



Roger's Landing ready for use

by **Rob Assels**

Roger's Landing is now open and is already seeing lots of use. The new slip for launching small pleasure crafts on the east side of the River John is open to members of the public to use at their own risk. Roger's Landing is the culmination of many years of work and the effort of many residents. The project was first envisioned back in 2005 when the River John Community Action Society (RJCAS) commissioned a waterfront development plan. Everyone living in River John and the surrounding communities is a member of the RJCAS. The community provided input into the plan. The first phase of the plan was having a walkway, picnic deck and removable docks installed at Bissell Park on the west side of the river. Phase 1 cost almost \$40,000 and with the exception of a \$10,000 donation from the Bissell family and a \$1,000 donation from the Pictou West Health Board, it was entirely funded by the community.

Many people were involved in the development plans, public engagement, building and management; too many to mention them all. However, there is a reason why the east side is now known as Roger's Landing. The building committee was composed of Bruce Frizzell, Dave Cochrane, Mike Topley, Mike George and Roger MacLellan. Roger, with the use of his excavator, did much of the heavy equipment work for Phase 1, but in doing so, saw the potential of the other side of the river. It was his idea to remove the footings from the old



Roger's Landing under construction.

bridge and use the salvaged material to build a slip on the east side. The building committee suggested the idea to the RJCAS. The federal, provincial and municipal governments were approached for funding and gave financial support. The rest, as they say, is history. Except that just before the excavation on the east side could be completed, sadly, Roger passed away. Because of his leadership and community spirit, Roger's Landing bears his name.

Phase 2 is now largely complete. It cost over \$130,000. There are still floating docks to install. They have been built by the same firm in Bear River, Nova Scotia that built the docks on the west side. A committee has been struck to oversee how Roger's Landing will operate. A set of temporary rules has been posted. They include:

- No vehicles, trailers or boats may be parked at the facility this year.

- No boat tie-ups are allowed this year.
- Area must be kept clear for construction vehicles and dock delivery.
- Use at your own risk. No usage after 9:30 pm.

The RJCAS Park Committee manages the site. There are no garbage containers this year, so please help by taking your garbage home with you.

All year-round residents and cottagers are welcome to attend RJCAS meetings. They are held the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm. These are the kinds of tangible things that can be accomplished when we work together. Once the plaque commemorating Roger has been completed, we would encourage all users of the slip to take a picture of themselves next to the plaque and submit it to pioneereditors@outlook.com. We will try to produce a collage in next summer's issue.



Roger's Landing completed with part of floating docks ready for installation

Editorial

We are living in unprecedented times. Not since the plague in the middle ages or the Spanish flu of 1918 has there been such a pandemic. But now with air travel more common, the deadly virus has spread globally very quickly. In mid-March, Dr Strang, our head of Public Health declared a public health emergency and we have had forced social isolation. As premier MacNeil said, "Stay the Blazes Home."

Our world has changed. There is a "new normal". Masks are commonplace, as is hand sanitizing and staying 6 feet apart from each other. The Atlantic provinces' borders are now open and we can bubble in groups of 10. The border between Canada and the USA remains closed for another month, at the time of writing. Now we are bracing ourselves for the next wave of infection.

Our normal festival-filled summer has been changed. Churches are cancelled, Read by the Sea is cancelled, Coffee Time is cancelled, and our beloved River John Festival Days has been cancelled for this year.

Meh's, an essential service, remained open, Simpson's is open now and the Library and drug store are now open, not just the drive-through window. All of these services are operating with new COVID guidelines.

Chase the Ace, our Legion and RJCAS fundraiser started again on July 10. We have a streamlined band and COVID protocols are in effect. Tickets can again be purchased at Fulton's Pharmacy and you do not have to be in attendance to win.

There have been silver linings in the pandemic. People have been forced to be more creative in how they do business. Home delivery of groceries is a good thing and we hope is here to stay. After all, it was a service that was provided by grocery stores in bygone days. Likewise, with G.P phone consultations. The environment is recovering. My bushes all got well-trimmed. Many families have become closer (I would not be surprised to see a rash of "COVID babies" after this) and my own two-year-old granddaughter has absolutely thrived at having her whole family at home every day! We are fortunate to live in rural Nova Scotia where we have a low number of COVID cases and also a lot of space between each other which can mitigate the spread of the virus.

Then, in the midst of the pandemic, we had an unprecedented mass shooting in rural Nova Scotia, fueled, possibly, by domestic violence and mental illness. This was followed by the death of a toddler in Truro. A helicopter crash and the crash of a Snowbird plane, losing the lives of young Nova Scotians in both tragedies. In many ways in Nova Scotia, we are still reeling from the tragic and unexpected sudden loss of lives and we are still grieving.

And now the issue of systemic racism has caused us to pause and reflect on how we, the settlers in this great country, can do more to be more inclusive and respectful of the rights of all minorities and indigenous peoples. It is indeed an unprecedented time.

Our faithful Pioneer editors for the past three years, Anne Patriquin and Cheryl Frizzell, have called it quits. A huge thank-you is in order for all their good work. A group of us have decided that it is not a good time for no Pioneer, so rather than an early summer edition advertising all the festivals, we thought we would bring out a late summer edition, also to be enjoyed by our summer visitors and cottagers. We are justifiably proud of the Pioneer, the brainchild of Rob Assels and Lesley Longhorn who started the Pioneer in 2012.

Joan MacLeod, on behalf of the editorial board, Beulah Wright, Linda Thompson-Reid, and Mary Beth Sutherland.

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Rev. John looks on as Mary presents Hayden Matheson with a Bible to commemorate his graduation from Tatamagouche Academy in this challenging time. Hayden went to Sunday School & Vacation Bible School and now is taking a gap year to decide on his future career. Congratulations Hayden!

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The River John Exercise Group

by Lynn MacLeod

You want to start an exercise routine, but where do you begin? Ideally, adults should get at least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week, so with that in mind here is our story.

The year was 2011 and there was a movement underfoot in River John. Two community members, Lynn MacLeod and Carol Johnson, were on a mission to start an exercise group in their own community, after belonging to a previous group. They went seeking a place to hold their exercises and were rewarded when the River John School gave them permission to use the school gym three mornings a week for an hour each morning. The ladies started advertising and contacting people in communities far and wide. Along with exercising came another idea, why not have a weigh-in at the same time, exercising and controlling your weight, what's not to love.

So began the River John Exercise Group. And what a success it turned out to be. There were over 30 members from River John, Tatamagouche and surrounding areas. The cost, \$2 a morning for a total of \$6 a week.

Over the next few years as the group continued to meet three mornings a week, a vote was taken to start using their offerings: donation to the school for the Breakfast Program, purchasing blenders to be used in the Home Economics room, donating money towards the students' graduating activities, and donating money to the school to be used for various functions.

In 2015, after a courageous battle to keep our school open, it was closed, much to the dismay of our community. This did not deter the exercise group, we continued to use the

school gym for our weekly exercising for another two years and we continued to donate monies to our communities.

During the fall of 2017 we agreed to move to the River John Fire Hall as the school gym had become inaccessible. We still had over 30 members on our list with an average attendance of 17-23 and we continued to meet three mornings a week. We also started to reward ourselves by going to a local restaurant after class on the last Friday of each month.

In 2019 we added Zumba to our exercising regime and a huge shout-out to our instructor, Raissa Tetanish, as this proved to be another success. With the start of COVID-19 in our region in the spring of 2020 the exercise group stopped meeting, as the Fire Hall had to close, as many businesses and organizations followed.

This article was written on the 14th of July and I can inform you that our group is back together and our first class was held at the River John School, on July 13th, with 14 members present, all COVID safety precautions in place.

As we all know, exercising brings its own rewards, better fitness, building strength, bringing friends together and having a lot of fun. We are a dedicated group of women and we finish each class with a pat on the back for our accomplishments over the years.

If you or any of your friends are interested, take the plunge into being more active, you might just find that you will enjoy it. We are at the River John School each Monday and Wednesday morning, 9:00 a.m. All are welcomed.

Isolating on a Boat

by Cheryl Frizzell

We put our boat in the water on July 1, 2020, choosing to isolate on the water with our grandson Braden and bubble friends. Isolation is something we normally do on our boat when cruising. We pick a direction that is away from the "rat race" of life and so this summer was normal for us. Our isolation has taken us into Ballantyne's Cove, Bras'Dor Lakes, Dover, Canso, Queensport, Guysborough and Isle Madame. We have a great time beaching our boats or going on a mooring. Cell and Wi-Fi is sketchy and if we do luck into a service area, phones and internet go crazy with messages from family and friends. With things going on in the world it's nice to get away and not know some of the news. Our biggest excitement of the day might be seeing porpoises, whales, sunfish or deciding who's cooking supper and who's cleaning up. We play Uno, Yahtzee or have movie nights. Our boats are very well-equipped with generators and solar panels.



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Church in the Time of COVID

by Reverend Connie McNamara

We have, as a humanity, become rather complacent about our routines, expecting things to stay the same, seemingly forever, but 2020 quickly put an end to such false beliefs. The declaration of a state of emergency for the province of Nova Scotia, for Canada, and for most countries worldwide, called an abrupt end to “life as we know it” and the church, regardless of denomination, was not exempt from the drastic changes that followed.

