



The Coldest Night of the Year - Team “Pay it Forward”

by **Lyla Cote**

What is the CNOY?

The Coldest Night of the Year is a walk that families can participate in to raise funds for people experiencing homelessness or groups like Roots for Youth.

What is Roots for Youth / Roots House?

Roots for Youth is an organization that helps youth 16-24 to end their homelessness. Roots House is a 4 bed youth homeless shelter located in Pictou County. Roots for Youth has helped over 38 young people in Pictou County.

How does youth homelessness happen?

- abuse in the home.
- problems with parents that have an addiction.
- youth with an addiction
- mental health issues.
- parents don't have enough money to support their family.

What our team has done:

Our team has done two fundraisers: 50/50 and tickets on a basket in which we were able to raise over \$2300 for the CNOY fundraiser. The people on our team "Pay it Forward" are Lyla Cote, Anna Cote, Shawn Cote, Melanie Cote, Twyla Heighton, Troy Washington, Glenda Campbell, Marilyn Heighton, Nancy Langille, Susan Hardy, Gillian Crawford, Katy Crawford and Rose Bezanson. A special thanks to the CG Fulton Pharmacy and the Village Gift shop for the donation to the basket as well as Sisterhood Fibres and many others who contributed.

Why did we decide to fundraise?

This all started because I, Lyla Cote, was doing a service learning project in my class and my group chose Roots for Youth so we could raise awareness about how much youth homelessness there is in Pictou county. For this project our group put up signs for the CNOY so people in our communities could be more aware of the organization. I asked my mom if she could take me around River John to put some signs up and that's when she got interest-



(l to right) Nancy Langille, Marilyn Heighton, Michaela Cote, Emily Cote, Troy Washington, Twyla Heighton, Shawn Cote, Maddie Langille, Katy Crawford, Gillian Crawford
Next row: Payton Richie, Alexis Langille, Anna Cote, Lyla Cote, Melanie Cote,
Kneeling in front: Doug Campbell, Glenda Campbell, Susie Belt

ed and got the idea to raise money. That is when we formed our team named “Pay it Forward” for the CNOY fundraiser. Our team has committed to walking 5 km on Feb 26th in River John.

Why are we walking?

- We walk to declare our concern for people who have no home, and take shelter in nooks and crannies.

- We walk for those whose days are a battle to house and feed their families, and whose nights are filled with fear and frustration.

- We walk for those driven from home by violence and abuse. We walk for people overwhelmed by isolation, guilt and despair.

- We walk humbly, realizing that anyone can lose their footing and then lose everything else.

Each step we take brings someone closer to safety, health and home, as together we raise funds for organizations whose commitment and work transforms peoples' lives.

Thank you to everyone who helped make a difference, your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

This took place on Feb 27th and to date has raised \$3,305 for Roots for Youth. -Ed.

Christmas Tree Lighting

by **Cheryl Frizzell**

The River John & District Lions Club joined up with the River John Action Society and the RJ's to decorate the Bissell Park and light up two large Christmas trees donated by Lion Kenny Langille and Raymond MacKenzie. After trees were erected, community members were invited to place outdoor friendly decorations on the tree during the season. The trees and decorations were a beautiful sight as you entered the village.



Coldest night Participants with full moon rising in background: Left to right: Michaela Cote, Payton Richie (in front), Emily Cote, Melanie Cote, Maddie Langille (behind), Lyla Cote



The ice covered snow along the rocks at Cape John, the water has been slow to freeze over this year. Photo by Christiane Gill



River John Action Society member Dave Cochrane and Lion Cheryl help put decorations in Bissell Park.

Jade Dares

Jade Dares was born March 1, 2020, at the Aberdeen Hospital, New Glasgow. Proud parents are Jordan and Grace (Eunhye) Dares of River John.

We moved here in 2019, so we're all new here and learning about the greatness of River John. Feel free to stop and say hi to us if you run into us.



Wyatt Oliver

Great-grandma Mary Tohill, Cape John, is happy to announce the birth of Great-grandson Wyatt, born on June 29, 2020, in Bangor, Maine, USA. Proud parents are Kyle and Alyssa Oliver. Wyatt weighed in at 11.5 lbs and 22.5 inches long, and is seen here with his big brother, 4-year-old Jaxson. Mary is hoping it's not too long before she gets to see them all in person and is eagerly looking forward to that day.



Liam Glenn

Sarah Yantzi and Adrain Rhyno are happy to announce the birth of their son Liam Glenn. Born January 7th 2021, weighing 10.3 lbs and 21 inches long. Big sister Olivia and grandparents Myron and Kelly Yantzi could not be prouder.



Remember this Young Lady?

by Beulah Wright

This photo is of Andrea Hind, daughter of Cecil Hind and Helen MacIntosh and only granddaughter of William and Maysie (Grant) MacIntosh of River John. Helen left River John and moved to Ontario to find employment, where she met and married Cecil Hind who was born in Ontario. They had a daughter, Andrea, born about 1944. Every summer Helen and Andrea would return to River John to visit at the MacIntosh home.

Reverend Harold MacDonald was the minister at Salem United in the 1950s and lived in the manse with his parents, not far from the MacIntosh home, and Andrea made many visits.

This summer, Harold's daughter found two photos of Andrea, in a trunk of his belongings, and she would like to return them to Andrea or a family member. But as far as I could determine, there are no close relatives remaining in River John, so probably they did not return after the grandparents had passed away.

Andrea may have married, may still be living



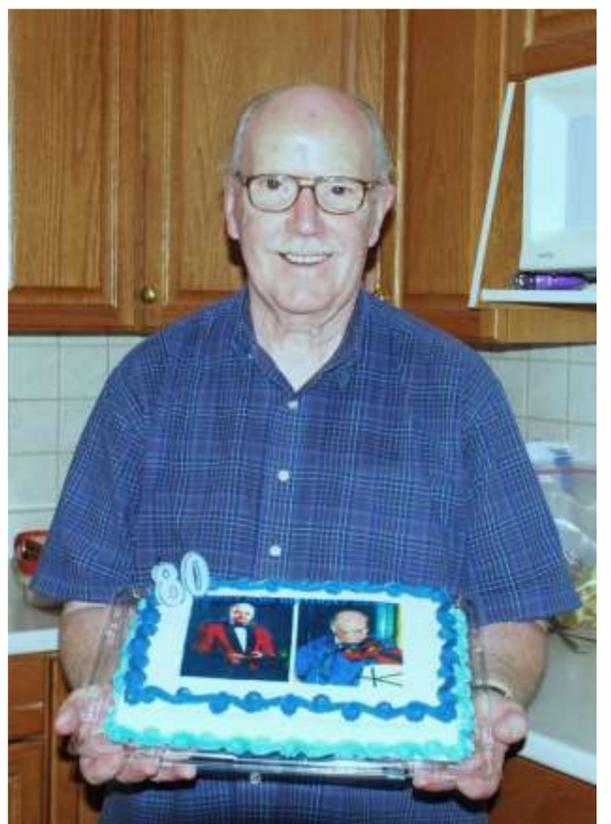
somewhere. Would any of her "summer friends" have kept in touch with her?

If anyone has any idea, please contact me at pioneereditors@outlook.com and we will ensure the photos find a home.

Geoff Hunter

Geoff passed peacefully at 11am July 2, 2020. He was born in Doncaster, Yorkshire, UK, July 23rd 1930.

Geoff was a talented musician, known for the playing of the violin (fiddle), and for his wonderful sense of humour. He could bring people to tears with his beautiful rendering of the River John Sunset Waltz.



More Changes at Old School

by Joan MacLeod

People may be aware that the Bigneys, owners of Old School Storage and Rental, are continually working to offer events and community space at their facility. A very successful Christmas Craft Fair was held there on November 28th, (following COVID protocols, of course). The River John Community Action Society holds the monthly meetings in the former pre-school room, which has been set up as a board room. Because heating the room was an issue, the Bigneys decided to have a heat pump installed. They were pleasantly surprised when Winmill Electric, their contractor, decided to gift it to them instead!

Nick, Shelley and Leonard Bigney wish to wholeheartedly thank the Winmills for their generosity and community mindedness.



Editorial Winter 2021

by Joan MacLeod

By the time this edition of the Pioneer goes to press, we will be commencing the one year anniversary of our premier exhorting us to “Stay the Blazes Home,” to protect ourselves from the deadly pandemic of COVID-19. We in the Atlantic provinces can feel justifiably proud that we mainly obeyed the health care directives and thus are a leading example of low infection rates. We are helped by our isolation and low population density, of course. As previously noted, Nova Scotia has become a safe haven for new people from not only other parts of Canada, but also the USA. Our rural life style has come into its own, and even in River John we have had an influx of new people.

I do worry about the new people who move here with few or no family connections. We are social beings and many of us have been able to socialize in our bubbles. But how do people new to the area find their bubbles and make new friends? I would so love to hold a social, so newcomers to the area would get a chance to meet each other. But it’s not the sort of thing to do in the midst of a pandemic.

Small towns are often known as being cliquey, insular and not being especially friendly to newcomers, even people who have been here for decades. (People who join local churches are a notable exception.) In the late 1930s when my mother moved to River John from Wentworth, NS, she felt the cold shoulder of disapproval from the high society of River John. She managed to make friends with another outsider, a young wife and mother from Tatamagouche. This may sound ridiculous in this day and age, but I assure you that my mother was very hurt by her initial rejection. A measure of her success in being accepted in the community was pointed out to me on her death by another community doyenne. She said, “Your mother was an integral part of River John society, which is quite something as she wasn’t from here.” (Is it only me that sees that as a somewhat backhanded compliment?)

Still today, I feel that these attitudes persist. People are still called “outsiders” or “from away” even though they may have lived in the area for many years. It is time to let go of the old culture of divisiveness when small communities were pitted against each other. Let’s abandon old beliefs and embrace newcomers and welcome them into our communities. We need their fresh energy and per-

spective to assist our growth.

Our communities need help in developing. For example, we have seen the hard work of a few committed people bring our waterfront to life. There is still a lot of work to be done. It takes a lot of varied skills to bring projects to fruition. Some people can contribute computer/networking skills. Others, skilled trades, knowledge of government grants, how to develop organizational policies, manual labour etc. Many parts make the whole. The point is that by working together as a team with a spirit of cooperation and unity rather than divisiveness, we can accomplish a lot. What the Bigneys are doing in keeping the Old School is one such example. The Lions club recent renovation is another example of teamwork which brings the added bonus of beautifying the village. Congratulations are also due to Chris Cameron for buying the property next to the former Cohen’s Cones, taking down an unsightly building and building a new facility.

So, like our neighbours south of the border, let’s move forward in 2021 with new attitudes as we continue to fight this deadly virus.

Correction

The Pioneer wishes to apologize to our new Councillor for several errors in the article about Ronnie Baillie in the last issue: Please note the following:

The correct spelling is Wooldridge-Elliott.

The article states Mary will now be overseeing the Library Board when in fact, she will be a committee member only.

The swearing of the new councillor position was held on Nov. 2, 2020, not Nov. 3, as stated in the article.

Please accept our apologies, Mary, and we wish you good luck in your future endeavours as Councillor for District 4.

Card of Thanks

by Editorial board of the Pioneer.

As some of the recipients of the Lions club Christmas dinner, we heartily thank you for the delicious meal and extra gift of truffles. Seventy meals were delivered to members of the community. We thoroughly commend the Lions club members who left their homes and families on Christmas Day to prepare and deliver this meal.

Chase the ACE

At the River John Legion
Supporting the Legion
and Action Society

**Every Friday
6:30-8:30pm**
Draw is at 9pm

Tickets can be purchased at
Fulton’s Pharmacy in River John

Ticket prices: 1-\$5 3-\$10 7-\$20
You don’t need to be present to win.

Live music every week provided by
Geezer Light and Myrna

AGD Lottery Permit #AGD 107131-18



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

The Pioneer is distributed in River John, the village of Scotsburn, and West Branch. We welcome any articles or pictures from any of our newspaper friends and areas. Contributions to the next issue should be sent to the editors. Please send text files and pictures as separate attachments. Text should have the bare minimum of formatting. Photos should be the best resolution available and be accompanied by a list of captions.

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Joan MacLeod, Chair, River John Community Action Society

The River John Community Action Society (RJCAS, aka the Action Society) is a not-for-profit society created to assist with community development in River John and the surrounding area. Working committees are a key part of RJCAS’s work. The Action Society envisioned and created waterfront access at Bissell Park with the new riverside deck and dock. On the east side of the river, the Society also created the Roger’s Landing slipway and docks which will be fully open this summer. RJCAS committees manage both facilities.

The Action Society is presently working to get changes to speed limits approaching River John, and improved speed limit signage, with the aim of having traffic slow down before entering the village. The Pioneer newspaper is also a project of the RJCAS. Chase the Ace is run jointly by RJCAS and the Legion to raise funds for both groups.

In addition to our own projects, RJCAS often supports other village organizations in their projects, such as the Lions’ Free Christmas dinner for Seniors. RJCAS meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 PM. All COVID protocols are in place for meetings.

Our Annual General Meeting is on March 9th at 7 PM at the River John Legion, when a slate of officers will be elected.

We welcome new members to the organization, whether by attending monthly meetings or by joining a working committee.

Getting to know our Councillor

by Beulah Wright

Last fall, Mary Wooldridge-Elliott of Seafoam became the new councillor for District 4 by acclamation, and was sworn in on November 2, 2020. She is new to the municipal scene, but is learning fast and enjoying every minute of the new experience. In a recent interview with the Pioneer, she says that in the ensuing days, she has found 100 percent satisfaction in the new role and is happy with the great people who are working with her.

Asked why she decided to join the Municipal Council of Pictou County, she replied, "It was a challenge! I wanted to make a difference, to ensure that these people are able to express themselves, with confidence, in a non-judgemental atmosphere, to give them some assistance with solutions to problems they may encounter and to listen to their concerns, whether I agree with those concerns or not."

Mary considers herself reliable, hardworking and committed, and laughs when she says, "Everyone knows that I don't give up easily. This is new to me, and I have to learn about what can or cannot be done, what contacts I can make to ensure the benefits available, and so on. Sometimes solutions are slow to happen, and I would suggest that people have patience, and not be discouraged, when the desired answers are not immediate."

Asked if COVID-19 has affected her experience, she was quick to agree that it has. "I have



not had the same personal contact with the people of District 4, have missed attending events and functions, because of cancellations and restrictions. But that may ease in 2021, which would be gratifying. My message to the people is that may the New Year bring good health and happiness, and especially, hope, after a trying period."

We wish her well!

Two plays this week in Tatamagouche

The North Shore Players & The Grace Jollymore Joyce Arts Centre present two short one-act plays in March. Directed by John and Kathleen Hicks with actors and young people from our community.

HARD 2 SPEL DAD is a drama focusing on teens with learning disabilities.

Imperfect Proposals is a comedy on trying to pop the question.

Dates:

Thur. March 11th at 7:00 pm

Fri. March 12th at 7:00 pm

Sat. March 13th at 7:00 pm

Sun. March 14th at 2:00 pm.

Two plays—One Night—One Price

\$12 Adults

\$10 Students and Seniors

\$5.00 Child

\$25 Family

With limited capacity, get your tickets early! Tickets at the Grace Box Office Fri. and Sat. from 10-5 pm and Sun. from 12-4 pm. or at www.gracejollymore.com

Your Community Health Board

Community Health Boards (CHBs) help create healthier communities by:

- Working with community partners to promote health and wellness
- Increasing awareness about the social determinants of health (e.g., income, education, gender, sense of belonging) and ways to improve these factors that influence health
- Sharing knowledge about their communities with Nova Scotia Health and others who can use this information for planning, programs and community development
- Annually awarding Wellness Fund grants to local groups and organizations working to improve the health of their communities

Pictou West CHB serves the communities in and around Pictou, Lyons Brook, Toney River, Cape John, River John, Caribou, Three Brooks, Seafoam, West Branch, Loch Broom, Poplar Hill and Scotsburn.

Pictou West CHB is always looking for new volunteers. This is a great opportunity to get involved in your community! Pictou West CHB members are available to speak to your group or organization about what they do and how you can get involved.

