

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.”

Community Support Society Grand Opening

By Hannah Mertin & CristyAnn Langille

In December, the new River John Food and Health Centre opened its doors officially. The day was a huge success! The road has been long and there has been a lot of work being done behind the scenes, with many volunteers working tirelessly, under the direction of the co-ordinator of the centre, CristyAnn Langille.

The Food Centre will help those experiencing food insecurities in the River John and surrounding areas. With the help of volunteers, the centre is open every Friday from 1 - 4 p.m. with the option for pickup at the centre, or having your food delivered within the District 4 region.

While we are open every Friday for pickup, we welcome food donations within these hours as well. If these hours do not work for you to either pick up food or to drop off a donation, you are more than welcome to call 902-324-8897 to arrange for pickup or drop off outside of the normal hours.

We are extremely proud to state that the food centre is currently operated 100 percent by volunteers, with many people offering their time to help such a good cause within our wonderful village.

The food centre is not the only use for this beautiful new building, as we have a few different health care options that we are proud to be able to offer to the community for a fee.

Connie Smith is doing foot care at our centre, and Chelsey Scott is offering massage therapy. VON Meals on Wheels service is also operating out of our centre once a week.

We are currently seeking more health and wellness services to be able to offer at the centre, so if this interests you, please do not hesitate to reach out.

We also offer rental of our board room, as well as the health room, for a small fee. With the warmer months around the corner, we are excited to get our community garden up and running and to see what fresh produce we will be able to offer.

As always, if you are interested in volunteering or helping out in any aspect at the centre, please contact hannahmertin10@gmail.com or call 902-301-5810.

It takes a village for an undertaking like this to be successful, and we are very grateful for all of the support we have been given from this wonder-



Hannah Mertin beside the plaque commemorating her mother, Dolly.



Cutting the ribbon for the grand opening.



Congratulations

Congratulations to Julia Reid-Howell, recipient of the Female Runner of the Year, for the province of New Brunswick. It is an honour for Julia to be nominated and chosen as a finalist. She received the award on November 19, at the 2023 RunNB Annual General Meeting and Awards luncheon, co-hosted by the Miramichi River Runners and RunNB, in Miramichi. Dr. Paula Keating and Bradley Wood, of the Miramichi River Runners, were the guest speakers for the event. RunNB is the provincial organization that promotes running in New Brunswick.

Julia is the daughter of Linda Thompson-Reid and Terry Reid.

Full software access

Make an ancestral chart, get access to census, immigration records, search local sources and so much more only at your local library.



Congratulations

Congratulations to Demetria Keera Jean O'Brien of West Branch on her recent graduation from the University of Prince Edward Island.

She is the daughter of Rose Bezanson, also of West Branch. Demetria attended River John Consolidated School and graduated from Tatamagouche Regional Academy, in 2019.

Demetria completed a Bachelor of Arts, with a Major in Sociology. She was on the Dean's Honour List for the 2022 academic year.

Demetria is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Education degree program, at the University of Prince Edward Island. Demetria's family and friends wish her continued success in her chosen profession.

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Nova Scotia Down-Home Cooking

(Thin) Oatcakes

by Janice Murray Gill

Comments () by Christiane Gill

2 cups medium oatmeal - not rolled oats
 1 cup flour
 1 tsp salt
 2 tsp baking powder
 2 tsp sugar - optional
 6 tbsp bacon fat, or margarine
 1/4 cup cold water

Sift flour, salt, and baking powder together. Add oatmeal and sugar.

Work in the fat (until everything is coated with it) and (then) mix in water (you may need quite a bit more) until the mixture is firm.

Roll out on a surface dusted in oatmeal to a thickness of 1/4 inch (I like mine thicker).

Cut into triangles (squares or circles work just as well and if you want to involve the kids, take some fun, not-too-dainty cookie cutters, and go to town)

Bake on a lightly greased cookie sheet in a 350 F oven for 12-15 minutes.

Serve with butter and cheese (or whatever topping your heart desires.

Deagh rùn
 (Enjoy)

by Janice Murray Gill

In our kitchen were three large bins, each holding fifty pounds, and these were filled with flour, sugar, and oatmeal. The oatmeal was used to make oatcakes, which might be either thick and sweetened, or thin, crisp, and dry. They were buttered and eaten instead of bread. I never knew of anyone using oatmeal to make real Scottish haggis boiled in a sheep's stomach, but pot haggis was a simpler variation, boiled in a pudding basin. It's rich, savory goodness was wonderfully filling. It is the best way I know to get children to eat liver and love it. Mother would serve it on January 25th to mark Burn's birthday but I felt the bard would have found little cheer at our board as no dram accompanied it.



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River John Needs a Sidewalk

By Mike Topley, RJCAS Project Lead

Well, it's not a question of need, it's a question of when. We are a village divided by a highway with traffic that frequently pays little attention to much else except getting from one end to the other as quickly as possible.

Traffic is essentially uncontrolled, with drivers operating large commercial fuel, salt, gravel, lumber and construction vehicles, often paying little attention to the posted speed limits.

Our bridge has walkways on both sides of it that go nowhere except to ragged shoulders unfit for safe walking. Pedestrians, cyclists, joggers, seniors with walkers, mothers with strollers, disabled persons on motorized wheelchairs all take their life in their hands attempting to reach a church, the museum, the Lions playground, the seniors' residence, or simply go for a walk. In summer, folks land their kayaks, pontoon boats, paddle boards and canoes at Roger's Landing, look up & down the road and wonder how to get a coffee or ice cream cone.

It's time for a sidewalk.

Planning for the current proposed alignment (from the bridge to Meh's store) began in 2021 with an invitation to the Municipality of Pictou County Engineer and our Councillor Mary Elliott to visit for an inspection and needs assessment. Best alignment (on the churches side) was determined, and preliminary costs were estimated. A submission was made to Nova Scotia Department of Public Works and approval in principle was received in December, 2021. Then it went to MOPC Council... and there it remains.

In November, 2023, representatives from MOPC were invited to update the River John Community Action Society on a number of matters, including the proposed sidewalk. It was then we learned that the sidewalk hasn't even reached the list of possible projects, and in order to get on the list we should raise a petition to verify community interest.

So, we started a petition in January 2024, and within only a few weeks we obtained over 240 signatures. The petition papers will remain at Meh's, the library and the pharmacy until the snowbirds and cottagers arrive, when we expect many more to endorse the need.

In the meantime, we have submitted the petition signatures to MOPC, along with a formal request to have our sidewalk project properly acknowledged and placed on the County's priority list.

When chatting with your Councillor, Warden, MLA or MP, please remind them of the need for a sidewalk in River John.



Photo Caption: Aerial photo showing proposed sidewalk location.

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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

Attention Woodlot Owners

Was your woodlot significantly impacted by Hurricane Fiona?

If your woodlot is larger than 4 hectares (10 acres), you may be eligible for cleanup assistance. Even if you have already cleaned up, you may still be eligible. Assistance is also available for follow-up tree planting and silviculture work. Contact our office if you are interested in learning more, or visit www.asforestry.com

Paul Gilbert 902-899-5066 or Ed MacLean 902-890-1939



Editorial — Winter 2024

By Joan MacLeod

We are pleased to bring you another issue of our free, local, independent River John newspaper, the Pioneer. As always, a whole team is responsible for putting it together. There are again changes to our team; our photographer, Christiane Gill, has moved to Montreal. Not wanting to lose connection with us, she has taken on Pre-editing, from Montreal. This new email address for submissions is: rjpioneer.story@gmail.com. All content/stories should be sent there first.

Another person we are welcoming to our team is Kelly Shaw. Kelly is taking over the Layout position, which is akin to doing a giant jigsaw puzzle, fitting all the photos and stories into a pleasing format. Kelly is the daughter of Debby Shaw who also writes for the Pioneer. Also, for the third time, I am doing the editing from Mexico via email and zoom calls.

One of the themes in this issue is celebration. There are many things in life which are worthy of celebrating. Perhaps it is hard for us to let go and truly celebrate our accomplishments. And I do not mean by excessive drinking or drug use. I mean instead, the acknowledgement of our achievement, and even patting ourselves on the back.

In this paper, there is the acknowledgement of successful achievements in university, of a successful runner who achieves her goals because of hard work and training. We are also celebrating successful businesses and new businesses opening. Just getting through the recent bout of winter weather, that we indeed survived, calls for celebration. A group of people near Pugwash are delighted that they succeeded in halting the spraying of dangerous chemicals in their area. And recently there was a benefit dance to assist a woman in her struggle with cancer and celebrate her recovery. Now when people die, we call their memorial a "Celebration of Life" and some people even have a dance or a party to truly celebrate a life well lived.

There is a power in positive reinforcement, it works so much better than punishment or negative reinforcement. I have recently learned that by setting intention, and even as simple a gesture as smiling, creates neo-pathways in your brain. This reinforces the intention or the feeling. Our Pioneer team is no exception. Once each issue is hot off the press, we like to have a party to celebrate the achievement of our group of volunteers. We take pride in our work and feel relieved that the seemingly endless hours each issue takes is over. We feel it is important for team building. We do go on to critique each page and then start planning for the next one.

And yes, maybe we do drink the odd glass of wine. Cheers!

Corrections

We need to correct our mistake. An article submitted by the Odd Fellows, which appeared in the last issue of the Pioneer should have read:

"We were able to support two students with a grant of \$1000 each, courtesy of a donation from Stuart Cresswell's company, Simple Films, to honour his great-grandfather, who served in the First World War and was an Odd Fellow in England. Recipients were Demetria O'Brien and Victoria Langille."

Editor's Note: We do make mistakes for which we apologize. To ensure limited opportunity for error kindly follow the guidelines for submission.

Thank-you

The Pioneer is 10 Years Old in 2024

By Joan MacLeod

Another cause for celebration is that this paper is 10 years old this year. Started in 2014, this Paper was the brainchild of Rob Assels and Lesley Longhorn, who moved here many years ago from Ontario to the Lindblad/Romanowski property in Marshville.

One of the reasons it was created was because they had noticed that The Light newspaper, based in Tatamagouche, did not really cover River John stories. It is ironic that The Light no longer exists, or only in digital format and we are going strong. But you may have noticed that we are covering several stories in this latest publication reflecting a wider geographical area.

In an earlier issue our writer, Beulah Wright, wrote the history of our little publication which took the name of an earlier paper printed in River John. That Pioneer community newspaper began publishing in 1877, with an issue every Thursday, at a subscription rate of 50 cents for the year.

One of the ways we are choosing to celebrate our 10th anniversary is to hold a writing contest for children in three age groups, with prize money donated by our mother organization, the River John Community Action Society. (See advertisement on this page.)

Our other idea is to republish articles from previous Pioneers, possibly one from each issue since our inception. This will be in the next two issues of the Pioneer this year. Summer 2024 and Fall 2024. We welcome other ideas of ways to mark our 10 years of publishing. A float in the Festival Day parade, anyone?

Writing contest in celebration of our 10 years of publication

Community Chronicles: Celebrate and Transform

Calling all young aspiring writers! Participate in our "Community Chronicles" writing contest and share your unique perspective on your community. Craft a compelling essay about what you love about your community and your vision for positive change. Let your words be the catalyst for a brighter and stronger community.

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Elementary School (Grades 4, 5 and 6)

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Submission Guidelines:

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Submission Deadline: April 30, 2024. Submissions

should be emailed to rjpioneer.story@gmail.com

Include your name, grade, and school in the email.

Judging Criteria:

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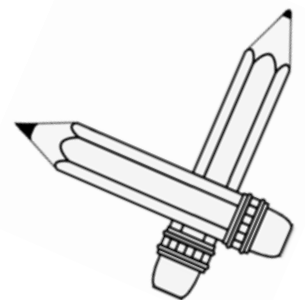
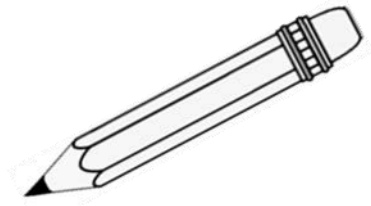
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River John Community Action Society

P.O. Box 161, River John, NS, B0K 1N0

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. Submit content to: rjpioneer.story@gmail.com

Submit articles and photos all together at the same time. Articles should be in Word format (docx, doc, odt) and photos in .jpg format. Do not embed photos into the text document.

Captions for photos should be added below the article. Check for accuracy. We cannot make changes once the article is sent to layout.

Type the complete article, including the title, using a plain, basic, black font - no bold, large fonts, superscript, indents, italics etc. Our layout department will make sure your article looks good.

The writer's name should go just below the title, not at the end.

Double check for accuracy.

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Letter to the Editor

By Jack Reid

I am writing this article in response to Joan MacLeod's article in the previous issue of the Pioneer. It was on the 1 Million March 4 Children that took place in Halifax recently. I along with my sister decided to travel to Halifax to participate in the event in question. Both my sister and I have become increasingly concerned with the erosion of parental rights within the provincial education system. My children have aged out of that system, but my concern remains for my grandchildren, and children at large. Being an eyewitness to this march, I feel obligated to tell the truth as to what actually transpired on that day.

First and foremost, there were no obvious right-wing organizations there that I could discern. No official placards, signs or political entities. What I saw was about 1000 concerned parents and children. A sort of grassroots collection of Nova Scotians. The marchers consisted of approximately half Muslim and half Christian participants, based on my conversations with those around me.

The plan was to march from Grand Parade to the education building to protest to the Minister of Education about the new curriculum being taught in our schools. At this point, I must say, I have no hate in my heart for the LGBTQ2+ community. I steadfastly believe it is an individual's choice to live their life as they see fit. My concern was not with that particular community. My main concern was with the introduction of a sexual identity/orientation curriculum to children at such a young age. I was also concerned with the systematic exclusion of parents in the education of their kids. I'm still learning about how this system may or may not be implemented, but I didn't like its possible implications, so I went to Halifax to learn more.

My sister and I parked by the waterfront and walked towards Parade Square. The streets were lined with counter-protestors, all wearing dark masks and screaming "Leave our children alone" and "No place for hate." Halifax police were on

site using bikes as barricades to protect us from the more aggressive of the counter-protestors. I must admit, I'm new to the protest scene and what I saw was very eye-opening. It seemed the mask-wearing was by design, in order to hide the counter-protestors' identities in case things got out of hand. They were very organized. Bused in, had refreshments readily available, and it was suggested by people on both sides of the barricade that the majority of the counter-protestors were sponsored by unions, universities and provincial governments.

I don't scare easy, but I have to admit I was nervous. I saw a TV cameraman and reporter there. I asked who he was with. "CBC" he replied. I commented that I knew how this would be portrayed on the evening news. "Most likely, the protesters are bad guys, counter-protestors - good guys, right?" He simply said with a shrug, "That's my job...that's what I get paid for. Honestly, I'd much rather be covering a sports event or something milder."

The speakers could not give their speeches as they were drowned out by the counter-protestors. We then marched to the education building. We were followed by the counter crowd screaming and hollering their chants the whole way. The police protected us the whole time. I have to commend them as their actions probably saved us from injuries and prevented hot-blooded confrontations. They were proactive and effective law enforcement officers.

The hate coming from the counter-protestors was palpable. You could hear it in their voices and see it in their eyes. A gay person marched with us. My sister inquired why they were marching with us and not against us? "Because the counter-protestors have gone way too far." was their response.

No one hollered back in anger from our side, as far as I was able to observe. That isn't to say there weren't any heated confrontations, just none from our side from my vantage point. The anger and the hate seemed to come from the other side. And part of that I think I understood. They saw us as anti-

LGBTQ. As anti-gay. Or so it seemed. So of course they'd be angry. But we were not. I can't speak for the organizers of the 1 Million March 4 Children at large, but in Halifax, on that day, there was concern for our kids, not hate for the other side.

I was able to meet an organizer of the Halifax 1 Million March 4 Children. He told me he felt compelled to do something. His little brother in grade 9 came home from school upset one day. I told him to man up. Men don't cry. He said that's the problem, his teacher informed him he wouldn't know if he was male or female until he was 18. That might be anecdotal, but if it's true I find it hard to wrap my head around.

Sometime later at a church function we had a guest speaker, Tom Taggett, the Conservative MLA for Bass River. I asked him where the school board got its direction for designing the curriculum. He replied: "From the Premier". The same man we voted in to fix health care. Needless to say, I'm still a bit cynical about it all.

I pray if you care about what's happening in your school systems, you'll write your MLA, you'll communicate with your local politicians and policy makers and let your concerns be heard.

Written by a concerned grandfather of 5, who loves them all unconditionally.



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A Drop in the Bucket

by Michael Jensen
michaeljonjensen@gmail.com

The news is awful: Antarctica and Greenland are beginning to self-destruct, and the Northwest Passage is now open most of the summer. The interconnected web of life is in tatters, with toxins in all living flesh and blood and bone, microplastics in every rivulet of every stream, corals bleaching and dying worldwide, the forests burning worldwide. And the weather!

