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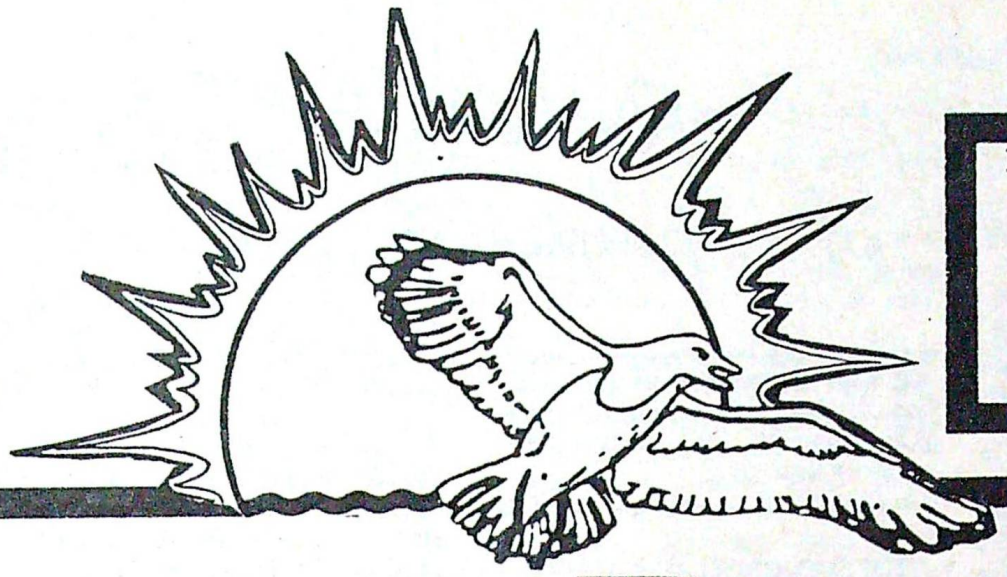


Happy Graduation!

Class of 1990

Partici-Paper

June 1990 Volume 11, no.6

A free monthly newspaper for the people of Inverness County since 1979

Getting in the festival mood!

The Festival Committee is busy this early part of June. Fred W. Smith, Chairman of the organizing committee, is going over the list of entries for the sail boat parade and races, and secretary Donald McLennan is talking to one of the sprinters for the track event. There will be a whole day of sports and getting it all organized is a big job. There are a thousand things to do yet before July 1st. The refreshment booths have not been constructed, and they need to get lumber for the dance stages. The music needs to be lined up, not that there is any lack of it. But it has to be decided when the pipers will be needed, and when each fiddler will be scheduled for the dancing. "How much for admission, Fred?" asks Donald, again busy over paperwork: "We need to get an ad in the newspaper before the 10th."