The United Church of Canada in general, and the congregations I serve at Salem UC, West Branch UC, St. Andrew’s UC, Malagash UC, and St. John’s UC, in particular, have all had to adapt to new ways of worship, pastoral care, and being in community. Once our church buildings were closed, we offered an email/printed service for the first two weeks, and while those ways of distribution have continued, since April 5 we have also offered a Facebook Live worship service each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. Our first few weeks of online worship were troubled by poor quality music, but once Ron MacNutt came to my rescue and I worked through a steep technological learning curve, our services have been well-received, with the contributed photo videos based on the worship theme being a highlight each Sunday. It has been wonderful to see so many regulars, and so many who live away and have connections to the people and the places, joining us for worship either live or later when they have time or need.

Pastoral care moved from in-person to phone calls, texts, emails and Messenger, with me reaching out to people at times, and people reaching out to me at other times. Those valuable verbal connections have increased in many ways, as people have experienced a real need for contact throughout the months of isolation. As well, community was quickly

sought, rather than being taken for granted. The ability to share in our Facebook discussion group and our Facebook “Faith and Fotography” group, and several ZOOM gatherings, have helped to strengthen our community connections while following COVID rules. In addition, ringing the bells at Salem UC and at St. John’s UC in Wallace has enabled us to maintain an audible presence in the wider community, recognizing both the essential workers and those who remained at home during the COVID state of emergency. Many thanks to Murray LeGrow and Ashton Ross for ringing the bells at Salem UC.

After many months of living with COVID, the rules have begun to relax but the church remains in a high-risk category because of the age of the majority of attendees. There are a large number of labour-intensive rules for sanitization before re-opening our buildings and after each use, and the 6ft physical distancing must be maintained. Sadly, many of our common practices such as greeting with hugs, lots of singing, passing a collection plate and sharing in Communion are not allowed. After reading and discussing all of the pertinent information, our Joint Ministry Committee made the difficult decision to continue the building closure until September, when they will further review any new public health and United Church standards.

Please join me for Facebook Live worship each Sunday; all you have to do is go to my FB profile, (if you are not currently ‘my friend’, please send me a friend request) and at 10:57 a.m. the waiting screen will be posted and the video will go live shortly thereafter. Each week at the conclusion of worship there is a request for photos to be sent to me pertaining to the theme for the following week, and your contributions help us all to feel more connected during church in the time of COVID.

Blessings, Connie

Sharing the river safely

by RJCAS Park Committee

It is good to see the river being used so much this summer by power boats, canoes and swimmers, but there have been a number of reports of swimmers and small craft being impacted by the wash of power boats going too fast.

All boaters should note that the stretch of river from the bend in the river above Bigney’s new slipway to the first channel marker is posted as a no-wake zone. More visible signage will be added soon. Of course, boating safety and navigation rules should be followed everywhere on the river - to protect people, property and the river itself.



Do you know?

Any boater in operation of a pleasure craft has a duty to ensure the safety of others on the water. This includes:

- The pleasure craft must stay clear of swimmers and properties
- The pleasure craft operator is responsible for the boat’s wash and is responsible for injuries caused to people or properties
- The pleasure craft operator must abide by collision regulations
- The pleasure craft operator must use courtesy and common sense to avoid dangerous situations
- Further, a pleasure craft operator is responsible for maintaining a safe speed.

<https://www.preszlerlaw-ns.com/boating-laws-and-safety-in-nova-scotia/>

Chase the Ace

by Marilyn Heighton

Chase the Ace has started again, Covid style! All the proper procedures are being followed to ensure everyone’s safety. Jim White and Blaine Brown are providing very good and much needed live music for your listening pleasure (no dancing). The jackpot started at \$3000 and the ticket prices are the same as last time - 1for\$5, 3for \$10, 7for \$20. Tickets are on sale every Friday night at the Legion from 6:30- 8:30 pm, with the draw taking place at 9:00 pm. If you don’t feel like coming out then you can purchase your tickets at C.G. Fulton Pharmacy, Monday- Friday 9:00 am -5:00 pm. So please get out and buy your tickets! The River John Community Action Society and the Royal Canadian Legion need your support.



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St. John's Anglican COVID Summer Newsletter

**by Mary Tohill,
Church Warden**

Well, all the activities came to a halt at our church and hall on March 15th when Archbishop Ron Cutler announced no services or anything else until further notice due to COVID-19. We are thankful there are no cases in our area, but prayers go out to those affected.

Our priest-in-charge Reverend John Morrell, lay ministers Monica and Denise, and others have been preparing at home online church services; most people could receive these by way of online or some were printed off and distributed. A lot of the older folk are receiving phone calls to see how they are doing or are being sent an email.

On Palm Sunday, Mary opened the church at 10:30 a.m. so folks could come and pick up a palm cross; appropriate music was playing and everyone respected social distancing, some stopped for silent prayers.

As a tribute to the victims of the Portapique tragedy, the church bell was rung

for several Sunday evenings by Mary, Reverend John and Dana. John also prepared a special online memorial service.

Again on Mothers Day, Mary invited all the ladies of the church to stop by the church and pick up a card and gift from the Scotsburn Soap Company. Kathy Morrell delivered to those who couldn't be there. Mary also prepared the service for that day..

June 21 being Fathers Day, the men visited the church and were given a card and a small gift.

On Wednesday July 1st at 2 p.m. the church bells were rung to show our appreciation for all the workers at Glen Haven Manor and other health care workers everywhere. Just a note - the bell at St. John's came from England, as well as the stained glass windows.

On most Sundays parishioners were able to watch live online services provided by Reverend Connie McNamara, Reverend Michael Hawkins (Saskatchewan), Reverend Catherine Stuart, Reverend David Torrville (he is a retired bishop from Central Newfoundland)

and I am sure there were others.

On June 5, several parishioners did a drive-by 65th birthday party for Myrtis Guy. All went very well, COVID-wise.

Thanks to Dana and Faye, Johanna and Wayne, and Mary for keeping check on the church and hall on their assigned days.

Treasurer Denise W. has been grateful to those who send in their monthly offerings to her - bills still have to be paid.

St John's showed appreciation to Hayden Matheson who graduated from Tatamagouche Academy and presented him with a Bible.

Everyone has been missing our regular monthly breakfasts, so we are hoping to get a break in the fall or maybe do something else in the line of a take-out. We are also missing our ecumenical gatherings with Salem United and St. George's Presbyterian Churches; we hope you are both doing well.



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Read By The Sea

by Monica Graham

For the first time in two decades, the first couple of weeks in July came and went - without the literary extravaganza known as Read by the Sea. Over the years, the village's annual literary festival survived author cancellations, funding shortfalls, marketing, venue and weather challenges, missing bits and pieces of equipment, innovations that didn't work and others that surpassed the wildest imaginings of the volunteer committee.

But in 2020, the festival was taken down by a teensy-weensy organism: the coronavirus.

Read by the Sea was not alone, of course, nor was the decision to cancel taken any more lightly than others in the region. Cancelling Read by the Sea meant a loss of income for more than a dozen literary, visual and musical artists usually employed by the festival, as well as loss of business generated by venue rentals, lodgings, meals and other purchases by the festival and by the thousand or so visitors to River John and area during the event. It also meant that some of the organizers were left wondering over the last days of June and first

days of July: Why did we feel bereft? What was missing from our already busy calendars? Why did we suddenly, this year, have time for families and personal projects and lolling in the sunshine? As long as we or our loved ones weren't among those who contracted the virus and died, the quarantine offered a chance to stand back and breathe after twenty frantic seasons of festivals.

Happily, all the authors who were slated to read on stage this summer have agreed to set aside the dates for Read by the Sea Summer Literary Festival 2021. So, the panel of award-winning and highly-acclaimed authors includes children's writers Vikki VanSickle and Sydney Smith at WordPlay, with Rebecca Thomas, Joan Baxter, Wayne Curtis, Amy Spurway, and Pasha Malla on Main Stage. Almost all are from the Atlantic region; a true demonstration of the writing excellence to be found close to home. Please check the festival's Facebook page and website www.readbythesea.ca for more information, and follow us on Twitter (@Rjreadbythesea).

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, June

30 to Saturday, July 3, 2021. The actual events and schedule may be altered to reflect the dates (which include Canada Day), the possibility that we may still have to observe Covid-19 safety concerns, and potential venue or other organizational challenges arising from "taking a year off." But fans can expect WordPlay for the youngest readers, Pitch the Publisher, Story Walks and Family Campfires, opportunities for writers to meet and greet, PageTurners' book clubs, the Saturday finale Read by the Sea Main Event, and the sale of featured authors' books.

And who knows what else the committee members' fertile minds can conjure? Aspiring writers: sharpen your pencils for Pitch the Publisher. Storytellers: build your repertoire of tales, suitable for family fare! Book clubbers: Amy Spurway's *Crow* and Wayne Curtis' *Fishing the High Country* are available for borrowing. Check the festival website or the River John Library. "Wannabe" volunteers: check the website, or if you do not have Internet, leave your name and contact information at the River John library to be passed along.

St. George's Presbyterian Spring News

by Rev. Enjei Achah

The Church Bells A' Ringing! One of our dear elders, David Sutherland and his special assistants, William, George and Isabel from St. George's Presbyterian church, have been ringing the bells on Sunday evenings from March-June in honour of our essential workers, and most especially the health care workers who are our heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic and always. We are grateful to them and wish them all the best as they enjoy their summer. (picture, page 11)

Vacation Bible School (VBS) This summer's Vacation Bible School (VBS) at St. George's took place the week of July 13-17 from 10-11 a.m. It was a virtual VBS, but we still had loads of fun with the kids. It has been recorded and can be given to anyone who was not able to attend.