What's a person to do? Shorter showers will not fix it. Buying local, trying to eat in-season food, reusing/repurposing whatever we can, recycling to decrease our impact on the world... It's all just a drop in the bucket, and won't fix the problem. No single individual can save the world by their personal actions.

Recently, I flew over Boston, and then Munich, and then Berlin and Washington DC. I looked down on these vast cities, and was reminded of just how much raw energy is embedded in our current habits. Countless cars, to-ing and fro-ing, millions of rooms with lights ablaze, street-lights and infrastructure all churning out a future guaranteed to make us weep. And there I was, flying - a climate crime in itself. I knew these travels were making the climate problem a tiny bit worse; probably we shouldn't be traveling like that at all.

I've been worried about the environment for more than fifty years, and have paid close attention to the science, and to the politics around the science, for nearly as long. Across a long career I led environmental committees, and steered what I could in the right direction. I celebrate Earth Day every year. Later, my wife and I spent a decade

building a sustainable farm near West Branch, and discovered exactly how hard farming is. Today, we live pretty frugally day-to-day, minimizing energy and plastic use. We try to do our part. But the news continues to be, well, just awful.

Until the early 2000s, I had a sci-fi-like expectation that some wonderful technology would come along -- carbon capture, mirrors in space, cold fusion, who knew? -- to fix what humans were so casually degrading.

But alas, this has not happened, and is very unlikely to happen. The system itself -- of international commerce entwined with debt obligations for oil and resource extraction revenues based on loans and bribes supporting tyrants, dictators, billionaires and transnational corporations -- this is what must change. And it is the least likely to change, because it is accepted as background to our daily lives.

This economic system is currently structured to use up Mother Earth pretty darn quick. So, what are we to do?

I've concluded this much, so far in this life: We each must do whatever we can, to add drops to the buckets that we're throwing on the roaring fire of environmental ruin. For many, "do whatever we can" is about making small choices -- using less plastic, installing a heat pump, replacing propane with an induction stovetop, driving less, buying local, getting less disposable crap. It may be holding back on glyphosate use, choosing selective forestry, or preserving the fruits of our gardens. Each of these is a drop in the bucket.

For me, "do what I can" is committing to spending my retirement (while I still have my wits about me) pushing Commons Communities, ex-

panding the "Commons Communities" project (see CommonsCommunities.com) that my Rural Carpool project evolved into, to help small-town rural folks save money and CO2, by self-organizing and self-coordinating. If I can get the project to take off, it might make a drop-in-the-bucket difference -- maybe even help a lot of others save a few drops.

Each of us can't help but *sometimes* do something counterproductive. We can't live like medieval monks, taking cold showers and eating only gruel. Then, after the splurge, we can redouble our own efforts to add drops to the bucket. We can't stop the awful, but we can slow it down. Like "the miracle of compound interest," our drops today can mean the worst parts of the next century could be less bad, and shorter. Our grandchildren may still curse us, but I hope to be able to say "it could have been worse." Enough drops, and we have a bucketful to hurl on the fire burning up their future, and our own. Sadly, I fear it's too late to stop the slow-motion catastrophe we've created. But we can make the future much less miserable, if we each do what we can to add our own drops to the bucket.

***Been washing my
trampoline.***

***Seemed time to do some
spring cleaning.***

A Visit with Murdoch Sutherland, West Branch, Pictou County

by Ian MacCara

Murdoch's home place is located close to the Colchester County line on NS Route 256, near McBain's Corner, just west of Murrayfield and east of Earltown.

Just before the corner on the left is Squire MacKay Road that leads up the hill towards the Gunn Cemetery. This cemetery is rumoured to be the resting place of Lady Esther Sinclair, with connections to Mey Castle, Caithness, Scotland.

My part of the conversation first relates to Murdoch's father's connections to the early Earltown settlers. His father Harold's line goes back to a 3rd great-grandfather, Alexander "Ballem" Sutherland, and a 3rd great-grandmother, Nancy "Corrigan" Murray. This allows me to suggest that Ballem was a soothing ointment made from the poplar tree. His ancestors brought the recipe from Scotland and continued to produce it in Earltown.

This ointment has been related to the "Oil of Gilead" mentioned in the bible. We surmise that olive oil was infused with some type of poplar resin in the process. It is also true that the nickname Corrigan applies to descendants of an Alexander Murray from Rogart. On leaving Sutherland-shire, this Alexander had a fine corrigan or Scottish tam in his possession. It seems that during the crossing to Nova Scotia that same corrigan was blown into the sea. This incident was not forgotten! Alexander's subsequent complaints earned his line the identifier of Corrigan.

Murdoch's mother was Ellen Mary MacKay. This leads back to John "Ballem" Sutherland. Mur-

doch has two 3rd great-grandfathers from the Ballem line. However, instead of making ointment from the poplar tree, his family has one hundred years' experience in producing maple syrup in the West Branch area of Pictou County. This exceptional product has been served for many years at the annual West Branch pancake breakfast. If we are lucky, Murdoch and his wife Linda will have enough syrup available for sale during the event.

Events at the West Branch Hall, or either of the two churches, often include significant musical contributions. Murdoch's activities include participation in the choir, playing the organ, or playing his fiddle. When you visit his sugar camp, you may be treated to a fiddle tune along with a taste of maple sugar, maple butter, or syrup. The maple products are all made from sap on an evaporator fired by dry maple hardwood. As the locals say, "That's some good!"

Music often runs in families and Murdoch's is no exception. His grandfather was one of the last church precentors in the area. Even in the late 1800s there were no musical instruments allowed in church, and choirs, if they existed, were untrained. The precentor would sing out the line and the congregation would then repeat the same. This "throwing out of the line," as it was termed, required one to be not only musical but bilingual in both Gaelic and English. Murdoch's grandfather, also called Murdoch, was one of the progressive precentors, who saw to the introduction of organs and trained choirs in our churches. For a while, church played a big part in musical education, moving beyond into local community classrooms.

The picture of Murdoch's father, Harold, is circa 1958. A group of noted local fiddlers gathered in West Branch to perform. Along with Harold they included much remembered names as Vattis Harrington, Dan Gammon, and Sandy "Air" Sutherland.



I encourage anyone interested in local genealogy to check out the Facebook page, Northern Nova Scotia Genealogical Fun. Conversations will appear there, along with posts on DNA matches, out-migration, and local settlement. Local family nicknames will be used as genealogical memory hooks.



A picture of Murdoch and Linda at the West Branch annual pancake breakfast.

Second Story Shop & Baked Goods

By Emma St Francis

We are so excited to announce the opening of Second Story Shop & Baked Goods in the River John Old School, Room 212!

We held our "soft opening" on March 3rd and are looking forward to fully opening on March 17th. We invite you to come check out our baked goods offerings, including sourdough bread and other handmade pastries handmade, unscented, and herbal-infused soaps, herbal salves, teas, and bath salts local art from creators in the River John/Tatamagouche/Pugwash area handmade baskets and bags plant-dyed clothing, cards, and fabrics a small used book selection and a small non-perishable section courtesy of our friends with Gloria's Market.

Kids are more than welcome, too. We've set up a kids' corner with art supplies and books to keep them entertained while you explore.

A little bit about us: we started selling our soap and salves under the name Pugwash Soap Company at the Pugwash Farmers' Market in the spring of 2022. We loved the community and friendships so much that we decided to do a booth in Pugwash again for the summer of 2023, even though we had moved from the Amherst Shore to Tatamagouche, and added baked goods made with in-season fruits and vegetables each week.

We continued to perfect our sourdough breads, which Cal has been baking since living in Guelph, Ontario, in the early '00s, and Emma experimented with cake baking techniques and flavours (our favourites are Dark Cherry/Tarragon and Strawberry/Basil).

Over this past winter, we thought a lot about how to continue the momentum built over both summers. Once we heard about an opening at the

River John Old School through our friends at Threads, we decided to try a storefront to showcase our handmade goodies alongside other artisans who sell at markets.

We are very excited to be a part of the growing River John Old School community as a new vendor, and hope that our shop can also serve as a future meeting space for art gatherings, book clubs, or small classes.

In the spring, we will carry locally grown flower bouquets, open our Seed Library, and offer flower and veggie seedlings. Our offerings will shift with the seasons and expand over time. We are excited for the warmer weather when we will be able to build a woodfired clay oven which will allow us to bake much more bread for you.

And speaking of more bread... we will also offer a sourdough bread subscription service starting March 17th, with sign ups opening March 3th. When you sign up for a weekly bread subscription, you receive \$2 off each loaf. We will offer a variety of sourdough breads, including white, whole wheat, and marble deli rye.


Second Story Shop will open fully on March 17th and will be open each following Sunday, from 1-5 p.m.

If you'd like to follow us along our journey, we have a Facebook page (Pugwash Soap Company, soon to be changed to Second Story Shop) and an Instagram (@pugwashsoap). We are also building a website.

If you would like to sign up for the bread subscription service, please reach out to us at secondstorybakery@gmail.com or message us on our social media pages. We look forward to seeing you in River John and Pugwash in the spring.



Emma & Cal



Ph: (902) 305-5414
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Tatamagouche, NS
B0K1V0

May I Marry You?



Linda Atkinson
Administrative
Justice of the Peace

57 Joyce Mackinnon Lane
Seafoam NS B0K1N0
(P) 902-758-5157
lindamaryatkinson@gmail.com

"Helping You Join Your Hands and Hearts"

Heartfelt Thanks to Our Communities for the Trish Manning Benefit Dance.

By the Family of Trish Manning

In the spirit of gratitude, we would like to extend a heartfelt Thank You to the incredible communities that came together to support Trish Manning through her journey of fighting breast cancer. Your unwavering support and generosity have made a significant impact on Trish's journey, and we are truly grateful for your kindness.

Firstly, we want to express our deepest appreciation to every person who attended the benefit dance. Your presence and enthusiasm created an atmosphere of unity and compassion. Together, we showed that when a community comes together, amazing things can happen.

A special shoutout goes to Robert, Ashley, Megan, Kayla, Patrick, Lora and Vicky whose dedication and tireless efforts were instrumental in the success of the event. The joint efforts of their passion for Trish's fight against cancer, and their exceptional organizational skills, all ensured that everything ran smoothly, from the planning stages to the final moments of the benefit dance.

We would also like to recognize the invaluable help from many volunteers who helped during the event; you truly helped bring the benefit to life. The eye-catching decorating and attention to detail added a touch of magic and excitement to the event. We are grateful for the help at the ticket booth, front door, bar, auction tables, music, and clean up.

To our sponsors, donors, and local businesses who generously contributed their resources and support, we extend our deepest gratitude. Your contributions played a vital role in helping us raise funds and make a positive impact on Trish's struggle.

In closing, we want to express our sincere appreciation to the entire community for rallying together and making the benefit a resounding success. Your kindness, generosity, and unwavering support have touched our hearts. A total of just under \$20,000 was presented to Trish and her children. She was overwhelmed with the love and generosity that she has received and forever grateful to all who have supported her through her breast cancer journey. Thank you.

River John Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary Pancake

By Gillian Joudrie

Successful Family Day Pancake Breakfast Hosted by the Ladies Auxiliary in Support of the River John Volunteer Fire Department.

On February 19th, despite the chilly weather, over 110 people came out to support the River John Volunteer Fire Department's Family Day Pancake Breakfast. The plates were quickly emptied, with only a residue of syrup left behind as evidence, showing just how much of a success the breakfast was.

A big shoutout to the Ladies Auxiliary for their hard work in planning and executing the delicious and "fluffy" breakfast. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we were able to raise over \$1460 to support our fire department.

We're grateful to everyone who comes out to show their support for our events. Looking forward to seeing you all at our next one.

**Where do rabbits go after their wedding?
On their bunnymoon.**

Ella May Watt's 100th Birthday

By Shelley Vickers (Daughter)

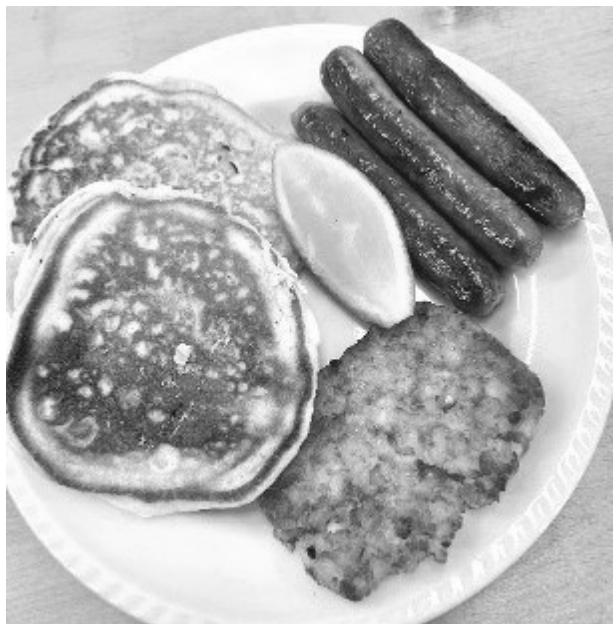
On February 24, 2024, Ella May Watt (née Cameron) celebrated her 100th birthday with her family and friends at her home in Toronto. May's son, Peter, lives near Boston, but was not able to attend the Toronto birthday celebrations.

May was born and grew up in River John along with her siblings, and married Sydney Earle Watt of Pictou. Throughout their life together, along with their children, they lived in various parts of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, while also maintaining a lovely summer home in River John. About a dozen years ago, May moved to Toronto to be near her two daughters, Shelley and Marial.

Throughout her life, she has maintained a close relationship with her place of birth. She remains in constant contact with her sisters, Mabel and Marie who live in River John. May has been a long-time member of Salem United Church (where her son-in-law was a minister), a supporter of the River John Library, and has many friends in the village with whom she still corresponds. She continually extols the virtues of River John and reads all the local news with great interest.



May celebrating her 100th birthday



Enjoying their breakfast: Top L-R: John MacLellan, Willie Weatherbie, Ashley Langille, Forrest Manning Bottom L-R: Dale MacLellan, Georgina Manning



May at age 20

What does an elephant use to pack for spring break?

A trunk.

Ray Thompson Memorial Hockey Tournament 2024

Thank you to everyone who supported the Ray Thompson Memorial Hockey Tournament, at the North Shore Recreation Centre, Tatamagouche, on January 26 and 27. A total of six teams registered, with Luc Lohead's team, Reim's Blazers, winning the championship game on Saturday.

Thank you to Tri County Ford, Tatamagouche Subway, Caldera Distilling Inc. and the Tatamagouche Brewing Company for their generous donations.

The timekeepers deserve credit for keeping track of the game pace - Grace Veno, Rory Thompson, Ria Suidgeest and her assistant, Valrie.

Thomas Patriquin contacted and organized the referees' schedule; your time and efforts are greatly appreciated. The tournament was organized by Amy Fraser and Ryan Thompson, who contacted the teams, created the schedule, gathered fees and ensured all payments were made. Recognition and a special thank you to Arthur Baillie, Richard Halverson and Kenneth Watt, who kept everything in working order.

A total of \$2554.50 was donated to the ice pad replacement fund, from the proceeds of the 50/50 and registration fees.

The Thompson and Reid families appreciate the support of the community, players and fans.



Reim's Blazers: Back Row - left to right - Jaden Mason, Seth Buckler, Kevin Mason, Jake Martin, Brandon Bell, Cody McKay, (unknown).

Front Row - left to right - Lucas MacRae-LeBlanc, Matt Chediac, Craig Matheson, Luc Lohead, Josh Mulholland, Tyler Ferguson, Luc Brown.

Nate and his Wish

by Jay Reid

A Beautiful Thing happened this winter on the North Shore of Nova Scotia. A real thing. An emotional thing. A thing that helped put smiles on faces and hope in hearts. That sounds like hyperbole, but it is rock-solid truth. The dying wish of a local teenager was fulfilled, and in turn, a community was able to celebrate the emergence of a high school hockey team. This monumental feat was 100 percent due to the efforts of the late Nate MacLeod and his singularly focused father, Cecil MacLeod. Against substantial odds and a ticking clock, Cecil was able to ice a high school hockey team for Tatamagouche Regional Academy this year. He did this because his son Nate requested it. What a powerful story these two have created.

Last year, Nate was fighting a battle against leukemia. A losing battle. A battle he fought with an inspirational sense of courage and fearlessness that would amaze anyone lucky enough to meet him or know him. I can't convey with words how graceful and inspirational his outlook was on his situation. A person that young shouldn't be capable of coping that calmly. But he did. He absolutely did. And as he coped, he also wished. He wished aloud that he'd love to see his friends and classmates be able to ice a high school hockey team. Nate loved hockey. He played. He watched. He was a referee, a fan and a participant. A Winnipeg Jets fan at that. Go Jets!

