



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

Community welcomes new owners of Amet Farm

by **Christiane Gill**

“We dodged the Academia Bullet” ...

... is Juliet Oraziotti's and Martin Weber's life in a nutshell, as she likes to put it. Yes, they do have various degrees in agriculture but I am not even going to attempt to write down what they are for fear of embarrassing myself by badly butchering those titles.

Juliet is originally from Vancouver but grew up mainly in Niagara-on-the-Lake, embedded in agriculture. While Martin is from Schärding, Austria, where he has deep dairy farming roots.

But wait, that's thousands of miles and a huge ocean apart. Well, it turns out that Juliet's mom infected her with the travel bug when she took her daughter on numerous trips throughout Europe. Soon after Juliet finished her Canadian education in Ontario and then in British Columbia, she went off



New owners of Amet Farm Juliet Oraziotti and Martin Weber with a few of their 450+ sheep

to study in Sweden, after which she followed up with studies at the university in Vienna, Austria. This was where she met Martin who himself had acquired some quite reputable academic degrees. Realizing that they each had achieved a lot in academia at a young age they found that it was time to put the pencil down and put their knowledge to good use.

They wanted to apply their knowledge and heart & soul to living farm animal welfare and where better to do that than in Canada.

They started out with about 100 sheep, some pigs and horses on a rented farm in Ontario in 2015. Seven very successful years later the young couple decided that it was time to grow and the best place to do so was on their own property.

As they looked around Canada there were a few spots in BC and Ontario that had caught their eye but never quite hit the spot until Amet Farm popped up straight out of left field. There was something about it that made Juliet and Martin stop and consider. And consider they did - and in no time at all they packed up all their belongings and moved into Amet Farm shortly after Fiona.

So, what was it that made them come and stay?

Was it the farm itself? Yes, in part.

Was it the view? Yes, in part.

Was it the general location? Yes, in part.

So, what was it that convinced them to move to Nova Scotia?

Well, when John Pembridge showed Juliet and Martin the farm, he also introduced them to all the neighbours and it was their hearty welcome that sealed the deal.

With that Juliet and Martin have made their home here in River John, along with the largest sheep herd east of the prairies, namely 450 sheep, (many pregnant,) and a wonderful menagerie of nine cattle, eight dogs and two cats - and I am sure that that is only the beginning.

Welcome to River John.

Herzlich Willkommen in River John.

(Translation: a heartfelt welcome to River John.)

Grace Young — environmental advocate

by **Grace Young**

Grace recently was chosen as one of the top 25 environmentalists of 2022 by the Starfish Canada team.

The Starfish Canada is a journal and platform that celebrates young environmental leaders. Through a national platform, young changemakers are able to advocate for the environmental issues that matter to them, and make their voices heard. To show the beauty of their love and care for the environment, the Top 25 Program celebrates and rewards these young leaders creating positive change in their communities, and gives Canada's youth a platform to make their voice heard through their Journal.

Grace Young is a youth advocate, speaker and community builder from Halifax, Nova Scotia. As the Mentorship & Events Manager at Student Energy, she leads a team of youth working on the International Student Energy Summit (SES 2023), the world's largest youth-led energy conference. It will

unite hundreds of youths, industry leaders, and members of government in Abu Dhabi in November 2023 at the margins of COP28, the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference). Grace is designing a mentorship program for Student Energy's network of 50,000 young people in the energy space and engages in youth leadership with global organizations like IRENA, (The International Renewable Energy Agency based in the United Arab Emirates). Grace speaks about youth innovation and meaningful youth engagement to international audiences at events such as COP27 and CEM12 (12th Clean Energy Ministerial). Grace completed two degrees at Western University, where she co-founded the institution's first fossil fuel divestment campaign. She has a background in gender studies, politics, and energy. Her graduate research identified how young Canadians are accelerating the energy transition, both as activists and professionals. Grace's work positions youth as crucial stakeholders in achieving a clean energy future and outlines the potential of placing young voices at the fore-



front of the broader climate movement. Growing up on the coast and the north shore of Nova Scotia influenced her passion for environmentalism and cooking. She loves learning from local farmers and has recently taken up scuba diving to learn more about ocean biodiversity. On the weekends, she works in the kitchen at her favourite local restaura-

.....continued on page 6.....



Langille Fuels
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



ORDER NOW!
Call 902-657-2390
www.langillefuels.ca

Community Announcements



Join us for 'coffee, cake & climate' conversations

Are you feeling anxious about the state of the planet, the storms we are experiencing?

What does a changing climate mean for us at a personal, family & societal level?

A place where you can be speak freely about your anxieties, be supported in your concerns, & learn what individuals can do to cope.

We meet monthly, alternating libraries

- Tuesday March 28 (Tata)
- Tuesday April 18 (RJ)
- Tuesday May 16 (Tata)
- Tuesday June 27 (RJ)

6-8 pm



EVENTIDE
WHEN AFTERNOON MEETS EVENING

AN HOUR OF CONTEMPLATIVE MUSIC
PRAYER & INSPIRING TALK

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, BRULE
TUESDAY MARCH 21 @ 7-8 PM
ALL WELCOME

Card of Thanks — River John Old School

A great big "Thank You" from the River John Old School, for all the support we received for our benefit pot luck supper to help John and Clara Clark and family after the recent fire. Everyone was so great from all the yummy dishes, desserts, hungry guests and last but not least, all the helping hands that made it possible to raise \$1,230.

Thanks everyone so much.

Joudrie-MacLean engagement



Chelsey Joudrie of River John, and Lee MacLean of Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia, would like to share the news of their engagement.

Lee proposed on New Year's Eve and the couple are getting married in August of this year in River John.

Chelsey is the daughter of Stewart and the late Michelle Joudrie and stepdaughter of Cindy Langille. She is the granddaughter of Stewart and Christene Joudrie, and Donald and Joan Redmond, and step-granddaughter of Jeannie Langille and the late Willis Langille.

Lee is the son of Daniel and Pauline MacLean and grandson of Ronald and Rita MacLean and the late Reginald and Joan Bartlett.

Card of Thanks — The Mertin Family

The family of the late Dolly Mertin of River John, wishes to express sincere appreciation for those many acts of kindness in the form of meals, visits, messages and phone calls during the recent loss of our wonderful wife, mom and Grammy. We especially wish to thank anyone who has donated in her name to the Community Support Society of River John for the food bank, along with everyone at McLarens funeral home in Pictou for their kindness.

Baby Matheson

Baby: Jax Easton Roy Matheson

Born: Dec 8, 2022

Weight: 7lbs 3ozs

Parents: Bobbi Lee Bigney and Kyle Matheson

Grandparents: Shelley and Leonard Bigney, and Gail and Hollis Matheson



Carlie Thompson graduation



It is with much love and great pride that we congratulate our daughter Carlie Thompson on her recent graduation from St. Francis Xavier University with a Master of Education in Administration and Policy.

We wish her continued success in life and with her career at McCulloch Education Centre.

Unending Love,
Mom and Dad, Janice and Charles Thompson



HANN
AUTOMOTIVE INC.

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

485-1588
11 FRONT ST. PICTOU

MOPC FirstHome Wireless Internet Comes to River John

by Maureen Topley

The River John Community Action Society recently hosted a Municipality of Pictou County staff presentation, as they confirmed their MOPC FirstHome Wireless Internet service nears start-up in the River John area. The Legion hall was packed with area residents keen on hearing what and how the new service would work.

MOPC Project officer Heather Allan-Johnson and Director of Corporate Services Sueann Musick presented the scope and details of the project. The bottom line is that residents of the River John area should soon be able to receive full wireless internet service for \$49.99 + HST/month. MOPC is in the process of testing and connecting customers to its present 14 towers. The River John tower is on Mountain Road and awaiting an NSP power connection. The expected start-up is March 2023. Installers will check to ensure a good signal before installing the new equipment. If your email is linked to your current internet provider, (e.g. Sympatico, Eastlink, etc.) you will need to change your email address. If you have emails with Gmail, Hotmail, or Outlook, which are free options, you will not need to change your email address.

Those interested need to apply to the Municipality of Pictou County for connection. There will



Sueann Musick - Robert Parker - Heather Allen-Johnson

be no data limit, expected 25mps upload and download speeds, no connection fee and no long-term contracts to sign. There will also be an option for seasonal customers.

Warden Robert Parker, also at the presentation, told the meeting that planning for this project started some seven years ago, and councillors approved the go-ahead based on three criteria; 1) it will eventually reach everyone in the county, 2) it will be of competitively high quality and 3) it will be affordable.

Warden Parker explained that part of the project includes installing fibre-op cable throughout the county. This fibre will be leased to 3rd party internet providers, who are currently Purple Cow, TNC Wireless or NCS; they will sell residents the service. When fibre is available in your area, residents will receive a letter from the municipality informing them how they can connect.

Federal funds are helping to support the project. MOPC is hopeful that there may be Provincial funds coming as well. Once the set-up and maintenance costs are met, any money generated by customers paying for the internet can be directed to other projects within Pictou County.

Warden Parker said that the MOPC is committed to enabling rural residents to conduct commercial and family business from their homes. We want people to stay living in our communities, and we want to attract new families to the area. This means providing high-quality internet service to everyone.

Those interested or have questions should contact Heather Allen-Johnson at 1-833-727-2256 or email sales@mopcfirsthome.net

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

Working Remotely

by Joan MacLeod

With modern wireless connections we can literally work anywhere in the world from wherever we are. This is why our own Pictou County Municipality has a lot of foresight to ensure that rural Pictou County is being connected with reliable high-speed internet. This way we can attract many new workers to our wonderful county and they can be within minutes of a beach or our beautiful rivers and lakes right after work. It sure beats a two-hour commute each way.

When I wanted to resign as editor of the Pioneer the rest of the group felt that it was much too soon and we had too many quick changes. I agreed to stay on and hold our meetings by Zoom. This is the second year that I have edited the winter issue of the Pioneer, working from less-than-wintery conditions, in Mexico. As I am living in Mexico for 3 months, rather than just vacationing here, it keeps me very well-occupied for a few weeks. Thanks to the rest of the team for allowing this. Adios amigos.



Pioneer editor Joan MacLeod hard at work on her balcony overlooking the Gulf of Mexico.

RURAL LAND GUY.com

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



Hon. Karla MacFarlane
MLA, Pictou West

P.O. Box 310, 37 Water St.
Pictou, NS B0K 1H0
902-485-8958
pictouwestmla@bellaliant.com



NS Government Services:

Health Information & Services...811
Public Health...902-752-5151
Need a Family Doctor Registry...855-893-1930
Seniors Pharmacare...800-305-5026
NS Road Conditions...511

Community Resources:

Public Works...844-696-7737
NS Power Outage Information...877-428-6004
Chignecto-Regional Central Centre for Education...800-770-0008
Housing NS Switchboard...902-755-5065
Senior's Outreach, Mary MacLellan...902-752-8400

Help Lines:

Mental Health Crisis Line...888-429-8167
Kids Help Phone...800-668-6868
Addictions Services...800-922-1122

by Joan MacLeod

People will agree that the climate is changing. The news is fraught with more extreme weather events, stories of drought, massive forest fires, earthquakes and hurricanes. Our own area was badly affected by three hurricanes in the past twenty years, (Juan 2003, Dorian 2019 and Fiona 2022,) and they appear to be getting worse. One of the impacts of climate change/global warming is that our coastlines are being eroded. This is especially evident to me as I live on the ocean for ten months of the year and in both places, Cape John and the Bay of Mexico, expensive measures have to be taken to try to keep the ocean at bay. Two other factors affect the erosion, global melting causing the oceans to rise and also the much milder winters, preventing the clay banks, (e.g. in Cape John) to remain unfrozen so that fall and spring rainfalls cause even more erosion. Prince Edward Island, for example, is recognising that the province is shrinking and measures are being put in place to move people back from the coastline. Our own province is implementing new restrictions on how close to the coastline one can build. And we all remember the footage of the houses in Newfoundland, (and one person,) being washed into the sea.

But Coastal erosion is just one aspect of global warming. Other aspects are: the loss of wildlife and biodiversity due to habitat destruction and increasing urbanization; the mass destruction of the rainforests due to corporate greed, and the pollution of the ocean with plastic garbage. Our over-reliance on fossil fuels is a huge contributor to the warming of the planet. Human activities and prac-

tices cause increased greenhouse gas emissions which in turn warms the planet. Time is running out! The future of the planet is at stake. For more information have a look at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), especially the 6th assessment report. There are petitions to sign from Greenpeace, calling on a halt to destruction of the rainforests and calling on our government to halt the shipment of our plastic waste to other countries, also calling on companies to produce less plastic waste in the first place. Our province having banned plastic bags is commendable. Paper bags are degradable, but this is just one small step in a massive challenge.

We have heard about visionaries such as Greta Thunberg, the Swedish environmental activist who is known for challenging world leaders to take immediate action for climate change mitigation. We have a local hero now, Grace Young, who is getting youth involved to clean up and re-think the energy sector. I must admit when I read her biography I immediately had to research all the acronyms, such as the United Nations Climate Change Conferences (COP 27/28) and SDG7 (Sustainable Development Goal 7). It is all high-powered, heady stuff!

In 2018, a new organization was born called Extinction Rebellion. It is a decentralized, international, and politically non-partisan movement using non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to persuade governments to act justly on the climate and ecological emergency. A local chapter in the Annapolis Valley has been instrumental in lobbying to save old growth forest habitats. Extinction Rebellion is holding a massive demonstration on April

21st in London, England. A short while later, May 6th, the coronation of King Charles will take place. Imagine what could be achieved if the expense of the coronation could be invested in green technologies instead.

We can all do our bit in our own individual way, whether by simply buying reusable water and coffee cups to reduce pollution, recycling, re-using (see Library Workshop), buying second-hand, signing petitions (e.g., Greenpeace), joining local environmental organizations such as SUNNS (of “Water not Gold” fame), becoming vegetarian, or building owl houses. To learn more, there is a series of discussions about the changing climate, facilitated by Susan Stephen, this spring at the River John and Tatamagouche libraries. We have been urged by Reverend Connie to “show up”; we need to also show up for the environment.

This issue of the Pioneer has more of an environmental theme. Our team works hard on each paper to present as much local news as we can and to keep people informed. Enjoy.

The two pictures show different methods of mitigating coastal erosion.

