



River John Halloween, 2020



The Skeleton Family all decked out for some Trick-or-Treating recently. AKA Mike & Santina Weatherby and sons MJ and Colter. Hope you had fun, guys!



Nolan Chisholm enjoyed the children's parade, accompanied by ET and mom Alyssa.

River John and Area Recreation River John and Area Recreation hosted a children's parade for Halloween, with a preregistration of 67 children. Fun was had by all. That evening we had a haunted walk through the gardens at the Royal Canadian Legion. We would like to thank the community members and the River John Oddfellows for all the treats. A big shout out for all the help from volunteers, also thanks to the River John Legion for letting us use their grounds. River John Recreation is also looking for new members. For more information, please call Joanne Wilkins at 902 351 2143.



A group of ghouls, ghosties and goblins that helped out at the haunted trail at the Legion Halloween festivities. It was a great success and fun and scares were had by all.



This picture of the full moon was taken on Halloween night by Christiane Gill. It was the first blue moon on Halloween that could be seen in all time zones since 1944.

A Wedding at Lismore Sheep Farm

by Gillian Crawford

Lismore Sheep Farm was the location for the beautiful wedding of Brittany MacGregor and Mat Boss on Thanksgiving weekend. Brittany worked in the wool shop for several summers when she was younger. During this time, one of Brittany's favourite parts of the job was the extra task of walking the dogs across the fields. She loved the view looking over the wa-

ter towards Cape John. Not long after she was engaged did she decide that would be the perfect spot for her wedding, and it was. The weather cooperated, it was dry, not too cold, some sun and the wind died down a little! Despite the many worries associated with planning a wedding during COVID times, all went smoothly and it was a beautiful day for all. Lismore Sheep Farm was honoured to host the event.



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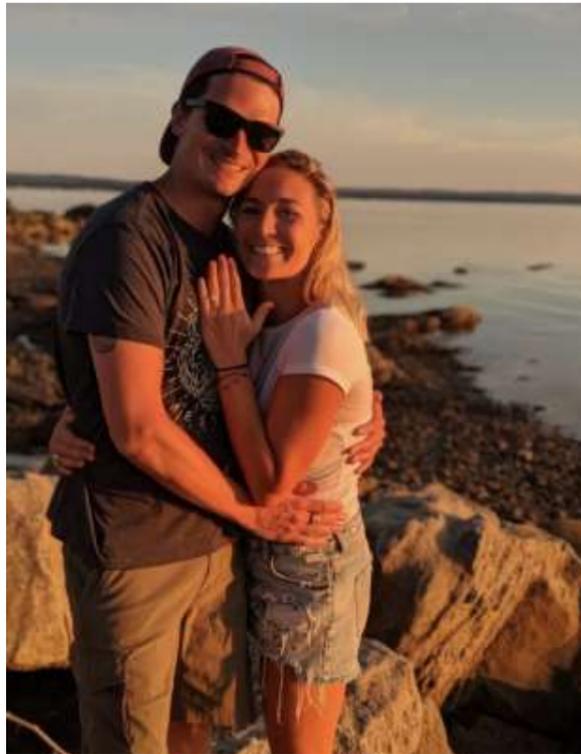
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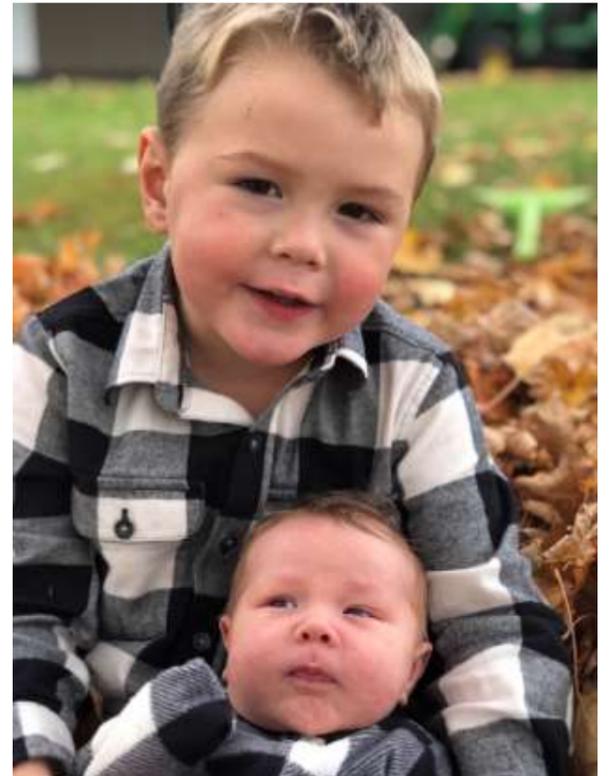


Cindy Langille and Stewart Joudrie are pleased to announce the birth of their first granddaughter, as is great grandmother, Jeannie Langille.

Cera Langille and Jesse MacKenzie were blessed with the birth of Quinn River MacKenzie on October 17 at 5:15pm weighing 7lbs 8.6oz. All are doing very well and are very thankful for all the generosity expressed by family, friends and communities.



As reported in our last issue, Patrick Howell and Julia Reid were engaged earlier this year.



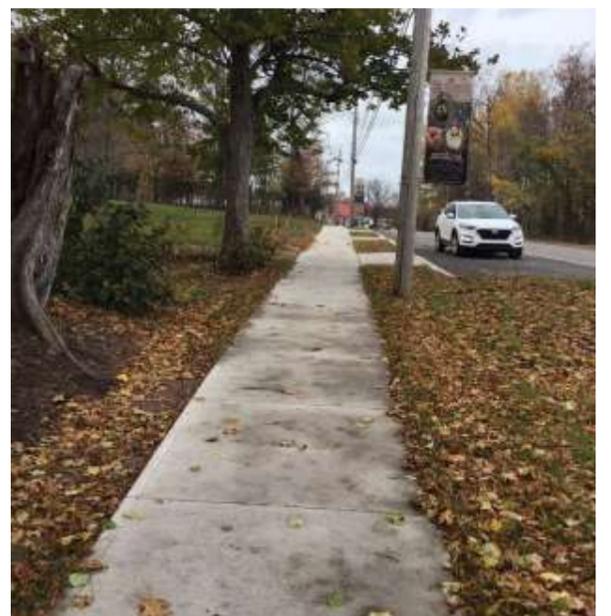
Mike & Santina Weatherby, Hedgeville, are excited to announce the arrival of their son Colter "Colt" Fulton Foster Weatherby on September 11th 2020. Of course, big brother MJ Weatherby is adjusting well to his new role! Thank you to everyone who sent well wishes.



Leonard, Shelley and Nick Bigney caught two tuna on Oct 16th and 17th off Port Hood, Cape Breton. First tuna was 676 lbs and second was 553 lbs.



This beautiful lobster trap Christmas tree has been built on the wharf at Toney River in memory of Nicholas Dewayne Falconer. Read the full story on page 9.



Recently there have been several improvements in our village of which we are justifiably proud. New sidewalks from the Post Office to the Library, our new community events sign and our beautiful banners commemorating our veterans. Thank you to everyone who made these changes possible to enhance our village life.

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Editorial

by Joan MacLeod

Outsiders, “Come From Aways” (CFA’s), or even “Come Back From Aways” (CBFA’s). These are hurtful and, in a way, discriminatory terms. They imply that there is an “us” who all think alike and a “them” who think and act otherwise, different, wrong. Sometimes it is expressed as “run by outsiders who think they know everything”. The reality is so very different. Yes of course, if we are lucky enough, we may have some chosen friends who think and act like us. But there is so much variation in attitude, behaviours, looks, sexual orientation, mental health, physical health, not to even mention skin colour. We would have few friends if we demanded that everyone looked like us and held the same views. Of course, there are societal norms and ethical norms. One would hope that we would espouse kindness and concern and empathy for our neighbours. But sometimes even with friends, we need to call each other on, for example, sexist behaviour. Sometimes a good debate or discussion between friends and partners is healthy! But what I am talking about is the feeling that others do not belong. It is an insidious and unwelcoming attitude. I, for one, am tired of it all. We can do better.

To take this one step further, this land is the unceded land of the Mi’kmaq and Maliseet peoples.

England and France expanded their empire, took this land and sent over settlers. The Indigenous people have graciously allowed us to stay. In fact, the earlier settlers would have perished without the help of the native people. How did we repay them, by giving them diseases (smallpox) for which they had no immunity, taking their children away from their families and exploiting the riches which this land offered. Now there are treaties, which are still not being honoured. However, it is important, I think, to remember that we are guests in this country. The first European settlers here were also immigrants.

The history of the Maritimes, since confederation, has been one of out-migration. Young people have left to find work. In the 1800’s, to the “Boston States”. In the two world wars, people left to fight in Europe and those who survived often brought back war brides. In the ‘50s people left to find employment in Ontario. More recently, people have found work “out west”. Our communities and our families have suffered the loss of loved ones for long periods and also have lost the young, thriving energy, so vital for our communities.

But now things have changed. For the first time in my memory there is a surge of people moving to

rural Nova Scotia. COVID refugees, perhaps. Many people are wanting to escape densely populated urban centres to the relative safety of rural Pictou County, where there is a whole lot less virus and more fresh air. Houses in River John have been “flying off the shelves.” Realtors report banner years. At the same time, the nature of work has also changed, with many folks being able to work from a home office, as long as they have an internet connection.

So how should we behave towards these new neighbours? Heaven knows our community groups and organizations could do with an influx of new people and fresh ideas. Let’s welcome them with open arms (while socially distancing, of course). You never know, they could be very good at applying for government grants for our community organizations; they could be electricians, plumbers, engineers, or construction workers willing to help voluntarily with our projects. They could be writers, policy developers or community organizers, musicians or artisans. We all have talents and we can all contribute. So, let’s leave those outmoded ideas of “them” and “us” behind and truly embrace our fellow rural dwellers, show them our Maritime hospitality so that they stay here and know that they are home!

To our loyal readers

by Marg Jones

Here at Pioneer HQ, we love to receive your articles and pictures, and our readers, from the feedback we’ve received, love to see them when their Pioneer arrives. It’s a lot of work for the folks who put it together, and that’s fine, we do enjoy it but we do run across a few problems when we’re putting the paper together and we’d like to gently remind you of a few things you can do that would make our job a little easier.

If you are the rep. for a local organization or group who sends in a regular newsletter, please mark your calendar as soon as you are aware of the next deadline date, then we won’t have to be chasing you for your article. Even if you only plan to submit a one-time article, contact the editor to find out the final date for submissions. (Please note: we should clarify that the deadline is only for last minute events, and that we like to receive material as early as possible.)

That would make the reporters’ lives easier.

When you have finished typing your article, read it through to make sure you haven’t left out any information. We get many articles which have to be revised or added to, usually after the original article has been proofed and sent to the layout department.

This makes the editor’s life easier.

Also, when you have finished typing the article and reading it through, read it through one more time. Sometimes you read what you think you wrote, and it turns out you left out a little word, or misspelled a word, and didn’t catch it after the first read-through, and it pops out at you the next time.

This makes the proofreader’s life much easier.

Articles that are only text (no pictures) should be saved in whatever word processing program you use; we can convert most formats into the format the layout guy likes. (He really likes Microsoft Word .doc or .docx format best.) If you don’t use a word processing program, and your article is not

too long, you can type it into the body of an e-mail, which you send to the address below.

Now, if the content is only text (no pictures), you’re ready to submit your article to pioneereditors@outlook.com. Send the file as an attachment.

If you want to include a photo with your article, it should be in JPEG format. Minimum 960 pixels, but bigger is better to allow for cropping. The most common problems we see in submissions are poor lighting, bad focussing or blurring. We love to receive your pictures but cannot always use them for those reasons. You can send both your text file and .jpg file in the same email if you send them as attachments. And don’t forget to write a few words to tell us the name of the person/people in the picture, and what was the occasion.

You’ll make the layout guy’s life much easier.

So keep those pictures and articles coming, your friends and neighbours and all of us here are looking forward to seeing them! Thank you.

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The Pioneer is published by the River John Community Action Society

P.O. Box 83, River John, NS, B0K 1N0

The Pioneer is distributed in River John, the village of Scotsburn, and West Branch. We welcome any articles or pictures from any of our newspaper friends and areas.

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

Advertising sales Dave Cochrane, dcochrane123@gmail.com
Graphics Kristine Stallman, kristine@pinklemonademediamedia.com
Copy typist Sandra MacKay
Proof reading Marg Jones, william.jones@bellaliant.net
Layout Derek Andrews, pioneerlayout@outlook.com
Printing Advocate Printing & Publishing Co Ltd

Letters to the editor

Letters to The Pioneer editor should be emailed to pioneereditors@outlook.com

Dear Pioneer Editors,

I read with interest the article "Mockler Ship Yard" by Beulah Jane Wright from the Summer 2020 issue of The Pioneer which was sent to me by Dale Swan of Tatamagouche. Paul MacKinnon of the North Shore Archives had published an article in the Shore with the same photograph as was published in your article. See below:

With the help of Dale Swan and Linda Glass of the North Shore Archives, I have been looking for an original copy of that photograph of Captain Patrick Mockler for some time now. Should you have a scan copy of the photograph you can send to me, I would greatly appreciate it!

Last year, Dale Swan sent me some photocopies of photographs of Patrick Mockler from several books and publications. I immediately recognized the photographs as an original photograph within our family archives. See below.