You can learn more about CHBs at <https://www.communityhealthboards.ns.ca>

For information on becoming a volunteer with Pictou West CHB, contact:

Dominic Boyd (CHB Chair) at dominicboyd1@gmail.com

or Lynn Langille (CHB Coordinator) at lynn.langille2@nshealth.ca or 902-324-0621



Don't Panic

by Nick Gunn, Scotia Systems

Every week I'm getting panic calls from customers because they're getting a virus warning on their computer. The alert takes over the screen and warns the user not to shut down. Often, a siren will blare, and an automated voice will repeat the message over and over.

Don't panic - it's not a virus.

Instead, you've somehow reached a web page made to look like a virus has taken over your computer. Perhaps you were searching for something on Google. (searching for recipes is a popular target,) and when you clicked on a link, everything started happening.

This is a common tactic with scammers, and their intention is to get you to phone the number on the screen. If you do this, they'll confirm that your computer is in imminent danger and that you must allow them access to your computer. If you do this, they'll likely put a "real" virus on the computer, and then charge you hundreds (sometimes thousands) of dollars for the work!

So, what do you do if this happens? Simply restart the computer. Yup, a restart is all it takes, as after all, the warning is just a web page, and nothing has actually happened to your computer.

To do this, click on the Start Menu and choose to "restart". The only "gotcha" here is that when you go back to what you were doing on the Internet, the page is going to re-open and you'll be back to where you were! To get around this, there's a simple tip - press and hold the "shift" key on your keyboard when you open your web browser (Chrome/Internet Explorer/etc). Pressing the shift key tells the web browser to forget the page you were last on, and just open a fresh new window. Simple eh?

You'll want to keep your antivirus software updated, and there are some free tools which are designed to help stop you from visiting these pages in the first place, (Google CIRA Shield for an example).

If you'd like a hand installing or checking your antivirus protection, please get in touch (ngunn@scotiasystems.com).

Stay safe online!

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2021 Brings New Chief to River John Fire Department

**by Santina Weatherby,
Public Relations,
River John Fire Department**

It is a new year, and the River John Fire Department is welcoming a new Fire Chief. After 25 years, David Brown will pass over the reins to senior department member, John MacLellan. Effective January 1st, 2021 John will step into his new role with the department.

I had the opportunity to sit down with both the incoming, and outgoing fire chiefs this winter, to capture their experiences, and hopes for the department, as it moves ahead with a new chief.

Joining the department in 1979, David Brown, known as “Dave” was the longest serving Fire Chief of the River John Fire Department since its inception. It was 1996 when Dave took the position as Chief, however during his time on the department, Dave has held many positions including Firefighter, Medical First Responder (MFR), Hall Director, Secretary, Training Officer, Safety Officer, Captain and Deputy Fire Chief. It is with honour Dave continues to serve and believes it is important to keep our fire department actively engaged in the community.

While chatting with Dave about his time on the department, he could not help but reminisce about his memories of washing fire trucks; just a young boy at the time, looking forward to joining someday as a member. He says there are many great memories with the fire department over the years. Described by his peers on the department, Dave is touted as dedicated to his commitment as chief. He was often found at the fire hall on evenings and weekends, working behind the scenes on many projects, ideas and of course paperwork. Dave’s genuine care and concern for his department members was always evident. He has always been supportive of members and fostering their involvement in the fire service and encouraging members to continue their fire education and training. Dave himself has always been committed to lifelong learning, as he continues to share his knowledge through his role as instructor at the annual Pictou County Firefighters Association Fire School held each fall. Safety has always been a priority for Dave, always working hard to instill the importance in the membership. Dave recollects the remarkable improvements made to fire equipment and personal protective equipment since his time joining the department. He says the personal bun-



Dave Brown Fire Chief 1996-2020

ker gear worn by department members today is a shocking difference from the “turn out” coats and high boots worn decades ago. He is impressed by such improvements, as it supports safety for firefighters.

Through Dave’s time as chief, he was able to see many changes in the fire service, and he has often been a driving force behind initiatives that would benefit the department, community, and fire service community. Dave remains an active member of the Pictou County Firefighters Association where he has held positions as President, past Vice-President, member of the nominating committee of the association.

While reminiscing with Dave, one of his most memorable experiences as chief includes one call where the department was needed for medical assistance. The patient required CPR, which was initiated immediately by our members. At the time, paramedics were on route, but had not arrived. Dave and fellow members were able to provide the life-saving measures prior to paramedics being on scene. The patient was treated by paramedics and transported. Fortunately, this person is alive and well today. Dave says it is not as often as we would like, this type of situation results in saving someone’s life, thus he admits he is honoured to have had this experience.

His best advice for the incoming chief is despite all the technological advances in today’s world, there are some things that need to be done the old school way. Dave is looking forward to a bit more leisure time in his near future, while enjoying his retirement from the department of highways. He plans to remain actively involved in the fire department.

Despite John being considered new to the role as Fire Chief, we can surely say he is not new to the department. John joined the department in 1987, he was looking for a way to give back to the community and valued the fire service as an asset to the community too. During his time with the department to date, he has held many roles including Firefighter, MFR, Captain, Secretary, and Deputy Chief. He admits there will be lots to learn in the role as Chief but is looking forward to the challenge.

John says he has been pleased and encouraged by the support he has received by department members; “Everyone is willing to help... it’s contagious”. He and many members have been working on several department projects already this year and is excited to see members take initiative and lead such projects. John had spent many years of his career as an instructor at NSCC in the trades program. It is evident he brings many transferable leadership skills into his new role, as his department membership describe him as a born leader and mentor; always working to lead by example, friendly, diplomatic and understanding.

During our conversation, many memories were shared. He too remembers the turn-out gear from many years past and eagerly wears the modern bunker gear we have today. Interestingly, one of John’s most vivid memories also involves a call for medical help for an infant with trouble breathing. Fortunately, John reports after initial assessment and oxygen therapy, the infant turned from a dusky blue back to a healthy colour. The relief he experienced when the infant’s breathing improved was immense. He says it is something he will never forget.

He also talks of fond memories of past fundraising events with the department, especially the mock jail, where monies were raised through ap-



John MacLellan, Fire Chief 2021

prehending community members and locking them away until fees (donations) were collected. He also remembers his days as secretary, where part of the duties were to ensure a written reminder notice of monthly meetings was provided for each member, taken to the post office, and distributed by the Postmaster. We chuckled at both the cumbersomeness and simplicity of the task, compared to the technology used today for automatic reminders of similar events.

John says he is looking forward to using technologies available within current department platforms and programs to improve communication and help ease the load of administrative tasks where appropriate. His hopes for the department as a whole are for the younger generation of members to learn and mentor under senior members, with the idea that as some members retire over time, their knowledge will live on in the department.

It was amazing to me, after speaking with both these gentlemen on separate occasions, their commitment to community and humanity shines through. Both shared stories, experiences and opinions valuing rurality, compassion, generosity, and selflessness; doing their volunteer work for the greater good, and not for one’s self. We often do not think of our fire leaders in this way. They are stereotyped into being official and regimented. However, in our community, we are so lucky to have these fine servicemen lend their time, sweat and tears to their community, and at the end of the day, to help you in your time of need. Their sacrifices are what keep fire service in our communities.

In conclusion, I would like to thank David Brown for his 25 years as Chief of the River John Fire Department, your dedication does not go unnoticed. Furthermore, a warm welcome to John MacLellan as incoming Fire Chief, I know you will do great things for the department and community.



Community Learning Centre

by Ed Kennedy

As most readers of The Pioneer are probably aware, the River John Community Action Society (RJCAS) is continually looking for opportunities to support our local community and provide services of value to community members. A potential service that the RJCAS is now exploring is the creation of a Community Learning Centre at the River John School. The idea is to bring together people who are interested in providing presentations or short courses, on information and skills that they want to share, with citizens that want to participate in new learning opportunities. Recent polls in the River John Facebook page suggest that there is lots of community interest in a variety of courses.

In order to pursue this idea further and confirm its feasibility, we are seeking community input. As a first step, we would welcome offers by prospective presenters or course leaders to provide talks or short courses on topics of potential interest to the community. We are open to formats of all kinds (e.g., short presentations, evening or weekend courses, etc.) either in a classroom or hands-on setting. Although we propose to start with learning events of a short duration, if there is interest, longer courses (e.g., 4-5 sessions spread over several

weeks) may be possible. A Community Learning Centre at the School could include facilities for both classroom instruction (e.g., projector, screen, tables and chairs for a computer course) and hands-on instruction (e.g., furniture reupholstering course). Once we have confirmed interest in providing specific courses or presentations, we plan to follow up with a survey/poll to determine the level of interest for participating in each offering. For those offerings in which a good level of interest has been indicated, we will organize courses starting at the earliest in mid-Fall this year.

If you are interested in offering a course or presentation, please contact Ed Kennedy by email (kennedyeda@gmail.com) with a brief description of the learning opportunity you are prepared to provide. The committee is currently looking at ways to raise funds to keep the cost of the courses as affordable as possible.

River John is a dynamic, growing community and the RJCAS hopes that a Community Learning Centre will become a popular place for community members to meet, socialize, exchange ideas and knowledge, and develop new skills. We look forward to your feedback.

Read by the Sea Virtually this Summer

by Lana MacEachern

River John's iconic literary festival is moving to your computer screen, for this year at least.

Read by the Sea is back on July 3, 2021, albeit in a different format. Organizers made the difficult decision to cancel last year's festival because of gathering limits and border restrictions stemming from the coronavirus pandemic. It was the first time since 2000 that the annual gathering of authors, illustrators and readers didn't take place.

"At that time, we had no experience of doing it any other way than large excited gathering of readers and writers," festival coordinator Monica Graham says of the decision to cancel in 2020.

Instead of being an outdoor in-person event, this year's Read by the Sea festival will primarily take place online. The move will enable authors and readers to share their love of literature and storytelling regardless of where they are physically located or what Public Health orders are in place.

"Right now, we don't know what July will bring and we don't want to endanger anyone's health by forging ahead with in-person events," says Graham. "but we don't want to cancel again, either."

What will a virtual Read by the Sea look like? Graham says the details are still being fine-tuned but it will include videos of the participating authors reading from their works. Organizers are exploring ways to make the event interactive, such as the possibility of fans posing questions to some of the authors online in real time. They hope to have remote activities related to the books featured in WordPlay, the festival's event for children.

"We haven't worked it all out yet," she says. "but regardless, we hope people will read the featured authors' books and submit questions or comments one way or another."

Participating authors for Read by the Sea 2021 include Rebecca Thomas, Vikki VanSickle, Amy Spurway, Joan Baxter, Pasha Malla, and Wayne Curtis. Information about the authors and their most recent publications is available on the festival's website, www.readbythesea.ca.

We have been assured by Coles in New Glasgow that the authors' books will be available for purchase there, but if you don't see them, make a request," advises Graham. "They may sell out!"

She urges people to keep an eye on the Read by the Sea website, Facebook page and Twitter account (@RJreadbythesea) for more exciting details to come.

Ship Hector descendants project

Was your ancestor aboard the Ship Hector that arrived in Pictou in 1773?

The Ship Hector Passenger Descendants Project is a research project that documents multi generations of descendants of the passengers aboard the Ship Hector who arrived in Pictou, Nova Scotia in 1773. The Ship Hector is known as "Canada's Mayflower" which began a wave of immigration to Nova Scotia and Canada from Scotland.

One of the goals of the project is to connect with living descendants both local and across

North America (and beyond) to invite them to Pictou County and Nova Scotia for the 250th anniversary of the landing of the Ship Hector in 2023.

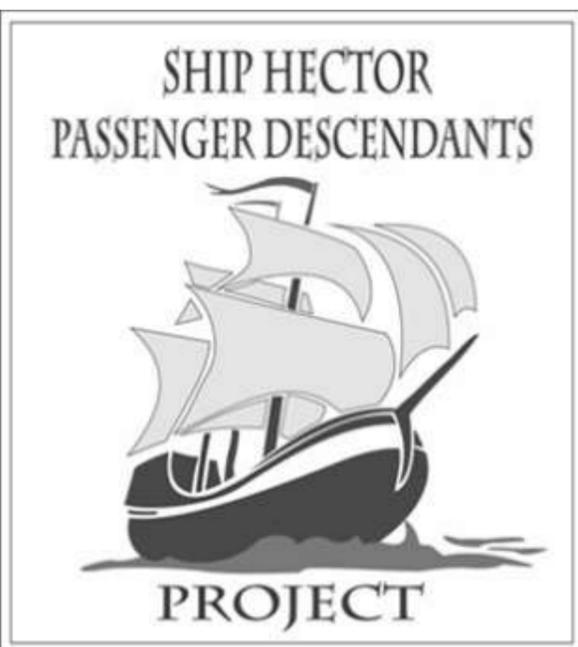
Research on the various families has been ongoing since the fall of 2015. A variety of methods have been used to find descendants, e.g., reviewing existing, completed genealogies; accessing census records, wills, cemetery records, vital statistics, books, newspapers, obituaries, any and all sources that may provide clues and evidence re the passengers lineage to the present day.

The project has assisted many people connect with their Nova Scotia and Pictou County roots. A project website was created and can be found at: www.shiphctordescendants.ca. The site lists the passengers who were known to be on the Ship Hector, a "Distinguished Descendants" page and a "News & Blog" page. The project Facebook page is located at: www.facebook.com/shiphctordescendants.

A quarterly newsletter (via the website) provides an opportunity to reach people who may not utilize social media and wish to stay informed re project updates.

The project researcher is Brenda Hutchinson of Braeshore, NS. If you believe your family descends from a Ship Hector passenger, you are encouraged to connect with the project either via the website, Facebook page or email at hector-roots1773@gmail.com.

Thank you for your interest in the Ship Hector Passenger Descendants Project.



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Roger's Landing

by Barb Harris

Heads up, boaters. Roger's Landing Slipway and Docks, River John's newest recreational facility, will be fully up and running this summer. For the first time, there will be rental dock space for a limited number of boats from June through September.

The popular slipway/boat launch that opened last summer will open for 2021 by the May long weekend. The slipway provides public access to the river free of charge for small motorized boats, kayaks, canoes and other small craft.

Roger's Landing docks will open on June 1. Rental spaces will be available for boats of 24 feet or less. The 96 feet long docks will provide docking space for four boats per month. To allow the maximum number of users to enjoy the facility, docking spots will be rented on a monthly basis for the months of June, July, August and September. Spaces will be allocated through a draw. One entry per boat per month will be allowed. Boat owners

can enter all of the four monthly draws or enter for specific months of their choice. The deadline to enter the draw is April 30, and the draw will be held on May 1. Rental fees have not yet been determined but will be set before the draw takes place. Winning spots cannot be transferred, and winners will need to show proof of insurance.

For more information about renting a space at the Roger's Landing docks, contact rogerslanding@outlook.com. Additional information including application forms for the draw and rental rates will be available soon at rogerslanding.ca. Watch for posters and social media posts for more information.

"I'm excited to see Roger's Landing dock and slipway become a reality and allow more boaters to enjoy our river. It's very dear to our hearts," says Brittany MacLellan, a member of the RL committee. Roger's Landing was the vision of Roger MacLellan and is named in his honour. The facility was developed through the hard work of

members of the River John Community Action Society, with financial support from the federal, provincial and municipal governments. Donations to help with the upkeep of Roger's Landing are welcome.

No Wake Zone

River Johners and visitors are now enjoying the river for swimming and boating in large numbers with the addition of the Bissell Park Deck and Docks and the Rogers Landing Slipway and Docks.

For the safety of people swimming and boating, and for the protection of the river itself, please boat safely, and especially respect the No Wake Zone between Bigney's Slipway and the second channel marker. Keep it slow for everyone's sake.

Water Safety

by River John Fire Department

The last year brought many challenges for everyone, and we've had to adopt new ways of doing things. The COVID-19 virus has brought unprecedented times globally. Fortunately, with some of the restrictions being lifted many are now able to enjoy water activities which all look forward to each year. With the summer months not that far away, it is a great time to reflect on what you know about personal flotation devices and water safety. It's also a great time to think about ensuring you will have appropriate water safety gear for next summer.

Enjoy the water safely!

Ensuring you have access to and are wearing lifejackets or personal flotation devices (PFD) is a life-saving step.

Do you know the difference between a PFD and a lifejacket?

Lifejackets, when worn properly, are designed to turn an unconscious person from face down to face up in the water, allowing them to breathe. Standard lifejackets must be orange, yellow or red, and have a whistle attached. (Source: Red Cross).