In Mexico, long bamboo stakes are driven six feet into the sand in two parallel rows and rocks and sandbags are placed in between; the idea is that the sand collects around the barriers. They also fill huge black EcoTubes with sand and place them about 6-8 feet off the shoreline.

The Canadian method is to drive huge metal posts six feet into the earth and construct a thick hemlock wall and backfill it with rocks. This photo was after the wall was gutted by Hurricane Fiona.



Erosion mitigation, Canada



Erosion mitigation, Mexico

Article submission guidelines

We really love to receive your articles and pictures, and appreciate the work you put into contributing to our newspaper. Thank you, all!

We would like to make a few small requests when you send these to us, which will make life a little easier for the little band of volunteers that puts the paper together:

(1) Please submit articles and photos (if any) all together at the same time. Articles should be in Word or WordPerfect format if possible (.docx, .doc, .wpd), and photos in .jpg format. Do not embed photos into the text document.

Caption(s) for photo(s) should be added below the article. Check the spelling of names in photos, we cannot make changes once the article is proof-read and sent to layout.

(2) Type the complete article, (including the title,) using a plain, basic font - no bold, large fonts, superscript, indents, etc. These have to be removed by proofer before going to layout. Our layout department will make your article look good anyway.

(3) The name of the person submitting the article should go just below the title, not at the end.

(4) Re-read your article before sending, for spelling or name errors.

(5) Keep on sending your articles, we love them, so do our readers!

Thank you.

Pioneer Editorial Team

The Pioneer is published by the River John Community Action Society

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

The views expressed in this newspaper are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editorial board.

The Pioneer is distributed throughout the BOK 1N0 postal area which is primarily River John and West Branch. We welcome any articles or pictures from any of our newspaper friends and areas. Contributions to the next issue should be sent to the editors. Please send text files and pictures as separate attachments. Text should have the bare minimum of formatting. Photos should be 400-1200 pixels wide, and be accompanied by a list of captions. We reserve the right to edit letters and articles for clarity and brevity. Profanity will not be tolerated and we have the right to refuse to print letters.

Editorial board:..... Joan MacLeod, Linda Thompson-Reid, Beulah Wright, Debby Shaw, Mary Beth Sutherland
.....pioneereditors@outlook.com

Photographer:..... Christiane Gill
Advertising sales Julie Windebankrjpioneerads@gmail.com
Advertising, accounts receivable Melanie Millerpioneerpayments2000@gmail.com
for advertising

Graphics Dylan Langille.....langille.dylan@gmail.com

Typist Sandra MacKay

Proof readingMarg Jones

LayoutDerek Andrews

PrintingAdvocate Printing & Publishing Co Ltd

Community Health Boards Promote Strengthen Health and Wellness in River John and Area

by Lynn Langille

Community Health Boards (CHBs) are groups of volunteers that work together to improve health and wellness in communities across the province. CHBs are involved in three main roles: supporting community leadership and partnerships, promoting health and wellness through the CHB Wellness Fund, and engaging in community health planning to improve the conditions in communities that influence health.

CHBs define health in broad terms. Health is not just about the absence of disease or illness. In the broadest sense, health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being. Health is influenced by individual health behaviours and practices, but also influenced very strongly by the conditions in which people live, learn, work, play and age. CHBs advocate for actions to promote and improve health and wellness based on what communities say is most important.

CHBs focus on the many factors that affect health & wellness in our communities, including income, housing, food security, sense of belonging, and other “social determinants of health.” Whether people are healthy or not is largely determined by their circumstances and environment. Factors such as where we live, the state of our environment, income and education levels, working conditions, housing and food security have considerable impacts on health. Health services are important, but it’s equally or more important for people to have access to the social determinants of health, which help to keep them from ending up at the hospital or doctor’s office.

Every five years, CHBs engage in health planning with people in their communities to make decisions about what the CHB should be focusing on. CHBs share what they learn in local communities with Nova Scotia Health Authority, IWK Health Centre, and other community groups. Currently, the priorities of the CHBs in the Northern



(L to R): Dominic Boyd (Co-Chair, Pictou West CHB), Ashley Langille and Jay Reid (River John & Area Recreation Development Society), Julie Windebank (Member, Pictou West CHB)

Zone of Nova Scotia are:

Mental Wellness and Sense of Belonging

Healthy Active Lifestyle and Supportive Environments

Thriving Communities, Prosperity and Affordability

Community Engagement, Connection and Inclusion

CHBs are now planning to update their community health plans. Community members will be invited to provide input on CHB priorities for the next five years. Stay tuned for community engagement sessions in the spring and fall.

The CHB Wellness Fund provides grants to community-based organization that are promoting health and wellness in their communities. In the past few years, Wellness Funds have supported a number of projects in the River John area, such as: “An Ounce of Prevention” Winter Wellness Workshops in Toney River, The Belonging Project and Art Jam (Writing on Fire Society), Pictou County Forest School, and the Food Bank/Food Pantry and Community Garden (River John Lions Club). This year, Wellness Funds have been awarded to the River John & Area Recreation Development Society for summer recreation camps for children and youth (ages 4-12 years).

For 2023, there is a new deadline for Wellness Fund applications. The online application site will open Monday, March 6, with an application deadline of Monday, May 1.

There are two CHBs in the River John area. The Pictou West CHB area includes the area between River John and Pictou. The North Shore Area CHB includes the area between River John and Wallace. Would you like to join the North Shore Area or Pictou West CHB? We are always looking for people who want to work with others to improve health and wellness in the area. To learn more, visit the CHB website or contact the CHB Coordinator at 902-324-0621 or lynnlangille2@nshealth.ca.

River John Memories

by John Crichton

July 15, 2022. This came to me from looking at a photo of my wife, Fran, sitting on the bench at the end of Cape John, as the setting sun sent a trail of golden sparkles across the wavelets to lead the way to the horizon.

There are things in my life I will never forget
Special memories locked away in my brain
Places and people and moments in time
Until I might need them again.

I have paused for an hour at the end of the Cape
At the close of a fading spring day
With the cries of the gulls and the smell of the tide
As the sun slipped slowly away
The reflection of the red setting sun
As it slowly sank out of my sight
It gives feeling of calmness and a sense of real peace
Moment of pure delight.

Have you stayed for an hour at the Bissell Park dock
On a warm tranquil day in July
On a bench watching kids jump from the bridge
Under an azure blue sky
Or up in the park on a warm summer night
With music being played for the crowd
And everyone there enjoying the sounds
All clapping or singing out loud.

These are things in your life you might never forget
Special memories to lock away in your brain
Places and people and moments in time
Until you might need them again.

These are things in my life I will never forget.

Splitting Hairs

by Christiane Gill

Decades ago, it seemed that everyone’s mom/wife/daughter—I have yet to come across any male family member—cut their family member’s hair, so I figured that I could do it, too. Easy peasy. So, I went out late one Sunday to buy one of those contraptions and sat my son down for his first (and only) haircut by mom. On Monday he went to class with a baseball cap very firmly on his head. His home room teacher of course demanded that he remove it. Beet red, my poor son asked to approach her desk and there lifted the front of the cap so that only she could see. I can only imagine the expression on her face. She swiftly wrote a note for my son to show his other teachers that day but, apparently, he didn’t need to because he was not once asked for it. Having been a teacher myself at a different school I can so well imagine this making the rounds in the teachers’ lounge like wildfire.

Of course, right after school I went to a professional hair studio with him and now pitied not only my son but also the hair stylist for having to find the balance between containing her laughter, her urge to reprimand me, and show her pity for my son’s plight. No need to worry about him, though, he very successfully exploited my guilt for months after that and we still laugh about it today, so one

might say that all’s well that ends well.

Plus, I learned my lesson:

STAY IN YOUR OWN LANE!

And that credo popped into my mind when I read Facebook comments regarding the RCMP operation on January 25th of this year. Demanding that the police announce their plans publicly is absurd. That would completely defeat the purpose. Demanding that the police present all their evidence to the public is just as absurd. Pretty much none of the public is any kind of law enforcement member, lawyer or judge. Even then it would be absurd to comment, much like any serious doctor refuses to even casually comment on anyone’s health unless they themselves have studied the case in depth. I am sure you wouldn’t want them to do so either. The same holds true for legal issues.

So, let’s all stay in our own lane and do what we do best such as repair cars, create products, sell products, care for people in need, teach or give poor kids who suffered their mom’s hair cutting skills a proper haircut, and be thankful to have such dedicated law enforcement Officers who strive to keep us all safe.

Thank you, RCMP Nova Scotia.

.....Grace Young, continued from page 1.....

rant. She is taking courses about kelp hatcheries, aquaculture and local agriculture.

Grace mostly grew up in Halifax, but her family is from the north shore of Nova Scotia. Her parents are: Tammy Manning and John Young. Her maternal grandparents are Lynda and Allan Manning from Seafoam and her paternal grandmother is Ann Young from Pictou. The coast and the ocean have always played a massive role in her life and shaped her personality.

Since its founding in 2009, Student Energy has become the world's largest youth-led organization working on energy, empowering a network of 50,000 young people in over 120 countries who are accelerating the transition to a sustainable and equitable energy future.
studentenergy.org@studentenergy)

P.S. Grace says, "If any young people in the local area are interested in anything to do with energy, (no experience required,) or energy careers, I would love to connect with them. Feel free to give them my email or my phone number (902-818-1855). At Student Energy we work with all post-secondary students, from university to the trades, and any young people aged 18-30 who care about energy or climate, even if they are not currently students. Additionally, we work with young professionals who are looking to develop skills, gain project experience, advance their energy careers, or fund current ventures. Our programming is free and I would be happy to share more information."



Grace with friends at Climate Change Conference 27 in Egypt.

Habitat for Humanity's First Home in Pictou County Completed

**by Ed Kennedy
Chair, Pictou County Chapter of
Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia**

On November 10th, 2022, the Williams family received their brand-new Habitat for Humanity home at 94 Poplar Street in Stellarton. The Key Ceremony was a joyous and emotional event, attended by some 50 donors of cash and materials, and construction volunteers. Thanks to the strong leadership of Construction Supervisor Dave Graham, the generous donation of funding, labour and materials from partner organizations, and the hundreds of hours of volunteer help, the Pictou County Chapter of Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia exceeded our goal of completing the home before the end of December 2022.



First Habitat for Humanity home in Pictou County, located at 9 Poplar Street in Stellarton

As Chair of the Chapter, I really enjoyed the opportunity to help manage the project, to contribute on a regular basis to the construction of the house, and to lead teams of volunteers. I was amazed at how volunteers, many of them with limited or no construction experience, were willing to pitch right in and take on tasks that they may have never tried before. Without exception, they seemed to enjoy the Habitat building experience, and left the construction site with a smile on their faces.

Pictou County are constructed as efficiently and effectively as possible and to the highest standards.

Plans are now underway to build a second Habitat home in 2023 on a lot donated by the Town of New Glasgow. We are always looking for donors to help support Habitat Home builds and welcome volunteers who would like to participate in the house construction. No previous construction experience is required, and Habitat provides all necessary tools and safety equipment and provides on-site volunteer training and supervision.

The new owners of the home - Nelson, Kaitlyn, Jaxon and Lila Williams - are a young family that needed a hand up to obtain a home of their own. Like other Habitat Partner Families, they did not qualify for a conventional mortgage, but have secure and steady employment and were able to commit to completing 500 hours of volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity. The major benefits that they obtained with Habitat home ownership include a zero downpayment, an interest-free mortgage and affordable monthly mortgage payments never exceeding 30% of their income.

To donate or volunteer, go to the Habitat NS website at habitatns.ca.

The Habitat Pictou County Chapter is composed of hard-working community members that have the collective ambition to build at least one house per year for families in need of affordable housing. The Chapter has strong support from the team at Habitat Nova Scotia and we are all working together to ensure that the houses we build in



The Williams family takes possession of their new home at the Key Ceremony on November 10th, 2022.

PAPA D'S AUTO REPAIR

4120 Scotsburn Road
Scotsburn, NS B0K 1R0

Darrell MacNeil
902-485-6613
Owner/Operator



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



Shop Hours: January - April by appointment
May - December, open daily 10am - 4pm

Sheep Barn will be open to visitors during shop hours beginning May 20th

Our own raised Lamb, Beef and Chicken now available. Inquire in the shop.

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

www.lismoresheepfarmwoolshop.com

The Silent City Cemetery

by Paul Martin

This modified article was originally published in the Saltwire news network; July 29, 2021

Approximately three kilometres west from the community of River John, NS, along the Northumberland Strait, there is a small cemetery set back in a field on what is called the Louisville Road.

The Silent City Roman Catholic Cemetery has been known to our family since about 1986 as a place of rest for several Mi'kmaq Children dating from 1853. My late parents, Ben and Jean Martin of Millbrook First Nation, had at one time resided in this community and had learned of the burial site from Netta Heukshorst, a resident and one of the cemetery's caretakers. Around 1986, my mother Jean learned from Mrs. Heukshorst, that this site contained several Mi'kmaq children, as she had discovered when she first began restoring this neglected overgrown cemetery.

Rumour had it that there were as many as 13 Indigenous children interred at this tiny Roman Catholic cemetery and that there was no grave marker to indicate their presence; just a "mound" to indicate their general whereabouts. Although now known to the Martin family, it became apparent that something needed to be done to acknowledge the presence of our ancestors in the cemetery. The lore of this sacred area has also served as a stark reminder that we had at one time inhabited and flourished along these shores long before contact.

Over time, the deep importance and significance of this small area became a focus of my thinking and I decided that the time had come to recognize and honour these ancestors so that they will be forever remembered. Thus I began further research in the fall of 2019. I contacted Mrs. Heukshorst to see if she had any further information regarding the presence of the Mi'kmaq children in the cemetery. Within hours she came to my house and dropped off literature that made several mentions of the burial of Mi'kmaq children in the Silent City Cemetery.

In the book, *The Roman Catholic church in Cobequid, Acadia 1692-1775 and Colchester County, N.S. 1828-1978*, written by Douglas Ormond, it is mentioned in the cemetery plan that, "There is an unmarked plot in the northern end where Indian children are buried." Additionally, on Page 6 in *The Roman Catholic Church in Colchester County*, written by Roy M. Kennedy, it is also mentioned that "A plot at the northern end of the cemetery contains a number of unmarked graves of Indian children." Within the same book, there is a picture that shows that at one time there was a headstone, its whereabouts are now unknown, and it is noted that there are seven children interred at this site in Row 7. What is missing, however, is why they died so young and where they came from.