Church Reopening. It was decided by the session of St. George's that the church

doors will be open again the first week of September. We continue to do our sermons online and if anyone is interested, they can join the St. George's Presbyterian Church Facebook page and get the links to the Bible Studies and Sunday services.

Food Bank. The food bank collection is still ongoing and the next one will be on the July 29 at St. George's parking lot between 10 and 11 a.m. Food and monetary donations are kindly appreciated. To make things easier for the Food Bank Treasurer to send receipts, please put your monetary donation in an envelope with your name and mailing address.

All other activities that take place at St. George's Presbyterian Church are still on hold until further notice. We will keep everyone posted. May the blessing and peace of God be with us all and with our community in Jesus' name. Amen.

St. Michael's Catholic Church

by Netta Heukshorst

St. Michael's Catholic Church is closed for now due to the pandemic.

Due to limited seating, COVID-19 guidelines could not be met.

Mass is available each day on YouTube and Vision TV.

Mass is also available in Pictou and in Truro but one must contact them to reserve a seat.

We can only pray that one day soon we may be able to gather once again in St. Michael's. God Bless..

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Nature's Nook
& Kranny

From our Garden to Yours

Auxiliary Coast Guard training

by Cheryl Frizzell

Bruce and I joined the Auxiliary Coast Guard a few years back and have learned so much about water safety. We have been involved in numerous trainings and have had to put these trainings to use on various occasions. We are part of a group of boaters who try to help out the Canadian Coast Guard. Recently we, along with other members, attended a training in Arisaig on towing procedures.




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St. David's Presbyterian Church, Toney River, Spring News

St. David's will be reopening their church doors on August 16, 2020.

Vacation Bible School for St. David's Presbyterian Church will take place virtually (Zoom) July 27-31. You can head to our St. David's Presbyterian Church Facebook page to send a message of your interest. Let your kids come and have fun!

Reminder of A SPECIAL INVITATION

As a result of the Mission Awareness Sunday initiative as outlined in the Presbyterian Message, St. David's is inviting ALL members

- children, youth and adults - to draw/paint a picture, write a poem, story, or song, scrap-book page, any medium, to show a way in which you "Rejoice in Service". What do you do in church, at home, at school or playtime that shows that you love God, and/or expresses your joy in serving Him! Please give your submission to Karri Ann or Marjorie. Others are welcome to participate. All submissions will be displayed in church, and then compiled into a book that will represent our congregation in 2020!

Congratulations to...

Heather Fortune's parents. Allan and Paula MacDonald on their 50th Wedding Anniversary on June 27

Gordon and Mary Jane MacKinnon on their 48th Wedding Anniversary on July 8

Dennis and Myrna Phillips on their 50th Wedding Anniversary on July 11

Emily Elliott, daughter of Burns and Mary, who graduated with a Degree in Kinesiology from Acadia University, Wolfville, N.S.

Community Health Centres

A model for our rural communities

by **Bernadette MacDonald**

As our health care system continues to evolve in Nova Scotia, Community Health Centres have become an integral part of the new model for healthcare delivery in Nova Scotia.

Community Health Centres (CHCs) extend the delivery of healthcare services beyond the provision of primary healthcare. "Besides providing access to doctors, nurse practitioners and other healthcare professionals, CHCs put people and community first and address the underlying social issues impacting people's health," said Bernadette MacDonald, a member of the Pictou County Community Health Centre Working Group. "As not-for-profit organization CHCs are in a position to respond to community healthcare needs."

CHCs do this in five ways:

· Provides Customized Care: People can receive care for a range of issues from a team of diverse healthcare providers, all through one health organization

· Prevents Future Illness: Programs led by qualified staff help people manage their illness and learn how to keep up their health and well-being.

· Breaks Down Barriers to Health: Services and programs focused on housing, employment, healthy foods and other day-to-day needs reduce social causes of illness

· Responds to Local Needs: People from community play an active and ongoing role identifying priorities for services, programs and community action

· Champions Health For All: Measures are taken to ensure programs and connections in the community reduce social inequalities faced by different groups

With seven Community Health Centres across Nova Scotia, a group of community volunteers in Pictou County have been working to develop the conditions for the establishment of a Community Health Centre in the county.

For more information please visit the Nova Scotia Association of Community Health Centres <https://www.nsachc.org/> as well as the Canadian Association of Community Health Centres <https://www.cachc.ca/>

Bernadette MacDonald is a member of the Pictou County Community Health Centre Working Group



William, George and Isabel Cripps playing in the sand, just as the River John bucket list suggests.

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS



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Ringling Bells in River John Churches

by **Mary Beth Sutherland**

As the global pandemic spread, across the world, people in countries such as Italy and the United Kingdom could be seen on television gathering outside their homes to bang pots and pans, clap hands, ring bells and more. Murray LeGrow decided he would start to ring Salem United Church's bell to honour essential workers, as he and his wife Erma have three front-line health care workers in their immediate family. Murray started ringing the church bell 7pm on Sunday evenings early in April, then later in the month Ashton Ross took over the



Ashton Ross was one of the bell ringers who rang the bells at Salem United Church every Sunday night during the early part of the pandemic to honour the health care workers for their dedication.

ringing and continued until the end of June. Also assisting on occasion were Joan MacLeod and Marie Farrell. Each of the churches in the community rang their bells Sunday evenings at 7pm as a tribute to essential workers and it was also a reminder to folks that while churches may have their physical doors closed during Covid 19 restrictions, your churches are still presence in the community and there for you. Folks have said they enjoy hearing the sound of the ringing church bells on Sunday evenings. It has been years since so many bells have stirred the air in River John.

The bell in Salem United Church was manufactured at the Old Established Bell Foundry in Troy New York and weighs over 750 pounds. The church building was opened in 1870 and the bell tower is 90 feet high.

St. George's Presbyterian Church bell was cast in 1886 by Henry McShane & Company of Baltimore, Maryland and it also weighs 750 pounds. The church framing was begun in July 1860, while the tower was added in 1896.

St. John's Anglican Church bell was manufactured in England.

Thank you to the churches and members who have assisted in recognizing our valuable essential frontline workers during this COVID 19 pandemic.



David Sutherland and his assistants, William, George and Isabel have been ringing the bells at St. George's Presbyterian church on Sunday evenings in honour of our essential workers.

Mabel Murple's Book Shoppe and Dreamery

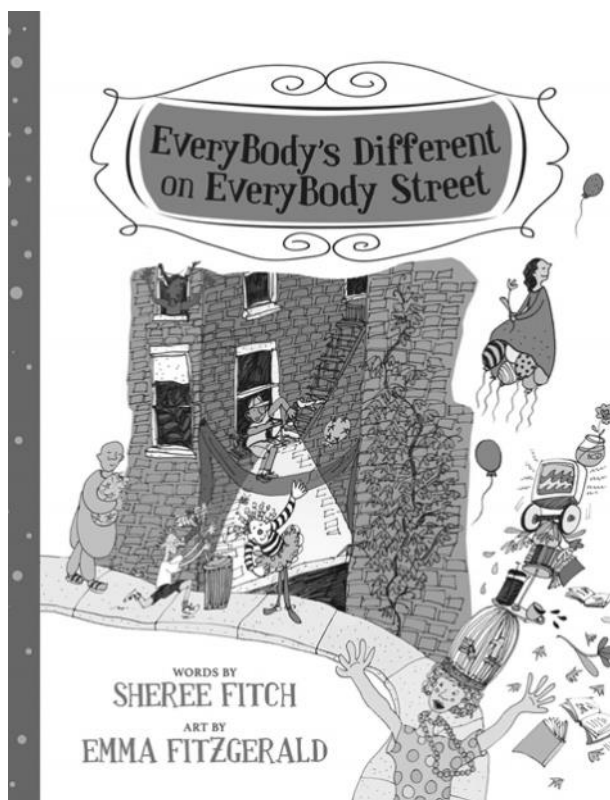
by **Sheree and Gilles**

The decision to keep the doors of Mabel Murple's Book Shoppe and Dreamery closed this year was a wise one, a safe one, but a sad one. We are certainly missing the joy! But here's to next year!

Sheree Fitch won the Atlantic Book Awards Ann Connor Brimer Award for Children's Literature for her book *Everybody's Different on Everybody Street*. Her new book *Summer Feet* is now out, buy it now and get it signed next year at Mabel's.

A new, small, poem/prayer book will be out this fall called *Because We Love, We Cry*, a poem Sheree wrote and read on Nova Scotia Remembers, the virtual vigil for victims of the Portapique tragedy, on CBC and CTV. A portion of proceeds will go to the families affected.

For a fun podcast for kids tune into Mabel Murple's Popping Purple Wordspinning World <https://voiced.ca/project/mabel-murples-popping-purple-wordspinning-world/>



Change-a-Letter Puzzle

DOWN BY THE RIVER JOHN
At night if you look up you may see #1.
In the daytime you may see #4 on the water.
I've given you a clue for each.
Go from #1 to #4 by changing one letter in each word at a time.

1. M _ _ N

2. _ _ _ _

3. _ _ _ _

4. B _ _ T



Answers on page 19

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Life on the farm !

by Gillian Crawford

Some things on a farm are always the same and some things are constantly changing. The spring and summer of 2020 are a perfect example.