Because of this love for the game, he let his father know what he wanted. A tall order. Some would say an impossible order. In all honesty, the cynic in me didn't think it was a thing that could happen. There was simply too much red tape and administrative restrictions. Too little time to organize it before Nate's friends graduated. But I underestimated the drive and motivation of Cecil MacLeod. He wouldn't let his son's dream die, and the hockey community on the North Shore is better for it.

Here is a copy of the letter that Cecil wrote to Hockey Nova Scotia in regard to his efforts to make this wish a reality:

Dear Hockey Nova Scotia Executives,
My name is Cecil MacLeod, father of the late Nate MacLeod. Nate was 16 years old. He played Minor Hockey in Tatamagouche for six years and refereed from the time he was 12 until the weekend before he ended up in the IWK. On January 1st, I took Nate to the IWK where he was diagnosed with AML. We were told that day, he had a 5 percent chance of survival. Over the next four months Nate fought with everything he had to beat the leukemia. Sadly, on April 25 he passed away peacefully with all his family with him. Nate never complained or questioned why it happened to him. He simply put his head down and went to work trying to beat it.

When the doctors told Nate nothing was working and they couldn't say how long he had, he calmed all of us and said, "It's OK, let's go to a Mooseheads' game."

I'll never forget how much hockey meant to us both and will be forever grateful for the positive impact it had on our relationship. I am writing to you all today for two reasons.

The first is to tell you how grateful we all were for your support during the worst time in our lives. Some of you reached out to us directly, and some of you indirectly through mutual connections.

Please know from the bottom of our hearts that those well-wishes were received, and truly made a difference. The second reason I'm writing to you today is that several members of TAMHA are looking for an exception to rule 2.35(a) so that we may be able to fulfill Nate's dying wish. As you may know, in January, Nate's hockey family organized a hockey game to raise money that was covered by the media. The game was recorded, and Nate and I watched it weekly.

During his four months in hospital, we talked about a lot of things, but Nate's main focus was almost always hockey, specifically a high school hockey program. Currently, rule 2.35(a) prevents us from using our C level players, and we need some of them to be eligible to field a team. The reason we are looking to get an exception this year is that many of Nate's friends will be graduating, and he wanted them to be able to be a part of the inaugural year. I am providing a list of the players who have requested the opportunity to play, as well as letters from many of their parents and our Minor Hockey Association.

I've been told by SSNS that we will be lucky to get a few games this year, creating minimal risk of impacting our minor hockey program. We have the same team managers for the school team and our U18 team, to make sure there will be no scheduling conflicts between them. Our school's female hockey team, (has players in TAMHA as well), currently operates this way and it has worked really well for the last few years.

All children on the list have been given a current checking clinic. Many playing C this year are recent A and AA players, so they are familiar with checking, creating less risk of injury. We have been planning since June and I started communicating with Terry Nichol in August. We are prepared, organized and ready. Please keep in mind I'm a father trying to fulfill his son's last wishes by creating a school hockey program that will help create new scholastic opportunities for his former peers. In those four months I watched my son's life end, this was all he asked of me.

Hockey in small rural communities has changed and Hockey Nova Scotia will need to re-evaluate rules and adapt to help minor hockey associations, such as ours, survive. I see this as a

great opportunity to help our minor hockey program by being a test pilot for this potential solution to declining numbers. Then I plan to be a prominent voice of rule changes next year. This will also help to give closure to many of Nate's friends that are graduating this year. Please help me make this possible for Nate and these kids this year. I've done all the work necessary - you just have to allow them to play. If there is a fee involved, I'm happy to send it any time.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact myself or any of the parents involved. I'll also provide you with Brandon Verges information. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Cecil MacLeod

Needless to say, Cecil managed to create a roster of eligible players, and as of this writing, managed to schedule two games with the team - one away and one home. Reminiscent of a Disney sports movie script, Nate's buddies, the Tatamagouche Mustangs, won their first ever game on the road against the Island View Devils, 4-1. Simply an incredible result.

The inaugural home game was against a formidable opponent in the North Nova Gryphons. Despite their loss, they were able to pack the rink to standing room only capacity and treat Tatamagouche and surrounding communities to a feel-good story for the ages.

It would be remiss of me to say Cecil did this ALL on his own. Local sponsors and individuals volunteered their time and money to make this happen. But this is ultimately Nate and Cecil's story. A small community came together to make a dying teenager's wish come true. The future now looks bright for Mustangs Hockey. The seed has been planted and the passion for high school hockey in Tatamagouche cannot be denied.

So, in the future, if you find yourself at a TRA Mustangs hockey game, take a moment and thank Nate. Do it out loud. Do it in your head. But make sure you do it. He deserves it. And lastly, maybe most importantly, never underestimate the power of a father's love. Thanks, Cecil, for all of it.

The TRA Mustangs roster is captained by River John resident Terry Jollymore.

The rest of the roster includes: GOALIES - Taylor Bowser and Garrett Tattrie FORWARDS - Layne Duggan, Carson Langille, Hayden Lepper, Sawyer Donaldson, Axton McKay, Malachi Tattrie, Logan Tattrie, Kaden Purdy MacKenzie, Konnor MacNutt, Keiver Matheson, Adrien Hunt DEFENCE - Rylan Patriquin, Cole Tattrie, Thomas Ross, Cohen Halverson, Owen MacNutt, Johnathan Murray.

Odd Fellows and Rebekahs News

by Jacob Leegwater

First, a correction to our write up in the fall issue, the amount of monies given to the two students was \$1,000 each, not \$100 as printed.

After installing officers at Eastern Star #1 in Pictou and Liberty #120 in Tatamagouche, Brother Bob Dwyer, District Deputy Grand Master, installed the officers at our lodge: Noble Grand, Brother Brian Emoff; Vice-Grand, Brother Rod Hayman; Recording Secretary, Brother Jacob Leegwater; Financial Secretary, Brother Steven Craib; Treasurer, Brother Earl Johnson; Warden, Sister Joann Ferguson; Conductor, Brother Terry

Hovey; Inside Guardian, Brother Bob Dwyer; Right Supporter Noble Grand, Brother Dan Ferguson; Left Supporter Noble Grand, Brother Willis Langille; Right Supporter Vice-Grand, Sister Sylvia Stewart; Left Supporter Vice-Grand, Brother Patrick Heighton and Chaplain, Brother Peter Richardson.

Deputy Grand Master Brother Dan Ferguson travelled to Confidence Lodge #106 in Riverport where he installed officers and made an official visit on November 16.

Our fifth annual coat drive was a huge success again, thanks to all who donated the 175 coats and 135 winter accessories.

Also on our agenda was the replacement of our heat pump, and during the Christmas break we had the hall floor re-done, with excellent results.

Brother Willis Langille had been working to get pictures of past Noble Grands, past District Deputy Grand Masters from our lodge as well as photos of lodge meetings. We are very grateful to Raymond MacKenzie for making all the frames.

On December 7, we were informed of the death of Brother Eric Hann of Truro. He was a member of our lodge for 25 years. On January 24, a Memorial Lodge Service was held at our Lodge for the family.

... .. continued on page 12

Obituaries



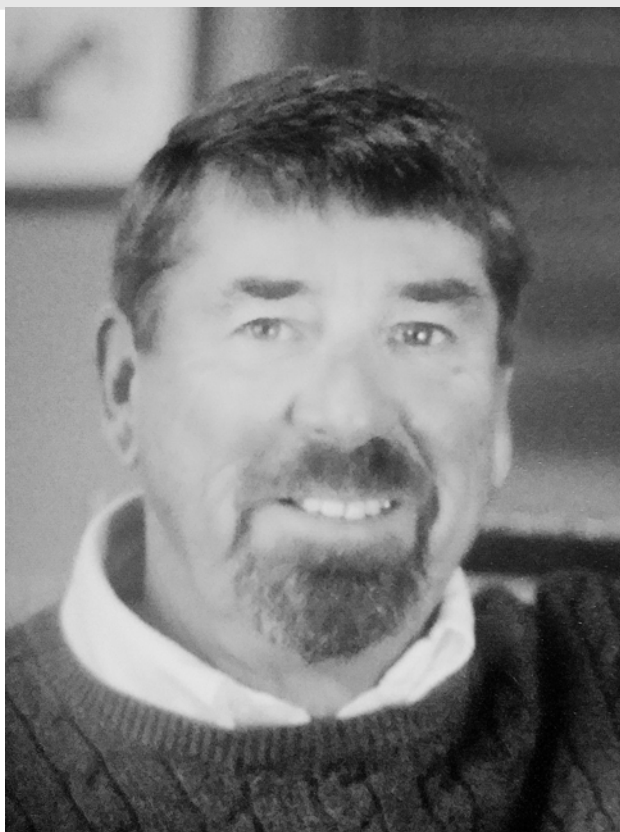
Robert (Robbie) Ernest Heighton
1942-2023

Robbie Heighton, 81 years old of River John, passed away peacefully December 7, 2023, at the Aberdeen Hospital after a brief illness, with his family at his side.

Born in Welsford, he was a son of the late Ralph and Jean Heighton. Robbie was a lifelong commercial fisherman who fished as recently as this past lobster season. Being a Jack-of-all-trades, he also worked various jobs in the off-season, including driving a dump truck and working in construction. He was an active member of the River John Fire Department with over 51 years of continuous service, where he held various positions over the years, including Captain and Deputy Chief. He loved his summers at the Cape (Cape John), gathering there with family and friends. The “more the merrier” was his motto, always making room for more. He loved to carry on with others and enjoyed a good story, a joke or song. Family was his priority, and Grampie Holy Smokes took great pride in his grandchildren’s accomplishments. In his later years, he enjoyed spending time with his beloved grandpuppy, Lola.

He will be deeply missed by his wife, Ann (Heighton); daughter, Rochelle (Blake Chapman); son, Robert (Eria Spears); grandchildren (his “true Capers”), Nole Chapman (Sierra); and Brent Chapman (Bryanna); brothers, Ronnie (Sharon) and Keith (Marilyn); sisters, Mary Monk (Merlin) and Faye Jefferson (Dana); sisters-in law, Bev Dwyer, and Maxine Cox; brothers-in law, Bob Dwyer, Charlie (Eva) Dwyer, David (Carolyn) Dwyer; and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his first wife, Leona (Dwyer); his daughter, Stacy Ann; his sister, Ruth Fraser; his sisters-in law, Judy Dwyer, Mary Ann Cameon; brothers-in law Ronnie Fraser, Larry Dwyer and Jim Cox; niece, Melinda; nephew, Michael; great-nephew, Michael; great-nephew, Jimmy, and great-niece, Phoebe.

The family would like to express special thanks to Drs. Debbie Straub, Hammam Gholam, and Usman Bhutta and all the staff of the ICU and Palliative Care units of Aberdeen Hospital for their kind and compassionate care. Donations in Robbie’s memory may be made to the River John Fire Department, St. John the Baptist Church or the IWK.



MacLeod, William Edgar ‘Ned’
1946-2023

Age 77, passed peacefully in Palliative Care at the Aberdeen Hospital on December 18, 2023.

Ned was the son of J.Carl MacLeod and Irene (Giles) MacLeod of River John.

Ned is survived by his wife, Marilyn and his first wife, Denise; son, John; daughter, Angela; stepdaughters, Lisa and Sarah; stepson, Robbie; four grandchildren, Jacob, Lexie, Katelyn and Alex; sisters Diane (Bob) and Joan (Marie); two nephews and a niece and their children. He was predeceased by his second wife, Donna. Ned initially joined his father in the family hardware store business, which operated out of the former Riverside Hotel in River John. After the business was sold in the 70s he became an insurance agent. After retiring from the insurance industry in 2005, Ned and Marilyn spent many winters in Florida where wonderful friends were made and golf was played. Ned loved going to Donnie’s camp in Guysborough, fishing and hunting. Drinks were had and stories were told.

Although Ned moved away from River John in the 80s, and eventually to Pictou, River John was always close to his heart. He liked nothing better than to visit his friends and cronies in River John. And he loved to keep up with the River John news.

Special thanks to the Palliative Care team and the Dialysis Units in Antigonish and Truro.

A Celebration of Ned’s life will be held on June 26th in Pictou.



Colin Wilbert Douglas
June 6 1922-Dec 21 2023

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our Dad, Colin Douglas in Willow Lodge, Tatamagouche, on December 21st, 2023, at the age of 101. Dad lived a very active life, from growing up on the family farm in Denmark and then buying his own farm on the Louisville Road exactly a mile from his birth place, where he raised his family of five with his wife, Bertha, who passed away in 2021.

Besides farming Dad held many jobs, including driving the school bus for eighteen years until retirement. Dad was born June 6th, 1922, as the oldest of a family of three. He is survived by his sister-in-law Elva, his daughters, Shelley, Cindy (Dale Henderson), Alexa and son, Richie (Glenda), twelve grandchildren, fifteen great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild. He was predeceased by his parents, Geordie and Annie; son, Barry; son-in-law, Frank McLean; brother, Bob; sister, Irene and brother-in-law, Don MacKay.

Anyone who knew Dad knew he was a very hard worker with a kind heart. A special thank you to all the staff at the Willow Lodge who were so kind to Dad.

Arrangements entrusted to Coulter’s Funeral Home Tatamagouche. A private graveside service to be held at a later date in Holy Trinity Anglican Church Cemetery, Denmark. No visitations as per Dad’s request. Donations may be made to the Holy Trinity Anglican Church Cemetery Fund, Willow Lodge or the Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital.

COOL FACTS

(Found at
www.mikmaqonline.org)

There are multiple ways to talk about snow in the Mi’kmaq language.

There’s a Mi’kmaq word for snow: Ma’munipsaq

(Pronunciation: maa-mun-ip-sahk)

John Hawkins IT Consulting
COMPUTER SERVICE & REPAIR



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Obituary



JOHNSTON, Rose Anne,
1954-2024
Braeshore, NS.

Rose was the seventh child of twelve, born in June, 1954, in St. Stephen, New Brunswick to Dr. Edmund and Evelyn Johnston.

Rose seized life as a vision quest! She jumped in with both feet, grabbed with both hands, as she had learned from riding a draft horse home in the dark, became a Wall of Fame basketball star, a medical doctor, a woman who built her own house, a qi gong instructor, an accomplished pianist and composer, a spiritual guide and mentor.

As an MD with a practice in River John she was loved by her patients of all ages, and she loved them back! She supported women having home births in rural Pictou County long before it was popular. Her leadership in her lesbian community included starting an annual camping weekend, "Wild Womyn Don't Get the Blues" in 1983 in West New Annan, and later the "Rose Bowl Dinner and Dance" in Tatamagouche.

Rose joined with Muriel Agnes and her 3 children in 1993 and became a family. They were blessed with more than thirty years of a richly fulfilling life and many adventures. Rose gathered deep friendships wherever she went. She loved to play, hike, swim, laugh and dance!

The continuous opening to spiritual growth has always been a driving force for Rose that included her Catholic upbringing, participating with First Nations communities, Buddhist, and Catholic nuns, walking on hot coals, and finally settling on a practice in A Course in Miracles.

In her last two years Rose was part of an online spiritual community with weekly meetings and several teachers that meant so much to her. The search for good health was a rigorous road through medicine, psychotherapy, auricular acupuncture, a study in palliative care, homeopathy, naturopathy, and various other alternative treatments.

Rose was intense, deep, and demanding. Beautiful (handsome) to look at, Rose loved to be outdoors. She swam the Atlantic and walked daily until she was physically unable. In fact, her last swim in the ocean was mid-September.

Rose died at home after a long, chronic illness, surrounded by her family and friends. Predeceased by her brother, Joe Johnston, Rose is survived by her loving spouse, Muriel; their children, David (Alice), Paul (Sara) and Claire (Jony); grandchildren, Ella, Ezra, Amos, Juniper, Sylvie; step-grandchildren, Scarlett and Will; and her sisters and brothers.

Memories of Dr. Rose

By Joan Macleod

I was still living in the UK when Dr. Rose came to River John in the early 80s. My mother wrote me to tell me the scandalous news that the new doctor was a lesbian. She felt that she had very good care from her, nonetheless.

I first met Dr. Rose in the summer of 1984. My father had died tragically and I came home from England with my 3-year-old daughter. My mum stayed at the house, but Siobhan and I went down to the cottage. This was a time before cell phones. The cottage had a black bakelite dial phone attached to the wall. Around 6 a.m. one morning I was awakened by the next-door neighbour (who was renting my parents' other cottage) pounding on my door. Her husband was having a seizure and she needed a doctor.

At the back of the phone book, Dr. Rose's number had been written, so I called her. Remember in those days, doctors still did house calls. This was also at a time before we had civic addresses and our lane did not even have a name. Rose asked me to come out to the end of the cottage lane on Cape John Road so that she knew where to find us. I think I was surprised at the appearance of this gorgeous, athletic woman, wearing shorts and hiking boots and carrying her doctor's satchel. She explained that she was busy building a house that summer.