Upon further investigation, and just by luck, I happened to learn of an elderly resident near the cemetery who could shed further light on the seasonal existence of Mi'kmaq families that camped in the area. The late Robert Douglas grew up across the road from the burial site and had some interesting stories and information to share with me when I spent time with him in the fall of 2019. Among the stories was that of a "medicine man" by the name of John Cope from Millbrook who brought some natural medicine that healed his father's illness. Surprisingly and coincidentally, John Cope was my great-uncle and was known as a medicine man on the Millbrook Reserve in Truro, but that is a different story.

Mr. Douglas told of an Indigenous encampment two kilometres away on what is called Bains Brook where the Mi'kmaq settled on a seasonal basis and made axe handles and splints to make baskets that were then traded and sold to local residents and nearby farms for milk, eggs and flour. He also spoke about the time his dad went to visit the encampment at Bains Brook and was invited into one of the several Wikwams (wigwam – not a teepee) which he said was lined with spruce boughs, had a fire burning in the centre for warmth, and that it was exceptionally warm and comfortable. Mr. Douglas spoke highly of the Mi'kmaq that came to the area and he said they were kind and friendly and that they were often invited to attend kitchen parties at their home but he does not think they ever attended. He also does not recall when they stopped coming to the area.

Turning his attention back to the existence of Mi'kmaq children in the cemetery, Mr. Douglas thought that perhaps the plague had killed the children as it did to many of the local people including several children, although he was not certain. He said that for many years there was a woman named Cathy who would visit the cemetery and it was assumed that she was there for the Indigenous children. It is also unclear as to when her visits stopped.

As a headstone maker, I thought it fitting that I immediately design and produce a proper grave marker. I also deemed it necessary to consult my mother, Jean Martin, for her input into what information should be engraved in stone to commemorate the children. Seemingly without further consideration she immediately gave me what she considered to be an important saying and two meaningful cultural graphics that should be included. Given the information, I drew up several design options and my mom selected one to be forever etched in stone.



In the fall of 2020, my wife, Anne, and I carried the headstone to the approximate location where the original grave marker once stood, and installed it. Mrs. Heukshorst joined us and performed a small and heartfelt ceremony to bless these "young, innocent and beautiful Indigenous children."

An Indigenous-based ceremony is being planned for the near future so that the children who are interred at this small country cemetery will also be recognized and honoured by their own culture in hopes they can completely rest knowing that they will remain loved, respected and forever remembered. In my continuing research into who these children are, where they came from and why they died, it would be extremely helpful if anyone has information to contribute.

Wela'lin (Thankyou).

Fire Department News

by Krysta MacLellan

I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday. As we ended 2022, we had our year-end Banquet and Awards Night. We would like to send our congratulations to our long-service award members: Peter Ingram 10 years, Michael Weatherby 10 years, Santana Weatherby 10 years, Brian MacLean 25 years, Bruce Murray 25 years, Donald Baillie 35 years, Donald MacGregor 35 years and John MacLellan 35 years. We would also like to send our congratulations to Jordan Dares who was nominated as Firefighter of the Year, Cody Joudrie who was Officer of the Year as well as Member of the Year. Congratulations to all of our awards winners!

As we ring in the New Year, we also ring in new Executives and Officers. We would like to congratulate the following on your new roles. Terry Heighton as Fire Chief, James Brown and Carson Bigney as Deputy Fire Chiefs, Captains: Darren Allan, Travis Heighton, Cody Joudrie and Brian MacLean.

We would also like to mention that we now have email addresses to contact the fire department:

For anything Fire Chief related:
riverjohnfdchief@gmail.com

For hall rental or inquiries rjvfdhall@gmail.com

And for all other fire department inquiries
rjvfd@outlook.com

These emails are checked on a regular basis, but also please allow one or two days for a reply.

We are happy to announce that the county has decided to offer a course in the schools as a credit for Junior Firefighters. This allows young members between the ages of 16-18 to join their local fire departments as Junior Members to learn about becoming a firefighter. They get to participate in their department's training, meetings and functions. They must meet the criteria for the county as well as the individual department they are planning to join. It is a great way to start as a firefighter to build up knowledge, teamwork, safety and awareness in becoming a firefighter. River John Fire Department is also fortunate enough to have its first member in this program.

As we are all well aware, the weather this winter has been up and down, which means a lot of lighting and re-lighting of fires in your house. Doing this repeatedly is one of the worst ways to build up creosote in your flue which can create a flue fire. In the event of a flue fire, after you call 911, IF ABLE TO DO SO SAFELY, grab a bucket of water and some papers, soak your papers in water and then gently place the wet papers on top of your fire. Never throw a bucket of water in your fire as you will create a back splash of hot coals and fire back in your face. Placing wet papers on top of your fire will help slowly put your fire out and also create steam which will help put your flue fire out with the least amount of damage to your flue. Once firefighters show up, we have a thermal imaging camera that we can use to check and make sure your flue fire is out.

With all this rain, snow and soft ground, we would also like to advise you to please pay attention when driving, as shoulders are soft and can pull you into the ditch. Also, wet roads followed by a drop in temperature can create black ice and icy conditions. We all want to get to where we are going safely. If you do see us out helping someone in need, please slow down and move over. It is the law.

Getting Ready to Read by the Sea, July 6-8

by Jackie MacKean

The weather outside may be frightful, but it's perfect weather for curling up with a great book and escaping reality for a bit. And while the icy winter winds have been blowing and swirling, it's been heating up for the organizing committee of the Read by the Sea literary festival in River John.

Already, plans have been solidified for the 2023 festival which will run July 6-8. The festival will kick off July 6 with Atlantic Canada's only dedicated children's literary festival, WordPlay and OnWords, (a teen/young adult event,) followed on July 7 by Wordstock, (writing workshop, heritage story walk, open mic, campfire family storytelling,) then culminating on July 8 with Pitch the Publisher and Main Stage.

Local author Monica Graham, long-time Read by the Sea festival committee member says, "This year's event will feature some of Canada's best authors who come into a rural community that might not otherwise get to meet them."

Among the authors confirmed for this year are Whit Fraser from Caribou River (Cold Edge of Heaven, True North Rising) and Angela Bowden from New Glasgow (UnSpoken Truth, Black Girl Black Girl) and Olga Manzoni from Halifax (Mondays With Nonna). And there are plenty more to come.

The festival offers something for everyone of all ages: there will be plenty of books for sale, author readings and interaction with the authors, food vendors will be onsite, and there will also be workshops, storytelling and plenty of time for family activities.

One event that will be back this year is the immensely popular Pitch the Publisher. In this Dragon's Den-type of event – with a twist – aspiring authors aged 18 and older will get three minutes to pitch their unpublished manuscript in front of a panel of at least three regional publishers; if one of the publishers takes an interest, they will offer a contract and if more than one publisher takes an interest they will compete for the manuscript.

Submissions are now open for Pitch the Publisher, sponsored by the Atlantic Publishers Marketing Association and

Read by the Sea literary festival. It runs 9-10:30 a.m. at the River John Legion. Deadline for submissions is March 15.

Graham stresses that those interested in pitching the publishers don't have to have their pitches ready, just their submission: a one-page summary that explains what the book is about, the audience, how many words, etc. Submissions can be emailed to contact@readbythesea.ca or by mail to Read by the Sea, c/o River John Library, PO Box 104, River John, NS, B0K 1N0. A jury will select the nine or ten entries most likely to succeed. Graham stresses that doesn't necessarily mean the best entries, rather those most likely to be picked by a publisher in that year. They should not see it as a reflection on their writing. The successful writers will be contacted by the RBTS committee so prospective writers need to be sure to include their contact information with their submission.

Volunteers needed

Read by the Sea depends almost entirely on volunteers. Anyone who would like to help out in any capacity would be welcome – whether it's joining the organizing committee, being part of the Pitch the Publisher submission review panel, lending a hand with setup and cleanup on the day of the events, or in some other capacity. Interested individuals may express their ability to help out by emailing contact@readbythesea.ca or rjreadbythesea@gmail.com.

Stay in the know

Details about the 2023 festival will be updated on the group's festival website, www.readbythesea.ca as they become available. Follow us on Twitter (@RJreadbythesea) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/readbythesea>). Also watch for more newsletters and write-ups in The Pioneer and other local news media.

If you have general questions or comments or know someone who would like to be added to our newsletter mailing list, please connect with us at contact@readbythesea.ca or rjreadbythesea@gmail.com.

Submissions open for Pitch the Publisher

Calling all writers aged 18 and up: This is your chance to pitch your unpublished manuscript to a panel of Atlantic publishers at Read by the Sea 2023! Here's how:

1. Prepare a proposal. Describe your book in two sentences or less, plus why you are the most qualified person to write it and why people will want to read it. State the genre and intended audience.

2. Send your proposal (not the manuscript) by March 15, 2023 to Pitch thePublisher by:

- email using the "contact us" feature at www.readbythesea.ca; or
- mail to Read by the Sea, c/o River John Library, PO Box 104, River John, NS, B0K 1N0.

3. A jury will select the nine or ten entries that are most likely to succeed. The selected writers will then get three minutes to pitch their manuscripts to the publisher panel on July 8, 2023, 9-10:30 a.m. at the River John Legion. We will contact the successful writers to let them know so be sure to include your contact information.

News from the West Branch and Area Community Association

by Reg Crewe, Director/Treasurer

The West Branch Hall was built in 1933 by interested community members as a centre for the community. The hall is also a registered "Comfort Centre" and has been providing services to community members, especially during the Hurricane Fiona event. The association and hall are run by a volunteer board of seven community members. The board has been successful in applying for several grants to enable the continued maintenance and use of the hall.

We received approval for a New Horizons for Seniors Program grant of \$24,216 to purchase mostly kitchen and hosting equipment to better enable hall events to take place with better equipment to ensure everything needed is at hand. Some items include a commercial fridge, microwave, chairs, carts and cooking utensils.

We were also successful in receiving a \$1,000 grant from United Way for the extra fuel and food stuffs provided during the Hurricane Fiona. We are currently in the process of applying and having the hall appraised and evaluated for a grant from the Affordable Housing Program to update our insulation and heating system with the goal of becoming a solar powered facility.

The board was also successful getting two grants, one from the Municipality of Pictou County and another from the Pictou Mutual Charitable Foundation to provide fully accessible washrooms



with up-to-code toilets, sinks, mirrors and grab bars.

Our thanks to the granting organizations for providing the necessary funding to allow us to keep our hall in great operating condition.

The hall is accessible and available to any interested community members and groups. We seat 60 people and have a kitchen.

The hall is currently hosting West Branch Wednesdays on three dates in February and March to address "Mental Health: Taking care of ourselves and others." We welcome community members to the hall for a meal and info sessions. This is a pilot project for the county and also to assess the need for a more regular get-together for community members on an ongoing basis, depending on attendance and need. So far, attendance has been great and participation has been fantastic.

Other events happening soon, include:

The annual Maple Syrup Festival, scheduled for April 29, 2023.

Our monthly "Old Time Dances" have been on hold and once again hope to resume when conditions permit.

The weekly music jams, we are all missing the music and we will announce plans to continue when conditions permit.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all newcomers to the area and encourage anyone new to the area who would like to participate or contribute to the West Branch and Area Community Association to contact one of the board members. We appreciate any help anyone has for the betterment of our community.

The hall is available for private events, anniversaries, birthdays, celebrations or meetings. Please call for details, 902-351-2260.

A & M Small Engines SALES AND SERVICE LTD.

4119 Scotsburn Road, P.O. Box 18, Scotsburn, NS B0K 1R0

Rental Shop	Briggs & Stratton
Lawn & Garden Tractors	Toro MTD
Echo	Lawnboy
Kohler	Husqvarna

Since 1985

Telephone: (902) 485-8866

Allan Fraser

Published Author praises Read by the Sea and Pitch the Publisher

by Jackie MacKean

Read by the Sea was a virtual life changer for a Canadian author.

After travelling from her home in Calgary, AB, to River John, NS, to attend 2017's literary event, Lana Shupe was finally able to realize a dream come true: publication of her children's book, *The Lonely Little Lighthouse*.

It was after participating in Read by the Sea's Pitch the Publisher event two years later in 2019 that Shupe was offered a contract for her book. *The Lonely Little Lighthouse* was published by Nimbus Publishing in 2022.

Since that eventful day, she hasn't looked back! Shupe explains, "I have been a lover of Atlantic Canadian books since I was a teenager and strove to work hard to promote authors/publishers there. While researching books to read and review I came across the website for RBTS and reached out asking if there was anything I could do from Calgary."

That July, she travelled to the event and helped with the opening of Mabel Murple's Book Shoppe and Dreamery where she met committee members in person.

"Oh, what a glorious day that was!"

Shupe had attended other literary festivals while living in Ontario, but wanted to get involved in the Atlantic Canadian book scene.

"RBTS was small, but mighty, and I felt an instant connection there. I just felt at home in River John."

Her experience at RBTS – and Pitch the Publisher – definitely changed her publishing trajectory. "Although nervous as all get-out, I felt calmed by all the encouraging words from the experienced authors and volunteers. What I liked most about the 2019 event was hearing all the other pitches. Such a wide ranging, diverse collection of potential authors with great stories. The publishers were very gracious and gave excellent feedback for each pitch."

If you are an aspiring writer aged 18 or older with a manuscript collecting dust in a desk or buried deep among other files on your hard drive, Pitch the Publisher is your opportunity to finally get published. It worked for Shupe.

She encourages, "Believe in your story. Believe that you are the ONLY ONE who can tell YOUR story, whatever it may be."

Shupe has some advice for those who are selected to pitch the publisher.

"Keep your pitches to the three-minute allowance. Practise, practise, practise your pitch. Read it out loud. Get feedback from someone who respects you and will give honest, constructive criticism."

This year's Pitch the Publisher will run Saturday, July 8, from 9 until 10:30 a.m. at the River John Legion.

Local author Monica Graham, a long-time committee member of Read by the Sea Festival says, "Aspiring authors will be given three minutes to pitch their works to a panel of regional publishers. The publishers will be tailored to the theme of the pitches; for example, if the projects being pitched this year are all children's books, then the publishers will all be geared toward that genre."

Sponsored by the Atlantic Publishers Marketing Association and Read by the Sea literary festival, this fan-favourite is like a Dragon's Den-type of event. "If one of the publishers takes an interest in your proposal, they will offer you a

contract and if more than one publisher takes an interest, they will compete for you!"