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) are designed to keep you afloat in the water, and were designed for use in recreational boating. They are generally

smaller, less bulky and more comfortable than lifejackets. They have less flotation than lifejackets and have limited turning capacity, but are available in a variety of styles and colours. Approved inflatable PFDs can be worn if you are 16 years or older and weigh more than 36 kilograms" (Red Cross).

Proper Fit

It is important to ensure the PFD/lifejacket fits properly. Sizing is based on chest measurements for adults and weight for children. The Red Cross recommends trying the lifejacket or PFD on. "It should fit snugly, with all the buckles, zippers and snaps done up, but still allow room to breathe and move around freely. Try walking and sitting in it, too. Your PFD is too big if you can pull it over your ears and too small if you cannot fasten all buckles and straps. Check the label to make sure

the PFD or lifejacket is approved for use in Canada." It is important to note, "In Canada, there are no approved flotation devices for children weighing 20 pounds and under. Transport Canada recommends that you wait until your child reaches 20 lbs. before you go boating with them."

"Every year in Canada hundreds of Canadians drown while boating. Most of them never intended to be in the water, they were just enjoying their boating activity. Only 12.5% of people who died were wearing a properly fastened and fitted lifejacket or PFD." (Source: Canadian Red Cross Drowning Report).

The article above is only a brief overview of some important information about lifejackets, PFDs and water safety. Please visit the websites listed at the bottom of the page for additional information.

On another note....

Now that cooler weather is upon us, we must also turn our attention to other safety matters. It's important to have your chimney/flue cleaned to help prevent flue fires, and make sure you have your smoke detectors in working order. Also, if your civic sign is not visible from the road, please ensure you make the necessary arrangements so it is clearly seen from the road in both directions.

Thank you for reading. Stay safe.

The Canadian Red Cross lists the following items as the minimum mandatory marine safety equipment for boaters

- Pleasure Craft Operator Card, you are required by law to carry marine safety equipment.
- Canadian-approved flotation device or lifejacket of appropriate size for each passenger on board
- Buoyant heaving line at least 15 metres in length
- Watertight flashlight OR Canadian approved flares - Type A, B or C
- Sound-signalling device
- Manual propelling device (i.e. paddle) OR an anchor with at least 15 metres of rope, chain or cable
- Bailer OR manual water pump
- Class 5 BC fire extinguisher

Safety Tips!

Water and boating safety is an important topic to keep at the forefront. Below is a list of safety tips to remember at all times:

- Children and those who are inexperienced swimmers should be supervised at all times in and near the water, and wear a personal flotation device or lifejacket
- Children and inexperienced swimmers should not rely on inflatable water toys as swim aids
- Do not dive headfirst from platforms into unknown or shallow waters
- Wear PFDs or lifejackets at all times while boating, although it is only mandatory to have enough devices for each person on board a boat, the Red Cross recommends devices be worn at all times
- Make sure your flotation device keeps your chin above water and you can still breathe easily.
- Inspect your flotation devices regularly. If there are rips or signs of wear, they should be replaced immediately.
- Be aware of weather conditions while swimming and boating, plan accordingly
- Follow maximum occupancy and weight limits on pleasure crafts

Some useful links

- Canadian Red Cross- Swimming and Water Safety:
<https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/swimming-and-water-safety-tips-and-resources>
- Transport Canada - Lifejacket Safety
<https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine-transportation/getting-started-safe-boating/choosing-lifejackets-personal-flotation-devices-pfds>
- For more information on proper fitting of PFDs/lifejackets for children:
<https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/swimming-and-water-safety-tips-and-resources/swimming-boating-and-water-safety-tips/lifejackets-and-pfds>

The Poems of Dorothy McKenna

by **Bernard McKenna**

Dorothy Marie McKenna and her restaurant (McKenna's Tea Room) was in the village for decades. For any recent village inhabitants, the Tea Room was located in the recently renovated Lions Den. As well as running the restaurant she wrote articles about the village for the Pictou Advocate. She was always a village booster, especially her beloved Trail Blazers hockey team. The following poems were written by Dorothy at age 85.

WHAT COULD WE ASK FOR MORE

What could we ask for more
Than to sit beside the shore
By the river bend of the River John
Where the tides come over and over

What could we ask for more
On a summer eve by the shore
Where the birds and bees in the linden trees
Sing praise for ever more

What could we ask for more
When the jets and planes do hum
We can sit in ease and enjoy the breeze
In the eastern tip of our shore

When our blessings are all summed up
With our health and peace we are blessed
Do we ever pause and give thanks
And say 'What could we ask for more'

FAMILIES

You who have families
Are richer than gold
Their joys and their pleasures
To you do unfold

They brighten the darkness
they lighten your day
and wash all your troubles
and sorrows away

They may bring you sadness
But it's overshadowed by
The pleasure and laughter
Which they will supply

They act as a bridge
When the waters are rough
They stick with you
When the going gets tough

Just think of your family
And you're never alone.



An old aerial view of the buildings that now house the Lion's Den. Could that be Dorothy standing outside her tea room?

SONGS OF PRAISE

Have you heard the choirs in the treetops
With peaceful and beautiful tones
Not even Chopin or Mozart
Could render such beautiful sounds

Their beautiful colors of plumage
Are disguised in the leaves above
In daytime with Robins and Skylarks
Sing out in amazement with love

They are hidden away from the danger
Of hands that are ready to grasp
By our maker in Heaven above us
Who sings "When the Stones are Cast"

So, in life it is oh so easy
To cast a stone where it will
Far better we are ever so quiet
To the tunes of "PEACE BE STILL"

For the choirs sing in the treetops
While hidden in the leafage above
Are like humans whose cloaks are scarlet
But safe in "God's Wonderful Love."

UP ON THE HILL

Let's go up on the hill, Grammy
It's so nice and cool up there
I'll take you by the hand Grammy
Cause I know your back is sore

There are flowers and grass and berries
You and I can pretend
Colleen can come and help you,
We'll take you by the hand

Up on the hill we went along
Step by step up the hill
Colleen was picking berries
And sliding down the hill

Now the times are passing by
The skies are getting grey
It's so quiet on the hill
The children moved away

Grammy has gone to a golden hill
Where the flowers are stiff in bloom
But we'll still pretend as in by-gone days
when the children loved to come home

Be Inspired, at the River John Library

by **Trecia Schell**

In celebration of International Women's Day, the library is pleased to offer a presentation of "Strong and Free. Stories and photos of Canadian women in sport from the popular #superROLEmodels project" with Halifax-based photographer and athlete Lyndsay Doyle on Tuesday March 9, at 7:00pm. All are welcome to join us for inspiring stories of women in sports, of all ages and abilities. Full details on all our upcoming author readings and presentations are available in our PARL events calendar online. Peter Thompson will be reading from "Nights Below Foord Street" on April 14. Monica Graham will share with us her latest book, "Senior Moment. Navigating the Challenges of Caring for Mom" on May 11. And Genevieve Graham will be reading from her latest novel, "Letters Across the Sea".

March Break fun starts Saturday, March 13, with the launch of our Case of the Missing Book Characters Scavenger Hunt, and DIY "Among Us" Take & Make bookmarks. All welcome to drop by, all week long. On Tuesday March 16 at 3:00pm, we have a special guest - Bill Burnyeat with the Canadian Planetariums, will be giving a virtual presentation about the Stars in our Backyard (online via ZOOM and teleconference by phone). Full details are available in our PARL events calendar online.

The library is pleased to be able to offer many different Take & Make home crafting kits, for all ages. And we have several online Book Clubs and Knitting Clubs too. For more information, do drop by, call or email the library.

Missing the warm sunshine? Drop by the library, take a few minutes and try out one of the light therapy lamps available at your local library - thanks to our local Community Health Boards of Pictou County and MacLean & Poulain Pharmacy First. Light Therapy boxes, also called SAD lamps, use fluorescent lights to mimic the full-spectrum sunlight you would experience outside on a bright spring day. Light therapy is a way to treat seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and certain other conditions by exposure to artificial light. SAD is a type of depression that occurs at a certain time each year, usually in the fall or winter.

The library offers many online services - from courses, to downloadable eBooks, audiobooks, magazines, and access to several online research databases - all available through our website, at www.parl.ns.ca. Curbside pick-up for hold requests of library items is available upon request. And all library materials are quarantined and sanitized following NS Public Health guidelines.

The River John Library is located at 2725 West Branch Road, and is currently open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00pm-7:00pm, Wednesdays and Fridays 10:00am-1:00pm and 2:00pm-5:00pm, and Saturdays 10:00am-2:00pm. For more information, please contact the River John Library by phone, (902) 351-2599, or by email, riverjohn@parl.ns.ca

Trecia Schell is the Community Services Librarian, and Branch Librarian - Books-by-Mail, River John, Stellarton & Trenton Public Libraries

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Mary Wooldridge-Elliott
District 4

Please contact me with your
 questions, concerns, and ideas.

3960 Seafoam, Pictou County
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 902-351-2794
 mary.elliott@munpict.ca

Valerie Rose (Gollan) Langille

(1948-2020)



ODE TO MACDONALDS COVE

MacDonalds Cove wharf sits lonely and decrepit,
 Many a story lives eerily within it,
 It holds memories of good and bad,
 And for some families it was truly sad.

The ice was thick, hitting the wharf with a slap,
 When James Gollan rushed out to save his traps.
 It wasn't in the cards to save him that day,
 Under 3 ton of ice he did sadly lay.

It's been a place from which fisherman sail,
 Fishing lobsters and scallops, and seeing the odd
 whale
 Or a leisurely sail on a sunny day,
 The whole family, oh yes, that was the way.

The men would leave in the early morn,
 Nothing phased them, not even a storm,
 Fishing was their way of life,
 It wasn't easy for them or their wife.

The ocean waves were icily cold,
 The winds were wild and strongly bold.
 The traps were heavy and hard to cope,
 Above all, fishermen, beware of the rope.

One miss-step in that deadly rope,
 Overboard you went and could only hope,
 That the crew could save you, just in time,
 From a watery death, in that salty brine.

This is the life of the fisherman,
 Nothing would keep them from sailing again,
 It's in their blood, good times or strife,
 They would never choose another way of life.

Valerie Gollan Langille

SISTERS

I will always remember
 The days that we shared
 In good times and bad
 You showed me you cared

You loved me for me.
 And not what I did
 Your undying love
 It never was hid.

As time travelled on
 Living many miles apart
 We remained very close
 With love in our hearts.

As sisters, we started
 That remains to this day
 The sharing and caring
 Will not slip away.

The shadows of darkness
 One day may arrive
 But our love and our memories
 Will be forever alive.

For my sister, Laura

*Valerie (Gollan) Langille
 December 2003*

On July 17, 1948, a beautiful baby girl was born into the Gollan family, who grew up to be our little sister; we called her Valerie Rose.

Valerie was brought up by her grandparents, James and Rosanna (Holmes) Gollan, who she called Mom and Dad and we became her brothers and sisters.

Valerie went to a one-room school in Melville and then to West Pictou High School where she got her grade eleven.

She met and married Robert Langille; they were married 54 years and had three children, a son Mark and two daughters Tamara and Amber. They moved to Hamilton, Ontario, and raised their three children and five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Valerie was a lovable person. Her family meant everything to her, along with her Nova Scotia summer home in Melville.

On November 9, 2020, my beloved sister and best friend died suddenly from a heart attack at home.

Valerie was a cherished wife of Bob for 54 years. Beloved mother of Mark, Tamara and Amber. Loving grandmother of five and great-grandmother of three. Beloved sister of Irene Paterson and Laura Elliott.

She was predeceased by parents, six brothers and five sisters.

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS



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(Helping Hand Lodge #34)

2019-2020 Noble Grand, Rod Hayman

Irene (Tattie) Stone 1930-2018

Irene Stone was the youngest of three daughters of Helen and George Tattie from River John. She grew up on a farm on the Gunn Road. In the late 1940s, when it became hard to earn a living from farming, they, like many families, sold the farm and moved out. George moved to Toronto where he found a job on the docks. Helen and Irene moved to Pictou, so Irene could finish her education at Pictou Academy. When she graduated, the family was reunited in Toronto. Irene wrote this poem about a hockey game she attended at the old Pictou rink, near where the deCoste Centre is today.

Irene went on to marry Earl Stone and rise in the insurance business, where she became a vice-president. She had a penchant for real estate and bought, renovated and sold many properties in her time in Toronto and Nova Scotia. She bought Brule Shore Cabins, renamed them Heritage Cottages and ran them successfully for many years. She was always a keen "River Johner". She spent her last days here and her ashes are buried at Lockerby Cemetery. She is survived by a son Doug and family in Calgary, Alberta.

Irene finished her education in Pictou, at which time she wrote this poem about the excitement of attending a hockey night. This was found among her papers, when she passed away and was given to the museum in her memory.

Irene retired to River John where she became a faithful and valuable member of the River John and Area Historical Society.

A HOCKEY GAME Pictou Sunbeams vs Antigonish Bulldogs

My French remained unnoticed
My oral left undone
For tonight again was Monday
And a game was to be won

At eight I shook my piggy bank
50 cents fell on the floor.
Would the game tonight be worth it?
For I didn't have any more

Next I put on my "rink attire"
Red flannels and plaid shirt
Four sweaters, coat, six pairs of sox (sic)
And Grandma's "floor-skirt"

I left home about 8:30
And as I turned down Decon's Hill
I wondered, "Will the Bulldogs win?"
Perhaps the Sunbeams will.

I plodded on along the street
And finally I was there.
I went to put my money down
But the girl could only stare.

I knew my clothing must look weird
And that I was a sight
She said I'd just charge .25
But the carnival's not tonight

I turned my step in through the door
But someone else turned too
Two elbows hit me in the face
And through the door I flew.

I landed up against a man
Who wavered on his feet
And as we both fell to the floor
He said "Shay! (hic) where'd we meet?"

Then I headed towards the stairway
A safe place to retreat
I wanted now to see the game
And not more injuries meet.

But my hopes were not long with me
For as I upward climbed
A flask came flying down the stairs
With its owner right behind.

At last with many vain attempts
I finally reached the top
But my efforts had been worth it
For I saw Hepburn make a stop.

Now "tic" was taking over
And as down the ice he flew
There was only one defence to beat
Could Williams get it through?

Well I'll never know what happened
But as they scrambled for the puck
A shot went wild and through the air
And someone yelled, "Hay! Duck!"

Well "Shorty" couldn't stop the puck
That was heading up my way
I stopped it with my own front teeth
The most sensational stop of the day.

The crowd they swayed; the lights flashed on
The stars shone all around
Wild visions danced within my head
Immune to earthly sound.

The game went on, the fans still cheered
I lay there knocked out cold,
With two black eyes, my teeth all gone
And wounds and scars untold.

When I revived, the game was through
And I crawled home bruised and lame
I never did find out the score
But it sure was a "good game"
-Irene Tattie

Notes from Community Liaison RCMP Officer

**by Corporal Natasha Farrell
Pictou District RCMP-GRC**

Did you know that according to statistics, Motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of death of youth in Nova Scotia? Nova Scotians aged 15-24 have the highest rate of death and hospitalization due to motor vehicle collisions compared to any other age group on our roadways. Collisions are the cause of on average 80 deaths and 636 hospitalizations each year. Speeding, either exceeding the posted speed limit, or driving too fast for conditions, is a factor in approximately one third of all fatal crashes in Nova Scotia.

What can you do to keep the roads in your community safe?

- Talk to the new drivers in your family and community about following the rules of the road and the consequences for not;
- Talk to your teenagers about not driving with friends that are known to drive recklessly;
- Never drive after using alcohol or drugs;
- Put away your phone and avoid any other distractions. Remember that passengers can be one of your biggest distractions;
- Drive the speed limit, and adjust your speed for the road and weather conditions;
- Wear your seatbelt at all times, even if it's just a short trip down the road.

If you see a vehicle travelling in a dangerous manner or suspect the driver to be impaired, call Pictou District RCMP at 902-485-4333 or in an emergency dial 911. License plate, vehicle description and driver description (if available) is helpful to investigators.

Road safety is everyone's responsibility. Rules for the road are set to promote the safety of drivers, passengers, cyclists and pedestrians.



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Cape John Fairies - Chapter 5

by **Sandra-Lee**

The day after the wedding was challenging and rewarding. The fairies were up early and had the farmhouse, the garden and themselves all cleaned up, refreshed and ready to greet Elizabeth and Delbert. It was only one more day until they returned from their honeymoon.