After she had attended to her patient and seen him off on an ambulance to Halifax, she turned to me and asked if she could borrow my

bathing suit so she could have a swim in our bay. Then at 7:30 in the morning, she swam the most perfect front crawl right along the length of the beach. I think I fell a little bit in love with Rose that day even though at the time I was married.

by Nancy MacLeod

At one time, my husband, Jim, would get allergy shots once a month from Dr. Rose. He always had to wait in her office twenty minutes to half-an-hour after he got the shot, just in case he had an allergic reaction.

One afternoon he got his shot and Dr. Rose had to leave before his wait time was up. Sandra MacKay, her secretary at the time, was not comfortable being left alone with Jim. Dr. Rose assured her that he had never had a reaction so he'd be okay.

Dr. Rose left, but quickly returned because she had forgotten something. Sandra saw her car swing into the parking lot. She told Jim to lie on the floor. Doctor Rose came into the office and Sandra was on the floor beside Jim, frantically waving her arms and panic-stricken and said, "I told you not to leave, I didn't know what to do." Eventually Jim jumped up and started laughing. After she caught on to what they were doing, Dr. Rose laughed as well and then gave them both a scolding.

She came into the Co-op store and told me those two up there at the office are bad and they can't be trusted. I can still hear her wonderful hearty laugh. She will be missed.

A Celebration of Life is planned for the first week in August in Pictou United Church (pictouunited.com) and Pictou United Spirit Glen.

Rose was a lover of life, a teacher, a guide, a parent, a sister, and a friend that we shall all miss like no other.

Memories of MacLeod's General Store in River John

by Diane MacLeod Shink

Even though MacLeod's Store no longer exists, my sister and I can see it all very clearly in our mind's eye. Following are a few of our reminiscences.

Barter was still practised at that time. Many of the farmers' wives raised chickens and when they came to town the eggs were candled. At the back of the store was a small darkened room which had a "candler". This piece of equipment was a type of light box used to check the eggs to ensure they had not been fertilized. The resulting proceeds gave what was called "pin money". It was her money to be used as desired, sometimes a few yards of calico or ribbons.

This was the time before plastic bags were invented so all purchases were wrapped in brown paper and tied up with string. In some cases, there were two sizes of dispensers for various sizes of paper rolls. The paper roll holder was a wooden mechanism with a metal rod inserted into the central cavity of the paper to elevate the roll from the counter and a metal strip was lowered to cut at the desired length. One product, sanitary napkins, was always wrapped before being put on the shelf supposedly to give some amount of privacy.

In a recent price check of costs in the thirties it was noted that a gallon-sized galvanized oil can could be purchased for 55 cents. Most customers

arrived with two steel cans, one for molasses and one for coal oil (kerosene). These products were shipped from manufacturers in wooden barrels and were stored in the "back shop" along with vinegar and extra goods needed to restock shelves. Some building supplies were also sorted and stored there.

When I was around 9 or 10, I remember purchasing 5 cents worth of nails for use in constructing one of the many shacks built in the back orchard of the village. Somehow, Charles Halliburton and I even installed a steel drum attached to a chimney. The stove which kept us warm on cool days was not only used for heat but our last one had an oven. One day I made a sort of apple pie and attempted to bake it in the oven. Because we needed more building supplies right then, I was dispatched to our nearby store to procure the needed articles. Father decided to inspect our project and the enterprise was quickly shut down before we set the whole village on fire.

I can picture main street in the mid 50s at the intersection of the roads from Welsford and Brule where they met at the old bridge that crossed the River John. On Saturday night, the wide street was lined with cars, trucks and a few horse and buggy rigs on both sides. Saturday night was a big deal in those days. Clerks at all three general stores, MacLeod's, Sutherland's and the Co-op were busy serving customers. This was before self-service. In those days, after waiting in line, you stepped up to the mahogany counter and recited your list.

I remember the old codgers who had come down from the hills standing around outside in front of the store talking to their buddies and maybe having a tippie or two. Earlier in the evening, Dad would tell me to go out and get their lists as they had not been in the village for months and the shopping list from their wife would be as long as their arm. When it was getting on for 10 o'clock we would flash the lights a few times, so they knew we were closing.

Did I mention that my boyfriend was patiently waiting in his car so we could go to a Saturday night square dance?

Community Notices

COMPUTER USERS

By Marg Jones

DID YOU KNOW...

...that there are TWO Facebook groups where you can keep up-to-date with River John news and events past and present?

One is the Facebook page "River John, Nova Scotia," (where you can find back copies of the Pioneer in the Files section), and the other is "What's Going on in River John 2.0."

To see all the posts about River John and around, you need to subscribe to both these pages, as sometimes a post will appear on one of the pages, but not the other, and vice-versa. So be sure you subscribe to both.

If you make a posting to one of them, please be sure to "Share" your post to the other one, in order to get maximum coverage. You don't want anyone to miss any of the many exciting events going on in our village.

There is also a website www.Riverjohn.com where you will learn much more about River John's present-day life and a lot about its history. You will find the latest copy of the Pioneer there.

... Oddfellows and Rebekahs. From page 9

At our last meeting before Christmas, we enjoyed a dinner at Yap's Place Restaurant which was enjoyed by all. During our District Meeting, Brother Willis Langille and Brother Rod Hayman, were presented with 25-year jewels and Brother Brian Emoff was presented with his Past Noble Grand jewel.

On January 20, eight of our members attended the institution of the new Lodge Atlantic #107 at Nine Mile River. In all, there were 28 members representing eight different lodges.

On February 12, we were presented with two awards from Sovereign Grand Lodge by Sovereign Grand Lodge Representative Brother Jimmie LeFresne. They included an Honour Roll Award and a Living Legacy Award for the tree planted in Bissell Park for our 145th Anniversary.

Our Sister Rebekahs had a meal out at Yaps after ours on December 22. We purchased Christmas gifts for our adopt-a-residents at the Maritime Odd Fellows Home. Sales for tickets on our accent table was very gratifying. Winner was Clifford Battist of Lyons Brook.

We are also the winners of a Make-A-Difference Award from Sovereign Grand Lodge for gaining new members. Members who transferred from Princess Rebekah #4 were Sister Annie Scott, Sister Sylvia Stewart and Brother Peter Richardson.

Many thanks to Sister Marie Langille for washing the curtains in the hall after all the redecorations. Also, for the purchase of new kitchen curtains.

Helping Hand Lodge meets every Monday at 7:30 p.m. with Noble Grand Brother Brian Emoff. The Frazee Rebekahs meet the second and fourth Friday at 2 p.m. with Noble Grand Brother Jacob Leegwater.

Until next time stay safe.

**What did the ocean say
to the beach?**

Nothing—it just waved.

River John Square Knitters

By Netta Heukshorst

Every Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. you can find us at the River John Library, happily clicking our needles as we knit the squares to send to South Africa for the vulnerable little children at the orphanages.

A big heartfelt thank you goes out to St. George's Presbyterian Church for their generous donation of \$310 from the soup luncheon, also to the members of their Atlantic Mission Society for their donation of \$45. It sure will help with the cost of mailing.

We attended several local Christmas markets where we sold various knitted articles to raise money.

Over the course of the summer and fall, tickets were sold on a lovely homemade afghan, donated by my sister, Lisa Heukshorst, of Mabou, Cape Breton. The draw took place at the library on December 15th. The lucky recipient was Reverend Connie McNamara of Wallace. Thank you to everyone who supported the raffle which raised \$740. All monies raised will help with the cost of postage.

Last November, we participated in the Festival of Trees at the Fraser Cultural Centre, where we decorated a tree with many colourful knitted squares and informative brochures.

Besides mailing away bundles of squares, (6 bundles of squares were mailed out last December alone,) our group also sewed together blankets for local distribution. Twelve warm ones were delivered to the Truro Hospice Society in February of this year.

As always, donations of money, yarn and needles may be left at the River John Library during open hours. New members are always welcome, it is free to join. Come for a little visit, have a coffee and a treat and learn about the group.

Smile, knit, and be kind to each other.

**What do you call a
snowflake shindig?**

A snow ball.



River John Red Cross Society Information Sought

by Mary Beth Sutherland

I am looking for any information on the Red Cross Society during World War I, in River John and surrounding areas. Did you ever hear any mention of this from your mother, grandmother, aunt etc.?

Have you found pictures, diaries, journals or notes on the Red Cross work from around that time, maybe in the attic or in the back of a desk drawer or in a book, or maybe between old pictures?

There must have been record books kept somewhere. Newspaper clippings are a great source of information, too.

My understanding is that during WWI and WW II, women of most communities gathered to knit, make bandages, etc. to support their men and women overseas. The information I am gathering is for a project/display being setup by a friend this summer.

If you think that you might have something that could help, please contact Mary Beth Sutherland, call or text 902-351-3355.

Thank you.

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River John Community Action Society News

By Gillian Joudrie, Secretary

Looking to make a positive impact in your community? Join the River John Community Action Society (RJCAS) - a group of dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to make our small community a better place to live.

RJCAS is responsible for looking after Bissell Park, which includes the grounds, washroom, benches, deck, and dock. We also oversee Roger's Landing and secure funding for its creation and upkeep. Additionally, the group makes financial donations to other community groups, such as the River John Festival Days committee, the Lions Club Christmas Dinner, and the hiring of a Recreation Committee summer student to assist with park maintenance and day camp.

This year, RJCAS has been busy with various fundraising efforts, including a BBQ, Kayak Raffle, and Christmas Raffle Basket. We also hosted a successful Christmas Tree Lighting event in Bissell Park and replaced the Welcome to River John signs in the village. We also created a petition to have a sidewalk added to the village.

River John Community Action Society is the organization behind the well-loved Pioneer community newspaper which is published three times per year.

This is the third year RJCAS has co-sponsored with the Lions and the Recreation Department to put on our annual tree lighting ceremony. It is a fun event for the whole family, with entertainment and ending with cocoa and cookies.

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



West Branch and Area Singers under the leadership of Heather Smith performed during the River John Christmas



Santa with Mary Beth and her granddaughter Charlotte



Cody Joudrie and his grandmother, Chrissie Joudrie



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Aubrey Heighton Profile

**By Joan MacLeod, Ed Kennedy and
Cindy Graham**

Most residents on Cape John are aware of a wonderful neighbour, Aubrey Heighton. We think of Aubrey as a pillar of the community and salt of the earth. One of his friends and neighbours, the now late Chris Giles, described Aubrey as “the go-to guy.” When Joan needed some fishnet to put around her vegetable garden in the village, Chris told her to go to Aubrey and he would find some for her and, sure enough, he did.

Aubrey was born on December 28th, 1932, on a farm on Cape John. He was one of four children born to Abe and Lila Heighton. When he was 13, he left school and home to work for other families for room and board. He worked and boarded with Ralph and Jean Heighton in Welsford. Later on, Aubrey and his brother, Mac, worked at a sawmill for \$2 a day for the winter months. The brothers worked together at a fish factory in Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick, and Aubrey also worked on fishing boats with other fishermen in the area. He was able to secure a loan from Maritime Packers to purchase his own fishing gear.

In 1956, Aubrey married the love of his life, Mildred, who also grew up on Cape John, very close to the former horse racetrack in the community pasture, near the end of the Cape. He built a home for Mildred and himself, (the small house across from Meh’s convenience store,) using off-cuts of pine from the sawmill where he was working. Amel Sutherland built his new home across from Salem United Church at the same time, using spruce lumber, which cost him much more than Aubrey’s home. Aubrey and Mildred have five children, Darryl, Cindy, Eric, Alan, and Lorne, who all live in the area. Cindy told us that her father asked her once if she minded being raised poor, and she said that she didn’t know that she was. She thought that they lived off the land and they were never hungry.

In 1963, Aubrey noticed an old rundown farmhouse near his former home on Cape John and decided to buy the property for \$1,200. He asked George Wilkens if the house could be rebuilt, and George said “Well, it was built!” George and Bert Brown worked on the house, and you can ask Aubrey about Bert’s “lemon lime drink.”

Aubrey raised his family with hard work, farming and fishing, and he has been gifted with an ability to take on almost any task. Aubrey bought his first fishing boat, but in the years to follow, he built a building large enough to build boats for himself, as well as some other fishermen.

After retiring from fishing, Aubrey saw a need for bows for the wooden traps. He invented a machine to form the bowed frames. He has a whole fabrication plant in his outbuilding with a huge, flat pan of water on a wood stove for steaming the wood, which needs to be bent into shape.

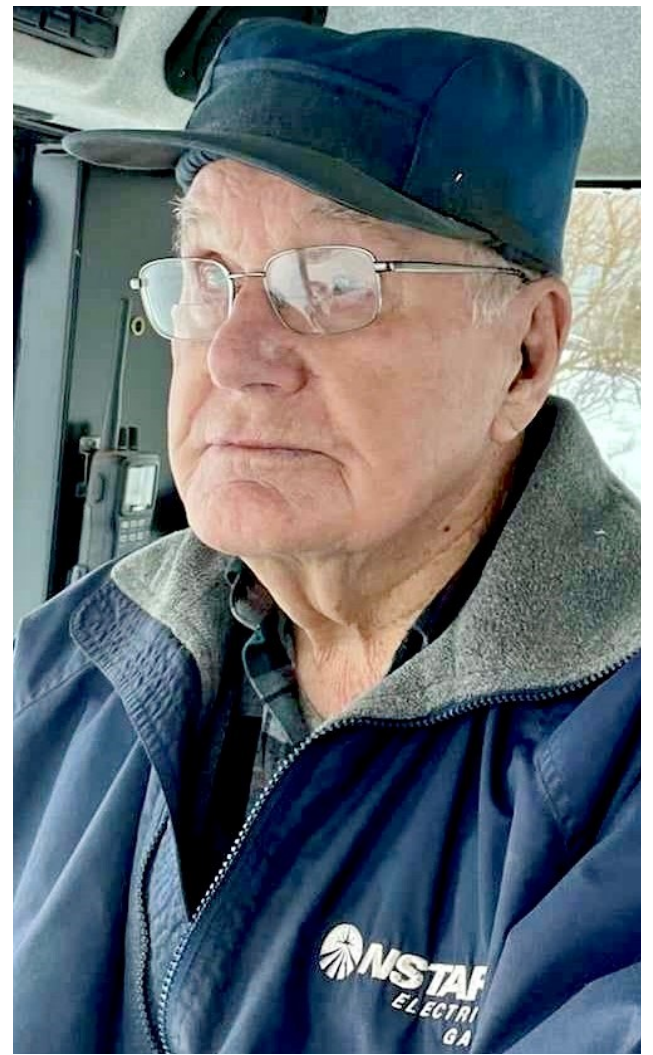
There are five or six dedicated workstations of drills and saws to ensure the process runs smoothly. He creates three bowed wooden pieces that are just one part of each lobster trap, which then has a knitted net portion and is assembled on a platform by others. In our opinion, he is a very industrious 91-year-old!

Aubrey loves animals. He has always had horses in the barn. He took great pride when his granddaughter won ribbons and trophies for barrel racing at the Pictou exhibition with one of the foals from his mare. As of now, he has a dog, Molly, and two guinea fowls, named Dolly and Kenny. Truth be told, he’s not sure if he has two hens, or two roosters! He is also passionate about haying and spends a lot of time each summer making hay up and down the Cape. Some of his haying equipment

is antique, but he loves to maintain and use it each year, with the help of his sons Darryl and Alan. Aubrey also loves gardening, and each year he gathers up seaweed and eel grass along the beach across from the big pond on the Cape and deposits this fertilizer on his garden patch. Ed found out that Aubrey had a tiller that he hooks on his tractor and asked him to till a potato patch on his land. When he asked Aubrey how much he owed him, as usual Aubrey said “nothing,” but Ed managed to force \$20 on him – that’s Aubrey!

Another thing that Aubrey is passionate about is access to the beach. He and Willis Langille have been involved in preserving access to Meggie’s Cove, as he is aware of the history of this area and believes that the land was left in perpetuity to the fishermen of the area. He has graded the Cove Road himself and helped create the parking area for cars.

You always know where you stand with Aubrey – he doesn’t mince words. He does appreciate people who look like they are trying. It doesn’t matter to him if you are rich or poor. Your value is in how you treat others. He and Mildred have opened their doors over the years to many people without any expectations. If you arrived at mealtime, there was always an extra place at the table. Their son-in-law said when he first came to the farm, it was like visiting with the Waltons.



Aubrey Plowing Snow



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Fond 4-H Memories

By Elizabeth and Christine Heighton

Beginning her 4-H career at the tender age of seven as a clover bud, and completing it at age twenty-one as a River John 4-H club member, Elizabeth Heighton found 2023 was a bittersweet year. The past few years, not being able to meet with leaders or hold exhibitions and pro Shows due to Covid-19, Hurricanes Dorian and Fiona, made 4-H very challenging. Through all these obstacles Elizabeth stuck it out, to finish her last year with a big bang!

