

ISSUE 7 OCTOBER 2023



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See Page 15 for the cover story

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Did You

Know?

These blue spaces with the ***Did You Know*** logo are located throughout this issue and contain interesting tidbits of local information.

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Message From The President

Dear WUEH Readers,

We are pleased to offer you Issue 7 of What's Up East Hants and hope that you enjoy the stories within its pages! What's Up East Hants publishes 25,000 copies per issue and to date we have distributed over 150,000 copies. As the only magazine devoted to the communities of East Hants, we are committed to bringing you interesting, pertinent stories and information from all corners of our region. We appreciate the story ideas people send in and the advertisements that enable us to give you the magazine for free. East Hants has so much to offer!



However, there are challenges to uncovering the best stories because our core base are committed volunteers who can only cover so much ground.

Do you have a little extra time? Would you like to do something meaningful? We need Directors at Large to get stories and advertising in their prospective areas.

If you would like to support your local community magazine and become a volunteer for your area, reach out to Rhonda Steeves at info@whatsupeh.com for more information.

We hope to hear from you soon!

Thank you,

Bob Bona

President

MEET THE VOLUNTEERS BEHIND WHAT'S UP EAST HANTS



Marci Ettinger
Ad Designer



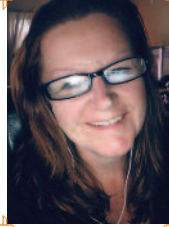
Lea-Ann Julian
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Shubenacadie



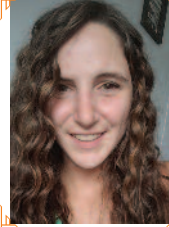
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Charlotte Mendel
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What Stories Can You Tell?

We need local interest stories for our Spring Issue. If you have a story you would like to see featured in our next issue, please submit it to
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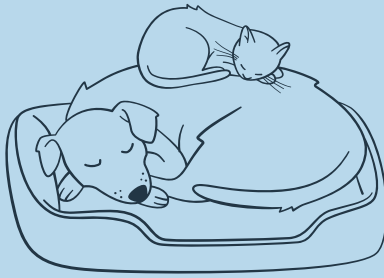
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This past July, over 5000 athletes, coaches and team staff descended on Nova Scotia from all over North America to participate in the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG). More than 756 nations, including our very own Sipekne'katik community, competed in 16 sports over a period of 8 days, from July 15 to 23.



Two East Hants boys from Sipekne'katik played in the U19 softball competitions. 17-year old Houston Maloney is a catcher and 18-year old Brody Knockwood is a pitcher for the U-19 team. The games took place over five days on two fields—in East Hants Sipekne'katik and the Halifax Commons.

These two boys did us proud by proving what our community of Sipekne'katik can do, given such a special opportunity. Brody Knockwood and Houston Maloney brought home gold medals!

Many other Sipekne'katik athletes also competed in a range of sports, including Casen Augustine, Captain of the U-16 softball team.

Congratulations to all our East Hants athletes!

Cole McDonald (U19 Badminton)
Shawn Davidson (U19 Basketball)
Orlando Meuse (U19 Basketball)
Isaac Marr (U16 Lacrosse)
Mia Syliboy (U16 Badminton)
Brya Kingham (U19 Soccer)
Royce Nevin (U19 Softball)

Kayla Nevin (U19 Softball)
Jaici Syliboy (U19 Softball)
Maia Maloney (U16 Volleyball)
Eleyna Brooks (U16 Volleyball)
Casen Augustine (U16 Softball)
Brody Knockwood (U19 Softball)
Houston Maloney (U19 Softball)

Finally, congratulations to all Nova Scotian athletes who participated in NAIG. Our athletes brought home a total of 35 medals: 14 gold, 10 silver, and 11 bronze.