Deadline for submissions is March 15. Graham notes that those interested in pitching the publishers don't have to have their pitches ready by that date.

SUBMISSIONS

Prepare a proposal: Describe your book in two sentences or less, why you are the most qualified person to write it and why people will want to read it. State the genre and intended audience. Send your proposal – not the manuscript – by March 15 to Pitch the Publisher by email using the 'Contact Us' feature at www.readbythesea.com; by mail to Read by the Sea, care of River John Library, PO Box 104, River John, NS, B0K 1N0.

A jury will select the nine or ten entries most likely to succeed. Graham stresses, "That doesn't necessarily mean the best entries, rather those most likely to be picked by a publisher in that year. They should not see it as a reflection on their writing."

The successful writers will be contacted by the RBTS committee so prospective writers need to be sure to include their contact information with their submission.

Those who are invited to pitch the publisher will all be given a specific time to make their presentation. They should be there 15 minutes before they are scheduled to pitch and may stick around afterwards to be in the audience to hear the other pitches, but don't have to be there for the entire 90 minutes of the event. Graham says if they don't show, the next scheduled person will make their presentation and sometimes, that leaves room at the end for someone who was not scheduled to pitch. So, if someone who doesn't make a pitch but wants to attend in the hopes that maybe they'll get in at the end if someone is a no-show, they may actually be successful in pitching the publisher.

Editor's note:

We realize that the "Pitch the Publisher" article missed our publication deadline, but in publishing the whole article, the organization offers a second chance on the day, for hopeful writers.

IOOF and Rebekah News

by Jacob Leegwater, Secretary
Helping Hand Lodge

The Rebekahs' ticket sales for the handmade table were very gratifying. The winner was Sonya White of Hodson. The winning ticket was drawn on December 2nd at the Overstreet Cafe.

Due to weather and holidays, we had fewer meetings. Gifts were collected for our Adopt-A-Residents at the Maritime Odd Fellows Home. At our January meeting, guests were Brother Peter Richardson, Sister Annie Scott and Sister Sylvia Stewart. At our recent meeting on February 24th, we approved a donation to a family that had lost everything in a recent fire.

On the other hand, the Odd Fellows were able to meet weekly on Monday nights at 7:30 p.m. On November 10th, we attended the semi-annual district #17 meeting in Pictou with District Deputy Grand Master Brother Michael MacKenzie presiding. We participated at the Cenotaph by laying a wreath on November 11th.

One of the projects carried out were to help a River John resident with piling wood. Cards and gifts for widows of deceased members were delivered. On various occasions we welcomed visitors from Eastern Star Lodge in Pictou, Union Lodge in Springville, Moore Lodge in Thorburn and Scotia Lodge in Westville.

We donated a Walmart gift card to a family that had lost everything in a recent fire.

Repairs to the lodge hall are started, most visible is the steel on the roof. Work will proceed on the other items as well as repairs to the interior.

Brother Willis Langille has been instrumental in getting pictures of past Noble Grands and displaying them in the downstairs hallway.

Since our last report we lost some members. We remember Sister Helen Gunn and Sister Marie Sellers of Frazee Rebekah Lodge, and Brother Hugh Langille of Helping Hand Lodge. Our sympathies to all those families.

Application for associate membership was received from Brother Peter Richardson, which was approved. Also, an application for membership from Joanne Ferguson was approved. Initiation will take place at Liberty Lodge in Tatamagouche on March 1st. For Rebekahs, we accepted the application for associate membership from Sister Annie Scott.

We are still collecting recyclables and scrap. Call Willis Langille at 902-897-3883.

Until next time, stay safe.

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS



Helping Hand Lodge #34

If you're interested in joining an organization that believes in making the world a better place to live, by aiding each other in times of need and organizing charitable projects that benefit the less fortunate, then **call today!**

Call 902-351-2684
or check us out on Facebook
(Helping Hand Lodge #34)

2021-2022 Noble Grand, Willis Langille

Sheep Shearing Isn't Just Giving Sheep a Severe Haircut!

by **Christiane Gill**

Sheep shearing is caring for and connecting with these sweet creatures and the world. Yes, the world!

Today I was invited to Amet Farm. Aaaahhh (deep sigh).

Amet Farm... Who has not driven past this property, read the sign and was drawn into the magic exuded from the farmhouse up the drive.

So today my daydreams met with the cold, hardworking reality of the - now - largest sheep farm east of the prairies and I am swooning even more. Yes, I am very well aware that any outdoor trade, farming especially, is very hard work day in and day out with barely a day off, if any at all. But these creatures are so worth the effort and Juliet Oraziotti and Martin Weber make it seem almost effortless. Their love for each individual creature shows radiantly even to the casual observer. For example, for a recent two-day sheep shearing, they were able to obtain one of the very best professionals, Amber Petersen, from PEI. She just returned from two months of sheep shearing in New Zealand. Yes, a lady sheep shearer who informed me that it is a profession that more and more women take up and even compete in. Just a decade or two ago there was maybe one woman among 4000 male sheep shearers. Today it is around 1 in 40.

I also learned that the pregnant sheep need to be freed of their wool before birth so that the lambs can easily find the teats. The shearing is also important because the farmer can then see if the mother sheep is in good shape. If not, she is separated and will receive an extra-large portion of TLC. This is also the perfect time to check the hooves and give the darlings a much-appreciated pedicure. No! No nail polish or the likes, just a good trim where necessary. We don't want to spoil the ladies too much, now do we? As for the present rather frigid temperatures I was wondering if the sheep would need a very quickly knitted wool sweater but was assured that the sheep actually welcome the shearing and that the barn will become quite warm as the sheep now emit their body warmth. The very first sheared sheep I saw gave herself a much-relished body rub against one of the metal partitions - no splinters from them (yes, sheep are smart).

I met people from all around the world this morning. Besides meeting Juliet from Vancouver, BC/Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON, her husband Martin from Schaerding, Austria, and Amber from PEI straight out of New Zealand, I also met a few more people. Anna Kinigadner from Germany and also her German husband Patrick Kinigadner with Canadian roots is one such international couple. And then there is Alina from Ottawa with Polish roots who, with her husband Steve, came here to River John to be able to host family, friends and acquaintances (many with a family member suffering from serious health issues) who otherwise would not be able to go on a vacation. Ah Alina, such a funny lady, too. She traded her stilettos for rubber boots and turned from file pusher to sheep lover. And then there is Jamie O'Kane from our much beloved Melville Corner Homestead as well to gladly lend a hand as he so very often does.

Now look at those incriminating photos, if they don't exude mutual respect, genuine love and compassionate care I don't know what does.



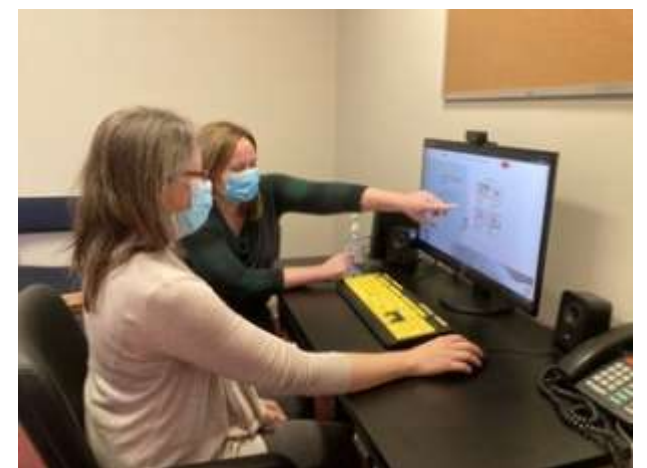
At the salon: "Sorry dear. We don't do trim but I assure you that you will love your ultra pixie cut. After we are done, you'll be next up for that relaxing pedi that your sister is enjoying behind us".



Alina checking the fleece for impurities

Virtual Care at your Library.

Do you need to see a doctor and have been told you need to use Maple? The River John Library offers high speed internet and computer equipment in a private room for Virtual Care appointments with trained staff to assist with anything you may need. The library has a private room to sit and talk with a doctor or nurse-practitioner online using the Maple application or Zoom for scheduled specialist appointments. All the equipment that is needed to have a virtual appointment in a comfortable private setting is available and ready to use. Melissa Marshall, Virtual Care Technician, will help you with any technology needs. She will help you access Maple, which is a free health application for all Nova Scotians that are on the Need a Family Practitioner list or will help you register if you have not done so already. Melissa can help you set up a Maple account if you don't already have one. If you do, she can help you get logged in, upload your health card and ID and any other information you may want to add. She can assist you every step of the way.



Once you are connected with a doctor or nurse-practitioner Melissa will step out and you can have your appointment in private. Doctors on Maple can help in many ways; they can fill prescriptions, send you for testing, answer health questions and diagnose minor health conditions plus so much more. Another great feature of using Maple is after your testing is complete you will get a notification that your results are back. All you have to do is log into your account and your results are there. Melissa can help with that as well.

For more information please contact Melissa at (902)759-5227 or virtualcare@parl.ns.ca







CALL ME FOR ANY OF YOUR REAL ESTATE NEEDS!
YOUR LOCAL AGENT ON THE SUNRISE TRAIL
SERVICING ALL OF NORTHERN NOVA SCOTIA

Janet Butler
REALTOR®

📞 902-396-6062
@ janetbutler@royallepage.ca
🌐 janet.butler.royallepage.ca



Helping YOU is what we DO™

Pickleball Growing in River John

Just a few months ago, with support from the River John Fire Department, River John Pickleball Club introduced indoor pickleball to the community. Attendance is steadily increasing with ten 90-minute playtimes now being offered every week including one strictly for youth. But sign up quick to secure a spot. The fees collected (Nov-Jan) have provided \$815.00 to the Fire Department.

The club has finalized the Partnership Agreements with the River John Legion Branch 108 and the Pictou County YMCA. The agreement with the Legion provides the physical location for the courts as well as a great partner in the community. The partnership with the YMCA has resulted in a \$15,000 capital contribution and assistance with programming at the facility.

On the grant front, all applications for government funding have been submitted. At the municipal level a presentation was made to the Municipality of Pictou County (MOPC) Council on November 7, 2022, in conjunction with our partners from the RJ Legion and Pictou County YMCA. Our presentation was very well received and has the support of our District 4 Councillor, Mary Elliott.

At the provincial level, we have applied for



Rob MacKay and Dael MacKay in back. Val Langille and Janice Thompson front.

funding under the Recreation Facility Development Grant program. We continue to work with Karla MacFarlane, MLA for Pictou West, to highlight our project and the support it is receiving in the community.

Federally, we connected with the office of Sean Fraser, MP for Central Nova, who has provided

support for our application to the New Horizons for Seniors Program.

Stay tuned as we launch our campaign for both corporate and personal donations. Our optimism is rising that the three outdoor pickleball courts will be built in River John this year.

We thank everyone involved to-date for your support. See you all on the courts soon! To keep in touch, join the River John Pickleball Facebook group or visit our website.



These courts built in Little Harbour are very similar to the plans for River John.



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



Ray Thompson Memorial Hockey Tournament

by **Linda Thompson-Reid**

The 23rd annual Ray Thompson Memorial Hockey Tournament was held at the North Shore Recreation Centre, Tatamagouche, on February 10 and 11. A total of six teams participated in the two-day tournament. Luc Lohead's team won the championship game, 5-1 against Aaron Crocker's team.

Thank you to the Tatamagouche Area Minor Hockey Association for its guidance and support with regard to organizing the tournament. We appreciate everyone who helped – officials, timekeepers, canteen and rink staff, as well as the teams who participated.

Thank you to Caldera Distilling, Overstreet Cafe, TataBrew and Tri-County Ford for the generous donations of prizes, which were presented to the most valuable player of each game, the championship game and the tournament champs.

The Thompson family appreciates your generosity and support.



We have failed to identify most of the players with the following exceptions:
Goalie - Josh Mulholland Right of Josh - Luc Lohead
Blue jacket - Marc Lohead
Front right row - Craig Matheson

Joudrey Road
MUD MULCH & MORE
 (902) 890-3413 
DELIVERY AVAILABLE



Welcoming a New Resident to River John: RCMP Constable Ralphene Williams

by Julie Windebank

In October, as the North Shore was grappling with the effects of tropical storm Fiona, Ralphene Williams moved to River John. She's been busy ever since, becoming oriented to her new region, and being called back to follow up on cases in her previous post.

Two Pioneer volunteers had the opportunity to meet informally with Ralphene to welcome her to the village, and we talked about some of the social issues facing rural communities.

Ralphene grew up in Prince Edward Island, and her Maritime background gives her an appreciation for rural life. She noted that people in small communities tend to take care of each other, and it becomes clear in conversation that these values have influenced her. While she has a Business Degree from University of PEI and worked for the large tech company, Honeywell Aerospace, she always wanted to be a police officer. She's been with the force since 2010, and gained experience working in Saskatchewan and Northwest Territories before coming back east. She has fond memories of the people and communities where she lived in previous posts.

A dog lover, Ralphene has gathered canine companions, several of them as rescues. They are settling in to their new home, too. Ralphene is enjoying living closer to family, with access to beaches and hiking trails here in Pictou County. We hope she'll have the opportunity to attend a meeting with the River John Community Action Society in the near future, and wish her a warm welcome to the village.



River John's First Newcomer Meet and Greet

**by Wilma van der Veen,
Managing Branch Assistant**

It was without a doubt an amazing success! Fortunately, the weather cooperated and on February 21, 2023 the Welcome Committee & River John Library were able to host the first of what will be many—a Newcomer Meet and Greet. It would appear that the third time is a charm. More than two dozen people attended, and if the buzz of the room was any indication, there was plenty of conversation, networking, and just plain ol' River John hospitality!

Several newcomer families joined us, some coming from as far away as BC and Europe, others from Ontario and Quebec, and a few from other parts of this province. Some had moved here as recently as December and January; some had moved sometime during the earlier part of the pandemic, while others were returning to the area after being away for decades or recently making the final move to the area after having been seasonal residents. Some were living in River John proper, others around Marshville, Seafoam, Welsford, West Branch and Toney River.

Representatives from most River John organizations were in attendance, including the Welcome Committee, the River John Community Action Society, the Pioneer, Friends of the River John Library, the C@P Society, Recreation, the Legion, the Lions Club, and the Oddfellows and Rebekahs. For groups that were not able to send a representative, others in attendance were able to fill in some gaps and spoke to the Meals on Wheels, the Community Support Society of River John, the Old School, 4-H and the Historical Society. In addition, various options for getting physical exercise were mentioned: the ever-popular River John Pickleball, Exercise Classes at the Firehall and Line Dancing at the Legion. Many of the organizations stressed how volunteers are what make this area strong with so many organizations supporting the community; more volunteers are always welcome and needed.