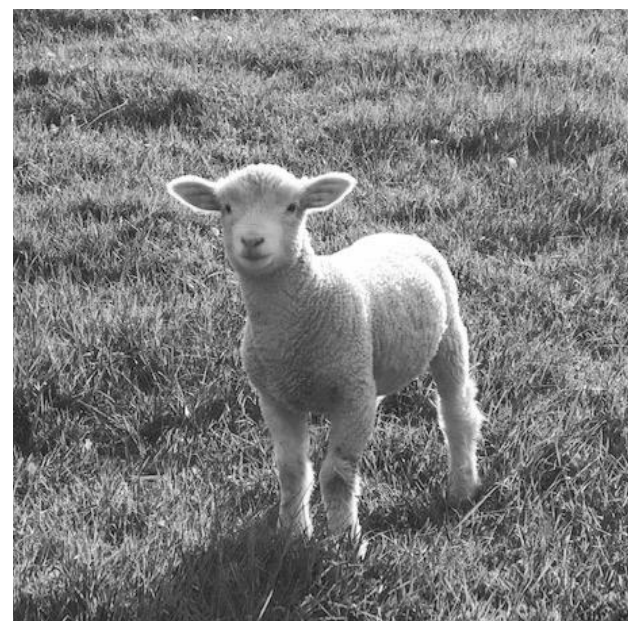
At Lismore Sheep farm we have about 180 ewes ,10 highland cows, some chickens, 2 border collies and 2 great Pyrenees/Maremma guard dogs.

Our sheep had their lambs in late April , so in March we start preparations and making sure we have everything on hand for a busy 6 weeks. This year was no exception. When stocking up on lamb's milk replacer which we always need for lambs needing an extra boost, we thought it might be worth getting a bit extra just in case, due to COVID. We also thought further ahead to spring planting and summer haymaking and stocked up on those supplies too, just in case!

When the lockdown began, we stayed the blazes home, we felt very fortunate to have plenty of work to keep us busy and lots of wide open spaces to walk. The animals still needed to be fed twice a day, young lambs cared for, dogs still had to be walked, so in many ways life carries on.

The biggest change for us was with our wool shop. We normally attend different farmers' markets around the province, two or three during the winter and 4 during the late spring, summer and fall. Suddenly all of that came to an end. Fortunately we had an established website so many people took advantage of that to shop during the early days of the pandemic, but it certainly was not the same as the weekly markets.

In farming you are always thinking ahead but not really sure what to expect and, as we thought about our summer plans and more and more events were being cancelled, we had to make some decisions. Our sheep-shearing day which is part of River John Festival days couldn't be done safely with the crowds that usually come. The sheep will still be shorn, but without an audience. Another tough decision was the River John Sunday Market which we host on the farm. The market was held every Sunday, with a BBQ, live music, wagon rides, and, of course, a variety of vendors, so to keep everyone safe it was cancelled. Our wool shop is now open again with safety precautions in place, reduced hours and with the visitor barn being closed. This is the place where people enjoyed getting close to the sheep and lambs



and learning a little about wool. However, as we say, "You can still see our sheep in the field and their wool in our shop." We are counting on the support of Nova Scotians and other members of the Atlantic Bubble to help us get through these uncertain days ahead.

The sheep and cows are still grazing, the chickens laying their eggs , the collie dogs rounding up the sheep and the guard dogs keeping them safe, so life on the farm carries on!

We hope you will stop by and visit Lismore Sheep Farm Wool shop this summer.

River John Community Action Society

by Joan MacLeod,
Chair of RJCAS

The RJCAS is a society dedicated to the improvement of life in the Village of River John and surrounding communities. All residents are welcome to attend

The work of the Action Society in the past few years has been to allow and enhance use of the River for recreational use. We completed the Deck and Dock project with the help of an army of volunteers in 2017. Last year we added a washroom. The park committee oversees and manages the park. After several years of planning, Roger's Landing on the east side of the river was built in 2020. The slipway is open to unload watercraft, but there is no parking at present. Floating docks will be installed in 2021. We received financial assistance to develop Roger's Landing from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (federal), the Province of Nova Scotia and the Municipality of the County of Pictou. There will be an official opening at a later date.

RJCAS commissioned a new village sign to

advertise events in the community. This will be placed between the Post office and Simpsons. We hope this will be erected by the time we go to press.

Chase the Ace is one of the fundraisers we operate (in conjunction with the Legion) in order to raise money for these projects.

On March 10th at our AGM a new executive was elected:

Chair: Joan MacLeod

Vice chair: Barb Harris

Treasurer: Mike George

Secretary: Shar MacLean

Director: Nick Bigney

Director: Marie Farrell

Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm. Meetings are not held in July and August. However, we held telephone conference call meetings in April, May and June.

We welcome everyone to the monthly meetings and in September we will be meeting at the "old School" Library. It is a great way to meet people and become involved in your community.

Now that our vision (access to the river-front) of 15 (or 50) years has been realized. What now? What new project(s) can we start to help out and enhance village life? We hope to hold visioning meetings in the future. All ideas are welcome.



River John
& District
Lions Club

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community
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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.

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Lions Annual Chicken Barbecue

by Cheryl Frizzell

After receiving several requests for the Lions Chicken Barbecue, the River John & District Lions Club held an impromptu meeting and decided to hold the barbecue. With social distancing in place, the members donned masks and gloves, and served well over 650 meals to community and friends. All were happy to have a little normality for a short time.



Business was brisk for Chase the Ace Tickets sold by Lynn MacLeod and Elaine Falconer.



River John & District Lions members tend the barbecue on July 26th. More photos on page 19

IOOF Helping Hand Lodge #34 Notes

by Jacob Leegwater

Due to COVID-19 we were not able to meet from March 19, then as restrictions were being lifted we were able to meet again on June 1. During our enforced "recess" some items were taken care of. We donated \$100 to Tatamagouche Regional Academy for student prizes. Plans were also put in motion for our Annual Lobster Dinner for our Sister Rebekahs and our members.

A very successful dinner "takeout" was held on June 7 with pick-up between 2 and 4 p.m.; by all reports it was well-received. As in the past, we donated \$500 to a community member who lost his home by fire.

Also due to COVID-19, Grand Lodge sessions in Grand Falls - Windsor, Newfoundland were cancelled. It is usually held the second weekend in July, it has now been scheduled for May 7-9, 2021.

A highlight in our Order was the presentation of the 75-year Jewel for Bro. Earl Holt at the Northumberland Veterans Wing in Pictou. The presentation was made by Noble Grand Rod Hayman and Treasurer Bro. Earl Johnson. A very well-deserved recognition for his longevity in service to the Order.



District Deputy Grand Master Earl Johnson and Noble Grand Rod Hayman of IOOF Helping Hand Lodge present Brother Earl Holt with his 75-year Jewel at the Northumberland Veterans Wing in Pictou.



River John 4-H

The River John 4-H Club has 20 members and 10 leaders this year. In the fall of 2019, we did our annual Highway Pickup and now with Covid-19, all 4-H meetings and activities have been cancelled. Our members are still hard at work training their animals and the leaders have been doing some training as well for the new year. The Pictou-North Colchester Exhibition has been cancelled but some members of Pictou County 4-H are taking part in a Virtual Showcase with their livestock.

We look forward to next year. New members are welcome. The club meets the first Sunday of the month at 2pm.

For more information on 4-H please contact Christine Heighton at 902 351 2061 or Shar MacLean by email at sjollymac@gmail.com.



Back row L-R: Christena MacLean, Elizabeth Heighton, Kholey Bezanson
Front row L-R: Desarae Jardine, Darwyn Ayles, Alexandria Bezanson, Jolie Bezanson

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Congratulations to our Graduates of 2020 !



Karley is the 18 year-old daughter of Robert and Theresa Scotland, River John. Karley graduated with a Certificate of Achievement in the Options and Opportunity Program and she also achieved excellence in Math. Karley's parents are very proud of her accomplishments and achievements. Karley also received the Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation Award (NSSAF). This award demonstrates how Karley has grown, not only as a team player, but also as a leader. Karley will continue her studies with Apprenticeship Nova Scotia, to complete her goal in achieving her Red Seal, as an Electrical Technician. Congratulations, to Karley, as she continues her studies!



Hayden Matheson does not plan to continue his education this fall. He is interested in a trade or an apprenticeship in the future.

Congratulations from Mom, Dad, Hunter and Shaelyn.



Kathryn Smelt-Elliott graduated from Northumberland Regional High School in 2020. "Kat" was born in Kamloops, BC and moved to River John in 2015, from Alberta. She is enrolled in NSCC Pictou campus and will be taking the Social Services two-year program. Kat plans to run her own daycare centre in the future. Parents are Blaine Alexander Elliott from Toney River and Sara Pinto Elliott from Lisbon, Portugal. Kat's older sister, Kay-Lynn Smelt-Elliott, lives in Calgary, Alberta.



Hayley Murray graduated with Honours and with an Excellence in French 12. She received a renewable scholarship from Saint Mary's University as well as a number of bursaries: RJ's Ladies Group Bursary, Frazier Rebekah Lodge #33 Bursary, Municipality of the County of Pictou Bursary, Leetik's Bursary, Helping Hand Lodge #34 IOOF Bursary and Royal Canadian Legion Branch #108 Bursary.

Hayley plans to move to Dorm in the fall and pursue a Major in Linguistics with a Minor in multiple languages, the first language she will be taking is German. She plans on being a Translator.



The beginning of the trail which leads through the woods to the old school property. See story on page 19 & 20.