How fortunate to be able to identify this photograph and put the name with the image of such a handsome and dignified man. You can find more information on Captain Patrick Mockler at the following link: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/157135574/patrick-mockler>

My great-grandmother, Margaret Jane (Mockler) McGowan, is the sister of Patrick Mockler. Both were born and raised at River John. Margaret married Patrick H. McGowan of Memramcook, N.B. He is the shipbuilder Beulah mentioned in her article. His shipbuilding enterprise ran into financial difficulties in the late 1870s and he took employment at the Dorchester Penitentiary the year it opened (1880). He was promoted and transferred to Stony Mountain penitentiary near Winnipeg in 1886. He tragically died in a carriage accident in downtown Winnipeg while on prison business in 1894. He is eligible to be honored and inducted into the Canadian Peace Officers Memorial at their annual event on Parliament Hill in Ottawa in September 2021. You can read more about Patrick and Margaret McGowan at the following links:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/191278885/patrick-h.-mcgowan>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/152712246/margaret-jane-mcgowan>

I was told there might be an old photograph of the old Mockler home in River John. Teresa MacKenzie of the McCulloch House in Pictou said she thought she remembered a photograph of it before it was torn down. Any photographs of the Mockler home or Mockler ship yard at River John would be very important to me if you ever come across any of them. Any local outreach to seek old photographs pertaining to them on your part will be greatly appreciated.

John Mockler, with father, Patrick Mockler, may have started out at Pictou, but resided at River John by 1837, where he and Eleanor raised 10 children. You can read more about John Mockler and his father Patrick Mockler at the following links:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/157135963/patrick-mockler>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/146586814/john-mockler>

It is unclear to me exactly when the Mocklers moved further north. At least by 1860, John Mockler was attempting to sell his land at Brule. The following advertisement was placed in the Colonial Standard and published on March 13, 1860:

I do not believe this land was ever sold. John and Eleanor Mockler relocated to San Francisco in the early 1870s where they lived until they both died there, on the same day, in January, 1897. They still resided at "Pugwash" in the 1871 Canada Census:

I'm not certain exactly where their dwelling house was located from this 1871 census return. It doesn't appear to be at Brule.

I believe son Patrick Mockler took possession of the land at Brule, (possibly after his parents died in San Francisco in 1897,) and built a new house upon it circa 1900. That house still stands at Brule after being restored by John and Connie McNutt.

Having said all of this and shared the links to the various memorials and biographies, I cannot say I know the complete story of the Mockler family. I know a heck of a lot more than I did just two

years ago - that's for sure! I wanted to share what I knew about them because they are a part of your local history and the heritage of River John, (which I visited two years ago this month). Two years ago I knew virtually nothing! As you are aware, John and Eleanor Mockler had five sons - all were master mariners. The youngest son, Charles Mockler, resided at Sausalito in San Francisco Bay circa 1880. He died when a steam ship he was traveling on was lost in Alaska on the way to Seattle in 1903. More on him, including a pen sketch of his likeness from a photograph, can be found at this link: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/192671917/charles-edward-mockler>

Two other sons, John and Thomas, died somewhat young of tuberculosis in California. Their brother William died at Brule in 1925. There are links from the memorial pages if you care to look up their information. Then there are the links to the daughters and sisters. There are some interesting letters and Thomas' master mariner certification uploaded to the McCulloch House "HAGGIS" database.

Should you come by any new information on this family, or photographs related to their home, (even as to where it was located,) the ships they built, or the ship yard and ship construction, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you again for your article on the Mockler Ship Yard. Best Regards, Rob Stoddard

River John Fire Department thanks the community.

by **Santina Weatherby**

All members of the River John Fire Department would like to thank everyone who purchased and helped sell tickets on the Honda ATV this past summer. Due to pandemic restrictions we were unable to hold our annual fundraisers, which were missed by both department members and the community alike. However, despite the challenging times, the community supported us in a different way this summer, and it was great success.

The winners of our September 2020 Draw were:

Grand Prize: Ellen Richardson (No. 0194)
Second Prize: Charlie Smith (No. 0446)
Third Prize: Greg Henley (No. 0259)

In late summer 2020, River John Fire Department teamed up with departments across the province to raise monies through a weekly online 50/50 fundraiser to support volunteer fire services. If you are interested in purchasing tickets, you can do so online at www.firefighters5050.com, make sure to select River John Vol. Fire Department. Weekly ticket purchases end on Thursday evenings. A portion of all ticket sales goes to our department.

All funds raised by both local fundraisers and the online 50/50 stay within our department and contribute to maintenance and purchases required to support our community ability to provide fire and rescue response.

Once again, thank you to our community and everyone who continues to support our department.



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Outgoing Councillor, Ronnie Baillie

Ronnie Baillie served our area, District 4, River John, Toney river and part of West Branch since 1997. Ronnie was encouraged to run by a number of people. He first ran for office, unsuccessfully in 1994. However, he was elected as our councillor in 1997 and continued to serve us for 23 years. Pictou County has a warden system, rather than a mayoral system. Mayors are elected by the public at large whereas wardens are chosen from the ranks of councillors. In addition to being our councillor, Ronnie also served as deputy warden for 4 years and warden for 8 years. Ronnie says that any elected official is only as good as his or her residents. If you have the co-operation of your residents, then you can get things done.

When asked about his biggest success, Ronnie feels that the new River John library is what he is most proud of achieving. To give a bit of background history. The River John library used to be crowded in a small room which was rented from the Lions Club. We asked for a new building but were refused. Starting in 1998, a group of citizens, spearheaded by the late Janice Murray Gill would not take "No" for an answer. They decided to take out their own mortgage on a new building. Calling themselves the Friends of the Library, they fundraised and in 2000 had a new building built with a 20 year mortgage. The building is rented to PARL (Pictou Antigonish Regional Library) who also hire and pay the staff. The Friends of the Library Board maintains and runs the building. They are proud that they have been able to pay off the mortgage 5 years early. The role of overseeing this board will fall to our new councillor, Mary Woolridge Elliott.

In 2004-2005, Pictou Regional Development Commission initiated a series of talks to find people who would become active in the community to form a body for some self-governance. Out of this process, River John Community Action Society (RJCAS) was born. Also, a Community Co-



ordinator post was created. The Municipality pays for our community co-ordinator but her salary is administered by RJCAS. We are indeed fortunate that we have a co-ordinator who applies for grants to hire students to maintain our village parks and recreation facilities all summer long. She also runs the Meals on Wheels program for Seniors.

Another change in our village was the building of a septic treatment facility. This was built in 1995 and completed in 1996. We are the only community in the municipality to have 2 extensions to our septic treatment plant. (Cape John Road, River John Road and also River John Station Road.)

We were the first community to get LED street lights. We also had our "J" (secondary) roads paved and recently, our sidewalks were replaced from the

Post Office to the Library. In addition, the Council helps with the community halls in Seafoam and West Branch, through grants.

Ronnie says his biggest disappointment during his time in office was the closing of River John Consolidated School. It was not just the closing itself, but the way in which it was handled by the School Board. The Save our School (SOS) Committee worked so hard to present a viable plan to present to the school board, but it fell on deaf ears. Another disappointment was the closing of the bank, followed by the closing of the grocery store.

In response to the question, "How do you see the future of River John?" Ronnie says: "I see some growth in our community. Young people are settling here again. Growth creates opportunity itself. The future of River John is in our own hands. There is not the rivalry between small communities that there used to be."

Ronnie will continue in the car business for as long as he continues to enjoy it. He is the Sales Manager for Straitway Kia in New Glasgow. A future goal is to take a trip to New Orleans some March for Mardi Gras.

Behind every great man there is often a woman. Norma, who is friendly and outgoing, has certainly been an asset to him as Councillor. Ronnie has often said, "If Norma does not know them or who they are, then they are not from Pictou county."

Finally, Ronnie says, "It has been an honour and a privilege to serve the residents of District 4 for the past 23 years. Your help and confidence are very much appreciated."

The swearing in for our new councillor, Mary Woolridge Elliott was held on Nov 3, 2020.

Knitting for others

by **June Kirjavainen**
& **Gwen Boese**

We began this project in 2014 when Gloria Grandy from Dartmouth posted an invitation in the River John library, inviting all interested parties to join her in knitting, bring your own needles and "share a yarn". A few ladies turned up with needles, crochet hooks and yarn to see what this was all about. Thus we were introduced to KNIT-A-SQUARE International, aka KAS.

KAS is an international Organization started by a woman and her niece in South Africa in 2000. They were shocked at the numbers of children in South Africa who are orphaned and/or vulnerable due to AIDS, millions of them living with their grandparents. Thus KAS was born.

It has grown into an organization that receives knitted or crocheted squares, plus other items such as hats, toys, hand-puppets and wrist-warmers; 64 countries from around the world have contributed and continue to do so.

Squares are the bulk of knitted items we send in. Packages contain up to 60 or 70 squares. Each bundle weighs 2 kg and the cost of mailing each bundle is \$38.00. When these squares reach South Africa they are hand-sewn together by the African grammas and then distributed to the children. Each

child receives a blanket, a toy and a hat/toque.

Most of these orphanages and daycare centres have concrete floors. The blankets provide warmth and comfort to the children and a sense of security.

To date the River John Square Knitters have mailed in slightly over 26,000 squares making a total of 745 blankets in South Africa. In order to raise money for our postage we have craft sales throughout the year. We sell items that we have made e.g. hats, mitts, socks, shawls, dish cloths, pot holders, slippers etc. To date we have spent \$13,000.00 on postage. We appreciate donations of yarn, (no wool content); money donations are appreciated to help with our postage.

Knit-A-Square posts on the web page site, which shows, at times, squares we recognize as parts of a blanket, and brings a feeling of real satisfaction! From Nelson Mandela: "It is in your hands to create a better world for all to live in." Our motto: KNIT LOCALLY – SHARE GLOBALLY.

We have local knitters who gather, but we also have summer folks who enjoy knitting with us. If you are interested in joining us, you can contact the River John library at 902-351-2599. Due to COVID-19 we were not allowed to gather in our usual location but the River John Square Knitters hope to resume there soon.

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Welcome Wagon

by Joan MacLeod

Because there are so many new families who have moved into the community recently, a few of us decided to form an unofficial "Welcome Wagon" group to welcome them. So, we baked some cookies and jelly and got a little greetings page together. We combined it with some free magazines from the library and also the last issue of the Pioneer. We visited 3 families (with social distancing) and left the package for one other family. When I got home, I searched the internet for the official Welcome Wagon, looking for some support or ideas, only to discover that Welcome Wagon no longer exists. It shut down in May, 2020.

Undaunted, we plan to continue our unofficial version. There are more places to visit. At the last count there were 13 families in total, either recently moved, moving in, or planning to come soon. It seems people are escaping to rural Nova Scotia to avoid the virus in more densely populated places. In a way it is a COVID silver lining. It will give our area a welcome boost.

If you would like a Welcome Wagon visit or know someone who would benefit, please contact one of us.

Joan MacLeod 902-351-2759,

Lynn MacLeod 902-351-2640

Maureen Topley 902-351-3361

IOOF Helping Hand Lodge # 34

by Jacob Leegwater

After the summer recess it was good to get back to Lodge on September 14. Plans were made to confer the initiatory degree on our new candidate, Brian Eloff. With help from Eastern Star Lodge and Union Lodge we did a shortened version on September 21. Then the next week with help of these same lodges we did the first degree.

On our sick list is Bro. Ron Langille; we wish him well with our thoughts and prayers. Due to COVID-19 pandemic there will be no coat drive this year.

For those who would like to help the Odd Fellows, recyclables such as bottles can be dropped off at Bro. Willis Langille's at Cape John. Over the past year and a half we have done very well. Also, we have been collecting junk. Just call Bro. Willis Langille at 902-897-388 for pick up.

We are pleased that our newest member was able to get his second and third degree of Odd Fellows on October 24 at the degree rally held in Tatamagouche. Brian Eloff and six others were able to have this honour bestowed on them. Our district meeting for lodges in district #17 was held at Helping Hand on October 26 with three of the four lodges in attendance. Lodges from Pictou, Tatamagouche and River John attended, with the meeting chaired by District Deputy Grand Master Bro. Earl Johnson. A donation of a gas card was made to Bro. Ron Langille for travel to Halifax. Also a donation to the Lodge that Gives.

For more information, see us at our Facebook page Helping Hand Lodge #34. Meetings are every Monday, 7:30 at 2747 River John Station Road. Jacob Leegwater, Secretary 902-351-2847

Pictou County's St Andrew's Society Seeking New Members

by Mary Beth Sutherland

River John, West Branch, Toney River and other areas in Pictou County first started receiving the first significant wave of Scottish immigrants in 1773 with the arrival of the ship Hector. This wave of Scottish immigration continued over the years with increases in the early 1800s and later in mid 1800s. There is a large population of people in the area with Scottish ancestry and who have an interest in Scottish culture. The texture of Scottish culture continues to be an important part of our county and province's fabric.

The St. Andrew's Society of Pictou County was founded in May 1921 to prepare for the commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the arrival of the Ship Hector, and to provide leadership for this major event, including the recognition of "Auld Scotland's" cultural influence on "New Scotland". Scottish culture was - and is - reflected in Nova Scotia's language, literature, athletics and music.

The St. Andrew's Society is presently preparing

to celebrate the 100th anniversary of our founding. As we approach 2021, we are inviting new members with an interest in Scottish culture to join our Society. In a normal year we would have two main social events, support Pictou County's Celtic Culture by assisting at events such as the New Glasgow Festival of Tartans, providing financial assistance to workshops on Gaelic, highland dance and music. Through supporting Celtic events, we hope to encourage our youth and citizens to various aspects of the Celtic Culture and promote a progressive future for Scottish culture.

