



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."

Opening and Re-closing of the River John Millenium Time Capsule

By Amy Fraser

On January 1st, 2025, the community of River John held a Levy at the River John Fire Hall and came together to open the Millennium Time Capsule that was sealed back on December 31st, 1999. Over 250 people showed up to celebrate with us.

The organizing committee, which was made up of the original members from the first time capsule, consisted of Marilyn Heighton, Valarie Langille, Ronnie Baillie, Cecile Heighton and Willis Langille.

Lots of preparations and planning were involved in making this event happen. This included numerous meetings, sending letters, sourcing decorations to try and make the event look like it did back in the year 2000, finding donors, and locating a company to do an amazing firework show, before the residents filled up the capsule, to once again be sealed, and wait for 2050 to be opened again.

The event started at noon with some mingling and finger foods, along with a slide show of pictures from the 1999-2000 New Year's Eve dance when the capsule was first sealed. Cecile Heighton and Marilyn Heighton opened the event with an official welcome and speech, and were able to get in touch with Pat and Luc Gauthier over the phone. Luc was the 2000 Millennium Baby in River John. The group sang Happy Birthday to Luc over the phone and a cake was cut to celebrate his birthday.

It was a pleasure to be able to have Jim MacLeod there, the creator and builder of the Time Capsule. Colin Heighton, who, at the age of 11, had won the contest to design the logo for the T-shirts, was also present. This logo was used for swag and for new T-Shirts that were sold as part of the fundraising for this year's



L to R: Cecile Heighton, Valarie Langille, Alan Heighton, Marilyn Heighton

celebrations. Once speeches were over, the capsule was officially opened and community members were given their treasures that had been sealed up for the last 25 years. This included letters written from parents, grandparents, siblings. Little tokens and trinkets left by loved ones. News articles, old photos, quilts, old menus, and a variety of other items.

The band Derailed started playing at 2 p.m. and kept everyone on the dance floor cutting a rug all day. People were moving and grooving to the great tunes, creating an amazing atmosphere and a great place to be. The River John Fire Department opened the bar, serving ice cold drinks that were flowing all day. Thanks to Jason and Willie for keeping everyone happy. For the most part, this was an over-19 event. Kids arrived around 5:30 p.m. to place new items in the time capsule and to take in the fireworks. The fireworks show was slated to start at 6:30 p.m. but because of the forecast, the show began a little early, and what a show it was. Thanks to the sponsors for donating to such a great show that was well over 10 minutes long.

Everyone had a terrific time and lots of new memories were made.


Once the fireworks show was over, everyone moved back inside the fire hall. Derailed continued playing for another hour while community members filled the time capsule with their items. The kids got to see the big box which will hold their treasures; it was an exciting feeling knowing that some of them may not remember or know that something was put in the box for them, but that in 2050 most of us will be there to watch the smiles on their faces when they receive what was left for them when it's re-opened at the next celebration.


Overall, the event was a huge success, with so many participants and onlookers, a lot of memories being brought back and new memories made.


I will oversee the opening of the 2050 Time Capsule and will be looking for volunteers in 24 years to help plan to make the 2050 opening even bigger. So, get your thinking caps on and contact me if you think it would be something you would like to be involved in.

Janet Butler

REALTOR®

 janet.butler@viewpoint.ca

 (902) 396-6062

 www.viewpoint.ca



ViewPoint
REALTY

List with Confidence, Sell with Success.
Your Trusted Pictou County REALTOR®

The Mystery of the Killick

By Beulah Jane Wright

This past summer, a lady came into the museum and asked if I wanted a strange looking item – a huge rock embedded in the cleft of a round and peeled piece of wood, like a tree branch, with a curved piece of wood on the bottom, holding the rock within. It was nearly three feet high, and it was heavy. There were wedges of wood making it tight and one small piece of metal under the bottom. What was it? The lady had no idea what it was but said it had been rescued from the shores of River John. I was intrigued and asked everyone who came in if they knew what it was. Finally, a visitor, who was from Newfoundland, suggested that it was a Newfoundland anchor. Okay, it was roughly the shape of an anchor, so I started looking for homemade or Newfoundland anchors, with no luck. Another visitor, who had just come back from a trip to Newfoundland, agreed, said she had seen miniature ones offered for sale in gift shops, as Newfoundland souvenirs. We were on the right track.



Finally, another lady came in and I started my query, and she said, “Oh, that's a killick.” Once I had a name, I found some information. I contacted the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and was told they also had one and I was sent a picture. Theirs was a bit different and much bigger. I realize that probably each one was unique, according to the builder's wants and needs and the available components. I found out that the killick was native only to Newfoundland and there were various spellings of the word, killock for example, and that the killick was used up to the beginning of World War II. Also, the term killick was applied to navy personnel, as was verified by a navy veteran who told me he had been a “killick” once. Mystery solved but now another mystery - how had it reached the shores of River John? Or was it a Nova Scotia killick, as I recently heard that killicks had been made and used on the Eastern Shore as well. In River John shipbuilding days, there were many ships built for or sold to Newfoundland. Could one of the prospective buyers have sailed into River John and lost their anchor in the Bay? We will never know the rest of the story but the search was fun and our killick is an interesting artifact to display in the museum and so we are grateful to the donor.



MOST TRUSTED PAINT PROVIDER IN TRURO



Change the Look of Your Home for
a Fraction of the Cost With Our wide
Array of Paint Colours

Ask About Our Colour Match Software for All of Your DIY Projects!



Residential Paints

Industrial Paints

Painting Supplies



Epoxy Flooring provides a durable and bright interior finish that
will withstand heavy traffic

Visit Our Store for a Vast Selection of Epoxy and Industrial Coatings

Call today

902-893-9493

carterspains.ca

243 Industrial Avenue, Truro, Nova Scotia, B2N 6V3



Joudrey Road

MUD MULCH & MORE

(902) 890-3413

DELIVERY AVAILABLE

Gravel Mulch

Compost Top Soil

HANN

AUTOMOTIVE INC.

- Brakes • Exhaust • Alignments
- Tires • Tune ups • Undercoating
- Major & Minor Repairs
- Motor Vehicle Inspections

485-1588

11 FRONT ST. PICTOU

Winter Fun on the River

John Allen Murray and Nick Bigney enjoying a beautiful winter day on their snow mobiles. The mixture of cold and snow made for perfect conditions to race up and down the river.

GET YOUR SUMMER TOYS INSURED TODAY!

Motorcycles

Cottages

Watercraft

Trailers & RVs

ATVs & Rec Vehicles

Seasonal Vehicles

22 George St.

902-485-8551

Call or visit us in downtown Pictou for a quote!

AA

MUNRO

INSURANCE

kw

SELECT REALTY

KELLER WILLIAMS

Mary Brown

Associates

FREE HOME EVALUATION

FREE HOME EVALUATION

WHAT'S YOUR HOME WORTH?

Marci Heighton

902-986-2557

3

River John Community Support Garden and Greenhouse

By Bernadette MacDonald

The River John Community Support Society, that owns and manages the River John Food and Health Centre, is ready to expand the garden and greenhouse to citizens in the River John and surrounding communities. Last year, spring through fall, five to ten volunteers showed up each week and managed to grow a lot of food, some distributed through the Food Centre, and the excess given to family, friends, and neighbours of the volunteers. This year, we want to continue to provide food to the Food Centre, and expand the garden space to offer garden plots and raised beds to interested community members. Anyone interested in a garden plot and/or a raised bed, please contact us through our email address cssriverjohn@gmail.com.

While the focus of the volunteers will be on growing food for the Food Centre, they will also be able to assist everyone interested in growing their own food in their own garden plot and/or a raised bed on site. This year, due to the greenhouse, there will be a lot of watering needed. If you would like to be a garden volunteer and help, please contact us via email and we'll get back to you. The raised beds will be particularly helpful for people with issues like bending down or kneeling. They

are wooden and about 8 feet long x 3.5 feet wide x 4 feet high, and will be filled with soil and natural fertilizer. The garden plots still need to be laid out but will be sectioned to a manageable size. If you want more space for your food needs a second plot can be made available, if there are some that haven't been claimed. The greenhouse (100 feet long x 50 feet wide) will be completed this spring to start our own seedlings and some food production can happen in it through the growing season. The final step in completing the greenhouse construction will be putting the plastic covering over the frame. If anyone can assist with this please contact Paul Baron at the following email address: cssriverjohn@gmail.com. We will have to be very particular about the day and time chosen as it can't be windy, and that doesn't happen often. If you are interested in assisting us with this task, please contact us as soon as possible, and Paul will alert you to the day and time we will all be coming together to complete this. The more hands, the better. Besides the anticipation of more people coming forward to grow their own food on site, we want to start offering food preparation and preserving programs. We do know some people who are experts in this, and our plan is to offer

programming from them. We also know that in our community there are a lot of people who have expertise in this and other areas of food production and preserving. If you are someone who would like to share your expertise, please contact us at our email address cssriverjohn@gmail.com. We would like to offer your expertise in the future as well. We look forward to hearing from you. Photo caption:

One of the raised beds being offered to local gardeners to use for growing their own vegetables.



Destination River John

By Diane Kennedy

Spring is moving time, FOR SALE signs go up and before you know it, SOLD signs appear. If you are like me, you are tired of moving, or maybe this is your first or last planned move. No matter which way, moving comes with many joys and challenges. Fitting into a new community, finding new friends and groups to join, a new doctor, dentist and hairdresser, or simply to find a great cup of coffee. The list goes on and on.

The River John & Area Welcome Committee is happy to help you with many of those needs. We invite you to join us at your River John Library on Tuesday, May 6th, 6:30 to 8:00 pm. We will provide refreshments, smiles and lots of information about the River John area. There will be local residents to welcome you as well as representatives of the MANY local service groups. River John offers a wide variety of groups and organizations that you can join.

The fastest way to meet people and feel at home here is to put yourself out and get involved.

Continued on page 27

River John Fire Department News

By Krysta MacLellan

The Fire Department would like to send out a huge thank you for the continued support through the Nova Scotia Firefighters 50/50 draw that takes place every Thursday. Tickets can be purchased online at firefighters5050.com/107. We are currently working towards saving up to purchase a new fire truck to replace our 1991 Pumper. We have been working towards some upgrades to our upstairs hall over the last year or so with such things like new stage curtains, fresh paint, stripping the floors and fresh wax put down, new curtains for the windows, dollies under the stage for storage, new tables, and a few more upgrades to help update our hall. With warmer weather on the way, we would like to remind people that dirt roads and shoulders will become soft with the thawing of the ground and can sometimes make driving more challenging. Please drive with caution and watch the shoulders as soft

shoulders can sometimes pull you into the ditch. Also with the warming weather, warm

Continued on page 19

**RIVER JOHN FOOD SERVICE
(KELLY'S)**



We now have take-out pizza, hot out of the oven. We also have donairs, subs, and garlic fingers. The best you've ever eaten!
Order ahead for fast service and pick up. I guarantee you'll be back for more!

WINTER HOURS:
Thursday - Sunday 4-9pm
Closed Monday - Wednesday

RIVER JOHN OLD SCHOOL, 2 SCHOOL STREET
902-351-2929



Someone Else's Shoes

By Joan MacKeigan

Walter lay there in his bed, quietly staring outdoors past the old shoes perched on a hook beside the window. Gloria and Becky bounced into the room, basin in hand, ready to give him his morning wash-down. His next scheduled bath wasn't until Wednesday. Gloria had been a CCA (continuing care assistant) for years, Becky had just finished her course. She had wanted to be a veterinary technician, but she missed the intake deadline. This job paid OK and came with a healthcare program and a pension plan. She was hired just yesterday.

"Mornin' Walter," chirped Gloria. "Checking out the weather, are we? They're calling for rain, they are." She perched her basin on the small table and started in at washing his face. Walter winced. He hated sponge baths. As they rolled him over on his side to wash down his back and rear end, Becky caught a glimpse of the old shoes on the hook. "What's with the shoes?" she said over his head.

"No idea," replied Gloria as she dipped the washcloth back into the basin. "They've been there forever. Must be someone else's shoes because Walter only wears slippers. He seems to like them hanging there so we just kinda leave them. Don't get too close," she laughed. "They probably reek, right, Walter?" Walter didn't reply. It wasn't worth it. He couldn't anyway. He'd had a stroke. He had lost the ability to speak. He'd lost a lot. Basically, nothing moved anymore except his brain and his bowels – and they only moved when prompted by the twice-weekly Fleet enema – which he hated worse than sponge baths.

Yes, Walter liked those old shoes, sneakers actually. Yes, they were someone else's. Someone he remembered, oh, so well, but someone no one else here knew or would ever know. That someone else wore those sneakers sailing and even playing tennis in the early days when they were still white and clean. That someone else had won provincial championships in both sports. Had even been on the Olympic back-up team.

Later, as the sneakers got a little more "worn in" looking, that someone else wore them coaching kids' soccer on muddy fields, twice a week for years. They were on the feet of that someone else for the lovely long hikes in the woods with his wife and their faithful border collie, Joe. Those someone else's shoes had marched back and forth across the lawn behind the lawnmower on Saturday mornings, year after year. Over the years they had picked up a lot of soil from many happy hours in the garden. They were pretty worn out now. And yes, they probably reeked now, too.

Walter had vivid memories of wearing those shoes, back when he was someone else. But now he was just an old disabled widower, in an institution, a name on a to-do list on bath mornings, getting washed down by a CCA who had missed out as a veterinary technician. His Monday-morning sponge bath would last fifteen minutes. Then he would be wheeled out to the big lounge and perched beside another window, where he would stare, "checking out the weather," as Gloria would say.

He knew he was someone else. But no one else here knew or would ever know. The world just knew that someone else's shoes were hanging by his window.

Shop Hours: Open Daily 10am-4pm beginning May 1st
JANUARY - APRIL, OPEN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Visitor Sheep Barn Opens May 17TH



Wool Blankets, Sheepskins, Slippers
Lots of Yarn, Felting Supplies and Much More!

Our own raised lamb now available.
Inquire in the shop.