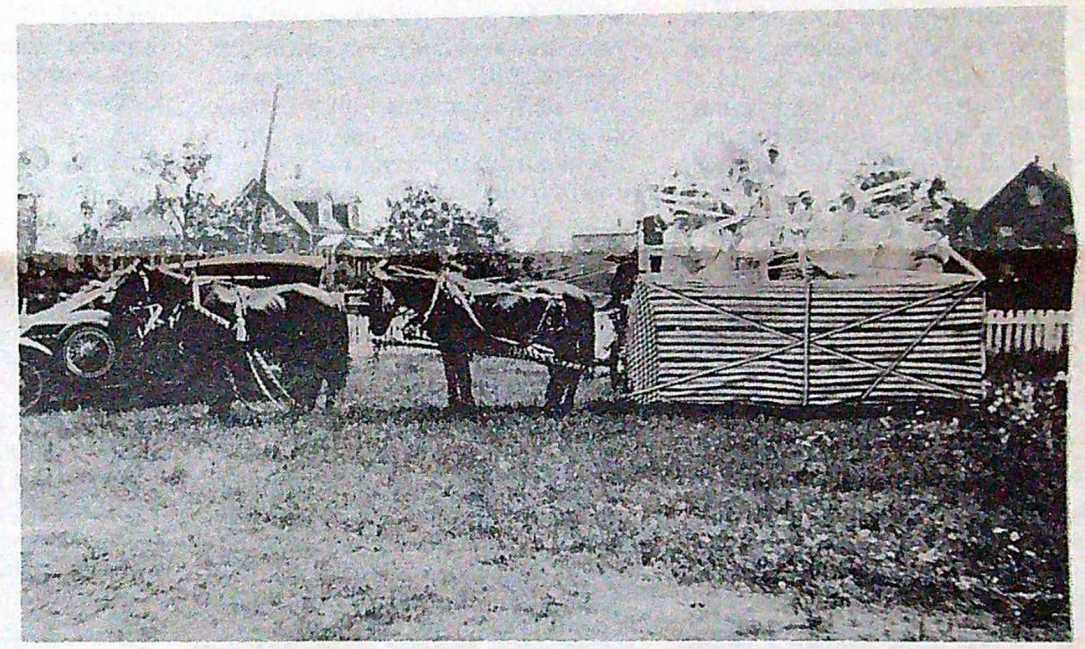
"Same as last year. Gentlemen 15c., Ladies 10c., Children, 5c."

"Hope it isn't too high," reflects the secretary, dipping his pen in the inkwell.

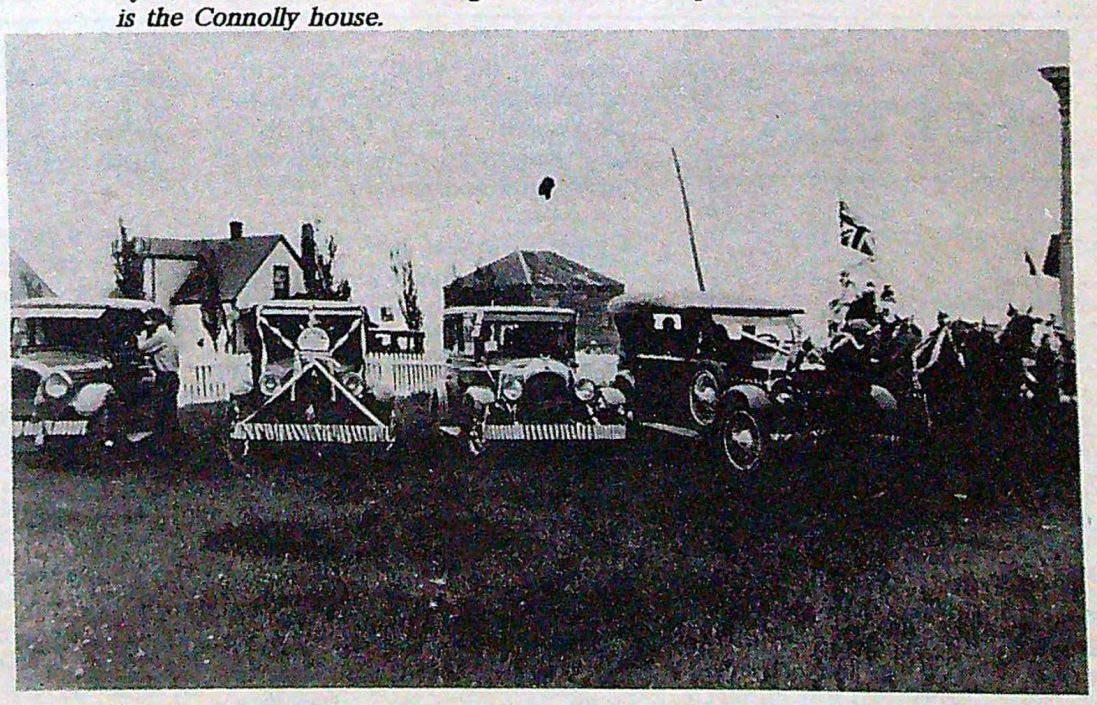
The year is 1914; the event Dominion Day, July 1st, The Fishermen's Regatta in Port Hood: *"The Biggest and Best Celebration Held in the County."* On the programme: a decorated boat parade, with more than 100 boats; two sail boat races; a fish splitting contest; a dory rowing race; and a tub race. There will be a whole day of sports including track events, and music, dance, and refreshment booths on the waterfront.

