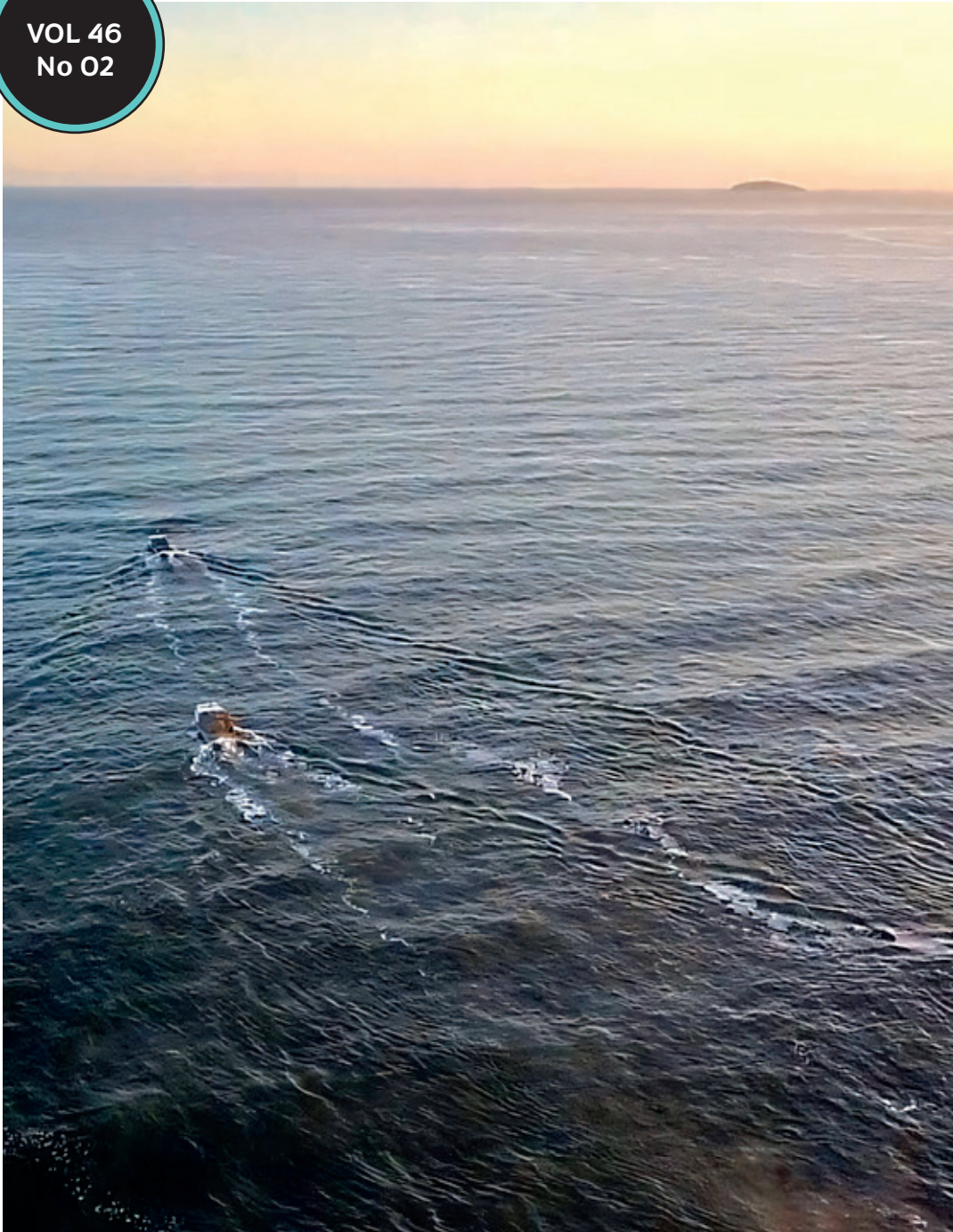


THE PARTICIPAPER

An Inverness County Periodical

Summer 2025

VOL 46
No 02



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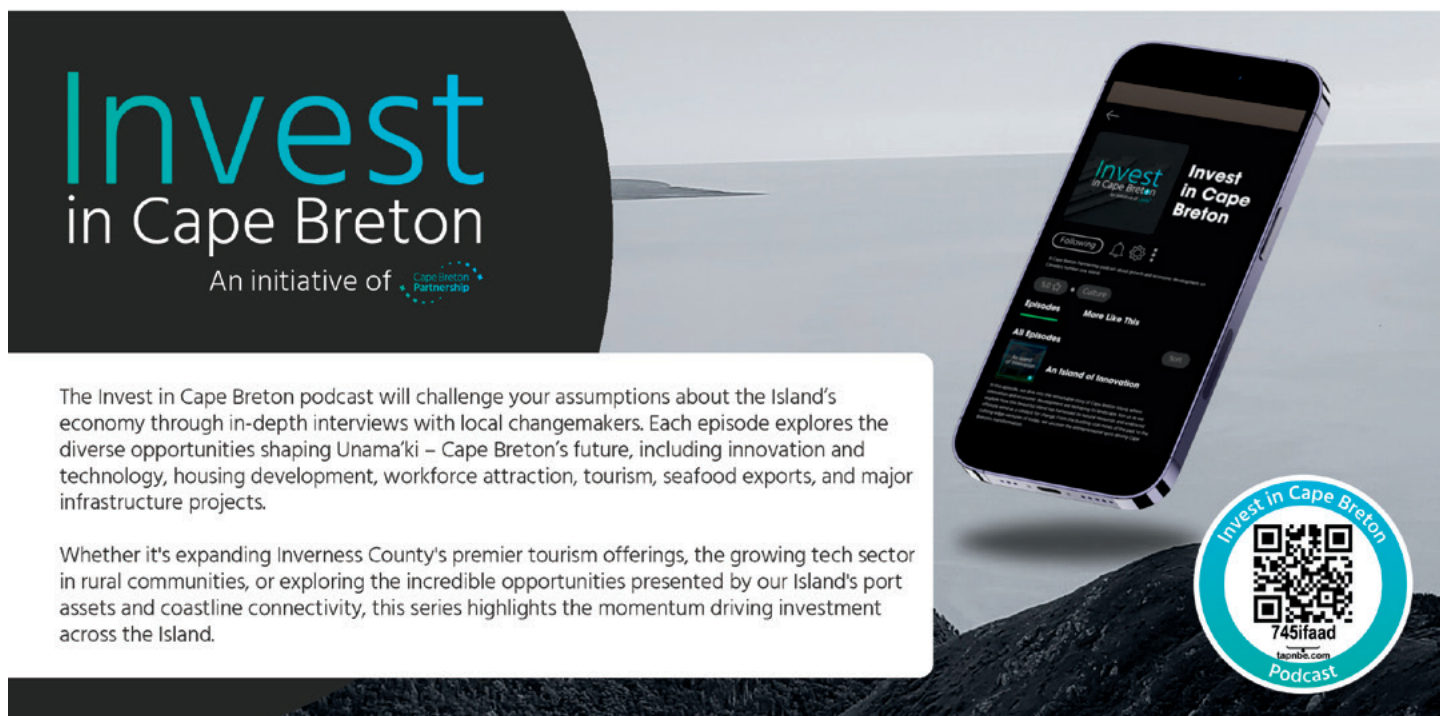
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Chief Administrative Officer's message

KEITH MACDONALD
INVERNESS COUNTY CAO

Summer has arrived, bringing a vibrant energy to the west side of Cape Breton Island. Our communities are alive with activity, achievements, and inspiring stories that we're proud to share.

In this edition of *The Participaper*, we shine a spotlight on 38 outstanding individuals nominated for Volunteer of the Year. Their dedication reflects the strength of community spirit across our county and highlights how important volunteers are to the fabric of our communities.

Young voices are also taking center stage. From a Gaelic Café in Mabou to intergenerational cooking workshops where youth and adults 55+ come together to prepare meals, local youth are thriving in innovative and meaningful ways. We also feature a rising volleyball star whose talent and determination are gaining well-deserved recognition.

Discover our local museums, each offering a window into the rich tapestry of our region's culture and history. And don't miss the breathtaking stained-glass art of Polycarpe LeBlanc of Procreation Studios—a stunning example of the creativity flourishing in our own backyard.

There's so much to celebrate in this issue of *The Participaper*. We hope you enjoy reading about the remarkable accomplishments and stories that capture the warm and welcoming spirit of our county. ■

Keith

The Participaper
Editor/writer: Dave MacNeil
Art direction/design: missbrenna Studio

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A letter from the editor

DAVE MACNEIL

info@invernesscounty.ca

Colleen Burns wasn't trying to make any grand statement when she started fishing her late husband's gear out of Margaree Harbour 34 years ago. She had a young family to feed, and the notion that she might inspire other women to captain their own boats was the furthest thing from her mind.

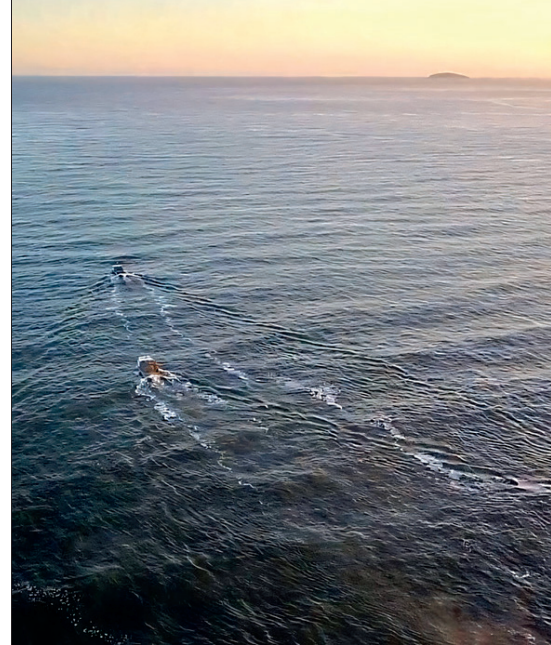
But sometimes one person's bold decision can have an unintended result, and that's certainly the case, as you'll read in our feature on female fishing captains in the county (page 14).

Amanda MacDougall of Inverness, who is closing in on 20 years captaining her own boat, says it's not likely she would have considered such a career possible if it were not for Burns paving the way more than a decade earlier.

The seven women profiled in the feature say they've received nothing but encouragement and acceptance from their fellow fishers, and in 2025 that's the way it should be – no big deal. Except, it is a big deal to these women, who've graciously agreed to share their stories.

For them, making their mark in an industry still very much dominated by men is a source of pride – whether that's pride in carrying on a family legacy, or pride in succeeding at something they may have thought impossible earlier in their lives.

Burns, who hopes to retire soon, can look back on a career that has provided well for her family. But she also takes a great deal of satisfaction from knowing that she inspired other women in the county. ■



Cover photo: Setting Day in Inverness.
(Photo: Desiree Ryan)

- 4 BREAKING GLASS**
- 6 TINY SCHOOL PLAYS HUGE
 ROLE IN COMMUNITY**
- 8 CANTON CULTUREL**
- 14 WOMEN OF THE WATER:
 THRIVING IN THE FISHING
 COMMUNITY**
- 20 JUDIQUE FESTIVAL MARKS
 250 YEARS SINCE FOUNDING**
- 24 BACKYARD FORAGING**
- 26 MUSEUMS OF INVERNESS
 COUNTY**
- 34 2025 INVERNESS COUNTY
 VOLUNTEERS**
- 46 PARTIR À LA DÉCOUVERTE
 DES SENTIERS PÉDESTRES
 DANS LA RÉGION DE
 CHÉTICAMP**



Breaking glass

East Margaree artist dancing with the light

BY DAVE MACNEIL

When Inverness County honoured its healthcare workers at an awards gala in April, honorees went home with a personalized, one-of-a-kind gift created by a local artist.

Polycarpe LeBlanc, an East Margaree-based stained-glass artist, crafted two separate designs in stained glass. Each honoree was presented with a piece that reflected their home community. Healthcare staff based in Chéticamp received a view from Le Buttereau looking north to the highlands, while those based in Inverness were presented with a coastal view overlooking Margaree Island.

LeBlanc attended the Excellence in Healthcare Awards Gala, and says he was encouraged by the response to his work.

After almost 50 years with art as a sideline, LeBlanc says he's finally able to make a living at his work. "It's really taken off in the last year or so, so I've been focusing a lot more on it," he says.

Although he's exhibited his work in the past, including a display at the Inverness County Centre for the Arts, most of what he creates is by commission.

“Whatever I make, I’ll sell eventually, so I’ve been trying to stockpile for the summer, because I have a lot of people who come up here to see what I’ve got.”

LeBlanc has done work for the Inverary Manor in Inverness, a couple of stained-glass windows for Calvin United Church in Margaree Harbour, and a whole series of windows for a church in D’Escousse, Richmond County.