1389 Louisville Rd., River John | 902-351-2594 or 902-351-2889
www.lismoresheepfarmwoolshop.com



40 Years of River John Festival Days

By Debby Shaw

This year will be the 40th anniversary of River John Festival Days. The first year, 1985, the theme was Set Sail for River John. Audrey Brown was a dressmaker here in River John and sold her handmade quilts. As a fundraiser that year, Audrey made a quilt designed especially for the festival. The quilt was on display and tickets were sold. Arnold Brown won the quilt. Sadly, Audrey died the next year, but the quilt was passed down through the Brown family and Christine Heighton still has that quilt. I heard other interesting facts from that inaugural year. A fashion show was conducted featuring local young people, including Audrey's daughter, Elaine Brown (now Langille), who presented two dresses made by her mother. Elaine remembers wearing a white fur stole supplied by Ross Furs of New

Glasgow. They supplied furs for all the models to wear. There was also a pageant, and the entries had to wear homemade dresses or Ross Furs items to support their sponsorship. Elaine remembers that, in the pageant, Tammy Forward (now Langille), wore a beautiful white dress in the style of a wedding dress that Audrey had made.

This year, Elaine, with the help of her daughters, Kaylee and Cassie Langille, is following the family tradition of quilt making, and honouring, Audrey. The quilt they are making is representative of this year's anniversary theme. It will be displayed during festival week and tickets will be sold. The design is under wraps and not to be revealed until Festival Days in July.

How exciting that this family quilting tradition will now span three generations.

River John Square Knitters

By Netta Heukshorst

As always, our knitting needles and crochet hooks are keeping busy. We participated in several local markets to raise postage money: November 15th at Willow Lodge, November 23rd at the West Branch Hall, November 29th at Ebbett's Farm Market in Tatamagouche. Also in Tatamagouche on December 4th we decorated a Christmas tree at the Fraser Cultural Centre for the Festival of Trees, using many colourful squares and small boutique items; it looked very nice. Tickets were sold over the summer months on a lovely homemade Afghan and the draw took place on December 15th at the library. The lucky, excited winner was Kathy MacLean of Halifax.

No bundles of squares have been mailed lately but a good amount has

accumulated so at least ten bundles will be mailed out soon.

On a sad note, one of our bundles in South Africa, along with some others, was stolen and held for ransom, thieves wanting \$72.00 for its return. Well, that wasn't happening! The last word was that they would be returned as no monies were forthcoming, keeping our fingers crossed. Let's hope that event will not be repeated.

We have pretty dishcloths for sale at various local places such as the Overstreet Cafe, the library, the post office and the Country Bread Basket in Brule. All monies raised are greatly appreciated.

Donations of yarn, new or leftover, are welcome and may be left at the library.

Continued on page 19

MOPC Climate Change Action Engagement

By Ed Kennedy

The Municipality of Pictou County (MOPC) Council's Climate Change Advisory Committee hosted a series of eight public engagement meetings in January, 2025, including the first meeting at the River John Legion on January 7th. The meetings were an important step in the development of a Municipal Climate Change Action Plan (MCCAP) that the Advisory Committee is overseeing.

The objectives of these meetings were to share with participants the key results of research about climate impacts on Pictou County and the proposed actions to mitigate and adapt to those impacts, and to receive their feedback on what they heard. From Merigomish in the east to River John in the west, and from Caribou in the north to Eureka in the south, some 175 citizens participated in the meetings. A copy of the slide deck presented at the meetings can be found at <https://munpict.ca/council/climate-change/>.

Participants were invited to provide their views on the importance of the proposed actions that were presented and to share additional ideas for climate action in the county. Most of the people who provided feedback felt that the proposed actions were of medium to high importance. The most popular action topics and idea examples in the feedback received from participants at the meetings were:

Wildfire Management/Fiona Cleanup (e.g., Develop a wildfire management strategy, organize a program for clearing of trees and windfalls close to homes, develop a Fire Smart program, create fire guards between high-risk areas and properties and planned ignitions, employ selective cutting and preventing monocultures to help reduce blowdown and wildfire risk.)

Food Production (e.g., Provide young farmers with funding and other kinds of help for growing multi-crops, encourage gardens, fruit trees, vegetable markets and promote Nova Scotia First, develop classes for growing home gardens.)

Education/Communication (e.g., Use social media, more radio ads and videos for schools to educate on climate change, develop a one-stop MOPC website with resources that will help Pictou County residents who are dealing with climate impacts, create an email address for feedback and communication about climate change action.)

Coastal Erosion Control (e.g., Provide discounts/funding for homeowners to plant native plants/weeds/roses/trees with fast-growing roots along the shoreline, limit the type and size of buildings near the shoreline to reduce damage loss amounts, develop more stringent zoning and regulation to ensure that new construction is built to new standards that accommodate new climate threats, in the Land Use Planning program restrict development in high-risk areas and have mandatory shoreline setbacks.)

Evacuation/Vulnerability (e.g., Develop a seniors' registry for evacuations, work with MOPC citizens to develop emergency and evacuation plans, develop water escape routes for residents close to the Northumberland Strait, provide generators for gas stations and small businesses.)

The Advisory Committee is hoping to table the Action Plan recommendations with the MOPC Council in late Spring, 2025. While not all the ideas can be included in the initial MCCAP, the plan will be a living document, with ongoing assessments and additional action recommendations to the Council annually. Climate change education and engagement will continue to be a principal component of MOPC climate change action planning. The Advisory Committee is very thankful for the citizen participation in the Climate Change Action Engagement Meetings. The MOPC Climate Change Advisory Committee is committed to furthering the objectives outlined in our climate planning efforts and incorporating the feedback of community members. Progress will be shared through the County's monthly newsletter, website, and social media platforms.

Be True to Yourself

By Marg Jones

Here at the Pioneer, we don't often have a problem of needing to find articles to fill the newspaper; it's more often the problem of finding space for all the great articles that folks submit. But for the rare occasion when we need "fillers" I jotted down a few inspirational quotes I came across that might be worth keeping in mind. Here they are:

Give - but don't allow yourself to be used
Trust - but don't be naive
Love - but don't allow your heart to be abused
Listen - but don't lose your voice
Speak - but don't be unkind in your words
Believe - but don't trust every word you hear
Hope - but never expect
Look forward - but never wait
Care - but don't neglect yourself
Learn - and never stop learning

River John Sidewalk

By Mike Topley


Over 550 petitioners have confirmed the need for a sidewalk in River John. 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 Lion's children's playground, the seniors' residence or simply go for a walk. In summer, folks land their kayaks, pontoon boats, paddleboards and canoes at Roger's Landing, look up & down the road and wonder how to get a coffee or ice cream cone. Planning for the current proposed alignment (from the bridge to Meh's store) began in 2021 and continues. Councillor Ronnie Bailey recently advised the River John Community Action Society that MOPC engineers are looking further into the design/construction details, and that council will be considering our project along with others on the 5-year plan to determine which projects advance. So, when chatting with your Councillor, Warden, MLA, or MP, please remind them of the need for a sidewalk in River John.

A Change in The Pioneer Leadership

By Ed Kennedy on Behalf of the Editorial Team

As you may have noticed in the article, "Editorial - The Inside Story" in the Fall, 2024 issue of the Pioneer, our editor for the past four years, Joan MacLeod, has resigned. Starting in 2020, Joan provided energetic leadership and built an editorial team of which she was proud. Full of ideas and innovative ways to improve and expand the Pioneer, Joan ensured that each issue was packed with local news and announcements of interest to the residents of River John and surrounding areas. The team valued her leadership and enjoyed our meetings for the preparation of each issue of the newspaper, which could sometimes involve supporting Joan to stay on track. A born extrovert, Joan really enjoyed the camaraderie with the editorial team - the meetings were a social event, often including liquid and solid refreshments. We miss you, Joan.

Although we are sorry that Joan has resigned, we are very fortunate that one of our newer members of the editorial team, Kelly Shaw, has picked up the reins. A professional educator at the Nova Scotia Community College campus in Truro, Kelly has extensive experience in writing and editing. Working with Joan during 2024, she learned the Pioneer layout and publication ropes, and was ready to lead the production of this, her first issue, the Winter/Spring 2025 Pioneer. Kelly is very organized and upbeat as well as a gracious host of our editorial meetings in her home. The editorial team is thankful for Kelly's leadership and looks forward to working with her to produce many more Pioneer issues in the years ahead.



Ph: (902) 305-5414
Fax: (902) 900-9184

229 Main St.
Tatamagouche, NS
B0K1V0

River John Comfort Centres

Emergency Comfort Centres will be open when an emergency is declared by Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO) of Pictou County

First report point will be the River John Legion. The three Comfort Centre reps will meet at the Legion to determine further action. There are three Centres in River John:
RJ Legion Branch 108
2506 River John Station Rd.
RJ Community Food & Health Centre.
2456 River John Station Rd.
RJ Firehall 3 2
School Street

Contact List:
River John Legion: 1st Report Centre
President: Mike Topley
Mobile: 902-890-7236
Email: topley.mike@gmail.com

Comfort Centre Rep: Maureen Topley
Mobile 902-957-2344
Email: maureenbtopley@gmail.com

River John Community Support Society
Food Centre Coordinator:
CristyAnn Langille
Mobile: 902-324-8897
Email: shanerlangille@hotmail.com

Comfort Centre Rep:
Hannah Mertin
Mobile: 902-301-5810
Email: hannanmertin10@gmail.com

River John Firehall
Fire Chief: Terry Heighton
Mobile: 902-324-0412
Email: rjdfchief@gmail.com

Municipality of Pictou County
Emergency Service Director: Evan Hale
Mobile: 902-759-1714
Email: evan.hale@munpict.ca

Regional Emergency Management Org. of Pictou County
Coordinator: John Davidson
Mobile: 902-759-1797
Email: coordinator@remopc.ca
811- Non-emergency 911- Emergency



Mom Debbie looks on as Rylan Algarra drops his package into the time capsule at the River John fire hall New Year celebrations on January 1st, 2025.

Read by the Sea Gearing up for 25th Anniversary Taking its Show on the Road

By Jackie Jardine

With spring on the horizon, excitement is building for the 25th anniversary of the Read by the Sea (RBTS) literary festival, and this year, big changes are in store. Traditionally held in River John, the festival is moving to Pictou's deCoste Culture Hub and Murray Family Public Library on June 20 and 21. Along with a new location and dates, RBTS is expanding its programming, bringing fresh literary events throughout the year to celebrate this milestone in style.

Committee member Sarah Butland highlighted the significance of this milestone, stating, "This is a banner year for the festival as it celebrates its silver anniversary, and it also marks a major year for the newly opened deCoste Culture Hub. We saw an opportunity to celebrate both and bring greater visibility to the festival, benefiting both the literary community and local tourism."

The festival's evolution was also influenced by the retirement of two long-serving volunteer board members, prompting organizers to rethink its structure and offerings.

A key addition to RBTS this year is Books on the Breeze, a literary series inspired by the festival's original Village Series. This initiative brings author readings and workshops to various locations in Pictou County, broadening the festival's reach.

The series launched in January with writer and original RBTS founder Linda Little leading an event at Pictou Library. Halifax's former Poet Laureate, Lorri Neilsen Glenn, followed with a session on February 22. The upcoming lineup includes:

Alexander MacLeod - March 22,
Westville Public Library
Lesley Crewe - April 26, Antigonish

Public Library
Lana Shupe - May 10, Westville Public Library

Books on the Breeze is made possible through partnerships with the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library, deCoste Performing Arts Centre, Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia, Arts Nova Scotia, Creative Pictou County, and Access Copyright, ensuring all events remain free to the public.

Main Festival Events on June 20-21

The festival's main programming will continue its tradition of showcasing distinguished authors across multiple genres.

WordPlay (June 20, 9:00-9:40 a.m., Murray Family Public Library) is a children's literary festival featuring Toronto's Kevin Sylvester and Edmonton's Joan Marie Galat, offering engaging storytelling sessions for young readers.

OnWords (June 20, morning, Murray Family Public Library) is a session designed for middle-grade and young adult readers, featuring Toronto authors Basil Sylvester and Jean Mills. Attendees will hear book readings and participate in discussions on writing, publishing, and creative inspiration.

The festival will conclude with its Main Stage event (June 21), featuring four prominent authors:

Myna Wallin (Toronto, poet and author)
David A. Robertson (Winnipeg, Indigenous author and two-time Governor General's Literary Award winner)
Charlene Carr (Halifax, novelist)
Vernon Oickle (Liverpool, multi-book author)

RBTS remains committed to providing enriching literary experiences and fostering

connections between authors and readers. For updates and additional details, visit readbythesea.ca.

VON Meals on Wheels Program in River John Area

The VON in Pictou County offers frozen meals, available for pick up or delivery. There are 40 entrees to choose from, including gluten-free, low-sodium, low-fat, low-calorie, and texture-modified options. \$6 each, no tax or delivery charge. Delivery on Wednesdays. To see the menu, for more information or to register: Call 782-233-1097 or email CSSPictou@von.ca.

www.sunsetbeachcottages.com



Proprietors:
Terry & Linda
Reid

Cape John Road
902-351-2079
terry@sunsetbeachcottages.com

The River John Community Action Society (RJCAS)

By Gillian Joudrie

Join the River John Community Action Society and Make a positive impact in your community. RJCAS is a group of volunteers who help to make big things happen in our small community. We help to look after Bissell Park, including grounds, washroom, benches, deck, and dock. Roger's Landing also falls under the auspices of RJCAS, including securing funding for its creation and upkeep. We also make financial donations to other community groups, including the River John Festival Days committee, to help with their week-long event, the Lions Club Christmas Dinner, and hiring a Recreation Committee summer student to help with park maintenance and day camp.

Here are just a few things that RJCAS have been up to this year:
Fundraising efforts including a BBQ and Fashion Show.

blockbuster fashion show. Stay tuned for the exact time and date. The docks at Bissell Park and Roger's Landing have been removed for another season.
Cleaned up Bissell Park during the hot summer months.
Installed the Welcome to River John sign in the village.
Purchasing new Welcome to River John signs.

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

And a bit of a teaser: It is hoped that at the end of May or the beginning of June you can look forward to yet another

River John 4-H Club News

The River John 4-H Club started the year off with a successful registration, with 15 members - 12 returning members and 3 new members. The club offers beef, sheep, rabbit, cavy, foods, crafts, goat, light horse, dog, clover-bud, dairy and waterfowl. The members attended several community events including the Remembrance Day service at the cenotaph. They held a chili supper fundraiser on February 28 from 4-6 p.m., eat-in or take out, at St. George's Church Hall. The club also takes time to have fun as they enjoyed a mini golf fun night at Simply Golf in Westville. A great time was had by all who attended, playing mini golf for 1½ hours, followed by pizza. The club has many other activities planned for another busy year and greatly appreciates the community's support. We meet the first Sunday of each month at 4 p.m. at St George's Church Hall. Please email Christine Heighton at riverjohn4h@gmail.com for further details.