Birth Announcements

William, George and Isabel Cripps are proud to announce the arrival of their little sister, Charlotte Elizabeth. She was born July 27th at the Colchester East Hants Health Centre, weighing 5lbs 15oz.

She is loved by parents Sam and Margaret Cripps (Middleton, Col. Co.) and grandparents David and Mary Beth Sutherland (River John), Matthew Cripps (Tatamagouche) and Naomi Cripps (Westville), as well as great-grandparents, including Joan Sutherland (River John) and Frances Sutherland (Alma).



Blair Falconer and Terri Lynne Reid are pleased to announce the arrival of Maverick Joseph. Maverick was born on December 21, 2019, at the Colchester-East Hants Health Centre. Proud grandparents are Terry and Linda Reid and Fred and Elaine Falconer. Great-grandparents are Henry and Elaine Forward.

Family and friends are delighted to welcome Maverick to the community of River John!



Engagement

Congratulations to Pat Howell and Julia Reid on their engagement, which took place at Cape John, July 18, 2019. Pat and Julia will be married on August 14, 2021, at Pictou Lodge. Their families and friends are overjoyed and wish them the very best in the future!

The River John Song

About two hundred years ago - note the date
Four pioneers to River John came - to seek their fate
To Tatamagouche they bid farewell
DesBarres his land refused to sell
Pioneers - we honour you.

These four proud families settled here - on the hill
Patriquins, Grattos, Langilles, Tattries - with a will
Next came the Bigneys, Joudreys, too
Matatalls, Gammons, to name a few
Hugenots - we honour you.

Soon some Scotmen joined the group - for good or ill -
To evil they would never stoop - their purse to fill
They built their churches and their schools
"Hoot mon" these laddies were no fools
Scotsmen all - we honour you.

The village grew by leaps and bounds - for fifty years
Soon barques and sailing ships were launched - from the piers
A fine bridge joined the East and the West
Where lovers often stopped to rest
Couples all - we honour you.

A railroad called the Shortline had - its station here
It joined the good old Shiretown to Oxford fair
But now it's gone, we mourn its loss
For cars replaced the iron hoss
Past things dear - we honour you.

The age of sailing ships was drawing - to a close
Severe depression hit us hard mid two World Wars
Our brave men served our country true
They gave their lives for me and you
Soldier boys we honour you.

Six generations passed this way - through the years
From them the torch we carry high - have no fears
Our children's children years from now
Shall think of us and take a bow
Ancestors dear - we honour you.

This year we celebrate our - anniversary
There's fun and games for all to share - and have their say
Come, join the fun and don't be shy
Events will peak in fair July
Welcome all - to our birthday
Welcome all - to our birthday.

Dr. Ella Sangster (1985)

For the first time in 35 years we were unable to celebrate "Festival Days" in River John, this year. We must rely on our memories and one good memory was the songs and poems that it engendered. The River John song was composed by the late Ella Sangster for the first Festival Days and was printed in the original bulletin in 1985.



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"The Covid-19 River John Bucket List"

Feeling symptoms of loss, grief and disappointment? Yeah, us too! The Doctor has diagnosed it as River John Festival Days withdrawal and has prescribed the Festival Days Committee with some good 'ol fashion fun that we wanted to share with all of you!

Introducing (DUN DUN DUN DUN) the "River John Bucket List"

This list can obviously be done anytime, but if you want to get in for prizes and awards we ask that you take pictures of you and or your group doing each activity. Then send those photos to rjfestivaldays@gmail.com or to River John Festival Days on Facebook via Messenger by midnight of **August 1st, 2020**. Please include your name (s). Prizes and awards are to TBD, depending on participation. What we do know is each photo you send in will earn you an entry into a draw! The more creative (artistic, humour etc) the pictures are the better!

*We may even share some of your pictures on our Facebook group, so please disclose in your email if you do not give us permission to do so!

We wanted to include a number of places and activities; unfortunately Covid-19 has kept some fun River John things closed and also may keep you from experiencing some of these things in their entirety. We ask that you please respect places and businesses in adhering to their Covid-19 guidelines as well as the health and safety guidelines promoted by the Nova Scotian and Canadian government.

Stay safe, have fun and enjoy some of what our little village of River John has to offer! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out! We miss you all and cannot wait to celebrate next year, even bigger and better than ever!



- 1** Feel like a kid again at the Lions Club Childrens' Park.
- 2** Check out farm life at Lismore Sheep Farm! (1389 Louisville Road)
- 3** Buy an eggroll at Yap's Place and don't forget the plum sauce!
- 4** Have a picnic on the new deck and/or dock down in Bissell Park!
- 5** Stop into Carlson's Family Farm to check out their fresh produce! (147 Carlson Lane)
- 6** Beaches? We have plenty! Choose one and build something out of sand! Rushton's Beach Provincial Park, Cape John, Skinner's Cove and McDonald's Cove are four of the most popular, but any beach will do!
- 7** Stop in to smell the flowers at the Seafoam Lavender Company and Gardens. (3768 Highway 6, Seafoam)
- 8** Brush up on your Johnner history at the River John Museum! (Corner of St. Andrews Street)
- 9** Grab a cold treat at Cohen's Cones! (Next to the River John Museum)
- 10** There is just nothing quite like the River John Sunset from the Bridge!

Cape John Fairies, chapter 3

by Sandra-Lee

'Twas a warm mid-July day, lobster season had just closed for another year. Elizabeth and Delbert had left for Ireland to see her homeland, introduce Delbert to her family and make arrangements for her family to come to their wedding in October

With Elizabeth and Delbert now safely away, the fairies were left to run the farm. The days had become as long and as light as they could. The sun shone hot and bright on sunny days and the rain fell dark and cool on rainy days.

Every morning the fairies would feed and give water to the hens, gather the eggs, then go for rides on the hens' backs. What fun they had scooting about the chicken yard!

After that they would all go and do their specific duties ensuring they ALWAYS did their best!

One sunny afternoon just before tea time, Sigurd came to Chrysanthemum and reported. "I'm here to tell you, m'Lady, that we have a sad looking fairy. Iris is hiding under a rhubarb leaf and looks to be weeping."

"Oh, the poor, wee girl is missing our Elizabeth! I will see to her, and thank you, Sigurd, for alerting me."

Off she flew. She didn't have much trouble locating the young fairy as by now her weeping had turned into a sobbing that was louder than a cow bell ringing!

"Oh, you poor, wee girl," Chrysanthemum said softly, as she lifted the feathery light Iris into her lap. "I know what is troubling you. Let's have a wee cup of tea and how about I tell you a story?"

Iris nuzzled into her fairy grandmother, managed a nod of her head and sighed a soft, "Okay."

Just then Sigurd happened by standing on the back of a crow.

"Are you both well?"

"Nothing a good cup of flower fairy tea, some ginger cookies and a good story can't mend," Chrysanthemum replied, smiling down at the tiny one nestled on her lap.

"All right, then," said Sigurd as he whisked away, still standing atop the crow.

"Now which story would you like, Iris?" asked the matronly fairy.

Iris thought for a moment and said, "I like the one about the rascally boy who went to visit his grandma."

By then the other fairies were gathering around as tea and cookie time was together time. With the tea poured, cookies served and the chickens tucked in their coop they all gathered at the edge of the rhubarb for the telling of "Ned, What Did You Do to the Bed?"

Here is that story.

Ned was visiting his granny which he enjoyed VERY MUCH. She had 2 horses, 2 rabbits, 5 cats, 8 kittens and 12 chickens! Ned really liked the chickens. After chasing them for a while he'd say, "Chickens are weird." They soon finished up their chores, then had supper, including fairy salad with ice cream cake for dessert. Granny settled into her favourite rocking chair and Ned went upstairs to get ready for bed. He wasn't upstairs more than two shakes of a flower fairy's wing when she heard a bump and a thump and a jump, jump, jump! Granny called up the stairs, "Ned, are you okay?" and "Ned, what are you doing?"

No reply.

Granny climbed the stairs, opened the door, saw all the pillows on the floor, the sheets on the floor, the stuffed animals on the floor and right smack dab in the middle of it all sat Ned!

Granny pointed to the pile and asked, "Ned, what did you do to the bed?"

"Nothing, Granny," Ned said, smiling his biggest, dimpliest smile.

"Well," said Granny, "let's clean up this whole pile of nothing and go have a bedtime snack."

After the snack, she told him his favourite story about castles and owls and a little girl who was turned into a mouse, then fell asleep beside him.

The next morning she quietly went downstairs, sat in her rocking chair having her morning tea when she heard a bump and a thump and a jump, jump, jump! Yup, you guessed it. It was Ned!

Granny went upstairs and found Ned with the beds all torn apart. This time she knew what he was up to. Ned said, "Nope, not me. It was the ghost that lives in the sock drawer!"

Granny rolled her eyes, looked in the sock drawer and saw only socks!

"Well, you and I will fix it this time, but he better not do it again!" said Granny.

Ned put his hand over his face to hide his biggest, dimpliest smile.

The rest of the day they spent chasing chickens, gardening and playing with kittens.

Bedtime as usual with snack and a made up story, snuggling and sleeping with all the stuffed animals.

Morning came around and it was exactly the same as every other morning. Granny up first, having tea and getting breakfast ready. This morning though all she heard was Ned running back and forth across the floor... then silence!

Granny tippy-toed up the stairs, opened the door and found Ned sitting in the middle of the bed, reading. The blankets were neatly placed, the pillows too! The stuffed animals were all around him and he smiled his biggest, dimpliest smile and looked up at his Granny

and said, "I love you Granny."