Although Elizabeth's 4-H activities were a big part of her cattle-showing career, she also showed in many of the open classes. Some of the shows attended in 2023 were the Junior Angus Show - Antigonish, Canadian Charolais Youth Association conference and Junior show - Brandon, Manitoba, Old Home Week - PEI and the Heritage Beef Show - Windsor NS. When asked what the best part of attending these shows was, her response was "It's fun competing but the best part is the friends and memories you always have when the show is over."

Elizabeth is sad to see it go but so grateful for the opportunities and memories as a 4-H member. After completing her official 4-H year at Achievement Day in July, Elizabeth decided to move on to the Pictou North Colchester Exhibition in September to compete, to then move on to the Nova Scotia 4-H Provincial Show in Windsor. She and her calf Valentina won numerous awards at the Exhibition as Sr. Show-person, Champion Show-person, Champion Charolais, Reserve Champion calf overall and Champion beef judge.

Her last Pro Show on the weekend of September 29 was - wow - a huge success! Elizabeth is so thankful for the 4-H community and the friendships it has created. Without these people,



Elizabeth at CCYA Brandon, MB

Elizabeth wouldn't be where she is now. A special thank you goes out to Cally Rae and Sophie Heighton for all their help throughout that weekend. Thank you to the organizers, sponsors, family and everyone who made it possible. Thank you, Liam Fraser, for answering many phone calls and supporting her when she needed it.

Elizabeth is beyond proud and pleased with Balamore Valentina 247K (Tina); thank you, Ken Langille, for trusting her with this amazing heifer. Elizabeth placed 2nd in senior showmanship and was awarded Reserve Champion showman. Tina also placed 2nd in Senior Charolais and won Reserve Champion Charolais. That Sunday morning

in the Grand Champion Showmanship class they received 4th overall.

Elizabeth was so honoured to represent Nova Scotia with 9 other amazing 4-H members on the Royal Beef Team for 2023. The team attended the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair on November 1st and competed on November 3rd and 4th. The Masterfeeds National Junior Heifer Show was live-streamed for everyone to watch the members compete. Congratulations to all the 4-H members who attended that weekend; we're so proud of you all!

Welcome Spring!

Hon. Karla MacFarlane
MLA Pictou West

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Maverick Falconer with his scavenger hunt prize at the library.



Isabelle Cripps checking off her scavenger hunt list.

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Editorial changes

At the last minute, we had to reduce our paper by 2 full pages. We apologize for those articles which had to be cut, one of which was information on the new programming for the Grace Jollymore Centre in Tatamagouche. If you go on their website www.gracejollymore.com you can read about their new wonderful shows.

Cripps & Sons

By Debby Shaw

I had my curiosity piqued recently when I read the Fall and Winter issues of The Sunrise Trail. In it was an interesting article by Sam & Jim Cripps, Cripps and Sons Woodworking, titled “What in the World”. If you haven’t read it, look it up. I called Mary Beth Sutherland (Sam’s mother-in-law) for the brothers’ address and arranged to meet them in the showroom of their business.

Jim and Sam emigrated to Canada in 2003 from Devon, England with their parents. They started working with their father in 2008. As their cabinet making skills grew, so did their interest. They both married local women, Jim to Jamie (Baillie) and Sam to Margaret (Sutherland). Sam now has four children and Jim has two.

In July, 2021, the brothers set off and began their own business. In 2022 they built a new 6,000 sq ft workshop. At the new premises they continue to manufacture high-end custom kitchens. Their showroom is a modern, clean and contemporary space, with displays of cabinets, doors, countertops, appliances, sinks, light fixtures and sink faucets; whatever you need for your kitchen, they can supply.

When I visited, they demonstrated all the cabinet choices they offer; some with touch-opening doors, interior lighting, glass shelves, recessed doors, or matching doors that They have samples of countertops, every style and material you could want. The brothers buy from local suppliers and direct from a Canadian mill in Quebec. They work with homeowners to integrate modern cabinetry into older homes or to help with a new build. Everything they do is custom.

Once you have made your choices, they use 3-D design software to provide you with a rendering of your kitchen. Along with clean, functioning offices, they have a modern, state-of-the-art workshop. They are the first in the world to have the ProEdge. This machine allows them to use a new and innovative way of putting the cabinets together using the patented “peanut and keyhole fasteners” to hold the cabinet panels together. The peanuts that they use are made and shipped from the UK. It was on their visit back to the UK last spring where they saw this new system.

I know I said the shop was state-of-the-art - while I think I’m really techie when I ask “Alexa” to turn on my music, Sam and Jim can control their shops dust removal system with their voice and send instructions to the CNC (computer numerical control) machine no matter where they are. The machines they use to prepare their custom builds are operated with joy sticks just like a video game.

The Cripps brothers have had many learning opportunities. They toured and received ideas from Jigsaw Kitchens in the UK, and they have been invited by the Maritime representative of Concerto Countertop Manufacturer to come and visit their operation in Spain in April. They are also members of the Nova Scotia Interior Decorators Association. This fall, they received the 2023 Business Growth Award presented by the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce, of which they are very proud.

They also provide learning opportunities. Jim is the youngest certified Red Seal Cabinetmaker in the province, with Sam currently in the process of receiving his certification. They are working with Apprenticeship Nova Scotia helping to put together the online portion of the Red Seal

Cabinetmaking program for the province. They have three apprentices, two male and one female, currently working their way through apprenticeship. There are only five apprentices in the province and Cripps Brothers have three of them. Whether they are working remotely sitting on a train in the UK, working on designs for high end resorts, with a designer from New York City, or renovating a home along the north shore of Nova Scotia, Cripps Brothers have the vision and facilities to actualize dreams.



Sam and Jim Cripps

Winter Storms

By Mary Beth Sutherland

I love a winter storm when you can stay at home nice and cozy; it is perfect when the power stays on. It makes us slow down. Unfortunately, that is not true for all, during storms.

If you are a health care worker (or live with one), or considered a member of essential services, and are scheduled to work, you cannot sit home relaxing. The same for those with livestock, which need to be cared for. You have to get out and battle the snow, wind and roads. Our recent snowstorms reminded me of the dedication of our health care workers.

You shovel or snow-blow the driveway, the wind blows it back in. Finally, out of the driveway and onto the roads which everyone else is told to stay off. You navigate the road, using memory to know where the turns are and where you might run into the worst snowdrifts, depending on the direction of the wind. Praying the snow plow is on the road ahead or at least doesn’t run over your vehicle if you get stuck in the snow. I have helped others and have been helped myself when travelling these roads, having encountered these conditions over many years, some worse than others.

Several years ago, when three of us health care workers were driving to work together in a 4x4 truck, we became stuck in a snowdrift in a whiteout. We shovelled and shovelled, but it filled in just as quickly as we shovelled. We felt “saved” when River John’s late Edward Sutherland, operating the snow plow, happened upon us. He got out of the plow, checking to see how much road was left between the truck and the edge of the road, (I wasn’t sure where the road was at that point), could he get by us safely? He managed, which helped move some of the snowdrift we were in, and after

more shovelling, we, and the two vehicles behind us, also travelling to work in health care, followed the plow. He was our guardian angel that morning. The skill shown by Edward as a plow operator was evident as we followed him, manoeuvring the road conditions and several other vehicles buried in the snow. What was normally a 20-minute drive took over four hours with the plow leading the way. We had been on the road since before 5 a.m., arriving in Tatamagouche at 9 a.m. to relieve the tired night shift at Willow Lodge.

You may wonder - Why not go in a day earlier before the storm arrived? Yes, it is sensible, but hospitals and nursing homes are not set up to have two and three shifts sleeping and working. I have slept on the floor at work before and it is not comfortable! Plus, some have family members they care for at home and it is stressful when those individuals are left too many hours without supervision.

Getting back to this recent storm, what made it quite hard on staff was the length of time the poor weather and road conditions lasted. I am grateful to family friends who rescued my daughter, a nurse going to work at Lillian Fraser Hospital. She became stranded in a snowdrift during daylight hours, so she snowshoed towards the home of these friends, for assistance. They spotted her through the blowing snow while out assisting a member of their own family. They kindly used their tractor and snowblower to get the car out and cleared the road to their home to get her to safety as the main road had filled in again. There she stayed until the next day waiting for the road to open. The snowplow coming her way had gone off the road, delaying road clearing. The plows too were experiencing poor visibility, and plow drivers were trying to ensure healthcare workers got to

work to relieve exhausted staff. There are many stories that health care providers can tell you of trips in and out of work in poor conditions. While staff are trying to get to work, there are staff already at work, often working hours past their shift, waiting to be relieved.

To sum up, I am thankful for the paramedics, doctors, nurses, dietary staff, housekeeping, maintenance, recreation: all the support staff who keep our health facilities running during the good and not-so-good days. I

am also thankful for the skill of snow plow operators who work in difficult conditions to open the roads for all of us. Yes, there were complaints of the length of time it took



Emily Sutherland’s car immobilized by a snowdrift.

to open roads. But I heard a number of plows that went off the roads during the storm from the Lyons Brook and Tatamagouche plow sheds needed repairs or at least a “check up” before they were able to return to work. Thank you to the mechanics who repaired the plows and got them back on the roads.

Thank you to all who reached out to assist during and after with the cleanup of the snow. By the way, if you drove down to Cape John several days after the snow, it was an amazing wall of snow. Hats off to Sterling Heighton and Willis Langille.

Cumberland Residents Push for Ban on Aerial Spraying of Toxic Herbicide on Forests

By Emma St. Francis

It was with a great sigh of relief that on September 30th, 2023, the “Don’t Spray Cumberland County” group saw the sun set on Pugwash River Road without a helicopter in sight. After more than a hundred hours spent underneath both blazing sun and smoggy skies, members of that group were able to celebrate a substantial victory: protecting a forested area, whose waterways lead to the Pugwash Estuary and feed several shallow domestic wells, from being blanketed in the herbicide glyphosate via aerial spraying.

Since first gathering in 2022, the collection of Cumberland County residents, organic farmers, and families that comprise “Don’t Spray” has advocated against the aerial spraying of glyphosate herbicide, sold under the common name Roundup, on their local forests. Reasons for joining are as varied as the members themselves. Some are primarily concerned with the well-being of the frogs, toads, snakes and salamanders for which glyphosate is lethal. Others are disturbed by the potential neurological effects of the herbicide on humans, which have been studied extensively and subsequently banned or heavily restricted in several countries, including Germany, Austria, France, The Netherlands, Vietnam and Mexico. Members hailing from the organic farming sector are troubled with the possibility of glyphosate drifting onto their pesticide and herbicide-free farms.

What binds these views is the perspective that aerial spraying is an inaccurate and dangerous method of glyphosate application. This method, regardless of operator skill, devastates entire ecosystems, despite being targeted to kill hardwood or deciduous trees. When sprayed aurally, glyphosate lands on all plants and creatures that dwell in the forest, and it is absorbed into waterways. After a hardwood tree is sprayed, the toxin targets the tree’s growth reactions, leading it to stop producing leaves, and dying. After forest-dwelling amphibians and reptiles such as frogs, salamanders and snakes are coated with glyphosate, they too absorb the toxin through their porous skin and die. Glyphosate has also been linked to neurological problems in birds, insects and fish.

Furthermore, in 2015, the World Health Organization’s International Agency for Research on Cancer released a study that labelled glyphosate as a probable carcinogen in humans. The indiscriminate nature of aerial spraying spreads out the impact of glyphosate on plants, animals, and waterways that are not the intended targets.

Glyphosate is not a new product, neither is its developer. Owned by the pharmaceutical giant, Bayer, Monsanto has produced glyphosate since the 1970s and has long been associated with controversial business practices in the agricultural sector, including: blocking exports of crops from Argentina in order to put pressure on the government to accept higher usage of its genetically modified seeds; being linked to an increase in farmer suicides in India after enormous financial and governmental pressure for farmers to use Bt cotton seeds (patented GM seed produced by Monsanto); and being a primary producer of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.

The agrochemical company has also been named in numerous lawsuits regarding its



products’ effects on humans, the environment, and the agricultural industry. In 2018, a lawsuit was filed against Monsanto by an American groundskeeper after his non-Hodgkin lymphoma diagnosis was linked to daily glyphosate use in his profession. He was awarded a \$78 million claim (*Dewayne Johnson v. Monsanto Company*, 2018). This lawsuit led to over 100,000 lawsuits against Monsanto, with 40,000 not yet settled as of December 2023, for glyphosate’s effect on individuals’ health. The settled lawsuits amount to approximately \$11 billion USD paid by Monsanto. In December 2023, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice certified a class action lawsuit against Monsanto for not properly warning glyphosate users about potential cancer risks and “...engaging in bad faith activities to sow confusion and doubt in the public about the state of the science on Roundup in order to preserve and grow their profits.” (“Roundup Class Action,” Koskie Minsky Law).

As far as Monsanto’s interactions with governmental bodies in Canada, Health Canada is responsible for reviewing glyphosate application permits and, in 2015, approved the application of glyphosate in forestry and agricultural use until a follow-up reassessment scheduled for 2032. CBC has reported on allegations of studies cited by Health Canada to demonstrate glyphosate’s safety as being “ghostwritten” by Monsanto staff. CBC later reported that Monsanto was given access to the reports before they were filed and was granted editorial input. Twelve of the 15 authors of the studies were previous consultants for Monsanto; two now admit to being paid by the company (“Court documents reveal Monsanto's efforts to fight glyphosate's 'severe stigma'," CBC, Mar 12, 2019). Glyphosate remains the main herbicide used in the forestry industry to develop a monoculture of softwoods out of Nova Scotian forests.

At the beginning of each August, the provincial government of Nova Scotia releases a list of approved sites for glyphosate application. Cumberland County accounts for 85% of 2023’s spray sites, with 54 sites listed, with Annapolis, Colchester, and Kings making up the remaining 15%. Much of the land being sprayed is owned or managed by Irving Ltd or ARF Enterprises Inc (ARF being the initials of the owner, Alexander Ralf Feix, the former Forestry Operations Planner for Northern Pulp) who then contract helicopter operators such as Vision Air Ltd. in Halifax for the actual spraying. After the permits are granted,

spraying takes place between mid-August and September 30, when the spray season closes. The deadline for spraying is timed with the shutting down of photosynthetic processes that allows the tree to absorb glyphosate.

The 2023 spraying season marked the first fall that the group collectively resisted the spraying of a particular parcel of land. After being contacted by a resident of Pugwash River Road who was concerned about the effect of glyphosate on the water in their shallow home well, the group travelled to the site and was surprised to see that the Pugwash Estuary was visible from the entrance to the site. This particular parcel is also located on a hill above several residential properties. The concern of residents living close to or below this piece of land encouraged “Don’t Spray” to begin a roadside protest.

Between September 15th and 30th, from 7 a.m.- 6 p.m. each day, members of “Don’t Spray” made signs, talked with passers-by, and made their presence known at the entrance to the site. “I would say 98% of the feedback we got was positive,” states Ann Hennigar, a resident of Amherst Shore and founding member of “Don’t Spray.” “We found that most people were not aware of the extensive aerial spraying of toxic herbicides that has been taking place in Cumberland County, and that it was happening so close to their homes.” Hennigar herself spent almost every day of potentially good spraying days at the site. “Those two weeks felt like much longer. But I’m happy we did it. People now know a bit more about the issue and are concerned that it’s happening in their community.”

Mary Purdy, also a member of “Don’t Spray” and resident of Pugwash, discussed the importance of education in the fight against glyphosate spraying and connecting people to the issue on an emotional level. “The language we use to describe nature,” she states, “is subject-object, as in ‘I am the subject and everything else is object.’ When we talk about a tree, we say for example that ‘it’ is covered in snow. But this doesn’t capture that the tree which is covered in snow is alive. We reserve ‘he’ or ‘she’ or ‘they’ for other humans. If we were to change this basic way we relate to trees or any other living thing in a forest, to describe them in ways that convey the sense of respect, our relationship with them changes. Our brain works differently, and it becomes easier to see ourselves as part of the whole that is the natural world, and to recognize the interdependence that exists living entities, each of which, as part of a biocontinued on page 24... ..

Love is in the Air

By Beulah Wright

Valentine's Day has been celebrated for a very long time. It began in the eighth century and, at that time and for ages after, was a religious day to honour various Saint Valentines, always a celebration of love and affection. Although it has never been a public holiday, it is considered a feast day in the Anglican and Lutheran churches. February 14th was the date chosen by the Western Christian church.

In the 14th century, Chaucer's poetry influenced the romantic aspect of Valentine's Day, and also connections to the season of spring, growth, flowers, romance and courtship. In England in the 18th century, February 14th became a day mainly for couples to celebrate their love with gifts, flowers, chocolates and greeting cards.

Early settlers from overseas brought their traditions with them and Valentine's Day became ever more popular. Early greeting cards of the 19th century were in the form of postcards and lavishly covered with roses and forget-me-nots, lace, doves, cupids and pretty girls. As time passed, these greetings were exchanged not only between lovers, but to show affection for family and friends and children, who celebrated at school with parties and beautifully created Valentine boxes filled with their homemade cards, or later with commercially-offered Valentine books. But it is still primarily a lovers' day and very much a part of courtship.