River John Community Action Society

**P.O. Box 161, River John,
NS B0K1N0**

The Pioneer is published three times a year, and is produced by volunteers. It is distributed throughout the River John area, including West Branch.

Mission Statement: The Pioneer community newspaper's mission is to be a voice for River John and area. We report on current and historic events and news, while being mindful of the fact that River John is situated on the unceded land of the Mi'kmaw people.

We reserve the right to edit letters and articles for clarity and brevity.
We reserve the right to refuse to print letters.
Profanity will not be tolerated.

Please follow the guidelines below when submitting items for publication:
Maximum of 1200 words per article and 450 words per obituary.
Articles and photos should be submitted together at the same time.
Articles in plain text, MSWord format (.doc, .docx, or .odt) and photos in .jpg format.
Author's name should be included below the title of the article.
Captions for photos should be added below the article.
Do not embed photos and images into the text document.
We usually limit the number of photos to 1 or 2 per article, so please do not be offended if you send more and they are not published.
Please check for accuracy and spelling, particularly names.
All content should be emailed to:
rjpioneer.story@gmail.com.



Above Picture:

Mary Tothill with her grandson, Kyle Oliver, from Maine. After many years of dedicated studies, he received his Doctor of Business Administration - Leadership on January 25, 2024. Kyle is the son of Sheila Landi, formerly of Cape John.
Celebrating academic achievements is often a family highlight. The editorial team apologizes for the delay in publishing this submission and add their congratulations to those well deserved. Quite an accolade, Dr. Oliver.

We are Looking to the Future

By Rob Assels

Friends of the Library is a local not-for-profit organization that takes care of the building that houses the Janice Murray Gill Memorial Library. The library was built 25 years ago. As most of you know, buildings need constant upgrades and ongoing maintenance. Friends of the Library meets every two months,



usually for less than hour to make sure the library is in good shape, accessible and safe. Our Annual General Meeting is on Wednesday, April 23 at 6 p.m. There will be pizza, so please let us know in advance if you plan to join us. It's not a big-time commitment and it's a good group - very welcoming of new members and recent arrivals in the community. No special skills required (maybe a sense of humour). If anyone would like to become a member and provide input on the future of the building, feel free to email me at r.assels@icloud.com .

What's Up at the River John Library?

By Trecia Schell, Community Services Librarian, Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library and
Helen Chudley, Managing Branch Assistant – River John Library

We're easing into winter with lots of gathering at the library. Our Tuesday afternoon socials have returned. All are welcome to drop by and join us Tuesdays after 1 p.m. for a cuppa and conversation in our cozy corner.

In January, we held two popular workshops with Mandy Sandbach, from SOULfully SOIL, on how to make your own sourdough bread and how to grow your own sprouts at home. To wrap up the month, with Family Literacy Day celebrations, children created their own terrariums and planted forget-me-not seeds. They also make their own binoculars out of paper towel tubes. The winner of the Family Literacy Day Challenge was Rylan Algarra, who went home with a very nice bag full of goodies.

For February, we celebrated Groundhog Day, making a cute groundhog puppet that jumped in and out of its den. Several more very popular homesteading workshops were held by Mandy, on topics such as Immune Support and Syrups, Ginger Bug Fermented Drinks, and Sourdough Inclusions. Gillian Crawford, from Lismore Sheep Farm, dropped by and taught a workshop for adults on how to make felted coasters and ornaments for Valentine's Day.

Library fun in March begins Saturday March 1, as we celebrate Paper Bag Princess Day, with make your own crown and other great activities based on the much-loved book by Canadian children's author, Robert Munsch. For March Break, we invite everyone to drop by and tryout our Scavenger Hunt and LEGOS all week long. There will also be several special workshops - a Garden Bingo with Mandy on Tuesday March 11 (1 p.m.) and Kids Felting with Gillian on Thursday March 13 (1 p.m.). For adults, we have An Intro to Permaculture workshop on March 8 (11 a.m.)



Rylan Algarra was the lucky winner of the Family Literacy Day draw at the River John Library.

and a 3-part series on Growing Food Security with Mandy on Thursdays, March 13, 20 and 27 at 6 p.m. Seating is limited for all workshops; please call the River John Library to register.

April is peeking around the corner, and we're excited to host National Canadian Film Day at the library, with a free screening of *You are Here: A Come from Away Story*, on Wednesday April 16, at 3 p.m.

The RJ Square Knitters continue to knit up a storm and meet weekly on Friday mornings. Barb's Book Club continues to explore new books and meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday at 4 p.m., and Helen's Young Readers Book Club (for youth ages 9-12) meets monthly on the first Thursday at 6 p.m. (in person and online by ZOOM).

Library programming and services 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 are open Tuesdays through to Saturdays. You can also follow us on Bluesky, Instagram and Facebook, and visit us online at www.parl.ns.ca.

River John Public Library's Open Hours:

Tuesdays: 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Wednesdays: 10:00am - 1:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Thursdays: 12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Fridays: 10:00am - 1:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Saturdays: 10:00am - 3:00 p.m.

Helping Hands Pantry: A Local Non-profit Dedicated to Supporting Pictou County's Vulnerable Populations

By Samantha Acorn

My name is Samantha Acorn, and many of you have seen my posts on Facebook where I seek donations for the unhoused community. I would like to take this opportunity to provide a deeper understanding of the work we do at Helping Hands Pantry.

Before joining Helping Hands Pantry, I worked independently within the community to provide food, support and essential supplies to those experiencing homelessness. In September, 2024, I began delivering hot meals, initially targeting the unhoused population. However, this initiative quickly expanded to include seniors and families with school age children.

We have several key milestones to celebrate. In October, 2024, we hosted the Soup of Hope event in partnership with the Krusty Bowl in Tatamagouche. During this event, we successfully distributed over 1000 bowls of soup across Pictou County, Truro, Portapique, and River John. Since September, 2024, we have distributed more than 2000 meals to individuals in need, primarily focusing on

those experiencing homelessness. As the weather grew colder, I began collecting items such as tents, jackets, blankets and other essential supplies for those sleeping rough. This revealed significant gaps in support for those individuals.

We continue to provide hot meals and essential supplies such as propane, butane, food, hygiene products, and more. These efforts are made possible through the generosity of community donations and the purchase of items when needed.

In addition to our hot meal program, we operate four community food pantries located in Pictou, Westville, and Stellarton. These are stocked with donations to ensure that community members have barrier-free access to food when they need it most.

Looking ahead, we are currently a donation-based organization, but are actively working to gain access to the Second Harvest food waste rescue app and secure additional funding to expand our reach.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the following individuals and organizations for their continued support:

Danielle Fraser, Helping Hands Pantry, The Krusty Bowl, Tatamagouche, The River John Lions Club, Ashley and Sean Crouse, River John Community Support Society, Global Pet Foods, Pizza Delight, and all the community members who have generously donated clothing, food, tents and other essential items. At Helping Hands Pantry, we believe that everyone deserves access to food, and we're deeply grateful for the opportunity to give back to our local community. To stay informed about our latest initiatives and updates and to find out how you can help, please follow or join our Facebook page [Helping hands pantry].

Continued on page 14

The Pioneer is published three times a year, and is produced by volunteers. It is distributed throughout the River John area, including West Branch.

Mission Statement: The Pioneer community newspaper’s mission is to be a voice for River John and area. We report on current and historic events and news, while being mindful of the fact that River John is situated on the unceded land of the Mi’kmaw people.

We reserve the right to edit letters and articles for clarity and brevity. We reserve the right to refuse to print letters. Profanity will not be tolerated.

Please follow the guidelines below when submitting items for publication:

- Maximum of 1200 words per article and 450 words per obituary.
- Articles and photos should be submitted together at the same time.
- Articles in plain text, MSWord format (.doc, .docx, or .odt) and photos in .jpg format.
- Author’s name should be included below the title of the article.
- Captions for photos should be added below the article.
- Do not embed photos and images into the text document.
- We usually limit the number of photos to 1 or 2 per article, so please do not be offended if you send more and they are not published.
- Please check for accuracy and spelling, particularly names.
- All content should be emailed to: rjpioneer.story@gmail.com.

Editorial Board: Kelly Shaw (pioneereditors@outlook.com), Ed Kennedy, MaryBeth Sutherland, Linda Thompson-Reid, Debby Shaw, Beulah Wright

Submissions/Photography: [Christiane Gill \(rjpioneer.story@gmail.com\)](mailto:rjpioneer.story@gmail.com)

Advertising Sales: [Julie Windebank \(rjpioneerads@gmail.com\)](mailto:rjpioneerads@gmail.com)

Advertising Accounts Receivable: [Melanie Miller \(pioneerpayments2000@gmail.com\)](mailto:pioneerpayments2000@gmail.com)

Graphics: Dylan Langille

Typist: Sandra MacKay

Proofreading: [Margaret Jones \(bmjcapers@gmail.com\)](mailto:bmjcapers@gmail.com)

Layout: April Jollimore

Printing: Advocate Printing & Publishing Ltd.

An annual subscription of 3 issues per year, including postage to anywhere in Canada, is \$22.50. For more information, contact Melanie Miller (address above).



2024/25 Advertising Rates

Ad Size	Greyscale Price	Colour Price
Business Card	\$16 or 3/\$45	\$24 or 3/\$67.50
Half Page	\$167	\$250
1 col x 4"	\$30	\$45
1 col x 7"	\$52.50	\$78.75
2 col x 5"	\$75	\$112.50
2 col x 9.5"	\$142.50	\$213.75
3 col x 2"	\$45	\$67.50
3 col x 5"	\$112.50	\$168.75

Place Your Ad With Us!
Email: rjpioneerads@gmail.com



DID YOU KNOW...

...that we will send The Pioneer to your friends and family anywhere in Canada when you purchase a year’s subscription for only \$22.50. What a great gift! That’s 3 issues, and that includes postage. For more information, contact Melanie at pioneerpayments2000@gmail.com

11 Harris Rd.
Pictou
902-485-4362
or
223 Foord St.
Stellarton
902-755-2277
Benjamin Moore Authorized Dealer

Writing Contest

By Linda Thompson-Reid

The Pioneer editorial team recently sponsored a writing contest as part of our celebrations of the paper’s tenth year of publication. The objective was to encourage children’s literacy, by asking the questions, “What makes up a community?” and “What are perspectives, contributions and challenges within the community?” To promote the contest, a member of the editorial team for the Pioneer visited four schools which River John and area students attend. There were 24 entries submitted by students attending three of the four schools – Scotsburn Elementary School, Northumberland Regional High School, and Tatamagouche Regional Academy. To grade the essays, the judges considered creativity and originality, clarity of expression and insightful reflection on community. The River John

Community Action Society donated the cash prizes for the essay winners. The awards were presented at the River John tree lighting ceremony on November 24th. The winners were:

Northumberland Regional High School

Tied for First Prize: Keighley Brooker, Grade 10, Hannah Waller, Grade 10

Scotsburn Elementary School

First Prize: Lilah Wiszniowski, Grade 5
Second Prize: Clara Gormley, Grade 5
Third Prize: Liv Irons, Grade 4

Special Recognition and Honourable Mention awards were also presented to 20 Grade 5 and Grade 6 students who attend **Tatamagouche Regional Academy**.

The editorial team who judged the essays appreciate the teachers’ support and guidance, which resulted in inspiring and thought-provoking entries.

Writing Contest Photo Captions

Photo 1

Lilah Wiszniowski

Photo 2

Keighley Brooker

Photo 3

Honourable mention
Garret Yantzi

Continued on page 12

What The Word “Community” Means To Me.

Lilah Wiszniowski, Grade 5, Scotsburn Elementary School

I didn't fully understand what the word “Community” meant when I lived in Ontario, but now that I live in Scotsburn, the word “Community” means so much more to me. I used to think the word “community” just meant a neighbourhood or a small town when I lived in Ontario. But the Scotsburn community is important to me and to some of my family and friends. The word community means love, sharing, contributing, caring for others, and events like the Scotsburn Fire Hall breakfasts, and the Food Forest show these things.

It doesn't only have to be businesses contributing – people too. If people want a healthy community, they have to put effort in. Lots of people mistake communities for being just a neighbourhood, but it could be whatever you want it to be. A community can be a classroom, a school, clubs, a family, sports, a brand, a business, a support group, or even a vegan community. A community should be a safe space for people to share their interests, hobbies, and likings.

Scotsburn community is a perfect example of a good community. Scotsburn shares communal activities like every Canada day; they host events through the hours including baseball games and a community barbecue. Sometimes they even have a three-legged race. The Scotsburn Food Forest hosts events like garden parties. The Food Forest even has a harvest share stand where anyone can take anything as long as people leave some food for others. The Pictou County community has an event called the lobster carnival. The lobster carnival has a parade with local businesses,

marching bands, the Royal William Cadets, floats and the pictou princesses. Then, in the evening, the lobster carnival has a bunch of volunteers, and they help sell beers and lobster dishes.

Our whole world is a community. A country or even a continent can be a community. And of course, if a continent can be a community, then so could a town/city, a street, or a household. Businesses can be communities too. For example, the Walmart community or the Sobeys community, the Winners community, and each fast-food business is a community. A community should be a welcoming place. I know that when my family moved to Scotsburn, I felt welcomed and never uninvited. Scotsburn was a nice place to move to. When I moved here, the Scotsburn community was a big part of why I didn't want to move back. I think that anyone who moves to a new place should feel a little like I did.

Scotsburn Elementary School also holds events. For example, they had a local business show to support small businesses. People can walk around the gym and go to different stands. Different volunteers who mow the baseball field and the field beside the Food Forest are big contributors because if people didn't mow the baseball field, they might not even be able to play! The 4-H club is a wonderful program that has different activities like crafts, cake decorating, welding, wood working, photography, and lumber-sport competitions that the whole community can watch. Then once the competing part is done, people go inside the fire hall and give out the medals, prizes and the trophy which is given to

whichever 4-H club did the best in the competition.