“That’s all you’ve got to do, get someone to buy one window for a church and they’ll fill the church,” he laughs. “That’s what happened last time [in D’Escousse]. We did one window, and ended up selling 15.”

He’s also done a lot of pet portraits for owners who bring him photos of their animals.

“I’m doing a brown Lab right now, actually,” he says, adding that he usually does the pets portrait style, with a background. “I’ve done many of those over the years. It’s all in the eyes, especially with a dog.”

He says the result usually gets an emotional reaction “especially if the pet has passed on.”

LeBlanc’s studio is in the home where he and his 11 siblings grew up and, given the size of his family, he has appropriately named his workplace the “Procreation Studio.”

He says he wasn’t always artistic and only happened upon stained-glass art after beginning a career in banking. With a business degree from Dalhousie University, he went to work at a bank in Wolfville in the late 70s, where he got to know a stained-glass artist and fell in love with the art.

“It’s the dancing of light with colour,” he says, explaining what attracted him to stained-glass. “There’s a lot of reflection of the natural light that comes through the glass. The light coming through the glass is really quite magical.”

“Depending on the time and the lighting of the day, it changes all the time.”

LeBlanc says he buys each colour of stained-glass individually, draws his designs on paper to create a template that’s then transferred to the glass. He then uses a glass cutter to cut out his design.



Polycarpe LeBlanc works on a project in his studio in East Margaree. (Photo: Dave MacNeil)

“The cutter itself makes a score line on the glass and then that breaks, and hopefully it will break the way you want it to break,” he explains.

He says he’s broken a lot of glass over the years, and not always in a good way.

“The way stained-glass is made, it has a smooth side, which is the side you cut on, and the other side is more textured,” LeBlanc says. “So, you use the textures as part of the design, so there are different aspects to it, the colour, the texture and the light of day.”

LeBlanc moved back to East Margaree 20 years ago and took a course with InRich Business Development so that he could set up his stained-glass business, but his art still wasn’t enough to sustain him, so he worked for seven years for Canada Post, operating the post office in the community. He’s retired from that job now and he hopes his art career, like the stained-glass itself, will break the right way. ■



Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide has been reaching out to – and into – the community in recent months, including a trip to A.J. Campbell's maple syrup farm (top, left photo). Students also hosted a series of Gaelic Cafes, hosting the wider community (photos, bottom left). (Photos: contributed)

Tiny school plays huge role in community

BY DAVE MACNEIL

As the first Gaelic immersion school in North America wraps up its fourth year, its connection to the surrounding community has never been stronger.

Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide, located behind the Beinn Mhàbu campus of Colaisde na Gàidhlig, was opened in September 2021, and may have a hit on its hands with its recent Gaelic Café events at the college.

This spring, the tiny school, which is comprised of 11 students, held three such events, welcoming the community in for a cup of coffee, a bit of cake, and a whole lot of Gaelic. Seonag Buxton, who teaches grades primary and one, says the café grew each time it was held.

“It was more than I anticipated by miles,” Buxton says. “The first time we did it, we set out four tables, but we quickly found we had to set more tables up. We were blown away by the support of the community.”

“Every time it grew bigger,” she adds. “And every time the children got more efficient.”

Students operated every facet of the café, from baking the cakes and making the coffee, to taking the orders and handling money. Buxton says events such as this are extremely important to the school.

“A massive part of any school is community links and that was something that tied in nicely,” she says, noting that the students appear keen to continue the cafés when they return in the fall.

“They did so well, keeping in mind they’re five and six years old,” Buxton explains. “They made videos to teach a lot of the Gaelic phrases you might need if you came to our Gaelic café, and they were taking their orders in Gaelic.”

“A lot of Gaelic people from the community came and it gave them an opportunity to speak Gaelic.”

The Gaelic cafés are just part of the school’s goal to integrate fully into the local community. In recent months, the school has hosted visitors who’ve shared their musical and spiritual influences, they’ve visited a local maple syrup farm, and they’ve shared their knowledge with children outside the school during their weekly play groups.

“It’s showing the students the relevance of their learning and their sense of belonging within the culture and the community,” Buxton explains. “It’s helping them understand their identity, being a Gael and what that is.”

“There’s so much learning that goes on. It’s nice to see the practical application of what they’re learning.”

Buxton only arrived in Mabou last fall from Scotland and says the familiarity of her new home is probably what has surprised her the most.

“I’m from the highlands of Scotland, so it’s a very similar community feeling, it’s very similar musically,” she says. “It surprises me to be in a different country and still find it so similar to home.”

Buxton says it was big news in Scotland when the school first opened four years ago. In the spring of 2024, she saw an ad looking for a teacher to join the tiny staff, which consists of another teacher and a class support person. The ad was advertised heavily in Scotland, so she jumped at the chance to apply.

“I very much like my job,” she says. “Workwise, I couldn’t ask for a better school to work in.”

“The community is incredible. They’re so supportive and involved, the wider community as well as the school community. It’s an incredible place to live, and music-wise and Gaelic-wise, it’s so vibrant.” ■

Le Conseil des Arts de Chéticamp enters a new era with the opening of Canton Culturel

BY SIOBHAN BEATON

A cornerstone of the northern village of Chéticamp and its surrounding areas, Le Conseil des Arts de Chéticamp has long been dedicated to promoting and preserving the language, culture, and heritage of the community's Acadian residents.

For over 25 years, the non-profit organization has hosted diverse Acadian-focused shows, artistic workshops and training, extracurricular activities, and more, showcasing and supporting both local and international artists for residents and visitors of all generations to enjoy.

Now, in the wake of pandemic-related challenges, Le Conseil is entering a new chapter centred on revitalization and innovation—as many arts and culture organizations throughout the county are.

At the heart of this transformation is the long-awaited Canton Culturel, a major new venue nearly a decade in the making. Developed in partnership with Le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP),

the Canton Culturel is a versatile facility that features a conference centre, a multi-functional theatre, a workspace, and an artist workshop, all adjoining École NDA in the heart of Chéticamp. The venue offers much-needed infrastructure for a community that has lost several gathering spaces in recent years, including the Acadian Centre and LeMoine Parish Hall.

The Canton Culturel—in just under one year of operation—is already filling that gap, positioning Le Conseil des Arts de Chéticamp as a central hub for arts, culture, and community. The space is being used not only for Le Conseil's signature programming such as art exhibitions, workshops, and live performance; but also bringing opportunity for new, innovative events such as art competitions, dinner theatres, and more.

A perhaps unexpected benefit of the Canton Culturel is the wide range of groups, organizations, and individuals utilizing the space. The Municipality and Destination Cape Breton have hosted awards ceremonies and community engagement sessions, while artists and creatives seeking rental space from all over the region are coming to Chéticamp to showcase their work.

This increased activity is expanding Le Conseil's reach and fostering new connections for the community. With a venue of this scale and flexibility, the organization is now able to support more diverse programming, attract new audiences, and create meaningful opportunities for artists, educators, and cultural groups. The momentum sparked by the Canton Culturel is energizing the local arts scene and strengthening connections across the county and beyond.

This article was originally written earlier in the year while Kaylee Deveau was serving as general director of Le Conseil des Arts. A native of St. Joseph du Moine, Deveau played a key role in overseeing the early operations of the Canton Culturel and in helping the organization navigate its post-pandemic recovery. Though she has since moved on to a new role outside the organization, her efforts during this pivotal time helped set the stage for Le Conseil's continued growth and community impact.



The spaces at the Canton Culturel can host a variety of events, including art galleries (top left), cultural events (top right), and community gatherings (bottom). (Photos: contributed)

As the organization undergoes internal leadership transitions, the focus remains firmly on the potential of the new space and the role Le Conseil plays in the cultural and social fabric of the region. As the community looks to the future, the Canton Culturel is expected to be a cornerstone of ongoing efforts to celebrate Acadian identity and bring people together through the arts.

This summer and fall, the Canton Culturel is set to host a vibrant lineup of events, including dinner theatres, comedy shows, and a weekly intimate music series. For more information on upcoming programming and venue rentals, follow Le Conseil des Arts de Chéticamp online at conseildesartsdecheticamp.com. ■

Getting to know... Devin MacDonald

In this recurring series, we ask a municipal employee a few questions to get to know them better.

Where are you from?

Mabou, born and bred.

What's your role with the municipality?

Water meter technician.

What's your service time?

Since 2020.

What are your main responsibilities in your job?

I'm responsible for seasonal connections and disconnections for customers. I also look after the

water metering program, read water meters for billing, and coordinate the installation of water meters.

What's the best part of your job?

The people I work with, and meeting people in the community.

What's your favourite thing about Inverness County?

The community. Just from working away, you realize how friendly people are and how they generally care about each other.



Devin MacDonald

What's your favourite shop/store/service in Inverness County?

I don't really shop. If I had to pick one, it would be The Corner Store by missbrenna in Inverness.

Finally, coffee or tea?

Sadly, coffee now. I grew up on tea, but now I have three kids, so I usually go through an urn (of coffee) before 10 every morning!

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Users turning on to water conservation

BY DAVE MACNEIL

Residents of the county are getting a lot better at conserving water, says the Municipality of Inverness County's Water Meter Technician.

Devin MacDonald was hired in 2020, as the municipality was working to upgrade its water metering system. He manages the system along with coordinating the installation of meters and conducting seasonal connections and disconnections for residents.

He says he's seen major improvements in residents' attitudes towards conservation.

"I was hired after the water metering program began, to bring it to completion," MacDonald says, noting that there was metering done before his arrival, but that it wasn't efficient.

Prior to the upgrade of the system, staff would have to be pulled off their regular jobs every three months to travel the county collecting data.

"It could take two to three weeks," he says. "I can do the whole county in two days. Not only can it be done more efficiently, but you're getting accurate, timely data now."

When he started working for the municipality, MacDonald says there were a lot of surprises in that data.

"When I first came here, on the software program that I use, generally you'd expect to see businesses in the top 15 – hotels, restaurants, hospitals and schools," he recalls. "When we first started metering, there were a lot of residential customers in there on par with restaurants." That shouldn't be the case, MacDonald notes.

Along with upgrading the metering system, the municipality began distributing literature on water conservation, with tips on what to watch for, like running toilets or water softeners that can waste water when they get stuck on a backwash cycle.

At the same time, many residents were having to come to terms with having to pay for water for the first time. "Not everybody had meters," MacDonald says. "It was basically starting from scratch."

MacDonald says water conservation is a key part of his job, and that in most homes, toilets are often the biggest culprit when it comes to wasting water.

"It's probably the biggest user of water in your home and the number one thing is the flush valve. That can gum up with mineral deposits and prevent it from sealing. It then keeps a flow of water going," he explains. "People tend to notice that on their bill very quickly."

MacDonald says he also sees a greater acceptance of, and cooperation with, water conservation advisories.

"It seems like Inverness has been getting one every summer and it's directly related to aging infrastructure and the high demand of people visiting in the summer," MacDonald says, noting that residents have been very cooperative as the municipality works to upgrade its infrastructure.

"People have been pretty good," he says. "You can drive around and you're going to see someone watering the lawn, you're going to see someone washing their car. But in the grand scheme of things, from what I'm seeing, everybody does what they're supposed to."

In its advisories, the municipality outlines a number of steps that consumers can take to conserve water, and they include: taking shorter showers and not taking baths; not watering their gardens or lawns; not washing their vehicle or boat; not letting faucets run when washing or rinsing; avoiding washing clothes as much as possible; flushing the toilet less often; and keeping a bottle of water in the fridge to avoid letting water run while getting a drink. In the end, every drop saved is better for our communities and the environment. ■



Summer thoughts on your health

BY GLENNAL CALDER, ND

The sun on your skin

After a long and cold winter, we are all craving some consistent sunshine. We all find it easier to become more active, get outdoors more often and eat more fruit and vegetables. There are a few things we need to be mindful of to ensure we enjoy a safe, healthy and fun summer.

The first thing is sun protection. While it's important to maintain healthy vitamin D levels, it's also important to protect your skin from prolonged exposure to the sun to avoid skin cancer and premature aging. The best way to do that is, you guessed it, sunscreen! Let's talk about the different kinds of sunscreens:

- **Chemical:** Contain organic compounds like oxybenzone, avobenzone, and octinoxate, which absorb UV radiation and convert it into heat, which is then released from the skin. These sunscreens tend to be easier to apply without leaving a white residue, but they can sometimes cause skin irritation, particularly for those with sensitive skin or conditions like acne, rosacea, and eczema.
- **Mineral:** Contain inorganic compounds such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. These ingredients sit on top of the skin and physically block UV radiation. Mineral sunscreens are less likely to cause irritation and are often recommended for those with sensitive or reactive skin.

When wearing sunscreen, always look for one that says, "broad spectrum," meaning it protects against both UVA and UVB light, and one that boasts an SPF of 15 or higher. Both UVA and UBA can damage our skin. In addition to choosing the right sunscreen, incorporating other sun protection strategies can greatly enhance your skin health during the summer. Wearing protective clothing, seeking shade during peak sun hours, and remembering to reapply SPF every two hours when outside can also be effective strategies.



