Volume 1 **PARTICI-PAPER** Number 17

November 1980

Community leadership is required to encourage and sustain participation

Photo courtesy of Joey Beaton

Cape Breton fiddler Dan Hughie MacEachern

Cape Breton fiddle enthusiasts gathered at the Adult Vocational Training Centre in Sydney, November 15, to pay tribute to one of Canada's leading exponents of Celtic music, Cape Breton fiddler Dan Hughie MacEachern.

Present at the tribute were representatives of Scottish societies and associations throughout the island.

A native of Queensville, Inverness County, MacEachern has mastered a unique bowing techique and is widely known for his compositions of marches, strathspeys, reels and jigs.

Most of his compositions were written for friends, places and special events. Such compositions include a "A Land of My Love," "Trans Canada March," The Canso Crossing" and "The Rosebush Jig." One of his most popular tunes is "The Trip to Mabou Ridge" which he composed in 1938.

School recreation programming underway

Recreational programming within the schools is underway thanks, to the help of supervisors, principals and public interest. In most areas of the county there is at least one recreational program in the school. These will run until Christmas and new programs will begin in the new year.

Our main concern in helping set up these programs is to support the wants and needs of the people in each area. This is where you came in. We would like to put a master schedule of all the recreational programs which could be offered, in the next issue of the Partici-Paper. If you know of an activity, such as knitting, dancing or volleyball, in which ten or more people would be interested perhaps you could call the supervisor in your area and let them know. Also, you may know a person who would like to instruct a certain program. If you do, please contact the supervisor in your area.

The schedule of possible programs will be in the December issue of the Partici-Paper. It will consist of a list of programs, the time and day they could take place and the registration fee; only those receiving enough interest will begin. If you want to participate in a program you will be asked to let the supervisor in your area know. This will help provide a more organized program.

Below is a list of the supervisors. If you have any information please contact them before December 3rd, 1980 to ensure that your information is included in the schedule.

Contacts:

St. Joseph Du Moine: Joe Delaney, 224-2664.
Margaree Forks: Willie D. Chisholm 248-2737
N.E. Margaree: Nelson Ingraham 248-2983
Inverness: Eddy MacEachern, 258-2124.
Mabou: John Morris Rankin, 945-2889
Port Hood: Francene Gillis, 787-3344
Judique: Rita Poirier, 787-2779 or Theresa MacInnis, 787-2475
Creignsih: Geri MacDonald 625-1942
Port Hastings: Yvonne Fox, 625-2556
Glendale, West: Joan MacDonald 625-0526
Belle Cote: Gloria LeBlanc 235-2348
Whycocomagh: Elspeth Kinney 756-2941

Francene Gillis

RECREATION
INVERNESS
COUNTY

Director's Desk
Cordination

Coordination, what does it mean? Who should be responsible?

Coordination, as defined in the dictionary, is to "put into harmony." Although this a very simplified definition, it does come close to explaining the role of a municipal recreation department.

No recreation department could feasibly run all the recreational programs within a county. If the function is to "facilitate" or "enable," however, the role of such a department is then in proper perspective. The ultimate responsibility of deciding the recreational destiny of each community is left with the communities themselves.

The recreation department can help coordinate certain activities occuring within the community on a municipal level. A very good example of such an activity is tug of war competitions.

A sponsoring organization, convinced that this sport would be a drawing card at various festivals in the municipality, can approach the department for assistance.

If there is sufficient interest, the recreation director then can arrange a schedule of tug of war competitions aimed at developing team initiative within the participating communities.

In order to ensure that each competition would be attended by the teams involved, a point system could be developed whereby each team would be given X number of points depending on where the team finished in competitions.

At the completion of the final competition, the team with the most number of points accumulated throughout the summer would be declared the Inverness County tug of war champions.

This method of coordination, of course, can be applied to many other similar activities.

As a recreation director, I would be very happy to act as host to community groups or individuals interested in applying this concept to their own particular circumstances.

It is only through the efforts of the communities that this procedure could work.

I look forward to hearing from you! John Cotton

Androcles and the Lion

Due to the success of Stage East Theatre's production on energy and forest conservation which toured junior high schools throughout Nova Scotia, we are pleased to announce our upcoming production.

The presentation entitled "Androcles and the Lion" is being staged especially for the Christmas season and will be touring Nova Scotia communities from December 1 to 13. This delightful play, adapted by Aurand Harris from the Aesop fable, is appropriate to the season and promises to be a Christmas treat to both young and old alike.

CULTURE AND FITNESS NEWSLETTER

Municipal Department of Recreation Inverness County.

Second Class registration number 5012.

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Send all Partici-Paper contributions to:
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telephone 945-2982
or
Stop in at the Recreation Office when you are in Port Hood and give submissions to John Cotton or Betty Campbell.