A friend from Ontario visited and had to say that he loved the food, nature and most of all, the people. He was saying that he loved the brown-sauce pizza, the seafood, and the local beer. For nature, he also loved the trees and forest and the beach being so close to home (even though he can't go to the beach because it's November). He loved the sunrises and sunsets and how there's no light pollution so you can see the stars every night. And for the people, he loved how welcoming and nice everybody is here. For example, if you say hi to people here, people won't judge, and people will wave from their cars. He also loved how close and friendly the community is.

My Dad, who dislikes feeling trapped in by tall buildings (which he definitely doesn't feel in Pictou County), loves the fresh air here. He also likes gardening because he has more space than in the city. He finds that people here are friendly and authentic, and he also loves all the interesting adventures that are a part of nature.

A friend from school who moved from Halifax when she was younger says that she loves having the beaches so close to home. She also says that she likes how healthy the grass is and how Scotsburn has the Food Forest and the harvest share stand.

Scotsburn has shown me what the word “Community” means.

The Meaning of Community

Keighley Brooker, Gr 10, Northumberland Regional High

Everyone grows up around some type of community. The people surrounding you as you grow have a big impact on the person you become. Community is so much more important than people think. There are multiple aspects to a community, and many people don't take the time to consider them. Many times, people fail to realize what a big impact their day-to-day activities can have on the community surrounding them. Ultimately, a true community isn't defined by the wealth or appearance of a neighborhood, but by the generosity and kindness within its people.

There is no such thing as a community without diversity. Different people from different backgrounds, and those that come with different stories have different morals and values. It's all our differences that come together to create a community. People have different opinions, and when they take the time and dedication to voice their concerns, it's worth listening to. It can be difficult for multiple people, whether it be people of different ethnicities, different ages, and different genders to have their concerns heard, due to past discrimination holding them back. But out of these struggles, improvements in the systems and unlikely bonds can form. By helping someone advocate for what they believe in, you can form friendships with those around you and make an impact on your community as a whole.

As a member of a community, it's important to realize everything you do has an impact on those around you. Perhaps the lady you smiled

at was having an awful day, and your small gesture gave her the sign she needed to keep going. Perhaps the man you cut in line was in a big rush, and you added a load of unnecessary stress to his day. Even the little things can have a big impact on those around you. Maybe the lady you bought a coffee for paid it forward and helped someone who was in need. Perhaps the donation of a can of soup you made to the food bank fed a family that didn't know if they were going to eat that night. Everything has consequences, it's up to you if they are positive or negative. It's up to you to make a positive impact on your community.

Community is so much more than the buildings on the street, and the amount of money in the bank. If you were to look up the definition of community, two different definitions would come up. The first one being “A group of people living in the same place,” and the second one being “A feeling of fellowship with others.” I think the community should be defined by its people, not by any physical features. If a community can come together to help each other and to support one another, these definitions can be switched and the things that truly matter will be above everything else.

In conclusion, community is vital in the upbringing of a person. Each person in the community has an impact on each other, positive and negative. It's up to yourself what you want that impact to be. Of course everyone is going to make mistakes, and

everyone won't do the right thing 100% of the time. But community is about being able to support each other through these hard times, whether you are close with the person or not. It takes nothing to be kind, and it means so much to an individual. Ultimately, a true community isn't defined by the wealth or appearance of a neighborhood, but by the generosity and kindness within its people.

West Branch and Area Community Association 31 West Branch Rd., West Branch

Greetings from West Branch. Hope everyone has had a good winter. We are continuing with our West Branch Wednesdays and have received more funding from the Seniors' Support and Connect Fund. These have been a huge success and provide an opportunity for speakers on a wide range of topics, a chance to get together and socialize and share a meal. These get-togethers encourage social connection and hopefully reduce isolation for our community members. We have applied to the Municipality of Pictou County and the Community Culture Tourism and Heritage Community Accessibility Program for funding to add a new accessible

Continued on page 18

Writing Contest

Continued from page 10

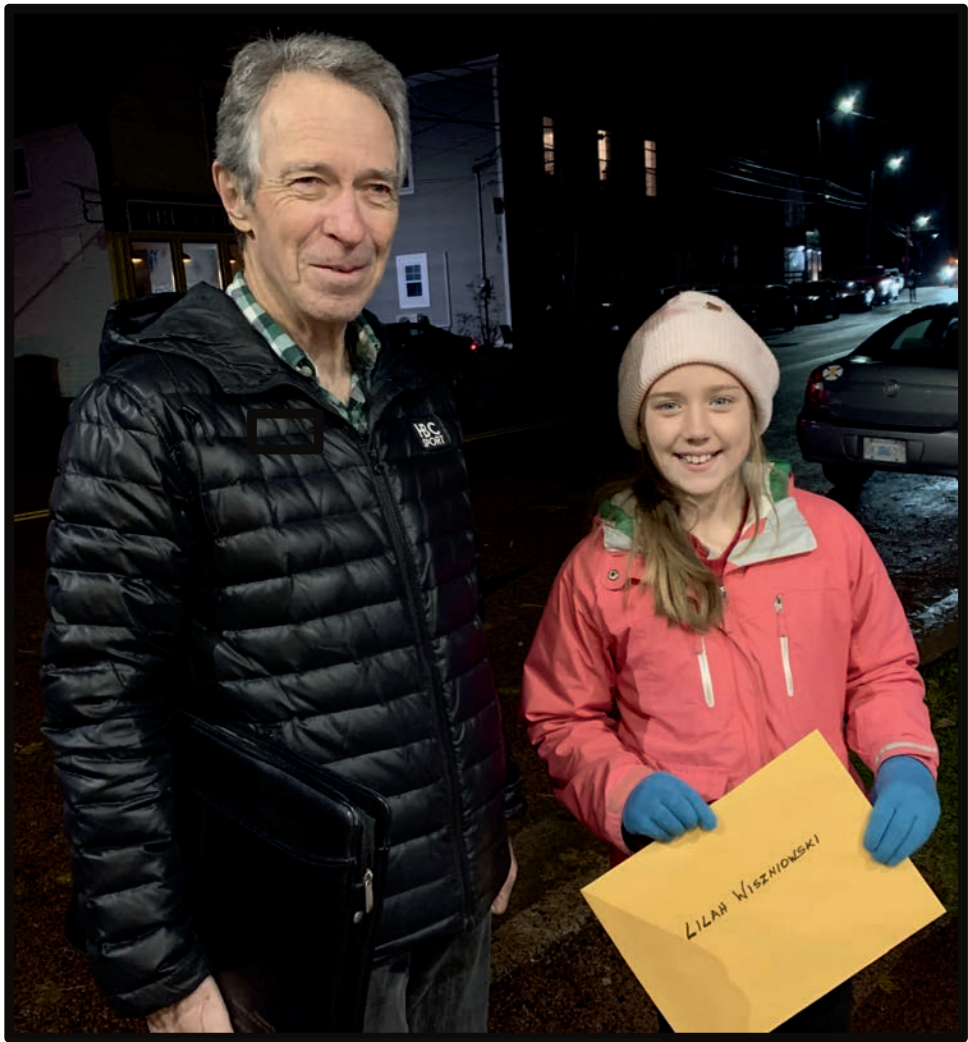


Photo 1 Lilah Wiszniowski



Photo 2 Keighley Brooker

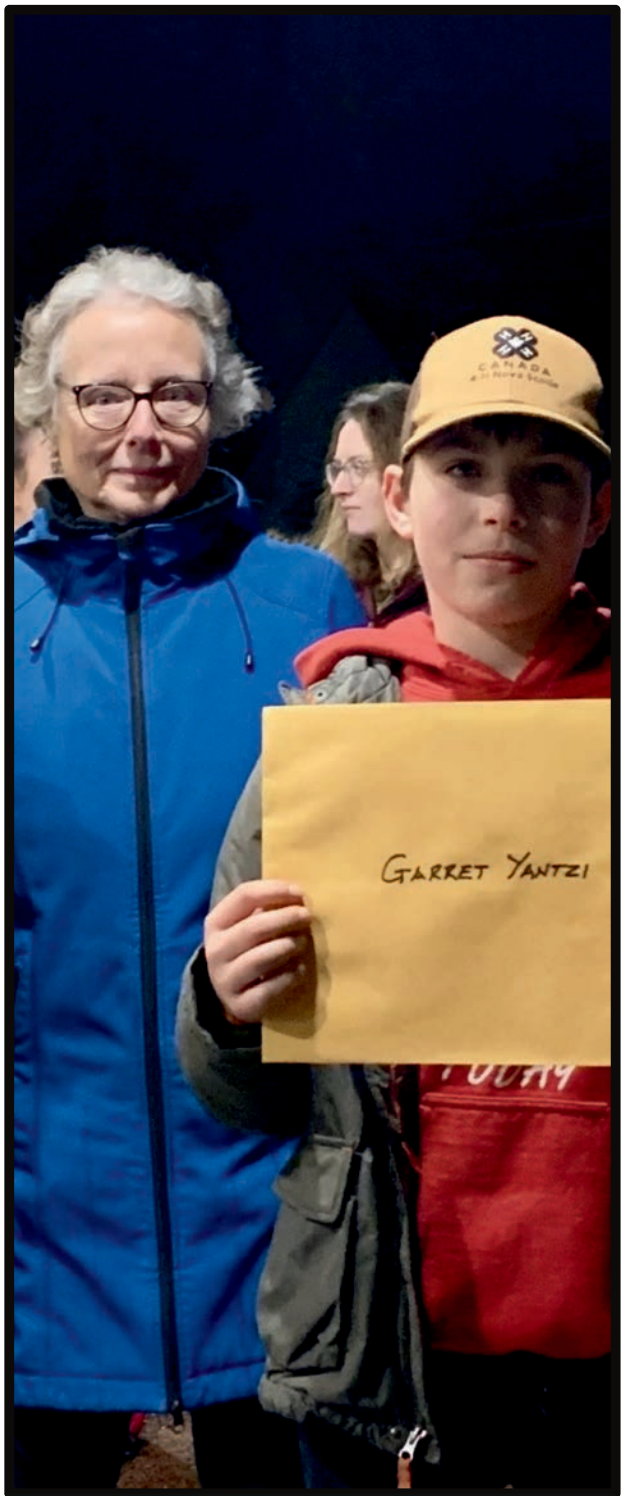


Photo 3
Honourable mention
Garret Yantzi

LEETIK ESSO
Gas Station & Convenience Store

YAP'S PLACE RESTAURANT
Finest Chinese & Canadian Cuisine

RR#1 River John
Pictou County, NS B0K 1N0
Tel: 902-351-2515 • Fax: 902-351-2145

A&M
SMALL ENGINES
Sales & Service Ltd.

40 YEARS
1985-2025

902-485-8866
amsmallengines.ca

4119 Scotsburn Road
Scotsburn, NS



MacMaster Surveys

Residential and Commercial Land Surveying
*Providing timely, personal and reliable service
with over 20 years experience.*

Mike MacMaster
NSLS, CLS, BSc.Eng.

(902) 233-0494
mike@macmastersurveys.ca

PO Box 124
River John, NS
B0K 1N0

www.macmastersurveys.ca

Remembering the Cream Separator

by Beulah Jane Wright

When we first came to River John, my father, who had shipped milk daily to a Halifax dairy, had to change to selling cream. Most of the River John and area farmers sold cream to one of two creameries located in Tatamagouche or Scotsburn. The cream was picked up by truck once a week. This necessitated a few changes in production, such as, the cream had to be separated from the whole milk, kept in a specialized cream can, in a cool place, until set at the driveway for pick-up. The farmer was given a shipping number which was painted on the can.

The separation of cream from the whole milk is a natural process. If the milk is allowed to stand, the cream rises to the top, because the butterfat particles are lighter than the skim milk, so if the cook wants heavy cream for a special recipe, it can be lifted off the container and enjoyed. But for commercial use, it must be a lot more precise. And that's where the mechanical cream



separator comes in. The machine was invented in 1877 by a Swedish engineer, Dr. De Laval, and modifications were carried out as time went on.

Separators are still used commercially, and can be purchased; some people, perhaps wanting to make their own butter, may still use one. The older style separators are often used as outdoor flowerpots; the stainless-steel bowls are nice and large and can be quite attractive for this purpose. Personally, we used our bowl for making large batches of bread.

I don't remember how my dad acquired his separator or how he learned the use and maintenance of the machine. The milk needed to be warm from the milking. The separator was bolted to the floor in our back kitchen. The force was manual, achieved by turning the crank until a certain speed was reached, and which had to be maintained. That was Dad's job, and there needed to be a helper to make sure the milk pails did not overflow; the can was positioned to catch the cream without any pause in the rotation. Two spouts extended from the machine, one for the skim milk and one for the precious cream. The children used to bring their cups to catch the warm skim milk for breakfast drinking.

Of greatest importance was the cleaning, twice

a day, after each use. The various parts were dismantled and washed separately in hot soapy water, then set to dry on clean towels and finally put back together for the next use. Eventually, the cleaning was my job, and it was tedious, especially for the disks. There were many, twelve or more, metal, cone shaped - they did the actual separation, and they had to be kept in order! The skim milk was for drinking and also fed to the calves. We set aside bowls of the skim milk for a few days, after which the curds that formed were made into cottage cheese.

The hand cranking type of separator was gradually replaced with electric models, cutting down on the need for manual force.

But that, too, is just a memory, and I don't regret a minute of my farming upbringing that I loved.

**GREEN
ESCAPE
PROPERTIES**

**Yard Maintenance
& Cleaning Services**
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

 **902-396-9131**

 **hello@greenescapeproperties.ca**

 **greenescapeproperties.ca**



Great People. Great Service.

We offer fast, reliable heating
fuel delivery for your home
or business in Tatamagouche,
River John, Toney River, Wallace,
Pugwash and Wentworth areas

- **Furnace repair, cleaning & maintenance**
 - **Furnace Oil**
- **Diesel fuel for construction, farming,
fishing, and forestry**
- **Full line of lubricants**

**Now Offering Residential and Commercial Propane
Sales, Service & Installation of:**

- Hot Air Furnaces and Boilers
- Water Heaters
- Fireplaces
- Cooktops and Ranges
- Pool Heaters
- Generators
- Space Heaters
- Hot Dawg Heaters

**ORDER
NOW!**

Call 902-657-2390
www.langillefuels.ca



Helping Hands Captions for Photos:
Picture 1
Samantha Acorn and CristyAnn Langille from the River John Community Support Society with her Soup of Hope donation for the food bank clients.