With tears of love in her eyes, she said, "I love you too, Ned."

The End

The fairies were by now getting sleepy, so, with visions of their own comfy beds, off they went. Sigurd helped Chrysanthemum carry the already sleeping Iris to her flower, tucked her in and whispered, "I love you, Iris."

Rolling onto her side and snuggling in, Iris replied, "I love you too, Granny."



Ronald Baillie
Councilor, District 4
County of Pictou

Regular council meeting 1st Monday of every month unless that Monday is a holiday then the meeting is held on 1st Tuesday of the month. Committee meeting is held on 3rd Monday of each month. All meetings are open to the public, all are welcome.

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Fishing 2020

by Amy Fraser

My day starts at 3:00 am. The alarm goes off and I know it's time to get up and make a start to the day - shower, throw on a few extra layers of clothing (especially in May), make lunches, get the dog fed and let her out for her morning business, and coffee... lots of coffee! Next, to get everyone out the door to head to the wharf. Lobster fishing is something I never thought of as a career choice growing up, until I met Ryan. There's nothing better than the smell of salt air, the beautiful sunrise, the sun on my face and seeing the traps break the water for the first time. It's not always sunshine and happiness; we've fished some beautiful days, but also had some not-so-nice weather, pounding seas, pouring rain, frost, strong gusts of wind and hail.

We get to the wharf and prepare for the day, get the oilskins on, put on our boots, grab the gloves and get on with our day. Getting the banding table set up, banders, gauges, rubber bands; straighten out the hose so I can get it cleaned out and into the holding tanks to keep the water filtering through the lobsters. Then it's on to the bait, taking the trays out of the tubs, and prepping, whether it's cutting it up, filling the mesh bags, or prying them apart because they're still frozen. By this time, we're usually pulling up to our first trawl, so I grab the gaff and hook onto the buoy, get it around the hauler and get things moving. From this point on, it's non-stop, getting the traps to the back to the washboard down the trap launcher, opening up the door of the trap, picking the lobsters out, checking them for eggs, making sure they're not too small and putting them on the banding table, removing the old bait, putting on new bait, closing the trap and moving onto the next one, repeating this for all 5 traps, for all 56 trawls, for 280 traps in total.

It seems like a lot of work and it is, but this year I had help. With school being cancelled because of COVID, our daughter, Rory, was our extra deckhand, and let me tell you, I always knew she was strong and powerful, but I never thought she'd overpower me tenfold. I've seen her pick up a trap that weighed well over 100lbs and throw it on to the trap launcher by herself. She's a force! I'm not going to lie, there have been some days when I would rather have been back in bed than being thrown around at the stern, where the dynamic changes again in the rough weather. Now I'm scurrying around trying to tie tubs down and secure everything so it's not sliding around, while keeping a close eye on Rory because, like I said, it's different out there, having her fish with us. The rough days were more

stressful as I was constantly keeping an eye on her to make sure nothing happened to her. As scary as it was some days, the rougher it was out there the more she was grinning ear to ear, no seasickness with her. This being her first year fishing, there were a lot of teaching opportunities, a lot of one-on-one time, with both of us at the back. She is so quick to learn and isn't afraid to ask, and although we did have a few arguments, (but who doesn't with their teenager), she seemed to love it out there. I loved seeing her smiling, standing in the cabin with her dad, learning what his dad had taught him; maybe one day it will be the four of us out there. Our son, Liam, has fished lobster with us in the past. He has a job buying lobsters for a local processor, so he doesn't get to come out as much as he would like to.

Once we finish hauling all our trawls, it's time to clean up, wash out the bait

trays, close up the Logitechs that are holding our catch from the day, put all the tools of the trade away, tally up our catch and spray and wash down the boat. From there, it's a sail into the wharf where we offload our catch, sell to the buyer, get our bait for the next morning and finish up our day. I say goodbye to Ryan and give him his lunch as he heads out to his primary job. Then Rory and I head home so I can shower, change and get ready for my other job as evening dining server at the Pictou Lodge, then home after my shift, only to do it all over again the next day. As much work as it is, and with little sleep, usually averaging three hours a night between the two jobs, I wouldn't change a thing!

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Mockler Ship Yard

by Beulah Jane Wright

Somewhere in the hills near Earltown, there once was a small settlement of Irish immigrants, called Corktown. They were Roman Catholic in faith and the church they established and maintained was St. Michael's in Middleton. They tended to avoid their Scottish Presbyterian neighbours of Earltown, with not much love lost between the two cultures. Many of them worked in the shipyards in River John. They evidently were accustomed to travel quite a distance. Think of the hardship of a funeral cortege when one of their number passed away! The cemetery at St. Michael's is the resting place of many of these hardy pioneers. Among the Irish names to be found on the headstones are Burke, Kennedy, Mockler, MacCarthy, Hogan and Heffernan. The settlement and its inhabitants are now long gone from the area. One of the most influential families from this settlement were the Mocklers. Patrick Mockler, born in 1771 in Cashel, County Tipperary, Ireland, and his second wife, Honora Heffernan, had four children and in 1810 moved to and settled in River John where he worked as a cooper and may have been in the shipbuilding trade as well.

Their son, John Mockler, born in 1809, may have been born in Nova Scotia, although some accounts say he was Irish born. He married an Irish girl from New Annan Mountain, Ellen MacCarthy, settled in River John and owned and ran a grocery store in 1836. They had 13 children and John apparently did very well, as in 1844, he purchased a large plot of land on the west side of the river, near the bridge, created a shipyard and began shipbuilding. His first ship was the brigantine, Sir John Harvey, 125 tons, launched in 1846. That was followed by nine more vessels - the last one, the Banshee, a barque of 250 tons launched in 1854. At that point, he left River



John and settled in Brule, where he continued to build larger vessels, ending his career having built twenty-two vessels.

But, as well as his accomplishment as a prominent shipbuilder, he was followed by most of his family, in the trade. All five of his surviving sons were master mariners and shipbuilders and at least one of his daughters married a shipbuilder. John built a ship for all five sons as they became old enough to go to sea. Although not as famous as the notable builders, Kitchin, MacKenzie and MacLennan, the Mockler shipyard was part of River John's history for almost ten years.

Of all his children, only Patrick, the eldest son, stayed in the area, retiring to Brule after forty years as a builder and master mariner. He was unmarried. He built a mansion of a home in Brule, complete with a "widow's walk" where he lived the life of a country gentleman and enjoyed his beautifully landscaped grounds of gardens and fruit trees. Although he was educated in River John, Halifax and Dublin, he bequeathed \$10,000 to St. Francis Xavier University which was used to build "Mockler Hall". So the Mockler name lives on in Nova Scotia, not in individuals, but in history.

A Devoted Lion

by Lion Cheryl Frizzell

When attending a River John & District Lions Club meeting you are sure to meet a friendly, smiling Lion, (not that all our Lions members are not friendly), but Lion Anne Patriquin will quickly come forward and greet you. Anne is very committed to being a Lion; she feels strongly about the Lions' motto, "We Serve," and she has served her community well, being involved with River John Festival Days, River John Recreation, River John Legion, the Pioneer newspaper, River John Community Action Society and the River John & District Lions Club. Although Anne has been a member for only 6 years, she has been the treasurer, chairperson and has attended many Lions events and fundraisers. I think one of her favourite Lions tasks is to manage the Lions Children's Park in the village, and on Festival Days you will see her there, giving out hot dogs and drinks to the children on behalf of the Lions Club. Lion Anne spearheaded the neighbourhood clean-up program in the village of River John and organizes it every year. In the spring she attends graduations at high schools which River John students attended, handing out bursaries to selected graduating students on behalf of the River John & District Lions Club. I have come to realize that many of us Lions depend on her and she is usually up for any task.



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River John Legion is Back in Business

by Mike Topley

Summer Meeting - Although our Legion doesn't normally meet in the summer, we did meet in early July to discuss some pre-COVID business and to get ready for the re-starting of Chase the Ace. With the help of many, our Legion has now been set up to meet the guidelines for re-opening, most specifically dealing with distancing, disinfection and cleaning.

Chase the Ace (CtA) - Re-started on Friday July 10 after much planning and preparation. Ticket sales for our first week totalled \$340 and the consolation prize of \$70 went to Elaine Falconer. Next week's grand prize will be \$3100. Special thanks to a sub-group of Geezer for providing a nice mix of cabaret-style music. Distancing and disinfection rules were followed by all. Face masks are welcome and encouraged. Tickets are available at Fulton's Guardian Pharmacy throughout the week and at the Legion from 6:30-8:30 p.m. each Friday...come on out.

Outside Events— Our Legion is not open for any public or private events other than Chase the Ace until further notice. This will

ensure that Legion's COVID rules get fully established before visitors start enjoying our facility again.

Other Happenings - Meals on Wheels has been providing 45 much appreciated meals each Wednesday through a special COVID-19 grant. Our summer students are also doing a nice job with the property and other tasks around the community.

Remembrance Banners - You can have a family member (veteran) remembered by purchasing a banner for \$200. If you are interested, call Marilyn Heighton or Ann Patriquin. We hope to have the Banners (pole) mounted in the village this November.

Next Meeting - Our Legion's next full meeting will be on Monday, September 7, 2020...with our executive remaining in touch through the summer.

Stay safe all.