Valentines Day has passed for this year, but courtship goes on and there are many changes in the way couples managed to get together. Dating is fairly recent and actually began in the beginning of the 20th century, when couples were seen in public together, unsupervised! There were more opportunities - schools, colleges, workplaces - no longer just in the family home, and the end result was for

entertainment and fun, not exclusively marriage, and falling in love was becoming important, if not necessary.

Our grandparents took advantage of many social encounters. There was always the church and church events such as suppers or prayer meetings. and couples discovered ways to spend some time together, from buggy rides to walks in the park.

In River John, couples were lucky - there was the beautiful River John Bay. In the summer, there was boating, swimming, great beaches or just walking along the shore. In the winter, once the river froze over, there were horse and sleigh races on the ice. One lovely, elderly lady told me once that there was quite a competition among the young men to persuade the lady that was fancied to join them in the sleighs. She had joined her first "beau" and what a thrill to go racing up and down the river in the frosty evening air.

My mother lived within a mile of the Elmsdale post office, and it was the usual practice for her and her friends to walk to the village in the evenings to collect the family's mail. Dad lived a little farther away and on the same errand, he took his car, and would give the girls a drive, and that was a beginning!

Most communities had a community hall where social events were held and often movies or musical performances. There were lots of house parties - anniversaries, birthdays or any excuse to celebrate. There was always someone with a violin or a guitar to provide music and the floor would be cleared for dancing. Square dances were popular, which required a caller and somebody in the community would be known for their talent as a caller and guaranteed an invitation. John Fraser held singing classes in the Hedgeville school, another

place that couples could attend if they possessed a good singing voice - or imagined they had! Another possibility was the Box Social. The ladies who were participating would prepare a very tasty lunch, (competing for the most delicious,) and present it in an unmarked but gaily-decorated box. A designated auctioneer would then offer each box for bids, and the winning bidder would then be able to share the lunch with the lady who had made it. The gentleman would bid on the box he most admired, or in the case of married or dating couples, he may have been given a heads up on how his partner's box could be identified (and woe betide if he made a mistake!). Sometimes that could be expensive, as his friends might run up the bid for fun, if they realized which box he was determined to acquire. When I was a girl there was a box social held following the Christmas concert in Hedgeville, but most of the pupils were taken home before the auction.

And now there is the Internet. The courtship often develops online. I think our ancestors may have had more fun!

What do you call a rabbit with fleas?

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Allan Fraser

River John Recreation Association News

by Ashley Langille

The River John Recreation team worked tirelessly to set up the perfect sledding hill, ensuring a safe and enjoyable time for all the little adventurers. The kids couldn't contain their excitement as they zoomed down the hill, their smiles as bright as the winter sun. Thank you to Nick Bigney, you played a huge role in this day for the kids.

To warm up after all the thrilling sled rides, hotdogs and hot chocolate were provided. The delicious aroma of sizzling hotdogs and the comforting warmth of hot chocolate brought smiles to everyone's faces. It was the perfect way to recharge and continue the snowy fun.

The event was a great success, thanks to the dedication and support of the community and the River John old school. It's heartwarming to see how River John comes together to create joyful experiences for the kids. These moments of togetherness truly make our community special.

As we look back on this wonderful winter event, let's cherish the memories made and the connections formed. River John continues to shine as a community that cares, supports, and creates magical moments for everyone to enjoy.

Get ready for an action-packed summer in River John in 2024. With the winter season behind us, the community is eagerly looking forward to a summer filled with fun and adventure. The River John Recreation team has been hard at work planning a variety of activities and events to keep everyone entertained.

First up, mark your calendars for the highly-anticipated Easter egg hunt in April. It's the perfect

opportunity for families to come together and enjoy some egg-citing fun. Don't forget your baskets.

In addition to the Easter egg hunt, the community is buzzing with the news of summer students being hired. Their enthusiasm and fresh ideas will surely enhance the summer experience for everyone. From organizing day camp to coaching T-ball and soccer, and keeping our community looking spectacular, these students will play a vital role in creating a memorable summer for all.

Speaking of day camp, get ready for a summer full of adventure and learning. The River John Recreation team has put together an exciting lineup for this year's camp that will cater to various interests. Whether it's exploring nature, finding artistic skills, or diving into sports, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

And let's not forget about T-ball and soccer. These beloved sports are a staple of summer in River John. The Recreation team is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for kids to learn and grow through sports. Get those cleats and gloves ready for some friendly competition.

As we gear up for the summer season, it's important to acknowledge the ongoing support from the community. Recreation thrives on community support, donations and volunteers.

So, get ready, River John! Summer is just around the corner, and with the Easter egg hunt, the hiring of summer students, and the excitement of day camp, T-ball, and soccer programs, it's going to be a season to remember. Let's make lasting memories and embrace all the adventures that await.

Students looking for summer work who are 15

years old and up, please send your expressions of interest or resume to me by email to langillea@hotmail.com



Top of the Hill



Artwork by The Beehive Collective

Salem United Church News - Connie's Comments

By Reverend Connie McNamara

It's a new year at Salem United Church and we are looking forward to a busy Lenten and Easter season. We continue to worship with Saint John the Baptist Anglican Church from January to Holy Week - alternating monthly between the two church buildings - and this collaboration provides a strong ecumenical foundation within both faith communities.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which this year happens to fall on February 14th, otherwise known as Saint Valentine's Day - providing a wonderful way to enter Lent, acknowledging the great love of God for all, and our call to love one another. Throughout the Lenten season, our theme for worship will centre on the various covenants that God has entered into, and while covenant is not a word that we use very often in our conversations these days, it is still an important word for us, because it refers to the agreement and the promise that ought always to be a part of any loving relationship.

Within the Lenten season, we will, as always, hold two very important meetings. The first will be a congregational meeting for Salem United Church on Sunday, February 18th, following a shortened worship service held at Saint John the Baptist Anglican Church, beginning at 11:00 a.m. Secondly, the River John West Branch Pastoral Charge Annual Meeting will happen on Sunday March 3rd following the 11:00 a.m. worship service at Salem United Church.

The continuing presence of Salem United Church in River John depends not only on attendance in worship, but also attendance at the meetings which help to review what has been happening in the church, and to assist with visioning for the future. The best way for us to become who we are called to be as a church in this community, is by receiving the hands-on support of those who call Salem United Church "home" - regularly or sporadically.

Holy Week begins with lay-led worship at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday March 24th for Palm Sunday, at Salem United Church.

An ecumenical Maundy Thursday worship service, which will include a potluck meal and the celebration of Holy Communion, will be led by Reverend Connie at Salem United Church on Thursday March 28th at 6:00 p.m.

An ecumenical Good Friday worship service will be held at St. George's Presbyterian Church at 11:00 a.m., led by Rev. Enjei Achah.

The ecumenical Easter Sunrise service will be led by Saint John the Baptist Anglican Church at Bissell Park at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday March 31st. Easter Sunday worship will be led by Reverend Connie at Salem United Church at 11:00 a.m. with the celebration of Holy Communion.

There is much opportunity for us to gather in the coming weeks, but more than that, there will be much opportunity for us to give of ourselves. There will be a basket at the back of the church into which we may place any prayer requests, and Reverend Connie will utilize these the following week in preparing her prayers of the people.

There will be a box at the back of the church, and we are invited to bring one food or personal hygiene item to each service to be donated to the local food bank. Also, there will be a jar at the back of the church into which we are encouraged to drop our loose change or small bills to be donated to the Mission and Service Fund to

provide valuable support at home and around the world. home and around the world.

May our time in worship, in meetings, and in giving, enable us to strengthen the foundation of our church and our community.

Blessings, Reverend Connie

St. Michael's Catholic Church News

By Netta Heukshorst

Regularly scheduled mass is on Saturdays at 4 p.m. There may be a change in Mass time for the summer months to Sunday mornings. When this is confirmed, it will be reflected on the church sign by the road.

As always, there is a fellowship following Mass. Tea, coffee, and treats are enjoyed, and this gives everyone a chance to socialize with parishioners and visitors alike.

Everyone is most welcome at St. Michael's. Remember to smile and be kind to each other.

Saint John the Baptist Anglican Church News

by Monica Graham

The Church with the White Picket Fence Saint John's held its annual meeting on February 11th, after the Sunday morning church service, electing a slate of church officers and making plans for the next year.

Church wardens are Dana Jefferson and Jim White; treasurer is Denise White; and secretary is Elizabeth Langille. Representatives to the council of the Parish of Northumberland - which includes churches in Oxford, Wallace and Middleton Corners, as well as River John - are Denise White and Monica Graham. Faye Jefferson is organist. Reverend John Morrell is Priest-in-Charge of Northumberland parish.

Saint John's enjoys an ecumenical relationship, as well as friendship, with members of both Salem United and Saint George's Presbyterian churches. This involves participating in Christmas and other events related to the seasons of the church, as well as village events like Festival Days and supporting the Food Bank. During winter months, Saint John's and Salem have taken turns hosting and leading worship for their combined congregations.

Currently, the cracked and yellowing storm windows that protect the stained-glass windows are being gradually replaced with Lexan covers. Drop by to enjoy the new intensity of the colours.

The congregation is busy with plans to repair hurricane damage to the church roof; create efficient storage within the building; improve the cemetery surrounding the building; expand community outreach following the COVID shutdown - when senior and shut-in church members especially missed gatherings.

Perhaps the favourite of all are the Gospel singalongs in the church!

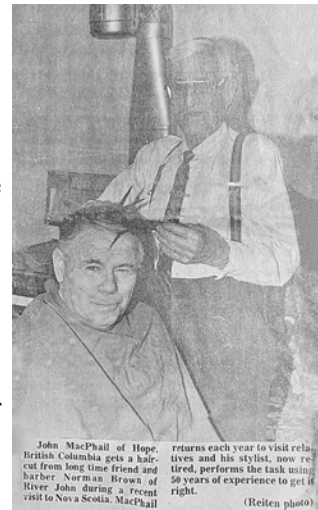
Church members look forward to new initiatives like a study of women in the Bible, more training for laypersons, and attending training sessions offered by the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

Services are generally held at 11 a.m. on Sunday. Information is available on the Facebook page for Saint John's Anglican Church, River John, NS, which is located at 1917 Highway 6, River

River John Barbers

by Mary Beth Sutherland

The Riverside Hotel, an ornate three-story building in River John, was built near the old bridge in 1885. Like many fashionable hotels of the day, the Riverside had a barber shop on location. Florence Craib found this newspaper clipping in her scrapbook and wanted to share it. She remembers two of the barbers working there. One was Logan Brown, whose wife was Edna. The other was Norman Brown, married to Annie Jollimore. When Norman retired from the hotel location, he continued to cut hair from his home on Black Street, (note the stove and stove pipe in the background of the photo.) The hotel ceased renting rooms around 1953. Florence said both Logan and Norman were good businessmen and worked together in the barbershop. She thinks haircuts were about 25 cents at that time. Thank you, Florence, for this bit of information.



John MacPhail of Hope, British Columbia gets a haircut from long-time friend and barber, Norman Brown of River John during a recent visit to Nova Scotia. MacPhail returns each year to visit relatives and his stylist, now retired, performs the task using 50 years of experience to get it right. (Reiten photo)

St. George's Church News

by Rev. Enjei Achah

We are in the Lent season which is the 40-days period towards Easter, beginning from Ash Wednesday, until Easter Sunday on March 31st. This is a time we set aside each year to remember the love of God poured out to the world through Christ Jesus His Son.

What to give up for Lent? Meat? Sweets? Social Media?

Many of us try to be more disciplined for Lent and give up something that we really like. Fasting has always been an important tradition of Lent. This year, however, let us also consider other things that we can give up. Give up complaining and be thankful always. Give up bitterness and forgive more. Give up worry and trust God. Give up discouragement and embrace hope. Give up hatred and return good for evil. Give up anger and be more patient. Give up gossiping and control your tongue.

Our church services are as follows:
St. David's Presbyterian Church, Toney River: 9.30 a.m.
St. George's Presbyterian Church, River John: 11 a.m.

If you need help in anyway or someone to talk to, remember that the church is always there for you, whether you are a member or not.
Our contacts: (e-mail) rev.enjeironi@yahoo.com (phone) 782-440-3772.

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This is Assisted Dying, a Doctor's Story of Empowering Patients at the End of Life by Dr. Stefanie Green

By Ed Kennedy

On June 17, 2016, the Parliament of Canada assented to Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying). Medical assistance in dying in Canada, now known as MAiD, was made possible by a Supreme Court of Canada decision, which struck down the blanket prohibition of assisted dying and was followed by the change in the law that took place on that day in 2016.

Since that time, the reported MAiD deaths in Canada have grown from 1,018 in 2016 to 13,241 in 2022 and by then there were some 45,000 total medically assisted deaths reported in Canada. (For further information about MAiD see Fourth Annual Report on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada 2022).

As one of the MAiD pioneers in Canada, Dr. Stefanie Green began facilitating medical assistance in dying in June 2016. Her medical practice had focused for twenty years on maternity and newborn care, but when MAiD became law, she decided to learn everything she could about this newly-emerging field so that she could support people with their final wishes and their transition at the other end of life. This is Assisted

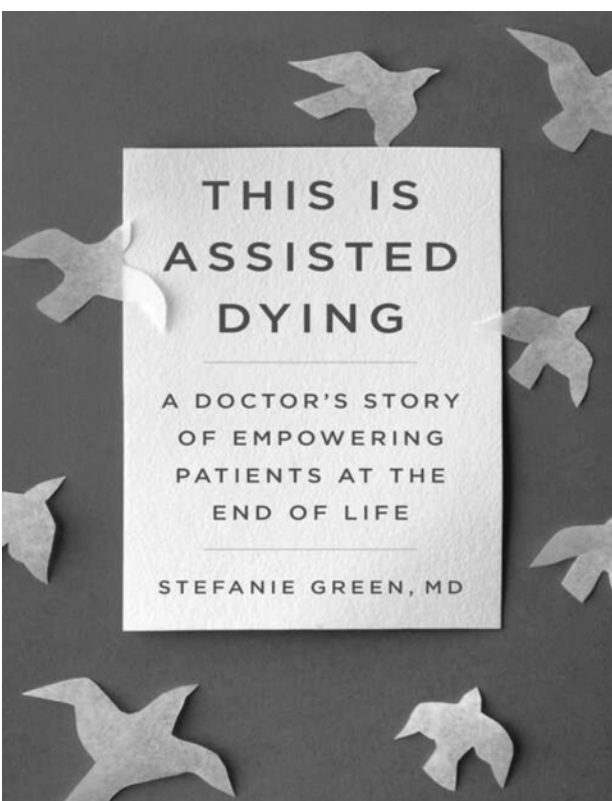
Dying is a heartwarming chronicle of her first year providing assisted dying in and around Vancouver Island, BC. Through the stories of the patients Dr. Green has helped, she shows in this book what she does, how it works, what she's seen, and what she's learned. From her perspective, Dr. Green has now worked on "deliveries" at both ends of the life spectrum.

In addition to the many stories that illustrate the range of situations she has encountered in her MAiD practice, Dr. Green provides a useful summary of the strict conditions under which MAiD is administered. Participants must be eligible for government-funded health care; over eighteen; capable of making their own health care decisions; and suffering from a "grievous and irremediable condition." Quantification of

how much longer a patient might live if they didn't receive MAiD is not necessary; it could be days or weeks for some, months or even years for others. They have to be on a trajectory toward a natural death due to their serious and incurable illness, must already be in an advanced state of decline, and must make their request voluntarily and under no sense of coercion.

The book's prologue provides thoughtful questions that we might consider in thinking about the end of life. "What if you could decide, at the end of your life, exactly when and where your death would happen? What if, instead of dying alone, in the middle of the night, in a hospital bed, you could be at home at a time of your choosing?"

You could decide who would be in the room with you, holding your hand or embracing you as you left this Earth. And what if a doctor could help ensure that your death was comfortable, peaceful, and dignified? What if you could plan a final conversation with everyone you love? You might never look at death the same way



again."

A review of this book on an important topic sums up its content: "A humane, clear-eyed view of how and why one can leave the world by choice, This Is Assisted Dying will change the way people think about their options, and ultimately is less about death than about how we wish to live."

Read by the Sea Literary Festival

Read by the Sea has exciting news!

Mark your calendars now for July 5th and 6th so you can attend Read by the Sea with your entire family.

Writers, be sure to book some time off to join the joyful and jovial Jane Doucet on Friday, the 5th, for our WordStock Workshop. Plan to spend the night nearby and join our authentically Canadian authors for Saturday. With further details to come.

We are excited to tell you that our author line up is fantastic, offering something for everyone from the hockey fan to the sci-fi fan and everything in between. Read by the Sea Literary Festival wants to celebrate Canada's literary finest with you.