Helping Hands Picture 2
Samantha Acorn, Tricia Gallant, Krista McKay, owner of The Krusty Bowl in Tatamagouche, and Melanie MacGregor, owner of the Tatamagouche Grain Elevator where The Krusty Bowl is located.

News from River John Legion, Branch 108

By Mike Topley, President

Our annual smelt fry on Saturday, February 15th saw cool but sunny weather which encouraged over 180 folks to arrive at the Legion ready for their annual feed (or take-out) of the tasty little fish. Two hundred and twenty pounds of fresh whole smelt delivered direct from Shediac, NB, were reduced to 160 pounds after 6 hours of cleaning, prepping, and washing, ready for batter and the skillet. Biscuits and sweets topped off a full plate of smelt and molasses for every guest. Thanks to all who donated and to all those who worked and helped to make the day a success. Music Saturdays at the Legion began in February and will continue as long as folks attend. Our February performers were our own Jim White and Scott Oderkirk, aka “True Grit” who delivered a great mix of country, ballad, and rock’n’roll tunes that had many on the dance floor. A poster is attached for upcoming events, including Mike Chapman in March and Route 6 in April. Be sure to come on out. Fortunately, we are nearly past the worst of what winter may bring and (knock on wood) we haven’t had to mobilize our comfort centre services. We do remind all however that the Legion is fully registered with MOPC Department of Emergency Services as a River John Comfort Centre and our generator is ready and waiting to

provide stand-by power to the Legion. Our community is fortunate to have 3 registered comfort centres and plans have been made to coordinate the services of the Legion, the Fire Hall, and the Food Bank (CCS) should an emergency occur. For contacts see the notice in this issue of the Pioneer. Other regular activities at the Legion through the week include: Kids First program every Monday morning at 10 a.m. Line Dancing lessons every Monday afternoon at 1:30 p.m. Washer Toss on the 2nd Saturday of every month

Savor sustainability crafting global flavors

Green Escape Catering

Get ready to start pampering your taste buds!
Crafting Unique Menus for Every Celebration.
Elevate your event with customizable menus tailored to your tastes, themes, and budget.

BOOK NOW
+1(902)-396-9131

www.GreenEscapeCatering.ca Info@GreenEscapeCatering.ca

CHEF/OWNER
ANUSHKA SRINIVAS

OUR SERVICES

- Corporate Events
- Weddings
- Meetings
- Funerals
- Luncheons
- Social Events

Follow us on

UPCOMING EVENTS

"Music Saturdays

Branch 108 River John Legion

February 22	March 29	April 26
TRUE GRIT	MIKE CHAPMAN	ROUTE 6

2:00-5:00 Doors open at 1:30
cover \$10 which includes 50/50.
Bar and Canteen services available
Wheel Chair Accessable

Cribbage on the 3rd or 4th Saturday of every month. Regular Legion drop-in hours now include every Thursday evening 6-8pm. Come out for snacks, cards, music or maybe just a drink with friends. The Legion Hall can be booked for community events by calling Maureen at 902 351 2261.

RURAL LAND GUY.com

SPECIALIZING IN VACANT LAND IN CUMBERLAND, COLCHESTER AND PICTOU COUNTIES.

The Little Shop of Crafts

By Marg Jones

If you’ve ever driven down the Cape John Road in the summer months, halfway along the road you may have seen a bungalow up on a hill with a red, white, and blue OPEN flag flying from the front deck. Beside the garage sits a smaller building, known as The Little Shop of Crafts, proprietor, Marg Jones.

The shop has been there for quite a few years, it was built by Marg’s husband, Bert, when he got somewhat fed up with having to wade through shelves full of Marg’s crafts stored in the garage, before he could find what he had gone to look for.

Marg has been crafting for years. It all started around 1971, when her twin boys started school back in Northern Ireland and needed school uniforms. Marg says, “We didn’t have a lot of spare cash then, so, to save money, I bought a flatbed knitting machine for ten pounds. I quickly taught myself how to use it and had four school sweaters knitted in no time. Machine knitting is still my favourite craft. I think I really got started in other types of crafting when I was on the plane coming from Ireland to Canada, back in 1973; I passed the time on the flight starting, and



almost finishing, a crocheted granny square vest, all the rage back in those days.

Fast forward to 1996, and having tried many and various crafts, with knitting still the

favourite; retiring, and moving to beautiful Nova Scotia, I now had my very own crafts room, followed by my own little shop. Who could ask for more?

By the way, my motto is, “I’m a crafter, not a cook.” I readily admit it; well, no one can be good at everything, right? Bert has learned to eat what I put in front of him, he’s so easy to get along with.

Moving on, I have decided to cut down on the crafting, all except for anything knitting-related. I mean, I think one flatbed and five circular knitting machines, plus all the yarn that goes with them, is enough for anybody. So, I recently donated all my painting, card-making, jewellery-making, scrapbooking, leather work, Zentangling, plus a few more, supplies to several local groups and I can now move again in my crafts room. Phew!”

So, back to the Little Shop of Crafts. It’s open year-round, whenever I am home, which is most of the time in the winter, not as much in the summer, just call me before you come, to make sure, (902 351 3265). I still have a few non-knitted crafts there but am planning to concentrate on only knitted goods from now on. You’ll find my “famous” 100% wool felted hats there, also at the Lismore Sheep Farm, and at Crafty Shore in Tatamagouche. Come and visit my shop any time you’re “down the Cape” - it’s at number 922; don’t forget to call ahead in the winter and look for the Open flag in the summer. Everyone is welcome.



FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1890

**CONTROL YOUR FULLY AUTOMATED BLINDS FROM
THE PALM OF YOUR HAND**

We Provide a Large Selection of Blinds to Give Your Home a Refreshing Look

**Drop in Today to See Our
Large Selection!**

Honeycomb Blinds

Roller Shades

Dual Shades

Automated Blinds



Call today
For Free Quote
& Installation

902-893-9493

carterspaints.ca

243 Industrial Avenue, Truro
Nova Scotia, B2N 6V3



The Country Bread Basket
"You need the bread, We knead the dough"

Bakery & Coffee Shop

Come on Over and See What's Cookin'
Open at 8am for Breakfast

Muffins, Cinnamon Rolls, Baked Beans & More
Coffee Shop Open until 2 • Bakery Open until 2:30
Take-Home Soups & Sandwiches, Desserts, Pies,
Cookies, Coffee & Tea

629 Brule Point Road • 902-657-0041
Check us out at www.countrybreadbasket.ca
or email thebakery@countrybreadbasket.ca





**MELVILLE CORNER
HOMESTEAD**

2752 Highway 6

Fresh baking
available by order
all winter long!

Call: 902-921-3515



Pictou County Community Health Centre

The Pictou County Community Health Centre (PCCHC) opened its doors at 25B Front Street in downtown Pictou on January 8, 2025. Located in an accessible building, across from the Pictou West Food Bank, the centre reflects what can be achieved when a community comes together with a shared vision for better health. The centre is open to the public Mondays (1-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m.), Wednesdays and Fridays (10 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1-3 p.m.), with a full-time community health worker and a program developer on staff, as well as support from the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library's virtual care technician on Wednesdays, ensuring flexible and accessible services. Supported by the Aberdeen Health Foundation and the Department of Health and Wellness, this initiative is the result of years of collaboration, research, and a commitment to addressing gaps in local health care. "This isn't just about providing health care," says Susan MacConnell, the centre's Executive Director. "it's about creating a place where everyone, especially those who have been left out by the traditional system, can feel supported and empowered to improve their health." The PCCHC focuses on low-barrier access to health care for people who often face systemic challenges. This could involve connecting someone with a primary care provider through virtual care, helping them navigate social services, or providing connections to existing resources for food, housing, or mental health support. Instead of focusing on predefined programming, the centre aims to maintain its flexibility to address unexpected challenges that residents may face. "Maybe someone needs access to health care but they don't have a health card," Susan explains. "so it may be that we help them through that process and go from there." This unique aspect of the centre is a key reason the Aberdeen Health Foundation is behind it. "Investing in the PCCHC allows us to address the factors that affect people's health and prevent them from accessing the care they need," says Michelle Ferris, Executive Director of the foundation. This initiative also reflects the foundation's focus on population health, which seeks to prevent illness

arising from broader issues like housing, food security, and mental health. "Our mission is to build healthier communities by recognizing these challenges and working to improve health outcomes for everyone," Ferris explains. The journey to bring the PCCHC to life began in 2018, when a small group of community members identified unmet needs across Pictou County. They envisioned a more holistic approach to primary care, one that considers all aspects of a person's life, moving beyond simply treating illness. With support from the Aberdeen Health Foundation and the Sutherland Harris Foundation, the group developed a business plan and spent the following years turning their vision into reality. Over time, the working group evolved into a dedicated board of directors, composed of individuals with expertise in governance, public health, community services, and non-profit leadership. Together, they have shaped the centre's operational plan, programs, and policies. Anne Simmonds, Chair of the Board, shares her excitement about PCCHC's mission. "For me, the most exciting part is creating a space where people feel like they belong. When someone walks through our doors, they'll be met with compassion and respect. They'll know they're not just a number - they matter." The decision to locate the centre in Pictou was a thoughtful one. "We originally thought New Glasgow, because of the population density," Susan explains, "but after seeing the need in Pictou and realizing that many services didn't follow people who moved across the causeway during COVID, it became clear Pictou was where we needed to be." Over the next year, the centre will engage the community through conversations and feedback, using that input to shape future programs and services. A key part of this process will be led by the program developer, Lynn Langille, who will work closely with local communities to identify their needs and create targeted initiatives to promote health and well-being. In the months ahead, the PCCHC will begin outreach programming in communities where residents have gaps in services or have to travel a distance to access care. "We don't want to assume we know what people need," says Anne. "This

centre belongs to the people of Pictou County. We're here to listen and respond." For Susan, the centre represents more than accessible health care. "This centre isn't just about filling gaps," she said. "It's about creating a space where people feel valued, where they know someone cares. That's the heart of what we're doing here." Above all, the goal is to foster a sense of belonging and trust that will, hopefully, extend beyond the PCCHC to the broader health care system. As it opens its doors, the centre is poised to become a vital resource for Pictou County residents, paving the way for an inclusive and responsive model of health care for all. For more information, or to book an appointment, please text or call 902-616-2142 or visit Pictou County Community Health Centre on Facebook.



**MARCO
MACLEOD**
MLA FOR PICTOU WEST



37 Water Street
Pictou NS

902.485.8958

info@marcomacleod.com

Scared of the current housing market?

Never fear, we're here to help guide you through the process.

- ✓ Locally Owned & Operated
- ✓ Full Service Real Estate Company
- ✓ Modern Technology
- ✓ MLS Services



45A Water Street, Pictou, NS
(902) 485-9399 or 1-844-376-HOME(4663)
Cathy Covey Broker/Owner 902-956-3301
Donna Fitzgerald REALTOR® 902-897-5154
sunrisebrokerage.ca



Countryside BIN RENTALS
902-754-0108
COUNTRYSIDEBINRENTALS@GMAIL.COM
139 BARRON RD. RIVER JOHN, NS, B0K 1N0
SERVING PICTOU, COLCHESTER AND CUMBERLAND COUNTY

12 YARD BINS - 14 FEET LONG
WITH BARN DOORS FOR **EASY LOADING**



The History of Semordnilaps

The concept of semordnilaps, words that create new words when spelled backward, has an

intriguing history that traces back to wordplay in literature and language. The term

“semordnilap” itself is a playful invention—it’s the word “palindromes” spelled backward.

Though the term is relatively modern, the concept has been used for centuries.

FORWARD AND BACKWARDS

The following definitions apply to one word if it is spelled forward, then backwards.

Fill in the words.

Example: a flying mammal BAT--TAB a bill at a bar

Part of a boat _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ A Welsh vegetable

Community Notice

Event: Newcomers Meet & Greet

Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2025

Location: River John Library

Time: 6:30 – 8p.m.

All Welcome

What a river does _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ A wild animal

Teller of untruths _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ A metal bar

These tell you where to go _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _
_ You don't want to receive this on your computer

It comes in twice a day _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _
Change some words

SEACREST ELECTRIC
COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL

3746 Hwy 326, River John



Heat pumps are an efficient, environmentally responsible way to heat & cool your home.

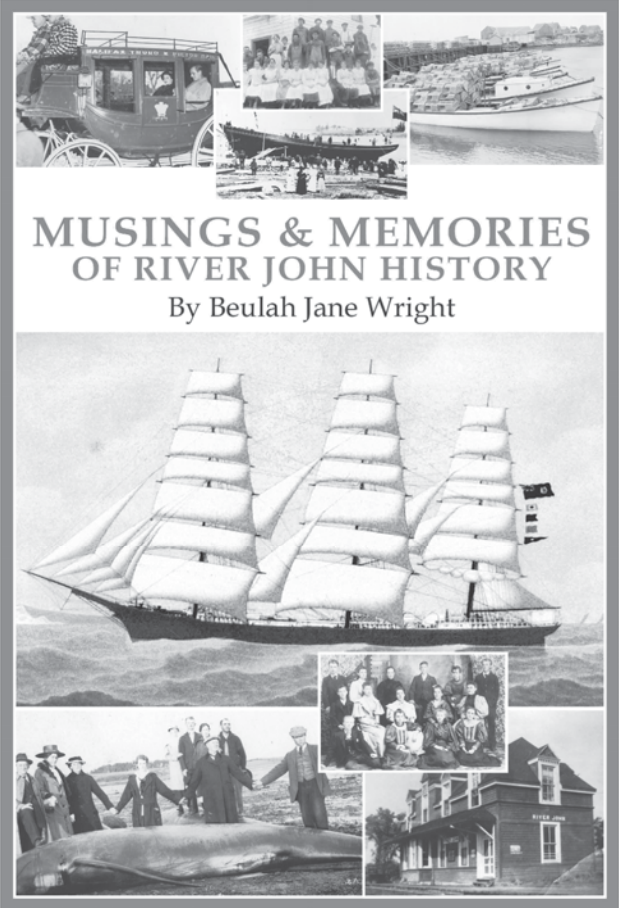
Call us to arrange a home visit: 902-657-1109

We also offer **Heat Pump Cleanings** at a flat service rate.