Special arrangement have been made with the railway which also will be advertised in *The Port Hood Greetings* for June 17, 1914: "Persons desiring to visit the Shiretown on July 1st should take advantage of the low rates on Railways. A train from Port Hawkesbury, and also one from Inverness will arrive in Port Hood before Sports begin."

There are some who would gladly row the distance back 76 years to take in this Fishermen's Regatta, meeting parents, grandparents, and great grandparents all much younger. It is not possible, of course, but if you are patient enough to wait unitl 1927, we do have a glimpse of the Port Hood Regatta of that year--thanks to John Gillies of the *Chestico Museum and Historical Society,* who provided the pictures and information.



One of the parade floats, pulled by a double team of horses, waits in a field by the Courthouse. To the right is the Dr. Campbell house and to the left is the Connolly house.



Local cars and teams line up beside the Courthouse in preparation for the parade. The house in the background is currently owned by Donald Alex MacDonell.

From the Editor

In a 130 page report, Andrew Terris articulates some long-unresolved issues about the cultural and artistic life of Nova Scotians, and makes a series of proposals that are bound to spark controversy in the arts community across Nova Scotia. One thing is certain: everyone, whether interested or informed or not will be affected either by the changes or because nothing is changed.

We are in a time when everything has to be equated with "economic impact." Surely culture has value beyond this jingoism. We seem to have lost a sense of one of our fundamental human rights in Nova Scotia: the right to define who we are, to have a feeling of pride and self-worth, to express individual spirit and meaning. This right should apply equally to rural and urban areas, with programs aimed at overcoming the typical rural disadvantages of inadequate facilities and transportation, educational disparity, and lack of representation.

Andrew Terris is challenging the province to a cultural chess tournament, the stakes of which are real and earnest: money, jobs, visionary empowerment, prestige, and personal ambition.

While there will be disagreement with some of the assumptions and recommendations in the Andrew Terris report, I thank him and the *Coalition on Arts and Culture* for bringing issues to the table and giving a few "passionate pawns" an opportunity to voice long suppressed views.

Reflections of a passionate pawn

(Preliminary thoughts on the report on "Public Policy and Cultural Development" as written by Andrew Terris.)

IF CULTURE WERE A GAME OF CHESS . . . . .

If you can imagine a chess tournament in which the opponents are "Blessedbethestatusquo," and "Suxtathestatusquo" in Nova Scotia cultural politics, then further imagine what the game would be like if the chessmen themselves had "passions and intellects." Just such a game was described by George Eliot in her novel *Felix Holt, A Radical.*

"Fancy what a game at chess would be if all the chessmen had passions and intellects, more or less small and cunning: if you were not only uncertain about your adversary's men, but a little uncertain about your own; if your knight could shuffle himself to a new square by the sly; if your bishop, in disgust at your castling, could wheedle your pawns out of their places; and if your pawns, hating you because they are pawns, could make away from their appointed posts that you might get checkmate on a sudden. You might be the longest-headed of deductive reasoners, and yet you might be beaten by your own pawns. You would be especially likely to be beaten, if you depended arrogantly on your mathematical imagination, and regarded your passionate pieces with contempt."

THE PAWNING OF RURAL NOVA SCOTIA

The arts are a growth industry in Canada, making a greater individual contribution to the economy than steel, lumber and forestry or fisheries. While people are losing jobs in the resource industries, they are being created in cultural industries and arts, especially in Quebec where the per capita expenditure on arts and cultural industries are the highest in Canada. Yet Nova Scotia, desperately needing growth industries, has overlooked this potential here, ranking ninth among the ten provinces in funding cultural production.