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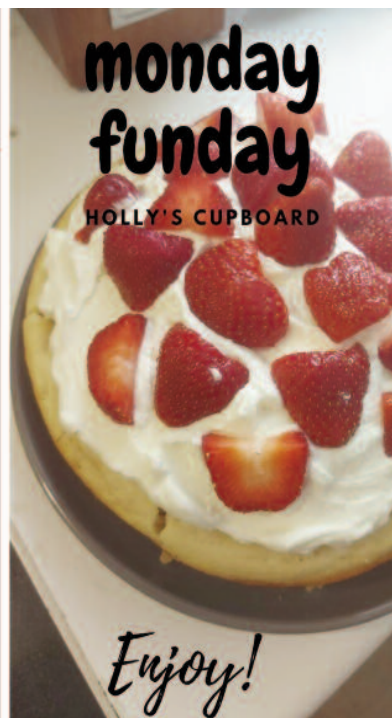
Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cup flour
- 2 tbsp corn starch
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla + 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 cups lemon curd (homemade or store bought)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 packet vanilla sugar (optional)
- pinch salt
- 3/4 cup butter
- 1 cup warm milk
- 4 cups whipped cream
- 1/4 powdered sugar
- 2 cups fresh strawberries



Directions:

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Mix flour, cornstarch, baking powder, sugar, pinch salt. Combine well.
- Add butter and combine until sandy.
- Make a well and pour in eggs, milk, vanilla. Mix well. Pour batter into a 9 inch spring-form pan. Bake for 25-30 mins until top is golden brown. Let cool completely.
- Clean and slice fresh strawberries.
- Prepare whipped cream by adding the powdered sugar and 1 tsp vanilla. Beat vigorously for 5-6 minutes with a hand mixer until light and fluffy. Cut the cake in half and lift the top off.
- Cover with half the whipped cream and half the strawberries. Replace the top and cover top with remaining whip and berries.



Shooters

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**Did You
Know?**

Did you know that the town of Noel has been known as a fun place to send off cards and mail through the Post Office. It is speculated that many people like to have their cards postmarked NOEL, especially at Christmas time? Do you send your Christmas Cards from NOEL?

601 Hwy 2, Unit 7, Elmsdale - By NAPA

91 Years Ago A Local Bank Robbery Went Very Wrong – Shubenacadie, NS.

August 22, 1932 marked the date of perhaps one of the strangest attempted robberies in Canadian history. The Royal Bank in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia set the stage for an unusual shoot out, which not only incriminated the would-be robbers, but members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Halifax Police Department as well. In addition to the bizarre unfolding circumstances, the truth about the shoot out did not surface until quite some time after it took place.



The Bandits

S. A. Rafuse was an ex-bank manager who had been discharged from the bank for financial irregularities. After being discharged, he took to selling insurance. He and his brother-in-law, Gerald Freckleton, conceived a plan to rob the bank. After devising the plan, the two men felt they needed a third man. They

recruited Edson Boutlier, a young man on parole and a known criminal with an expertise in car theft.

The Plan

Rafuse would enter the bank shortly before closing and engage the manager, Robertson, in a conversation about insurance. He would stay until after the bank closed, so that Robertson would have to open the front door when he left. At that point a masked Freckleton and Boutlier would rush in and take Rafuse, the manager and the other employees hostage, forcing them to the rear of the bank and tying them up. Finally, they would scoop up the cash and leave, locking the door behind them.

Boutlier was on parole and a known criminal. He decided that it would be to his benefit to reveal the proposed crime to the police. So he snitched to Thomas Kennedy, the chief of detectives with the Halifax Police Force, whom he knew. The detective told him that they should go ahead with the proposed robbery, at which time the three bandits would be arrested. Boutlier could then turn King's evidence and receive no punishment. This act would also assist at his parole hearing.

At this point, the Mounted Police were brought into the plan. Boutlier was to provide the car for the robbery since he was an expert car thief. He was also expected to get his own handgun. He did not wish to steal either, so the police provided him with a car that had been seized from a bootlegger and was in police possession. The police also gave him a Colt .45 revolver, but

no ammunition. He was instructed to go to the Shubenacadie area with the other two men, where they would be stopped by the police for supposedly carrying weapons with a stolen car, at which point Boutlier would reveal the planned bank robbery and Freckleton and Rafuse would be charged with criminal intent.



On the day of the robbery, the three bandits drove to Shubenacadie, fortifying themselves with liquor. They drove around the village, but Boutlier saw no police. He suggested that they drive out of the village and find a spot to have another drink before the robbery. They drove up the Gay's River road, parked and had a drink. It was

getting near the time of the robbery and Boutlier did not wish to go through with it, so he backed the car into the ditch as a solution. Unfortunately, they were only there for a few minutes when a local farmer with a team of horses appeared and pulled them out of the ditch, being promised money for his services. Boutlier then had to drive to the bank, perplexed as to what had happened to the police. The men parked out in front of the bank a few minutes before closing time and Rafuse went in to visit the manager.