Book Announcement: Musings and Memories of River John History

Announcing the launch of the book, “Musings & Memories of River John History” by Beulah Jane Wright, to take place on Saturday, April 5th, from 2-3 p.m., at St. George’s Presbyterian Church Hall, River John, 1857 Sunrise Trail, River John, NS B0K 1N0. Beulah will talk about her book and will be available to sign copies, which will be available for sale for \$25. Music and refreshments. All are welcome. Proceeds from the book will be used to support the River John Heritage Museum. This book project is Beulah’s gift to the River John community.

“Musings & Memories of River John History” by Beulah Jane Wright, is a charming and informative compilation of stories from River John’s past, featuring tales of early settlers from Montbéliard, France, with names such



as Langille and Bigney, Patriquin and Gratto, still seen today. Tales about shipbuilders’ yards lining both sides of the waterfront, and thriving enterprises such as Gammons’ Stagecoach Line. Read the story of the Seaview Trotting Park, where local favourite “Rock Boy” repeatedly won races against the famed “Ghost.” From military figures such as Colonel Dan Sutherland, who led the No. 2 Construction Battalion, to famous River Johners such as Chalmers Bigney, the “Strong Man of River John” and Anna Sutherland Bissell, the first female CEO in the US. Musings about how residents socialized and tended to their daily chores in the days before television. Well-researched and easy-to-read, these stories will take some readers down memory lane, while some, residents and visitors alike, will learn about River John’s illustrious history for the first time.

Continued from page 11

ramp, front door, and entrance porch to the hall. This will make the entrance up-to-code with an accessible ramp and entrance door in a new room providing a roof overhead for people entering the hall, especially when there is a line-up for functions in inclement or cold weather. It will also provide a barrier from the cold weather. We will be bringing this up for approval at our Annual General Meeting being held in May; please follow our Facebook and bulletin board for date and time. We ask members of the community to please attend our Annual General meeting. We hope members of the community will offer to sit on the board, as all the current members have served for a considerable time, and we would love to see younger members provide fresh ideas and energy. The Pictou County Net-Zero Community Buildings Project is moving ahead, and we are waiting for the “Scope of Work” proposal to be approved, so work can start.

The 32nd annual West Branch Maple Syrup Festival Pancake Breakfast is being held on April 26th from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. We hope everyone will attend and support payment of the maintenance and expenses of the hall. 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/ or email: westbranchcommunityhall@gmail.com . We would like to extend a warm welcome to all newcomers to the area and encourage anyone that would like to participate or contribute to the West Branch and Area Community Association to contact one of the board members. Wishing everyone a great spring and summer. Our current board for 2024-2025 is: President: Jim White Secretary: Catherine Dalglish Treasurer: Reg Crewe Directors: Charlie Kennedy, Lynne Hart, David Luxton, Gary Johnson



River John & District Lions Club

By Lion Cheryl Frizzell

Since the last issue of this paper, the River John & District Lions Club has been busy serving the community. The club has held three monthly breakfasts, opened our club building for the annual Tree Lighting in Bissell Park, where our Lion Cubs and the River John Community Action Society members passed out free hot dogs, hot chocolate, and cookies; also, the Lions Club members prepared and delivered over 100 free hot Christmas dinners to community residents on December 25th. The River John & District Lions Club have been visiting other Lions Clubs, exchanging ways to better serve our community. Membership at our club is increasing, which is great, as our community can always use more volunteers lending a helping hand.

Continued on page 19



Book Review: Spare

Author: Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex
416 pp. Publisher: Random House Canada, 2023

By Joan MacLeod



Spare tells the story of Prince Harry’s life in his own words. It was given that title because of a comment that his father, the then Prince of Wales, made at his birth that he had provided an heir, William, and Harry was the spare.

Born in 1984, Harry was 12 years old when his mother, Princess Diana, was tragically killed. Who can forget the sad spectacle of him and his brother walking solemnly behind the casket that carried his mother into Westminster Abbey.

Harry developed a bad boy reputation as he grew up, drinking heavily and experimenting with drugs. Despite growing up with a silver spoon, Harry had issues with anger and unresolved grief about his mother’s death, which he blamed on the paparazzi who had given chase and continued to shoot pictures as she lay dying in the crashed car.

In 2005, at the age of 21, Harry joined the army and saw active service in Afghanistan. It left him with panic attacks which were much later diagnosed as PTSD. His compassion and empathy for wounded veterans led him to start the Invictus games.

He was rather unlucky in love, having lost several girlfriends because they could not handle the constant press attention. That all changed when he met Meghan Markle, and he was smitten from the beginning. They had a lot in common as they were both engaged in humanitarian work. It was Meghan who later insisted that Harry start receiving counselling for his anger management issues, which helped him greatly. They would go on to have a fairytale romance and a beautiful wedding in 2011. Megan was a biracial, divorced American. It did not take long for the embedded racism of the press and British society to appear. By 2020, Megan and Harry fled the UK to Canada, and later America, in fear of their sanity and their lives.

One thing which this book taught me is how vile and corrupt the media can be. Any royal news sells papers, and controversy sells even more papers, so conflicts are manufactured or fanned, and the press showed their blatant racism towards Meghan, and to the couple’s children. The book revealed that members of the royal family sometimes manipulated the press to their own advantage. In my opinion, the institution of the royal family, despite their massive wealth, punished Harry for leaving. They initially withdrew security protection and even more recently have taken Frogmore cottage from him, even though it was a wedding gift from Queen Elizabeth.

Almost everyone has an opinion on Meghan and Harry, but just how are our opinions shaped? In my opinion, by a biased media. If you are interested in hearing the story from Harry’s point of view, read the book. It is available at the River John Library.

Continued from page 5

You can find us there each Friday morning from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Anyone is welcome to join this worthy cause.

Smile, knit and always be kind to each other.



**Photo caption:
Lions Club Christmas Dinner**

Continued from page 18

The club building is used the 2nd Tuesday of each month for River John Community Action Society meetings, the 1st Monday of each month for Lion Cubs meetings, the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month for River John & District Lions Club meetings, every Wednesday night for Donald's Music Circle and various days for community groups. The Club has also been rented out by individuals for private events. Anyone interested in joining the River John & District Lions Club can contact Cheryl Frizzell at 902-324-2695 or any other member of our club.

The River John & District Lion Cubs

By Cub Leader Jayden Brown

The River John & District Lion Cubs have been busy. In November, 2024, we laid a wreath at the Remembrance Day ceremony in River John. We held a Rock-a-thon and raised \$1,845.85 for the Dog Guides of Canada. The money went towards helping a girl with diabetes get a dog guide to help with her diabetic needs. The dog is trained to get her a juice pack from a designated area, shake it and will alert someone if her sugars drop too low, among other things. Thank you to our community members, friends and family for all of your donations. It wouldn’t have been possible without your support. In December, we helped cook and hand out hotdogs and cookies at the annual Tree Lighting at Bissell Park.

We are now getting ready to host a St. Patrick's Dance Party on March 14th, for kids aged 10-15. On March 30th, we are having a Cub Membership Drive at the Lions Club. Come on out and see what we do for our community. We will be having another fundraiser on May 25th, called Walk for Dog Guides. Everyone is welcome to join our walk and enjoy a BBQ afterwards. More details to follow. We have our meetings the first Monday of every month at the Lions Club from 6:30–7:30 p.m. New members are always welcome. We do not tolerate disrespectful behaviour.

**Photos and photo captions
continued on page 20**

Continued from page 4

days and cool nights can mean letting fires burn out and relighting them. In doing such, this can create a build-up of creosote in your chimney pipes which can cause flue fires. To help prevent this, check your pipes for build-ups and clean when build-up is created. Remember to check your smoke detectors and change the batteries.

Ladies Auxiliary Supports Local Fire Department Celebrating a Successful Year

By Gillian Joudrie

The Ladies' Auxiliary is thrilled to reflect on a successful year of community engagement and fundraising. We hosted a delightful Mother's Day luncheon, enjoyed a successful pancake breakfast, and had a great time at a comedy night featuring Jimmy, the Janitor. Additionally, our "Explore the Strait" draw added excitement to our efforts, allowing us to further support our community. In addition to our fundraising, we have supported our firefighters by preparing food for their training sessions, ensuring they are well-fed during these important occasions. At the recent Firemen's Banquet in November, we proudly presented our fire department with a cheque for \$5,000. This contribution will greatly assist their ongoing efforts to keep our community safe. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the fire department and finding new ways to support them in the coming year.

Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed, together, we make a difference!



Continued from page 18

Lions Cubs photo Captions:

PHOTO 1

From left to right

(L-R) Ronan Thompson, Lion Brian Charette, Braden Babin, Canadian Guide Dog Chair Person Lion Bill Bruhm, Jayden Brown, Lion Cheryl Frizzell (Missing from photo, Vanessa Brown)

PHOTO 2

Jayden Brown and Vanessa Brown

Editorial: Strength in Community, Looking Ahead

By Kelly Shaw

This community may be small in size, but it is big in heart. From warm welcomes at the library or Wednesday Morning Coffee at St. George’s Presbyterian Church (always wonderfully organized by Earl Johnson), to lively conversations at The Overstreet Cafe, to social gatherings at the Legion and the Lions Club, it’s clear that this is a place where people genuinely care. There’s an undeniable energy - a vibrancy that comes from a community rooted in its history yet looking toward the future.

And there’s plenty happening! So much – it’s impossible to capture in this submission, let alone in this edition. We have tried. If we have missed something let us know and write about it for next time.

Winter is loosening its grip, and longer days signal spring is just around the corner. The 40th anniversary of Festival Days is on the horizon, a celebration of our enduring spirit and commitment to bringing people together. The fishing industry is preparing for another season and farmers are making plans for spring

planting, tending to the land that has sustained generations. Across our communities, conversations about climate action and tourism opportunities are gaining momentum, as people consider how to balance economic growth with environmental responsibility.

But it’s not just the big discussions - it’s the everyday efforts of the people who make things happen. Volunteers are hard at work organizing a variety of events, from music circles and fundraising breakfasts to fashion shows and social gatherings. These events aren’t just about entertainment; they’re about connection. They bring people together, strengthen relationships, and reinforce the shared values that make our communities so special.

As we move through 2025, there are important conversations to be had. How do we ensure local voices are at the forefront of conversations about climate change, rural sustainability, and the very specific needs of our community? Perhaps most critically, how do we recognize and support the volunteers who dedicate so much of their time and

energy to keeping our communities thriving?

This newspaper, *The Pioneer*, exists to tell those stories - to celebrate, inform, and challenge. It’s a space to highlight the best of our community while fostering meaningful talks about the road ahead.

Though I may be “from away,” I feel a deep sense of belonging here. The kindness and generosity I’ve experienced have been overwhelming, and I’m grateful for the opportunity to contribute. Having grown up on the shores of the Bay of Fundy in a rural Hants County community, I feel similar threads in the ways people care about, and care for, each other. It’s easy to see why so many people choose to stay here, return to here, or become part of this community in any number of ways.

I look forward to meeting more of you, hearing your stories, and working together to keep our rural communities thriving. If you have a something to share, or an idea for a feature, let’s talk. My door - and inbox - are always open.

To Each His Own

By Christiane Gill, inspired to share By Monica Graham

Shortly after Christmas I enjoyed a very pleasant chat with Monica Graham about how we had spent these past holidays. Upon mentioning that I had been in Montreal, she told me of a church service she had attended there decades ago. Back then, in the 60s, Father John Burke used to minister to the hippies, and they'd come to communion on dirty bare feet in raggedy clothes. As she recalled, no one complained - but a lot thought it amusing. Her old aunt leaned over to her and said "Look at their dirty feet, Monica. What will they do when winter comes?" Then she'd straighten up and say "Oh, well, to each his own."

To each his own and yet united - many decades ago.

When I went back to my church, St. Barnabas in Pierrefonds/Montreal, from almost five decades ago for this past Christmas Eve, I noticed that nothing, but really nothing, had changed, except, maybe, the posters and pictures in the hall.

Everything looked exactly the same, felt exactly the same. But somehow that did not surprise me. Well, a few things had changed over time but not in a way that it felt like a change, but more like a logical development. The use of technology, like Zoom, the sound system supporting the singing congregation, and the big screen displaying the lyrics so that everyone was happy to raise their voices, was interesting. This also made it easy to follow the

minister during her service. As fascinating as all this was, it didn’t surprise me. The congregation was diverse in age and nationality, ranging from baby to senior, having come from the east, the west, the north, the south and everywhere in between. That was intriguing, yes, but what truly surprised me was that the Lord’s Prayer was sung joyfully to a Caribbean steel drum tune, while outside a snowstorm was raging, and yet it still felt like I had gone home to visit my grandmother.

To each his own and yet united.
This was as true well over half a century ago as it is today.

Happy Easter



The Geese

By Joan MacKeigan

The tired pair of geese
landed on the river
at a quiet spot near the bridge.
There was calm there
on a long journey south.

For now, they’d rest, and eat
replenishing belly and soul
And later fly up together to join the others.
Or not.

Above the bridge that crosses the river
runs a power line...
As the early morning dew sparkled
in the autumn grey sunlight
he flew up, heading off
to the nearby corn fields.
Still on the water, she paddled around,
oblivious to the loud bang,
sparks flying... the ensuing dead silence.

Bewildered in the nothingness, she waited for him...
Three days and three nights of lamenting calls.
On the morning of the fourth day
she ceased her lament.
She rose up from the river, alone.



Presbyterian News

Rev. Enjei Roni

There was a famous artist who went back to the rural community where he was born and brought up. Walking around some of the stores, he saw an antique shop. He looked in the window and couldn’t believe what he saw – one of his masterpieces. It was a painting that he painted years before he was famous. The frame was broken, the picture was scratched and dirty. He could not go into the store and say, ‘That’s my painting, give it back to me.’ If he wanted it back, he had to buy it back. He bought it, cleaned it, restored it and reframed it. That is what Jesus did for us when he came and died on the cross for our sins.

It does not matter how dirty, how creased you think you are; it doesn’t matter where you’ve been. You can’t alter the past. Bring the entire past to the altar of Jesus and He is going to clean it, restore it, and reframe you because He loves you. The Bible says “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:13) (Story by J. John Global).