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Medical Practitioners in River John from its first settlement to Confederation

by Dr. Allan E. Marble
Chair, Medical History Society of Nova Scotia

Prior to the passage of the Medical Act in 1856, there were many medical practitioners practising in Nova Scotia who did not have a medical degree. Only five of the ten practitioners who opened a practice in River John between 1800 and 1867 recorded their medical degree with the Provincial Secretary. Christopher J. Perrin (1755-1835) was the first medical practitioner in River John and arrived in the community about the year 1800. The author of the Perrin Family History wrote that Christopher J. Perrin "excelled as a surgeon and was called to all parts of the country in cases of fractures and dislocations" Alexander C. Cowie from Scotland established a practice in River John in 1843 but it was short-lived. He had stolen the medical diploma of Dr. Samuel Muir who had received his MD from Glasgow University in 1839. When Dr. Muir was informed that his name and diploma were being used by Cowie, Dr. Muir came to River John to claim his diploma. Cowie escaped to New Brunswick before the Sheriff could be called to arrest him for impersonating a doctor. The third medical practitioner in River John was William McKay who practiced in the village from 1851 to 1862. His impressive gravestone stands in the Presbyterian Church Cemetery close to the highway. Others who practised in the village prior to 1867 were: Robert S. Campbell, John Bancroft, John B. Fraser, Alexander Anderson, Laurence N. Young, David McLean, and John T. Cameron. Of the foregoing, only Dr. John T. Cameron (1840-1890) practised in the village for more than two or three years.

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The things that mould us

by **Georgie Fleck**

When I was 13, I played on a fastball team made up of 11 to 15 year olds and there was no place for us to play except in a woman's league. This was the mid 70's and we still played in jeans. Our coach, a man I owe a lot to for the kindness and encouragement he showed me, had gotten us actual T-shirts with numbers on them. This was a big moment for us. They were an awful green with orange trim around the neck and arms with big white numbers on them. We were thrilled! They only came in two numbers - 12 and 22 - I was one of the 12's. We played against women mostly in their mid 20's to mid 40's. After the games the adults would head to the tavern and if we won our coach took us for ice cream. We all liked ice cream, really liked ice cream, so we played hard and won more than we lost.

It was during one of our games late in the season that this occurred.

It's funny when things change. There is no warning, not usually anyhow. I remember everything about this moment. It was hot, the field was dry, it was a beautiful infield of orange-brown dirt. I remember our catcher setting up, her huge blue eyes and freckles prominent even through her mask, the umpire leaning over her shoulder, the batter digging in, the game was close, they had the tying run on base. I placed my toe on the pitching rubber, glancing around to see where everyone was, I felt for the strings I wanted to grip on the ball tucked in my glove. We were the away team so our two extra bodies were on the bench down first baselines, watching intently or chewing gum, blowing bubbles and chasing butterflies, you never knew with them, they were 11. I remember releasing the ball and then everything slowed down . . . I can't see this any way but slowed down, the ball felt good off the end of my finger tips, then I heard it . . . a voice from their bench call my friend, who was 14 years old, our all-star third baseman, one of the coolest people I knew with her massive afro, beautiful smile and the yellow pick in her back pocket, my friend, who I knew had tucked her good-luck beads into the front of her shirt, as she did before the start of every game - this waste of breath called her the N word. It was my first experience with racism. It wasn't hers.

I don't know what registered first in my brain, that the batter had stepped out and had a shocked look on her face, that our catcher who was a wild child had caught the pitch and without hesitation had thrown it at the "adult" on the other team with the offensive mouth,

that our catcher had followed the ball onto their bench and jumped on top of waste of breath, the umpire pulling them apart and kicking the offender off the field, but I'll tell you what I will never ever forget . . . was looking at my friend and seeing a tear run down her cheek as she stood frozen in place, staring straight ahead.

SKIP AHEAD TWO DECADES

It was June of 1999. I had sold my business and was moving from the city back to the country.

One of my clients called to say goodbye, she'd been with me since not long after I'd opened. She was smart, funny and, well, just really nice to talk to. She and her daughter who was around 10 had recently come back from visiting somewhere in the southern part of the USA. She told me about going to McDonald's and her daughter getting upset, she was scared and wanted to leave, everyone in the restaurant was black.

My client said she was shocked. She tried to reason with her daughter, pointing out that she sees black people all the time. "Why are you frightened?" and her daughter replied, "But they are all black, where are the white people?"

My client said it was only then that she thought about what her daughter saw every day at school in Halifax and on the streets, on TV, the majority of the people she saw were white and somehow that made her feel that it was normal and safe. We talked for quite a while, the reasoning, the why? How we can be nervous or fear someone, someplace or something that is different. How, why we learn this behaviour? You see, what really struck my client and me both, was that she and her daughter are both black. So where was this fear and distrust coming from, except her environment?

I've often thought about that conversation. I've often thought about all the implications of it and how we learn to feel differently. Who hasn't heard someone say, "I don't have a prejudiced bone in my body." Sure ya do, we all do, regardless of what colour you are or how pious you may think you are. It may not be skin colour that you are prejudiced against, it could be religion, sexuality, gender, body shape or size, nationality, people who follow one political stripe or another, there are a host of possibilities . . . unfortunately. Maybe if we first admit that, it may lead to some good conversations and solutions? Black and white



are skin colours, curly, wavy or straight are hair types, that's all they are.

George Floyd shouldn't have lost his life on the chance he may have purposely passed a phony twenty-dollar bill. Mr. Floyd's family support the demonstrations, but not the destruction of property. They say he was a gentle man.

The picture is of my friend Jaxon, at his first protest. Outside of his cat, Marven, and his family, there is nothing that he loves more than strawberries. He is a happy, energetic, little boy. Maybe if you and I do better he'll grow up in a better world.

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Summer in River John

by Diane Shink

Although I formally left River John years ago there is only one summer of my life that did not include time spent in River John. I started swimming in the river shortly after learning to walk and have been practicing that skill ever since. Later, those skills were enhanced by Red Cross instruction at summer camps. Summer to me means swimming, especially in the salt waters of the Northumberland Strait. As a child the ocean was my playground whether the tide was in or out. We gathered mussels at low tide and used them as play money during our many games of playing store. My father operated a grocery store so the concept of exchanging goods for services was ingrained at a young age.

We swam behind our house which was literally on the river's edge with a somewhat sandy area near the breakwater when the tide was low. We always tried to avoid areas where the eelgrass and other seaweed grew in case actual creatures were in hiding. Will Mitchell, who lived next door, had a special bench behind his barn where he sat and did lifeguard duties many hours a week. He wore a wooden leg that he made for himself, so would have had difficulty getting down over the bank, but could have raised the alarm should we be in danger.

Another of my memories is watching the village boys jumping off the iron bridge, into the river. Usually the term iron bridge referred to the larger bridge further up the river which was built when the Short Line railway ran from Pictou to Oxford Junction. I think they first practiced by jumping off the wooden wharf very close to the village, a picture of which was in the spring 2020 edition of *The Light*. The channel was relatively deep and meandering up the river from the sand point which partially blocked the mouth of the river. The locals knew where the channel was but unfortunately one visitor misjudged and the RCMP diving team was called in. A spectator remembers standing on the wharf as the RCMP boat pulled the deceased victim to the wharf where my father was waiting with his



Mrs John Mitchell aged 94 and her granddaughter Geneva Mitchell, who later moved back to River John. Her married name was Frith. Her daughter Kathy lives in the original Mitchell property in River John.



The author Diane MacLeod-Shink and Charles Haliburton on the swimming rock in 1945.

hearse to perform the undertaking services.

On hot summer days when the tide was really out we would get on our bicycles and drive up Station Road, over the railroad tracks past where the Legion is today and go down the hill to a location where the river branched, known as the ford. It was brackish and shallow, but refreshing on a hot summer day.

I do not remember any organized summer activities for children during those years, we were expected to entertain ourselves. In the evenings we sometimes had giant games of hide and seek, the cemetery by the creek being a favourite hiding place. We also had some lively games of cowboys and Indians. I, being the only girl, used to call myself Dale Elevens. It was years later before I learned that Roy Rogers' wife was called Dale Evans. My brother had a toy gun set which I sometimes borrowed, but sticks made good substitutes.

We had a freedom in those days that my grandchildren will never experience; I remember playing until dark and there were other activities as well which shall wait until the next edition.

Editor's note: I was talking to Diane about this and she explained that she was not referring to jumping off the present-day iron bridge, (I think the fall would kill the person as it is extremely steep), she was referring to the previous steel structure which was in place before our present bridge.

Also the person who drowned hit his head on the structure or abutment on his way down.

Another note is that we have heard of cottagers from Smith's Cove who make it an annual ritual of jumping off the bridge when they come here for their summer holidays (not recommended!).

The Scoop on Cohen's Cones

by Joan MacLeod

"Cohen's Cones" is the brainchild of Chris Cameron. He has been operating his ice cream stand for the past three summers in the parking lot in front of the former Jo Dearing's Barbeque Restaurant. Last year he was open for 85 days and he is hoping for a longer period this year as Labour day is later. The ice cream stand is named after his young son Cohen, whom he hopes to entice to run the stand one day.

They are open from 5-8 p.m. on weekdays and 2-8 p.m. on weekends. Business is brisk, especially in the hot, sweltering, evenings, like

we have had lately. He serves a very generous scoop of Scotsburn ice cream in dishes or cones and also slushies and soft ice cream.

Chris says "We love that it is a meeting place."