If you would like to become a member of the St. Andrew's Society of Pictou County please call Doug Ross at 902-752-8079, or contact by mail at 174 Archimedes Street, Unit B, Box 107, New Glasgow NS, B2H 2T6.

The River John Ladies Exercise Group

by Lynn MacLeod

Hi once again to our avid readers out there. Just an update on our group. We have moved back to the River John Fire Hall and are now meeting three mornings a week - Monday, Wednesday and Friday - 9:00 am.

The cost is \$2.00 a class, for a total of \$6.00 a week. All COVID safety precautions are in place - wear a mask when entering the hall, sign in with name and phone number and please sanitize your hands (lotion provided). Once we start our class, masks can be removed as they are not a requirement once physical activity is in progress. If you have an exercise mat please bring it, although we do have a number of mats on hand. Any equipment we use is sanitized after class.

As we all know, exercising brings its own rewards, better fitness, building strength, bringing friends together and having a lot of fun. All are welcome.



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or check us out on Facebook
(Helping Hand Lodge #34)

2019-2020 Noble Grand, Rod Hayman

What's new at the River John Library!

by Trecia Schell
Community Services Librarian
Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library

The River John Library has new open hours, as of October 26, 2020. We are now open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12pm - 7pm, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10am - 1pm and 2pm - 5pm, and Saturdays from 10am - 2pm.

If you haven't had a chance to drop by lately, you may notice a few changes, including – we are now FINE-FREE for overdue items! And we have some very lovely new paperback book spinners, courtesy of the Friends of the River John library.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Regional Library has in place since this summer, several protocols following the NS Public Health guidelines to help keep us all safe -

All library materials are quarantined for 72 hours upon return, and are cleaned before they are re-shelved. And the circulation desk has a Plexiglas shield.

We ask that you wear a mask at all times while visiting the library. (If you happen to forget to bring a mask, we do have some available at the desk for you to use.) In addition, please sanitize your hands upon entering and exiting the library (we do have hand-sanitizers located at the entrance).

While visiting the library, we ask that you maintain a social distance of 6ft (2m) from others outside your 'bubble'.

To reduce contact, we ask that all borrowed materials are returned to our outdoor return drop box, or the drop box located at the circulation desk.

To support safe contactless service, we now offer a curbside pick-up service upon request for materials on hold (please contact the library to make arrangements). This is in addition to the traditional check-out service at the main circulation desk.

The public computer area also has a limited numbers of computers available, with Plexiglas screening in-between, to help maintain social distancing. The equipment is disinfected after each person's use.

The use of the Community Room is limited for the moment, and the Community Office is closed to public use. (It has become the library's temporary storage area so that we can re-open the Community Room and to maintain open spacious areas for safe social distancing measures.)

Programming is slowly resuming too, and we do have several online program offerings – from Book Clubs to Knitting Clubs and author readings. In November, we have 2 online writing workshops with Sheree Fitch (Tuesday November 17 and 24, starting at 7pm). Please check out the library's events calendar online at www.parl.ns.ca for full details, or call the library.

Technology interns return! If you are looking for some one-to-one computer instruction or are having trouble with a device, our Tech Intern, Bailey MacKay, will be at the River John Library on Fridays. Please contact the library to make an appointment, (902) 351-2599. The River John C@P Committee has also purchased 2 Playaway LaunchPad tablets, that will be available for borrowing from the library. In addition, if you're the crafty type – we have a Silhouette cutting machine that is fantastic for working with scrapbooking, card making, and decals/stickers to create your own, personalized, homemade items.

This fall, the internet connection to the library was also increased to a higher bandwidth (faster speed!). The library's online services have grown too. PARL now offers free access (with your free library card) to Lynda.com/LinkedIn Learning, PressReader, (for thousands of newspapers & magazines,) RBDigital for over 3,300 magazine titles in 18+ languages, RocketLanguages, Ancestry.com, NovaStory, OverDrive/Libby for downloadable eBooks and audiobooks, Chilton's Database and more, all available at www.parl.ns.ca. The library's free WiFi is also available outside the library, and extends as far as the middle of Bissell Park, across the street.

Library cards are free. If you would like a library card, please call, email, drop by, or you can complete an online form to register for a library card and have it mailed directly to you at home, <http://www.parl.ns.ca/forms/register.php>.

We look forward to seeing you soon - at the library!

River John Library
2725 West Branch Road, River John, NS
(902) 351-2599
riverjohn@parl.ns.ca
www.parl.ns.ca

Open Hours

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12pm–7pm
Wednesdays & Fridays, 10am-1pm
& 2pm-5pm
Saturdays, 10am–2pm



This young gentleman, MJ Weatherby, was very happy to receive his very own library card this summer, with Samantha Allan, Branch Assistant (left).




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The Worst News Possible

by Doug and Glenda Campbell

I have written a book called "Grieving our Murdered Daughter - A Journey of Grief and Hope".

It is about our family journey through our daughter's death by the hand of her husband in 2017 in Regina Sk.

To our daughter Jenny Leigh, Seafoam was her favourite place on earth and it is now our home.

The book was written for these purposes: (from the Introduction)

A friend said I should write a book to help others deal with the trauma of losing a loved one through domestic violence. One of my goals is that in sharing how I/we have grieved, it may help others to express their grief. For healing to begin grief must be expressed. In this day, many people try to sweep away grief by avoiding visitations and funerals, or never talking about their deceased. If we do not adequately mourn and grieve, we are not dealing with reality and may miss out on having our broken hearts experience healing.

Perhaps this will also help those trapped in an abusive relationship to find a way out. I hope Jenny's story grabs the attention of those who know people in similar situations and moves them to take action. I also hope Jenny's personal words and poetry will speak to those who struggle in similar ways that she did. May you find reflection and courage to admit your struggles and ask for help.

This is an excerpt from

"Grieving Our Murdered Daughter – A Journey of Pain and Hope" by Doug and Glenda Campbell. It is available as a paperback or ebook from amazon.ca.

Jenny Leigh (Campbell) McKay

It was an ordinary day - Wednesday, September 6, 2017. I was working at our church office. About 11:30 Pastor Steve Adams flew in my office, took me by the shoulders and said, "sit down brother." When someone tells you that, you know it is going to be bad news. He said, "Your Girl is Gone!" I do not remember exactly what else he said as my mind was spinning. It just hit me like a brick that our Jenny Leigh was really gone, murdered by her husband. The tears just flowed as the news ripped into me. A thousand things were running through my mind. It was like a shock wave hitting me, yet there was clarity about what to do next, and about this dreadful outcome of the last few weeks of Jenny's life.

As I took the hour drive home through Wentworth to Seafoam, a song played over and over in my head: 'Morning Light', by Amy Grant and Stu Gerrard. As I played it again, a realization crept over me what this song was about for us. I shared it with Jenny over the past couple of weeks, as she was so weary of the life she was living. I asked her to pray about it with me, for God to change her life and make her shine again. It hit me that for us the song was not about her shining again in this life, but that she was closing her eyes to this life, with the hope and promise of shining in the next life, in Heaven. I was simply stunned by this realization.

"Close your eyes and lay down your head, looks like you could use some rest, That's what Mercy says

And when you wake up, you're gonna shine, with the morning light, Again."

I drove to the Lavender Farm where Glenda



works. I got her alone and said, "Jenny is gone." She was very startled and shaken, wondering what that meant. "Gone? Gone where? Did she leave home? Is she alright?" I told her Jason had taken her life. After that it is all a blur as we took the short drive home. We were distraught and overwhelmed. What do you do when you get the worst news possible? We called our son Ben in Calgary. He is two years younger than Jenny and they were inseparable as youngsters. Then we called our daughter Ally in Iqaluit. That was especially difficult as she had just left for Iqaluit the day before to start a new chapter in her nursing career. Ally was completely distraught – they were so close and talked every day. Life does not get much tougher than hearing your sister was murdered.

We drove to New Glasgow to tell my mother. Jenny was mom's first granddaughter. Their birthdays were just 1 day apart, so they shared many birthday cakes when Jenny was young. We gently told mom what happened. Three days later she ended up in the hospital from a stroke and has not been the same. I think the news broke her heart. Then we went up the street to see our sister-in-law Kim. We did not stay long and decided we could not face telling anyone else. That afternoon took all the emotional energy we had. I cannot put into adequate words how we felt. Something autonomous takes over and you just function - but barely.

That evening we went to MacDonald's Cove, to walk on the sand and just be together. We looked over to the next point, where Jenny and Jason had been married five years before. Such a happy time then, now like hurricane wreckage washed up on the shore. Jenny said it was her favourite place on earth. She loved to sleep there under the stars. Now she was never coming home. Glenda and I walked and talked, wept and prayed, and held each other. We stayed on the beach until after the sunset and watched a full orange moon rise over the ocean. We gave thanks to God for Jenny's life as our grief washed over us, wave after tidal wave. There is a certain unreality to losing your firstborn, especially in such a horrible way. The stark shock becomes a searing pain of heart and soul. You truly feel your heart could break in two.

Our 35 years of marriage and our commitment to walk with Jesus Christ in faith prepared us for this worst day of our lives. Not that we were not wrecked, and wondering why, and all those sorts of thoughts and questions that hit at a time as this. But when we were at our weakest, the Lord showed Himself to be strong. Scriptures like Psalm 46 reminded us God is truly with us, and His Spirit strengthened and sustained us.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

Gospel in the Park

With COVID-19 being such a huge concern, all of the churches in our area were closed to regular worship. For those of us who attend regularly, it was quite a blow. But we are nothing if not resilient. Jim White from West Branch organized local musicians who gave of their time and talents to provide an outdoor gospel music event every Sunday in August.

For a couple of hours each Sunday, sounds of praise could be heard coming from Bissell Park in River John. The musicians were set up on the veranda of the Lions Club. Those who attended were able to stay a respectable distance between their "bubbles" by sitting at the picnic tables or a bit further away in their lawn chairs. Each Sunday there were at least 50 people in attendance. The weather was perfect. Not a single Sunday in August was missed because of rain.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following musicians: Alvin Heighton, Leon Fisher, Carol Campbell-Smith, Harley White, Mike Cranmer, Lynda Manning, Jim and Denise White, Donny Duggan, David Farrell, Janet Mills, John Crichton, Floyd Rudolph and Blaine Brown.



Janet Mills and Dave Farrell entertain the appreciative crowd at Gospel in the Park this summer.

A special thanks to Norma Fox for providing the musicians with sandwiches and snacks. An extra special Thank you to the Lions Club for allowing the players to set up their equipment on the veranda. And, of course, to the residents of River John for supporting an effort to bring us all together. Plans are in the works to try it again next summer.

Thank you, again, to one and all who helped to make this event a success (and fun!)

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Tribute to Nicholas Falconer, Toney River

by **Mary Beth Sutherland**

At 6:30 pm on the evening of November 11, the Falconer family and friends will be lighting a lobster trap “Christmas tree” alongside the Toney River wharf and harbour to honour the memory of Nicholas Dewayne Falconer (1995 – 2019), one year after his death. Fellow fishermen are invited to hang a buoy to represent their boat or in memory of a loved one, as an addition to this special “trap tree”.

Nick was the beloved son of Dewayne and Catherine Falconer and brother of Matthew, and this has been a difficult year for the whole family. The idea of this lobster trap Christmas tree was a way for them to remember Nick at one of his favourite locations. It will also be an eye-catching sight as one drives through Toney River.

Nick was a friendly young man with a sense of humour, a friend to many and a wonderful son and grandson. A graduate of Scotsburn, West Pictou and Northumberland Regional High School, he



then attended St. F.X. University, graduating in 2018 with a degree in Aqua Resources and Economics. He fished with his father while growing up and after graduation. He had a great love for fishing on the water with his Dad and spending time at the wharf. So placing this lobster trap Christmas tree at a location he loved is appropriate, and it will add sparkle to his beloved location.

Dewayne, Catherine and Matt would like to thank family members and friends, Raymond (grandfather), Travis (uncle), Robbie, Joey and Ben for their help in building the tree, also Richard and Cheryl for the beautiful anchor tree-topper.

Individuals have offered to help with the cost of lighting the tree, but his parents thought a more lasting legacy to Nick would be to create a bursary in his memory at the Northumberland Regional High School. They are in the process of setting up the bursary to help other young people in Nick’s memory. If you would like to contribute to this bursary speak to Dewayne or Catherine.



Nova Scotia Tragedy

April 18-19, 2020

I wonder, did she feed the birds? Did she obsessively pick out the twigs and bits of chaff? Like I do? On that last day?

I wonder, did her little dog give her wet, loving kisses and tail wags before she took him for his morning walk that day?

I wonder, did they make sweet love that last night, not knowing it was to be their last night on earth?

I wonder if she tended her horse that last morning? Of course she did, she loved her pet.

I wonder if she told her husband and children that she loved them, before she went off to work that morning?

I wonder what forces would arouse such anger in a man to gun down innocent people?

How can it be that in Nova Scotia, this peaceful, beautiful place, a neighbour, just a neighbour, can go out to say, “Hey what’s going on?” and be shot dead in his tracks? Like the Wild West!

(by a Warrior? Commando? Cowboy? Super Villain?)

No, by a guy masquerading as the Police. As the RCMP!

What was he thinking?

Why?

I wonder if we will ever get over the horror of this tragedy in Nova Scotia?

I wonder what it would be like if some men learned to handle their fears, their losses and their rage without resorting to assault rifles?

Or if only the one man did?

Joan MacLeod May 7th 2020

West Branch News

by **Denise White**

I think that I can honestly say that this has been the quietest year in West Branch I’ve seen since my husband, Jim, and I moved here almost eleven years ago. It seemed that nary a day went by without seeing one of our neighbours or hearing music coming from somewhere. And there always seemed to be something happening at the hall. But we, like other small communities have put many of our regular activities and events on hold until COVID-19 is cured. Or at least, until a vaccine is found.