With free admission, fantastic memories and phenomenal names our promise is to offer something for everyone, from the young to the young at heart. We just know you'll want to be there. Follow our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/readbythesea> and X Twitter account <https://twitter.com/>



West Branch and Area Community Association

31 West Branch Rd., West Branch

by Reg Crewe, Director/Treasurer

Hi from West Branch.

We have held several West Branch Wednesdays and these have been a huge success. The hall received funding for this social-minded community get-together. The intent is to hold monthly information/social sessions at the hall and include a meal. So far, we have had speakers address several issues from mental health, eating for healthy aging, aging and self-esteem, and fraud prevention. Future WB Wednesdays include topics such as pharmacy and medication safety, bird and wildlife habitats, gardening and seed swap, foot health, crafting and fun and games. Details will be posted on social media.

The hall is accessible and available to any interested community member and/or groups. We seat 60 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 commu-

nity.

The hall is available for private events, anniversaries, birthdays, celebrations or meetings. Please call for details, 902-351-2260 or simply message us through our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/groups/623698718509101/. The annual Maple Syrup Festival will be held on April 27, 2024, please monitor our Facebook page for details as they become available.

Our Annual General Meeting is May 6, 7 p.m. and we welcome all community members to attend. The hall board is comprised of seven community members and the existing board has been in place for several years. It would be great to see some new faces and ideas, to continue the great contribution the hall provides to the community members in the local area.

An excerpt from our booklet called "Stories from Around the Branch" is below contributed by Ruth Smith and Margaret Stewart. Ruth recently moved into a nursing home, and we wish her all the best.

"DANCES AND MUSIC LOVING DEER"

Ruth: When we were young. There were dances and house parties everywhere. Margaret: Yes, many's the house party we had at the house.

Vattis Harrington used to come down and play the violin. We always had him down every weekend playing for us. Mum used to play the organ. That's where we learned to play.

Ruth: Christy Elizabeth Mary Katherine was all her names.

Margaret: She had so many, but we always called her Kate. Yes, we used to have some awful good dances in the old house. Vattis was a great player, you know. He would just sit there and play away just so easy.

Ruth: I remember one night they were playing and there were deer come in and they had their noses right up against the window, looking in the house. That's with the music.

Margaret: They always go to the music. Yeah, you take a radio out if you're hunting, I often heard them saying, and the deer will come to you. Staley Campbell, that's Andrew Campbell's father, and Dad used to go moose hunting. Staley had a big birchbark horn and he used to call the moose.

Margaret: One time, they were having an early breakfast and of course I woke up. I was going to scare the girls in another room. So, I put a big fur coat over my head, but instead of going into the other room, I fell and landed downstairs. Well poor old Staley didn't know what it was. Here I landed down in a big fur coat. Oh, my soul and body, I'll never forget it. And I didn't get hurt either. They were the good old days. A lot of fun we had.

Health and Wellness in River John

by **Derek Andrews**

“Wellness – the holistic integration of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being”

Access to health care seems to be getting harder and more distant than ever these days, and more so for a rural area such as River John. Perhaps now, more than ever, we need to take more responsibility for our own health and wellness. A good start is to know what options are available here in our community to help us do so.

It has been many years now since we had a doctor’s office in the village, but we are fortunate to have a pharmacy, where, apart from filling prescriptions, the pharmacist can assess and prescribe for minor ailments. Two new businesses use space at the new River John Community Food and Health Centre (rjcfhc.ca); Connie Smith LPN (902-890-4240) is a qualified advanced diabetic foot care nurse and Chelsey Scott (902-817-6884) is a registered massage therapist.

Many healthcare services are now available online in Nova Scotia. Even if you already have a primary care provider you can now see a doctor or nurse practitioner online at getmaple.ca. The new YourHealthNS website and app (yourhealthns.ca) is a guide to healthcare services in the province. It also has an extensive Healthy Living section that will link you to a wide range of resources and programs. If you have symptoms of mild to moderate anxiety and depression, www.tranquility.app gives access to interactive tools designed to help manage your mental health. This is an internet-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy program supported by coaches.

One component of a healthy lifestyle is diet. With all the ultra-processed foods filling the shelves at the grocery store, it is good to have local businesses like Lismore Sheep Farm, Gloria’s Market and Melville Corner Homestead providing locally produced natural foods. The garden and greenhouse at the Food Centre will be a great addition too. The Community Support Society is looking for volunteers to help with this project, so if you would like to contribute to this project and reap the social, physical and mental benefits of volunteering, call Bernadette MacDonald (902-771-2685) to help in the garden, or ChristyAnn Langille (902-324-8897) to help in the food centre.

Research shows that up to half of our functional decline between the ages of 30 and 70 is not due to aging, but to an inactive way of life. Physical activity gives us energy, decreases stress, makes us stronger and prolongs independence as we age. It can also reduce the risk of many chronic health conditions. Eighty-year-old Eleanor Crowell, who plays pickleball, jogs, and line dances, attributes her wellness to staying active and eating a healthy diet that avoids processed foods. It’s never too soon to get into the habit of exercising. The Public Health Agency of Canada says that more than 90 percent of Canadian children are not meeting current physical activity guidelines in Canada.

We are fortunate in River John to have a growing number of opportunities in the community to encourage and enable us to become more active. One of the many ways to stay fit and agile is the River John Exercise Group. Established more than 15 years ago, this group meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9-10 a.m. at the River John Fire Hall. It’s a relaxed class where all levels of fitness are welcome and the goal is to keep moving, meet new people and improve your overall fitness level. Check it out on Facebook or email Vickiferpatton@icloud.com.

Last year a local group of NS Walks was started by Melanie Cote and Victoria Barry. The

purpose of these walking groups is to help less-active adults in Nova Scotia enjoy the benefits of walking. It’s a perfect way to make new friends and get that extra motivation to walk more. Search on Facebook for ‘NS walks-River John’ to find the next walk.

In a similar vein, a park-run group (parkrun.com) started in Tatamagouche last summer. Every Saturday morning (conditions permitting) they set off at 9 a.m. from Creamery Square and walk, jog or run to Nelson Park and back, a distance of 5 km. Whether you can run it in 17 minutes, or walk it in 70, you will still be applauded as you cross the finish line. Afterwards, gather at the farmers’ market for coffee and a natter. Search on Facebook for ‘Butter Trail park-run’ and join this international event that operates on six continents.

The gym at the River John Old School has a lot of equipment for members to use, including treadmills, bikes, rowing machines and weights. Hannah recently started at the gym and says, “I am super enjoying it! It’s a wonderful thing for our village to have. I joined due to wanting to live a healthier lifestyle, and to become more active. It’s been beneficial to my mental and physical health attending the gym on a regular basis, I usually go with a few friends so it’s fun to socialize while we’re there as well. I like all of the equipment and I try to change it up every time I’m there to keep a good mix of different activities to do.”

The River John Pickleball Club has been playing at the firehall since the fall of 2022, and in a few months’ time the new outdoor courts will open. Don Spicer says “The RJPC has greatly enhanced my experience living in the River John area. Being involved with RJPC has created a sense of community for me. I’ve seen first-hand how pickleball is contributing to the physical and mental health of people in our community.”

I have experienced the same benefits myself since taking up pickleball, and it has also led me to participate in parkrun and join the gym. I have never been much interested in sports, and past forays into running, tennis and squash were quickly abandoned, but what I find different about parkrun and pickleball is the sense of community and the mutual encouragement to be just as good as you want to be.

For some, there are financial barriers to par-



Pickleball Photo:

Back Row: Lynn MacLeod, Cindy Lou Morrison, Ann McKim

Front Row: Amy Fraser, Janice Thompson, Valarie Langille

icipation in many activities. The Go Play Fund was created by the Municipality of Pictou County’s Recreation Department to make recreation financially accessible to people of all ages. If a resident needs financial assistance to participate in a recreation program or activity and doesn’t qualify for other financial assistance programs, then they can apply for assistance from the Go Play Fund. Active Community Coordinator, Clare Steele, says the goal is to keep people active, which research shows has many benefits. “Play can increase your sense of belonging in your community, improve your physical and mental health and increase your overall sense of wellbeing. At Pictou County Recreation we believe that everyone should get the chance to play every day.” For details, email clare.steele@munpict.ca

Let’s not forget the library. They have Nordic walking poles and snowshoes available to borrow. The walking poles turn a walk into a full body workout by involving the shoulders, arms and core. Snowshoes are a great way to get out for walk or hike when snow would otherwise prevent it. To check how healthy your home is to live in, they have radon detectors and CO₂ monitors. There is also a light therapy lamp that may be used in the library. It is a way to treat seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and certain other conditions by exposure to artificial light. I’m also sure that they can help you find some books that might inspire you to improve your health and wellness. I’m currently reading *Exercised* by Daniel Lieberman, a fascinating read about the science of physical activity, rest and health.

I hope then that this article encourages you to take steps to become more active, take responsibility for your overall wellness, and has helped you find support if you need it. Make this the year that you eat better, get active and make new friends.

**Where do snowflakes
keep their money?**

Snowbanks

Away from home?
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Turtle Grove/Tufts Cove

By Paul Martin

Traditionally, the Mi'kmaq were seasonally nomadic, which means that in all parts of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and various areas of New Brunswick, the Mi'kmaq who have lived here for thousands of years, would move on a seasonal basis to take advantage of available natural resources. In winter, they hunted caribou, moose, and small game at places like Wekope'kwitk (Truro) and Sipekne'katik (Shubenacadie). In summer, they fished, gathered shellfish and hunted seals on the coasts at places like Taqamiku'jk (Tatamagouche) or Katjipokoeg (River John).

One of these coastal summer homes was located at a place the Mi'kmaq called Turtle Grove or, as it is known today, Tufts Cove. Turtle Grove was a summer residence established many generations before the arrival of the Europeans. Turtle Grove was so revered by the Mi'kmaq, because the temperature was relatively warm and they could hunt and fish all year round without having to move, so they established this place as a permanent settlement. They had wikuoms (wigwams) made of birch bark for use in good weather and some small, simple wooden structural homes for winter weather and an "Indian school." The community was located on the Dartmouth side of K'jipuktuk (The Great Harbour, Halifax) and was at Kepe'k (the narrows) or the narrowest point between Dartmouth and Halifax. Today this site is easily identifiable by the three tall red and white smoke stacks on the Dartmouth shoreline. It is important to note that Dartmouth, as of 1766, had approximately 39 non-indigenous people living in the area. It was nearly vacant.

As part of the colonization of Nova Scotia, the English Government began a campaign to entice settlers from European nations, and later, the Loyalists from the United States, to come to Canada with promises of free land and goods. As was the case in many parts of Nova Scotia, and without consultation with the Mi'kmaq, the property in and around Halifax, including Dartmouth, was divided into lots to be given to incoming immigrants. As they arrived, the Mi'kmaq villages were displaced,

and eventually disappeared due to settler encroachment. By way of example: In 1790 the British Crown granted 1000 acres to a carpenter by the name of Gershom Tufts of Massachusetts. This acreage included Turtle Grove. The land now became "private property." It had its name changed to Tufts Cove, and, suddenly, the Mi'kmaq were considered squatters and trespassers on their own land - but refused to leave their cherished home. Again, without consultation with, or consideration of, the Mi'kmaq, the land at Tufts Cove, including the Mi'kmaq settlement, through the years was subdivided and resold. Because the Mi'kmaq remained at their settlement, they were subject to constant harassment and ongoing threats of expulsion. Eventually, and after many years of negotiations with the Department of Indian Affairs, an acceptable deal was reached where a plot of land at Albro Lake would now become a new Mi'kmaq "Reserve". To sweeten the deal, it was agreed that the government would build new homes, a new school and provide medical supplies. Finally, following many years of pressure to leave their home and a mere week before the move was to take place, something happened that put an end to both Turtle Grove and the promised new settlement at Albro Lake.

On December 6, 1917, a French cargo munitions ship, the "SS Mont Blanc" and a Norwegian ship the "SS Imo" collided in K'jipuktuk, and a catastrophic explosion occurred, soon followed by a 20-foot tsunami. Roughly two thousand people were killed and many parts of the city were destroyed. The Halifax Explosion thus became a well-known part of Canadian history. What is not readily found or mentioned is the number of Mi'kmaq killed and injured at Turtle Grove.

Because of inaccurate government census records, the precise number of Mi'kmaq who lost their lives that day is not known, but nine bodies were recovered out of a possible 30 souls - three of whom were my ancestors. My great-uncles Henry and Frank, along with a cousin Louis, were killed on their way to school that morning as they went down to the shore to watch the burning boat - just

prior to the explosion. Their older sister, my great-aunt Rachel, was severely injured but recovered against all odds and lived to relay the story. The explosion, in effect, served to rid Turtle Grove of the unwanted Mi'kmaq in several ways. First, the explosion killed many of the inhabitants. Secondly, unlike the city of Halifax, the community of Turtle Grove was not rebuilt - probably because it was to be eventually vacated and, finally, the new settlement at Albro Lake, as promised, was never developed with new homes and a school. In fact, the new settlement at Albro Lake never came to be. Thus, while some Mi'kmaq families settled in other areas of Halifax, many left the area completely and so the issue of the unwanted Mi'kmaq of Turtle Grove was settled.

For the Mi'kmaq at Turtle Grove, which included my own relatives, there were many unwarranted injustices including prejudice, theft of the land, broken promises and horrific destruction. This history was one example of what Indigenous peoples have experienced throughout North America and beyond, and still endure today. None of this history can be undone, but it is important that this information is put into print for all to read and contemplate. Rather than ignore and condemn, perhaps as a step toward reconciliation the greater society could learn to embrace, support and celebrate Indigenous histories and cultures - as many already do.

Wela'liog - Thank you to all.



River John Fire Department News

by Krysta MacLellan

December was a busy month with wrapping up our 2023 year. We held our Annual Meeting where we elected our 2024 Officials. We would like to say "Congratulations" to

- Chief - Terry Heighton
- Deputy Chiefs - Carson Bigney
James Brown
- Captains - Darren Allen
Cody Joudrey
Travis Heighton
Brian MacLean
- President - Robert Heighton
- 1st Vice - Cody Joudrey
- 2nd Vice - Patrick Mulholland
- Secretary - Jordan Dares
- Treasurer - Krysta MacLellan

We then proceeded to have our special visit from Santa Claus, who graciously passed out treat bags to all the kids who came to send off their last-minute Christmas wishes before the big night. Santa was very pleased to see so many kids, and hopes he was able to give them what they wished for.

To finish off our busy year, we rang in the new year with a New Year's Eve Dance. We thank everyone who came out and hopefully everyone

enjoyed themselves.

In January, we had some members of our department get certified in Ice Rescue Training. This consisted of a 2-day weekend. Day 1 was Theory and Day 2 was Practical. Many of our members participated in this and gained a lot of knowledge of different techniques for rescues. We would like to congratulate those who received their certification.

As usual, we would like to say many thanks for your continued support of the Nova Scotia Firefighters 50/50 Draw. The money we receive from this goes towards buying some helpful and needed tools, gear and training which not only helps us, but helps the community as well. Once again, a huge Thank You from the Department!

An upcoming event will be our St. Patrick's Dance to be held on March 16th.

We will be having a meeting regarding our levy on March 17th, which we encourage everyone to attend.

We are also having a hypnotist coming for a

show, and planning on a BBQ Raffle. Please keep an eye out for these events in the future.

Our Safety tip for this edition is to be mindful of the weather and road conditions. We are experiencing warmer days with cool nights. There will be higher risks of black ice, thawing and freezing of roads, soft dirt roads with some major spongy areas. Please be mindful of school buses and kids on days when buses are "travelling paved roads only." On such days there may be a bus stop at the end of dirt roads where there normally isn't a bus stop.



Photo Caption: Ice Rescue training

Making Tracks

by Maggie Howatt

Winter. Time to slow down, snooze in front of the fire, sort through those books you never got read, simmer soup on the stove and shovel a bit of snow, or a lot of snow in early February. But not all creatures take a break in the winter. Those that aren't hibernating are keeping pretty busy finding food and staying warm and safe.

A fresh snowfall is a perfect canvas for detecting our winter wildlife, and the snowshoe hare is no exception. The distinctive, long, hairy, hind feet allow the hare to travel across the top of the snow with speeds up to 45 km per hour and leaping 6 feet with one bound. Take that Superman!

The snowshoe hare creates major runways through the undergrowth and keeps the lanes clear by snipping back new growth. These runways are important escape routes from coyotes, mink, great horned owls and goshawks. The coat of the snowshoe hare turns white in the winter, a perfect camouflage as it chews on its winter forage of bark and twigs, working its way up the trees as the snow deepens, which is how a rascally rabbit girdled eight inches up one of my young oak trees.

A native of Nova Scotia, snowshoe hare populations peak about every ten years and there can be as many as 400 hares per square kilometer. The track of a snowshoe hare is quite distinctive, resembling exclamation marks in the snow along with the little telltale 'raisins' scattered along its path.