Diet

In terms of improving skin health from the inside out, diet plays a crucial role. Here are some antioxidant-rich foods you might want to consider adding to your plate to improve skin health this summer. When in doubt, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds are the way to go!

- Berries (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries)
- Green tea
- Salmon
- Dark green vegetables (kale, collards, romaine, broccoli, spinach, bok choy)
- Red and orange vegetables (carrots, tomato, sweet potato, bell peppers)
- Nuts and seeds (walnuts, sunflower seeds, pecans, almonds, pumpkin seeds)

Water

I can't stress enough the importance of staying hydrated. Even mild dehydration can cause symptoms. If you find it difficult to drink water, here are a few reasons to start being consistent with your water.

Weight management: Water has been shown to decrease your intake of food if you tend to eat more calories than you need.

Circulation: Blood volume is made up of 92% water. If you are dehydrated your blood volume decreases and your circulation slows down which can lead to cold hands and feet.

Memory: Mild dehydration can affect your memory. A few glasses of water per day can improve your cognitive function and mood.

Joint Pain: The cartilage in your joints contains 80% water. Staying hydrated keeps your joints more lubricated and keeps the "cushion" between your joints healthier.

Kidney Stones: Many of us know how painful kidney stones can be. Drinking water can dilute the minerals in your kidneys and decrease the chances of kidney stones.

Temperature regulation: When we are dehydrated our body stores more heat. This lowers your ability to tolerate hot temperatures. Being well hydrated will decrease the risk of sun stroke.

Digestive function: There is nothing like water to keep your system regular and even if you have no problems with regularity, you will remove wastes more efficiently with adequate water. Keep a water bottle on hand as a visual reminder to drink water throughout the day.

Have a healthy, safe and fun summer.

Glenna Calder, Naturopathic Doctor



Women of the water: Thriving in the fishing community

BY DAVE MACNEIL

When Colleen Burns first captained her late husband's boat in Margaree Harbour back in 1991, she didn't imagine she would inspire other women in the county to try their hand at fishing.

Despite growing up in Main-a-Dieu with lots of fishermen in her extended family, she hadn't spent any time on the water until she met Johnny Burns in 1978.

"He was fishing with his dad at that time, so that's when I first started going out in the boat whenever I had the chance to," Burns recalls, "I really liked it."

"And then his dad passed away in 1981 and he took over the license. We got married the next year, so I used to go fishing with him between having children, so it was a bit sporadic at times."

Johnny Burns passed away in 1991, and, with the help of her in-laws, she was able to take over his boat.

"My brother-in-law used to fish a bit in Main-a-Dieu," she says. "So, he helped me, and I had two other brothers-in-law who helped me quite a bit."

"With their help I started running the boat and I've been doing it ever since."

Burns says the other fishermen at Margaree Harbour were also very supportive when she started.

"They all grew up with my husband and they knew I had three boys, so they were very generous in helping me out in any way they could," she adds.

Their oldest son passed away and the middle son, Howard, also fishes out of Margaree Harbour. The youngest, Chris, fishes with his mother.

"He's pretty much running the boat," she says. "I'm just there to help out in whatever way I can."

"Chris is preparing to take over this license, I'm hoping by next spring. I'm 67 years old and I'm feeling it. But he's more than capable of taking it over."

Burns says it's great to know she's been an inspiration to other women.



Colleen Burns still fishes out of Margaree Harbour, 34 years after she took over her late husband's boat.
(Photo: Dave MacNeil)

"It makes me feel amazing, because I kind of fell into it, and I was pretty nervous," she says. "To see females getting into it now, I think it's great."

One of those women is Amanda MacDougall, who fishes out of the wharf in Inverness.

"I'm very proud of Amanda," Burns says. "She's done really well."

Unlike Burns, MacDougall spent a lot of time fishing before becoming captain of her own boat. Her father, Jordan MacDougall, has been fishing for nearly 40 years.

In fact, since she started running her own boat 18 years ago, she's watched her sister, Sabrina Carpenter, do the same six years ago, and her brother Patrick also fishes out of Inverness. She says Amber, the youngest of four siblings, plans to take over their father's license when he retires.

"I'd fish with my dad on the weekends through high school, and then I did a couple of years after I finished school," MacDougall recalls. "I was in Halifax, and I'd come home every spring, and I'd fish."



Sisters Amanda MacDougall, left, and Sabrina Carpenter fish out of the wharf in Inverness. (Photo: Dave MacNeil)

“So, he asked me one day if I wanted to do this as a career, and I said ‘no,’ so he fired me!” He told me to go find another career.”

But MacDougall wouldn’t be off the water for very long.

“How I ended up fishing, a good high school friend had bought a lobster license in Margaree so I fished with him that next year,” she remembers. “I saw this woman, Colleen Burns, fishing. Her husband had died and she had started running the license.”

“I thought, ‘if she can do it, then I can do it,’” she adds. “She was the first woman I ever saw run a boat and then shortly after that I got my own. It’s really important for women to see that you can do this.”

MacDougall says she was a bit of a novelty at the wharf when she first started fishing, but that the other fishermen have been very supportive.

“At first, I think they didn’t think I was going to do much,” she says. “But I’d fish on the bad days, and they were like, ‘okay, she’s really doing it.’”

Along with driving the boat, MacDougall is involved in every other aspect of fishing with her crew.

“I’m in the thick of it,” she says. “I run the boat and do the traps. But I don’t touch bait. I used to do it, but with all the electronics in the cabin, you would get bait all over it. With all the technology now, it’s very different from when I started.”

When asked what she likes most about her career, there is no hesitation.

“On setting day, I was driving out of the harbour telling one of the people helping us, ‘Coming out of the harbour as the sun rises, this is my favourite part of the day. If anything ever happens to me, this where I want my ashes spread, right here.’”

For now, she’s waiting for the day when all four MacDougall children are captaining their own boats.

“We just need my father to retire, but he loves it.”

Sabrina Carpenter laughs when she recalls that, like her sister Amber, she too had planned to take over their father’s boat when he’d be done. A nurse at Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital, Carpenter takes a three-month leave of absence every year to go fishing.

After completing her nursing degree at St. F.X. University, she worked out west for several years

and was on a maternity leave when she ran her sister's boat while MacDougall was pregnant with her twins. She fished with her sister the following year and then moved back home in 2019 and bought her own license.

"I always thought in the back of my mind that I'd do it," she says. "My plan was when my father retired, I was going to take over his license. But then after fishing with Amanda that year, I thought 'you know, I really enjoy this.'"

"I just like being on the ocean. And then there's a competitiveness to it. I'm a pretty competitive person, so you're always trying to outdo the next person, so it's good to have that aspect of it. It's like a constant challenge. Every day you're trying to think, move gear and analyze everything. A different day brings a different challenge."

As much as she enjoys fishing, she says she's always more than ready to be back at the hospital.

"It's a nice balance."

Finding that balance in life was a big reason Jessica Hinkley decided she wanted to captain her own boat. The third female captain fishing out of Inverness, she grew up in Port Hawkesbury and had no connection to fishing before meeting her future husband.

"When I first met my husband, he had just gotten into the fishing industry himself in 1998," Hinkley recalls. "In 2000 he got his own license, so I got on the back of the boat with him."

She had planned to be a teacher and had finished her arts degree at St. FX. when they had their first child, and "that changed everything."

"So, I stayed on the boat," Hinkley says. "It made it a little easier that I was able to fish and be a mom and stay home with the baby."

"There was a license coming up for sale in Inverness, so my husband asked me if I thought I'd like to run a boat. That was 2014 and this is my 11th season."

She says fishing has afforded her and her husband a good work/life balance.

"It's a good career while being a mother," she explains. "I'm two months on the water, and we've



Jessica Hinkley, who has fished out of Inverness since 2014, says her career affords her the time to be more involved her children's lives. (Photo: Dave MacNeil)

always been able to attend all our kids' sporting events or anything at school. The schedule allowed us to do those things."

"I'm not one of those ones who loves fishing. It's a good job. Financially it's great, but I'm not one of those people who have salt water in their veins. I often tell people, 'I have the best job in the world on a nice day, and I have the worst job in the world on a dirty day.'"

Hinkley says since her first day on the water, the reaction from the fishermen at her wharf has been nothing but welcoming and supportive.

"As a woman in this industry, I think I've always felt I had to prove that I can do it," she says. "It's a pressure that I put on myself. Nobody's ever made me feel that I was out of place."

Erin MacLean, who fishes out of Maryville wharf, near Judique, says she's also encountered nothing but acceptance among her peers.

MacLean, who has proudly earned the nickname "Captain Eyeliner," says she hasn't changed who she is, as she's taken on the role of fishing captain.



Erin MacLean brought her pink oilers out of retirement for this photo aboard her boat at Maryville wharf.

(Photo: Dave MacNeil)

“I still get my nails done every three weeks,” she says. “I’m the girl with the sunglasses, the pink oilers and the nails. I still don’t want to lose that part of me.”

“I’m not like the women captains who run the license, drive the boat, and everything else. I’ll get there eventually. I’m only four years in.”

MacLean grew up just down the road from the wharf where her father, Harold MacDonald, fished for 40 years. She’s taken over his license and gear, but concedes it wasn’t in her plans years ago.

“My dad was heading for 80 and wanted to hang up his oilers,” she explains. “I’m the oldest of seven and my brothers had initially planned on doing it, but their lives took them elsewhere. My husband Trevor turned to me one day and said, ‘I think we should do it.’”

“I said ‘are you crazy?’”

“He said ‘why not, we’re doing it anyway and it would be a nice thing for Cam (their son) to have eventually down the road.’ So, we approached dad



Nancy Cameron-Dykens, shown here with her late father, Scott Cameron, says taking over his boat has brought her a great deal of comfort since his passing last year. (Photo: contributed)

about it, did the paperwork, and now I’m owner/operator of Family Tides Fisheries.”

MacLean’s husband has been fishing lobster out of the Coal Mines wharf, near their Mabou home, for almost 25 years. She says he’s the big reason it works.

“We both get up at 3 a.m., we have our coffee and our breakfast, and Trevor goes one way, and I go the other way,” she says. “At the end of the day, everything is down to Trevor. He’s got two licenses to get ready; 500 traps and two boats.”

Nancy Cameron-Dykens, who fishes out of Murphy’s Pond wharf in Port Hood, is also running her father’s gear this season, since Scott Cameron passed away suddenly last fall.

“I fished with him since my first year of university,” she says. “That was 2007. So, it’s been about 15 years that I was out with him.”

“I knew it was something he had wanted me to do. It wasn’t even a question for me. I knew that’s what he wanted, and I wanted to do that for him.”

Cameron-Dykens says she and her brother, who also fishes out Murphy's Pond wharf, are at least the fourth generation of her family that's fished for a living. Her brother is fishing their grandfather's gear.

"I'm pretty new here," she says. "But so far the fishermen have been so supportive, and I'm really enjoying it. It's a lot different than being at the back of the boat. It's a little more responsibility and more mentally exhausting versus physically."

"My dad was a good teacher, and he loved to talk about fishing and fill me in because he knew he wanted me to do this eventually. We just didn't think it would be so soon."

Cameron-Dykens says although she didn't hesitate about taking over her father's license, she did have some concerns about how it might go.

"I was afraid that I wasn't going to be able to do it because it would be too difficult emotionally, but I'm finding the exact opposite," she explains. "I'm finding it brings me a lot of comfort being out there and knowing that it's what he would want. It was a place for he and I to bond and we spent so much time together. I think that really helps."

Darlene Sutherland, another captain at Murphy's Pond wharf, says she couldn't be happier about Cameron-Dykens taking over her father's boat.

"I'm so proud of Nancy," she says. "Her father was my confidante, my go-to person. He was always the guy. No question was stupid. He was amazing."

Sutherland had her own baptism by fire when it came to launching her career as a fishing captain. She began fishing with her father when she was 16, but about 13 years ago he had a heart attack on setting day, and she suddenly found herself at the helm.

"I have a brother who was on the boat too at the time," she recalls. "There was never a day that I thought I would be the one taking it over. I always thought it was going to be him."

She says her brother had just gotten into the Boilermakers Union and got a call to work the same weekend her father had the heart attack.

"So, my father had the heart attack on that Saturday," Sutherland remembers. "I think it was Saturday



Darlene Sutherland is proud to keep up a family tradition as she's captained her father's boat for the past 13 years.

(Photo: contributed)

night my brother got the call to go to work, and he had to fly out Sunday night, and Monday I was left to pull the boat off the wharf."

"My nerves were bad; I'm not going to lie. I called a few of my friends that had fished with us over the years, and I said, 'I need you guys right now. I don't care if you're going stand on the stern and just encourage me, but I need you guys,' and that's what they did."