Next Partci-Paper deadline: December 12

Will Gealic die? The question may be old, but the answer is far from clear -- or at least far from the answer its advocates in Cape Breton would like to hear. Like John A. Morrison, in his speech as a member of parliament in 1879, a few regard the language of Gaelic a sacred trust as "the language of Adam in the Garden."

Historically, however, the forces against Gaelic were dismally effective, including attempted cultural genocide by the English in Scotland, the influence of schools, and even the indifference or shame of the Gaels themselves. English was the practical language, holding the key to worldly success, and the retention of Gaelic was plainly abstract idealism. Latin is dead, and the world survived. Cultures have flourished and declined, and are forgotten. So if Gaelic is relegated to the level of a quaint local backwardness, who is there to care?

MAC-TALLA

AR NI NACH GLUINN MI 'AN DIUGH CHA'N AITHRIS MI MAIREACH

SIDNI. C. B.. DI-HAOINE. AM MART 17, 1899.

The story of Jonathan G. MacKinnon

Apparently a few care, very deeply. Their zeal, if it does not turn aside the inevitable, at least will forestall the demise of Gaelic for a good, long time hopefully. One such man was born at Dunakin, near Whycocomagh, on September 2, 1869. The descendent of immigrants from the island of Skye in Scotland, Jonathan G. MacKinnon early developed a cherished ambition to produce a newspaper written entirely in Gaelic. As a young boy, he suffered from frequent illness, and did not attend school regularly, but his mind was keen. He avidly acquired information about his Gaelic forefathers and resolved that he would recover and put in print the songs, stories, and history that were known to most only by word of mouth.

He attended Sydney Academy to complete his schooling, and was given the post as editor of the school paper. This futher whetted his ambition to produce his own newspaper.

In May of 1892, Jonathan began a weekly four page paper in Sydney under the title *Mac-Talla* (Echo). True to his resolution, nearly every word in the paper was in Gaelic, even the advertising, which made it the first Gaelic newspaper anywhere to carry advertising. Reluctantly, he was forced to use English words when the Gaelic equivalent did not exist, such as for 'stove,' 'felt hat,' 'molasses,' and 'bicycle.'

In the second volume, he enlarged his layout to eight pages, and eventually, by dint of strenuous effort, the circulation increased to 1,400. Even so, Jonathan had to work part time to meet expenses because there were never enough paying subscribers.

In the seventh year of *Mac-Talla*, 1899, some of his close friends rallied to his rescue by forming a printing and publishing corporation, selling a thousand shares at $10.00 a share.

While this saved *Mac-Talla* temporarily, over the long range, Jonathan still had to harry his readers for payment. Ironically, the paper was highly respected and loved, and it contained a wealth of previously unpublished material of wide interest. Gaelic began to take on an air of prestige for some who had hitherto only spoken it at home.

Suas Leis A' Ghaidhlig!

In some Gaelic communities perhaps only one person had a subscription to *Mac-Talla* but it was passed from household to household, and even used as a means of teaching children to spell Gaelic words. For the many who could not read their own language, there would be gatherings around local scholars who would read aloud the latest news, stories, and songs.

Always in financial desperation, Jonathan continued to plead for payment,until an angry reader composed a song in response, comparing the bad-mannered *Mac-Talla* with the discreet and proper *Casket:*

"Look at the *Casket* so modest; it is mannerly and quiet, you never hear it shouting for payment-the trick of that rascal *Mac-Talla.*".

Finally in June of 1904, Jonathan was obliged to discontinue publication because of ever increasing costs. In despair, he wrote to his readers in farewell:

"In order to bring out *Mac-Talla* every two weeks, it would require not less than two thousand subscribers ...this number cannot be found throughout the length and breadth of the world, and we can reach no other conclusion than the Gaels do not want a Gaelic paper...

...we can do nothing else at this time except, with great regret, to allow it to die."

Thus the most durable of all Gaelic periodicals came to an end.

But Jonathan, nevertheless, continued his championship of the Gaelic language. In 1928, he edited a small monthly called *Fear na Ceilidh* (The Visitor), which ran for two years; he made and published translations in Gaelic of English literary classics; and contributed a Gaelic column in a Sydney newspaper.

In later years, Jonathan, still plagued by ill health, returned to Whycocomagh where he was in membership of the MacLean church.

He died on January 13,1944, at the age of 75. The funeral service, which was held in the MacLean church was conducted in both Gaelic and English.

If the fate of *Mac-Talla* is an omen of what awaits the Gaelic language in Cape Breton, the answer to "Will Gaelic die?" will not be a happy one. Fortunately, Jonathan MacKinnon was not entirely alone in his crusade and a number of attempts to halt the decline of Gaelic allow some slight glimmers of hope.