The Welcome Committee of Diane Kennedy—a relative newbie herself, Lynn MacLeod and Maureen Topley, will be visiting the new residents in the coming weeks, and have plans to hold similar events a few times a year, co-hosting the event with the library. We know there are more newcomers who were not able to attend so the next New-

comer Meet and Greet is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, June 13th.

A big thank you to everyone who came out, and, of course, a hearty welcome to all newcomers!



Back row, left to right: Ann Patriquin, Stephen Kealey, Alina Senkowska, Ed Kennedy, Erica Cotter, Molly Cotter, Martin Oraziotti, Jennifer Crawford, Ian McKay, Eric Stackhouse (Chief Librarian, PARL).

Middle row, left to right: Barb Acker, Charlynn Mullin, Glenda Campbell, Joan Redmond, Diane Kennedy, Maureen Topley, Lisa Bureau, Julie Windebank, Brad Crawford

Front row, left to right: Wilma Van der Veen, Susan Belt, Lynn MacLeod, Ashley Langille, Georgina Manning, Juliet Oraziotti



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



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

Illegal Weapons seized in River John

by Joan MacLeod

On Wednesday January 25th, the community of River John was very surprised to see a huge police presence centred around Salem United Church on Hwy #6. Pictou County RCMP, the Police Dog Service and the Emergency Response Team all gathered to deal with a complaint of shots being

fired. Sargent Lane, next to Wellington Street, was blocked off. After approximately 4 ½ hours the occupants of the home surrendered peacefully. During a police search, the RCMP seized unlawfully stored firearms and accessories and illegal weapons. Three of the people arrested were charged with firearms offences and two were released. Those three people will appear in court in April.

The investigation is still ongoing.

This recent incident was preceded by 2 incidents in Hedgeville—one in March and one in September, 2022—in which stolen weapons and illegal firearms were seized. Again, the police responded after shots had been fired. In those incidents, arrests were also made. In response to recent break-ins and thefts in Pictou County, the Municipality of Pictou County and Pictou District RCMP have hosted community meetings, one of which was held at the River John Old School on Oct 28th. The topic was, "Safer Homes, Safer Communities: Protecting your Property from Crime." The poster said, "The Pictou District RCMP will be



All's well that ends well. RCMP Operations in River John on 25 January 2023 winding down.

Bonnie Murray Receives Platinum Jubilee Medal

by Debby Shaw

Here is another chapter in Bonnie Murray's story.

On February 12, 2023, Bonnie Murray was honoured at the River John Legion Branch 108, when Peter MacKay presented her with the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal. The Platinum Medal was created to mark the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession in 1952. Recipients of this medal "...must have made a significant contribution to their community." In 2011, Peter MacKay also presented Bonnie with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her service to the River John Legion 108 and the community. Bonnie jokingly figured it wouldn't be a "real" presentation this time without Peter MacKay doing it, and was completely surprised and thrilled when he arrived!

It was a lovely afternoon with words of gratitude from Peter for Bonnie's work, as well as from MC Mary Beth Sutherland, followed by words of thanks from Bonnie.

She enjoyed spending time with friends, and her family who came from Alberta to surprise her. We all visited and relaxed with a light lunch provided by the Legion.

Congratulations, Bonnie.



providing a public presentation on how to avoid becoming a victim of property crime, crime reduction strategies and answering questions on rural policing." The meeting was well-attended, and there was a question and discussion period that followed, focusing on events in the River John and Seafoam areas. Families living in the area were understandably asking for better communication from the RCMP, so that they know to shelter indoors when there is police activity.

Since May 2020, Canadian laws prohibiting dangerous hand guns, rifles and assault rifles have been strengthened, and they also regulate how firearms should be safely stored. Unlike the United States, we can pride ourselves on our relative lack of mass shootings, despite the horrid instance in April, 2020. We all want safe non-violent communities in rural Nova Scotia.

News from River John Legion

by President Mike Topley

Big Congratulations to Legion members Bonnie Murray and Mary Beth Sutherland on their receipt of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal. Both were recognized for their significant contributions (like Her Majesty) to the service of family, community and country.

Mary Beth's citation highlights her work in advocating for an official apology to the No.2 Construction Battalion which was commanded by her grandfather Lt. Col. Daniel Hugh Sutherland of River John. This battalion of black soldiers was placed in a non-combatative role during World War I because of the overt racist sentiments of the top military brass. Further, they were disbanded unceremoniously at the end of the war without thanks or acknowledgment. Mary Beth's work helped convince the "National Apology Advisory Committee" that a formal apology was warranted. This was delivered by the Prime Minister in Truro last summer.

In other news, our River John Legion is in full force recovery mode after two years of (COVID) subdued activity. The Meals on Wheels program delivers 40 hot meals every Wednesday under the care and control of Melanie Cote and Sandra Patriquin. We should take this opportunity to thank JoAnne Wilkins for many years of service at the helm of this program.

Karaoke singers are blowing the doors off every Saturday night starting at 8 p.m. Doors are open at 7 p.m. and singers have a selection of over 1500 songs to choose from. Admission is \$5 and last week's 50/50 winner took home a little less than \$100. Singers also qualify for a "Chase the King" prize that builds each week until the King of Clubs is drawn.

Our Legion has reached an agreement with the local Pickleball Club allowing grant applications to be finalized and aiming for a construction start by early summer 2023. With any luck and a lot of hard work, we should be playing pickleball by this fall. Many are currently learning and tuning up their game with indoor pickleball at the Fire Hall

Our new propane-powered standby electrical generator is being installed this week by Seacrest Electric Ltd. This will make our Legion fully functional again as an EMO Comfort Centre. Many thanks also to the Nova Scotia Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage Community Generator Program for funding assistance.

Kids First playgroup program continues on Monday mornings and line dancing continues on Tuesday mornings. Line dancing lessons are included and all levels are welcome.

Thin ice on the Miramichi meant that the smelt season was delayed to the point that we decided to



forego the annual smelt fry this year. We certainly hope to be back at it next year with a traditional sit-in meal including smelts, biscuits, dessert and entertainment.

The 2023 Legion Executive was installed at our February meeting. Executive officers include: Mike Topley, President; Lynn MacLeod, First Vice-President; Ken Fox, Second V-P; Dave Fleming, Third V-P; Marilyn Heighton, Secretary; Dave Cochrane, Treasurer; Harley White, Past-President; Willis Langille, Sergeant at Arms, and Maureen Topley, Booking Co-ordinator.

Once spring thaw arrives, we will be mobilizing a clean-up crew to repair some of the Fiona tree damage in the Remembrance Gardens.



45 Water St. Pictou, NS
902-485-9399

**CHOOSING THE RIGHT REALTOR
MAKES A DIFFERENCE!**
WWW.SUNRISEBROKERAGE.CA

**LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED BUSINESS
SERVING THE NEEDS OF PICTOU COUNTY,
COLCHESTER, AND BEYOND!**

Are you thinking of selling your home or cottage?
Would you like a little help? If you are considering
listing your property for sale or purchasing a new
property, now is the time to contact us. We would
be happy to visit and give you market comparables.
And we can show you any property listed on MLS.

Cathy Covey REALTOR®
902-956-3301
ccovey@sunrisebrokerage.ca

Donna Fitzgerald REALTOR®
902-897-5154
dfitzgerald@sunrisebrokerage.ca





316 Route 6 Sunrise Trail, Marshville, NS
(902) 890-3413 or (902) 305-2430
SEASONAL RV CAMPGROUND
Located between River John and Tatamagouche

Find us on Facebook 

WE'LL BE OPENING A NEW
Convenience Store
& **12 Hole Mini Golf!**
Public Laundromat
We sell ICE

Salem United church News

by Rev Connie McNamara

On Thursday February 23rd, I was privileged to attend the celebration of life service for Florence and John Craib's son, David, at St. John's United Church in Fall River, where my colleague and friend, Reverend Matt Fillier, spoke about how David had lived his life, and in doing so he suggested to all who were present that it is very important to "show up." In other words, life is worth living, so don't just watch from the sidelines, "show up" and partake of all the work and the play.

In a time when church attendance and priority had already been on a downward slide for many years, the COVID pandemic and indeed its aftermath, has rushed most churches into rather precari-



Blaine Brown, Amanda Gillis, and Cathe MacLean perform at Christmas Eve Service.



Reverend Connie and Cathe MacLean were presented with poinsettias by session members Florence Craib and Janice Thompson

ous positions. Yet if we all took Matt's words to heart, we would see that to "show up" at church - to be an active part of a community of faith, to find hope and comfort in our faith and our togetherness, and to get involved in the fellowship and the fund raising - is an important part of living.

Since my last article in The Pioneer, we have had several opportunities to "show up". In the Christmas season, (and yes, that was only about three months ago!) Salem UC successfully hosted a Christmas Carol Sing that was not only joyous, with special singers sharing their talent, but also a good fundraiser for our Benevolent Fund, which

..... Continued on page 16.....

Tribute to Mary Tohill

by Kathy Morrell

St. John's congregation was shocked when Mary Tohill told us last year that she would be giving up all her church duties at the end of the year, after serving for almost 70 years! How could that happen? What would the church do without her guidance, hard work and experience? When you stop to think about all Mary has done, and continues to do, not only for St. John the Baptist Anglican Church, but also for River John, it's hard to count.

It began in 1957, when Mary was elected as church treasurer and parish treasurer, positions which she held for many years. For 33 of those years, Mary taught Sunday School and she also served as Superintendent. Her dedication was noticed by Bishop Hatfield who presented her with a Bible to mark this service. Mary has been part of the Ladies Guild since 1958 and is still treasurer. At that time, the Guild was very active in quilting which they did two or three evenings a week. Mary would go out fishing with her husband, Irwin Dwyer, and then come back and take up quilting again. Mary has always enjoyed singing in the church choir as well as the Community Choir and the West Branch Singers.

Mary and Jean Heighton were instrumental in getting the church hall brought to its present location. Originally, it was a cookhouse for fishermen on Cape John and with the help of many men, it was brought into River John to be the church hall. In 1976, it was opened with an old-time dance.

For many years, Mary is proud to have served as Warden for St. John's but it is perhaps as organizer of the breakfasts that she is best known in the area. Not only do the breakfasts fill a social need in the community, but the church benefits from these. Under direction of the Reverend Nicole Uzans, Mary studied to become a Lay Minister to which she has devoted much time to the services in the church, along with organizing the Altar Guild.

Mary has been active in her community making phone calls, treats and providing Christmas dinners, one year making twelve dinners for her neighbours who were alone.

Mary enjoyed working with young people and received her 10-year Beaver pin, helped with C.G.I.T.

and, along with Johanna Langille, was a Girl Guide leader.

The community of River John has also benefited from Mary's boundless energy. She served on the Festival Days Committee, was a member of the Board of Directors for the Co-op while it was operating in River John, and being a member of the RJs, a volunteer group of ladies who did much to help seniors and others in the community.

In 1992, Mary was presented with the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada in recognition of her prodigious volunteer work. Mary's involvement in the church will be missed by all of us, but as we all agree, she deserves to have more time for herself. She has earned a rest. We thank her for all she has done for us over the years.



SEACREST ELECTRIC
COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL



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.

Happenings at the River John Library

**by Wilma van der Veen,
Managing Branch Assistant**

Arts & Crafts monthly workshop series – The 1st Saturday of the month

Since the last edition of the Pioneer, we have had the following workshops: Photography with Christine Whelan, painting with Carolyn Bedford, wreath making with Monica Graham, folded book crafts with yours truly. Upcoming workshops include upcycling household items (March 4th), felt-ing with Gillian Crawford of Lismore Sheep Farm (April 1st), and more. Let us know what arts & crafts you are interested in learning and we will try to find someone to teach it.

Gardening monthly workshop series – The 2nd Saturday of the month

Spring is on the horizon which means it is time to start thinking about gardening for fun, food & fitness. Carrying on from the seed ordering session we had in February, we will have a seed swap in March and a seedling exchange in April. The Garden Club will begin meeting again, stay tuned for event notices. If there is any aspect of gardening that you would like to learn about let us know and we will try to organize a workshop on the topic.

Fix-It Café monthly series of workshops – The 3rd Saturday of the month

Due to the popularity of our sewing events held in October & November, we now have a monthly sewing club – see below. In November we had Clean NS bring their Next Ride event to RJ where folks were able to test drive 2 different electric vehicles – a Chevy Volt & a Tesla model 3. In light of hurricane Fiona, we organized a presentation on back up power systems which ironically had to be cancelled due to weather several times. Planned future events will cover basic auto maintenance, basic repair of light fixtures, safe use of power tools, tool kits for the home. We are always looking for fixers; perhaps you know of some retired trades persons who might want to volunteer some of their time to help others then please get in touch.

Monthly Sewing Club, the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 10 am – 12 pm

Bring along your sewing projects and Alice Smart, seamstress extraordinaire, will be able to guide you through the next steps in your sewing project. Bring along your machine or use the one available for use in the library.

Astronomy anyone? Join the River John Library Nightowl Skywatching club

Skywatching events continue to be held each month, weather permitting. At events you are welcome to use the library's telescopes or bring your own. Some self-study is needed in order to familiarize oneself with using the telescopes. Join us as we explore and learn about the night skies.

Board game events: The 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6 – 8 pm, & the 4th Saturday of the month, 10-2

Folks have joined us to play scrabble, and some of us are trying to learn Mahjong. Join us for some fun and screen down time.

Book Clubs new and old - monthly

RJ Library has 2 book clubs that meet on site, both suitable for older teens and adults; new members are always welcome.

1) The River John Library Book Club meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month, 4 p.m.

2) The River John Library Banned Books Book Club meet the 1st Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m., suitable for young people and adults.

If there are some teens that enjoy reading, we

are open to organize a teen book club. Get in touch so we can plan a monthly event.

Language conversation clubs – Note: clubs are on hiatus until April

Spanish meets the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month

French meets the 2nd & 4th Thursdays of the month

Are you wanting to practice your language skills? Are you needing a bit of a refresher? Are you planning on some traveling to a Spanish or French speaking region of the world? Are you someone seeking employment where knowledge of both official languages will be advantageous? Then join us to practice your language skills. Note: this is not for beginners as some ability to converse in the language is required. Part knowledge, part self-confidence, we provide a comfortable place to learn, make mistakes and share some laughs. We recommend for a refresher, check out Rocket Languages on the parl.ns.ca website.