Sutherland says despite those first tense days, she has no regrets about taking the plunge.

"I'm proud of myself for sticking with it, and I'm doing pretty good," she says. "Keeping it in the family is a huge thing. But it's the peace of mind I get out there. Everything on land is forgotten." ■

Judique festival marks 250 years since founding

BY JOYCE RANKIN

This year's annual Judique on the Floor Days celebration, scheduled for August 3 to 10, will be a special one, as the community marks the 250th anniversary of its founding in 1775.

A detailed schedule of events will be well publicized once it's finalized, but the festival promises to offer something for all ages – a village parade, historical talks, a community dinner, a movie night for the young ones, field events, pickleball and softball tournaments, and a variety of hands-on activities that illustrate the community's story.

The founding of Judique began in 1775 when Michael Mor MacDonald from South Uist navigated the shoals and landed on the shore of what is now the site of a small day-park and marked by a cairn. He was searching for a suitable location for settlement by a group of Scots who were then





living in St. John's Isle (Prince Edward Island), but who wanted to find a place where they could own the land they farmed. Michael was married to Anne MacEachern from South Uist.

The MacEacherns were a large and relatively prosperous family, and the father was Hugh MacEachern. The youngest son, Angus Bernard (Aneas), was already in training for the priesthood. In those days the penal laws in Britain made Catholic worship illegal, and prevented Catholics from voting, holding public office, owning land, or teaching. There were penalties for Catholic priests practicing their ministry, so the Church functioned underground, and training was done in secret.

Their landlord, Colin MacDonald of Boisdale, had previously left the crofters of South Uist alone to practice their religion quietly and unobtrusively, but after his marriage in 1770 he began to enforce the ban and tried to make them convert to the Church of Scotland. He stood on the path with a big stick, hitting them to prevent them from going to their chapel, and then refused to renew their leases for their crofts if they did not swear an oath to convert. They refused the oath.

Meanwhile, Colin's cousin, Captain John MacDonald, Lord of Glenaladale, had mortgaged his land in Glenaladale to buy a landholding in St. John's Isle. He needed tenant farmers and proposed that those who refused to convert could move there. They would be settled near the Acadians who were already there. The MacEacherns were a large and influential family, and when old Hugh MacEachern and most of his children decided to make the move many others decided to accompany them. Young Angus Bernard was to remain behind to continue his training.

So, there was a large contingent interested in going, but most did not have money to pay for their passage. Glenaladale began buying provisions for the group but could not afford the cost of a year's supplies as well as the passage money. Fortunately,

the story was heard in a well-off parish in London, and that congregation raised money to help pay the passage of those who could not pay their own.

The ship *Alexander* was engaged by Glenaladale and left South Uist in May 1772 for the trip to North America and then continued around the small isles of Rum and Eigg, and along the shores of the Moidart area, picking up others who wanted to emigrate.

Landing on St. John's Isle in late June 1772, the passengers of the *Alexander* were assigned tenancies nearby. There they found fertile land and a close community, but they were still tenant farmers. Glenaladale attempted to assist the group but there were problems with supplies not arriving, and dissatisfaction with the tenancy system, and then crops failed. Some of those who had been forced out of their homes once were wary of remaining tenant farmers and still being subject to the wishes of a landlord, even if he were a benevolent one. Hearing that there was land available across the Northumberland Strait in Cape Breton, Michael MacDonald, an experienced sailor and sea captain with his own boat, headed across to scout out the site for his group. At that time, the points to the south and to the north extended much further out and curved toward each other, to form a very fine natural harbour opening into flat land, and this is where Michael landed.

The ice closed in, and he was forced to remain while waiting for the waters to open up. With the help of the Mi'kmaq, he was able to spend the winter, and then headed back to Prince Edward Island. Shortly after, the group arrived to start a new community. They were soon joined by others and Judique was established. Michael MacDonald, who was a man of many talents, made the first Gaelic song in North America, *O S' Alainn an T-Aite* (Oh Fair is the Place).

Of the children of Hugh MacEachern who had come to St. John's Isle, four were included in that first group who came to Judique. Anne MacEachern was married to Michael MacDonald, Mary MacEachern was married to Robert

MacInnes, mason, Catherine MacEachern was married to Allan Ban Mac Donnell, and Ewan MacEachern was married to Mary MacDonald.

They were joined by Alexander MacDonald (Rhetland), John Graham (veteran of the American War of Independence) and Donald Ban MacDonald (Chloinn Sheamis), as well as John MacEachen (Iain MacEachuinn), Blacksmith, Roderick (Mor) O'Henley, and Neil MacMillan, Donald Gillis and Hugh Gillis. Of course, most of these were married and had children, but the names of their wives were often not recorded on land grants or legal documents, except in church records, if these survive. Because Catholics weren't allowed to own land, they were considered squatters. It wasn't until 1789 that they were able to petition for grants of the land they occupied.

According to *The History of Inverness County*, the clan names in early Judique were Beatons, Chisholms, Campbells, Camerons, Grahams, Grants, Gillises, O'Handleys, MacDonalds, MacDonnells, MacDougalls, MacEachens, MacInneses, MacIsaacs, MacLellans and MacMasters.

However, Rev. MacEachern had arrived in St. John's Isle in 1790, and the next year travelled to Pictou, where the first large groups of Gaels had landed, to encourage the Catholic ones to join their co-religionists in St John's Isle or in Judique. This, along with harsh conditions in Scotland, and letters of persuasion sent back home, meant that settlers continued to arrive.

In 1804 a petition was made for the title of the property that was being used as a graveyard and the site of a small chapel, St. David's. This was really the parish church, but as the penal laws prohibited Catholic churches, it was called a chapel and had to be owned (nominally) by an individual. But there was still no resident clergyman on the western side of Cape Breton, although there were occasional visits from Rev. Alexander MacDonald from Arisaig, from Rev. Augustin-Magloire Blanchet to Cheticamp, and from Rev. Angus Bernard MacEachern, who sometimes came from

Prince Edward Island to administer the sacraments and to see his sisters. In 1808, Rev. Alexander MacDonald petitioned for 200 acres in Judique for the use of a Catholic priest and Father Alexander MacDonnell (a cousin of Thomas Ban MacDonnell, one of the first settlers), came to Judique in 1816. He was expected to minister to all of Inverness County except Cheticamp, and travelled to mission churches that were being built in Broad Cove, Mabou, River Inhabitants, and later Port Hood. He remained until his death in 1841.

With the growth of population, the small chapel in Judique was too small, so in 1820 a larger wooden one was built, which was later struck by lightning and burned. A site further from the shore was chosen for the larger replacement church and it was completed in 1860, with a new graveyard established beside it. In August of 1919 a strong southerly gale brought lightning that struck the wooden church (the towering height of spires and bell towers made a target for that hazard). Neighbours saw the flames and rushed to rescue statues and altarpieces, but the wooden building could not be saved. There were no telephones, of course, so the couple (and their families) who arrived the next morning for their scheduled wedding found only a blackened ruin.

The current stone church was begun in 1924 and consecrated in 1927. It is built from brown sandstone hauled from the shore by horse and wagon. Stonemasons were hired for the skilled labour, but the rest was provided by the parishioners.

Meanwhile, the settlers who had arrived in 1776 were busy clearing land and building shelters for themselves. They supported themselves with fishing and farming, as many had done back home, though they had to adapt to new conditions and a very different climate.

In early years the grain they grew was ground in the household with a quern, made with two small flat carved stones, but later several grist mills were built, powered by water running down from the mountain.



Fishing was an early occupation and that led into shipbuilding, sailing, and trading. Farming techniques improved and farmers had access to agricultural learning. A brick-making factory was built on the River Denys Road. Later, during the Depression, they built lobster-canning factories to sell their lobster further afield.

The settlers also focused on education and at one point there were more students from Judique attending colleges than from the rest of the island combined. And of course, there was the music and storytelling, a rich cultural tradition that the settlers had brought with them and that was nurtured in the new land. Three things sustained them in hard times: this cultural tradition; their deep religious faith; and a strong sense of community.

The celebration being planned for this summer is based on those three things and marks the 250th anniversary of the landing of Michael MacDonald on this shore. ■



Backyard foraging - proposing perennials

BY CAROLINE CAMERON

I have always loved to make bouquets, using favourites from my garden, and always including some wildflowers to add to the fun. Over time, I've gotten to know which flowers stay fresh and perky for several days without dropping their petals, and I try to maintain lots of these in my garden.

My mother gave me two good pieces of bouquet advice: take a bucket of water out to the garden when picking the flowers and drop the stems immediately in, so there's no chance of them wilting. She also shared that bouquets should have a good backdrop of green, so that the colours of the blossoms are really accentuated.

I have built on this by starting a bouquet with a small branch or two from a bush with attractive leaves, so that the woody structure helps to hold the flower stems in place. If it extends horizontally a bit, it gives a good structure to allow you to place the flowers "just ever so."

The native shrub called high bush cranberry is a great starting place for greenery, and it also wins hands-down for flowers and attractive berries. Peony leaves provide a good structure, and you can try just about anything you like the look of, that doesn't wilt when picked, as some do. I also like to use foliage of purple-leaved shrubs like smoke bush to set off daylilies, in bouquets that I like to call "drama queens" because they're a bit over-the-top.

I like to have one bold blossom that I consider the centre-piece - like iris, dahlia, peony, or gladiolus. But if I don't have a showstopper, three larger blossoms loosely arranged in a triangle provides a good focus.

After this, lots of small colour brings sparkle and, if available, some white or cream-coloured blossoms really bring out the other colours.

We all have our own tastes, and I like a loose natural look, so some wispy greens such as tall grasses, daffodil leaves, or (my favourite) asparagus fronds poking out of the top of the arrangement just adds that special touch for me.

Choosing the right variety of flowers for your garden can give you bouquets through the whole season, from spring bulbs to fall Chinese lanterns. Investing in biennials and perennials means you'll have a supply that returns every year, but these have shorter blooming periods during each season.

Many gardeners will also plant or buy annuals that need to be planted a little later but keep flowering all through the season. Some great long-lasting annual cut flowers that I try to grow from seed every year are cosmos, strawflowers, calendula and zinnia.

Perennials will survive from year to year if you plant them in the right conditions and keep down competition from weeds. They'll usually have about a two-week blooming period, and I grow a variety of perennials that bloom at different times, so that there are flowers for the whole season. You can pick as many flowers as you like from a perennial. In fact, picking helps to keep the plant strong.

My favourite long-lasting bouquet perennials are Shasta daisy, bee balm, coneflower, peony, astilbe, ladies' mantle, tansy, and feverfew. Other favourites are irises and day lilies which have flowers that fade quickly, but one stem has a few buds that will continue to bloom in the vase, so they'll still provide colour for the week.

Old standards like tulip and daffodil bulbs can't be beat. But you can also consider lily and allium bulbs that come back yearly. There are some other bulbs that require a little bit of work, but are worthwhile for me, because their blossoms are so striking. Dahlias and gladiolus are planted in the spring, to



flower in the summer, and then need to be lifted in the fall. The roots are stored in a cool dry place, then replanted in late spring.

Biennials take two years to flower, and many produce seeds that can survive our winters. So once established, they essentially act like a perennial, coming back every year. The catch here is that you cannot pick ALL of the blossoms, because that prevents them from going to seed to grow for future seasons. Brown-eyed Susans are the most cheerful addition to a bouquet, and foxgloves, sweet William, and silver dollar (also known as honesty) are other biennials well worth growing.

Goldenrod and Queen Anne's lace are wildflowers that are absolute staples in my mid-summer bouquets and are very easy to come across in unmown areas, and it's always nice to have a small patch of lupines. I am careful to only pick flowers that are really common, so that I don't deplete populations of rare flowers. ■

Happy Gardening!

Caroline Cameron lives in Strathlorne, and offers gardening and guiding services around Cape Breton Island. Please submit any gardening tips, questions, and news to strathlorne@gmail.com and visit Facebook at Nature/Nurture Gardening & Hiking.

Museums of Inverness County

An Drochaid (The Bridge) (top photo)

11513 Highway 19, Mabou
902-945-2311

maboumuseum.square.site

 AnDrochaid

Open: Inquire locally for hours of operation.

Housed in a building that was formerly a general store (c.1874), An Drochaid (The Bridge) Museum now serves as a centre for research and local music, Gaelic language activities, cultural activities, local artifacts, and genealogical and historical records. Throughout the year, An Drochaid (The Bridge) hosts a series of ceilidh concerts, storytelling, a Gaelic conversation group and lessons, and music and dance lessons.



Chestico Museum (bottom photo)

8095 Route 19, Port Hood (Harbourview)
902-787-2244

chesticoplac.com  ChesticoMuseum

Open: June 2 – October 17, 2025

Hours of Operation:

Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and

Saturdays in July and August from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Admission Fees: Person: \$2, Family: \$5

Free for Members of the Chestico Museum & Historical Society.