Unbeknownst to Boutlier or the other two bandits, five city and Mounted police were hiding at the back of the bank. The staff (Lawlor and McNeil), had been informed about the robbery and instructed to fall to the floor when the bandits appeared. When Robertson opened the main door to let Rafuse out, the other two bandits rushed in with drawn weapons. Rafuse and Robertson were quietly forced to the floor and the bandits cried to the other employees that it was a robbery. Immediately the police rose from hiding and opened fire. Freckleton was killed instantly, Boutlier, more alert, jumped out the door and fell on the sidewalk, but received a bullet through his shoulder.

Dr. D. F. MacInnis had just left his office two hundred yards from the bank and had almost arrived at the bank when Boutlier fell on the sidewalk. He stopped his car and ran over to Boutlier. At the same time a policeman emerged from the bank and, according to Dr. MacInnis, he intended to shoot Boutlier again. Dr. MacInnis' presence prevented that from happening and Boutlier's wound was stabilized. The next train was stopped, and he was sent to Truro Hospital (built in 1926) by escort on one of the baggage cars. Dr. MacInnis testified that Boutlier kept calling the police by name and saying, "You double crossed me!"

After Boutlier was sent to the hospital, Dr. MacInnis entered the bank to see Freckleton's body. He asked if the bandits had fired any shots and was told that Freckleton had started the shooting and was shown a wooden pole in

the bank with two bullet holes in it, whom the police claimed came from Freckleton's gun. Dr. MacInnis commented that this was impossible, as the splintered exit holes of the bullet were on the wrong side of the post. Regardless of the suspicious bullet holes and Boutlier's reference to the police having "double crossed" him, the news stories the following day contained the police's version of the hold-up. Freckleton was noted as having started the shooting and Boutlier was said to be in critical condition with a very unlikely chance of survival. S. A. Rafuse was identified as a bandit as well, thanks to expert detective work. Maps showed the supposed location of policemen and robbers when shots were fired and the five policemen were credited with foiling a possible robbery. As an added bonus for the policemen, it was reported that S. A. Rafuse had been connected to a robbery in Halifax that had taken place a few days before the hold-up in Shubenacadie. Eventually Boutlier fully recovered in the hospital and revealed the entire story of the hold-up, including the police's prior knowledge of the crime. Apparently, the police wished to garner publicity about their successful deterrence of a violent bank robbery—it was the time of Bonnie and Clyde and John Dillinger, and bank robberies were big news. Their obvious intent was to kill Boutlier and conceal their prior knowledge of the robbery and the assistance they had given to it.

Boutlier was let free without being charged. S.A. Rafuse was sent to prison and served a sentence for criminal intent. All five of the policemen involved in the hold-up were demoted and/or transferred. W. P. Robertson was discharged from the bank in later years, along with Lawlor and McNeil, due to financial irregularities within the bank. For some years the bullet holes from the shoot out were still visible in the bank building and were a source of conversation and debate.

This building still stands, and was most recently known as "Shubie Pizza". The bank vault is still there, surrounded by the same concrete walls that served as a pantry for the pizza shop. Strange things would happen in this shop from time to time. For example, water puddled on the floor with no visible water source, fridges and cash registers would open on their own, brand new appliances would simply stop working, donair sauce would be seen moving from one end of the counter to the opposite end of the counter on its own. Although nothing 'bad' happened to anyone, the strange phenomenon occurrences had employees scratching their heads and perhaps even looking over their shoulders from time to time during their working hours.



Perhaps one of the most bizarre coincidences in recent history was the fact the 'to be' owner of Shubie Pizza, Marcia Klingerman, was unaware of this tragic event that took place all those years ago in the very space she was to open her shop. Marcia had just given birth to a healthy, baby boy a short time before opening her business. She named her son...Gerald!

On the Cover

BURNTCOAT HEAD

Home of the highest tides in the world

Among Nova Scotia's many treasures, the highest tides in the world at Burntcoat Head stand out as a natural phenomenon. The Bay of Fundy is known for its extreme tidal range; nestled along the shores of the Bay of Fundy, Burntcoat Head is a remote coastal area that just happens to be the epicenter of this natural marvel. Twice a day, as the moon's gravitational pull interacts with the bay's unique geography, the water level in the bay rises and falls dramatically. As a result of its funnel-like shape, Burntcoat Head boasts an average tidal range of 14 meters (approximately 46 feet), making it the highest tidal range in the world. To put it in perspective, that's roughly the height of a four-story building.