Especially after the COVID isolation, it is a great place to see people as we so yearn to socialize. The good thing about Cohen's Cones is that it is outside and one can still socially distance. Also there is lots of parking and the Lions children's playground is nearby. There is also a lovely bench on the grounds of the Presbyterian church where one can pause to eat the delicious ice cream. Enjoy.



Siobhan Small and Chase Hudson, (Truro) and Quinn Valme (NY) are awaiting a serving of delicious ice cream from Chris Cameron.

River John Old School Storage and Rental

by Joan MacLeod

Although Nick Bigney says, "I do not know about running a business, I am a fisherman and I turn wrenches," he is doing a remarkable job! He presented a business plan to the Municipality and took over the former River John Consolidated School building on January 11, 2018. The premises had been vacant for several years by that time, because the Department of Education decided to close the school in 2015. The remaining contents, including some of the fixtures had been sold off. What Nick and his parents, Shelley and Leonard Bigney, have achieved in the former school is nothing short of a miracle. Through hard work and determination, they have turned the school into a place to hold events and a multi-purpose storage facility. People can either rent a (former classroom-size) space for business or storage or use the larger space available for over-the-winter vehicle storage.

Unfortunately, the building is not well insulated so Nick had a rocky start. Fuel bills initially were \$1,000 a week. Then, he was scammed for \$8,000 for repairs to the gym roof, which were ineffective. And he had a mix-up over the tax bill, being billed initially \$170,000. When they came to reassess the tax bill and reduce the amount to \$4,000, the authorities were amazed at the fact that the school was still intact. They said in any other community a vacant school would have been destroyed and all the windows smashed!

Nick quickly learned how the boilers

worked and what areas they heated and has been able to reduce his fuel bills to \$1,400 a month. Despite these setbacks, Nick felt that, until the pandemic, he was holding his own and earning enough to pay the fuel bills and taxes.

He enjoyed holding monthly events, such as the Rubber Boot Fair and Craft Sale and indoor washer toss tournaments. He was particularly proud of the "Sweetheart Dance" which was held in February of this year, and had a great turnout.

The school has been transformed. The former cafeteria kitchen has been restored and doubles as a bar during dances. A retractable garage door has been installed in the old home economics room side of the building and walls were knocked down to create space to store vehicles over the winter. This same space can be used by the campers for meals and dancing during the summer months. Last year an event called "Toadstock" was held on the premises which 800 attended. The former playing fields behind the school have been turned into a campground. Several other smaller groups are booked into the campground this summer. Nick's father keeps the grounds immaculately mowed, this takes two days and then a day for whippersnipping!

The old preschool room has been repainted and is available for board meetings. The old library is also a usable space for events and

.....continued on next page

Dr. James R. Collie, Medical Doctor at River John, 1870-1925

by Dr. Allan E. Marble
Chair, Medical History Society of Nova Scotia

Dr. James Collie was born at Middle River, Pictou County, in 1841 and educated at Pictou County Schools, the Truro Seminary, and at Dalhousie University. He taught school at Tatamagouche, prior to entering Harvard University where he obtained his MD in 1869. Returning to Nova Scotia Dr. Collie established a practice at River John. Dr. Collie continued to provide medical attendance to people of Pictou and Colchester Counties for the next 55 years. His practice extended to Toney River in the east and to the Brule Shore in the west as well as south to West Branch and Earltown. His account book covers the period 1874 to 1921 and lists 644 heads of families. Considering that most families consisted of an average of five members, it would be expected that Dr. Collie provided medical attendance to over 3,000 people during his career.

Shortly after establishing his practice, Dr. Collie was appointed a coroner for Pictou County and also the Health Officer for River John which was a thriving shipbuilding port. Residents of River John and environs elected him to represent them on the Pictou County Municipal Council and he served as their Councillor for twenty-five years. He also was granted a license from the Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society to sell drugs and medicines. In addition to his medical practice and the sale of drugs and medicines, Dr. Collie supplemented his income by becoming a partner in the Belleview Freestone Quarry at River John. One of the major contracts awarded to the Belleview Quarry was from the City of Halifax for the facing stone to adorn the front of the new Halifax City Hall building which was constructed in 1887.

The dasher was constructed of two pieces of board, one set into the other to make a flat surface, and a handle was attached to go through the hole in the cover. The lady sat or stood beside the churn and "dashed" the cream up and down, until the butter formed. That's where the energy came in! Then the butter was worked by hand and salt was added and the butter was ready to be put in tubs or printed.

In the Museum we have a lovely old wooden churn, with dasher, donated by Frances Sutherland, that had been used by her great-grandparents.

Later churns were made of other materials. The one that my grandmother had was made of crockery, white on the outside and dark brown inside, something like the old-fashioned bean crocks but much larger. The dasher was still made of wood though. My mother seldom made butter, said she just couldn't make "good" butter, and my father sold milk, and

.....continued on next page



River John & District Lions members at work preparing the chicken barbecue meals.



The Butter Churn

by Beulah Jane Wright

A housewife's work is never done - that's for certain - but there are many household tasks, once considered as necessities, that have completely disappeared from our modern to-do list. Among these are the making of butter. Every home had a butter churn, and every week or so the churn was used. It wasn't an easy task - it took time and energy and there was a certain knack to making delicious butter as some ladies were famous for making the "best" butter.

To make the butter, the fat in the cream had to be broken down, into the butter which left the buttermilk, for cooking and drinking. After the butter began to form, it was washed in cold water, kneaded by hand, salt added, and shaped in bars. I am told there were fancy prints to make the bars of butter more elegant, but I haven't seen any of those. Early churns were horizontal barrels, fitted with paddles that were turned by a crank, probably took much cranking! Later the upright churns were used and were worked by a dasher. The churn was made entirely of wood, wooden vertical pieces held tight together by staves, much like a barrel, but with straight sides. The cover was a thick slice of a log, which was planed to be nice and round and a hole was drilled in the centre for the dasher, which agitated the cream.

Answers to Change-a-Letter Puzzle

(from page 8)

1. MOON
2. MOAN
3. MOAT
4. BOAT

The Butter Churn, continued from page 19

while Mom always had milk for our everyday use, we rarely held back enough for making butter. By that time it was much easier to buy dairy-made butter, and during war time there were ration books with yellow stamps for the purchase of butter.

We used our churn though for another purpose! When summer vegetables were plentiful, Dad would three-quarters fill the churn with water and add enough salt to float a potato, then fill it with whole cucumbers. He put a wooden disk on top of the cucumbers and a clean rock on top of that to hold the cucumbers under the brine. That stayed in the cellar until winter, when Mom would bring up some cucumbers from the brine, soak them and make pickles with them - saved a lot of jars and the time of pickling in the hot summer.

When I think of churning butter, I always remember A.A. Milne's whimsical poem, "The King's Breakfast", when the cow couldn't be bothered, and the King, who just wanted a little bit of butter for his bread, became very sorrowful. Finally the cow relented and said "there, there, I didn't really mean it - here is milk for his porringer and butter for his bread"!

All in all, butter making was hard work and time consuming and I imagine most women were happy to leave that chore off the list.



Mary Beth Sutherland Demonstrates how to use a butter churn . The churn itself was donated to the River John Heritage Museum by Frances Sutherland. It had been used by her grandparents.

River John Old School Storage, continued from page 19

Ladies Keep Fit now meets there. The former industrial arts room is now Leonard's Trap Shop, where he stores and makes his traps for lobster fishing. He also makes lobster trap seats and other wooden items. Shelley is the painter and has been constantly repainting the premises.

The gym roof still leaks badly and they work hard in every rainstorm to catch the water and keep the hardwood floor intact. This is their biggest problem and they are constantly seeking a solution. For example, they almost bought an intact roof from the Stellarton rink, but in the end, it was kept by that community. If the roof was fixed, they would love to have a boat shop in the space. Or they could use the space to store large RVs over the winter. Nick has already planned where he is going to install large doors. He also bought a scissor lift, for access to change the light bulbs in the gym. Meanwhile, some people store their kayaks there for quick access to the river.



Shelley Bigney in the trap house.

In addition to what they have achieved at the school, the Bigneys have cleaned out a wooded area which connects the school grounds to the main road. There is a delightful wooded path which everyone is welcome to use, complete with wooden benches, birdhouses and cute attractions.

Nick was approached as well about a high-speed internet tower on top of the school. If this happens, it could be an internet hub, with fiber op connection.

Nick and his family are grateful for the donations of furniture and equipment they have received from the community, and for all the help they have had in organizing events. Even though they have achieved a lot, they feel that there is still a lot they can do and want to keep all of their options open.



Nick Bigney, his mother Shelley and step son in the trap room.

The River John Heritage Museum

by Beulah Wright

The Museum is open! Although we are late this year, the hours are reduced and we are closed on Saturday and Sunday, the door will usually be open and we welcome visitors. We have the necessary safety measures in place, and since travel plans this summer are limited, what better chance to see what's available in our own community? You can browse through the artifacts. You can research your ancestry. You can reminisce about the past. You can admire great photos of which there are many.



The River John and Area Historical Society is alive and well, and extremely grateful to all the community members who have donated artifacts, photos, books, documents, and have entrusted these cherished memorabilia to our safekeeping. We will cherish and protect them.

This has been a different and difficult year for everyone, with the cancellation of many of the activities for which we are noted and are proud to host, including Festival Days, Read by the Sea, local tours and places to stop, shop and enjoy, but we have the time and opportunity for more leisurely and homelier pursuits. We can only hope that next year will be better, safer and happier. See you soon!



Part of the Trip Along Trail to the old school.