At first, the community was unable to continue to offer services in a way that would keep us all safe. But that doesn’t mean that West Branch was completely devoid of activity. Far from it!

I can’t be said to have my finger on the pulse of the community, but I know those who are in the know, and they know what I don’t know, you know? And they know that there were still things happening here.

I have heard that Peaceful River Campground had a good year. Better than was expected under current conditions with so many restrictions in place. And we are so glad! We should all feel good when our neighbours are doing well.

I see that construction continues on the outdoor

museum on the loop at the end of the Loganville Road. I know very little about this project, but I’ve enjoyed the occasional walk through. I particularly like the model of West Branch with all of the miniature buildings. It is truly a labour of love to keep the history of this area alive, but remember, this is private property so we mustn’t make pests of ourselves.

The community hall was unable to host our annual Maple Syrup Festival in April, and the weekly music circles were also cancelled, as well as the old-time dances. But once the province started to lift restrictions on gatherings, the hall directors started making plans. We can’t hold events at full capacity yet, but we’re hopeful that we will be back to normal in the coming year.

Just this past month, the West Branch and Area Community Association hosted a take-out dinner of ham and scalloped potatoes. From all reports, the meal was well received, and plans are in the works for another in the spring, if restrictions are still in place. Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped to make it a success.

Recently, the hall received a municipal grant that will allow the installation of a heat pump. That means that we will be able to offer an air-conditioned event space in summer. What a difference that will make!

With winter coming on, don’t forget that the hall is a registered Comfort Station. That means that in the event of a natural disaster or prolonged interruption in services due to storms, the hall will be open for use. You can come and get warmed up; cook a meal; use the facilities and power your devices.

Because we still have to feel like there is something close to normal in these trying times, we’ve decided to go ahead with our annual Christmas Craft and Bake Sale. If you come to visit, you’ll be asked to wear a mask and sanitize your hands as you come in. You’ll see all new vendors this year. As always, we’ll be out and about collecting for the annual food drive on the same day. Mark November 21st on your calendar for a visit to West Branch.

The community hall has also started a new Facebook page. Check it out to keep up on all the news in West Branch and the surrounding area. Just look for West Branch Community Hall group page. Don’t forget to “like” us.

We’ve got a whole raft of events in the planning stages for next year. Keep scanning Facebook for details. We’ll post new items as soon as an event is confirmed.

Stop by on the 21st, we’d love to see you.

Earl Stewart Dwyer, Flying Officer, RCAF, 1922-1944

by Beulah Wright

Three years ago, at Christmas time, an email was received in River John, from a Mr. Ernst, in Holland. The email message read " From your town... on Christmas Eve we put a light on his war grave, pilot D.S. Dwyer.. he will not be forgotten...Leusden Cemetery, Holland." Accompanying the email was a photograph of the headstone, with the light in front. That D.S. Dwyer, should have read E.S. Dwyer, probably just a typo.

At first it was difficult to find out where he fit in the Dwyer genealogy, mainly because of that "D"! However, with the help of a family researcher, Jane Terry, he was finally found. Earl Stewart Dwyer was born March 24, 1922, in River John, the son of James William Dwyer, a welder, son of James L. Dwyer and Ellen Fraser, and Elizabeth Marguerite Holmes, daughter of Stewart Holmes, an undertaker in River John, and Maggie Logan. The family moved to Trail, BC. when Earl was about a year old, where two sisters were born, Evelyn Eileen and Ethel Margaret.

Earl received his grade twelve and immediately became an apprentice welder, but in 1942 he left his employment and enlisted in Edmonton, in the RCAF. He was only 20 years old - a handsome, brown-haired, blue-eyed, clean-cut, healthy young man, neither a drinker nor a smoker, but with a keen determination to succeed. He was extensively involved in swimming, hockey and softball, and he enjoyed model planes.

He quickly made progress and in April of 1943



attained his Flying Badge, and by October was promoted to Pilot Officer, highly recommended "above average as a pilot and as a captain" by his superiors. He left for active duty overseas from Halifax.

On the 16th of June, 1944, he, being the pilot, and six other RCAF crew members left on a bombing mission in Germany. They never returned. The first report to his parents was, "Missing in action, presumed dead." Later they received word from German information that the plane had crashed and the seven men were considered to have died on June 17th and were buried in Holland. The letter to the parents then cautioned, that since the news came from the enemy, it was not trustworthy, and there was a possibility that they were prisoners of war. It was not until March 1, 1945, that verifica-

tion of their decease was received. Such a loss of such a promising young life - one of so many.

How comforting that his grave is still decorated and remembered by a grateful family in Holland.



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News from River John Legion

by Mike Topley

Re-Opening: Our Legion has re-opened carefully, with masks (unless seated), distancing, and lots of sanitizing, disinfection and cleaning. Thanks to all who have co-operated. For the time being we are only hosting Legion events.

Chase the Ace: Chase the Ace is going very well, with good sales and attendance. Most come for the music, to chat a bit and have a drink. The Ace of Hearts will now win you over \$7000. Tickets are available during opening hours at Fulton Pharmacy or at the Legion on Friday evenings from 6:30pm to 8:30pm.

Remembrance Day: This year, due to COVID distancing and Legion guidelines, our Remembrance Day ceremony at the Memorial will be limited to only a small Legion Remembrance Day committee, i.e. no public assembly. Everyone is still encouraged to lay wreaths and this can be done the previous day, November 10th. All wreaths and dedications will be recognized at the Legion ceremony which will be live videoed for Facebook. Thank you for your understanding.

Remembrance Banners: You will have noticed many (32) Remembrance banners in the village. These honour veterans of families in the community. Thanks to Anne Patriquin and Marilyn Heighton for organizing the production and mounting of these banners.

Comfort Centre: We were all ready to provide Hurricane Teddy comfort centre services, i.e. electricity, water and a friendly face, but fortunately there was no demand.

Fun Things: We held 3 outdoor washer tosses this summer, all abiding by COVID rules. Good, safe fun for all who attended. On Saturday, October 24, we offered a take-out hot chili lunch which sold out within an hour. Look for another one in November.

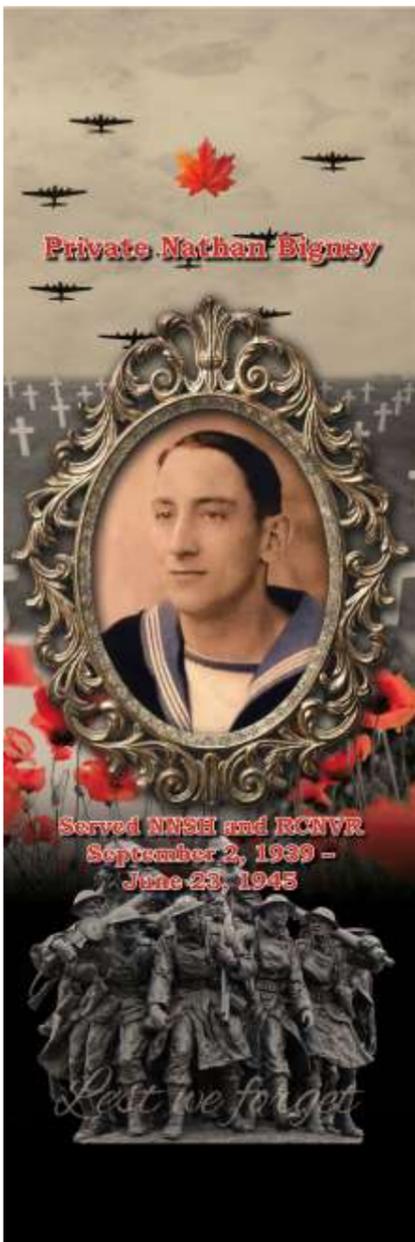
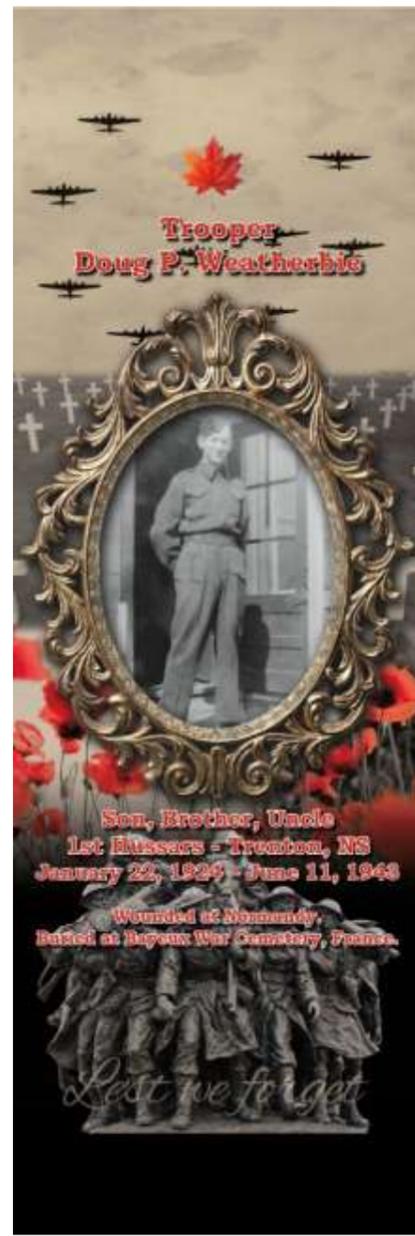
Meals on Wheels: We continue to support and host River John's Wheels on Meals program, organized and run by JoAnne Wilkins and Sandra Patriquin. This program ran right throughout the summer and continues to provide between 42 and 48 meals per week (on Wednesdays) to appreciative seniors in the community.

Next Meeting: Our year-end (annual) Legion meeting will be held on Monday, December 7, 2020 at 7pm.

Stay safe all.



Legion member, Barb Rondelet, hands Ann Heighton the wreath to be laid at the River John War Memorial, in remembrance of Ann's father, Lindsay Heighton. This year, due to the pandemic, wreaths from the general public were laid on November 10, and the Remembrance Service on November 11 was attended by Legion members only.



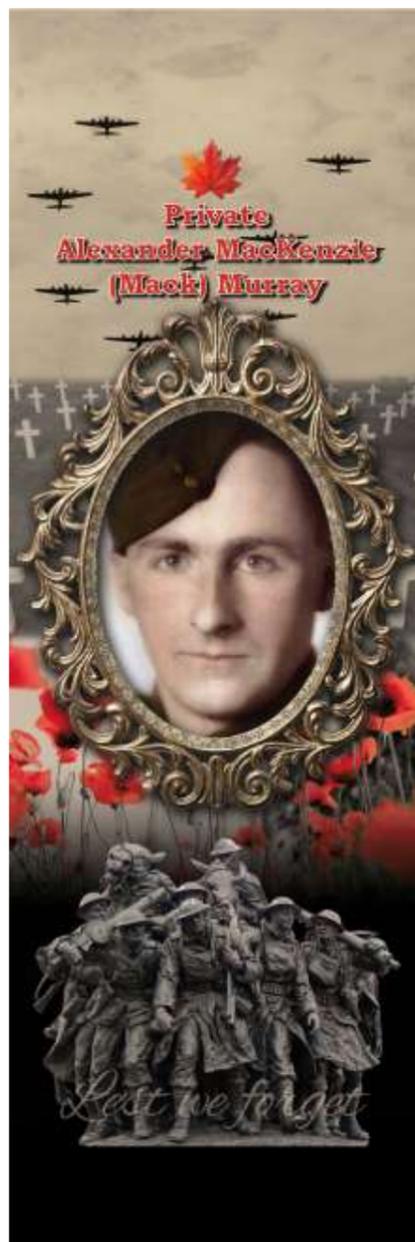
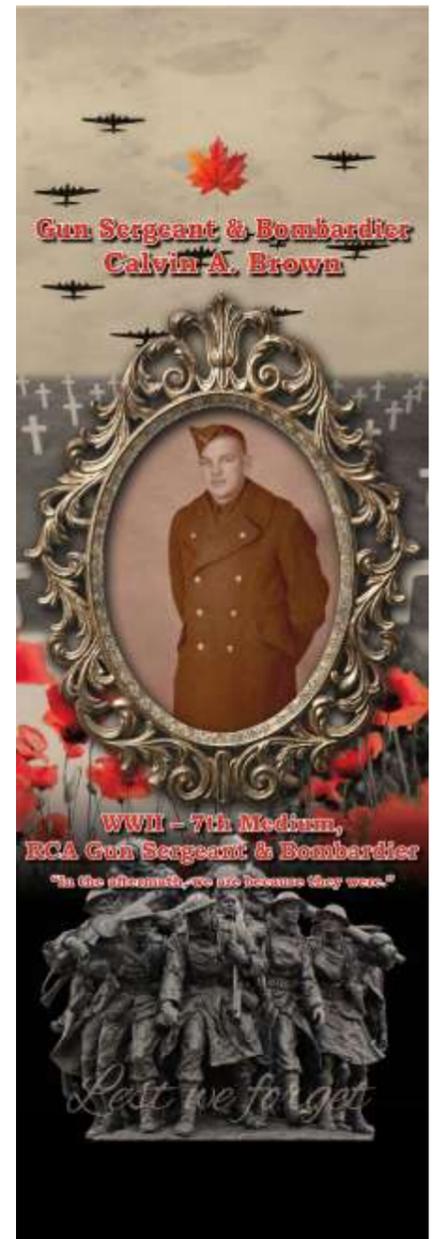
Veterans Banner Program

Three years ago I read an article in the paper about veterans banners recently placed on the power poles in River Hebert.