Those who visit Burntcoat Head during low tide are treated to a sight unlike any other. As the tide goes out, a bay filled with churning water transforms into a vast expanse of mudflats, revealing trees, rocks, and cliffs that were previously submerged.

As the tide comes in, the transformation is equally remarkable. The water rises at an astonishing rate, filling the bay with a relentless surge of energy. Those who venture out onto the mudflats during low tide could find themselves standing in water just a few hours later. It's a captivating display of the raw power of nature, and it happens twice each day, like clockwork.

The dynamic nature of these tides has given rise to a unique and vibrant ecosystem. The exposed mudflats teem with life, from clams and mussels to various species of birds, creating an ecological paradise for both nature enthusiasts and scientists alike. As the tide rushes in, it brings with it a bounty of marine life, providing a feast for the local bird population.

For those who wish to witness this natural wonder, Burntcoat Head Provincial Park offers a visitor center, interpretive panels, and well-marked trails that lead to viewpoints overlooking the bay. Be sure to check the tide schedule and plan your visit during low tide to experience the mudflats up close.




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Two Local Olympians Tie the Knot

The trajectory of local Olympian Wyatt Sanford's success has been one of hard work and fortuitous changes. The first change was the switch from right-handed to left-handed boxing—which launched a winning streak of 22 fights, including his first Canadian title at age 13 and his first international win at the World Ringside Championship in Kansas.

The next fortuitous switch was purely altruistic. Two boxers on the team were in the same weight class, so Sanford went up a weight class so his teammate could stay on the team and Boxing Canada wouldn't lose a fighter—from 139 pounds to 152 pounds. His first fight was against a 6'3" opponent—Sanford is 5'8". He won, and with his new left-hand and weight, he went on to place 9th in the World Championship in Russia in 2019.

"At this level, I focus mainly on mental preparation and the game plan. In addition to training for hours every week, I study videos of my opponents' fights to analyze their weaknesses and strengths and strategize how to match them to my own," says Sanford. "Fighters from different continents actually have different styles, and I actually do better against Europeans than Americans".

Of course the ultimate competition for all athletes is the Olympics, but Covid interrupted the usual schedule of international fights that are intended to prepare athletes for it. So Sanford had to wait while the International Olympic Committee chose its Olympic nominees without a qualification tournament.

The result? At the age of 22, Sanford landed in Tokyo for the 2020 Olympic games. But Tokyo in the midst of Covid was an isolated place. A fellow Olympian texted him daily, "Do you want coffee and a walk?"

"No," Wyatt repeatedly replied. Despite the isolation, he did not want to have coffee with Pamela Ware, a fellow Olympian in the diving category who can boast an equally illustrious career. Most recently, Ware raked in a bronze medal in the women's 3m springboard at the 2023 World Aquatics Championships; she is also a two-time Olympian and a 7-time world medalist. But Ware and Sanford hadn't talked in 6 years, ever since one of his teammates told him she had described Sanford as "an annoying little S**t".

But Ware persevered and Sanford was bored. Eventually, they discovered that they really enjoyed each other's company.

Both Sanford and Ware did us proud in the Olympics, with Sanford ending up in 17th place, and Ware finishing in 18th place, due to an unfortunate misstep in her final dive.

Do we know how incredible it is to have two Olympian athletes in our community?

"I wouldn't be here without the community of Kennetcook in Hants County," says Sanford.

They've been here for me from day one, helping me mentally and financially every step of the way. They care so much! A friend once told me that he'd driven down the street in Kennetcook at 2 am on July 24 2021, and every light was on—because my entire community had stayed up to watch my Olympic fight."

Sanford has accomplished a lot and the future of his boxing career remains an exciting mystery. The future of relationships is also a mystery, but Sanford and Ware took the first step along the path of their future when they tied the knot this summer. So does this mean Ware has changed her opinion about Sanford?

"No," Sanford admits ruefully, "but she says that I am her annoying little S**t."





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Did You Know?