Daylight was getting shorter. Weather fairies sang the sun to sleep earlier so the trees and the flowers and the animals could get a long, peaceful winter rest. The moon ruled the sky until the sun started to slowly awaken on December the 22nd of each year. The fairies made the most of the daylight hours and soon everything was just as it should be.

The fairies had called a meeting to discuss how life might be different now, but they would soon find out they were in for a huge, surprising turn of events. There was much speculation amongst the fairies. They tittered and twittered about who was going to be in charge, who would look after the gardens, the chickens, etc. Sigurd and Chrysanthemum sat atop a stump and shrugged their shoulders at one another. With a wave of her hand and a tinkling of some bluebells, all fell silent and attentive.

Sigurd cleared his throat, but before he could speak, Chrysanthemum sang a lively fairy song to get everyone's attention. This calmed the anxious gathering and so she spoke:

"My friends, fear not, for I believe ... nay, I know, that whatever Elizabeth and Delbert have planned will be the best for all."

(Chrysanthemum was the only one who knew what was about to happen. She confided in no one, not even Sigurd!)

Chrysanthemum no sooner said this when into the garden walked Elizabeth and Delbert along with Elizabeth's mother, father and sister, Alexandra.

All the fairies and animal friends jumped, squealed, chirped, whistled and grunted with joy in unison What a happy racket!

Sigurd was the first to greet them:

"My Lady, you and yours are back early. Is everyone well?"

Holding Delbert's hand, Elizabeth stepped into the fairy ring and quieted everyone down. She looked into all the faces and announced:

"My dear and wonderful friends. I love you all. You have all truly become my family. This is difficult for me, but a wonderful opportunity has presented itself to Delbert and myself. It seems that my mother, my father and my sister will be staying in Canada. They will be moving to Ontario and Delbert and I are going too."

All the fairies shouted at the same time. There were shouts of congratulations and cries of protest. Chrysanthemum was prepared for this and soon had them quiet again.

"We shall answer your questions one at a time as best as we can," she announced.

Elizabeth looked at Chrysanthemum and said, "That is why I am putting you and Sigurd in charge of the farm."

Turning to her friends she said, "Dear ones, we will not be selling the farm as this is your home too. Instead, we shall keep it going and come to visit when we can."

With that Sigurd cleared his throat in a very loud manner and announced, "I took the opportunity to slip away this morning to prepare for an important--hopefully, in the near future--event that involves--well--ummm. Oh, everyone just follow me."

Then to Chrysanthemum he said in an unusually soft and quiet voice, "My Lady, I would be honoured if you would ride with me."

Chrysanthemum climbed onto Crow, looking quizzically at Sigurd as she couldn't recall the last time she saw him so gentle.

Sigurd called down to everyone, "Meet us at the fairy ring between the oak and the birch trees." And off they flew.

When Crow landed Chrysanthemum looked around the fairy ring. It was decorated as if for a fairy ceremony.

"What in the world are you up to Sigurd?" she asked with awe.

Sigurd cleared his throat and said, "My Lady, I have felt a great kinship with you and I brought you here ahead of the others to ask you to marry me."

Well, Chrysanthemum was so taken aback, she was speechless! She looked at him for a long time, but upon hearing the others approaching and knowing he wanted an answer, flew into his arms and said, "Yes, I will marry you."

Everyone came into the ring, looking around at the beautiful decorations and muttering, questioning amongst themselves.

Holding hands, Sigurd and Chrysanthemum told the gathering of their plans and how they had been given the duty of looking after the farm and all of the fairies living there.

Delbert and Elizabeth moved to Toronto with her family where she went to university and became a nurse. Delbert worked at the grocery store that Elizabeth's family started, then later on became an airplane mechanic. They visited the farm every summer solstice.

As for the fairies? Some went to Ontario, some to form colonies around Nova Scotia and some are still running the little farm outside River John to this very day.

I'm pretty sure if you listen quietly enough, and look for the doors, you will be able to learn about the fairies near you.

Take care and BELIEVE!

Sandra-Lee continues to write about Nova Scotia Fairies and her family in Ontario. She hopes to start publishing her books soon. She can be reached at walkabout912@live.ca

Thank You and Fairy Blessings to you all!

Verna's Brown Bread

by **Linda Thompson-Reid**

1 cup rolled oats
2 Tbsp shortening
2 Tbsp brown sugar
3 tsp salt
½ cup molasses

To the above add 1 cup boiling water and stir to mix.

Add 1 Tbsp dry yeast to ½ cup warm water and ½ tsp sugar and let rise, then add to above mixture.

Add 2 cups warm water

Add flour until good consistency to knead, about 7 cups. Knead 15 minutes then put in greased bowl and cover to rise until double in bulk.

Punch down and put in pans to rise again until double. Usually takes 1 hour for 1st rise, 30-40 minutes for 2nd.

Bake @ 325 deg. for 45 minutes.



River John
& District
Lions Club

Proudly serving
the River John
community
since 1968

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

2724 River John Station Rd, River John
902-351-2700
riverjohnlionsclub@gmail.com

Butter Tart Muffins

A recipe from the RJ's Ladies Group 2007 Cook Book, "River John Favourite Recipes"

1 1/2 c raisins
3/4 c granulated sugar
1/2 c butter
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 c milk
1 tsp vanilla, rum or butterscotch extract
1 1/2 c all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
pinch of salt
1/2 c walnuts
1/4 c corn syrup or maple syrup

Place raisins, sugar, butter, eggs, milk and vanilla in a large saucepan set over medium heat. Cook, stirring almost constantly, until mixture is hot, slightly thickened and just beginning to bubble, from 4 to 5 minutes. Cool slightly, uncovered, in the refrigerator while continuing with recipe.

Preheat oven to 375 deg.F (190 deg.C). Grease 12 muffin cups, coat with cooking spray or use paper liners. Using a fork, stir flour with baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl until well-mixed. Make a well in centre of flour mixture and pour in warm raisin mixture, stirring just until combined. Stir in walnuts until evenly mixed.

Spoon batter into muffin cups. Bake in centre of oven until golden and a cake tester inserted into centre of muffin comes out clean, from 15-17 minutes. Remove from oven and immediately pour about 1 teaspoon of syrup over top of each muffin. Cool muffins in cups for 10 minutes, then remove to a rack.

Store muffins in a sealed bag at room temperature for up to 2 days. For longer storage, refrigerate or preferably freeze, wrapped in foil.

Recipe by the late Janice Gill, Muffin Maker Extraordinaire

Bringing Back the Barn Swallows

by **Maggie Howatt**

It was my neighbour who recalled how years ago the wires leading to the house used to be filled with barn swallows. How I would love to see that again. We at most have four pairs of barn and maybe 15 or so pairs of tree swallows. The barn swallows are having a hard time of it and are close to extirpation. As I drive around the countryside, a lot of our old wooden barns are fallen down or gone and many of the new structures are closed steel, and what hay is made is wrapped in plastic and stored in fields. With fewer farms and barns and livestock than ever in the history of agriculture in Nova Scotia, there are fewer nesting sites and food sources for barn swallows.

Swallows' diet includes face flies, blow flies and horse flies that come with sheep, cattle and other barnyard critters. We have lots of open fields and ponds to generate bug life but the last few springs there has been a week to ten days of cold wet weather and late frosts that delay the hatching of black flies, mosquitoes and other flying frustrations that the swallows depend on, to get started after their long migration from South America.

Once they arrive in the spring, the swallows waste no time competing for nest sites. Our farm has three out-buildings that swallows can choose from and it is a busy time while they decide which old nest to do a little reno on or start a new one. We have about a dozen nests between the various buildings and a few around the house that have been started and then abandoned. I have openings



in all the buildings that the swallows can access whether the doors are closed up or not, and have installed small platforms under eaves to help.

Then it's off to the mud hole gathering beaks full of mud to spruce up or build a new nest. We leave nesting material (feathers when we had chickens, for example) which they might find useful. If it's a dry spring I will pour water in an area of soil to supply mud and we also had a pond dug a couple years ago so they have a couple of choices. Then things quiet down as the females lay and sit on their eggs

They are poetry in motion once in the air. I love to watch their aerial exercises; barn swallows are fantastic flyers and when they do take a break they can be found lined up on the telephone lines chat-

tering. It is a wonderful sight and sound to wake up to in the mornings.

Once the eggs have hatched, both adults are non-stop bringing food to the nest. They generally lay 4-5 eggs and it's pretty crowded in there when they get to fledgling stage. Once the young have fledged they hang around perched on beams or the seat of the lawn mower waiting to be fed until they can fly and hunt for themselves.

If it's a good year the adult pair will lay another clutch and try for a second family.

Barn swallows are fearless fighters and when a predator enters the territory it is really something to watch these little bombers mob the infiltrator and escort it out of the area.

Generally they gather together for the long migration to South America at the end of August or mid September. They are here one day and gone the next until the cycle repeats in the coming spring.

For more information about barn swallows
https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Barn_Swallow/overview

<https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/birds/barn-swallow/>

<https://www.facebook.com/merseytobeatic>
Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute

Presentation of research by Dalhousie U. Student Hilary Mann, which includes information gathered here in Pictou Co., should be available in early March on the youtube link here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheMTRI>

The Great Quilt Debate – Hand Quilting vs Machine Quilting

by **Denise J. White,**
West Branch Quilt Studio

When I first started my quilting journey, many years ago, I took a hand quilting class with a well-known quilt artist. I understand that she was the Past-President of the Canadian Quilters' Association, the governing body of all quilt guilds in Canada. My hand work wasn't much good, but I thought that that was the only true way to finish a quilt. So I welcomed any opportunity to improve my skills.

Of all of the knowledge and information that she imparted that day, there was one piece that hit me square between the eyes. She said, "If you don't enjoy hand quilting, don't do it. There are other ways to finish a quilt." What a revelation that was! I felt like I'd just been given permission to be a bad girl. It opened a whole new world.

It didn't take long for me to realize that although the quilting world was open to new ideas and techniques, the general public wasn't. A lot of people thought the same way that I had; that it isn't a real quilt unless it's hand quilted. I once had a conversation with a man who stated that same prejudice. I questioned whether he had a hobby, to which he replied woodworking. I asked if he used power tools and he said, "Of course!" So I countered with, "Why is it OK for you to use a power tool, but not me?"

That's all that a sewing machine, or a quilting machine, is – a power tool. It allows me to do more, faster. I have a great deal of respect for the skill of the hand quilter. A great deal, especially since it is something that I don't want to do! I respect that it took hours and hours of practice to get those stitches even on the top and bottom. I respect that it took hours and hours of practice to make those stitches almost too small to be seen with the



naked eye.

But it took me a long time to learn my craft, as well. And I put as much pride in my work as does any other quilter.

You see, machine quilting isn't something new. It has been around for a long time. The Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC has some wonderful examples of quilts made completely by machine during the American Civil War (1860-1865). Back then, machines weren't electrified. They were powered by the foot using what is known as a treadle, or by a hand crank. Yes, machines have changed the quilting world. There are even quilting machines that practically run themselves. The machine that I use is a hand-guided machine. That means that it is NOT computerized, and I move the machine over the quilt top as if I am drawing. It is my pencil, and the quilt is my canvas.

A lot of people resist the machine because they believe that hand quilting is a lost, or vanishing art. I would heartily disagree! In my circle of friends and acquaintances, I can name at least a half dozen people who almost exclusively quilt by hand. Some

even make a living at it. Some folks feel that quilting itself is a lost art. Not so! The North Shore is alive with quilters. There are, in fact, three quilt guilds within an hour's drive of River John. The Northumberland Guild in Pictou, the Thistle Guild in Westville and the Sunrise Guild in Tatamagouche. The combined membership of these guilds numbers more than 200, and at least two of these guilds have waiting lists.

Most people don't quilt out of necessity anymore. It has become so much more than that. According to statistics compiled by the Craft Industry Alliance, in 2020 it was a 4.2 BILLION DOLLAR industry. Yes, Billion! This isn't your granny's hobby anymore.

Quilters come in all shapes and sizes, so why can't the methods of finishing a quilt be as varied as the quilters themselves? There is even an entire sub-group of quilters known as "toppers." What they enjoy the most is choosing the pattern and fabric, making the top, and then passing it on to someone else to quilt. If I didn't have my own machine, I'd be in that category. I currently have 27 tops waiting to be quilted. Shame on me!

As a machine quilter who makes a living with her skills, there are quilts that I will not quilt. For instance, an antique quilt top that has been sitting unfinished for a hundred years. No, I'd pass that on to one of my hand quilting friends. But, for new quilts that will become the heirlooms of tomorrow, there is no reason not to have it done by machine. It is your choice how you want your project finished and no one should make you uncomfortable because you choose one way or the other. There is room enough for us all.



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Planning a Wedding During COVID-19

by **Brittany Boss**

Matt and I were engaged on June 23, 2019 and we were over the moon with happiness. It did not take much time for me to hit the internet searching for decorators, floral inspiration, and booking wedding dress shopping and photographers. Little did I know that what I thought would be the most complicated, and sometimes stressful, part of a wedding would also be something I would later long for: planning a wedding without a new virus and government mandated restrictions.

I knew I wanted to get married in my hometown, River John, NS. Luckily, Matt was on board with this idea. I had always envisioned having a wedding in the fall when the crisp air is still warm enough to bear, without bundling up, during the day with a beautiful display of colored leaves. That is why we chose October 10, 2020 to be our special day. We also loved the ring it had: “10.10.2020”. Once we made the decision to get married in River John, we decided on having the ceremony at the Lismore Sheep Farm and the reception at the River John Fire Hall. The Crawfords graciously allowed us to have our ceremony at their farm, for which we are so grateful. The Lismore Sheep Farm was my idea as I always thought it was so beautiful up on the hill overlooking the beautiful Northumberland Strait. When I was a teenager, I was lucky enough to work for the Crawfords in their wool shop where sometimes I was given the task of taking the dogs for a walk in the morning and evening. This was one of my favourite tasks, as I loved the views all around, and the company.

Thankfully, I was a keener and had all of the “big things” taken care of by November 2019, so when the world came to a halt just a few short months later, I did not have to stress about trying to



book things when everything was closed. From the springtime on, most of our wedding planning consisted of familiarizing ourselves with the government mandated restrictions and contacting different people and government officials. Every week I sat down to read the newest edition of the Nova Scotia Health Protection Act Order, like it was a morning newspaper. Doing this ensured I was getting the rules and restrictions directly from the source and not relying on social media and news outlets which shared a lot of oversimplified and false information

surrounding the restrictions. Then there were numerous calls made to Public Health, Pictou RCMP, Nova Scotia Chief Medical Officer, and Nova Scotia Liquor and Gaming to get clarification on things and to ensure I was following every rule.

The last step in finalizing our big day was to make a formal letter to send to our guests to inform them of what would be taking place, all in accordance with the rules and regulations, and to ensure those who were not comfortable with the numbers and the virus had the opportunity to opt out. In the end, we had a truly magical day and were so thankful to share it with our dearest family and friends who were able to attend. Sadly, there were very special people who were unable to attend, such as Matt’s brother who was also a co-best man, due to the government restrictions. But in the end we decided to push through with our ceremony and reception as best we could as we knew the following year or two would continue to be uncertain.

My end message to those planning a wedding during these very unpredictable times would be to follow your heart and do what feels best to the both of you, not those around you. If that looks like the two of you doing an elopement – great! If that looks like going ahead with a wedding within the current gathering guidelines – great! If that looks like postponing to a later date – great! At the end of the day love will always win, not a virus and government mandated restrictions. We are forever grateful for our friends and family that provided us with so much love and support leading up to, and on, our special day. We would not have been able to do it without them.

Sadie’s Place

by **Debby Shaw**

Last November [2019], after selling our house in Windsor, N.S. Bruce and I packed what we needed into our truck camper and stored everything else. We travelled down and across the United States for the next four months, trying to find some warmth, and eventually ended up at my sister’s in California. We planned to spend two months there, then camp across Canada before buying a new home in Truro, where our oldest daughter Kelly



Debby and Bruce Shaw in front of Sadie’s Place

and her husband Eric live.

After two weeks in California with my sister, COVID hit; visit cut short; trip cut short. We winterized our camper and headed for home across the Rockies; from San Francisco all the way across Canada in 9 days. Not the trip we had planned. We arrived in Truro March 30, 2020 and then isolated in a motel before we moved to Kelly and Eric’s.

Near the end of April we started our house hunt. We were looking for a small house with history and character, with one or more outbuildings (in our price range). Our daughter said we were looking for a unicorn. Since we did not find said unicorn in Truro, my guess is Truro doesn’t believe in fairy tales! We had to cast our net wider.