The former Harbourview School houses museum artifacts and historical/genealogical records that relate to the early settlers of the Port Hood area. Numerous research projects have been undertaken by volunteers highlighting our World War veterans, war brides, Premier Angus L. Macdonald (who lived in Port Hood in his early years), and local heritage properties.

Celtic Music Interpretive Centre Archives

5471 Route 19, Judique

902-787-2708

www.celticmusiccentre.com

 CelticMusicCentre  celticmusiccentre

Open: May 19 – October 19, 2025

Hours of Operation:

9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday to Friday (Exhibit and Archives), 12 noon - 5 p.m. Sunday (Exhibit)

Admission Fee: \$5 for Exhibit Room

The Centre collects documentary records and other archival materials, preserving memories and techniques, and promotes the tradition of Cape Breton music. The Archive houses documents, recordings, videos, photographs, letters, and items significant to the people, communities, and organizations of music tradition in a climate-controlled vault. The Inverness Music Collection is an extensive resource of interviews with fiddlers, dancers, other musicians, and cultural figures. Tours and workshops are available.



Les Trois Pignons (pictured left)

15584 Cabot Trail, Chéticamp

902-224-2642

lestroispignons.com

 LesTroisPignons

Open: May 12 – October 24, 2025

Hours of Operation:

Every day from 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

(open until 6 p.m. in July and August)

Admission: \$5 for seniors and students, \$7 for adults, \$15 for a family of four

Visit Les Trois Pignons for a special view into Acadian culture and the history of Chéticamp, a stunning collection of hooked rugs and antiques, genealogy resource centre and library, and a full range of visitor information services. Guides will be happy to provide information on travel, services, activities, and tourist attractions in the area, as well as a large collection of tourist tips in the form of brochures, maps, guides, etc.

MacDonald House Museum and Heritage Site (below)

3458 Highway 395, East Lake Ainslie

902-258-3317

macdonaldhousemuseum.ca

Open: Inquire locally for hours of operation

MacDonald House Museum overlooks beautiful Lake Ainslie and consists of a restored 1850's gothic style farmhouse, display barns, a restored one-room schoolhouse, a fine collection of early 1900's furniture and artifacts, displays of farm machinery and implements, hand woven fabric displays and much more. You can also access the Trans Canada Trail from the museum by a path in the woods.



Father John Angus Rankin Cultural Centre

4248 Highway 105, Glendale

902-625-3441 or 902-302-1734

 glendale.community.coop

Open: Inquire locally for hours of operation. Call for an appointment to view by calling 902-302-1734

Housed in the former Glebe House, the centre preserves and promotes the rich heritage of Glendale and surrounding area with local archives, photographs, videos, and audio tapes of historical and cultural significance to the Glendale area. They also host kitchen ceilidhs, weaving classes, Gaelic lessons, accessible outdoor 24/7 Free Little Library, and an Annual Glendale concert July 6th on the outdoor stage. The facility is also a comfort centre in the event of an emergency in the Glendale and surrounding community.

Inverness Miners' Museum

15932 Central Avenue, Inverness

invernessminersmuseum.com

 InvernessMinersMuseum

Open: June 1, 2025 to October 20, 2025

Inquire locally for hours of operation.

Admission is \$5 per adult, \$3 per student/senior

The Inverness Historical Society is dedicated to preserving, communicating, interpreting, and promoting the history, heritage, and culture of the community of Inverness and the surrounding area. The Inverness Miners Museum is situated in the beautiful coastal village of Inverness on and showcases the region's 19th and 20th-century coal-mining history. They have relocated to an accessible building at 15932 Central Avenue, with parking available at the rear.

Margaree Salmon Museum (right)

60 East Big Intervale Road, North East Margaree
902-248-2848

margareesalmonmuseum.ca

 TheMargareeSalmonMuseum

Open: June 18, 2025

Hours of Operation: Wed – Sun, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Admission is \$5 per adult, \$2 per child

The Margaree Salmon Museum is located in a former schoolhouse in North East Margaree. It aims to share the rich history of fishing on the Margaree River, a river which is still world renowned for its salmon. The museum also strives to educate visitors on the importance of conservation, in order to ensure the protection of fish stocks for future generations. The museum houses exhibits relating to salmon angling on the river, as well as an excellent collection of fishing tackle, photos and memorabilia of famous anglers.



Mi-Carême Centre (above)

51 Old Cabot Trail Road, Grand-Étang
902-224-1016

micareme.ca  lamicareme

Open: June 4, 2025 to October 19, 2025

Wednesday to Sunday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Admission Fees: Adult: (19 to 64) \$5
Senior & Student: \$4 Child: (5 and under) Free
Family: (2 adults, 2–3 children) \$12

The Mi-Carême Centre is the only interpretive centre in Canada dedicated to the wonderfully whimsical Mi-Carême (Mid-Lent) celebration. A team of passionate guides will lead you in discovering the centuries-old fantastic and fun-filled Acadian tradition of the Mi-Carême, which is still celebrated every winter in the Grand Étang area.

Orangedale Railway Museum (right)

1428 Village Road, Orangedale

902-756-3384

 OrangedaleTrainStationMuseum

Open: July 1 – September 1, 2025

Hours of Operation: 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Tues to Sat

Admission by donation via cash or etransfer

Built in 1886, this classic 19th century Intercolonial Railway styled structure was operational until 1990. The two main buildings are now home to collections of railroad information and artifacts pertaining to the historical and cultural aspects of the Short Line – Main Line through Cape Breton Island. Along with a gift shop, there are several rail cars on site, along with the Station Master's quarters are open for viewing.



Strait Area Museum

24 Highway 19, Port Hastings

902-625-1295

sites.google.com/view/strait-area-museum

 PortHastingsMuseum

Open: May 15 – October 19, 2025

Hours of Operation:

Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.,

Saturday & Sunday, 12–4 p.m.

Members of the Port Hastings Historical Society have been preserving the history of the Strait Area with displays on the construction of the Canso Causeway and its impact on the people and communities in the area, model ship display, local history, early 20th century lifestyle, railroads, and ferries. Extensive archives and materials for genealogical research are also available on-site.

Storytellers Gallery (below)

5663 Highway 19, Judique

 StorytellersGalleryJudique

Open: Inquire locally for hours of operation.

Located in a heritage building that was once a company house in the nearby community of Port Hood, it was Jack MacDougall's Store for many years and now preserves and shares the history of Judique and district through the Suidaic Air an Urlar Historical and Cultural Society. On display are historical photographs and local artifacts of the area depicting lifestyles of the past and a collection of family histories.



Whale Interpretive Centre

104 Harbour Road, Pleasant Bay

902-224-1411  whaleintcentre

Open: June 1 – October 25, 2025

Hours of Operation: Daily, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Admission: Adults \$6.50, Seniors & students \$5.50, Family \$20, group rate (10 plus) \$3.50, Bus rates \$2.50. The Whale Centre is a fun and educational space for all ages with various exhibits on the 16 whale species sighted here in Cape Breton. Visitors of all ages can hear the whales and see a 3D life size model of a pilot whale while enjoying amazing harbor, beach, ocean, and mountain views. Information is displayed on local fishing and wildlife, trails, and businesses in the area.

Vital infrastructure replacement supports future growth

Throughout April, those walking the beach in Inverness were treated to an unusual sight: heavy machinery and a floating excavator. The reason? A vital infrastructure upgrade beneath the sand, out of sight, but essential for the future.

Approximately 180 meters of the 1,000-meter-long buried pipe, responsible for transporting effluent (treated wastewater) from the Inverness wastewater treatment plant into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, reached the end of its operational life. Installed in 1972 alongside the original wastewater treatment plant, the pipe had no known upgrades since its installation.

“This infrastructure replacement is about more than pipes in the ground,” said Melanie Beaton, Deputy CAO for the Municipality of Inverness County. “It’s about protecting public health, safeguarding the environment, and laying the groundwork for future community growth. By investing in critical infrastructure today, we’re ensuring Inverness remains a safe, vibrant, and resilient place to live for generations to come.”

The multi-phase project began in early April with an archaeological assessment where consultants carefully hand-dug through layers of sand and soil, searching for historical artifacts. Although nothing was found, the consultants remained on site throughout construction.

Following the assessment, the marine construction phase kicked off with a floating excavator trenching the ocean floor to install the new underwater pipe. Once completed, work shifted onshore to install the remaining length of the pipe under the beach.

Today, a casual stroll along the shore gives little clue to the complex engineering feat buried beneath. In fact, thanks to restoration efforts such as replanting dune grass and the placement of spruce boughs, the site has been returned to its original condition.

PROJECT SPECIFICS

Archaeological Consultants:

Davis MacIntyre & Associates Limited

Engineering Consultant:

CBCL Engineering & Environmental Design Services

Contractor:

Zutphen Contractors

Budget:

Approximately \$800,000 (funding from a collaborative investment from federal, provincial and municipal governments)

To learn more, visit

www.invernesscounty.ca and click on Projects

Environmental monitoring will continue over the next year to ensure successful regrowth and ecosystem stabilization.

Additionally, a section of the boardwalk, which was removed to facilitate the project and had deteriorated over time, has been replaced with a newly constructed segment, improving accessibility and safety for beachgoers.

“Creating a construction site on a beach and next to a golf course made for an extremely challenging project,” said Sean MacDonald, Director of Capital Construction. “We had to consider tides, unpredictable (and often unfavourable) weather conditions, and numerous environmental regulations. It meant we had to adapt every day, but seeing this project wrapped up ahead of beach and golf season was very rewarding.”

MacDonald extended his appreciation to residents, “we want to thank the community for their patience throughout the project, and for respecting the safety measures around the site. This meant the contractor, consultants and municipal staff could focus on the project, and we are extremely appreciative.”



April 7: Preconstruction conditions at the site of the outfall construction project.



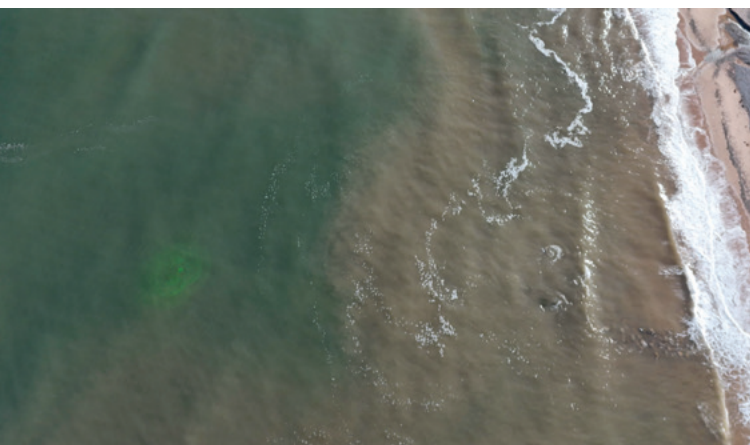
April 14: The amphibious excavator holds the end of the outfall pipe in place while divers check the depth and position of the pipe.



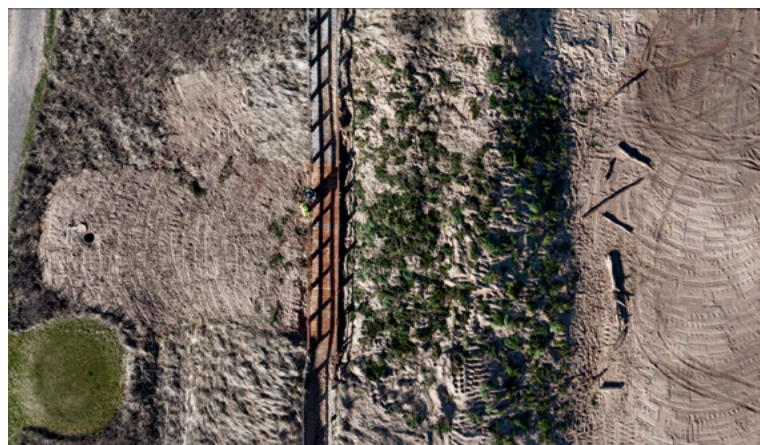
April 22 (morning): Final trench excavations were completed, and the old section of the outfall pipe was removed.



April 22 (afternoon): The new section of pipe was lowered into the trench. The inland side (left) was connected to the manhole, while the seaward side (right) was tied into the newly installed marine portion of the outfall system.



April 29: An environmentally friendly marine dye was used to visualize and test the outfall system. The dye is visible (center-left) discharging from the end of the marine outfall, approximately 120 meters seaward of the low tide line.



With the conclusion of the construction phase, construction fencing and materials were removed from the site, and the site reclamation monitoring process began. ■



There was no shortage of experienced cooks willing to try their hand at some new recipes during recent intergenerational cooking sessions at the Mabou Hall. (Photo: contributed)

Cooking classes fill in generation gap

BY DAVE MACNEIL

The organizer of an event that brought two generations of cooks together says the program will return in the fall.