- ▶ Did you know that Highway 2 through Enfield and Elmsdale funnels traffic at an average rate of 15,000+ motor vehicles per day?
- ▶ Did you know that Christmas is quickly approaching and What's Up East Hants is proud to present the Christmas Decoration Contest? Follow What's Up East Hants on Socials for further details.
- ▶ Did you know that the first railway through Elmsdale, to Truro, was constructed in 1855? This construction brought work to the area and brought in many new people, eventually furthering Commerce and Business Development.
- ▶ Did you know that East Hants has an active Historical Society? The society began in 1967 through the interest of several local people who understood the importance of documenting the past. EHHS works hard to keep memories of Days Gone By last for years to come. Check them out at www.ehhs.ca.



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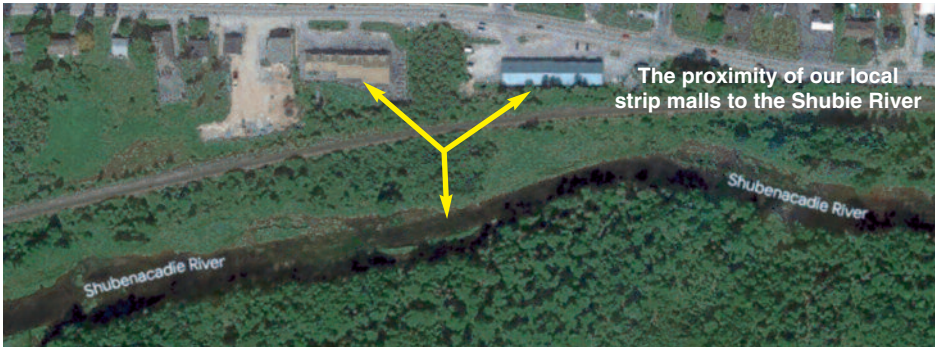
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Disaster Strikes Elmsdale Businesses

The proximity of the two strip malls along Highway 2 to the Shubie River has resulted in flooding before—but the events of this summer are unprecedented.



“We had prepared for one foot of water and lifted our stock off the floor,” says Kenton McNutt, the Business Owner of Quality Auto Parts. “The waters started rising on Friday and kept rising over Saturday. There was a lot of uncertainty, as we didn’t know what would be saved. Although we opened again after two days, we are still waiting for the contractors to cut out the walls that were damaged by the dirty water. If this type of weather is going to become common, it makes you question the location you are in. I have a moderate approach to climate change; I don’t think the sky is falling, but we can’t ignore it.”

Quality Auto Parts was lucky—many businesses are not yet open because they are still clearing up the extensive damage, or waiting for contractors. Some aren’t answering their phones, while other businesses were reluctant to participate in this article because they felt too traumatized by the experience and didn’t want to relive it in any way. Yet others felt that the huge impact on their businesses was nothing compared to the loss of life caused by the flooding, and respectfully declined to participate. Nevertheless, it was clear from the conversations that did take place that the disaster created a huge wave of solidarity and mutual support within our business community.

“My employee James Cole orchestrated our offer to store the products of other businesses in our location until they are up and running again,” says Nick Lunn, Owner of Corridor Auto

Sales. “There was no real damage to our business and we had extra space.”

Many businesses are still waiting for the contractors—flooded themselves with claims from the huge number of affected companies—to arrive to fix the damage, but Tina Ross from Elmsdale Design & Print couldn’t wait. She realized that mold would destroy her products within 72 hours, so she called on her employees and a family member to help.

“A guy from one of the other businesses in the mall stopped by my house to let me know that the water was rising fast. When I got there I called some friends to empty the lowest cabinets and shelves. I sealed the doors with vinyl but the water was coming up through the floors. When the rain stopped I was faced with a choice: close the shop or do it ourselves,” says Ross. “We set to work immediately in the dark, without electricity. It was like a horrible Louisiana swamp in there and it stunk after a couple days. My equipment doesn’t like humidity, so we had to get everything out right away. My staff and family were amazing, so we should be up and running by the end of this week, rather than waiting for the contractors. Everyone has been fantastic, businesses and people waiting for service were patient and understanding; nobody got upset.”

Talking to our local business owners, I felt the solidarity that exists in our community and it gave me hope. The climate crisis is here, and the events of this past summer might be the new norm, but the overall sense I received was that our community is resilient, and will stick together and help each other through whatever challenges lie ahead.

Did You

Know?

- ▶ Did you know that during the First World War, approximately 320 known individuals of East Hants fought for our freedom, and approximately 60+ of those men did not return?
- ▶ Did you know that the Village of Maitland has a rich and vibrant history? So much to learn and explore in one of Nova Scotia’s scenic hidden gems. Check out the happenings of Maitland at their website, villageofmaitland.com.