Church Services

Every Sunday at 9.30 a.m. St. David’s
Presbyterian Church, Toney River

Every Sunday at 11.00 a.m. St. George’s
Presbyterian Church, River John

Wednesday, March 5 Ash Wednesday
at Salem United Church.

Friday March 7, 2 p.m. World Day of
Prayer at St. George’s Presbyterian Church

Thursday, April 17 M a u n d y
Thursday at St. George’s Presbyterian Church.

Friday, April 18 Good Friday at
St. John’s Anglican Church & St. David’s
Presbyterian Church.

Sunday, April 20 Easter Sunday at
St. George’s & St. David’s

Morning Coffee Hour every Wednesday from
9.30 a.m. organized by Earl Johnson at St.
George's church
hall.

Wednesdays 2 p.m. Bible Study at
St. George’s church hall.

Ecumenical Calendar 2025

(Mary Tothill supplied the following long-standing
schedule of ecumenical worship in River John)

Event:
March 5 Ash Wednesday United
March 7 World Day of Prayer
Presbyterian

Village Lenten lunches beginning at noon at
St. George's Presbyterian
Short worship, lunch, fellowship, casual

March 26 led by Anglicans
April 2 led by St George's Presbyterian
April 9 led by Salem United.

April 17 Maundy Thursday
Presbyterian

April 18 Good Friday
Anglican (depending)

April 20 Sunrise Service United
July 20 Festival Days
Presbyterian

Nov. 11 Remembrance Day United

Everyone is welcome.

St. John the Baptist Anglican Church News

By Monica Graham

When is a church not a building with a pointy roof?
Well, the church IS always the people, but especially when the congregation is warned against using the building due to problems with the electrical system , which is exactly what has happened to our congregation of St. John the Baptist Anglican Church, River John.

In early December, we looked forward to the completion of the building’s long-awaited new roof, when it was discovered that the electrical system was in really bad condition, so bad in fact, that it presented a real danger of fire, so we had to shut the church down until the wiring and other electrical bits and pieces are replaced.

While it is a big, pricey, job, and folks miss using the building, church members are grateful that no fire occurred before the problem was discovered. Even though there is no firm timeline for the repairs, St. John’s people are even more thankful that we have been able to share worship space with Salem United.

For the past few winters, St. John’s and Salem have been taking turns leading worship in one church or the other, with strong attendance from both congregations, especially given winter weather. The practice is an extension of a long and strong ecumenical attitude in the village of River John: the churches are different, but all are Christian with much in common as we are all “church,” whether in a building or not.

Joint choirs, Festival Days, the Blessing of the Fleet, and Appreciation Day for first responders and other emergency personnel are further examples of all the area churches - Anglican, Presbyterian, United, and Roman Catholic - worshipping together, helping each other, and sharing in community events. St. John’s people are also grateful to Shelley and Leonard Bigney at The Old School for the

use of their space for meetings. (Shelley even makes coffee!)

Our congregation was elated when our Anglican Bishop of Nova Scotia, Sandra Fyfe, who is such a lovely and helpful person, led our service on November 10, together with Rev. Lorraine Street. We had a wonderful time with both women and members of other congregations from Middleton Corners, Wallace and Oxford - all in the Parish of Northumberland. A lovely lunch was served at the Legion. Everyone had such a great time that no one wanted to leave. What a memorable day. Unfortunately, just two months later we were saddened by the departure of Rev. Lorraine Street as Priest-in-Charge in January, after a short but inspiring time in that position, and we wish her all the best.

In other news, St. John’s held its Annual General Meeting on Feb 9, with the following slate of officers elected: Dana Jefferson and Jim White as church wardens, Eliz Langille as secretary, and Denise White as treasurer. The church is part of the Anglican Parish of Northumberland, which holds its annual meeting in Wallace on March 9.



Photo Caption
Rev. Lorraine Street, Dana Jefferson, Jim White, Sandra Fyfe (Bishop of Nova Scotia & PEI) and Johanna Langille.

St. Michael’s Catholic Church News

By Netta Heukshorst

Regularly scheduled Mass is on
Saturdays at 4 pm.

New for our church was the yard sales we held last summer and fall. They were well attended and monies were used for church purposes.

On December 8th a wonderful and very successful Christmas concert was held in the church, followed by a special reception afterwards in the hall. It was a lot of fun and put everyone in the Christmas spirit.

The Sacrament of Baptism was celebrated by the parish as two children were baptized on December 28th by Father Jim O’Conner. May God bless the little ones and their family.

Each Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. we gather for prayer intentions. Prayers are offered up for world peace, or any

intention so offered, as well as personal intentions and prayers.

As well, each Saturday after Mass, a social gathering is held in the hall downstairs to enjoy a great time with friends and visitors alike.

Easter notes:
Each Saturday during Lent at 3 p.m. Stations of the Cross will be held. Good Friday celebration will be held at 3 p.m.
No Saturday 4 p.m. Mass on Easter weekend.
Easter Sunday morning at 9 a.m. we will celebrate Mass, followed by a social afterwards in the hall.
Happy Easter everyone.

Everyone is welcome at St. Michael’s. Remember to smile and be kind to one another.

Obituaries



Mabel “Jean” (Sutherland) Henderson of Toney River passed away December 30, 2024, at the age of 98, surrounded by her family. Born June 3, 1926, in Toney River, she was the daughter of the late John Willie and Matilda (MacKay) Sutherland of Toney River and married to Allister Henderson on May 15, 1946. Jean loved many things in life including music, playing cards, baking (the best) biscuits, and spending time with family. Many in the community used to buy their eggs from Jean and Allister, and it was more about the chats and visits with friends and neighbours than the eggs. She loved her children, Gloria and Gary, her grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Family gatherings with lots of food, (especially lobster,) brought her joy, and were events she always looked forward to. Jean, at a very young age, became active in St. David’s Presbyterian Church and the organizations WMS and Ladies Aid. She and

Allister highly supported the church in many ways, and it was an important part of their life. They also very much enjoyed square dancing and bowling, and Jean was also considered a great quilter. Surviving is her daughter, Gloria (Richy Gammon); daughter-in-law, Darlene; her grandchildren, Dana (Sarah), Ryan (Julie-Anne), Amanda (Chad Bolton), Laura (Jamie Maxwell) and Matthew (Jenna); great-grandchildren, Paige, Carter, Callie, Brody, Grayson, and Theo. Greatly appreciated was her sister-in-law, Margie Schmitt. Jean was predeceased by her husband, Allister; son, Gary; brother, Austin; and sisters, Florence, Edna, and Hazel. A very important “thank-you” is extended to staff of the Maritime Odd Fellows Home during the last four years, for her wonderful care. More significantly, thank-you to the younger staff as they became a larger part of her life. The scores from countless card games will be treasured.



Langille, Alice
1935 – 2025

It is with heartfelt sadness the family of Alice Mildred Langille announces her peaceful passing on January 19th at Woodingford Lodge. Alice was predeceased by her husband Walter, survived by her 6 children; Dave (Carol), Heather Werby (Dan), Marilyn Denby (Don), Carol Holman (Derek), Julie Hawken (Rob: predeceased 2020) Michael, 12 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren. Alice was born in 1935 on Mountain Road, River John, Nova Scotia. She was raised with 3 brothers and 2 sisters. Growing up on a farm instilled a strong work ethic that Alice maintained throughout her life. She was a hard worker, both in and outside of the home as well as her volunteer efforts over the years in Nova Scotia and Ontario. Together, Alice and Walter raised their six children who were always their number one priority. Favourite times were spent surrounded by their family, and extended family. Her pride in her family was undeniable.

Anyone who met Alice, even if for a moment, would agree she was the most selfless, gracious, individual, ready to lend a hand, an ear, or a well-cooked meal. From baking, to her gifted quilting, she shared with all. We take pride in the beauty and detail of these gifts she left us, from recipes to hand-stitched quilts. Her legacy is her words of wisdom: “Have faith and be kind”. She maintained that generous beautiful spirit to the end of her days on this earth. Alice had a deep faith, and it is comforting to know that she left this world for a better place where she will be welcomed with open arms by her loved ones. Anxiously waiting will be our Dad to give her a ride on the crossbar of his bike. The family would like to thank the excellent care provided to our Mom, from all the staff at Woodingford Lodge, particularly Peach Place where she spent her final 3 years. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Alzheimer’s Society or Knox Presbyterian Church.

We, the families of the late Harry Smith, (September 13, 1945-May 21, 2024), of River John and Mabou Cape Breton, would like to thank everyone who came to support us both at West Branch for his celebration of life and in Mabou for his interment there also. We were completely overwhelmed by the over 250 people who attended at the West Branch United Church and walked with us over to the cemetery that same evening, and the over 100 people who joined us in Mabou on his old farm to walk him home there. It was a testament to how much he was loved and well thought of by all who ever came in contact with him. We would like to thank Elizabeth Bezanson for arranging and organizing all the wonderful food that somehow fed over 200 people, and the members of the West Branch & Area Singers who brought flowers from home so we were able to fill the church with them, and for Harry's daughter in law, Melissa Smith, who organized and arranged all the food for the gathering in Mabou in July at the School house where Harry attended. We want to thank those who got up and spoke: Chris from Home Hardware; his son ,Josh, who Harry worked with and freely admitted he had no clue where Home Hardware was and

didn't know how he could get along without his "DAD"; another son, Patrick, who thanked Harry's children for sharing their dad with all of us; son, Matthew, who thanked Harry for being the best stepfather ever (which he was); and Harry's own son, Stacey, who talked of his years with him. Thank you to Reverend Glen Matheson and all who came from far away to be there, and for the kind people at McLaren’s funeral home in Pictou. Thank you to all the pall-bearers, both here and in Cape Breton. The shock and sorrow still linger, with that question we all ask, "Why?" but he lives on in all we do and think, and when the singing group gets together, there is always a Harry story, or the boys talk of their "Dad" and remember all the things that will ensure we will never forget him. Thank you to all, from Heather Smith, Amy, Becky, Paul, Matthew, Patrick, Josh, Stacey and Kimberly, and all the grandchildren. *" I have an angel in Heaven - I call him, My Husband"* *" If I could choose again, I would always choose YOU."*

THANK YOU

The family of the late H. Wayne Langille wishes to express sincere appreciation for the many acts of kindness, messages of sympathy, phone calls, food delivered to our home, memorial donations and those who visited at the church and attended the funeral. Thank you to Rev. Enjei Achah and David Sutherland for conducting the service and to the organist and choir, to the pallbearers and McLaren’s Funeral Service. Also, we wish to thank St. George’s Ladies Auxiliary for the reception. Special thanks to Dr. Bush and the wonderful staff at Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital, Tatamagouche and Dr. Sean Taylor, Halifax. Your care and concern are sincerely appreciated and will always be remembered. Marie, Mark and Nicole

Obituaries

James Roberts Keatley 1939 -2025

It is with heavy hearts that the family of James Roberts Richard Keatley of River John, commonly known as Jim, shares the news of his peaceful passing at the age of 86 on Friday, January 31st, 2025, in Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital, Tatamagouche, embraced by the love of his family. He leaves behind his loving wife of 64 years, Florence (MacKay) and son, Richard both of Welsford; grandchildren, Derek Keatley (Megan), River John, April Keatley (Joshua), Stellarton, Tyler Swan (Katie), Westville, Sierra (Christian), Earltown, Parker (Gabryelle), Truro; nephew, Danny Galley (Lyla) Kingston, Ontario; niece, Terry Galley; niece, Sue Galley; great nephew, Brian Galley (Kylie); great nephew, Frank Galley and great niece, Erin Keatley-Lowles (Andrew); niece, Lynda Keatley-Garey (Mike); great niece, Tracy Garey (Michael); great nephew, Danny Garey, Brownsburg, Quebec; his beloved great-grandchildren, brother and sister in-law, Beulah and Borge Jensen and many more family and friends. Jim was born to the late Phoebe (McQuat) Keatley on January 26th, 1939, in Brownsburg, Quebec, where his love and knowledge for animals started, growing up and spending summers on his grandparents' farm. Jim later joined the Royal Canadian Navy and luckily was stationed in Halifax, Nova Scotia,

where he met the love of his life, Florence in 1959 at the Armdale Yacht Club. Jim and Florence wed on December 22, 1961, in Lachine Quebec. In the years to come they decided to move the family to live in St. Catherine's, Ontario, where their son, Richard, was born. After almost a decade of residing in St. Catherine's the family decided to move to Nova Scotia, building their home, developing the farm and raising their family in Welsford/ River John. The farm was registered as Tri-K-Acres, raising beloved goats, horses, and all the other animals who made their way into their hearts forever. Jim devoted his life to being a family man, a carpenter, community volunteer, mentor to many, a great and gentle leader, a loving grandfather and a helping hand to many. Jim took great pride in all that he did. His love and devotion for his kids kept him heavily involved in anything they desired, and they all shared his love for many hobbies and interests, from coaching and mentoring boxers at the Albion Boxing Club, coaching hockey and getting members to the rink for practices, or the nine consecutive years of 4-H meetings with the Old Barns Club and the River John 4-H organization. Jim is predeceased by his mother, Phoebe Keatley; brother, Harold Keatley; sister, Doris Galley; nephew, Dean Galley; niece, Joanne Keatley and his father and mother-in-law Mifflin and Dora MacKay.

The family would like to acknowledge great thanks and appreciation for Dr. Dan MacDonald and the nursing staff at the Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital for the kindness and compassion showed to Jim. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Alzheimer's Society of Nova Scotia, Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital or the IWK.