Rural cultural development has been long neglected and undervalued by the province. Included among the unemployed or underemployed in Cape Breton, for instance, are talented artists, singers, musicians; there are teachers, scholars and writers with academic degrees; there are technically expert graphic artists, film makers, craftspeople. For the most part, this talent is being starved out and sent down the road where there is light at the end of the Causeway.

A bureaucracy centralized in Halifax, seeming to exist mostly for Halifax, and not representative or responsive to the needs of rural Nova Scotians is a major handicap to rural cultural development.

We are given the message that we are not important, that our aspirations are trivial. There is a very mixed and confusing message coming from our Provincial government. On the one hand, it promotes cultural tourism, on the other hand, it ignores our problems, cuts our education system and sabotages the very means of fostering cultural development.

Rural Nova Scotians live in a world of mine closures, steel plant closures, school closures, fisheries collapse, pogey survival, no jobs. Rural Nova Scotia is a vastly more difficult world in which to develop expressions of creativity, and yet

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To obtain a copy of the full 130 page Andrew Terris report, (for $5.00) call the Department of Recreation and Tourism, 787-2274

Letters Policy

Letters are welcome in Partici-Paper, but space is limited. Please keep letters to about 100 to 150 words in length. Letters reflect the opinions of readers and do not necessarily reflect editorial views, or those of the publisher.

Publication is at the discretion of the editor who reserves the right to shorten or edit. Letters should be signed and include the writer's address and phone number. Send to: Letters to the Editor, Partici-Paper, c/o Mary Anne Ducharme, R.R.#2 Whycocomagh, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, BOE 3MO. Phone 945-2982.

Next deadline: June 25

Partici-Paper
Editor
Mary Anne Ducharme

Published by the Inverness County Department of Recreation/Tourism

Contributions of articles, photos, letters dealing with issues and opinions, information and promotion about community events are welcome.

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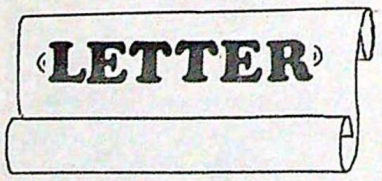
Printed by *The Pictou Advocate*



Dear Editor,

The following in response to a letter to the editor, published in the May edition of *Partici-Paper.*

The letter, by Myles Kehoe, was misleading. The exhibit in question *"Cape Breton Folk Art,"* features the work of Sidney Howard, supplemented by select works of eight other folk artists, three of whom are from Inverness County.

The headline for the letter "Publicity poor about folk art exhibit" is bad journalism on behalf of the editor. You have a responsibility to provide accurate information and to follow up on any allegations concerning other individuals and groups.

I wish to inform Mr. Kehoe and your readers that I am in no way employed by the Cape Breton Centre for Heritage and Science. The exhibit was assembled wholly by myself, I contacted the artists, and I found the exhibit area. The Centre agreed to display the exhibit, and is innocent of the allegations made of them.

Mr. Kehoe states that "sponsors of the Cape Breton Folk Art Exhibit should have done a better job of making craftspeople aware of this event." Firstly, this is an "art" exhibit, not a "crafts" exhibit, a serious display of Nova Scotia Folk Art. Also no artist comes under my "control." Nor it is part of my "job" to make artists aware. The sponsors of any such event are not obliged to advertise.

I spent upwards of $1,500. of my own money to assemble the exhibit. This kind of negative criticism, by persons not directly affected, explains why not many people want to volunteer time and money to broaden horizons, rather than complain.

My personal involvement in Nova Scotia Folk Art has been done for no personal gain, but for the preservation of this art form.

Two artists from Inverness County, Bill Hess of Inverness, and Joseph Deveau (now deceased) of Cheticamp, are now

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