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- Crisis Services Canada
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- First Nations and Inuit Hope
for Wellness Help Line
1-855-242-3310

- Kids Help Phone
1-800-668-6868

- National Eating Disorder
Information Centre
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1-800-273-8255

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Rick's Riches

A Community Success Story

Many people love their communities, like we do here in East Hants. But not every community can boast a story like the one you're about to read. A story that shows how a community can come together to fix a huge problem that transforms lives. It's even rarer for the 'problem' to become a success story, like our local Rick's Riches Thrift Store.

I interviewed three people about how it all began and all three said: "It started with a need in the community".

"In those days the handicapped never left their homes," says Lenny Gallant, who served on the board for years. "There was a national charity organization that offered programs, but there was nothing locally."

"Folks were isolated back then and there were no available services," says Phyllis Parker, who was involved from the beginning. "I had a couple of friends who were in need; I think back then it was one person saying to another, "What about..."

Once the idea to create work programs for the disabled took root, the next stage was to recruit clients. Parker's good friend Daun Bona also had a hand in the project from the earliest days. "We would go from door to door, and people were resistant at first, as if we shouldn't even know they had someone with a disability," says Bona. "They would hide their handicapped children in a different room before they answered the door. Back then it was a shameful secret. We often had to return several times to convince the parents that their children would benefit from this. They'd have something to do. They wouldn't be so alone."



“A survey in East Hants showed there was approximately 120-150 people in need at that time. We started with 12 participants,” says Gallant. “Our goal? To get them jobs.”

“To bring adults together to develop and grow,” explains Phyllis. “I used to load my first child in the car in sleepers and drive around collecting the participants. At first, even making a cup of coffee was new to them. How they blossomed! I remember one young woman wouldn’t communicate at first. She sat and knitted all day long—one long strip, continuously. Then one day she suddenly said, “Hello Phyllis, it’s nice to see you. My, you have a nice hairdo.”

“They felt they belonged in the program,” says Bona. “They wouldn’t miss a single day! Once the parents saw how it was helping their child, they were so grateful.”

It wasn’t all smooth sailing. To get a vibrant program up and running took a lot of work and fund-raising. Twice, fires destroyed the facilities they were renting, through no fault of the participants. So Parker persuaded her husband to donate a piece of land and fund-raised for a new work facility.

Surely these years of dedicated volunteer work—not to mention massive donations like gifts of land—reflect deep funds of compassionate altruism? Not according to Parker: “I think it was mostly selfish,” she says. “We worked hard, but it didn’t feel like work, because it was so meaningful and positive. There have been so many rewards from this group. I learned so much about what they were capable of, given the chance.”

The participants worked on a number of different projects as the years went by, from refurbishing furniture to packaging earplugs for Air Canada to woodworking projects. Indeed, there were multiple opportunities to see what they could do, “given the chance”, but the most successful and longest-lasting venture was Rick’s Riches Thrift Store.

“Rick was my first cousin,” says Bona. “He might be diagnosed today as on the spectrum, but he always knew right from wrong. He wanted to be part of everything and everyone knew him—the police gave Rick a uniform and a badge, the Fire Dept gave him an outfit. He was in the program from the moment it began until he died 10 years ago.”

Today, the original group are in their 80s and younger people have taken the reins, and they are just as dedicated. Today, their fund-raising efforts are going towards a new 7-million-dollar establishment in the Elmsdale Industrial Park. The trajectory from rentals in existing buildings to designing a beautiful new building from scratch reflects the huge growth and success of this venture, which started with the recognition of a need and ended up giving so many lives purpose—not just for the 100s of participants, but for those who helped them.

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Did You Know?

- ▶ Did you know that Lantz is home to a state-of-the-art skating, hockey and field dome? East Hants Sportsplex. Located at 1076 Highway 2, the Sportsplex offers a variety of programming from CanSkate to soccer, the Sportsplex is your place to play. Check out programming and events on the East Hants Sportsplex Socials.
- ▶ Did you know that The Municipality of East Hants is working toward building new playgrounds at the Walton Fire Department, John Murray Drive in Enfield and Dawson Dowell Park in Maitland? These areas will greatly benefit from the new outdoor spaces to create and enhance East Hants Adventuring. Check easthants.ca for updates on playground development.
- ▶ Did you know that the East Hants Aquatic Centre community room hosts a monthly Senior Social "Seniors Police Academy" for East Hants aged 55+? Covering a variety of safety and informative topics, get out and get informed! Check it out the second Tuesday of each month from 10:30am-noon.