Two intergenerational cooking classes were held at the Mabou Community Hall between March and April, and Maggie MacDonald, Senior Safety Coordinator for The Municipality of Inverness County, says the first two classes generated a great deal of interest and were supported by the Nova Scotia Community Health Board Wellness Fund.

“Some of the priorities for their funding had to do with bringing different generations together, so I really wanted to come up with something that did that,” MacDonald says, noting that additional funding has been received from Shannex Cares to continue the classes in the fall.

The event brought together people 55 years of age and older with younger cooks between the ages of nine and 16. They were led by Becki House and her husband, Geoff House, who operate House Catering in Port Hood.

The event in March featured two recipes – gnocchi, a potato pasta, with two different sauces, as well as a chocolate-dipped sponge toffee for dessert.

“I was looking to find something that would be a little bit different and that we could accomplish in two hours,” says Becki House, noting that she also wanted something that would engage the younger cooks, while coming up with something that the older participants might be trying for the first time.



With local chefs Geoff and Becki House providing guidance (background), the recent intergenerational cooking sessions in Mabou brought together a number of eager young cooks. (Photo: contributed)

“That was the challenge,” she says. “No one knows better how to cook than these older people, so I was trying to find something that would pique their interest. Trying to find things that you could get the ingredients for around here was key as well.”

House says she hopes to be able to take part in future classes.

“I had fun,” she adds. “I wasn’t expecting it, but of course the older people were there to help the younger people – how to hold the knife properly or how far to chop the garlic. It was really interactive like that.”

“It’s a good idea to get younger people and older people doing it together.”

One of the older cooks was Donelda Beaton of Mabou, who participated in both events. “It was so interesting watching the kids and seeing how keen they were to do the baking and talk about the ingredients,” Beaton recalls. “It was a lot of fun and everybody learned something.”

“I like the idea of learning to bake something different, something that I don’t normally make, and the knowledge that you get from that.”

Beaton says it was a great way to bring the generations together.

“There were very interesting conversations going on between the different age groups,” she says. “We all left with the idea that ‘I’ll make this again.’”

“It’s a basic skill that everyone should have to be able to make a meal for yourself.”

As for MacDonald, she says she couldn’t be happier with the first two sessions.

“The participants certainly had lots of fun, and that’s all I can ask for,” she says, noting that the fall classes will be advertised in local weekly newspapers, on social media and on the municipality’s website. ■

2025 Inverness County Volunteers of the Year

Volunteers are truly the heart of our communities, and each year communities across Canada come together to celebrate National Volunteer Week. This year, National Volunteer Week took place April 27 to May 3, 2025.

In recognition of this week, the Municipality of the County of Inverness launched its 2025 Volunteer Recognition Program, where community members are invited to nominate local volunteers who make a difference. Nominees are then recognized for their invaluable contributions with a certificate of recognition and a gift certificate from a local Municipality of Inverness County business of their choice.

This year, community groups and individuals throughout Inverness County nominated 38 people! Read on to learn more about the incredible volunteer efforts of this year's nominees.



Kate Beaton



Leo Beaton



Jeanette Cameron



John Campbell



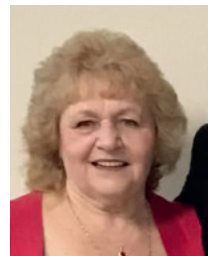
Julie Lovely



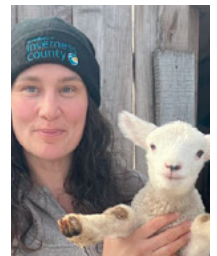
Donald MacCuspie



Raymond MacLean



Shirley MacLean



Krystal Noble



Linda Beaton



Darlene Boudreau



Jacqueline Boyd



Jack Brideau



Marie Brideau



Bernard Cameron



Carmen DeGruchy



Donna Ferguson



Deborah Graham



David Greenwell



Adele LeBlanc



Lester LeBlanc



Eleanor MacDonald



Glen MacDonald



Theresa MacDonald



Donna MacFarlane



Ben MacKay



Nicole MacLean



Bradley Malcolm



Sidney Matheson



Bailey McNeil &
Faith Welsh



Bob Middaugh



Robert Neil
Middaugh



Cathy Miller



Elaine Rankin



Marilyn Sangster



Pat Stinson



Lauren Tran



Etherridge Vance

Kate Beaton

CHESTICO MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Chestico Museum & Historical Society (CMHS) is proud to nominate Kate Beaton as our 2025 volunteer of the year. Besides being treasurer of CMHS, Kate is always there to lend a helping hand with our events and special projects.

Kate is also the chair of the Inverness Manor Ladies Auxiliary, a board member for Inverness County Home Care as well as an active member of St. Peter's Parish CWL. Whether working as part of an organization or personally reaching out when she sees a need in the community, Kate is always ready and willing to pitch in and help.

Congratulations Kate!

Leo Beaton

MABOU RIVERS TRAILS

Mabou Rivers Trails is pleased to announce Leo Beaton as our volunteer of the year. Leo recently retired from the oil industry and now resides part time in New Glasgow and his home turf in Mabou.

Due to the varied chores associated with the maintenance of our 20km section of the Celtic Shores Coastal Trail, we are fortunate that Leo gives freely of his time and expertise. Trail maintenance involves a myriad of different skills and trades to ensure our trail users get the best possible opportunity to enjoy our great outdoors.

We all hope Leo enjoys his much-earned retirement and continues to find time away from his part time work to assist his crewmates throughout the seasons. Good luck with your retirement Leo and we appreciate your volunteer spirit.

Linda Beaton

ST PETER'S PARISH CWL, PORT HOOD

The CWL of St. Peter's Parish Port Hood is pleased to nominate Linda Beaton as our volunteer of the year.

Linda's contribution to our parish and community exemplifies the spirit of service and commitment to giving generously of her time, energy and dedication. Linda does not hesitate when asked to help and does it all with kindness, caring, and guidance.

As a retired educator, parent, and active supporter of children, she continues to be a voice for ensuring their best guidance and mentorship will be available. Linda's compassion and sympathy extends to families and friends during times of unexpected loss, and she responds with genuine support and assistance at a time of need.

As a neighbor and friend, Linda can always be counted upon. She is a valuable member of the CWL, and we are happy to recognize and celebrate all she does for our parish and community.

Congratulations, Linda!

Darlene Boudreau

SACRED HEART COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE AUXILIARY

The Sacred Heart Community Health Centre Auxiliary is happy to nominate Darlene Boudreau as their 2025 volunteer of the year!

Darlene has been a very active and devoted member of the Sacred Heart Community Health Centre Auxiliary for over a decade. She always attends monthly meetings and participates in the Eastern Region's Annual General Meetings.

Hospital Auxiliary members dedicate many volunteer hours to help raise funds to purchase equipment and other medical articles for the hospital. In Chéticamp, the auxiliary also focuses on Foyer Père Fiset, the Dialysis & Occupational Therapy Departments as well as the Hospital Equipment Loan Program.

Events and activities organized by the Sacred Heart Community Health Centre Auxiliary are always

well planned thanks to Darlene. She reserves facilities, calls volunteers to arrange for baked goods, helping hands, and much more. Darlene purchases and supplies hospital patient rooms with toiletries, and she also kindly distributes cards from the auxiliary to the sick, those in need of surgery and to those who have had a death in the family.

Darlene will also be representing Inverness County at the 51st Annual Provincial Volunteers Awards Celebration in September. Thank you, Darlene, for your kindness, dedication and positive impact on your community. Congratulations!

Jacqueline Boyd

GLENDALE AND AREA COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE LTD.

The Glendale and Area Community Cooperative Ltd/Fr. John A. Rankin Cultural Centre is happy to nominate Jacqueline Boyd as our volunteer of the year.

Jacqueline is a dependable volunteer who donates her time and effort with the annual outdoor Kitchen Fest concert which is held in July. She helps with the preparations for the concert such as cleaning and painting the stage and working the gate. Jacqueline is also a volunteer for our haunted house cast and she is also helpful in applying for funding for our community. Jacqueline is an all-around community volunteer, serving also on the parish committee and Glendale community hall committee.

Jacqueline is an asset to our wonderful little community of Glendale, and we thank her for all she does! Congratulations!

Jack Brideau

CELTIC SHORES COASTAL TRAIL

If you've spent any time on our trail, there's a good chance you've crossed paths with that guy, the one who always seems to be in the right place at the right time, ready with a helping hand and a warm smile. That's Jack Brideau. He's the kind of volunteer every community dreams of - dependable, friendly and deeply passionate about the outdoors.

Whether he's clearing branches after a storm, offering directions to a lost hiker, or sharing a story about the land, Jack brings heart and hospitality to everything he does. He's the kind of person you hope visitors meet because you know they'll walk away feeling not just welcomed but connected.

We're lucky to have him on the trail, and even luckier to call him part of our team. Thank you, Jack, for your many years of dedicated service!

Marie Brideau

JUDIQUE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Judique Community Centre is delighted to nominate Marie Brideau as their volunteer of the year.

Marie, you've made a real difference at the Judique Community Centre. Your smiling face is always a warm welcome when you volunteer at events - fish dinners, special event dinners, teas and so much more. Every holiday you treat us with some of your delicious homemade chocolates that we all love so much! You've inspired us with your willingness to help, not only with our organization but the entire community. We are so fortunate to have you.

Thank you, Marie!

Bernard Cameron

*COMUNN GÀIDHLIG AGUS EACHDRAIDH MHÀBU / MABOU
GAELIC AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY*

Comunn Gàidhlig agus Eachdraidh Mhàbu / Mabou Gaelic and Historical Society is proud to recognize Bernard Cameron as our 2025 volunteer of the year.

Born and raised in Northeast Mabou, Bernard learned Gaelic both at home from his Gaelic-speaking parents and in school. He dedicated many years to teaching the language in the public school system, most recently at Bayview Education Centre, before retiring. In addition to his work in schools, Bernard has long been a dedicated teacher of community Gaelic classes and has played a key role in expanding our local class offerings.

A long-time supporter of Comunn Gàidhlig is Eachdraidh Mhàbu, Bernard has been generous with his time and talents, whether serving on the committee or simply lending a hand when needed. He is also a devoted member of Còisir an Eilein and is always ready to help with ceilidhs, from setup to teardown. Currently, he leads our maintenance committee, overseeing essential upgrades and upkeep at An Drochaid.

We at Commun Gàidhlig is Eachdraidh Mhàbu/ Mabou Gaelic and Historical Society are indebted to him for his contributions. Congratulations, Bernard!

Jeanette Cameron

MARGAREE FOOD SECURITY SOCIETY

The Margaree Food Security Society is pleased to nominate our treasurer, Jeanette Cameron, as our volunteer of the year.

Jeanette works diligently to keep our account up to date; she manages the purchasing of gift cards with flawless bookkeeping skills. Her attention to detail and commitment to searching for, and completing, grant applications is phenomenal. Jeanette personifies our society's commitment to protecting the dignity and privacy of our clients. She has taken on this role with an exemplary level of professionalism and empathy.

In addition to our society, Jeanette volunteers as a Margaree Meals on Wheels delivery person and enjoys working with her fellow community members at dinners and events at both St. Michael's Hall in Margaree and the Belle Côte Community Centre.

Thank you, Jeanette, from your grateful community!

John Campbell

PORT HOOD AREA DEVELOPMENT

Port Hood Area Development is pleased to recognize John Campbell as their volunteer of the year for 2025.

John has been a valued member of Port Hood Area Development since 2018. He is always ready to pitch in wherever he is needed and lends his expertise in carpentry and art in many of our projects. He has contributed many hours in decorating our Central Park at Christmas time.

Port Hood Area Development is fortunate to have John as a member, and we are pleased to select him as our volunteer of the year. Congratulations, John!

Carmen DeGruchy

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WHYCOCOMAGH

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Whycocomagh is proud to recognize Carmen DeGruchy as their 2025 volunteer of the year.

Carmen joined St. Andrew's Church in 2021 and since that time he has been a regular attendee at church services, a volunteer at all church events, a member of the Board of Managers and Ways and Means Committee, a choir member, a driving force behind St. Andrew's float in the "Christmas in the Village" Parade and sound man for the outdoor summer worship services.

St. Andrew's Session and congregation sincerely thank and appreciate all of Carmen's volunteer efforts. Congratulations!

Donna Ferguson

GLENCOE STATION RECREATION ASSOCIATION

Glencoe Station Recreation Centre is proud to nominate Donna Ferguson as their 2025 volunteer of the year.

Donna, with her pleasant personality, is always the first to offer her time. She is helpful with graphic design, creating games for the children's Christmas party, working at dances and taking her turn faithfully at the annual Hunters Breakfast. Donna recently served a term as secretary on our Board of Directors and did an exceptional job.

We are fortunate to have Donna as an active member of our community organization, and we thank her for her time and kindness. Congratulations, Donna!