“Wow!” I said to my husband, Lenny. “What a fantastic idea. I am going to contact the people responsible for them and find out how to go about getting started with this project for River John.”

So I contacted the ladies in River Hebert and told them I would love to meet with them and get some pictures of the banners, along with other information I would need to get started. At that time in my life my husband needed me as he was a very sick man. Then December 14th 2018 he passed away.

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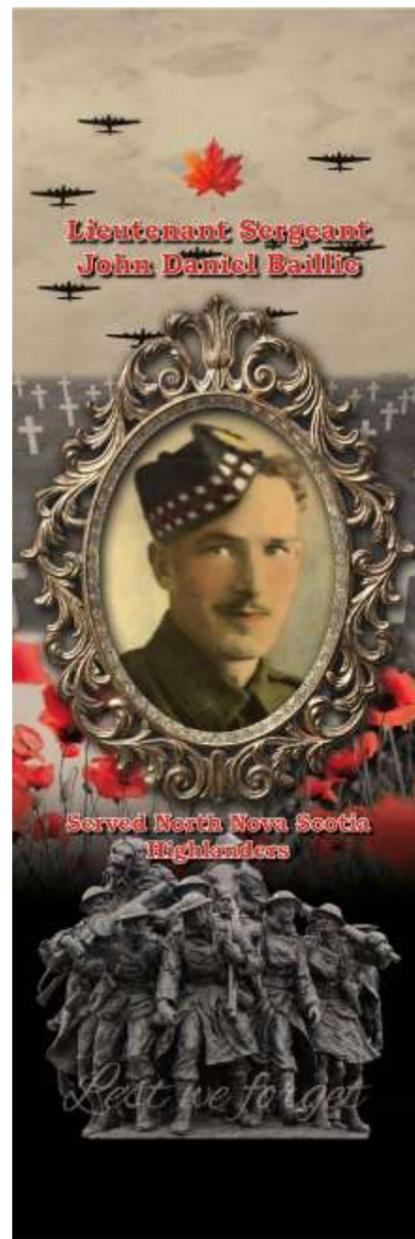
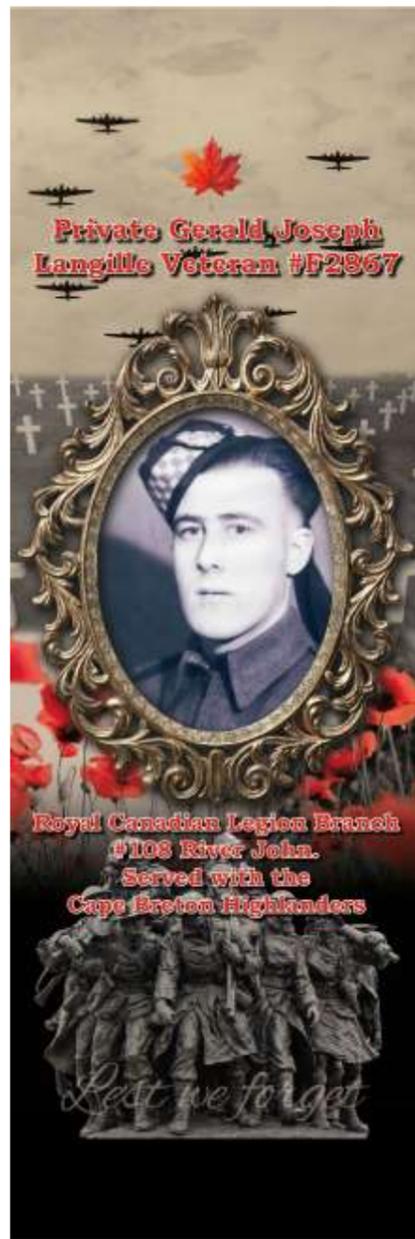
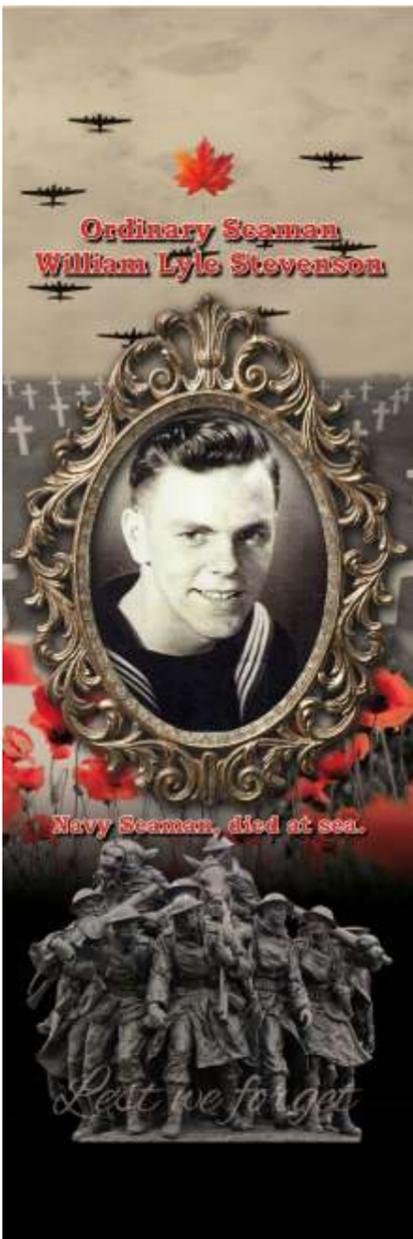
Time went by and while I was doing some cleaning I came across the information I had gathered for the Veterans Banner Program. I said to myself, "OK, this was meant to be, it is the right time to go further with this project."

I contacted my son, Willie, and asked him for help in going forward with the project; he agreed and said, "Let's do it!"

I contacted Charlie at Eastern Sign Print (Advocate) to see if they

could do me up a sample of a banner so I could show the public what they would look like. They did a sample up for us and it looked fantastic.

So then we approached the Royal Canadian Legion in River John to do a presentation about the banners and the cost for them. We showed them the sample banner that we had made so they could see just how beautiful they would be. They were all very excited and loved the idea.



We asked if we could have a volunteer from the Legion to help us and Marilyn decided she would like to get involved in the project.

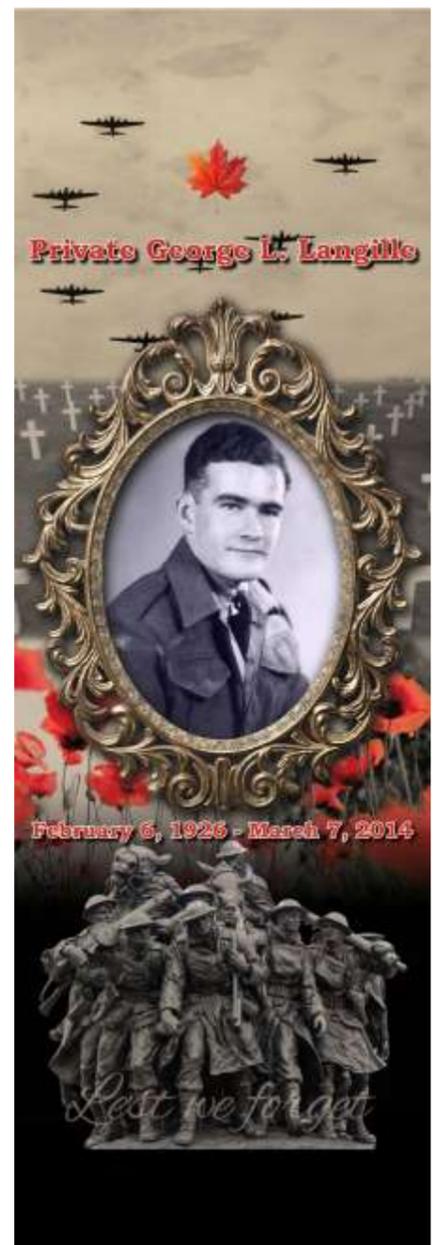
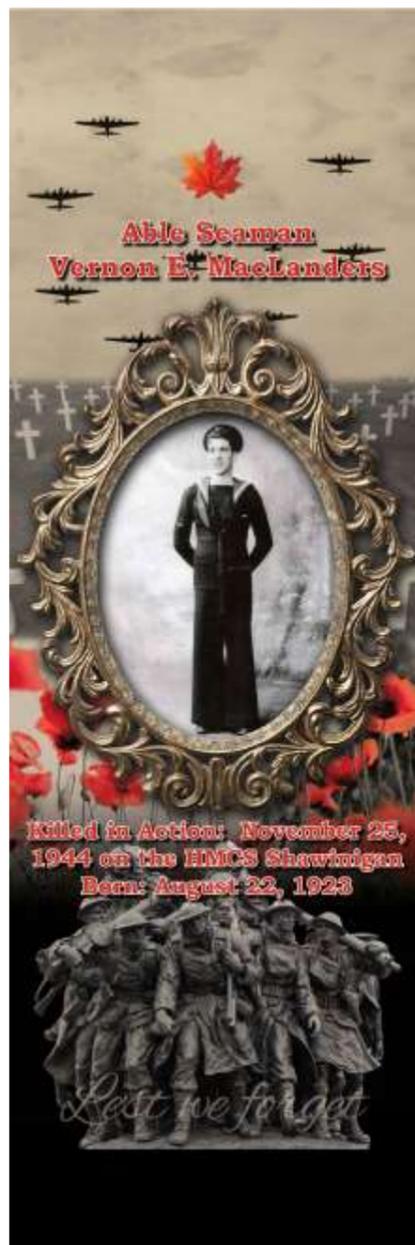
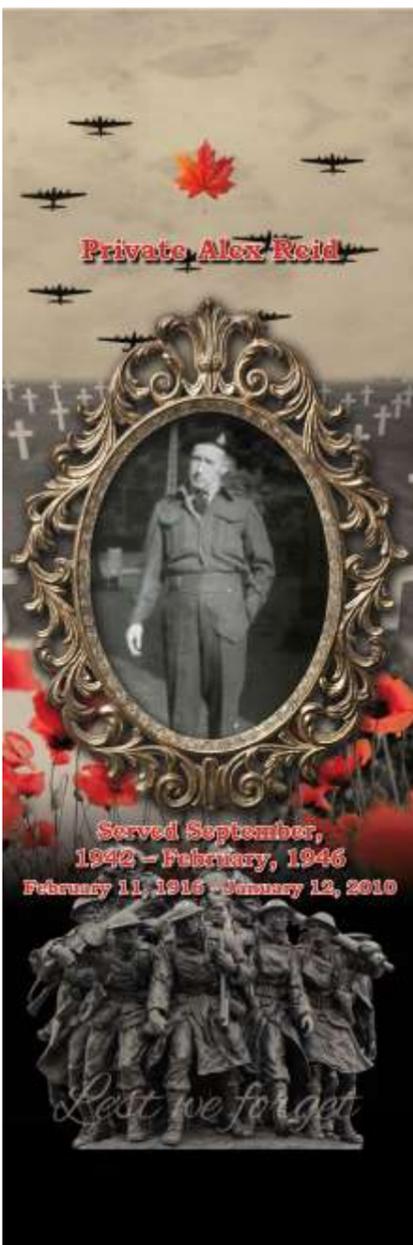
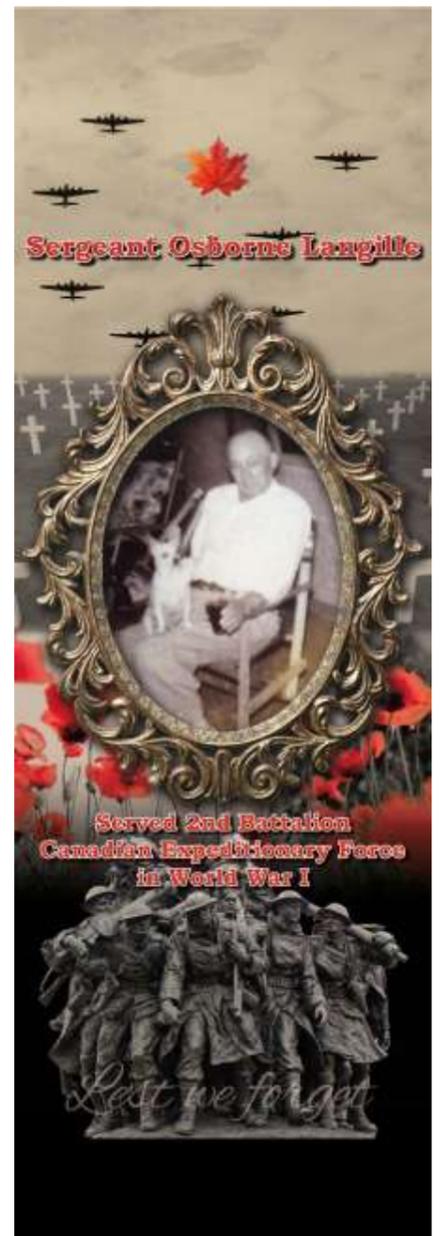
So we began to advertise to see if there was an interest in our community and we made many calls to family members that we knew of the veterans in our area.

Well, we now have a grand total of 32 veterans banners. They look

fantastic!

They will be taken down after Remembrance Day and put back up next September. So when you are out and about, take a walk or a drive around the village, you may see a father, a brother, an uncle, a grandfather or even a great-grandfather.

continued overleaf



We are so proud of these men and a big thank-you to the families and the River John Legion, as well as all the volunteers who helped and supported this project.

If anyone would like one of their relatives added for next year's veterans banners, contact any one of us, we would love to get more banners added for next year.