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What do you need to know?

Are you new to East Hants and have questions?

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Did You

Know?

- ▶ Did you know that In the 18th century, East Hants County was a significant hub for the mast trade? Large white pine trees from the area were sought after for making ship masts, and this trade played a crucial role in the local economy.
- ▶ Did you know that East Hants County has been home to several Victoria Cross recipients, Canada's highest military decoration, including George William Gracie and John MacKenzie?



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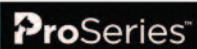
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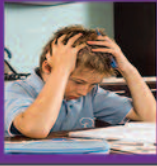


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Remembrance Day Lest we forget



NOVEMBER 11, 2023

On Remembrance Day, we gather at cenotaphs, memorials, and in ceremonies to pay our respects. The somber notes of bugle calls, like "The Last Post," echo through the air, evoking a sense of solemnity and gratitude. Wreaths are laid, and moments of silence are observed to honour those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

On November 11, come out and remember the soldiers, sailors and airmen who lost their lives to protect our freedoms.

Join your local community for a celebration of remembrance.



McNeill's Shell

Part of our community for over 60 years

What's Up East Hants likes to showcase businesses that are integral to our community, and there are few businesses that have been around longer than McNeill's Shell in Elmsdale.

Don McNeill first operated the business at the airport in 1962. "At first it was just me and my brother-in-law, Ray Doyle. We were open from 7-11 and we worked really hard, but it was challenging. I learned how to start cars that had been sitting in the airport parking lot for too long. I've rescued people off the highway in the middle of a storm. The work has always given me a great feeling of accomplishment."

On July 1, 1977, they moved to their current location in Elmsdale. McNeill's Shell has expanded with the community — today they employ 24 employees. Don's son, Roy, grew up with the business and took over in 2008.



From left to right: Carl Barr and Don McNeill

But while the size might change, their basic offerings haven't. Locals can still look to them for all their automotive, gas, towing and car wash needs. One of the biggest expansions in the early 2000s led to the inclusion of the convenience store and the car wash—the first in the area. There is also a dog wash connected to the car wash, because Roy McNeill thought this would be a useful service to offer. "Different branches of the business have different busy times," says Beth McNeill, Roy's wife, who has worked alongside her husband in various

capacities for the past 25 years. “The dog wash is busiest around Christmas time. Everyone wants their dogs spiffed up for the holidays!”

In the volatile times in which we live, the versatility of any company is a vital component of its success, and McNeill's Shell is no exception. “Trends come and go,” says Beth McNeill. “For example, every business is currently struggling with employees, and that is a new reality that we must adapt to. Another difference is that people are keeping their cars longer and fixing them, rather than replacing them. This is also a new trend, though I don't think it will last. Electric cars are the future. We are following what's happening very carefully in order to continue



to meet the needs of our community, because any business is as good as the community it is located in. And all small businesses contribute to the community. That's how they grow.”

The McNeill family have certainly contributed to the community. “We never let anyone leave without a working car,” says Don. “If they weren't able to pay right away, they would be able to pay at some point.” Then he adds with a chuckle, “Although there were times when they never could.”

Don also coached hockey for younger children and ran the Junior B Hockey Franchise, which involved a great deal of fund-raising for equipment and ice-time. There was also a lot of knocking on doors to get signatures supporting the construction of the new rink in Lantz. “I played on ice ponds when I was growing up in Sydney Forks, but I never played on a team because there wasn't the finances for a rink,” says Don. “My son Roy loved hockey, and he still plays.”

East Hants recognizes these contributions and has returned the favour, with customers and employees giving years of loyalty. Carl Barr can testify to this, since his entire career has been with McNeill's Shell, to the tune of 48 years. “I haven't been treated like an employee; I've been treated like part of the family.”



The Shubenacadie Canal System

Photo By Rhonda Steeves

In our picturesque region of Nova Scotia, there existed a remarkable network of canals that played a role in shaping the history and livelihoods of its people. The Shubenacadie Canal System was built in the early 1800s and took over 30 years to construct.