I had always dreamed of moving back to Tatamagouche. I had spent the first five years of my life and many summer vacations there so Bruce humoured me with a look at houses in Tata. We loved the village feel but still no home. As we left Tata, we drove towards River John and saw a For Sale sign just across the bridge. As soon as we parked by that sign under the flag at Sadie’s Place, I knew we were home!

Everyone we met – people at the post office, the liquor store, the drug store, the library, or people just out walking, were so friendly. We received pie, cookies, and jelly to encourage us to stay. We enjoyed that but we didn’t need encouragement. Bruce loved the changing faces of the river, and I loved that MacLean Street turns into Black Street turns into River Road and is the perfect scenic and safe place to ride my bike or walk.

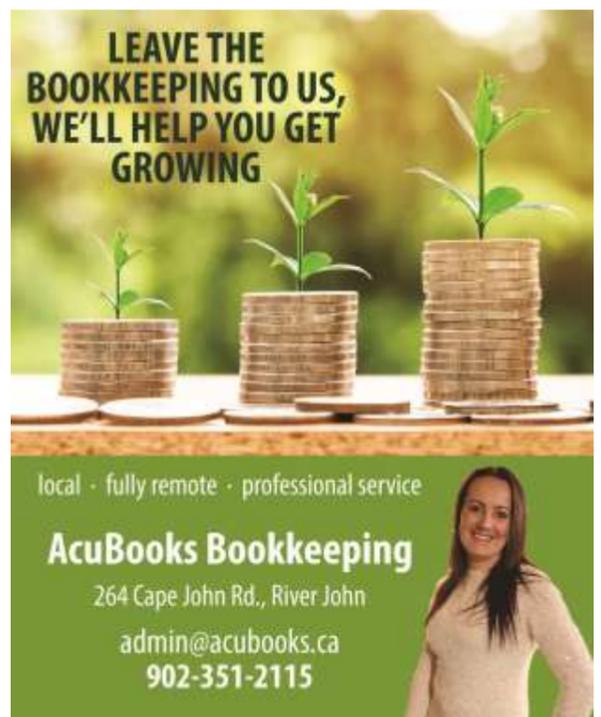
River John offered everything we were looking for. Nearby is the Trans Canada Trail by the

Legion and the lovely Remembrance Garden. I have joined the exercise group at the Fire Hall.

Sadie’s Place gave us what we were looking for: a small house for me and enough outbuildings for Bruce and not far from Kelly and Eric in Truro.

They also fell in love with the river and decided our side lawn was the perfect place to park their cottage/trailer. Because of COVID, Kelly is working from home so loves that weekend escape.

I read a quote by Arnold Bennett, “Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by discomforts.” Well, thank you, people of River John, for making this change comfortable for Bruce and me. We have so much to be grateful for.



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Hiking in River John

by Elaine Falconer

Hello Everyone! So, do you need to leave River John and have marked trails to enjoy the great outdoors? In this scenic community, no, you do not. You can reinvigorate yourself right here in River John if you're not stuck on the word hiking.

I like to think of it as an adventure in a rustic environment. Here are some of my favourites.

The Hedgeville Hall loop. Park at the Hedgeville Hall, go out the Watt Road, MacAulay Road, Grant Road, then onto the Hedgeville Road to get back to your car. You see trees, birds, swamps, horses, an abandoned house with interesting flowers, and most importantly, very little traffic. The distance is 7 km round trip.

The Mountain Road at County Line provides a 9 km adventure by using the 551W skidoo trail. I have walked, skied, and snowshoed this route. Take 551W skidoo trail to the Dean Chapter, turn right onto the Dean Chapter back to the Mountain Road. From the Mountain Road entrance to the 551W to the Dean Chapter it's all woods, maybe just do that part for about 5 km return.

Go onto the tracks at the Legion and head east toward Pictou to Baillie Road. The tracks run parallel to Langille Road. The trek out the tracks in either your sneakers, skis, snowshoes or bicycle is very interesting. There are big ponds, swamps, houses, farms, sheep and cows that I didn't know were there. The tracks are part of the Great Canadian Trail.

Back roads are not always completely plowed to the end and are also a source of great snowshoeing or cross-country skiing. Smith Road that joins Cape John Road to Shore Road in Melville is a good one. Two more are the Clydesdale Road and Berichon Road in the West Branch. There are great views of the Northumberland Strait from here.

Meg's Cove on Cape John to Skinners Cove and back is 11 km. The entrance and parking is at Scothorn Lane. This summer only walk is more challenging but you don't need to do the whole thing. You get the sound of the ocean, the sand is low impact and easy on your joints, as well as the smell and feel of sand, kelp, and Irish moss. There is also the added bonus of the sounds of community pastures. I would recommend going at low tide and going as far as the waterfall. At the waterfall, look up and you will see a barbed-wire fence suspended in air for about forty feet. This is likely due to erosion and is quite a sight. I am estimating 6 km round trip. Get this done by mid-July before the rocks get too slippery.

In summer, runners with a good tread will suffice. Once the road surfaces become slippery, a good insulated boot with an aggressive tread is effective, or even better, purchase ice grippers or crampons for your boots.

I must say that the wheeled drivers are considerate of foot traffic. They generally slow down. If you are in multiples, for safety, all of you go to the same side of the trail and step as far back off the trail as possible. The lead driver will signal the drivers behind to slow down and will signal to you how many vehicles are behind. Be listening for them and sound the warning to your friends. Smile and wave as they go by, this gesture is always returned.

At the very least take water and small snack. Always tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.

Grab a friend, enjoy the scenery and have the best chats, laughs, gripes, and cries. What happens in the woods, stays in the woods. Don't overdo it at first, leave yourself wanting more, and soon you'll feel so great, you won't be able to stay indoors either! I hope to see you sometime on one of these rustic walks in our great community.

News from River John Legion

by Mike Topley

Operations; Our Legion remains open for limited events, with protective masks (unless seated), distancing, and lots of sanitizing, disinfection/cleaning being the order of the day. Thanks to all who have co-operated. For the time being we are still only hosting Legion events, i.e., no birthdays, showers or family celebrations.

Chase the Ace (CtA); Chase the Ace is going really well, with good sales and attendance. Most come for the music, to chat a bit and have a drink. The Ace of Hearts will as of late February win you over \$13,000. Tickets are available at Fulton's Guardian Pharmacy, Monday-Friday, or at the Legion on Friday evenings from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. Music by Geezer "light", that is the Geezer cabaret vs. the dance musicians. Guest appearances have included Donald Duggan, Carol Smith and the Strange Valentines.

New Members; Zone Commander Charles McIsaac joined our January 2021 meeting to assist with the induction of several new members including; David Flemming, Mike George, Kenneth Fox, Norma Fox, Donald Duggan, John Crichton, Theresa Dickson, James Dickson and Maureen Topley.

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 through COVID-19, and continues to provide over 40 meals per week (on Wednesdays) to appreciative seniors in the community.

Legion COVID Site; If and when COVID testing and/or vaccination arrives in our village, the



Carl Snook, Allan Manning and Jason Langille

Legion stands ready to offer our site for such services.

Fun Things; Our first chilli (take-out) lunch of the year was sold out on Saturday 30th January. Our first meat roll of 2021 was held on Saturday 13th February; and by the time you read this, you may have enjoyed our annual smelt fry which was held on Saturday 27th February. In preparation for this event, 10 hardy fish processors convened at the Legion under the supervision of Robert MacLeod. Stories were told and laughs were had while cleaning and preparing 250 pounds of fresh Miramichi smelt, delivered by Keith Heighton.



On January 11th, the River John Legion Branch #108 had new members sworn in: (L to R) Mike George, David Flemming, Ken Fox, Norma Fox, Charles MacIsaac (Zone Commander), Teresa Dickson, Willis Langille (Sergeant at Arms), Maureen Topley, Jim Dickson Missing from photo: Donald Duggan



Geezer (Light) playing at Chase the Ace



Derelict barbed-wire fence at Megs Cove

Joan Redmond cross country skiing



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Double Hanging Valentines for February 14th, 2021

by Marjorie Johnson-Fraser

I have made Double Hanging Valentines for several years, giving/sending to friends and relatives, young and old. A clerk at Atlantic Fabrics, New Glasgow, told me that Valentine cloth is scarce this year, as it is picked up quickly for making masks. She made an apron (on display) and only had heart design cloth to put on the two pockets. Very attractive! The ones I keep I hang from door knobs, curtain rods, window locks, remove a small picture and wherever there is a spot. One can save the hearts from year to year and hang them again on the next February 14th.



Joyce Brown, our River John Post Mistress with the double hanging Valentines.



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Garbage: A message to those who litter – you know who you are

by Wilma van der Veen

What is the matter with you? What is your problem? Did your mommy & daddy not teach you to clean up after yourself or perhaps you are like mother/father like daughter/son?

These are rhetorical questions. I'm sure we have all heard the myriad of reasons the idiots who litter tell you about why they litter. "Ewww! I don't want that garbage in my car or in my handbag." "Who cares." "What's the big deal – it's just a piece of garbage." "I can't be bothered to find a garbage can – if it isn't convenient then too bad." My all time favourite is the following, priceless because of its absurd 'logic': "There are people who are hired by the municipality to collect garbage. What would they do if they didn't have any work to do?" Hmm... maybe the taxes that go to pay the wages of said person could go to ... I don't know ... to pay wages for healthcare ... or school workers.

I gather historically, before the days of garbage collection, folks would burn their garbage. Of course we certainly didn't produce the quantities of garbage we do now, and/or the type of garbage wasn't so toxic, e.g. plastics. Some will say, "Well we didn't know better." I am so fed up with that excuse whether it is for stopping garbage dumping or ending slavery or allowing non-white wealthy men to vote. The truth is that some folks did know better but alas they were not the powerful voices, instead they were ridiculed or worse vilified. I am always reminded of the historical phenomena where the folks who have what is considered non-conforming (read non-obedient) ideas, are often those who have the right ideas and those ideas will eventually be accepted as standard *modus operandi* but only after a huge struggle. And as we know with slavery, as with littering, it never ended, it is still alive and kicking even in Turtle Island (North America). Sex/human trafficking comes to mind. And of course there are still many around here who litter. Again you know who you are.

There have always been dump sites. Too often, all you have to do is take a walk down a dirt road or path and you will stumble across one. I have taken the time to clean up the dump sites I have found on our land, re-using some stuff – I mean I actually found decent jeans, mason jars, metal, etc..., and there is always stuff you can recycle. Little by little I also put the garbage out on our collection day. I know many other folks who do this. But is this something I really want to do? Of course not. We want to enjoy the natural environment in as much of a pristine state as is possible. I know you will always see the evidence of human activity, e.g. fences, mowed fields, clearcuts, buildings, power lines, old dirt tracks, etc., in this part of Canada. I remember being so disappointed to learn that NS forests have been cut over 7 times. I was like where are the old growth stands? Don't they exist? You need to go to other parts of Canada to see untouched nature. I am not looking for untouched wilderness but I do expect when I venture into fields and forests to simply find objects of nature.

So what do we find when we see litter:

Tim Hortons coffee cups: Why are folks still using disposable coffee cups? How ridiculously stupid. And with the lame excuse of convenience. I mean I am assuming you drink coffee/tea regularly even if not daily so GET YOURSELF A TRAVEL MUG. So utterly simple really but clearly there is some brain capacity missing perhaps? No excuse of too expensive since there are plenty available at thrift stores. Keep one in your car, in your backpack, in your purse. Laziness is all this is with the excuse "it's not convenient";

Ber cans & bottles: Every time I walk my dogs

I collect cans, anywhere from \$0.50 to \$1 worth of returnables. I recently heard that is because some folks like to drink and drive and so of course you can't be caught with open beer cans in your car/truck so instead just chuck them out of the window. I guess I should be happy that for the most part I find cans, since bottle tend to break which can be dangerous to wildlife and humans;

Disposable diapers: Yuck!! Do parents actually think they decompose? I don't get this one. I mean aren't parents supposed to care about the future of their children? I guess just another example of lip service when you think about what said parents are doing to the environment by dumping soiled non-cloth diapers;

Styrofoam food containers & other fast food packaging waste: Finally we are getting rid of single use plastic across the globe, e.g. straws. And we have the introduction of compostable food boxes. I remember from my childhood when the Chinese take outs were cardboard boxes albeit waxed lined. Alas, plastics took us away from often more environmentally friendly ways of production and consumption. We are learning the consequence of our actions now with plastic micro beads found in almost all food we consume (less so in organic food) and in so much of our soil & oceans;

Tractor & car parts from tires to oil drums: talk about mini toxic waste dumps. We actually had someone collect a derelict car that was left on our property as it was used for car mashups. Now you can get a few hundred or a tax write-off if you donate your car. Car parts can be recycled. Enough said;

Broken glass, dishes: Yes, what to do with some of this stuff. At least don't leave it around to hurt an animal or human. Children love playing in the woods but broken glass and skin don't match;

Plastic bags: Are you someone who still doesn't bring reusable bags for shopping? Get with the program. The verdict is in – plastics are toxic, for a starter killing marine life. But for those who put humans above all other life forms, they are also killing us and the corporations have known this for decades;

Toilets: I just don't get this. Can't you just try to find another use for this, like maybe a garden planter? Or pulverize it (great way to release anger?) so that you can use the crushed material for your garden or walk/driveway, similar to gravel.

I have on occasion found a whole turkey meal with all the fixings, (just minus a bunch of turkey,) just tossed in the ditch. I have found lots of home canning jars still filled with food and glass condiment containers, again just tossed in the ditch. In both cases, I couldn't help but imagine the big family fight that took place, someone being mad at someone else and deciding to empty the pantry/fridge and dump their food. I have also found pots & pans, plastic buckets, shoes, kitty litter & dog poop, (at least the latter will decompose,) purses – shucks never with any \$, TVs, barbecues. The list

goes on. What have you found and have been able to reuse?

The real problem is the fact that most people consume so much, way too much, so the corollary is they produce so much waste. Why do you think we have so many self-storage businesses that have sprung up this past decade. I mean part of the RJ school was converted to such a business, and similar use was planned for Tatamagouche elementary school. I have been astounded at the quantity of garbage bags that I see folks put out on collection day. I am mystified as to what folks consume but then I am not your typical consumer compared to most. In my purchases there are many considerations: The cost is not the #1 consideration, nor is my so-called need (read want). If you are adamant about wanting to buy whatever it is, then you should do your research: read reviews, ask others for suggestions, and buy something that will actually last so in the end it is actually cheaper and won't end up in the landfill so quickly. No more instant gratification which lasts hours if not minutes and then you have to again replenish your starving soul (psychologists and marketing types know you so well). However, equally important considerations are packaging and where the product was made. I realize this might be time consuming at first. Like any habit, it takes a bit of time to remember to do something that is different from how you used to do it, otherwise just an excuse.

I remember learning about folks who, despite their poverty or other very challenging life circumstances, still took the time to take care of their home and surroundings. For those who don't take care of what is around them you will often notice that they don't take care of themselves either. Often there is a significant mental health issue at hand. I'm sure we have all heard about the idea that if you don't respect and love yourself, why would you love and respect that which is around you as well. I am not referring to the British legacy of manicured lawns and gardens; talk about control issues and of Mother Nature nonetheless. Life is not neat and tidy and your garden can still allow for the ebb and flow of greenery, but it doesn't have to look like a garbage dump in its own right, nor

should you go make a dump site in the woods, supposedly out of sight and out of mind... NOT! There are folks out there who make a living from dealing with the contents of estates, salvaging stuff, reselling stuff, recycling stuff and responsibly bringing the real garbage to the municipal dump.

This might be an opportunity for you the reader to reflect on the amount of waste you and your family produce. How much are you actually satisfying a need rather than a want when you go about your consumer purchasing?

A word of advice to those who litter: You might want to remove any signs that can identify you, like receipts. I know folks who could track you down. I am watching for you, as are others.

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Bringing Down the Roof

by Carlie Thompson

Playing hockey around rural Nova Scotia 20 years ago, meant playing in some old, frigid cold and sometimes run down, barn-like rinks. To the eye, Springhill's rink was no different from many other rinks we played in. To a child, it was just another opportunity to play Canada's favourite sport.