THANK YOU!

Anne Patriquin 902-351-2898
 Willie Patriquin 902-956-1936
 Marilyn Heighton 902-351-2467

Remembering with Alice Rose

by **Georgie Fleck**

My Gram and I had a special relationship. I was her first grandchild, so close in age to her own last child that sometimes the lines between Grandmother and Mother were blurred. She was my dear friend, my co-conspirator, we shared the same humour and she never ever failed to catch me when I stumbled.

She passed away in January at the wonderful age of 96. I think of her daily. But on Remembrance Day, every year, she will always be my first and last thought of the day.

In our family you could miss birthdays, Christmas or Easter but even the most absent members of our big sprawling family rarely missed Remembrance Day. My Great-Gram Zylpha Cinderella (no less) MacFarlane was one of Canada's first Silver Cross Mothers. She lost her first husband in WWI and 3 sons in WWII. My grandmother was in the signal corps. My grandfather, served and lost a brother. Service was important, standing up for their beliefs and values and remembering those sacrifices was even more important.

Remembrance Day itself was run with military precision. The allotted meeting time on Young Street where one family member would arrive, then two, three, nine, fifteen... all coming from different directions and putting down the things that can keep families apart, to remember with Gram. We'd watch the veterans march past, their shoes beating in time on the pavement, medals bouncing and jan-

gling on their chests, all the while listening to Gram's inevitable comments about some being out of step. Then our family's quick mass "march" to the cenotaph to watch the veterans go past a second time.

No matter what the weather my Gram would be standing at attention clutching the poppy cross with the names of our family's fallen typed neatly on it. Every year she'd pick the individual or individuals that she wanted to lay the cross. When I was young I dreaded my turn, I'd avoid eye contact, try and tuck myself behind an adult, my stomach would be flipping and flopping at the idea of walking up in front of all those people. What if I tripped or knocked over an entire row of wreaths? I was certain every eye would be on me and me alone. But as I matured, as I truly came to appreciate what this moment meant to my Gram, I was proud when she would turn to me and pass me her treasured cross.

Every Remembrance Day was important, but one year in particular stands out to me. I can't recall the exact year, it was sometime in the '80s. The cenotaph in Truro was empty, covered in sheets of ice. The service had been called off because of the weather. It was the only year I'd watch Gram place the poppy cross below the names of her brothers. I stood beside her, she was a towering 5'1" with her narrow shoulders straight and proud. My uncle Jim, who had readily agreed to take us in his 4x4, was on her other side. The freezing rain was gathering, layering on our coats and boots, sticking to our cheeks, dripping off our noses. We stood there as

Gram, I imagined, conjured up memories of the brothers she'd known as boys and lost as brave young men.

Thirty minutes earlier, we had been in her kitchen; most of our family had tackled the weather, migrating out of our holes and made it to her tiny home. Bodies were squeezing past each other, those helping prepare and serve the meal and those trying to avoid doing so. I watched my Gram as she stirred a pot of soup, she was answering questions and giving instructions but her face, her eyes were so far away. I whispered in her ear, "Do you want to go?" She turned and looked at me, questioning. "I'm sure Jim will take us if I ask him." I said, "If not my Civic has made it through worse." She nodded slightly, blessing me with one of her crooked half-smiles.

On that November 11th as we stood in silence, three lone souls standing in front of the lost lives of so many, I could hear the Last Call play as I had so many years before and so many since. Haunting, pulling forward our ancestors to stand with us.

When we turned to leave I saw the crowd, the veterans behind the flag barriers, the cadets, RCMP and Town police, the bagpipers, the clergy and band, the four picked to guard the four corners of the cenotaph, standing still in the freezing cold. And I think she saw them too, as she took my hand and smiled.

Rest peacefully, we will remember.

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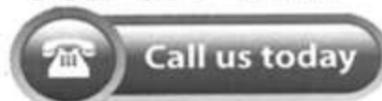


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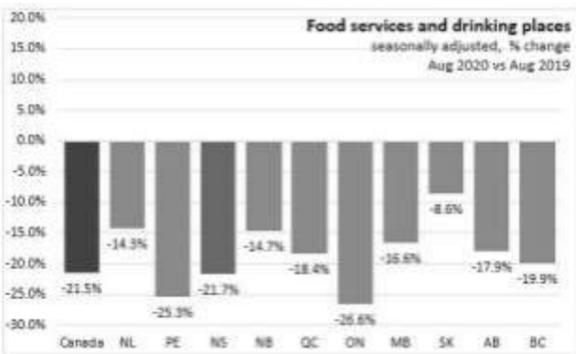
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The Impact So Far

by Rob Assels

It is no secret that COVID-19 has negatively affected Nova Scotia's economy. Almost no sector has been unaffected. Some of the latest economic data from Statistics Canada shows that while the virus has been devastating, the economic pain is unevenly felt across industries and across the country.

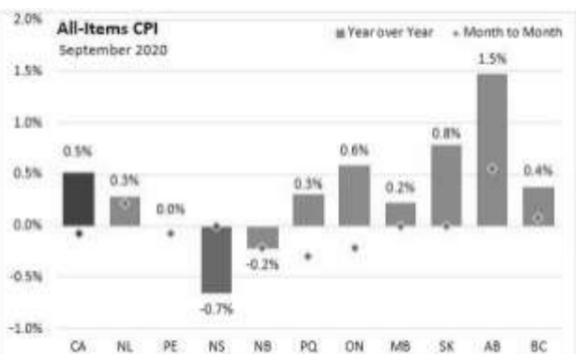
The chart below shows that when we compare August of this year with August of last year, Nova Scotia's restaurants and bars were harder hit than those in seven other provinces. And that's just comparing August. Most were without regular revenue from March through June.



Retailers, while initially hurt by the pandemic, have experienced an almost 5% increase over sales this August compared to last August, but again that doesn't offset the tremendous hit they took from March to May.



The chart below compares the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in September this year against last year. Nova Scotians paid 0.7% less for goods and services.



The figures include all goods and services. The items responsible for the biggest impact were:

- Purchase and leasing of passenger vehicles (+2.9%)
- Passenger vehicle insurance premiums (+9.8%)
- Homeowners' replacement cost (+4.8%)
- Gasoline (-16.1%)
- Traveller accommodation (-39.3%)
- Fuel oil and other fuels (-20.9%)

Not sure why vehicle insurance would go up with everyone driving less due to COVID. You can

again see the impact on tourism with the 39% reduction in hotel/motel/B&B rental rates.

The overall CPI is a bit deceiving because it includes items we don't often buy, like cars and cruises. The most important things in life are food and shelter. Compared with this time last year food increased by 1.2%, while shelter decreased by a minimal 0.3%. The price of gasoline and fuel oil influence the price of many other staples, particularly in rural economies, which is why the overall CPI was negative.

Some other facts:

Retail sales of building materials went up by 11.8%, presumably because when stuck at home, we all started on those home repair projects.

Gas stations experienced a decrease of 17.4%, again likely due to the fact that people were no longer driving to and from work or going out to restaurants.

Expenditures on clothing decreased 36.1%. I know I was wearing a lot of my old beat up pants and shirts that I couldn't get away with wearing in public but were fine for gardening.

Nova Scotia manufacturing shipments were down 9% compared with this time last year.

Employment data is somewhat difficult to analyze. Nova Scotians' "attachment" to their employer is supported by the federal government response to the pandemic. According to the September 2020 Labour Force Survey, "Nova Scotia reported the largest employment gain in September, up 12,000 (+2.7%), continuing the upward trend that began five months earlier. Employment in Nova Scotia was within 3.2% of its February level and the unemployment rate fell 2.4 percentage points to 7.9%."

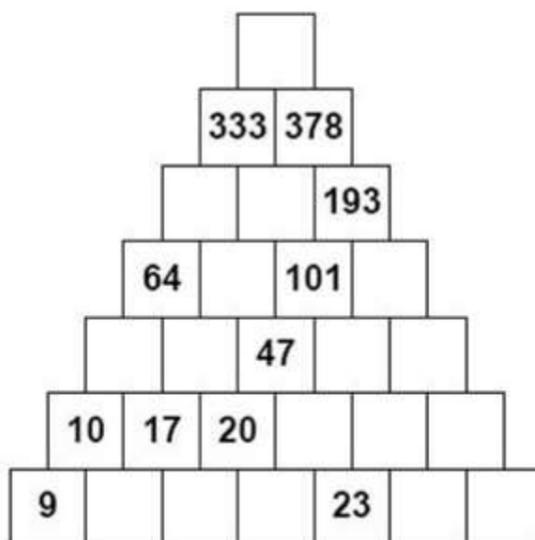
Big take away:

2020 has been hard, devastating for some. And it will continue to be difficult for us as a province. But there are signs that some areas of the economy are beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel. No one knows how long it will take, but collectively we are weathering the storm better than other regions of the country. Stay safe, support local businesses whenever possible and be nice to each other.

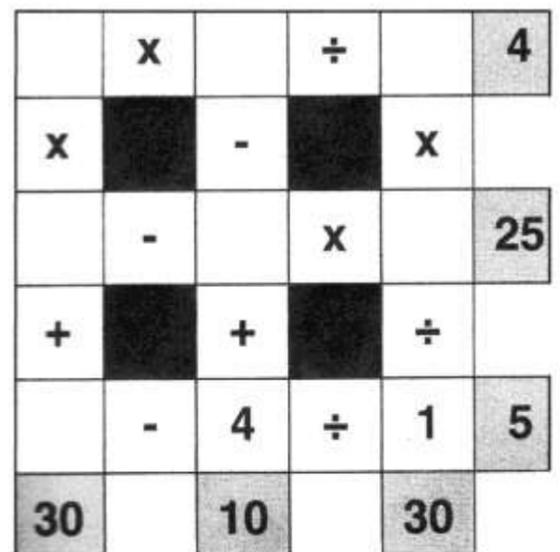
Marg's Puzzles

NUMBER TOWER PUZZLE

Complete the tower so that every square contains a number. The number in each square is the sum of the two squares directly below it.



NUMBER SQUARES PUZZLE



Enter the remaining numbers from 1 to 9 in each of the empty squares to complete the sums correctly. Perform calculations from left to right and top to bottom, not in strict mathematical order.



My 1st is in FROG but not in TOAD _____
 My 2nd is in HIGHWAY but not in ROAD _____
 My 3rd is in CAVE but not in HOLE _____
 My 4th is in SCORE but not in GOAL _____
 My 5th is in BROOK but not in POND _____
 My 6th is n CONJURER but not in WAND _____
 My 7th is in DOG but not in BARK _____
 My 8th is in NIGHT but not in DARK _____
 My 9th is in NICE and Also in KIND _____
 Now I have to leave,
 I'm running behind.
 If you find all the letters
 Then what will be found
 Is somewhere you'll see
 If you look all around!

ANSWERS

word puzzle: riverjohn.tower puzzle: 711,333,378,148,185,193,64,84,101,92,27,37, 47,54,38,10,17,20,27,27,11,9,1,16,4,23,4,7, number squares: 3,8,6,4,7,2,5,25,9,4,1,5,30,10,30.

Leetik's Esso

by Meh Yap

Q - How long have you been in business in River John?

A - 41 years, we opened in 1979.

Q - What changes have you experienced since you started your business?

A - Our population at one time was younger than today. A lot of them looked for and went out west to work. Through trial and error we changed and expanded our stock to try and fit everyone's needs. We hired and trained our staff from the local population, cut expenses to make us diversified enough to survive.

Q - How many people do you employ?

A - 6 full-time and 6 part-time

Q - How has your business been affected by the pandemic?

A - Our staff, due to medical fears and concerns, has been reduced in numbers. Our restaurant has been hit hard, with all the new regulations reducing our tables to 3. The increased work to maintain the new rules and risk our staff (if one of us gets sick we will have to close). We decided to do take-out only.

Q - What is your biggest challenge at this time?

A - Maintaining and following all the regulations, cleaning, keeping social distancing, wearing a mask for up to 14 hours a day and reminding our customers to follow the same rules as well.

Q - What are you proudest of achieving?

A - Becoming part of our community. Trying to provide all the needs of our population, groceries, movies, propane, pop, milk, water, the restaurant etc.

Q - Tell us about the restaurant, we understand that it is closed but take-out is still available.

A - Our eat-in tables are closed because of the pandemic. Take-out is available as follows: MONDAY CLOSED. TUESDAY-SUNDAY OPEN 12 - 6 pm.

Q - When do you see the restaurant reopening?

A - Depending on the pandemic and how it goes. Mother's Day, May 2021.

Q - What are you grateful for from the River John community?

A - Our community has provided us with total support and following the COVID-19 rules as close as possible, which makes our job as simple as possible.

Q - Please add anything else you would like to say about River John.

A - River John is a very tight, close-knit community with a big heart. They will all try and help anyone in need. I am very proud and happy to live here and be part of this community as long as I can.

River John Post Office

by Joyce Brown

Who would ever think things could change so quickly. Routine procedures have been replaced by uncertainty and confusion. With many businesses shut down completely or employers working from home, customers have adopted different shopping behaviours during COVID-19; not knowing how or when this pandemic will end, some started Christmas shopping last summer. This, in turn, has provided Canada Post with significantly increased parcel volume.

One downside is lack of letter mail, although it's unknown if this is a consequence of COVID-19. Through technology, we can instantly contact family and friends daily. Online banking has eliminated the necessity to pay bills by mail.

Cindy MacKay, Lesley Pretty and I are especially looking forward to the Christmas rush. I believe this will be one of the busiest.

We thank the community and wish everyone a healthy Christmas Season.