The long, slender ermine, also called a weasel or stoat in the summer, develops a white coat in the winter with a black tip on its tail. Its thin body enables it to worm its way down rodent burrows in search of small rodents, such as mice and voles. The ermine will occasionally go after chipmunks, squirrels and even hares. Their small, paired tracks zigzag back and forth across the top of the snow and are easy to identify as they inspect every clump of grass and possible burrow.

The smaller rodents such as mice, voles and moles, also leave tiny prints on the snow as they skitter across from one safe haven to another. Most of their time is spent under the snow in that rela-

tively milder zone between snow and soil and after the snow disappears in the spring, and in the case of mice, you can often find hollow balls of grass where they made their nests.

The deer mouse, hopping along, leaves a four-print track with a distinctive drag mark between footprints from its long tail, until the track disappears at a round hole in the snow. I find it very entertaining to spy this track as it winds its way across a fresh field of snow... and if a mouse was taken by an owl or a hawk, you may also notice the print of a wing tip where it brushed the snow as it touched down to grab its prey.

Back in the woods and the shrubby areas, the ruffed grouse struts along, picking its meal of catkins and buds from poplars, alders and birch, its main winter diet. The distinctive bird foot track, each step separate from the other and directly in line, winds along through dense brush and forest floor. The grouse may leave a curled brownish/yellow poop, often a few of them, below a higher branch where it may have perched for the night. The ruffed grouse is a deceptive flyer as it twists and turns through the dense woods, bursting out into an opening and practically taking your head off as it continues its panicked flight to safety. You wouldn't guess it was so skilled, the way it seems to favour bursting out of the ditch right in front of your \$2500 replacement headlight. The ruffed grouse manages very well in the deep snow, both able to travel over it on its scaly feet or burrowing down for warmth under spruce boughs.

Most of us recognize the track of the white tail deer, maybe through your tulip bed or vegetable garden, as well as in the woods and fields. The deep hoof print plunging through the snow and its own little pile of raisins along the trail are easy to identify. And if you look carefully, you can see where the deer have been browsing on tips of young saplings, biting off the tender ends as it strolls along or detouring between deadfalls of spruce and fir, stripping the lichen called old man's beard... a crucial source of food when there is little else.

The bobcat is common in Nova Scotia de-

spite being trapped and snared by the thousands in the 1900s. This handsome member of the cat family is about the size of a cocker spaniel and sports a bobbed tail and a mottled grey-brown colour coat. Its print in the snow resembles a cat paw but twice the size. It stalks prey on its large furry feet and can leap up to ten feet or run short bursts up to 30 mph. This elusive hunter has very little body odour and will sit motionless waiting to ambush its prey. It will eat almost anything: small rodents, birds, hares and will even pounce on a small deer if easier game is scarce. A bobcat kitten born in late winter sets out the following late fall as an individual youngster, so they aren't experienced with winter travel. Another reason not to throw food trash out the car window along the road: it attracts rodents, which attract owls and bobcats. Neither do well with vehicle encounters. So strap on those snowshoes or pull on those boots and get out on a nice sunny day after a fresh snow fall and observe what the wildlife has been doing to keep on keeping on: back yard or woods road, it's always an adventure.



... ..continued from page 18

between ourselves and other living entities, each of which, as part of a biodiverse ecosystem, plays a role in creating a healthy environment, preserving clean air and water, and defending against drought, floods, fire, and erosion."

Purdy also notes that she was drawn to the issue of glyphosate because she wants to encourage others to view forests as more than a resource. "As a child," she states, "I found unconditional love in the forest and with the other beings in the forest. The forest is a healing place in the community. We cannot afford to destroy the healing places in our community."

These sentiments were shared in Springhill on September 9th, 2023, when the group organized a public gathering around glyphosate being sprayed in Cumberland. There were approximately a hundred attendees, including families, grandparents, and children. Speakers such as Bob Bancroft, President of Nature Nova Scotia, and Ben Kendrick, a local amateur mycologist and discoverer of several rare and endangered species of flowers and lichen in Cumberland County, spoke at the event. Ann Hennigar filled in a few details about the current politics of the issue at the local, provincial, and national levels.

Local "Don't Spray" members Larry Duchesne and Mary Purdy also contributed their perspectives. The speakers were followed by an open discussion during which one attendee outlined the

debilitating health effects she has suffered over the past several years as a result of glyphosate exposure. Radio Canada TV and the Cumberland Wire covered the event, with Radio Canada TV featuring it in a documentary on glyphosate on their Saturday night news program.

Now thinking back to the 2023 season, the group reflects on this event with pride. Hennigar stated that she felt "...that education was the key to this whole thing, because once people know it's happening, they want to take action. They want to voice their dissent."

As trees begin to bud in a show of spring, "Don't Spray" now turns its attention to preparing to respond to the 2024 fall spray list which will come out in August. A big change the group will grapple with this year is that the province has opened up Crown lands to spraying, meaning that favoured camp sites, hiking trails, fishing spots, foraging areas, and birding hotspots could be hit with glyphosate.

Members aim to connect with people living next to spray sites in Cumberland to share information on the impacts of aerial spraying and glyphosate in the hopes that more demonstrations like the one at Pugwash River will occur, led by local residents. "Don't Spray" also looks forward to continued meetings with Cumberland North MLA Elizabeth McCrossin-Smith, Cumberland South MLA and Minister of Natural Resources Tory Rushton, and Environment Minister Tim Hallman, as well as a continued effort to have the

Cumberland Municipality address petitions signed by hundreds of Cumberland residents over the past summer.

If you would like to become involved, Cumberland residency is not a requirement. The group anticipates that all types of support and skills are needed and useful. "Don't Spray" can be contacted at dontspraycumberland@gmail.com, on their Facebook page (Don't Spray Cumberland County), or through their Instagram (@dontspraycumberland). If you'd like to keep abreast of the spraying, spray site lists are released in early August via the NS Dept of Environment's web page.



Along the road at the Pugwash River site

News from River John Legion Branch 108

by Mike Topley, President

The Legion Smelt Fry marks the time of the year when the days start getting longer, and the snow-banks start getting smaller. Over 120 guests were happy to enjoy their annual feed of fresh Miramichi smelts, biscuits and desserts at the River John Legion on the last Saturday in February.

Planning began weeks before with the ordering of smelts and call-outs for biscuits and desserts. The kitchen was transformed into a smelt cleaning, washing and freezing assembly line, the posters were put up and to our dismay a weather warning was issued to forecast freezing rain and snow for the big day. Regardless, we proceeded and on smelt day, battering and cooking began before sunrise. A small army of cooks, servers, and clean-up crews were well-appreciated by the folks who enjoyed their full platter of crisp smelts, biscuits and molasses. All to the live music from local musicians River Run.

On a more businesslike note, at our February meeting, our 2024 Executive was installed by Zone Commander Charles McIsaac. Branch Service Awards were also presented to Marilyn Heighton and Dave Cochrane for their outstanding service over the years. The new executive for this year includes Harley White, Past President; Mike Topley, President; Mae McIntyre, Treasurer; Margaret Barry, Secretary; Lynn McLeod, First Vice-President; Ken Fox, Second Vice-President and David Flemming, Third Vice-President. Committee chairs and special appointments include Willis Langille, Sergeant-at-arms; Mary Beth Sutherland, Branch Chaplain; Mike McIntyre, Poppy Chair, Harley White, Service officer; Nelson McInnis, Membership Chair and Maureen Topley, Booking Coordinator (Maureen's number is 902 351 2261 for booking purposes).

New members Cathy Covey, Vicki Patton and Dave Munro were inducted by Zone Commander Charles and welcomed into the branch. We also welcome two member transfers from other branches, and they are Jason Langille from Tamagouche branch and Don Goodall from the Pictou branch.

On the pickleball front, the snow is melting off our courts and several members of the River

John Pickleball Club are making plans to head north to their summer homes and cottages. Here they will join up with a keen group of River Johners to enjoy long days and evenings of the game that has become one of the most popular and growing sports in Canada. Our New Horizons grant application is under review and if approved will fund a perimeter sidewalk, assembly area, court lighting and hopefully a rebuild of our outdoor washrooms. Get ready, get fit and let's go.

Plans proceed with our June hosting of a Legion "Gathering" of families of Nova Scotia veterans who lost their lives in Afghanistan. Because of an expected large turn-out, attendance at this event will be "by invitation" only.

Fortunately, the large snowfalls in February didn't require Comfort Centre services, but we remind everyone that we are fully registered with MOPC Department of Emergency Services as a River John Comfort Centre, and our new generator is ready and waiting.

The Recreation Committee's Meals on Wheels program continues to operate out of our kitchen and volunteers deliver some 40 hot meals every Wednesday under the care and control of Melanie Cote and Sandra Patriquin.

Other regular activities at the Legion through the week include the Kids First program every Monday morning at 10 a.m.; Line Dancing lessons every Monday afternoon at 1 p.m.; Washer Toss starting at 1 p.m. on the 2nd Saturday of every

month; and Cribbage starting at 1 p.m. on the 3rd Saturday of every month. And don't forget Karaoke every Saturday night starting at 8 p.m. Doors 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 "Chase the King" prize that builds until the King of Clubs is drawn.

Finally, the Legion Executive and members would like to congratulate the Food Bank and Health Centre on their grand opening, and welcome them as our new next-door neighbours.



Lynn MacLeod presents Norma Fox with a gift and thanks her for her exemplary work as Poppy Chair.



Charlie and Victoria Kia take a work break at the Smelt Fry to enjoy a dinner with son Will and sister Marcia.

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Lion Wallace Sutherland

By Lion Cheryl Frizzell

Did you ever wonder who drives the blue pick-up truck that is seen picking up the recyclables donated and left on the River John & District Lions Club veranda?

Well, that same person has been doing community service for 40 years.

Stationed in CFB Gagetown, New Brunswick, Wallace Sutherland joined Geary Lions Club on Feb.22nd, 1984, promising to serve his community, and forty years later he is still serving his community.

As a member of the Geary Lions Club, he was instrumental in the starting of a new Lions club, the "Burton Lions Club." That is when he took on the title Guiding Lion Wallace, which he took very seriously.

After Lion Wallace retired from the Advanced Pioneer Wing in the military, he and his wife Anna moved to their hometown of River John. Wallace transferred his Lions membership to the River John & District Lions Club, and is still a very active member of the club today. In the past he has held positions such as King Lion, Zone Chairperson, Visitation Chair, Ways & Means,

Recycle Chair, and also served on many committees, working on the Annual Chicken BBQ and River John Breakfasts.

Today Lion Wallace really hasn't slowed down much. He has chosen to help on club events,

guiding the newer members as they work on events and projects. He still chairs the recycling program at the club, is on the nominating committee, and advises the club on procedures, activities and events.

Wallace has fond memories of the club. This is evident as he smiles and laughs telling stories about the conventions, the club visits across the province and the friends made along the way. Looking at Wallace's vest and hat, seeing the badges and pins, they are true testaments to his 40 years



King Lion Ann Patriquin presented Lion Wallace Sutherland with a Certificate and Lions Vest for 40 years of service in the Lions Association.



Zone Chairperson Diana Swaby and King Lion Ann Patriquin congratulate New Baby Lion Ashley Patriquin

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What's all the Hoopla about Hoopla?

By Rob Assels



Borrow free digital video, music, and audiobooks with your library card.

The Pictou Antigonish Regional Library and the Community Access Program (C@P) society would like to introduce you to Hoopla. Hoopla's website says: "Borrow and enjoy audiobooks, eBooks, comics, movies, TV, magazines, or music everywhere you have a screen-your computer, your phone, your car, even your TV. All you need is a library card."

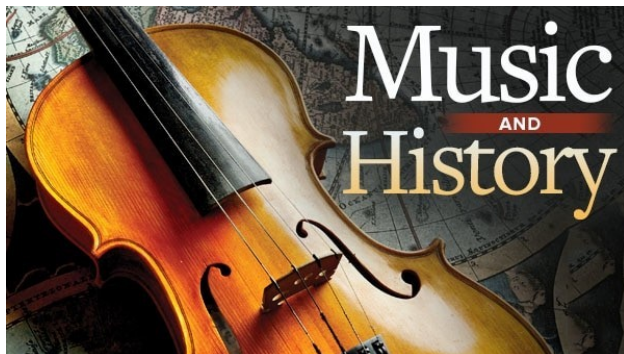
So, what's not to like? Well, there are a few things. Hoopla's browsing feature is not great; rarely do you find subsequent seasons of the same series next to each other in the listings. And it doesn't have the latest blockbuster movies. But its biggest drawback is that you are limited to 10 downloads per month. That's a lot not to like, so maybe we should discuss why you should go to the library and sign up.

It's free. And if you are a family of five trying to make ends meet, free is important. Furthermore, your family of five could watch up to 50 items per month if each of you has a library card.

There are over 10,000 items to download. So, there's a large range of downloads from comics for young children to almost every British murder mystery ever made. Hoopla also has a "bingepass" which allows you to use a single download of your 10 per month to access the full set of specific titles, and while these are largely for children, there are also complete courses from Arts to Zoology that would appeal to adults. I counted 100 courses including:

stargazing workshops or who have borrowed one of our telescopes.

Hoopla works on mobile devices, tablets, smart TVs (essentially any TV that allows an HDMI connection) or any computer. You will need a li-



brary card. To maximize the number of monthly downloads, get library cards for everyone in your household. You can register online but if you encounter any problems, just stop by the library and we'll help you out.

Note: If you'd like to get involved in the C@P society, our next meeting is March 25 at 6:30pm at the library. We won't make a big hoopla about it, but you will be warmly welcomed.



Four year old Jade Dares was the winter of the Family Literacy Challenge

At the River John Library, March 2024

By: Trecia Schell, Community Services Librarian

Welcome to the River John Library!

Finally, spring is around the corner and new beginnings too. The winter was busy, with lots of folks dropping by – especially for our Family Literacy Day challenge and children's programming with Helen Chudley and Barbara Acker. And the monthly Music with Heather Cameron, usually held on the first Wednesday (until April 2024) at 2 p.m., has been fantastic fun for the whole family. The Young Readers Club with Helen meets on the first Thursday of the month at 6 p.m., in-person and online, and is always open to new members. If you'd like to join, please let us know.

Love LEGO? Drop by the River John Library on Friday afternoons from 2-5 p.m. and build away!

The Makerspace at the library continues to grow, and Abby Falconer has several upcoming workshops planned and more on the way. For more information, and to register for these programs, and if you need any tech help - feel free to reach out to Abby at the River John library.

Hoopla: Join Abby at the River John Library on March 7th from 6-7 p.m. to learn about Hoopla Digital and have your name entered to win an Apple TV Device.

Silhouette: Make a customized water bottle at the library on March 21st from 6-7p.m.

3D Print: Design your very own 3D printed key-chain and have it printed out right here at the library on March 14th from 6-7 p.m.

Interested in Genealogy and local history? The library subscribes to Ancestry.ca, and you can access the full version using one of the public computers in the computer lab of the library. Abby is also on hand to offer assistance in navigating your search.

New to the community or want to connect with community? Why not drop in and join us for Afternoon Tea/Coffee Socials from 2-4 p.m. All are welcome to drop by for conversations and light refreshments, you never know who you might meet.

Looking for some crafting fun? The RJ Square Knitters meet at the library on Friday mornings, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. All are welcome to drop by. Love chatting about books? The Book Club with Barb is held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m. and always welcoming new members. If you'd like to join us, please contact the library.

Dreaming of green thumbs? This spring, we look forward to the return of the Little Seed Exchange at the library. If you have seeds to spare, please let us know. Also, Mandy Sandbach with

SOULfully Soil, will be by to lead several gardening workshops in April. Seating is limited, and registration is required.

Gardening on a Budget... FOOD is free! – Thursday April 4th, at 1 p.m.

Let's Get Growing, kids! A 3-part children's workshop series on Tuesdays from 6-7 p.m., starting on April 9th

Library programming suggestions are welcome, please let us know if you have something to share. For more information on all our upcoming library programs and services, please call (902) 351-2599, email riverjohn@parl.ns.ca, or drop by the River John library – we're open Tuesdays through to Saturdays. You can also follow us on Twitter, find us on Facebook, and visit us online at www.parl.ns.ca.

Winter Storm



The Storm: My Weekend at Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital

by Janie Craig

I showed up to work on Saturday morning with a bag packed, anticipating being there Saturday night because I knew the roads wouldn't be fit to come home, and I was scheduled to work Sunday morning. Little did I know I'd be there until Monday afternoon! Sunday turned out to be much worse than Saturday, and we all quickly realized we would be stuck for another night. My sleeping arrangement for the weekend was a cot in a dark office. Although all of us were tired from lack of sleep and very shack-whacky by the end of it, we were warm, well fed by our cook, and entertained by each other and the patients. Of course, we had a great crew working the weekend which made our time there much more enjoyable. It was nice to be able to spend some extra time with the patients and laugh about how stir-crazy we were all getting. I was very glad to get home in the end but will always cherish the memories we made that weekend.