The Tatamagouche Titans weren't the only thing falling apart that day. Unfortunately, we were losing 5-0, when a bar fell from the roof of the Springhill rink and hit our goalie's mother in the head. A few other incidents led up to that, which put the condition of the rink into question. That's when my father, self-proclaimed super coach Charles, yelled over to the Springhill bench that we were going to forfeit the game. It was too dangerous to continue to play. We were already losing by a "snow" slide, if you will, so we figured we didn't have much more to lose.

As we lined up to shake hands with the other team, our dedicated hockey moms and family members began to make their way to the entrance. The two teams did the same and waited for someone to come unlock our dressing room doors. I remember seeing my father talking to the Springhill coaches on the ice when a strange noise started. It sounded like a slow motion engine braking. The sturdy plexiglass that encompassed the ice surface started to burst and shatter! It was like Al MacInnis was rippin' slap shots at the glass simultaneously, SNAP! CRACK! POP! The glass continued to burst around the rink into microscopic shards, as the eerie noise increased.

People started screaming and rushing towards the front doors, "Get outside, get outside! The roof is coming down!" Both Peewee teams, skates and all, were forced and pushed in the crowd's direction to safety. My teammate, Travis Langille, and I both tumbled to the ground. I remember people trampling over us until someone hauled us up by our jerseys.

We met the rest of our trembling teammates outside, with our panicked parents. Everyone was watching the roof cave inwards before their eyes. The immense pressure and weight of the snow created such force that the old rink roof couldn't withstand any longer. The noises were like special sound effects you hear in movies. "Where's my dad?" I remember asking David Langille, our other coach, after scanning the crowd. "He'll be out soon, Carlie." David's reassuring words were hard to fathom when everyone was watching the building collapse. But, he was right. My father and the referee made it outside moments later. They were the last two to get out of the toppling rink. A captain goes down with his ship, they say. Same goes for a coach; he ensures his team reaches safe land before he does.

The caring and concerned people of Springhill invited us to the firehall, where we took off our hockey gear. As you can imagine, word travels fast in a small town and there were people at the firehall before we arrived. The flabbergasted chatter around the hall was abundant, but filled with gratitude. What if my father hadn't called the game when he did? It's overwhelming to think there could have been a much different and very devastating outcome. We could have lost 10-0!

Volunteers from the firehall, and community members from Springhill, already had hot chocolate, tea, coffee and sandwiches prepared for us. I think it's important to thank those people who came together quickly and provided us with comfort, support, food and refreshments. I'm not sure we remembered our manners that day, but I'll never forget their kindhearted hospitality. Thank you.

As my father, David, Travis and I drove back to Tatamagouche, I remember seeing people on their roofs, shovelling off the heavy snow. Word does travel fast! I listened to my father as he told us about being stuck in the bathroom with the referee. As they peered out the door and watched the glass shatter repeatedly, he knew they needed to get the H-E-double hockey sticks out of there. He was laughing when he looked over to Travis and me. He said something along the lines of, "Not many hockey players can say they brought the roof down. But, you two can."



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Book Review

Braiding Sweetgrass. Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer

by **Susan Stephen**

Elizabeth Gilbert, author of Eat, Pray, Love, writes that this book is “A hymn of love to the world.”

I concur.

Kimmerer is a botanist, a decorated professor at SUNY, the founder and director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, and an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. This book explores the ways she has come to understand her work and her heritage, and how those things intersect. Often while reading it I would stop and read sections out loud to my spouse, relishing the poetic phrasing or the new understanding that I was grasping. She is very skilled at helping the reader visualize the deep beauty in the natural world, and the new insights that open that world up for her readers.

The book is framed around the sacred act of braiding sweetgrass; she takes us through the action of planting sweetgrass in the marshes, of tending sweetgrass as it matures, of picking sweetgrass as a metaphor for sharing the bounty of the earth, braiding sweetgrass as a meditation, and burning sweetgrass, or finding the blessings in ritual.

The most common story Kimmerer uses to introduce us to the ideas in the book, the ideas that plants can teach us and talk to us if we only listen, is the story of her introduction to botany in University. When her advisor asked why she wanted to be a botanist, “I told him the truth. I was proud of my well-planned answer...the way it showed that I already knew some plants and their habitat, that I had thought deeply about their nature and was clearly well prepared for college work. I told him that I chose botany because I wanted to learn why asters and goldenrod looked so beautiful together.” (p.39).

Despite her advisor’s mocking, (“Miss Wall, I must tell you that that is not science.”)(p.40), she continued with her courses. It turns out, of course, that there is a scientific answer to why asters and goldenrod look so good together: they are the most attractive combination of colours to bees, and therefore get more pollinator visits than they would were they growing alone. Kimmerer, of course, spends much longer on this story than I just did, and gives you lots more science (about colour perception, after-images, bee vision, etc.), which is fascinating. She also reminds us, oh, so gently, that science is more than the testable hypothesis, and that studying beauty has value beyond the science.

Finally, the story illustrates the essential argument in the book: that plants often know more than we do, and that plants live in a world of reciprocity, trading bright colours for fertilization. And, though I have not referenced it yet, that indigenous ways of knowledge embrace knowing something with all aspects of our being: mind, body, emotion, and spirit, which is a fuller, more comple-

mentary knowledge than that of science alone.

She writes: “We are all bound by a covenant of reciprocity: plant breath for animal breath, winter and summer, predator and prey, grass and fire, night and day, living and dying. Water knows this, clouds know this. Soil and rocks know they are dancing in a continuous giveaway making, unmaking, and making again the earth.” (P.383)

Many of us in our Westernized culture may have difficulty with the idea that plants have knowledge, or that rocks have reciprocity with soil. Throughout the book, Kimmerer helps us understand what she means by this knowledge – that it isn’t based in language or facts, but in the way that the natural world balances the forces that create and sustain it. It is profoundly spiritual and at the same time rational, and we are reminded, through her stories of students hunting plants in the forest, of elders teaching how to make baskets (yes, of sweetgrass), of the traditional tales in a variety of indigenous cultures, that these essential stories give form to our lives. They teach us how to value the world around us, how to live with each other, how to listen to the forest and the ocean. Some of us already know the peace that comes with walking through fields or woods or beaches, the joy we get from digging hands in the soil to bring forth food. Kimmerer reminds us that everything we do has impact, and that finding the languages in the world around us expands our consciousness, and our responsibility as well.

This review is necessarily brief; I will suggest that if you want to hear Kimmerer speak, she can be found in interviews: On Being, with Krista Tippett; Tapestry, with Mary Hines; she has at least one TedTalk, and has appeared on numerous other programs.



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Local Girl Becomes Successful Business Woman

Profile of Cathy Covey, Owner of Sunrise Brokerage & Sales Ltd.

by Joan MacLeod

Not everyone is aware that Cathy Covey was raised and grew up in River John. She is the daughter of Jim and Nell Sutherland. She lived in Melville for her first 6 or 7 years and went to a one-room school where Mrs. Mabel Langille was her teacher. Most of the grade 1 to grade 12 students were either Langille or Falconer. Then she moved to Bigney where she went to a "smaller" one room school where her teacher was Mrs. Mary Grant, who blessed them each day with hot soup for lunch. The last place she lived while growing up, also in Bigney, is at the end of the Ford Road, where one of her brothers still lives. She has two grown sons.

After high school (West Pictou District High) Cathy moved to Halifax and began working in the real estate business. After managing Burnside Realty for 14 years she was licensed as a broker in 1994 and owned the franchise for Royal LePage Commercial Real Estate for the Atlantic provinces. Her office was in Halifax and she covered the four provinces. She was Vice President of Investment Sales, mostly selling shopping centres, apartment buildings, and hotels. She is very proud of her last project before selling Royal LePage, which was arranging for the construction of the Hilton and Holiday Inn at the Halifax airport. Cathy is also a certified property manager. She spent 2 years out west as manager of apartment buildings, before she moved back home to River John in 2007.

A community activist as well, she was very involved in our efforts to save our school before it closed in 2015. Save Our School (SOS) was an effort by many members of our community. They met once a week for a year and Cathy played a part by compiling information provided by other team members and putting together the final presentation; unfortunately, their efforts failed, we were all so disappointed! Cathy has been on the Board of Directors of the Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital Foundation for the past 12 years. She is Treasurer of the Foundation.

Cathy is both a broker and a REALTOR®. Every real estate company has to have a broker. The broker is responsible for the operation of the brokerage. A realtor works for the brokerage representing buyers and sellers. The broker can also represent buyers and sellers, this occurs in boutique



brokerages like "Sunrise Brokerage & Sales Ltd.". Cathy started this business in 2007 as something to keep her busy in retirement and mainly to sell cottages. As her main expertise was in investment real estate, she had never sold a house before starting up this business in River John. She soon found out that selling investment properties is very different from selling residential properties. (The experience, however is to

her credit as every time I have sold a property and contacted a lawyer, they have complimented my choice of Cathy, saying what a great realtor she is!)

Her main office is in Pictou. However, she works mainly from her home in River John. Since she travels to Amherst, Truro and Antigonish, River John is in the middle of the universe for her.

Currently, there are interesting trends in the real estate market. At the present time we have a sellers' market, which we have not seen in this area before. When Cathy opened Sunrise in 2007 there was a very busy market. The crash of 2008 brought down demand and therefore prices. Over the years the market gradually recovered, however the pandemic has created a great demand for property in rural

areas, including our area. Bidding wars, (I.e. properties being sold over asking price,) happen on a frequent basis these days. From 2008 until 2020, rural Pictou County has had an increase in sales of over 350%.

Lately, the people moving into the area are mostly coming from Ontario, although Cathy recently sold a home on the Louisville Road to a couple from Illinois; and she is currently working with buyers from California on a purchase of a large home in River John. They have never been to the area, have not personally seen the home. She is quite often doing Zoom showings to folks from outside the province. This works well for them; however, there have been a number of sales lately where folks bought a home and won't be coming to live there until the pandemic is over.

In general, 80% of the folks looking to buy are from Ontario and 20% from other parts of Nova Scotia. There are few buyers from Alberta and BC. People from Ontario feel that our prices are reasonable and they want to escape Ontario, especially now that more people can work from home. There are folks from the UK looking to buy in the River John area as well.

I think we can consider ourselves blessed that Cathy chose to return to her roots and operate her successful business from here.

Meals On Wheels: 16 Years of Service in River John

by Julie Windebank

One of various responsibilities of the River John's Community Coordinator, Joanne Wilkins, is the management of Meals on Wheels. The service was restarted 16 years ago by Bonnie Murray and Joanne, with initial funding support from the RJs Ladies Group. Largely provided by volunteers, the service ensures the weekly delivery of a nourishing meal to approximately 40 seniors in the River John area. Another very important benefit of the service is a welcome social visit to people who often aren't able to get out and around, although currently that has been limited by COVID-19 restrictions. The service is typically provided between October and March.

The twelve drivers are volunteers, and three of them each week have between 10 and 16 deliveries to make on their routes. Drivers go to Toney River, Cape John, Welsford and Marshville, as well as within the village. The person responsible for getting the groceries and all the cooking each week is Sandra Patriquin. Meals are prepared and packed in the licensed kitchen at the River John Legion Branch 108. Funding for the program is sourced through Provincial, Municipal and Health Board grants, donations from community organizations and the recipients themselves, who pay \$6 per meal. Meals on Wheels is important not only to the people who look forward to a delivery each week, but also to the drivers who enjoy their connection with the community members who rely on them. It's a source of pride for all those involved in keeping the service running smoothly, year after year. This is another example of the importance of volunteers, who contribute so much to keeping a small community thriving.

For more information, contact Joanne Wilkins: 902 351 2143

Meals on Wheels is unable to take new clients for the remainder of this service year.

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River John Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary

by **Chris Patterson**

On September 10, 1979, ten ladies met at the River John Fire Hall to form the Ladies Auxiliary and they haven't looked back since.

Over the past 42 years, the Ladies Auxiliary has provided many services to the community. We have catered to banquets, weddings, anniversaries, and other social gatherings. We have had many fundraisers over the years. They include dances, box socials, raffles, pantry sales, cellar to attic sales, Tupperware parties, collection of grocery store cash register tapes, chowder challenges, sale of printed cookbooks, lucky duck race, entertainment by Jimmy the Janitor, Quilt and Craft show (for 29 years), The Travelling Apron, Fashion Shows (for 19 years) to name some but not all. Since 2006 the main fundraiser has been the Dinner Theatre. The ladies-only night features a delicious lobster salad dinner with all the fixings and cherry cheesecake for dessert. Because of its popularity, the Dinner Theatre was put on for 2 nights with sold-out seating for 180 each night. The delicious meal was prepared by the Ladies Auxiliary members as well as loyal volunteers from the community. It's no small endeavour to prepare and serve 180 lobster salad meals in quick time each night.

An important part of the dinner theatre was the entertainment which was guaranteed to tickle your fancy. The actors in the plays were Auxiliary members as well as community volunteers who stepped up each year to help. There were also behind-the-scenes individuals who were necessary for such a successful evening. Writing and participation in the plays was a huge commitment that usually started early in the year. We also had numerous door prizes which were donated by businesses and individuals and given out each evening. The night usually ended with a standing ovation!

Since COVID hit, we have not had a meeting since March 2020. Needless to say, the dinner theatre was postponed in 2020 and 2021. We hope to resume our group and continue with our community service. Over the past 42 years, we have updated many items in the fire hall and kitchen as well as donating over \$220,000 to the River John Fire Dept. This is all possible because of the dedicated auxiliary members, some who are still part of the original group, and members of the community who always step up when asked.



2011 Charlie comes home:

Back row (l to r) Margaret MacLean, Chrissie Jamieson, Ethel Langille Anne Heighton, Jean Holt, Mary Jane Gagnon, Johanna Langille, Linda Little
Front row (l to r) Margie MacGregor, Valerie Langille, Millie Langille



2012: "Around the World in Eighty Days" - One-woman play by actress Amanda Gillis

Back row: Amanda Gillis.
Middle row L to R: Dorrie Langille, Della Jefferson, Carole Phee, Margie MacGregor, Anita Clark, Ann MacKay, Katherine Ives, Eleanor Sutherland, Aggie MacLellan, Marilyn Ebsary.
Front row: Millie Langille, Margaret MacLean, Chrissie Jamieson, Valarie Langille



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St. John the Baptist Church Newsletter

by Rev. John Morrell

With the reopening of the church in the fall, we were blessed to have musicians Jim White and Carol Campbell Smith sing two songs before the service began. With the permission to sing softly through our masks, organist Faye Jefferson was now able to accompany hymns - usually only two, and two or three verses from each. Occasionally, Denise White would also do a solo during the offering.

Rev. John Morrell will lead Palm Sunday (March 28th) and Easter (April 4th) services at Holy Trinity, Middleton Corners at 9 a.m. and St. John's at 11 a.m. All are Welcome. Masks and social distancing continue to be required.

Members of the congregation will lead a short Easter Sunrise service at Bissell Park at 7 a.m. NO BREAKFAST will be served again this year.

Other activities like Gospel Nights and Sunday Breakfasts are still on hold until the pandemic relents.



Jim White and Carol Campbell

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

by Rev. Enjei Achah

It is great to see that we are already in the New Year. We were able to make the most of our Christmas Eve celebrations as a church in spite of the restrictions and the turnout was really good. It is always a privilege to be in God's house.

Advent season is over, and we are now entering the season of Lent. This is a season of turning and returning to God; a time when we look inward and surrender our weaknesses to God through His Son Jesus Christ. This we do through our confession and penitence as we meditate on our obligations and blessings of being partakers of a covenant relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we continue to face the challenges of the global pandemic, we lift up our voices in thanksgiving to God for keeping us safe in our community. As we begin this season of Lent, may we consider ways in which we can lean on the promises of God in order to continue staying strong through this period. Our doors are open to anyone who needs help in any way or needs someone to talk to or someone to pray for them.

Due to the covid-19 restrictions, we are going to skip Ash Wednesday this year while hoping that next year will be better. Here are some dates to take note of:

March 28th Palm/Passion Sunday
April 1st Maundy Thursday
April 2nd Good Friday
April 4th: Easter Sunday

Church and COVID Continues!

by Rev. Connie McNamara

We are fast approaching the one year anniversary of the declaration of a state of emergency by the province of Nova Scotia in response to the COVID 19 global pandemic, and while much has changed, much also remains the same.