Deborah Graham

STORYTELLERS GALLERY

The Storytellers Gallery in Judique is proud to nominate Deborah Graham as our volunteer of the year.

Debbie is the president of the Gallery Board of Directors, and as such is invaluable to our organization. She spends countless hours working on fundraising, Tea and Toast on Wednesdays and many other activities. She does all this with a smile!

Thank you, Deborah for all you do.
Congratulations!

David Greenwell

MABOU & DISTRICT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Mabou & District Community Development Association (MDCDA) is very pleased to nominate David Greenwell as our community volunteer of the year.

MDCDA is especially grateful to David for his contribution to our organization serving two multi-year terms on the board of directors - first in 2012 to 2017 as a director and then as chair. During this time, David used his very significant leadership skills to keep Mabou Development alive, managing to recruit volunteers and maintain community initiatives.

Now in his second term with MDCDA, David serves on the executive as secretary. He is a master at minutes and communication while keeping our meetings organized. David also participates and leads numerous initiatives.

David's volunteer contribution does not stop at MDCDA. He has been treasurer of Strathspey Performing Arts Centre (2010/2011), and a director of Design & Construction Institute of Nova Scotia (2018-2022). Since 2018 he has been registrar of Nova Scotia Home Designers Association and from 2020 to 2024 director and 2nd VP of the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce.

David has also lent significant help to Mabou Rivers Trail, Celtic Shores Coastal Trail, Celtic Colours International Festival, Hillsborough/ Glendyer Community Association and West Mabou Hall.

David, you have touched a lot of organizations with your time and talent. We commend you and thank you!

Adele LeBlanc

MARGAREE HIGHLAND GAMES

Adele LeBlanc has been one of the founding members of the Margaree Highland Games since 2012. Her dedication to the games as well as her selfless contributions of time, energy and spirit continue to be instrumental in the success of our event. The Board of Directors of the Margaree Highland Games feel that Adele embodies the true definition of volunteerism, and we are very fortunate to have her as part of our team.

Adele also volunteers as the lead organizer of the Margaree Forks Terry Fox Run and she is a member of the Acadian Credit Union Board of Directors. She was also involved in reviving children's involvement at St. Michael's Parish last year. When Adele is not busy volunteering in these many capacities, you can be sure to spot her providing general support at her family farm.

Congratulations, Adele!

Lester LeBlanc

MALAGAWATCH CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

The Malagawatch Cemetery Association is happy to nominate Lester LeBlanc as their volunteer of the year for 2025

Lester can be counted on to assist with repairing graves, restoring headstones, and doing general maintenance on the cemetery grounds. He looks after our flagpole and Canadian flag and our mailbox, ensuring they are repaired, replaced and stored in the winter season.

Families appreciate Lester's work for the benefit of the cemetery and the community. Congratulations!

Julie Lovely

CRANTON CROSS ROADS COMMUNITY CENTRE

Cranton Cross Roads Community Centre is proud to acknowledge Julie Lovely for her outstanding dedication, leadership, and vision. Julie has been the driving force behind transforming our community center into a designated comfort centre for times of emergency and need. Her efforts have gone far beyond the call of duty, showcasing her commitment to the well-being and safety of our entire community.

Julie spearheaded significant upgrades to our heating and electrical systems, ensuring that the centre is equipped to serve residents during power outages, extreme weather, or other crises. Her hands-on involvement, from advocating for necessary improvements to coordinating contractors and securing support, has made a lasting impact.

Thanks to her tireless work, our community now has a safe, warm, and reliable space to gather when it matters most. Julie's initiative exemplifies the spirit of community service, and we believe she is truly deserving of this recognition.

Donald MacCuspic

CREIGNISH RECREATION CENTRE

Creignish Recreation Centre is happy to recognize Donald MacCuspic for his incredible dedication to our community. As a member of the Creignish Recreation Centre board of directors, he carefully manages our finances and always helps behind the scenes. He's the first to step in when something needs to be done, from filling out grant applications to overseeing summer students. His leadership and hard work were essential in planning and building the community playground. He's a reliable and generous volunteer, often the last to leave the hall after Friday night happy hour. Our community is better because of his ongoing commitment and support.

Congratulations, Donald!

Eleanor MacDonald

MILL ROAD SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Mill Road Social Enterprises is proud to recognize and honour Eleanor Macdonald for the many years of dedicated service she has given to the organization. Eleanor was a member of the volunteer Board of Directors for 38 years, as director at large, secretary, vice president, and president. She participated in functions from fundraising to celebrations and helped us grow and develop as an organization. With a well grounded and calm nature, Eleanor would often be the voice of reason. In 2024, Eleanor decided to retire from the Board of Directors, but she remains a close friend of Mill Road Social Enterprises.

We appreciate all you have done, Eleanor. Congratulations!

Glen MacDonald

ST MARY OF THE ANGELS COMMUNITY HALL

St. Mary of the Angels Community Hall is happy to recognize Glen MacDonald as their volunteer of the year.

Glen came to Glendale full-time in 2020 after his well-deserved retirement, thankfully for us! He picked up projects around the community almost immediately. He took on the job of painting the St. Margaret of Scotland Church on River Denys Mountain, painstakingly scraping and painting it, many, many, many days doing it solo! Glen then joined our hall committee with perfect timing - seeing we needed help! He came onboard at the beginning of our kitchen renovation and was instrumental in both the demolition and makeover. Glen is a steady-eddy, active in all aspects of the hall committee and always very willing to lend a helping hand with anything.

Thank you, Glen, for all your efforts. Congratulations!

Theresa MacDonald

L'ARCHE CAPE BRETON

Theresa MacDonald is one of L'Arche Cape Breton's most passionate and dedicated volunteers. As branch manager at the Mabou and Port Hood branches of East Coast Credit Union, she has championed our partnership with the credit union which began in 2005. Theresa takes the time to know our core members personally and we always look forward to her visits. She spearheaded Chowder Challenge, now our largest annual fundraiser, devoting countless hours to its success year after year.

Through her friendship and unwavering commitment, Theresa has made a lasting impact on L'Arche Cape Breton. Congratulations, Theresa!

Donna MacFarlane

*INVERNESS CONSOLIDATED MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
AUXILIARY*

The Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital Auxiliary is happy to nominate Donna MacFarlane as our 2025 volunteer of the year for her ongoing efforts to support community health care services in our area.

Donna has made a positive contribution to the work of the auxiliary in recent years, both as a skilled crafter and as an active participant in planning the auxiliary's Tea and Sale events each May and November. Whether it is sharing her talents for these seasonal fundraisers or designing delightful crafts for auxiliary raffles, Donna is always willing to lend a creative hand.

With a background in nursing, and now retired, Donna is also active in her home community of Southwest Margaree.

Congratulations, Donna!

Ben MacKay

INVERNESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Inverness Historical Society is proud to nominate Ben MacKay as our volunteer of the year.

Ben is a very active member of his community, volunteering with the United Church, the Arts Center, the Ned MacDonald Volunteer Community Award Chair, as well as a member of the Miners Museum Board of Directors.

Ben graduated from St. F.X. in May 2025 with a degree in political science. He is a hard-working student and employee, who has endeared himself to many visitors at the Miners Museum. We profusely thank him for his service and congenial manner.

Best of luck, Ben, as you continue to move forward! Congratulations!

Nicole MacLean

MABOU ATHLETIC CLUB AND AILEEN MACDONALD

It is with great admiration and appreciation that we nominate Nicole MacLean as a 2025 Inverness County volunteer of the year.

Since moving to Mabou with her husband Tyler, Nicole MacLean has embraced her new home with open arms and a full heart.

Nicole is the kind of person who leads not for recognition, but out of genuine care and passion for others. Her tireless dedication to volunteering touches every corner of Mabou and its surrounding communities. Whether she's raising vital funds through Mabou Fire and Ice, an initiative she created that has raised over \$35,000 in support of the local fire department and arena, or responding to emergency calls as a proud member of the Mabou Volunteer Fire Department, Nicole gives her time, energy, and heart without hesitation or expectation.

She is also a driving force behind Mabou Ceilidh Days, an annual celebration that brings joy, pride, and connection to the community. Her generous

spirit extends even further, contributing her time and talents to Mabou Communications Ltd., the Mabou Welcoming Committee and the Mabou Athletic Centre. Nicole's efforts have resulted in organizing of pub nights, upcoming accessibility upgrades, new lights and continuous repairs inside the arena facility. She is always willing to step up and give a hand, from assisting Santa at Christmas to completing applications for the arena.

Nicole's quiet leadership, strong work ethic, and natural warmth make her not just a volunteer, but an inspiration. She truly embodies the spirit of community service. Her efforts may not come with fanfare, but their impact is deeply felt. Congratulations, Nicole!

Raymond MacLean

INVERNESS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

If you have been to Inverness in the summer, you know Raymond. A seven-year seasonal employee of the IDA, who forgets when his designated shift starts and ends, he opens the washrooms early in the morning, locks them at dusk, and does maintenance that keeps things flowing. Raymond is always available for repair and maintenance at any time of the year.

We thank Raymond for his continuous efforts. He was the main impetus for the lighting of the park this past year, from fundraising to installing the lights.

We appreciate all you do, Raymond!
Congratulations!

Shirley MacLean

NORTH MOUNTAIN CULTURAL & RECREATION ASSOCIATION

Shirley has been a tremendous asset to our organization and community since she moved here a few years ago. She approached us asking if there was anything she could do to help in the community. As luck would have it, North Mountain Cultural & Recreation Association was looking for a new secretary and Shirley agreed to take that on and has done an excellent job. She also serves as secretary of a committee set up to develop a new association website.

Shirley has chaired a very successful volunteer luncheon for the past two years. She is an active member of the Library and Activities Committee and is also one of the administrators of our Facebook page.

Thank you, Shirley, for all you do. Congratulations!

Bradley Malcolm

WEST BAY ROAD & DISTRICT VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

West Bay Road & District Volunteer Fire Department is happy to announce Bradley Malcolm as our volunteer of the year for 2025. Bradley has been our truck captain for many years. He is actively involved in the department in many capacities that go beyond his responsibilities as captain, and plays a key role in the membership and training committees.

Bradley takes every opportunity to train, keeping his skills current in firefighting and medical response. He travelled to Texas in 2024 to attend training at the Training Specialties Inc. Advanced Foam Firefighting School.

Congratulations Bradley. We are very proud to call you our volunteer firefighter of the year!

Sidney Matheson

LITTLE NARROWS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Little Narrows Presbyterian Church is happy to recognize Sidney Matheson for his volunteer efforts.

Sidney has been the treasurer of the Little Narrows Presbyterian Church and the Little Narrows Presbyterian Cemetery Society from 1998 to 2024. Sidney has also generously volunteered his time at L'Arche Cape Breton and the Port Hawkesbury Senior's Club.

Thank you, Sidney, for all your time and dedication. Congratulations!

Bailey MacNeil & Faith Welsh

*PORT HOOD RESIDENTS TAMMY STANLEY & NICOLE
MACEachern*

It is with great appreciation that we nominate Bailey MacNeil and Faith Welsh for their outstanding volunteer contributions to our community. For the past year, Bailey and Faith have dedicated their time and effort to organizing and hosting trivia nights at The Admiral Lounge, an initiative that has not only brought the community together but has also made a significant impact in supporting our local food bank.

What began as a weekly event soon became a highly anticipated community gathering, drawing in large crowds and fostering a sense of camaraderie. As winter approached, the sessions transitioned to a monthly format, yet their commitment never wavered. Through their dedication and enthusiasm, Thursday nights at The Admiral have flourished, benefiting both local business and, most importantly, the food bank.

The impact of their efforts speaks for itself. Over \$7,000 has been raised in donations since the inception of trivia nights. Despite the extensive preparation and time commitment required to organize these events, Bailey and Faith have remained steadfast in their volunteerism, showing remarkable dedication to both the cause and the community. Their passion and perseverance have ensured that this initiative continues to thrive. Their contributions have not gone unnoticed, and

we sincerely hope they continue this invaluable work for years to come.

On behalf of the community at large, we extend our deepest gratitude to Bailey and Faith for their selfless efforts and unwavering commitment. Their impact is immeasurable, and they are truly deserving of this recognition.

Thank you, Bailey and Faith, for all that you do!

Bob Middaugh

SHEAN TRAIL COMMITTEE

Shean Trail is proud to recognize Bob Middaugh as their 2025 trail volunteer of the year. As the senior volunteer for the Shean Trail section of the Celtic Shores Coastal Trail, Bob's leadership, dedication, and unwavering commitment have been truly inspiring.

Since the trail's inception, Bob has been a driving force behind its development, continuously striving to make Shean Trail a standout gem along the Celtic Shores Coastal Trail. His enthusiasm and passion remain as strong today as they were on day one, motivating and energizing fellow volunteers.

Bob, your hard work and dedication do not go unnoticed. Thank you for everything you do to keep Shean Trail thriving! Congratulations!