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Update on “River John Old School Storage and Rental”

People new to the area will be unaware of the story of our “old” school, which was built in 1968, (with an addition in 1984) to replace the 4-room wooden school building in the centre of the village and also all the one-room schools dotted around the local area. Because of declining enrolment and also because the building itself is inefficient, the School Board closed the school in 2015. This was not without a valiant struggle to save the school. The building was leased as a community centre by the River John Community Action Society for 2 years. But in January 2018, Nick Bigney bought the former school, which he has turned into a storage and rental space, with his parents’ help. Had he not stepped forward, the building would have been torn down and the facility lost to our community.

There are several recent improvements of which the Bigneys are justifiably proud.

Firstly, they have found a good roofer, John Long. Phase 1 of the roof has been completed by painting it with a rubberized paint. Twenty-four bucketfuls of the paint were needed at \$375 a bucket. The roof is a great deal better now. Phase 2 will be completed in the Spring.

Secondly, with a donation from Don Matheson, they have had a culvert installed and the surrounding area landscaped to provide access to the Adult Campground, at the back of the building. The idea for the campground was a request for a place that



Leonard, Shelley and Nick Bigney standing on their new ramp to the campground at “Old School Storage and Rental”

did not enforce a strict curfew in the evenings. This way, adults could have a small campfire and enjoy beverages.

They were pleasantly surprised when a paving company (Will-Kare Paving) approached them recently with some left-over paving to fill one of the larger holes in the parking lot.

Nick says that the vehicle storage units are full now. He is very pleased with all the help he has been given from the community. Without this help, he would be unable to continue. Another group which stepped up to help is called “Bikers Down,”

they are a charitable organization which fundraises to help injured bikers. They took up a collection to help compensate for having to cancel their weekend this year due to Covid-19.

Nick was willing to help when the Ladies Exercise group needed a place to meet and also is happy to host our River John Action Society meetings on the second Tuesday of each month. A craft fair will be held at the old school on November 28.

The Bigneys have submitted the following card of thanks:

“Thanks a whole lot to Donnie Matheson for the great landscaping and culvert which he donated for the driveway to our new Adult Campground, opening in 2021. It is very much appreciated.

Also thank you to Bikers Down Society for their support. Thank you to Lynn MacLeod and Elaine Falconer from the Ladies Exercise group who are selling tickets on a draw for Meh Yap’s Restaurant coupons and a stay at Smith Rock Chalets, as well as Poplar Waters Cottages. The draw will be held on November 6. There has been a great response from everyone in the community and also from further afield.

Thank you to everyone in the community for their ongoing support from River John Old School, Nick, Leonard and Shelley”

Cape John Fairies, Chapter 4

by Sandra-Lee

What a day! What a day! What a day!

October 31! Hallowe’en and the wedding day! Everyone was awake early preparing for the feast and festivities. Elizabeth and Delbert were to meet in town that morning for breakfast with the families while the fairies decorated.

Sigurd and Chrysanthemum watched as Elizabeth and her family drove away, then turned to each other and hugged! They were so excited!

Sigurd pulled back, blushing and trying to grumble something under his smile, turned and quickly walked away. Chrysanthemum rolled her eyes and flew off to the garden to check on the decorations.

The garden was perfect. The fall mums were in full bloom, the pumpkins were placed in amongst them and the grass formed a lush, green path to the place where the marriage was to be performed. The trees even held onto their leaves just for this day. Chrysanthemum found Iris, Daisy and Lily fluttering about singing and dancing with the fireflies. What a day! Everyone busily humming and preparing.

"Gather round now, come, gather round. I have something to say." Chrysanthemum exclaimed.

" I just wanted to say a big Thank You to all. Okay, now, back to busily humming," she laughed.

Soon after, Elizabeth and Delbert were seen coming up the driveway. Really, though, you could hear them before seeing them! Everyone was in such a happy state.

The day was wearing on. The full moon was starting to show as twilight started to fade to purple sky. The warrior fairies were off duty today and had gone exploring on the Cape. Sigurd had gone down to bring them back and when he did... Oh my! What a sight! They had decided to play in the

stinky seaweed along the shore. Sigurd, hat in hand, approached Chrysanthemum, grumbled an apology and went off to see the herbal fairies for some rosewater and lemon balm. Chrysanthemum couldn't figure out why he was acting weird, he was being sweet. Oh well, she had other things on her mind at present. With all the trimmings ready, Chrysanthemum flew off to check on the bride. Elizabeth was in the kitchen looking over the food when she flew in. "My Lady! You should be readying yourself! Along with you then." And she shooed a laughing Elizabeth off to get dressed.

The dress. Yes, the dress was beautiful. A white, wool, long-sleeved top with a heavy muslin skirt, all made from a local sheep farm. Hand-woven, sewn and knitted by the village ladies and then handed over to the fairies for decorating. A waistband made from small, perfect shells and a neckline of delicate, white flowers adorned the dress, making it simply elegant. It was perfect. On her feet, Elizabeth wore shoes made from layers and layers of large, green leaves that were so soft and so strong. They were tied on with silk strands the garden spiders wove, and had tiny bells in the bows. On her long, dark hair she wore a tiny hat with just enough spider-web veil to hide her eyes. She looked stunning.

Delbert was all ready and waiting in the parlour with his best man and attendants.

The Maid of Honour and bridesmaids had arrived and were dressed in hues of pink and lavender long, flowing gowns.

The minister was in place. The families and all the townsfolk friends were seated and Delbert was... mmm... Delbert was missing! Or so everyone thought. Everyone except Elizabeth's and Delbert's family. The music started. The maids and their escorts walked down the path and took their places. The flower fairies flew slowly down the

path and off to the side. Chrysanthemum was at their lead, riding with Sigurd on his crow.

It truly was a magical moment. Then the music switched, and there they were. Elizabeth and Delbert walking the path hand in hand. They had decided they would enter their new adventure holding hands for strength, love and loyalty, and that's just what they did. Arriving at the altar, they turned to face everyone and smiled; then they turned to face one another, joining both hands to form an unbreakable circle. At the end of the ceremony, thanks were given, gratitude was expressed and the feast began. Everyone brought something, sandwiches, pumpkin pie, salads, cakes, drinks. It flowed in a never-ending wave of deliciousness.

When the wedding celebration was over, the Hallowe’en festival began. There were bags of treats for the children and a dance for the adults. The moon climbed higher over the farm and shed a warm, full glow over everything. At midnight and after everyone had left, Elizabeth and Delbert went off to a little cottage in the woods to spend their first night as husband and wife.

Chrysanthemum said to the sleepy-eyed fairies, "Please, dear ones, now we shall sleep, for clean-up is in the morning."



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Death toll of Pictonians during the Spanish Flu of 1918-1920

by **Dr. Allan E. Marble**

**Chair, Medical History Society
of Nova Scotia**

It appears that none of the 65 Nova Scotians who have died from the COVID-19 Pandemic were residents of Pictou County. By contrast, a total of 112 Pictonians died during the Spanish Influenza Pandemic which lasted from September 1918 to May 1920. Death certificates kept by the Nova Scotia Department of Vital Statistics indicate that 1,769 Nova Scotians died from the Spanish flu during 1918-1919 and an additional 280 died from the flu during 1920.

Fifty-four of the flu deaths in Pictou County took place in Stellarton and Westville, where coal miners worked in close proximity to one another, allowing the flu to be easily transmitted. The high number of deaths among coal miners meant that the majority of flu deaths occurred among males, with only forty-four among females. Twenty-six of

the flu deaths were among children under the age of six, and sixty-six deaths occurred among young adults aged between 16 and 40. Those in the foregoing age-range were the most vulnerable to the flu in all parts of the world. The reason for this is explained in an article I have written which can be viewed online on the website of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society (info@rnshs.ca) by first selecting RNSHS Journal and then clicking on selected articles.

Only sixteen deaths from flu occurred in rural Pictou County including one, Irene Sutherland, aged 17, who lived on the River John Road. Others who died from the flu, who were probably related to River John families, were Andrie Dwyer of Thorburn, Frances Heighton of Pictou, and Christine Langille and Mrs. Burton Langille, both of whom lived in Trenton.

There are many similarities and differences be-

tween the two pandemics. Both were caused by viruses and neither had an effective treatment or preventive vaccine. Whereas the Spanish flu was due to an unknown virus and no tests to determine infection were carried out, epidemiologists immediately recognized that COVID-19 was a coronavirus and were able to test patients to see if they were infected. Very few countries had public health officers in 1918, whereas in 2020 public health officials in most countries immediately introduced measures to control the transmission of the virus by recommending the wearing of masks and social distancing. Masks may have been worn in 1918, however, masks are not mentioned in any of the 38 newspapers which were published in Nova Scotia during 1918-1920. Also the words social distancing were not mentioned, however, Nova Scotia's Public Health Officer recommended that residents isolate themselves and keep their children home from school.

John Stromberg - The Bandmaster

by **Beulah Jane Wright**

John was born "Stramberg" but later changed the spelling to "Stromberg." He was born in PEI and began his musical career in River John - was pianist for a group of travelling musicians, became famous in New York, married in Rhode Island, died in Freeport, Long Island, New York and is buried in Rhode Island. River John has claimed him for their own.

And rightly so. His great grandfather, Eric John Stramberg, was born in Sweden, but wanting a career that wasn't in the military, joined the crew of a ship coming to Pugwash, Nova Scotia for a load of "deal". Deciding that he didn't want to be a mariner, he jumped ship and eventually made his way to Pictou County and settled on the Back Shore, near River John. He married Mary Campbell, a Scottish girl from MacLennan's Mountain and they raised eight children. The oldest son, Alexander, married Ann Rattery who came right from Scotland, and their son, Nathaniel, became an engineer and an accountant, and also arranged band and orchestral music. He moved to PEI to work, married an Island girl, Eliza Hudson, and that was why their son John was born on PEI, on November 9, 1858.

John often visited with his father's family in River John and because his mother died at an early age, he grew up at his uncle's in River John and it was in River John that his musical career began. After learning music from his father, he took further studies in Charlottetown. Then living in River John, he directed The River John Brass Band, probably the same band that performed on the upper balcony of the Riverside Hotel. John also directed

the Pictou Choral Society and the Pictou Concert Band. From there he joined a group of travelling musicians as their pianist, and eventually settled in New York, where he wrote his first hit, My Best Girl's a Corker, in 1895 and by the next year he was composer and conductor for the burlesque shows of Weber and Fields.

In the museum, we have a playbill advertising one of their shows, with "Music by John Stromberg."

Some of his best known songs include Kiss Me, Honey Do, Ma Blushing Rosie, Say you Love Me Sue, and My Josephine.

He suffered from severe medical problems, especially "acute rheumatism," and was in constant pain during his last months. He died on July 5, 1902, at Freeport, Rhode Island, but still composing, having completed Come Down, Ma Evening Star, a number he had promised to write for Lillian Russell, found in his pocket after his death. When Lillian Russell performed that for his last show, the lights of Broadway, for the first time, were dimmed in John Stromberg's honour. The loss, to his family and to the musical world, was a great one.

Over a century later, in April of 2011, John Stromberg was honoured once again with his induction into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame. Sandra MacKay, joined by other members of her family, accepted the award at a gala in Toronto. The award by a noted artist is, in itself, a thing of beauty, sculptured metal on a base of black glass.

The Heritage Museum is grateful to have this award now on display. And the fame of John Stromberg, Bandmaster, lives on.



Award given to John Stromberg, inducted into Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame.

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Allan Fraser

Christmas in River John in the '50s - A Memoir

by Diane MacLeod Shink

Currently, the holiday season extends from November 11 to the end of the year, but in the 1950s it was signalled by the transformation of the front window in our general stores to Christmas scenes; for a few, the opening of the second floor for holiday shopping a few weeks before the big day.

In the one-room schools surrounding the village, teacher and pupils were practicing their skits and music and decorating the schools for the annual Christmas concerts.

For many people in the outlying areas, a visit to the River John stores was the extent of their shopping travels. My father would start by converting a few large boxes to a fireplace; covered in brick-themed crepe it was installed in the front window. Stockings were hung and toys and other suitable gifts were strewn on the surrounding snow - cotton batting.

Other highlights of the season were the Christmas concerts presented in the many one-room schools in the area. Everyone worked to learn their lines for the recitations and plays, and also to decorate the classrooms. Sometimes stages were constructed by local men and, of course, a real tree was decorated. New dresses and outfits were ordered for the children from the catalogue, Simpsons or Eatons.

A friend recently reminded me about shopping in what she called the "Xmas store", long before they were the "in thing". Part of the second floor was decorated for Christmas and counters were laden with suitable Christmas gifts. She was permitted to go there without family, with one of our clerks, and remembers selecting a pair of gloves for her brother. I'm not sure if we had a wrapping service in those days, but probably not. There was a full stock of wrapping paper and ribbon available. There were lots of toys, dolls, trucks, perfume for the ladies, etc.

I remember one Christmas that Dad and I played Santa. As we were closing, my father remembered that an elderly grandmother in the area who was caring for a grandson had not been in the store for shopping. Before closing on that snowy Christmas Eve, he took some unsold toys and we made a trip to the country, where toys were deposited outside the door of that tiny house.

My mother would make one or two shopping trips to New Glasgow and hide the gifts until Santa

arrived. I remember one day in early December when my two-year-old sister disappeared. After a search of the house she was discovered in the back bedroom playing with a kewpie doll. I was upset that she had found her Santa Claus present and would no longer believe, but my mother casually moved her from the room and stated she would not remember seeing it when Santa left it under the tree. In our house, Santa never wrapped his gifts because he was too busy. There were always wrapped gifts from family and friends and I spent much time daydreaming and checking out the presents under our decorated fir tree. In some families, gifts were exchanged and unwrapped Christmas Eve. We were permitted to unwrap one gift the night before.