In the early 19th century, Hants County was a thriving hub of agricultural and industrial activity, but faced a significant challenge. The tides of the Bay of Fundy created an obstacle for transportation and limited access to the fertile lands and resources of the region. The solution was the construction of a series of interconnected canals and locks that would link the Minas Basin to the Shubenacadie River, allowing for reliable navigation, despite the challenging tides.

The ambitious project began in the 1820s, led by engineers and determined laborers. The main canal, known as the "Shubenacadie Canal", was nearly 65 kilometers long and featured a series of locks, basins, and channels. The ingenuity of the engineers was evident in the design of the locks, which used a unique drop-gate system to manage the extreme tidal fluctuations.

As the canals and locks took shape, a sense of excitement and anticipation filled the air. The completion of the Shubenacadie Canal System promised to connect the fertile farmlands of the interior to the bustling ports along the Bay of Fundy, opening up new opportunities for trade and prosperity.

Once the canals were operational, they transformed the region. Farmers could now easily transport their crops to market, and merchants could ship goods more efficiently. The canal also became a vital link in the province's transportation network, facilitating the movement of people and products. Towns along the canal flourished as they became essential stops for trade and commerce.

Local stories tell that the canals even played a role in the underground railroad, providing a secretive and safe passage for escaped slaves seeking freedom in Canada. The locks and canals offered refuge and a means to escape their pursuers.

However, the canal's glory days were relatively short-lived. With the advent of the railway in the mid-19th century, a faster means of transportation emerged. The Shubenacadie Canal System slowly fell into disuse and disrepair.

Today, the Hants County Canal System stands as a testament to the ingenuity and determination of the people who built it. Although it no longer serves its original purpose, it has found new life as a historical and recreational attraction. Locals and tourists alike can explore the remnants of this once-vibrant transportation network, enjoying its natural beauty and learning about the fascinating history that shaped the region.

The Shubenacadie Canal system may have lost its role as a vital economic lifeline, but it remains a cherished part of the region's heritage, a reminder of the indomitable spirit of those who built it and the legacy they left behind for future generations to appreciate and admire.

October 31, 2023

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

Did You

Know?

- ▶ Did you know that Halloween's roots can be traced back over 2,000 years to the Celtic festival of Samhain, which marked the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter? It was believed that on the night of October 31st, the boundary between the living and the dead blurred, allowing spirits to roam the earth.
- ▶ Did you know that the tradition of carving pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns originated in Ireland? Originally, people carved turnips or potatoes, but when Irish immigrants came to America, they found pumpkins were more readily available and easier to carve.
- ▶ Did you know that the custom of trick-or-treating is thought to have evolved from the medieval practice of "souling"? On All Souls' Day, poor individuals would go door-to-door offering prayers for the dead in exchange for food. Over time, this transformed into the modern tradition of children dressing up and collecting candy.



IT'S HARVEST TIME

It is that time of year when we are harvesting vegetables, making preserves and generally preparing for the long winter months. In the spirit of the Harvest, we give thanks for all we have and the beautiful people of our East Hants Community.

Walking Trails of East Hants

All over East Hants there are walking trails for everyone to explore. Check out www.easthants.ca for directions to the walking trails listed below.

Walton Lighthouse Trail

Nine Mile River Trail

Garden Meadows Trail

Milford Recreation Trail

MacInnis Trail

Rex McCoul Park Walking Trail

Uniacke Estate Museum Park

Bell Park Trail

Dot Buchanan Park

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Sherwood Park Walkway



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Sunrise over the
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Photo credit :Elder Marie Robinson

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Hey Kids

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Thank you to all WUEH readers and supporters. Stay tuned for future winners and contests.

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- Royal Oaks Playground Park – 187 Royal Oaks Way, Belnan
- East Hants Aquatic Centre Splash Pad – 14 Commerce Court, Elmsdale
- Mount Uniacke Memorial Community Park – 670 Highway 1, Mount Uniacke
 - Logan Drive Park, Lantz – COMING SOON!
- Shubie River Park – 2846-2850 NS-2, Shubenacadie – COMING SOON!

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What's Up East Hants is a community non-profit organization that is volunteer-based. Our mandate is to unite all communities in East Hants by promoting businesses in our area, highlighting the past and present accomplishments of our residents and so much more. We thrive on the contributions of our volunteers and are so excited to see new volunteers join our team. To become a volunteer you can visit our website www.whatsupeh.com or email info@whatsupeh.com. We look forward to working with the residents of East Hants in future endeavours.



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