“Did you know” facebook posts

For those of you who are social media users, each Wednesday we are posting a weekly “Did you Know” where we identify one of the myriad of services the library provides. Don't forget to check these out and see what the library has to offer.

Upcoming programming

International Women's Day – Wednesday, March 8

In commemoration and gratitude, we will be creating a Wall of Wonderful Women, leading up to the Wednesday. Come and create a card that acknowledges and celebrates a woman in your life. All materials supplied.

A Weekly Coffee club at the River John Library, every Tuesday 2-4 pm beginning March 7

With the lack of community spaces for folks to meet and have a cuppa (tea or coffee) in River John, the library will be hosting on a trial basis, an afternoon tea/coffee club, to be held each Tuesday from 2-4 pm. Come for some lively conversation, or to simply work on a puzzle or play a board game or read the newspaper or a magazine, or play around on a computer. Sponsored in part by Overstreet Café – thank you Elizabeth Baillie!

Seniors Technology Trainer, every Wednesday 10-2 & 2-5 until April 12

Wendy Ward is our new tech trainer who is available to assist patrons with their technology questions. Not solely for seniors, either stop in or make an appointment by calling the library.

March Break March 14-18

In addition to our regular programming, e.g. Board game events (the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 6-8 pm, & the 4th Saturday of the month, 10-2), after-school activities (each Wednesday & Friday, 3-5 pm), we are organizing some special activities for school age youth. Details are still being finalized. Drop by the library to participate.

Disaster Preparedness

We are planning a 2 session program discussing emergency disaster preparedness. The first session will focus on what individuals can do, tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, April 25th, 6-8 pm. A representative from the Pictou County Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO),

www.remopictoucounty.ca, will give a presentation on what individuals can do to prepare for emergencies of whatever kind. (REMO is the agency that takes care of emergency management planning, preparation, response, and recovery in Pictou County, ensuring that municipalities, police departments, fire departments, and others can deal with any emergency that happens and continue to provide the essential services needed in our communities).

The second session will focus more on communities and what they can do. The Disaster Resilience Plan for West Branch report that was developed in 2012 will be used as a launching pad to discuss what River John and the surrounding area can do to prepare for emergencies. This is scheduled for Tuesday, May 23rd, 6-8 pm.

Remember all programs are free; all you need is a library card! You can register online for a card at parl.ns.ca, or drop in the library. There is something for everyone; if you don't find anything of interest then reach out and tell us what you might be looking for; we are always looking for suggestions for workshops and activities, book or DVD purchases. A world of exploration, ideas and learning awaits.

United Church News

.....Continued from page 15

enables us to help when there is need in our community and beyond. Salem UC then worked with St. John's Anglican to combine our “Blue Christmas” service with their “Longest Night” service - and together we enabled the light of hope to fill many hearts. And of course, on December 24th, the Christmas Eve worship service was meaningful and included a fabulous rendition of Lennie Gallant's “Christmas Day on Planet Earth,” by Blaine Brown, Amanda Gillis, and Cathe MacLean.

Looking ahead, we also have many opportunities to “show up”. We are in the season of Lent which leads to Easter, and there are three Lenten Luncheons scheduled to take place at the St. John's Anglican Church Hall - and I will be leading the one on March 22nd at noon. This year, Salem UC will provide the ecumenical Good Friday worship service on April 7th, at 11 a.m., an important part of the story that culminates in the ultimate Easter celebration.

Still, church is about more than just worship, and at Salem UC we continue to struggle with repairs to the church building from damages caused by Hurricane Fiona, and with discovering ways to fundraise to keep our doors open. Much time and effort is being put into planning how best to move forward, so if you have an idea, a suggestion, or a way to assist, please just “show up”.

Ministry continues at Salem UC in the worship and the work and you are always welcome to “show up.”

Blessings

Rev Connie can be reached at (902) 890-9120 or email therevconnie@ns.sympatico.ca

Memories of Spring on the North Shore

by Diane MacLeod-Shink

When we say north shore of Nova Scotia, we refer to the section that is bordered by the Northumberland Strait, across from Prince Edward Island. Cape Breton, also part of Nova Scotia, is situated to the east. Spring usually is late arriving to the north shore. My father marked the arrival by the date when the "big cake" - the ice jam at the mouth of the River John - broke off and floated off to the Strait to melt. Once that happened, the ice would break up into big pieces and float around. For many years he noted the date on the door jamb of an old building on our property on the river bank. One popular, but dangerous, sport was to go to the river and climb onto the cakes and then jump from one to another, an activity which my father forbade his children from doing.

According to the song, April showers bring May flowers, but those often were interspersed with snow showers. I remember one April 1st in my early teenage years, dressing in a cotton circle skirt and matching sleeveless blouse fashioned by myself. I got off the school bus that afternoon in the freezing cold temperature, much too early for bare arms!

A sure sign of spring was when mayflowers bloomed. My sister was born in Pictou Hospital in early May. (In those days they stayed a week in hospital post-natally.) I spent a week with my aunt who lived on a farm. I remember picking mayflowers at the edge of their woods to send to my mother in hospital. The perfume from those delicate flowers is most fragrant and to this day one of my favourite wild flowers.

Another sign of spring's arrival was when smelts went up the river to spawn. When I was old enough to drive my two-wheeled bike a distance from home territory, my buddy and I went about a mile upriver to an area called The Interval, where we were able to catch them with nets. They were not as tasty as those caught in big nets in the river's channel in the winter.

Before most roads were paved, there was a time when dirt roads were impassable as the frost came out of the ground. My mother often talked of the Monday morning in late April when she arrived at her teaching position at the Cape John schoolhouse. The one-room schoolhouse was located halfway up or down the Cape John Road from Highway 6, depending on where you lived. The number of students awaiting her had doubled! The lobster fishermen who had been allotted sections off Cape John to drop their traps had moved their wives and families to their fishing shacks beside the wharf, so they wouldn't have trouble travelling on the poor roads. Earlier in the 1900s, some fishing areas provided a building called a bunkhouse where the fishermen could stay during the season. Some companies' middle men who bought the lobsters, provided cookhouses so the men could be well-fed during the lobster season. My father's sister, my Aunt Thelma, lived in the village with her parents while her husband was serving in World War II. She worked in our store with her father and brother and recalled preparing a huge food order for a husband-and-wife team who worked at Skippers Cove cookhouse. The couple prepared food constantly for two months and were not seen in the village again until July.

We ate lobster frequently, even though it was expensive, whether purchased or bartered. Mother said, "We do not spend money on alcohol so eat lots of lobsters!"

My aunt tells a story of having "a feed of lobsters" when her husband came home on

leave during his war service. He and my dad, as was the custom in our house, boiled the lobsters in sea water and de-shelled them at the kitchen sink. I was a toddler at the time, (around 1943-44,) but after being given a taste, took up position between my dad and uncle, chanting "More lobs!" So, my love of lobster started at a very young age. It will soon be that time of year again, and my mouth waters just thinking about eating those crustaceans, fresh from the sea.

A Touch of Thailand



by Christiane Gill

(1 serving) (10 minutes for the basic serving)

Cook the noodles of 1 packet of ramen in about 2.5 cups of plain water, no seasoning whatsoever.

Then strain them - setting about 1 cup of the cooking liquid aside - into a serving dish (or keep them in the strainer)

In the pot, heat

1 tsp sesame, vegetable or canola oil - not olive oil

1/8 tsp cayenne pepper or however much whatever spicing element you prefer

2 Tbsp soy sauce

2 Tbsp peanut butter (crunchy if you like more texture)

and stir well until the peanut butter has melted.

Now add about 1/4 cup of noodle cooking liquid while stirring. The sauce will thicken quickly so add more water slowly until you reach the desired consistency.

Add the ramen noodles back in (pour the sauce over them if you already have them in a serving dish.)

Sprinkle with toasted and/or black sesame seeds, and/or chopped spring onions, and/or fresh, thinly sliced chilies, and/or any kind of pre-cooked and sliced meat, vegetable, Asian sweet and hot sauce.

You get the idea.

Make it your own and enjoy!



**HECTOR
TIMBER MART**

Benjamin Moore Authorized Dealer

11 Harris Rd.
Pictou
902-485-4362

or
223 Foord St.
Stellarton
902-755-2277

Staying Warm!

by Beulah Jane Wright

We have things pretty easy these days during our Nova Scotian winter, with hardly enough snow to block the driveways, a pre-heated car warming up before we venture out, lots of warm thermal clothes, electric heating, so we don't even have to carry in the frosty logs to keep the furnace going, and our "snow days" and cancellations and so on. And usually we don't even experience really severe winter weather any more, so it isn't much of a problem anyway.

But this February of 2023, we were hit with a couple of record-breaking cold days; the power was out, heat pumps gave up, some cars wouldn't start, windows were frosted over and it was cold! There still wasn't all that much snow, but the winds were high, and all we could do was dig out more blankets and stay as close to the wood stove as possible, (if we were lucky enough to have one,) and shiver until it was over. It didn't last very long - not even a week or so, let alone the month of February or more.

But it made me think. Back when severe weather was expected and normal, did our parents and our grandparents hunker down and hibernate for three or four months of the year? No indeed! Spring, summer and fall were the working months; fishing, and farming, long hot days of planting and harvesting, and much of this labour used to prepare for the cold winter months. Barns would be filled with hay and grain, cellars filled with bins of vegetables and fruit, canning and preserves put up, enough for two or more winters. Meat would be butchered, smoked or pickled, fish dried or salted. Staples would be laid in, flour, sugar, salt and molasses. Those ancestors of ours would be prepared! Houses would be banked, with seaweed, straw, sawdust or small trees, the storm windows would be hauled out and installed, snow fences would be erected and winter wood cut and stored.

Then, did they plan to hibernate in their winterized houses? Oh no, winter was for fun and pleasure, when there was time to visit and have parties, go snowshoeing or skating. The River John provided a winter playground. As soon as the ice formed on the water, there would be horse races on the river. One lady told me of the competition among the young men to entice the prettiest girls to join them in the sleighs, and remembered the thrill of ice racing with her first beau.

A birthday or anniversary was a great occasion for a house party, to which the whole family would go, the babies being put to bed while their parents danced or listened to fine fiddle music long into the night. Then home late under the cold stars, well-bundled - maybe under a buffalo robe or bear skin rug. We have a lovely bear skin robe in the museum. They were so heavy and when well-tucked-in, kept the persons toasty warm. Bricks or stones would be heated in the oven before departure and wrapped in blankets to keep the feet warm in the sleighs. There were foot warmers also, metal and wedge-shaped, holding coals to provide some heat. The whole family would keep their hands inside fur muffs, and in those days, fur coats were not only stylish, but a necessity. The horses were not forgotten, all being covered in horse blankets, and being stabled in the hosts' barns for the evening.

So winter provided much pleasure and entertainment and, when well-prepared, everyone stayed warm and dry.

Climate change has been happening for a long time. So many changes...

LEETIK ESSO

YAP'S PLACE RESTAURANT

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

Fire in Hodson

by Kelly Shaw

February 4th, 2023, started freezing cold and dreary. Snow whipped through our community on the coldest day of this winter. The power was off. At 11:30 a.m. Highway 6 was a stream of fire trucks with their lights flashing and sirens blaring, on their way to a home on fire. The family of five who lived there watched, very afraid, as their home burned to the ground. Everything they owned was lost, including their government identifications, pictures, schoolbooks, treasures, and beloved family pets.

John Clarke and Clara Chase and their three young children had made Hodson their home for the past four years. Arriving at the scene, Ronnie Ballie, family friend, offered shelter and support to the now homeless family.

Following this tragedy, the people of River John and surrounding areas (from as far away as Sackville, NS) poured out their support. Churches and all River John service clubs contributed; meals were delivered; money and gift cards were donated; Meh's Quick Mart collected donations of money; Shelley and Leonard Bigney (River John Old School) hosted a potluck supper. Gifts of clothing for the parents and three children, as well as furniture to replace what was lost, quickly filled Norma and Ronnie Baillie's home in Bigney. The generosity was overwhelming.

We are so fortunate to have our own fire department here in River John, and grateful for the people who volunteer as fire fighters. Thanks are extended to everyone who offered support including mutual aid provided by Caribou, Scotsburn, and Tatamagouche Volunteer Fire Departments.

At the time of publication, we understand the impacted family intends to move a mini home onto the property left vacant by the loss of their family home. They are grateful for the generosity of Norma and Ronnie.

This article is based on an interview Debby Shaw had with Norma Baillie. Prior to publication, Norma shared this article with John and Clara.

Lent, Holy Week and Easter Services in River John

The three churches of River John, Salem United, St. George's Presbyterian and St. John the Baptist Anglican are pleased to resume our ecumenical cooperation this year post-COVID.

Lenten Wednesdays will resume in March at St. John's Anglican Church Hall

Wednesday, March 8th – Noon - Anglican
Worship and Light Lunch

Wednesday, March 15 – Noon - St. George's
Worship and Light Lunch

Wednesday, March 22 – Noon - Salem United
Worship and Light Lunch

All Are Welcome

Presbyterian Church News

by Rev. Enjei Achah

Greetings to everyone in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We went through some trying times in our province with the Hurricane Fiona, but it just proved how resilient we are as a people. My prayer goes out to those who are still recovering from the damages and cost incurred due to repairs.

In spite of all the challenges we were still able to have a wonderful advent celebration and are looking forward to Lent. Our church services are going strong even as the COVID restrictions have been uplifted. It is now up to any individual if they want to keep their masks on or not. However, we continue to respect

each person's decision and make sure everyone is comfortable. Our programs for this winter period are as follows and all are welcome:

Church Services

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

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

Wednesdays March 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and
29th – Bible Study Wednesday at 2pm in the
Manse.

rev.enjeironi@yahoo.com

How I Met the Future King

by the Rev. John K. Morrell

On Saturday, May 6th, King Charles III will have his coronation at Westminster Abbey. This will be the first coronation of an English monarch in over 70 years.

I grew up in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. and have memories of being pulled out of school when the Queen was visiting Washington. My mother would either park at the Tidal Basin and watch the Queen's entourage drive by on the way to the White House or do the same to watch her departure back to the airport. Perhaps my mother was a closet royalist!

