many of the things that we offer, if it wasn't for the incredible generosity of our sponsors, thank you over and over again.

Personally, I would like to thank our committee members; for me, as a coordinator, this has been the smoothest a festival has run since I've been involved, and that is a testament to all of you for your support and engagement, so, thank you.

In the next month we will be starting to plan River John Festival Days 2024, so if anyone is wondering how they can help, support or volunteer with the River John Festival Days, please check out our website at www.rjfestivaldays.ca or email us at rjfestivaldays@gmail.com

We are looking forward to 2024 and celebrating the love for our village with you all!

Chelsey MacLean
River John Festival Days Coordinator

These folks were visiting together after enjoying the delicious breakfast prepared by members of the local Odd Fellows and Rebekahs during River John Festival Days.

In back are members of the Rebekahs Lodge: Greta Langille and Margaret Langille

In front L-R: Mabel Zinck, Marie Langille, Merv Catto and his wife Reverend Jeanette Fleischer.

Mabel had just celebrated her 102nd birthday, a couple of days before this photo was taken. She is also a 75-years member of the Rebekah Frazee Lodge.

Congratulations from all of us Mabel!