Robert Neil Middaugh

MABOU NEW HORIZONS SENIORS CLUB

The Mabou New Horizons Seniors Club is happy to announce Robert Neil Middaugh as their volunteer of the year. Robert is president of the Mabou Seniors Club.

Robert has also volunteered many hard-working hours along the Inverness Shean Trail over the past 20 years and has also served on the Board of Inverness Legion Branch 132.

Thank you, Robert, for all your time and dedication. Congratulations!

Cathy Miller

ST. JOSEPH PARISH, SW MARGAREE

The Parish of St Joseph in Southwest Margaree is pleased to nominate Cathy Miller as our volunteer of the year.

Cathy is a faithful and dedicated member of the parish. She leads the hall committee and is also the chairperson of the tri-parish finance committee. Cathy is a dedicated member of the CWL and is always willing to help wherever she can be of service. She faithfully leads the recitation of the rosary before mass and is always generous with her time and talents. Cathy cares for many members of our greater community by willingly offering to drive and accompany people to appointments. She has served in many roles in the church including as catechist, altar server and eucharistic minister.

Thank you, Cathy, for your dedication to your parish.

Krystal Noble

SCOTSVILLE SCHOOL OF CRAFTS

Scotsville School of Crafts is delighted to recognize and nominate Krystal Noble as our 2025 volunteer of the year. Krystal lives on a small sheep farm with her husband Chestley and son Finley. It was Krystal's interest in fibre that first brought her to the Scotsville school.

Krystal has assisted with our dye garden, painting and cleaning. She offers more than her labour. She brings her enthusiasm and laughter, making the most difficult jobs lighter. In addition, when you get Krystal, you get her family. We thank you all!

Congratulations, Krystal!

Elaine Rankin

INVERNESS COUNTY CARES

After retiring from 40 years of caring service as an Licensed Practice Nurse and later as an assistant in the Occupational Therapy Department at St. Martha's Hospital, Elaine Rankin spends much time in her native community of Judique. She has a heart big enough to encompass the larger world and Inverness County Cares is happy to nominate her as their volunteer of the year.

For the past 10 years, in her quiet and capable way, Elaine has attended regular meetings and volunteered in many ways to support the visually impaired, blind and albino students at two schools in Zambia. Whether it be the organizing of a ticket fundraiser, decorating a Christmas tree for the Festival of Trees in Judique, preparing pizzas for a Chestico days pizza sale or painting the recyclable trailers in Mabou and Port Hood, this woman is up to the task, and has done it all. In addition, she personally sponsors Patrick, a student in need at St. Odilia School in Mporokoso, Zambia.

Inverness County Cares is fortunate to have Elaine on our team. Congratulations!

Marilyn Sangster

STELLA MARIS PARISH, INVERNESS

Marilyn (Poirier) Sangster was born and raised in Inverness. She grew up in a home where the door was never locked, and everyone was welcomed into the house. She learned from a young age that you always help your community, no questions asked.

Marilyn has been an alter server and eucharistic minister all her adult life. She has been teaching religious education for many years at Stella Maris Parish in Inverness, and eventually for students from St. Margaret's Parish in Broad Cove.

Marilyn has been very active in fundraising initiatives. She has volunteered for the annual Stella Maris Parish Dinner (same day as the Broad Cove

Concert) every year for 25 years, the annual Stella Maris Parish Fall Bazaar, the Stella Maris Parish quilters who make a quilt every year as a fundraiser for parish, and she is a member of the Christmas Tree of Lights Memorial Angels fundraising committee.

Additionally, Marilyn has volunteered her time as a founding member of the “Save Our Schools” committee, for Cursillo and Challenge teams in Mabou, teaching Beavers, and has served two terms on the Shean Co-op Board of Directors.

Thank you, Marilyn, for your dedication to your community. Congratulations!

Pat Stinson

MARGAREE AREA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (MADA)

Margaree Area Development Association is proud to nominate Pat Stinson as our 2025 volunteer for her commitment to Celtic Colours programs in our villages over the past 15 years.

Moving to the Margarees in 1994, Pat has been a valued community supporter through the years, but MADA has particularly appreciated her focus on Celtic Colours programming in our area since 2009.

Whether it has been the planning of community events, the organizing of volunteers on site through the busy festival week, or her hands-on preparation of a delicious meal for the entertainers and backstage crew on concert night, Pat has provided steady leadership throughout.

We applaud Pat's community spirit! Congratulations!

Lauren Tran

*DANIELLE CASGRANDE, CAPE BRETON PARTNERSHIP
WELCOME NETWORK*

I am thrilled to recognize Lauren Tran for her incredible volunteer services in Inverness County. Lauren's dedication to her community is truly inspiring. As a volunteer with the Welcome Network, she actively supports newcomers, fostering connection and inclusivity. Most recently, Lauren went above and beyond to organize a beautiful cursive writing workshop at the Inverness County Centre for the Arts as part of our Coffee and Connect program. She not only facilitated the workshop but also designed custom worksheets, created promotional materials, and even did an interview with CBC Radio to spread the word.

Lauren's passion, creativity, and generosity make her an outstanding community volunteer! Congratulations, Lauren!

Etheridge Vance

MARGAREE SALMON MUSEUM

Margaree Salmon Museum is pleased to nominate Etheridge Vance as our 2025 volunteer in recognition of his ready volunteerism within the Margarees and for his seasonal groundskeeping at the museum.

Etheridge grew up across the road from the Salmon Museum in Northeast Margaree. He now volunteers his time to mow the grass and keep the museum grounds looking attractive each year between June and October.

The father of a young family, Etheridge also volunteers as a fireman and first responder with the Northeast Margaree Fire Department. Whether he is helping to maintain the museum property or supporting the valuable work of the fire department, Etheridge is a firm believer that living in a place like the Margarees is a privilege and with that comes a responsibility to help build and support his community.

The Margaree Salmon Museum is proud to nominate this industrious young man. Congratulations! ■

Partir à la découverte des sentiers pédestres dans la région de Chéticamp



Le sentier de la Mine de Plâtre à Chéticamp. (Photo : Daniel Aucoin)

PAR DANIEL AUCOIN

Par sa situation géographique, Chéticamp offre une foule de divertissements autant pour les adeptes de la nature et des grands espaces que pour les intéressés aux curiosités locales. Parcourez la côte parsemée de baies, d'anses et de plages et laissez vous bercer au son des vagues. Vous pouvez aussi profiter de la nature et aller explorer la forêt à la découverte de la flore et la faune de la région.

La région acadienne de Chéticamp est la seule communauté francophone située sur la pittoresque piste Cabot. Avec le golfe du Saint-Laurent en face et les montagnes à l'arrière-plan, ce coin de pays constitue un des sites les plus pittoresques des provinces Maritimes.

À Chéticamp, il y a beaucoup à voir, beaucoup à faire et beaucoup à découvrir. Chéticamp, c'est la destination vacances par excellence! Depuis longtemps, on vient dans cette région du Cap-Breton pour s'y détendre et apprécier la beauté des paysages.

La région de Chéticamp plaira surtout aux amateurs de plein air. Au Parc national des Hautes-Terres-du-Cap-Breton, empruntez les sentiers, admirez la nature et gravissez les sommets. Accessible à tout le monde par la célèbre piste Cabot, le parc offre une multitude de trésors et d'expériences extraordinaires.

Le Parc national des Hautes-Terres-du-Cap-Breton est reconnu pour ses hautes terres et ses paysages côtiers spectaculaires. Il fait partie du réseau de parcs nationaux qui protègent les paysages d'importance d'un bout à l'autre du Canada. On y retrouve 26 sentiers pédestres au Parc. Avec ses couleurs flamboyantes et la température fraîche, l'automne est la saison idéale pour s'adonner à la randonnée pédestre au Parc national.

La randonnée pédestre est une activité accessible à tous et en toute saison. Loin des tracas de la vie quotidienne, c'est un moment privilégié pour découvrir la région de Chéticamp et ses beautés naturelles. Marcher, prendre l'air, admirer le



Polletts Cove. (Photo : Daniel Aucoin)

paysage....nombreux sont les randonneurs de tout âge à arpenter les sentiers.

Les bienfaits de la randonnée dans la nature sont multiples, allant de l'amélioration de la santé physique à la réduction du stress et de l'anxiété. Marcher le long de sentiers est un moyen agréable d'allier un exercice physique adapté au plaisir de la découverte.

Choisissez un sentier adapté à votre niveau. Portez de bonnes chaussures confortables. N'oubliez pas votre casquette ou un chapeau et apportez de la crème solaire pour vous protéger du soleil. Munissez vous d'un sifflet, d'un bâton de marche et d'une trousse de premiers soins. N'oubliez pas l'eau et les collations pour bien vous hydrater et éviter les baisses d'énergie.

Consultez la carte du sentier avant de commencer. Vérifiez la météo et habillez-vous en conséquence. S'il y a une possibilité de tempête, repensez votre plan. Suivez les chemins et les sentiers balisés. Il est préférable de ne pas partir en randonnée seul, surtout sur des sentiers peu connus ou éloignés. Avoir un ami qui vous accompagne est plus sécuritaire et assure une bonne compagnie.

Même s'il est tentant de s'approcher des animaux, assurez-vous de les observer à distance et de ne pas les nourrir. Pour préserver la flore et permettre sa régénération, restez dans les sentiers. Enfin, assurez-vous de bien ramasser tous vos déchets.

Surtout, ayez du plaisir et faites le plein de beauté et d'air pur. Bonne randonnée!

Read an English version of this article at:
participaperonline.ca



Le sentier Fishing Cove au Parc national des Hautes-Terres-du-Cap-Breton. (Photo : Daniel Aucoin)



Le sentier Blueberry Mountain au Parc national des Hautes-Terres-du-Cap-Breton. (Photo : Daniel Aucoin)



Le sentier Trous de Saumons au Parc national des Hautes-Terres-du-Cap-Breton. (Photo : Daniel Aucoin)

Inverness athlete earns ACAA second All-Star spot

BY KAISEY MACINNIS

Inverness native Sarah Ryan recently found great success with her varsity volleyball team. Leading her league in blocks this season—a show of her strength and athleticism—and finishing with a 12-8 record, Ryan earned the Most Improved title from the Mount Saint Vincent University Mystics. The success landed Ryan a spot on the Atlantic Collegiate Athletic Association's (ACAA) Second All-Star Team.

Sarah's interest in volleyball began when she was in grade four. Ryan and a few friends attended volleyball camps run by Cindy Watson and Norma MacKinnon, and she credits the time with friends as the beginning of her keen interest in volleyball. Additionally, the sport created space for Sarah—who considered herself a shy kid—to be confident.

Another plus for the sport is the connection and sense of community. “The way volleyball brings people together is my favourite thing about the sport,” Sarah says. “Some of my most long-lasting memories and friendships were born from volleyball”.

Starting at home with her parents and four siblings, Sarah says her community has always rallied around her and cheered her on in her volleyball career. Whether it was fundraisers or packing the high school gym to the rafters during home games, the support of her hometown has made her career possible. Even from hundreds of kilometers away, Sarah says she still feels the support as Inverness locals contribute to fundraisers for her university team.

It is this overarching sense of community, family, and friends that brings Sarah home during her school breaks—and the beauty of the Inverness Beach doesn't hurt, either. Sarah says the support encourages her through both sport and life, and she often finds herself homesick and missing her people while she's away.



Sarah Ryan in ready position on the court. (Photo: contributed)

When she's not on the court or studying, Sarah is likely working out, listening to music, soaking up the sun outdoors, or enjoying her favourite early-2000s flicks “Coach Carter” and “Almost Famous”.

Sarah's passion for volleyball continuously drives her to advance in the sport and play as long as she can. She works hard to improve her skills, saying she takes it one day at a time and tries to get one per cent better each day—great advice to any budding athletes! This drive and passion make Sarah a natural leader on every court she steps foot on. She frequently hears from teammates that her calm demeanor and level-headedness is a positive force on the team.

The career-long Middle says volleyball has awarded her many opportunities—including travel throughout the Maritimes and beyond, and the chance to represent Nova Scotia in interprovincial games. Volleyball has also given Sarah the confidence to thrive in leadership roles and to challenge herself, even outside of the sport. Ryan was recently honoured as an Academic All-Canadian, recognizing her dedication to both athletics and academics.

In the future, Sarah hopes to win an Atlantic Collegiate Athletic Association Championship and compete at Nationals. Once her biology degree is complete, Sarah plans to continue to graduate school. Post-varsity, Ryan plans to stay involved in the volleyball world and play recreationally for years to come, while also saving some time to travel and see the world.

Best of luck, Sarah!

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REGULAR COUNCIL MEETINGS take place on the first Thursday of each month and start at 9:30 a.m. These meetings are open to the public.

The municipality's Facebook page also carries up-to-date information on Inverness County events and other items of interest to our residents.

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