Before the opening of the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, the Queen and Prince Philip worshiped at Christ Church Cathedral. My wife,

Kathy, and I were in the choir and following the service we snuck onto the Cathedral forecourt to watch the royal couple leave. Suddenly, Prince Philip walked over to us to thank us for the service of music and shake our hands.

When I moved to Nova Scotia in 1983 as the Program Director of the Diocese of Nova Scotia, I was privileged to attend a Memorial Service at St. George's Church, Halifax, where Prince Charles and Princess Diana were in attendance.

Let's jump ahead twenty-four years to 2007. My wife and I were teaching in Doha, Qatar, (host of the World Cup of 2022,) where I also served at the Anglican Church of the Epiphany. Our "Sunday" morning worship actually took place on the Friday morning as that was the Muslim Sabbath and all schools and shops were closed. We met in a large auditorium of a British international elementary school. In March 2007 we were to receive a royal visit. The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall were coming to Doha on a visit and would attend our Friday morning service.

They arrived early for the 10:30 a.m. service on Friday, March 2nd, 2007. They were both greeted at the door of the school auditorium and I was able to shake hands with both Prince Charles and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. I spoke to Charles and said, "I shook your father's hand after the church service in Montreal for the Olympics in 1976." He replied, "And you lived to tell about it!" So continued my seeing and sometimes shaking hands with members of the Royal Family.



Rev. Morrell shaking hands with Prince Charles and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall.

St. Michael's Catholic Church News

by Netta Heukshorst

Religious Education was started for children aged 4-10 or so, being held the first Saturday of each month starting at 2:30 p.m., entitled "Little Flowers, Blue Knights."

Please contact Miri at 902-305-3905 to register or for more information.

St. Michael's participated in World Day of Prayer which was held at St. David's Presbyterian Church in

Toney River on Friday, March 3rd. It was a blessing to have participated in this worldwide prayerful event.

Regularly-scheduled Mass is on Saturdays at 4 p.m., followed by coffee hour afterwards in the hall. All are welcome.

Should We Give a Hoot?

by Maggie Howatt

Has anyone else wondered how our wildlife fared during and after Hurricane Fiona? Okay, maybe it was called a post tropical storm, but it felt like a hurricane at 2 in the morning as I cowered in my bed, comforted by three dogs as the old house shook and groaned while being battered by 150 km plus winds.

We know how the forests in Nova Scotia fared, especially in the North. Most of our hundred-acre woods were damaged in some respect by Fiona's fury. Eighty-to-hundred-year-old hemlock, sugar maple, ironwood and yellow birch were wind-torn, exposing roots and raw soil. Field spruce and fir flattened by the colossal steam roller with the delicate name of Fiona, which means white or fair in Gaelic. Ha!

Besides broken trees, I expected to find broken bodies of birds and mammals as I wound my way over and under, searching for our trails and woods roads, assessing the damage and mourning the loss of familiar trees, completely disoriented by the changed landscape. I found one sad little broken bird.

I had a chat with biologist Bob Bancroft, President of Nature Nova Scotia, and he didn't imagine I would find much evidence, as any injured would crawl off and die. I'm seeing lots of grouse, startling the heck out of me as they fly out from under all the new shelters. There are signs of deer finding new trails throughout and browsing on the maple tree tips now much more in reach. The chickadees and finch are back after what seemed a dearth of any bird life.

I was very concerned about the barred owls; we would often hear at least three hooting from different directions across the property. I've only heard and seen one since Fiona. Bob did feel that because owls try to select cavities for nesting in mature trees with deep tap roots, that these would likely withstand such a storm as Fiona.

The barred owl is one of our more common owls, nesting in tree cavities and sometimes on twig nests abandoned by ravens and hawks in deep, damp forests, preferably close to water. They are wonderfully camouflaged by barred brown and white feathers, with large, stocky bodies and rounded heads, no ear tufts, and large brown eyes.



They are the only brown-eyed owls in N.S. They have excellent distance vision, estimated to be 35-100 times better than ours. They look for small rodents, amphibians and vertebrates and have been known to troll along waterways for crayfish and fish. In addition to magnifying sound, an owl's facial discs help provide directional bearing. They can actually move the facial disc feathers to change the discs' shape which helps guide more sound into one ear than the other. Their call is a distinctive "Who Cooks for You?" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayDzQrV8wss>

I decided to build and install a barred owl nest box in the hopes that if they lost their nesting tree to Fiona, they might consider my ultra-modern, brand spanking new, low-rent accommodation. In mid-January, with the help of a friend, I hauled ladder, nest box and rope pulley down to the brook and up a tree, lagged the box in place facing roughly south with a clear view of the hundreds of trees lying against the hillside. I added a few inches of wood chips in the bottom and haven't seen a sign of interest yet. Could be years or not at all. There are plenty of nest box patterns online. I used 3/4"

exterior plywood which made it darn heavy to haul up a tree. It's important that the box be large enough to accommodate a brood of 1-5 owlets, as well as the adult, through the summer, until the chicks are old enough to clamber around through the adjacent branches and finally leave the nest for good.

Owls have been around a long time, with fossils dating back 70 odd million years, and can be found on every continent except Antarctica. The modern-day owl has different challenges than even a few hundred years ago, when owls were associated with wisdom, warfare and prophecies of death, and were hunted for their healing properties.

Needing mature trees with large cavities for nests, the clear cutting of old-growth forests creates fewer available nesting opportunities and more competition for those sites.

And the devastation of Fiona has only increased the competition.

Another challenge that I talked about in the snowy owl article is vehicle strikes. Both Hope for Wildlife and Cobequid Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre agree about the rise in fatalities and injuries during the December to February months, as all birds are starting to look for mates and nesting sites, drawn to roadsides to find the rodents attracted to litter. Even an apple core or a crust of pizza will attract a mouse which in turn attracts a predator.

Hope logged in 41 barred owls, 5 great horned owls and 4 saw whets. Rush hour and time change both contribute to more owl hits as we sail along on the open road with the sun on our face and the wind in our hair with nary a thought for what might swoop down in front of us.

Another deadly killer is rat poison. Sure, the box claims it's harmless for anything larger than a mouse, but an owl could easily eat ten mice and the resulting accumulation of poison is fatal.

So, with all these added challenges, it was concluded that it will be difficult to assess the direct impact Hurricane Fiona had on our wildlife. There will be increased pressure for food and shelter. Some species will benefit from the present conditions, and some will suffer. I think it is up to us to help any way we can, whether it's putting up a safe and adequate nest box or preserving habitats.

Janice Murray Gill's Memories of Fires Around the Early to Mid-1900s

submitted by Christiane and John Gill

From *Nova Scotia Down-Home Cooking*, published in 1978. She is referring back to the 1940s and 50s.

The Rebekahs' sale was truly a community affair, for the lodges were the only social groups that cut across the sectarian lines laid down by our four churches. It was a mammoth affair, originally instituted to raise money to pay for the Oddfellows' hall that had been burned in one of the fires that periodically swept the community. Until after the

war, these fires were fought by the local men with a small gasoline pump and bucket brigades. A fire always provided great excitement, and I felt in the thick of things for the fire "engine" lived in our barn. I remember being told stories of how Charlie Hines sat astride the ridge pole of a burning building, pouring buckets of water through a hole chopped in the roof; and ducking back to avoid the flames shooting through, until his hair and eyebrows were singed off. Another fire story I often heard was how the shop across from my grandfather's drugstore was burning, and my grandfather

was watching the progress of the fire, which had been brought under control. A man ran past with two buckets of water, no longer needed and, anxious not to waste his effort, he flung the water at the front of the drugstore, whose paint was blistering with the heat. Helplessly, my grandfather watched the cold water hit the big plate glass window - his pride and joy, now too hot to touch. At home, we (then) had a nice glass tabletop made from a piece of that window.

May I Marry You?

Linda Atkinson
Administrative
Justice of the Peace

57 Joyce Mackinnon Lane
Seafoam NS B0N1N0
(P) 902-758-5157
lindamaryatkinson@gmail.com

"Helping You Join Your Hands and Hearts"

John Hawkins IT Consulting
COMPUTER SERVICE & REPAIR



4175 Hwy 6, Toney River
902-616-5968
thehawk360@gmail.com

www.sunsetbeachcottages.com

Sunset Beach Cottage
and RV Sites

RIVER JOHN | NOVA SCOTIA | CANADA

Proprietors:
Terry & Linda
Reid

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

Professor Roy Mackenzie

by Beulah Jane Wright

Royal William Mackenzie, was born in River John in 1883, a son of Archibald Mackenzie, long-time ship builder of that village and his wife, the former Sara Eaton. He was educated in River John, Pictou Academy, Dalhousie University and finally received two degrees from Harvard, a Masters and a PHD in English literature. While he was there, he studied under G.L. Kittridge, and it was he who encouraged him to go back to River John and collect the old ballads which were found to be of Scottish and English origins, and which Professor Roy had often heard being sung in the village of his boyhood, probably many in the shipyard and in the sailing ships, built and captained by his family. Thus, it became his summer hobby, searching out the old singers and writing down the words, which, up until then, had often been preserved only in the memories of the singers. But the early Scots had brought ballad sheets with them and more were sent over from Scotland.

One singer told him that he remembered his father singing them when he was "feeling good" and had consumed gallons of rum, and polite society considered them rowdy songs! But we all know that singing while working hard makes the job easier and go faster. Visiting singers with good voices and good memories were welcomed at evening gatherings, and no doubt the horses enjoyed listening to the old ballads as they drove their owners' home after such pleasant evenings.

Professor Roy didn't seem to go further than Pictou and Colchester counties in his search. Two of his singers were Ned Langille and Dick Hinds. Even though River John was settled first by French



settlers from Montbeliard by way of Lunenburg and Tatamagouche, these settlers quickly picked up the Scottish/English ballads among them and enjoyed singing them just as much. Although Professor Roy did consider his research a hobby, he was moved to publish articles in the Journal of American Folklore, and then in the publication of "The Quest of the Ballad," and also in 1928 he published "Ballads and Sea-songs from Nova Scotia."

No doubt it was these publications that garnered the interest of Helen Creighton when she began

collecting. She was disappointed to discover that he had kept no records of his research, but she considered him a mentor to her eventual success. Professor Roy seemed to have given up his research by then but he is recognized as the pioneer in collecting and preserving those old songs. He gained more recognition when our local performing duo, the Strange Valentines, began a series of seeking out the gravesites of many of these old balladeers and performing their songs in the old way. You can find them on YouTube, "Connecting the Folk," and currently enjoy their rendition of the ancient songs that meant so much to our forebears.

Professor Roy was a professor of English who taught at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and he specialized in Shakespeare and Old English literature. He and his wife retired to River John, his boyhood home, during the summers. His home was the house that is often referred to as "the Gingerbread House" on Route 6 near the Salem Church. It had been built by the Carruthers family, subsequent owners were May Watt and Irene Stone. Currently it is occupied by Melanie Miller, who is on our Pioneer team.

Professor Mackenzie died in 1957 and is buried in Bellevue Cemetery.

Editor's note. I recall as a child collecting for UNICEF at this home and being shocked to have the door opened by a woman dressed as a French maid (Georgie Hatch). Not many people in River John had servants in the 50s.

Excerpt from the Diary of Reverend James MacGregor, Part 6

Shared by Reverend Glen Matheson
D.D., Scotsburn, NS

Rev. MacGregor's memoirs, 1787: "When April came the sun began to show his power in dissolving the snow and the ice, whose dominion had continued so long that I had almost forgotten that summer would come. Before April was ended, the harbour was completely clear of ice; and on the 6th of May, the day on which the elders were ordained, I saw the last patch of snow for that season. The boats and canoes were then launched and prepared for summer employment; for they were our horses, which carry most of us to sermon, and every other business. Now came on the spring work, and every hand that could help the farmer had plenty of employment. From the beginning May till the middle of June was the time of ploughing and sowing the various kinds of grain, and planting the potatoes. But there were few ploughs in Pictou. All the later settlers had to prepare the ground for seed with hand-hoes; for the roots and stumps prevent the use of the plough till they are rotten. All the potato land was cleared from the wood, and planted with hoes. The trees were cut down in winter, and cross-cut, so as to be fit to be rolled in heaps to be burned. Rolling is heavy work, and often requires four or five men with hand levers; on which account the neighbours gather to it in parties. The Americans are amazingly dexterous at this work, rolling huge logs along, launching them to the right or left, turning them round a stump in the way, or raising one end over it, and heaving it up on the pile. The ashes of the great quantity of timber which grows upon the land make good manure for the first crops – a most merciful arrangement of

Providence for the poor settler, who has to sow and plant among stumps and spreading roots, which often occupy one-third of the ground. The first two crops are generally good. No wheat was sown till the second week in May, nor potatoes till the first of June. Reaping was from the middle of August to that of November. The potatoes were raised in October. Spring comes now somewhat earlier, and harvest generally comes all at once. Grain sown at eight days' distance will often ripen simultaneously. I have known good wheat reaped in Pictou on the same day in August that it was sown in May; but this is very seldom.

In June I received a long letter from the Rev. John Buist in Greenock, being the first word I heard from Scotland since I left it. It contained much news, both ecclesiastical and political, and was to me like life from the dead. Looking on me as an exile from the world, and especially from Scotland, the reading of this letter revived my tender feelings for my native country, my relations and friends, especially the ministers whom I left behind. At the same time, I had a letter from my father, with the news of my mother's death. Thus, I was taught to rejoice with trembling; yet, it helped to reconcile me to my lot. Reluctance to part with my mother was one of my objections against coming to Nova Scotia; and now I saw that staying at home would not have secured me from parting with her."

(July 1787) "During this month the men were chiefly engaged in building the two new meeting houses; but, instead of employing contractors to

build them, they agreed to divide the work into a number of lots, and appointed a party of themselves to every lot. One party cut the logs and hauled them to the site; another hewed them and laid them in their place; a third provided boards for the roofs and floors; a fourth provided the shingles; those who were joiners were appointed to make the doors and windows, and those who did not choose to work provided the glass and nails. Moss (fag) was stuffed between the logs to keep out the wind and rain; but neither of the houses was lined with boards or ceiled, neither one of them was seated, otherwise than by logs laid where seats should be. Public worship was conducted in the open air all summer and part of harvest, till the churches were finished; and we had the same kind of providence preserving us from rain and tempest as we had last year; but no sooner were the houses built than great rain came on the Sabbath.