The River John West Branch Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada is currently worshipping online only, a decision that was made to alleviate some of the pressures caused by the special restrictions and the cleaning guidelines for in-person worship, and by the dangers of driving in the winter weather. This will change as of Palm Sunday on March 27th when we will resume in-person worship for Holy Week and for the weeks and months to come, unless COVID restrictions become more severe due to a rise in the number of active COVID cases in Nova Scotia. There is still much uncertainty as 'things' can change both daily and rapidly.

In the mean time, we will continue to plan and provide worship, to offer pastoral care, and to meet to do the business of the church (whether in person, by Zoom, or by Tele-Conference) on a regular basis. To that end, our annual round of Congregational Meetings and Pastoral Charge Meeting will be held in March, following the printing and distribution of our Annual Report. In addition to such administrative work, we have also hosted two take-out "Community Suppers" which were successful fund raisers and fellowship opportunities; and we will also host take-out "Community Suppers" in March and April.

COVID has definitely changed how the church is able to function in our communities, but what continues unchanged is our purpose, which is to care and to share, so if you know of anyone who has need of a visit, or assistance of any kind, please do not hesitate to contact me. COVID continues, but so does the church, and so does our hope for the future.

Blessings,

Rev. Connie McNamara, River John West Branch Pastoral Charge and Three Harbours Pastoral Charge, United Church of Canada

Why Did I Become a Priest?

by Rev. John Morrell

I have been asked this question on a number of occasions, "Why did you become a Priest?" Anyone's call to ordained ministry is different and our paths and journeys can take us in very different directions.

My parents were very religious and supportive of our Episcopal church in suburban Maryland. I also attended an Episcopal church boarding school and later an Episcopal college where my great-grandfather had attended and was ordained in the mid-1850s, so the possibility of ministry in the church was always there.

The summer following my first year as a Master's candidate at McGill saw me go to Camp Galilee on the shores of Lake Tahoe, Nevada. This summer camp in the Episcopal Diocese of Nevada confirmed my call to ministry. The following summer, I sought status as a postulant for ordination. I was asked to take at least 2 years and work in the secular world.

Graduating with my M.A. in Religious Studies in June 1973, I directed a summer 'Opportunities for Youth Program' at Christ Church Cathedral in Montreal. In the fall, I was hired as Student Activities Officer for a large regional high school in Greenfield Park, Quebec. The following year I was married to Kathy, then we bought a house, we had our first child and I was full-time at McGill doing a Diploma in Education.

Other careers in teaching and photography were interrupted when I applied and became the first lay person to be Director of Program for the Diocese of Nova Scotia. I served for five and a half years under Bishop Leonard Hatfield and Archbishop Arthur Peters. Following my ministry here, I moved to the Eastern Townships of Quebec as Youth Coordinator and Summer Camp Director for the Diocese of Quebec. With the support of retiring Bishop Allen Goodings, I undertook a six-month parish-centered training program and was ordained a deacon in June 1991. In September 1992 I was priested in Sherbrooke, Quebec.

Since my ordination, and as a summer resident, I have been able to occasionally lead services in Middleton Corners and River John.

In my 30 years of ordained ministry, I have served congregations in Montreal, the Eastern Townships of Quebec, Vermont, Qatar, Grenada and Nova Scotia, where I served St. Mark's in Halifax for over seven years. After a move to Marshville following my retirement in 2018, I currently serve the three churches of the Parish of Northumberland as Priest-in-Charge.

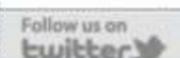


**Karla MacFarlane
MLA, Pictou West**

Please contact me with
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Excerpt from the Diary of Rev James MacGregor

**shared by Rev. Glen Matheson,
D.D., Scotsburn, NS**

Editor's Note: Rev MacGregor, was known as the Wilderness Preacher. He was sent from Scotland in 1786 to minister to the settlers. He built the congregation (Presbyterian) by preaching under trees. He baptised the children. In later years, when I served as a representative for Pictou Presbytery, we had a gavel which had been carved from a tree under which he had preached. in Bridgeville. He certainly came to River John in its early days and before our first minister, Rev. Mitchell arrived in 1808.

Note from Rev. Matheson: Years ago I was entrusted with a rare copy of Rev. James Drummond MacGregor's diary. What follows are his words written in 1786, shortly after he arrived from Scotland at age 27, in which he describes how he got from Halifax to Pictou. There was no such town or community by that name. "Pictou" meant a vast region called Pictou Township which then was an area covering several counties on today's maps. This was 13 years after the arrival of the ship Hector in 1773, and we are given a perfect description of the isolation and the difficulty of travel in 1786 as follows in his own words. (Rev. Cock was a minister in Londonderry.)

"On Thursday, 13th (July), a farmer from Truro, one of Mr. Cock's hearers, offered, if I would start next day, to accompany me through the woods to Truro, which would be sixty miles of the hundred to Pictou. I hired horse, and we set off on Friday afternoon on a good road, but a miserable rocky soil. About eleven miles from Halifax the road grew worse, but the woods became gradually better, till their beauty, strength, and loftiness far surpassed any thing of the kind I had ever seen in the Highlands. I imagined myself riding through the policies of a Scottish duke; but the policies of no Scottish duke can compare in grandeur with the forests of Nova Scotia. After riding two or three miles through this beautiful scene, I began to look for a house, but no house, great or small, appeared; till after we had ridden for eight miles more, there appeared a small clearing in rocky land, where, after supping upon good bread, fish and bohea tea, we lodged for the night. Thenceforth we had no road. A narrow avenue had been cut down indeed, and some of the trunks, cut across and rolled a little out of the way, but many of them lay as they fell, and none of the stumps or roots had been removed.

In proportion as the land became less rocky, and in every place where it was wet, the horses had to wade nearly to the knees, and often far above them, in mud and water, and the one horse behaved to put his foot in the very spots where the other before him put his. Next morning we rode eight miles before we breakfasted, which we did on fish, bread, and tea: then with great exertion and fatigue (to me) eighteen miles to dinner, which again composed of bread, fish and tea. I was very thankful for our safety, as the greatest part of the road was both difficult and dangerous, on account of the many swamps full of roots and logs, which we had to pass. I was attentive to direct the horse as dexterously as possible, and keep a good bridle hand, and often ascribed the safety of both to my cautious management. But at last we came to a place so apparently dangerous, that it seemed quite impossible to escape without broken bones. There was no way to get to a side, or to go back and the horse was in such haste to get on, that he did not allow time to think. I threw the bridle upon his neck in perfect despair. How amazed was I to find myself completely delivered from the great danger in a few

seconds by the sagacity of a mere beast! This incident was of great use to me afterwards, by inspiring me with perfect confidence in the horses reared in the forest here. Toward evening we came to the river Stewiacke, where there was a considerable clearing on the side of the river, and the soil was very fertile. It is called intervale in Nova Scotia, and haugh or dale in Scotland.

The river was small, though still and deep; and seeing neither boat or bridge, I thought only of swimming across it, but my companion showed me a trough on the edge of the river on the other side, told me that it was one of the canoes of Nova Scotia, and that it would carry us over in safety. Perceiving a man mowing hay at some distance, on the same side of the river with the canoe, my fellow-traveller called aloud to him. He understood that we wanted passage, at once threw aside his scythe, and on reaching the river turned the canoe upon its side, to empty it of some water which it had leaked, launched it, and quickly paddled over to us. He directed us to take the saddles off our horses, and helped us to drive them into the river, to swim across. Putting my saddle in the bottom of the canoe, he desired me to sit upon it; I did so, and he ferried me across quickly and safely, and afterwards my companion in the same manner. These operations being new to me, I observed them with no small degree of curiosity. The man was dressed in a home made check or woolen shirt, and striped trousers, without hat, handkerchief, or stocking. I admired his dress, as the best I had seen for labourers in hot weather, which was now the case in a high degree. He accompanied us to his house, put our horses to pasture, and lodged us hospitably. Here again we supped on bread, fish and tea, so that I began to conclude that there was no other eatables in Nova Scotia. Upon inquiry, I was told that the country people could not afford meat, as it kept fresh for only a very short time in such hot weather; but that fish could be had at any time, as almost every house stood beside a stream, and the fish were plentiful in proportion to the scarcity of the inhabitants. We had passed three houses only during the whole day, and each was beside a stream. I was also told that they caught fish in winter, when the ice was a foot thick, as well as in summer, merely by cutting a hole in the ice, and letting down a baited hook. The fish, seeing the light by the hole, come to it immediately and bite readily. It was said, moreover, to be common for country people to keep beef, moose meat, and caribou meat (I suppose the same as the elk and reindeer) fresh, in the snow, for three months.

The home in which we lodged consisted of a kitchen and two or three bed-closets, with a garret for lumber, and a sleeping-place for some of the children. We sat in the kitchen, and here I had an opportunity of seeing how the country women prepared their bread. After kneading the dough, the landlady formed it into a beautiful large cake of an oval form, nearly an inch thick, swept a hot part of the hearth clean, and there laid it flat. She then spread over it a thin layer of fine cold ashes, and over that a thick layer of hot ashes, mixed with burning coals. By the time the tea-kettle boiled, the bread was baked. The landlady with the fire-shovel removed the ashes, and took it off the hearth; and then, after a little agitation to shake off the ashes, she wiped it with a cloth, much cleaner than I could have expected when it was laid down. It made very good and agreeable bread. It seemed this was the way of baking bread in the days of Abraham, (Gen. 18:6). It was a speedy way; and, though not clean, still not so foul as a stranger would imagine. Some

cover the cake with paper when it is laid upon the hearth, which keeps it perfectly clean, but this was not a common mode. Our host, I suppose, kept up family worship, for the Bible was at hand, and laid on the table after supper, which I had seen done before."

To be continued . . .

News from Helping Hand IOOF Lodge #34

by Jacob Leegwater

Greetings to the readers of the Pioneer. Since the last issue, we have been active in the community. In December, we packed 20 bags with groceries for senior citizens living alone. Judging by the "Thank yous," we can see that this was appreciated. Also Christmas cards and a gift were distributed to our senior members and widows of departed members. We also sponsor a resident at the Oddfellows Home in Pictou.

In January, we welcomed our Deputy Grand Master, Bro. Peter Richardson, as well as three other guests. Grand Lodge officers were introduced to the visiting members. They included Grand Chaplain, Bro. Jacob Leegwater and District Deputy Grand Master, Bro. Earl Johnson. Our meetings are usually held on Monday nights at 7:30, however, on the second Monday of January, February and March, we meet at 1:30 on Mondays to accommodate some Lodge members from the Truro area, as the Lodge there has closed. Guests in February were Bros. Edward Phalen, Mike MacKenzie and Peter Richardson of Eastern Star #1 as well as Bro. Lester Ward of IOOF Lodge Union #30, Bridgeville.

Plans are underway to host the District #17 semi-annual meeting on April 19th under the direction of our District Deputy Grand Master, Bro. Earl Johnson.

Helping Hand Noble Grand is Bro. Rod Hayman. Recording Secretary is Bro. Jacob Leegwater.

Our sister Rebekahs will be meeting on March 12th for the first time since the pandemic started. We'll keep you posted if there is a start of the card parties.

Until next time, take care of each other and stay safe.



At the River John Remembrance Day dinner, Earl Johnson of the IOOF Helping Hand Lodge #34 presented Mike Topley, President of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 108, with a cheque for \$500 to help with expenses during this difficult time of COVID restrictions.

The Welsford Tannery of River John

by Beulah Wright

One might think that the Welsford Tannery would have been found in the community of Welsford, but in spite of its name, the Welsford Tannery was in River John, up on the hill opposite the Methodist Church, on Tannery Lane. It successfully operated there for many years, one of the prominent industries of River John.

Let us first look at the origin of the name "Welsford". Augustus Frederick Welsford, born in 1811 in Windsor, Nova Scotia, was an army officer from a military background, educated at King's College, and quickly rose through the ranks of the British Army, becoming a major in 1850. When the Crimean War broke out, he was sent to Sevastopol, and led several successful assaults before he was killed in action. Another Nova Scotian, William Parker, was also killed in the same attempt. Captain Welsford was highly regarded and his death deeply regretted. Five years later, in 1860, a monument was erected in St. Paul's Cemetery, in Halifax, in honour of these two military heroes. It was not only in Halifax that he was highly regarded though, as a part of River John village was named Welsford in 1858, in his honour.

As well as the Welsford Tannery and the community of Welsford, there was also a volunteer rifle company formed in River John, called the Welsford Rangers, with the following officers: Captain James Kitchen, First Lieutenant Charles E. Henry,

Second Lieutenants D.W. Kackat and W.E. Grish, Sergeants D.W. Campbell and Robert Beer and Corporals W.J. Rogers and Rod MacKay. Also, Welsford was a popular first name, given to several River John sons.

Robert Sutherland was born in 1840, in New Lairg, Pictou County, the son of John Hugh and Elizabeth (MacDonald) Sutherland. When only a small boy, the family moved to River John. In 1868, in Boston, MA, Robert married Margaret Fitzpatrick, a girl from Fitzpatrick Mountain, and they settled in River John, in a home still occupied by his descendants. He built a tannery behind the home and proceeded to become a leading citizen of

the village in which he lived most of his life. He was an elder in the Presbyterian church, President of the Bible Society, Charter member of Helping Hand Lodge and of the Sons of Temperance, and a loyal Conservative, active in the local political scene.

It isn't certain where he learned his craft, because he was known as both a tanner and a currier, a trade that required training and skill. Perhaps he apprenticed in the United States. The making of leather was a long procedure. Animal hides would be brought to the tannery by farmers, hunters or butchers, where the hides would be soaked, cleaned, hair removed and cured with various treatments of salt and lime, then tanned with multiple solutions made mainly of oak bark. After it was fully tanned it would be cut into the desired size, ready for currying, which was turning the stiff leather into pliable, workable, soft leather, ready for the harness makers or the shoemakers. There were plenty of them in the village of River John.

In our Museum there is a barrel chair made by Robert Sutherland, with leather from his tannery, the chair cushion stuffed with straw.

Eventually, after many years, the tannery closed due to changing conditions, which meant no longer such a need for leather. There is nothing left of the tannery now, except the pond, and some grown over foundations, where a thriving industry once flourished.

Robert and Margaret raised five sons, all of whom became successful citizens in their own right, and two daughters. One of the sons was River John's Colonel Dan, who was an engineer, building railroads in several Canadian provinces. He distinguished himself in the military in World War I, quickly rising in the ranks, and becoming the Commander of the Black Battalion, retiring to live out his years as a prominent figure in the life of River John.

Robert Sutherland died in 1925, Margaret predeceased him in 1921 and both are buried in River John.



What's Going on in West Branch

by Denise White

What's going on in West Branch? Well, the short answer is – Not much! Like a lot of small communities, we are struggling with the pandemic having seriously curtailed social activities. And winter has made that situation a lot worse. But we remain hopeful.

West Branch is normally a community of true neighbours. I know from personal experience, that if it wasn't for the kindness of friends, we'd still be digging out from the last big snowstorm. That's why it saddens me to hear, through the grapevine, that there have been some thefts and vandalism in our neighbourhood. It's shameful to think that there are some folks who believe that that sort of thing is OK. I hope that the authorities find out who it is quick and put a stop to it.

The West Branch and Area Community Hall held its very first take-out dinner in the fall. It was such a great success that we've decided to do it again. Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 24. We'll be serving ham, scalloped potatoes, veg and roll. There will be more information on that event closer to the day. We'll be sure to post it on the Hall's Facebook page.

The Hall also installed a heat pump. That will make things so much nicer for summer events. Air-conditioning is definitely needed when folks are dancing up a storm in August! Also, we'd like to remind folks that the Hall is a comfort station.

Although the Hall hasn't played host to music/open mic events since this time last year, we are optimistic that we will be able to start up again soon. The details haven't been worked out yet, and there may be some different rules than before, but we feel confident that we can do it and still maintain the Health Department guidelines. I know that there are a lot of musicians out there who are just itching to get back to the Hall to jam. Stay tuned for more information coming nearer the end of April.

Speaking of musicians, have you seen The Strange Valentines? They are a couple of very talented performers who have made the River John area their home. You have to check out their Youtube channel. They have done a series of six mini documentaries called "Community Strong." They are each about 20 minutes long and are about the small, rural community halls in this area, including West Branch. The others are Seafoam-Melville, Caribou River, Scotsburn, Brule and Lyons Brook. Each delves into the history, the heart, of the communities that they represent. And as an added bonus, the Strange Valentines perform an original piece of music in each one. Believe me, they are worth watching. We would like to extend our thanks to David Farrell and Janet Mills for putting together a project as unique as the subject matter.