Christmas morning was a very exciting time but we were not allowed downstairs until everyone was awake. After the gift opening, we would have our turkey dinner around noon. Some years, we would drive to our grandparents' but we kids preferred to stay at home and play with our toys. The day after was called Boxing Day, a holiday supposedly used to take boxes of clothes and food to the poor. I remember my father taking his gun and going to join the local men for a shooting contest, called a turkey shoot.

There was usually snow for Christmas and in those days the river was often frozen, so we could try out our new skates. It was best if the freeze-up came when it was calm, as windy weather did not produce the best ice. Later on in the winter we would raid the dumping area behind any of the three garages and use the old tires to make a bonfire. Usually some of the local boys would find an area suitable for a pick-up game of hockey. In more that one case, Dad would donate old burlap and a few boards and a goalie net would be hammered together. I still remember dad being annoyed when the goalie nets moved out to the bay on ice cakes in the spring. The ice would be too rotten to rescue the abandoned nets. At that time, the nearest artificial rinks were Stellarton or Truro, so the River John kids had to wait; if we were lucky, a pond would freeze up before the river and light snow would be blown off by the wind.

The other great activity was sliding on one of the many hills around the village. If a sled or toboggan was not available, we would use pieces of cardboard. In the days before nylon and other synthetics, wool was the fibre used for mittens, socks



MacLeod's general store, owned by Diane's father and grandfather. The store on the right was Frenchie Haliburton's ice cream parlour. Frenchie was Charles and Minnie (Cormier)'s father.

and snow suits. I can still see my woolen snow pants, covered with balls of snow, lying on the radiators where, hopefully, they would be dry by morning, no electric clothes-dryers then.

Celebrations are very different now; with television one can watch events all over the world and revisit the Christmas movies and TV specials. It is still important to celebrate with families and friends via house parties and Holiday celebrations.

My best regards to all for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



**Karla MacFarlane
MLA, Pictou West**

Please contact me with
your questions,
concerns, and ideas

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Salem Manse

by Beulah Wright

The River John United Church Manse at 20 River Road has been sold. After close to one hundred years of serving as temporary home to our ministers, there is a sadness in many hearts to see it go, but an empty structure is also a sad thing and far better that it is, again, going to be a permanent home.

This is not the first time that Salem has gone through the sale of a manse. The oldest church in River John, it was established in 1808, by Rev. John Mitchell, who came to Canada as a missionary. Having visited River John, a fairly new community settled by families from Montbeliard in 1785, he apparently fell in love with the place and immediately brought his family to River John. Before that, the community was served only occasionally by Rev. James MacGregor, who was known for his travels throughout the area. Rev. Mitchell bought a farm from John George Patriquin and built a home there. The first and second church buildings were erected on his property, near his house, and later Rev. Mitchell donated the church property and land for the Mitchell Cemetery, now called the Pioneer cemetery, to Salem Presbyterian church.

After Rev. Mitchell's death in 1841, the second minister was Rev. James Waddell, who owned his own house as well, and during that time, Mr. William Matheson donated six acres of land adjacent to Rev. Waddell's house, to the church. After Rev. Waddell's death, Rev. H. B. Mackay became the third minister, and in 1861 Salem bought Rev. Waddell's house for a manse. Successive ministers lived in the manse until 1909. Probably due in part to financial difficulty, when Rev. Charles D. Mac-

Intosh became the minister in 1909, Salem Presbyterian and the Kirk church on the east side of the river decided to join together, and Rev. MacIntosh opted to use the Kirk manse. Salem manse was then empty and was sold, along with the land, in 1914.

In 1925, National Union took place and the United Church of Canada was formed to include the Methodist congregation and some of the Presbyterians. Now again, Salem United needed a manse. Rev. MacIntosh had used the Kirk manse until 1924, and following his ministry, Rev. J. Arthur Forbes, a single man, found a boarding place in the village. The McLaren property on River Road was put up for sale and church officials decided it would be better to buy than to build. The purchase price was \$2,300 and extensive repairs were needed. The price had to be paid in full within a certain time limit, creating some financial difficulties, (seems there are always financial difficulties,) but the congregation came through and in 1928 Rev. Forbes moved in. Gone were the early terms of thirty or more years, and since then there have been many ministers, many manse occupants, all of whom have enjoyed their stay, whatever its length, and have left their mark on River John's history.

But a few years ago Salem found itself without a minister and the manse was empty. For a while we managed with supply ministers and lay persons, but economics dictated that we could not afford a full-time minister and there were no available takers for a part-time position. Finally, the decision was made to join the Three Harbours Pastoral Charge, (Malagash, Wallace and Fox Harbour,) and share their minister, which was a happy solution. They also had a manse though, and the situation influenced the decision to offer the Salem manse for sale.

The Manse has an interesting history in itself. It was built about 1850, but there are differences as to



the builder. In the 1879 Atlas of Pictou County the owner is listed as John MacKenzie, but in Dr. Ella Watt Sangster's book Salem United Church History, the builder is listed as J. Henry Kitchin, with assistance from crew members of the Kitchin shipyard. J. Henry was a son of James Kitchin, was a merchant, kept the house until selling it in 1889 to William Redmond, also a merchant. Next owner for a brief time was Robert Redmond, who immediately sold it to Eliza McLaren. At her death, William and Florence McLaren sold it to Salem United church in 1928.

It is a lovely building, Victorian in style, surrounded by beautiful old trees and facing the river, with a view of the village and Salem church. A descriptive quote says, "Set back off the road, on a spacious, treed lot fronting the River John, with houses of a similar style and time beside it, this house is well suited to its setting." It has been renovated and well-maintained by the faithful congregation, who have taken great pride in its ownership.

Our fervent hope is that the new owners will cherish its history, will be comfortable in their new surroundings and will enjoy their new home. How comforting it will be, to look across the river and see lights in the windows once again.

Church + COVID = Changes

by Rev. Connie McNamara

It has been seven-and-a-half months since the COVID 19 pandemic caused the province of Nova Scotia to declare a state of emergency, and in the isolation of our homes we have watched as most of the world ground to a halt. Today, although the state of emergency has been extended, there is much more movement in our lives and in our world, and with the advent of mandatory masks and six feet of physical separation, we have found our way back to some sense of normalcy, albeit a far cry from what we once took for granted.

Salem UC and West Branch UC are now open for in-person worship, but not without making changes! Both buildings have undergone extensive cleaning to assure that the risk of COVID exposure would be lessened, and to align with the rules put forward by both Dr. Robert Strang and the Nova Scotia Health Authority, and Region 15 of the United Church of Canada. The pews have been measured and marked to assure six feet of physical distance between people sitting in the sanctuaries, so while once we could host hundreds, we are now limited to a maximum attendance of 39 at Salem UC and not many more at West Branch UC. There are no greeters at the door, but there is a person recording names and phone numbers as people arrive, and all attendees are asked four questions about their health, recent travel, and any exposure to the virus. There is no singing, although instrumental music is provided several times during the service. The worship service, traditionally an hour in duration, has been cut back to an average of 30 minutes in length. The offering plates have been placed near the entry ways to receive monetary donations. Routes into and out of the sanctuaries are marked with arrows, and a separate door is used for each direction. Following worship, the sanctuaries and foyers are being cleaned, with all surfaces with which people may have come in contact being wiped down.

And there are more changes! Much greater numbers for attendance on special occasions has meant that there will be no Remembrance Day church service this year, and that Christmas Eve worship will not be in-person. In order to alleviate a first-come-first-served situation where many would be turned away, we have opted to return to our print, e-mail, and online Facebook Live format for Christmas Eve, hopefully enabling everyone to have a Christmas Eve worship experience in some way. To that end, there will be two online Facebook Live services, one at 6:00 p.m. re-telling the Christmas story, and one at 9:00 p.m. including the celebration of Communion. The services will be, as always with Facebook

Live, available to be viewed as recordings at later times. Most Christmas carols are in the public domain, so there should be no issues with copyright, meaning that our own photos may be added to the music videos during Christmas Eve worship. Themes will be shared in the worship announcements in the coming weeks, so start looking through your photos to see what you might send.

And still more changes! Salem UC, having sold the manse in River John, have moved the internet connection to the church building, and with this in place there are numerous possibilities such as Facebook Live happening each week, and PowerPoint and YouTube videos as part of worship. And with a Region 15 update from our Executive Minister, Reverend Faith March-MacCuish, expected later in November, there could be any number of changes still to come.

Blessings, Connie

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St. John's Anglican Church survived first 6 months of COVID-19

**by Mary Tothill
Church Warden**

It was a long summer not having regular church services, although we were able to have "Church at Home" services with LLM. Monica, Denise, Rev. John Morrell and Mary. Most people were able to view them online and for those who didn't have a computer, copies were delivered to their homes or mailed to our church folks. Dana, Faye, Johanna, Wayne and Mary kept check on the church and hall every three days for insurance purposes and it was recorded.

James White kept everyone entertained with his gospel music at Bissell Park on Sundays from 11:00 am. to 12:30 pm, along with lots of local musicians, a big thank-you to you all.

On September 2 the ladies gathered at the church and did a thorough cleaning and sanitizing. Seats were all marked and prayer books were placed in plastic bags with the name on it. At 11 am on September 6, the doors swung wide open to have our first service, but with many restrictions. We weren't allowed to use hymn books or sing. St. John's was favoured each Sunday for September and October with special music by Jim White and Carol Smith who sang up in the sanctuary, distancing from everyone else, thank-you to them. At the end of the service, each person sanitized their own seat and book and someone else took care of anything else. If we had Holy Communion only the hosts were offered in a safe and clean way. Finally, on October 25 we were allowed to sing softly but still maintaining our masks.

No special plans are being made for Christmas until we get permission from our Bishop. Rev.



Carol played her new Epiphone "Hummingbird" in church today for the 1st time. It not only sounds great but looks awesome! Thanks for sharing, Carol.

Nicole Uzans will lead the Christmas Eve service (TBA). So far, so good, follow the rules and we will get through this together, keep smiling.

On Saturday Oct 24 we were able to share in the memorial service from Old Donation Episcopal Church, Virginia Beach, to say goodbye to a dear friend, Sebastian Rio, 94 years old. Sebastian was a faithful member of St John's Anglican Church during the summer months for many years. He was also a member of the Thursday Night Fiddlers and was able to keep them in tune, loving every minute. He will be greatly missed in River John and surrounding area.



St. George's & St. David's Presbyterian News

by Rev. Enjei Achah

Church doors were open again on August 16th for St. David's and September 16th for St. George's, after 5 months of lockdown. Social distancing measures are being strictly followed and it is good to see and enjoy fellowship with others once again. Due to the COVID-19 rules, not many activities are taking place. The hall is closed until further notice due to insurance rules and funerals are mostly done at the graveside.

Dates to Remember

- November 29, First Sunday in Advent – Candle of Hope
- December 2, Bible Studies for both churches at St. David's.
- December 6, Second Sunday in Advent – Candle of Peace
- December 13, Third Sunday in Advent – Candle of Joy
- December 16, Bible Studies for both churches at St. David's.
- December 20, Fourth Sunday in Advent – Candle of Love
- December 24, Christmas Eve – For Christmas Eve this year we will be having two services. One from 4:30-5:00pm and the other at 5:30-6:00pm. There will be a sign-up sheet at the church for people to choose their desired time slot. This way, we will be able to accommodate all those who would desire to be present at our services. If there are any changes in the time, we will let you know. Everyone is welcome.

These are hard times and the church continues to keep everyone in our communities in prayer. Don't hesitate to call me if you need someone to talk to or pray for you or anything else that we can be of help with. Blessings to our lovely communities and Happy and Blessed Remembrance Day to everyone.

P.S. The church collects items and money for the Food Bank on the last Sunday of each month at both churches.

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News from the River John Lions



River John & District Lions Club would like to thank the community for once again showing their support on yet another bottle drive. Thanks to all the donations it was another great success. Photo: Lion Cheryl Frizzell

A Lion and a Fisherman

by Cheryl Frizzell

Travelling through River John at 5 am on a morning in early July you will see smoke coming from the River John & District Lions Club. Don't be alarmed, it is just Lion William Elliott and other Lions' members firing up the grill for the annual Chicken BBQ, or on another morning grilling sausages on the Lions Club back deck for the Pancake & Sausage Breakfast.

Lion William travels to Truro, taking a turn volunteering to work on the Truro Lions Bingo, or going to Tatamagouche to help tend the bar at Oktoberfest; he also helps produce a Lions calendar. Lion William helps out on various River John & District Lions projects.

After more than twenty-five years as member of the River John & District Lions Club, where he has been Treasurer for ten years and King Lion for two years, he is very proud to don his hat and shirt and serve his community.

When he's not volunteering, Lion William can be found playing with his new grandson,



Harper, working on his fishing boat or, during winter, running a contracting business.

River John & District Lions Club is very proud to have members such as William Elliott as a member.



River John & District Lions Club Members, Lion Al McNutt, Lion Mary-Jane McNutt, Lion Ann Patriquin, Lion Donald Duggan and KL Bruce Frizzell. Photo: Lion Cheryl Frizzell

Lions Club Halloween

The River John & District Lions Club hosted another successful event the annual Halloween night in Bissell Park, nearly 100 trick or treaters visited the park this year.



River John & District Lions members get into the spirit of Halloween, seen here is Coulton with Grandmother Lion Mary Jane, Lions Linda, Donald, Cheryl and Ann.



Lions Club Halloween, cont'd