Such were the two churches of Pictou; and for a while they had no pulpits, purely because they could make a shift without them; and when they were made, they were not of mahogany, but of the white pine of Pictou. However, this mean exterior did not prevent the gospel from being preached and heard with profit and comfort."

Rev. George Patterson who wrote Rev. MacGregor's memoirs in 1859 explains these log churches:

Continued on next page

The Mackenzie Shipyard of River John

by Beulah Wright

River John was particularly favoured by successful ship builders, making it the most productive shipbuilding area of the North Shore, on a par with New Glasgow, and earning many records in the half century plus of the heyday of wooden sailing ships from about 1850 to 1918. The river was deep and wide, the nearby forests providing lumber, and the willing workers, seafarers and craftsmen who not only built the ships, but sailed them. They were creative men, taking pride in their work, and they started young, rising to captains in their late teens and early twenties, prepared to see the world in the vessels they knew so well.

Alexander Mackenzie was one of the first. Born in Contin, a small village in Scotland, near Dingwall, he was the youngest of six children of Roderick Mackenzie. The oldest of the family, Donald, emigrated to Pictou County in 1803, followed in the next year by Roderick who went to Montreal where his cousin was already established as a governor of the fur trading North West Company. Around that time, their mother died in Contin and their father shortly after. The rest of the family, including Alexander and also Alexander MacLennan, who had married the sister Nancy, packed up their belongings, left Scotland and emigrated to Pictou County in 1808 to join their brother Donald, who farmed at Four Mile Brook. Alexander had no interest in farming, however, so went to Pictou where he studied the business of buying and selling. He wanted to own his own business and heard that Robert MacKay of River John, a general merchant and ship builder in River John, had run into financial difficulties and was selling his business. Alexander bought the business and settled in River John.

In 1826, Alexander married Elizabeth Archibald, of a prominent Archibald family in Truro. We have a lovely portrait of Elizabeth Mackenzie at the museum. She was a cheerful lady and quite opposite to her husband's dour, man-of-few-words outlook. He was, however, a skilled business man and built a fine home, just above his profitable shipyard. Elizabeth's sister, Mary, wedded the Honourable Alexander Campbell of Tatamagouche, also a shipbuilder, and the two men often conferred on their respective businesses.

Alexander's first-built vessel was the "Mary," 105 tons, followed in 1835 by the "Charles," a barque

of 519 tons. There may have been others, unrecorded, built in River John, at this time, loaded with lumber and sent overseas where they were sold, not the first quality vessels of later years, but a steady stream of recorded vessels of anywhere between 300 and 600 tons. And the quality surely improved. Alexander and Elizabeth had eleven children, although some died young. The oldest ones, Charles, George and Thomas were not so interested in the shipbuilding trade, but became competent ship masters, even in their teen years. Alexander took on his nephew and son-in-law, Charles MacLennan, to operate the Mackenzie yard, and it was left to the youngest son, Archibald, to later carry on, although he was only 17 years old when his father died in 1865.

In the meanwhile, his older brothers were making names for themselves as masters. Thomas Archibald Mackenzie became the master of the "Minnie Gordon" for Peter Crerar, when just 18. In the next year, he transferred to the "David Cannon," newly launched from the Mackenzie yard in River John. In 1867, he took command of the "Panama," built by Charles MacLennan, on her maiden voyage, but was unlucky enough to run into a severe gale. When it became dangerously rough, instead of "heaving to," Captain Tom decided to run before it, piled on as much sail as could be and safely made the run to Liverpool, in just twelve days and three hours – a record time by a sailing ship from Nova Scotia to England. This was not his only record however; another, was a sail from Montreal to Buenos Aires in forty-four days. But he apparently could see the future of sailing ships was threatened, as in 1870 he turned his back on sailing ships and ended his career as a steam ship captain.

Charles MacLennan carried on the River John shipyard until 1875 building ever larger and more beautiful vessels, then retired and Archibald Mackenzie, youngest son of Alexander, took it over. His main competitor now was the Kitchin shipyard on the other side of the river, and a friendly rivalry grew, culminating in 1884, when both yards determined to build the largest vessel. Kitchin's ship, their final one, was the famous "Warrior" and from the Mackenzie yard was built the "Caldera," which was measured for tonnage first, and registered 1575 tons. However, tonnage measured carrying capacity and although the "Caldera" was 10 feet longer than the "Warrior," a hurricane deck was added and when measured was now 1687 tons.



Construction at the shipyard



Mackenzie Shipyard on Westside of the river

Therefore the "Warrior" was the winner, the largest ship on the North Shore. Although the hurricane deck was later removed, being rather a nuisance.

Archie continued building other ships, including the "Argentina," a very fast ship and the "Cambrai" with its lovely carved figurehead which was built for the Great War, and was the last one for Archie. The shipyard was taken over by C.H. MacLennan, son of the elder Charles. Steam was taking over and the sailing ships were soon part of the past.

Archie married the lovely Sara Eaton on November 13th, 1873, and they were married for fifty-two years in River John. They had nine children, all of whom had interesting and productive lives, some of which will be featured in future stories.


MacGregor Diary.....Continued from page 20

"These two churches were some 35 or 40 feet long by 25 or 30 wide. The only seats in them were logs of wood, or slabs supported on blocks. There was a gallery or rather an upper story with a floor, seated in a similar manner, to which the young went up by a ladder. The one on the East River was situated on the west side of the river, a short distance above New Glasgow, on a rising ground between the old burial ground and the line of the present railroad. The one at Loch Broom was situated near the head of the harbour, on the farm then owned by William MacKenzie, still held by his descendants. It was situated near the shore, close by a brook that there enters the harbour."

Rev Matheson notes: "Most are familiar with the Loch Broom Log Church, a replica of this 1787 church. So significant was this event that the Moderators of the Presbyterian churches for Canada, Scotland and the United States took part in the dedication of the replica in 1973. The other log church at Lower Settlement East River (New Glasgow) was built on a hill above the river in what is now Duff Cemetery on Stellarton Road, across the road from the former Crofter's Restaurant.



Archibald and Sara Mackenzie's 50th wedding anniversary.



**River John
& District
Lions Club**

**Proudly serving
the River John
community
since 1970**

The River John Lions Club meets the second and fourth Thursday of every month at the Lion's Den in River John at 7:00 pm.

2724 River John Station Rd, P.O. Box 67
River John, BoK 1No
riverjohnlions@outlook.com

THE OVERSTREET CAFE

2727 River John Station Road

Re-Opening in Spring



Check out our Facebook page for updates!



Northern Home Health

Amanda Fitzpatrick RN

Grace Clough CCA

Phone: 902-759-8842

Email: northernhomehealth@hotmail.com

Proudly Serving Pictou County since 2022

Products and Services

- Basic Housekeeping
- Meal Preparation
- Personal Care
- Respite Care
- Wellness Checks
- Grocery Shopping
- Prescription pick up
- Companionship
- Palliative Care
- Nursing Assessment

Phone: 902-759-8842

Email: northernhomehealth@hotmail.com

West Branch Wednesdays

Mental Health: Taking Care of Ourselves and Others in 2023

by Anne Simmonds

West Branch Hall launched their lunch 'n' learn sessions "West Branch Wednesdays" with a three-part series on Mental Health. The sessions, which ran on February 15th, 22nd and March 1st, were based on the Mental Wellness and Resilience Toolkit, produced by the Pictou County Mental Wellness Roundtable (available on-line at <https://novascotia.cmha.ca/pictou-county-mental-wellness-and-resilience-toolkit/>). Session one focused on what mental health is, the fact that we all have good days and bad days, and the signs that we, or someone we care about, may be struggling. We also talked about the stigma around mental health, and how hard but important it is to talk and to listen so that people don't feel alone and isolated when they're feeling down. We wrapped up session one thinking about what 'fills our cup' and what 'drains our cup' and the kinds of things we could do to take care of ourselves. In session two we talked more about our communities – how they support us in everyday ways but also in times of stress, like Fiona or COVID. We agreed that our social connections and relationships were key to our mental health, especially living in rural Nova Scotia, and discussed how we could strengthen our communities. In the third and final session, we focused on how to support someone who is having a mental health concern, how to know our limits, and when/where to seek help from mental health professionals and services in the community.

Judging by the feedback from the 25-30 participants who attended, the sessions were a great success, with more West Branch Wednesdays being planned for the future. Big thanks to Lynn Langille, Community Health Board Coordinator, Mary MacLellan, and Anne Simmonds for planning and facilitating the sessions, and to Dominic Boyd for being available for support. Also, thanks to Bernadette MacDonald for preparing the wonderful soup and sandwiches, to Elizabeth Bezanson for providing the delicious sweet treats, and to the West Branch Hall Board for setting up the hall and supporting this initiative. Finally, thank you to Seniors Outreach and the Department of Seniors and Age-Friendly Communities Grant Program for funding the sessions.

Obituary of Susan Robison

by Margaret Langille

In memory of Susan Agnes Robison, born in Cape John, 1961, passed away on January 1, 2023, with friends by her side.

Susan was the daughter of Eunice Sutherland and Dodd Robison. She is survived by her mother Eunice Robison, sister Rosealie, and her partner of 40 plus years, Bill Hatch. She was predeceased by her father Dodd Robison and little sister Annie as well as her grandparents, Dan and Dot Sutherland.

Susan was a member of Salem United Church, River John, for more than 20 years. She was a graduate of the Nova Scotia Community College with a certificate in Human Services; unfortunately, due to health issues she was unable to follow her chosen career.

She and Bill were parents to many pets over the years; the last being her little girl dog, Caper, who was her life-line in the last few years.

Susan was a kind, forgiving and generous person who never learned the word "No." She was very interested in the lives of her many friends and always kept in touch by telephone, letters and cards.

She will be missed. We sent her off on the next phase

of her journey secure in the knowledge that she has found the peace which seemed to elude her on her earthly journey.

I am proud to say I was Susan's friend and mentor for many years.



REFERRAL REWARDS

IT'S AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3

#1 Refer a friend, family member or colleague to our team of insurance experts at AA Munro in Pictou:

22 George St pictou@aamunro.com
902-485-8551 aamunro.com

#2 Have them mention your name when they get a quote

#3 You'll be entered into our upcoming Referral Rewards draws!

2 \$100 VISA™ GIFT CARDS
↪ April 12 and May 17

1 NEW BBQ GIVEAWAY
↪ June 15



River John & District Lions Club

by Lions President Anne Patriquin

The River John Lions Club has been busy over the past few months. We helped a senior with the purchase of hearing aids, for which she was very grateful. We played a big part in the decorating and Christmas tree lighting in Bissell Park which went over really well and attracted a large crowd. It was so nice to see the community come together. Various groups decorated a tree of their own and took pride in doing it. The village looked beautiful when it was all lit up. We hope to do it again this year. We again served at least 75 people their Christmas dinners. Thank you to all the volunteers and donations that helped out. We could not have done it without your help. We hope to do it again in December 2023.

We helped individuals who needed funds to get them to Halifax for their appointments for treatments. These are only a few things that we have done. Our motto is "We Serve."

We would like to thank everyone for your continued support and dropping off your bottles and cans at our club. Also, thank you for supporting our Radio Bingo.



These are just three of the Christmas trees which were beautifully decorated by local people and groups in Bissell Park for Christmas. The one in the foreground was decorated by the River John 4-H group and it was covered with award ribbons which members won over the years.

Roller-Coaster Winter 2022/2023

by Christiane Gill

Maybe one or the other reader might dimly remember me worrying about not getting a really warm, knitted hat ready in time for this winter because I was always out and about taking pictures. Well, no need to worry. No, of course I did not get the hat finished but hubby gave me a great one for Christmas instead, so yes, I kept on taking pictures and yes, to me, that was well worth it. As for the new hat, was it worth getting? Always!

Was it needed? Hmmm - it came in handy on a couple of days during this roller-coaster winter.

Ignoring the sometimes spring-like weather, Christmas preparations were abundant and, in many cases, well-visible with the many beautifully lit windows and houses, hand-crafted wreaths, figurines standing guard at doors and - of course - Santa Claus having made a long stop at our RJ fire department. The kids, (the young and the young at heart,) were all thrilled. Yes, me, too; (I am grinning from ear to ear here, just remembering.)

As for winter itself, well, that is an on-and-off-and-back-on affair this season with the cold snap February 4th seemingly being the culmination with thermometer temperatures of around -27°C and windchills down to arctic -45°C. That was definitely not the time to dine al fresco for sure. But even with that, the river never froze enough for deer to cross it for our apple trees at the bank which has, at least to my knowledge, never happened before. There was only one daring, single skidoo out on the river close to our bank (the shallow side of the river) on Sunday, 19th February, which I noticed all season long.

(Deep sigh) at least my kitties had fun in the snow, when there was any.

Temperatures alternating from spring-like +degrees to arctic -degrees and back... and forth... and back... and forth again... and again... (you get the idea) sure makes me look back with wonder and forward with joyous anticipation.

Happy, hopefully soon, spring.



 /SeanFraserMP
1-844-641-5886
sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca

CENTRAL NOVA
SEANFRASER,MP
#HERETOHELP

Christmas and Winter photos



The Toney River lobster trap tree



Rylan Algarra at River John Fire Department to see Santa.



Standing: New Fire chief, Terry Heighton; Elf, Gillian Joudrie; Santa; On Santa's knee, Corporal Sally Rice; Kneeling: Outgoing Fire Chief, John MacLellan.



Mary Beth Sutherland with the dogsled team she drove while visiting with daughter Emily in Inuvik, Northwest Territories.



Playing in the snow — Charlotte, George, William and Isabel Cripps.



What fun it is to build a snowman with your brothers and sisters.

Left to right: William, Isabel and George.

In front: Charlotte Cripps with their (big) puppy, Cooper.



River John Christmas Tree Lighting

by Gillian Joudrie

It was a brisk evening on November 27th – but that didn't stop the village of River John from coming out and celebrating the start of the 2022 Holiday season! The West Branch and Area Singers came to serenade the crowd with some holiday classics while everyone sipped hot chocolate and

indulged in some delicious sweets. The River John Community Action Society and River John Recreation Committee would like to thank everyone who came out and made the tree lighting such a success, and a special thank you to those who decorated the park and the trees earlier that day, and to Jonah Yates for donating the trees. The sense of community and Christmas spirit was high, see you all at the next one!



The West Branch and Area Singers, led by Heather Mullolland, performed for the tree lighting ceremony.