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Winter in River John in the 40s and 50s

by Diane MacLeod Shink

The first 16 years of my life were spent in River John so I have many memories associated with that coldest of seasons.

I often think of the smell of home-baked brown bread and baked beans. Saturday was the day for my piano lesson and I remember walking home along highway #6 from Mrs Lisson's (near the end of the Louisville Rd) with the cold north wind whipping my legs. Women all wore skirts and dresses in those days as well, pants or trousers were not the custom. The kitchen was always warm and welcoming, the oil stove not only kept the kitchen warm but had an oven from which Mom produced delicious food. On Saturday morning she would simmer beans that had soaked overnight on the stove top. The beans would then be placed in a bean crock as Mom worked her magic with molasses and salt pork; beans and brown bread were the Saturday night staple. In those days when fresh vegetables were limited to the root variety, we ate many preserved veggies. The accompaniment to baked beans was always green tomato relish or chow.

We did our homework around the kitchen table without the distraction of television. Sometimes in winter, when the river was frozen and the moon was bright, we would be allowed to go out after supper to skate. Mother spent most of Saturday baking and preparing food for Sunday. In our house Sunday was considered a day of rest. That was also the day after morning church services when we went for a Sunday afternoon drive, which often involved visiting relatives.

The main meal of meat and potatoes was eaten at noon and supper was sometimes a bowl of strawberry preserves with home-made bread and sharp cheddar cheese. I never remember sandwiches being served in our home.

In those days the house was heated by a furnace located in the basement. Ours was fuelled by coal. Mom hated the yearly coal delivery because dust from the coal spread throughout the house as it was shovelled into the basement storage room. I believe the tradition of spring house cleaning was necessary in those days after the furnace was closed down.

Other preparations were necessary for winter; storm windows and shutters were installed and winter clothing was made or purchased. My father told the story of the bachelor farmer who came into the store yearly to purchase his suit of long underwear often called combinations. Dad asked him why he was buying a new pair. He answered, "When I take my underwear off in the spring, I burn it in the stove."

Women who had large families must have devoted a large amount of time to knitting mittens and hats. In some cases, they would use the wool from their own sheep. The job would start with shearing the sheep in the late spring, washing and cleaning and then spinning the wool and dyeing until it was ready to be knit. A client related the process that her job was easier because there was a stream flowing through their farmland so she used that water to wash her fleece.

Children enjoyed the winter as the activities of sliding and skating were lots of fun. It was a good winter when the river froze before there was too much snow and then the skating was great. The local boys would sometimes get old tires from behind the garage and make bonfires on the ice. I can still smell the woolen snow pants drying on the radiators. The kitchen stove also had a tank on the side for warming hot water. In the winter many Saturday night baths were enjoyed in the warmth of the kitchen. The oven was also used to dry wet mittens and gloves. That was before electric clothes dryers existed.

It was a simpler life then and certainly we adults and children got lots of exercise and fresh air.



Janet MacLean (Baillie) and Diane MacLeod (Shink). Taken in 1945. Note my father's long John's on the clothes line. There were no dryers in those days .

True or False Trivia Quiz

1. The helmets of space suits have a velcro piece that allows astronauts to scratch their noses.
True _____ False _____
2. There is a fruit that is 300 times sweeter than sugar.
True _____ False _____
3. In one of the largest fast food chains, hamburgers can be made specially for left-handed people.
True _____ False _____
4. Pigs are immune to snake venom.
True _____ False _____
5. There is a muscle in the human body that only some people have.
True _____ False _____
6. If a penguin is startled, it can use its wings to 'jump' 20 feet away.
True _____ False _____
7. Albert Einstein claimed his second greatest discovery came when he tried to make a hard boiled egg in soup.
True _____ False _____
8. In 2015, an attempt was made to use pigeons to boost the Wifi signal in London. They had small gadgets on their feet that charged whenever they stood on an electric line.
True _____ False _____
9. The owners of Foulis Castle in Scotland must make snow balls in the middle of summer at any time the queen demands it.
True _____ False _____
10. Bananas are radioactive.
True _____ False _____

Check your answers on the next page

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Sometimes Walls CAN Talk

by Beulah Wright

Found in the walls of the Munro house in River John was this gem, written years ago by the late Maysie MacIntosh, in tribute to Charlie Hinds. It is not dated, but Charlie died in 1955, so written before that. There is no idea of why she wrote this, nor how it came to be in the walls, but there is a great deal of history in these pages – very interesting reading! Maysie's daughter married Cecil Hind, but since Cecil and his father were both born in Ontario, there doesn't appear to be a family connection. However, Maysie and Charlie were neighbours. Anyway, as the tribute has been found, let us enjoy a voice from the past!

by Maysie (Grant) McIntosh

"A tribute to my good old friend, Charlie Hinds, and a few incidents in the early life of River John.

Charlie was born in River John in October, 1869, and was the son of James and Elizabeth (Patriquin) Hinds. He had one brother, William, who died at the age of 35 years, and two sisters, Etta, who married Harvey Langille, Brook Road, (he died suddenly with pneumonia leaving her with a three day old son, Harvey). She later married Harry Mills of Chester. Bessie married James Campbell of River John.

Charlie attended the village school which, at that time, stood near where the residence of D. McKay Ross is. Two of his earlier teachers were Cassie McKenzie who later married Rev. Robert McCunn. Another was John Gollans, a well-known teacher particularly noted for his fine penmanship.

Living near the river, from early spring until fall, Charlie had daily swims and that stood him in good stead for when, still only a young lad in school, he and his brother Will featured in the rescue of a young girl from drowning, a Miss Marion McCunn from Montreal who was vacationing at the home of Rev. McCunn. She had gone in bathing at what was then known as Chisholm's Point, and got beyond her depth. She had gone down several times when these two lads came to her rescue and got her safely ashore. Later, he and his brother were presented with a silver cup for their heroic deed.

On another occasion, Charlie rescued Maggie Proudlock from drowning after she had fallen thro' a hole in the Government Wharf.

Charlie, like a lot of other young boys, wasn't very fond of school so very often played hookey.

At the age of eleven, he left school and went to work with a man by the name of Dan Kitchen. His job was driving a horse and cart and they were working on the first railway to be built thro' here. The contractor was a Col. Snow and this undertaking was abandoned. At a later date, however, the present short line was built.

His next boss was a man by the name of Jardine who had the contract for building the Railway Stations from Brown's Point to Denmark. This same man also built the water tank at River John

His first work at ship-building started when he was 15 years old. He turned the trunnels for the warrior which was the largest ship ever built in River John.

In the year 1880, he hauled timber and plank for the barque, Gazelle, and others that he worked on were the Evadnay, Maratona, and Sir Dar, a 3-masted schooner built by McLennans in 1918. When shipbuilding was again revived, he worked on the Cambria and Mary F. Anderson, 1919-20, built by C.H. McLennan.

At the age of 16, he went to work in the stone quarries located up the river. The first one he worked on was owned by Charlie Rogers. They loaded the stone on scows and took it down the riv-

er to the Government Wharf, where it was re-loaded on a steamer and taken to Halifax where some of it was used in the building of the City Hall and some also was taken to New Glasgow and used in the building of the Post Office there. Stone from another quarry owned by David Hinds was used in the building of John McKenzie's store in the village.

In the year 1877, a terrible epidemic of diphtheria struck River John and children by the dozen died of it. The local Doctors, Collie and Cameron, were at a loss to know what it was. Doctor Roach of Tatamagouche was called in as well as doctors from Pictou but they could find nothing to combat it. There was hardly a home but lost one or more children, some even losing three or four.

The way it started, so the story goes, was that a Langille girl from Tory Lane had gone to the States and was working as a domestic in a home where a little boy had died of this disease and apparently, not realizing how contagious it was, when the girl was returning home in the summer, they gave her all the child's clothes to take home.

As was the custom in those days, once a week the women from that section of the village, (which was much more thickly populated than at present,) gathered at what was then known as Jim Sutherland's pond. They built fires nearby to heat the water and did their washing, spreading it on the ground to dry. They took their children along, as well as this girl took along all these clothes that had been given her and washed them along with the rest. The result was that all the children present came down with this dreadful sore throat and from that it spread from house to house.

Charlie and his brother and sisters took it but, fortunately, they survived. For forty years Charlie worked at the lobster factories in the summer, having various jobs from cracker to general man, also firing the boiler and weighing on the wharf. He was always one of the first men to go down in the spring to get the buildings and everything in readiness for the fishermen.

In the winter, he mostly worked in the lumber woods, but no matter where he worked or what he worked at, he was known as a very reliable and honest workman.

In 1931, when the River John Fire Department was first organized, he was appointed Fire Chief and in that capacity he, on several occasions, saved the village from destruction. He was cool-headed and fearless in the face of danger and never spared himself.

He has a very retentive memory and can recall people and happenings of by-gone days. He is much sought after for tracing out the genealogy of River John natives but, best of all, Charlie is known as a good friend, a kind neighbour and an honest man and what greater tribute can be paid to anyone than that."

Answers to Trivia Quiz

1. The helmets of space suits have a velcro piece that allows astronauts to scratch their noses.
True. Due to the repeating request of many astronauts, the inside of their helmets has a strip of velcro they can scratch their nose against.
2. There is a fruit that is 300 times sweeter than sugar.
True. The Luo Gan Fuo comes from the plant *Sitratia Grosvenorii*, grown in China.
3. In one of the largest fast food chains, hamburgers can be made specially for left-handed people.
False.
4. Pigs are immune to snake venom.
True. So are hedgehogs, honeybadgers and mongooses (why are they not called mongeese?!)
5. There is a muscle in the human body that only some people have.
True. The Palmaris Longus is a muscle visible as a tendon in the wrist. It is absent in about 14 percent of the population.
6. If a penguin is startled, it can use its wings to 'jump' 20 feet away.
False. Penguins cannot do much on land other than walk and skip.
7. Albert Einstein claimed his second greatest discovery came when he tried to make a hard boiled egg in soup.
True. This action helped Einstein develop the Theory of Relativity. He claimed it also saved him from washing another pot!
8. In 2015, an attempt was made to use pigeons to boost the Wifi signal in London. They had small gadgets on their feet that charged whenever they stood on an electric line.
False. But something that might be worth considering!
9. The owners of Foulis Castle in Scotland must make snow balls in the middle of summer at any time the queen demands it.
True. The castle was given, in the 11th century, to a tribal leader who helped the royal house defeat invading Vikings. Since then there has been this tradition, where the English crown may ask for snowballs in summer (but it's unlikely it has ever happened!)
10. Bananas are radioactive.
True. Although Potassium-40 is technically a radioactive material, you would need to eat thousands of bananas a day for it to affect you.

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Seniors Dinner

by Lion Cheryl Frizzell

With Covid 19 and so many seniors not being able to attend family and friends' homes for Christmas, on Dec.25, seniors opened their doors to a River John & District Lions Club member wishing them a Merry Christmas while delivering a free hot Christmas dinner with all the trimmings and a gift. The River John & District Lions Club delivered well over 70 meals to the communities of River John, West Branch, Toney River etc. Due to the terrific response the River John & District Lions Club hope to make this an annual event. Thank You to all who donated to help make this a success.



Lions enjoying Christmas dinner together.



Lion Linda, Lions Friend Dave and King Lion Bruce preparing cookers for potatoes



Lion Donald gift wrapping gifts for seniors



Lions Ann, Paul and KL Bruce present Jane Webb, winner of the Lions Bingo jackpot, with a cheque for \$15,100.00 Congratulations Jane!

Lion's Den Renovations

Lion Cheryl Frizzell

The River John & District Lions Club has been through many challenges and changes over the past few years. Membership on the rise, the 'Pride' has preserved through and is now focusing on going forward into the future. The Lions members did a complete renovation to the kitchen and dining room last year and with a grant from the Province of Nova Scotia and help from KL Bruce and Lion Al they have done a renovation to the outside of the clubhouse, including siding, windows, and doors. The Lions have also done renovations to the deck making it a fantastic spot for sitting and enjoying Festival Days Breakfasts and luncheons. New garden doors give a great view of Bissell Park and the riverfront docks. When completed it will be a perfect spot for weddings, showers, reunions etc.

This year the Lions of Nova Scotia recognized the Lions of River John & District Lions Club and presented them with the award for Most Improved Lions Club for the Province of Nova Scotia and presented King Lion Bruce Frizzell with runner up for King Lion for the Year.

The River John & District Lions Club continues to be a big part of the area and a beautiful landmark for the village of River John.



Lions unloading a load of lumber.



Lion Al



The newly renovated Lion's Den

King Lion

KL Bruce Frizzell joined the River John & District Lions Club in November 2017 and became King Lion in the spring of 2019.

KL Bruce has extraordinarily strong beliefs in the Lions Organization and the need for a Lions Club in all communities, which is evident when the River John & District Lions Club is holding fundraisers or any other events you will find him there actively participating. In the fall of 2018, he along with other Lions members took on the task of renovating the club kitchen and dining area to make for a more usable kitchen for community events such as River John Festival Days. KL Bruce serves on building the committee, membership committee, calendar committee, helps out with any other Club projects, most recently the Building committee. KL Bruce and Lion Al along with other Lions volunteers just finished the renovations to the outside of the River John & District Lions Club and deck. Being fairly new to the Lions organization, KL Bruce doesn't have a lot of titles yet but what he has is well earned and with great respect from his members. This year 2020/2021 the River John & District Lions Club received the award for Most Improved Club of the Year for the province of Nova Scotia. King Lion Bruce was also awarded runner up for King Lion of the Year award for the province.

As members of the River John & District Lions Club we are immensely proud of our Lions Club and our King Lion. We are 23 Members strong and hope to grow our membership even larger this year. KL Bruce is also an active member in the community of River John as he serves on the River John Action Society and played a big part in the development of both Riverfront Projects in the village. KL Lion Bruce is also currently an active member of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary.

As with us all, since Covid 19, we have all had to adapt to a different way of life, but we will continue to be there if and when the need arises in our community and live by our motto "We Serve".



Lion Mary-Jane congratulates KL Bruce for runner up King Lion of the Year.



KL Bruce presents Lion Brian with his 30 year Chevron Award. Congratulations Brian!

Coldest Night of The Year

Bethel Presbyterian Scotsburn: The Bible Bunch

by Chelsey Joudrie

The Bible Bunch (with walkers from Scotsburn and River John), would like to thank everyone who supported our fundraising efforts in February. Thanks to all of you, as of the time this thank you was written we have raised \$2,440.00. The online donation portal will be open until March 31st for those who would still like to donate. You can go to www.cnoy.org and search for the New Glasgow event, or, email me at bethelce@gmail.com.

Our team walked in two groups this year. Our Scotsburn crew walked on the evening of Thursday, February 18th and the River John crew walked on Saturday afternoon of the 20th. Both walks were chilly as we discussed how blessed we are to have warm places to live whereas others do not.

We are also blessed to have Pictou County Roots for Youth Society in New Glasgow, who support the youth of our county. Youth homelessness is greater than I imagine many of us realize. As someone who used to volunteer at Roots, I can assure you of the positive impact it has had on so many young people. The Bible Bunch have been proud supporters of PC Roots for Youth and the Coldest Night of the Year for the past five years and are looking forward to the years ahead.

Again, bless you all for the prayers and financial support and if you have any further questions on what PC Roots for Youth Society does or how you can support them, please email myself, or Pictou County Roots for Youth directly at 1-902-695-3241.



From left to right: William Austin, Rachel Rowan, Rachael Graham, Meaghan Gormley, Chelsey Joudrie, Molly Rowan and Sammy Daling



From left to right: Margaret Cripps, Alana Tattrie, Gillian McKenzie, Cera Langille, Carol Johnson and Chelsey Joudrie. Missing from photo: Casey MacGregor.



Johnnie River bought a new motorbike and went out for a ride. But when it was time to go home, he got lost. Can you help him find his way home?

River John Square Knitters

by Mary Beth Sutherland

The River John Square Knitters continue to be busy knitting 8 inch x 8 inch squares in their homes during this pandemic. The end of January they sent off five parcels of 262 squares, some hats and a dozen toys to South Africa.

A note received by our group included, "Thank you all for your using your time and your talent to create a little colour, warmth and happiness for a precious child who has so little."



Squares joined together for a blanket for a child and this child is holding a doll knit by the River John Square Knitters.



Winter in River John. Photos by Christiane Gill