Eunice Florence Sutherland (Langille) 1926 - 2024

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of our beloved mother, Eunice, on November 29, 2024, in Willow Lodge, Tatamagouche. Born in River John on April 9, 1926, she was the daughter of the late Vernley and Florence (Dwyer) Langille. Eunice was a stay-at-home mom to her three sons. She sang in the church choir and was very active throughout her life in the Anglican Guild, making many, many quilts. Her siblings often visited from Ontario in the summers and their house was the place to go for food, laughs and maybe a few drinks here and there. Mom loved to cook for her family and could stretch a meal to feed many and somehow still have leftovers. Her laugh was contagious and often echoed through her home. She is survived by her three sons Gilbert, Greg (Paula) and Kevin (Darlene), six grandchildren, Sean (Roxanne), Jason (Pam),

Jeremy, Adam (Liz), Shannon (Matt), Mandy (Thomas) and ten great grandchildren. As well, she is survived by brothers Oak and Jack and the "daughter she never had," very good family friend, Nancy Langille. She was predeceased by her beloved husband, Amel, of 64 years, sisters Dorothea, Effie, Myrna, Eleanor, Marjorie, and brothers Keith, Doug, Vern and Glen, and daughter-in-law, Ivy. We can't thank the staff at Willow Lodge enough for their kindness and compassionate care of Mom for the eight years that she was a resident, and especially during her last few days. We will always be grateful to you. Donations may be made to Willow Lodge Recreation Department.



Dexter W. Wright 1952 – 2025

It is with great sadness that the family of Dexter William Wright announce his passing on February 5th, 2025. Born on February 18th, 1952, in Elmsdale, Hants County, to Keith and Della (Fraser) Wright, he was raised in River John and later moved to New Glasgow where he resided until his passing. In his early years, he worked at National Seafoods and HF Russell's Seafoods. In his later years, he delivered newspapers for the Evening News and the Chronicle Herald. He is survived by his sisters, Beulah Wright, River John; and Jean (Russel) MacLean, Pictou; brothers, Lewis (Sandra) Wright, River John; Benson (Lorraine) Wright, Merigomish; and sister-in-law, Marie Wright, Piedmont; many nieces, nephews and cousins. Dexter

also leaves behind his beloved cat, Dingo Lass. He was predeceased by his parents; brothers, Leigh and George Wright and grand-nephews, Kashton and Myles. The family wishes to express their sincere thanks to the doctors and nurses at Aberdeen Hospital and the staff and caregivers at the VON for the wonderful care Dexter was given during his brief illness. Donations in Dexter's memory may be made to the VON.

Card of Thanks

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for all the kindness, sympathy, and support during this difficult time. From the messages, cards and visits, to the delicious food, none of it went unnoticed.

We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to Dr. Dan MacDonald, Dr. R Bush, and the amazing nursing staff at Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital, who provided such compassionate care during Papa’s final days.

We are forever thankful to you all.

The Keatley Family

Odd Fellows Helping Hand Lodge #34

By Jacob Leegwater, Recording Secretary

Greetings to our Pioneer readers.

Since our last newsletter from Helping Hand Lodge #34 and Rebekah Lodge #33, we have been busy with all of the regular duties of our lodges. Our coat drive was again successful, thanks to the community. We were able to collect 110 coats, 66 hats, 66 pairs of mittens, 24 scarves, 10 pairs of boots and 9 pairs of socks.

On November 18th, Helping Hand Lodge #34 held an open house meeting with four guests in attendance. The district meeting for District 11 of the IOOF was held at Liberty Lodge on November 20. At that meeting, we donated \$100 to the Christmas Daddies. One of the highlights was a donation of a set of Rebekah dishes, given to our lodge on behalf of an anonymous donor. In return, our lodge donated \$200 to Camp NEOFA (North Eastern Odd Fellows Association), in Maine. A lovely cabinet was obtained and donated by Bros. Willis Langille, Bob Dwyer, and Peter Richardson. Both the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs provided gifts for our Adopt-a-Residents at the Odd Fellows Home. The Odd Fellows provided gifts for the widows of our departed brothers. Also, in December, the Odd Fellows treated our sister Rebekahs to a dinner at Yap’s Restaurant, which was enjoyed by all present. A photo taken at that time was the item put in the time capsule, to be opened in 2050. With a gift from PARL in River John, we were able to assist twelve families in River John with groceries for a Christmas dinner. Robert Gunn of Welsford donated to the lodge a framed portrait of his grandfather, William Gunn, a longtime member of the Helping Hand Lodge, who passed in 1977. We donated \$600 to the River John Food Bank. Several members travelled to Eastern Star Lodge in Pictou where some participated in conferring the first degree on two members.

On February 11th, the Rebekahs hosted a social afternoon card party, with four-and-a-half tables in play. The door

prizes were won by Ruth Baillie and Earl Johnson.

We have obtained the record book of Helping Hand Lodge for the years 1944-1948. Of interest, it was started on August 16, 1944, with a special meeting called to discuss the rebuilding of the hall, as the present one of the day was destroyed in the early-morning fire that destroyed a total of seven buildings, including the hall and all of its contents. Until the new hall was built, meetings were held in Carruthers Hall (above what was the old Co-op store). The first meeting in the new building was on October 31, 1946. At that time, a chicken dinner was served to about 400 people in the afternoon. Also noted in this record book was the passing of long-time secretary, Dr. J. S. Murray on September 26, 1948.

Well, that’s all for this time. See you in the next issue of the Pioneer, until then, stay safe.



Odd Fellows photo caption:
Grand Master Daniel Ferguson, along with Brother Bob Dwyer, had the great honour of presenting Brother Jacob Leegwater with his 40-year jewel. Congratulations, Jacob on all your years of service to the IOOF Helping Hand Lodge #34 and the community of River John, in F.L.T.

L-R: Daniel Ferguson, Jacob Leegwater and Bob Dwyer.

Editorial Team:

Kelly Shaw, Editor-in-Chief
pioneereditors@outlook.com

Christiane Gill, Submissions/Photography
rjpioneer.story@gmail.com

April Jollimore, Layout

Margaret Jones, Proofreader

Ed Kennedy, Printing Co-ordinator

Dylan Langille, Graphics

Sandra MacKay, Typist

Joan MacLeod, Reporter

Melanie Miller,
Advertising Accounts Receivable
pioneerpayments2000@gmail.com

Debby Shaw, Reporter

MaryBeth Sutherland, Reporter

Linda Thompson-Reid, Reporter

Julie Windebank, Advertising Sales
rjpioneerads@gmail.com

Beulah Wright, Reporter

Printing: Advocate Printing & Publishing Ltd.

An annual subscription of 3 issues per year, including postage to anywhere in Canada, is \$22.50. For more information, contact Melanie Miller (address above).

Sunrise Shotokan Karate Club and Threads

By Enid Schaller

There are many reasons to create a physical and mental wellness practice and many ways to do so. Two ways that I’d like to share with you are martial arts and sewing. Perhaps these aren’t two things that seem like they go together but I have met many students through my karate club who are also very skilled sewers, quilters, knitters, and costume makers. In my own life, I have found great pleasure and satisfaction in making things with my hands and in the study of karate. I have been sewing since my mother taught me as a little girl in the early 80s and training karate after being invited to a class by my prof at NSCAD in 1998. Sewing has been a link between me and my mother and her mother. My mother taught me to sew on her beautiful Pfaff that she bought in Germany at the Canadian base in Lahr in the late 70s, and when I began garment sewing in my teens, she gave me my own Singer, which I just passed along last year through Threads. Over the years, my grandmother gave me her old sewing patterns as she’d come across them, and my project over the last few years has been to make each and every one of them, and as period- accurate as possible. I have had to make some changes to the methods, like making the closures “backwards” because an old injury makes it impossible to fasten closures the “correct” way. The three of us spent many visits together at fabric

Continued on page 26



Birth Announcement
Madison Marie Greaves
Born: January 19th @ 12:22 PM
Weight: 6 lbs 10.5 oz, 20 inches long
Parents: Julie Cameron, Toney River & Logan Greaves, Mt.Thom
Grandparents: Elmer & Theresa Cameron, Toney River, & Danny & Kelly Greaves, Truro

Ray Thompson Memorial Hockey Tournament 2025

By Linda Thompson-Reid

Thank you to everyone who supported and attended the Ray Thompson Memorial Hockey Tournament at the NSRC, Tatamagouche on January 31 and February 1. A total of seven teams registered in two divisions. Tata Brew won 4-2 over Luc Lohead's team, winning the championship game of the Open Division. Dana Fraser was the MVP for Tata Brew. Jay Reid's team won the Over 35 Division championship game 8-1 and Terry Cole was selected as MVP.

Thank you to Tri County Ford, Tatamagouche Brewing Company, and Caldera Distilling Inc. for their generous donations to the tournament players. Thank you to the following individuals who volunteered their time to ensure the tournament was a success: Sara Forbes created the timekeeper's schedule and contacted everyone who worked the clock; Mindy MacDonald and Thomas Patriquin contacted the referees and linesmen; Jay Reid contacted players and created the schedule for

Continued on page27

Continued from page 25

stores, usually at the discount section, and many of the fabrics my grandmother bought popped up at birthdays and Christmases as gift bags, placemats, or quillows (remember those?). Being able to sew, make my own clothes, and have the understanding of how to approach a project has been a very empowering experience. This skill was given to me freely by my mother and grandmother and I feel very passionately about passing those skills freely along to anyone who wishes to learn them. Karate has shaped my life in a way that I didn't anticipate when I took my first class. The first few years were all about getting the basics down, making goals and training routines, and becoming a

servant to them, while navigating early adulthood. I had a training group, all young women and we travelled the region going to clinics, tournaments, and karate exams. I continued to train on my own after we all went our own way for work. I trained through a back injury, through disappointments and losses, as well as successes. Karate, and all the lessons it carries for mind and body, has carried me through my 20s, 30s, 40s and soon my 50s. I don't train the way I did when I was in my 20s. It seems injuries changed both my sewing and my karate, but I train in the way I need to, to be able to continue through the rest of my life. If you would like to learn more about sewing or Karate, please come see me at Threads on Fridays at the old school in River John (room 208), or email me at sunriseshotokan@gmail.com



Photo Caption:
Threads shop at The Old School, River John

ADULT SEWING LESSONS & SUPPLIES

AT RIVER JOHN OLD SCHOOL, ROOM 205
OPEN: TUESDAYS 10am-3pm
& SUNDAYS BY CHANCE

FABRIC, YARN, NOTIONS & VINTAGE FINDS AT DISCOUNT PRICES

DROP-IN SEWING GROUP:
TUESDAYS 1PM-3PM

SEWING MACHINE TUNING
& MAINTENANCE

LESSONS AVAILABLE IN
VARIOUS TECHNIQUES
(MUST BE PRE-ARRANGED):

SEWING
RUG HOOKING
RUG BRAIDING
QUILTING



SEWING RELATED DONATIONS ALWAYS WELCOME
CONTACT GRISELDA MANNING - (902) 485-8287

SEACREST ELECTRIC
COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL

3746 Hwy 326, River John

Call Us Today:
902-657-1109

- New Home Wiring
- Renovation Projects

- Electrical Service Upgrades
- Service Calls

- Heat Pump Installation / Wiring
- Service repairs

Continued from page 26

the games in each division.

50/50 tickets were sold and the proceeds were donated to the Tatamagouche and Area Minor Hockey Association. The winner of the draw was Becky Scott, who received \$150. A donation of \$2100 was presented to the TAMHA for the minor hockey program. These funds were the result of tournament fees paid by each team, once all the costs (ice time, referees and timekeepers) were distributed.

Recognition and a special thank you to Richard Halverson and Kenneth Watt, who kept everything in working order – always cooperative and accommodating.

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



Photo Caption:

Tournament Champions, over 35 Division
L-R: Sandy Sutherland, Team Luc and Them; Luc Lohead, Team Luc and Them;
Allyson Lohead, Team Ronnie Dunphy; Margaret Cripps, Team Jay Reid.

Continued from page 4

I have started over in new communities many times and once the physical work of settling into a new home is done, it's time to work on new friendships. Be open and inclusive; it might take a while but trust me, it is worth it.

River John is a great place to call home!

ADULT SEWING LESSONS & SUPPLIES

OLD RIVER JOHN SCHOOL - ROOM 205
(902) 485-8287

**BRING YOUR MENDING
1 DAY ONLY!**

SUNDAY, MARCH 30TH, 1-3PM
OUR TEAM OF SEWERS WILL MAKE
NEEDED REPAIRS FOR A SMALL FEE.

River John Neighbourhood Watch



We are looking for volunteers !
stickers for your home or car are available.

for more information check out our FB
or call Gary at 902 351 2210
you can also email us at
riverjohnneighbourhoodwatch@gmail.com



River John Neighbourhood Watch

After the community meeting Oct 29th, 2024, at the River John Legion. Some residents of River John decided to gather to produce creative, positive ideas to help our community feel a little safer. The River John Neighborhood Watch is not unlike other national neighbourhood watch programs. The idea behind our group is to provide education and suggestions to help people feel safer where they reside. It is our hope that we can achieve a safer community for all to enjoy. We want to be able to offer helpful tips in home security and what to do if you encounter any issues.

We have asked the RCMP to review our flyers and provide us with any other resources we can pass along to our friends and neighbours. We want to echo what was said in the meeting with the RCMP, that it is important that if you experience an incident to please call and make a report with the RCMP. It is important that if you or anyone you know feels threatened or unsafe to call the RCMP for assistance immediately. As a community we need to act by reporting all criminal activity.

We have had some 11 x 14-inch signs created to put up in key areas such as entrances into

River John. We also have stickers for those who would like one for their doors or cars. You can contact us to join, or to obtain a sticker, by calling Gary at 902 351 2210 or by emailing . We are always accepting new members, and you can call Gary or email us with any questions at riverjohnneighbourhoodwatch@gmail.com . We are always accepting new members, and you can always call Gary or email us with any questions.

Of course, none of this is possible without a financial investment, so if anyone is looking to help us out with some fundraising ideas or would like to donate, please contact at the above contacts.

Remember, if you need help in an emergency situation, always dial 911. If you would like to contact the RCMP, the non-urgent numbers are 905-755-4141 or 902 485-4333.

Tree Lighting



Photo 1

Among those attending the tree lighting were Sheila Ives with her grandchildren Forrest and Georgina Manning.

Photo 2

Julie Tattrie is accompanied by Violet McMaster, Millie Roeterdink and Charlotte Cripps in front and Georgina Manning in back.



Photo Caption

Every Wednesday night Donald welcomes musicians from River John, Halifax, Truro, and area to get together and jam. Donald's Music Circle has become quite the spot in River John to sit back, socialize with friends and enjoy great music.



At the needle felting class offered at the River John library in December, Gillian Crawford of Lismore Sheep Farm had eleven enthusiastic participants who worked hard, had fun, and went home with a beautiful, felted wool ornament.