



Museum and Culture Centre Programs Are Off and Running!

June 27-28 : John Cabot Day Celebrations

The Museum and the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre are working to revitalize the annual John Cabot Day celebration at Cabot Landing Park. We feel that the event, first celebrated in 1955, is an important part of our local heritage and merits a grand celebration. Posters in



local stores provide information about the many planned activities, which begin with a lobster dinner at the Bay Cafe on June 27, 6.30 pm, and conclude with Ken Donovan's presentation on John Cabot, on Sunday June 28, at 7.30 pm, in the Culture Centre.

June 28 : The 2009 Presentation Series Debut

On Sunday, June 28, 7.30 p.m., Fortress of Louisbourg NHS Historian Ken Donovan will open the 2009 speaker series "People, Places and Events in the North Highlands" in the Museum's Culture Centre. Ken's talk, which is part of the annual Cabot Day celebration, is entitled "John Cabot, Aspy Bay and The North Atlantic Fishery." The following week (on July 1) the series will return to its usual Wednesday evenings schedule. Fred Lawrence and Margrit Gahlinger will speak on "Building and Sailing the Wooden Sloop "Double Crow." Admission \$5, students free. Music and refreshments! Proceeds will go towards Culture Centre renovations. For the complete listing of Wednesday presentations, see the enclosed flyer or visit our website at northhighlandsmuseum.ca.

July 5: Our 30th Anniversary Celebrations

The Museum turns 30 this year! To mark this happy occasion, a celebration is planned, from 2 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, July 5th. Indulging in cake, drinks and other refreshments, and cheery tunes played by local musicians, we will observe three special events:

- **The launch of our new Gallery**, located in the Museum's south rooms (first floor);
- **The opening of the Gallery's first full-scale exhibition, "Needle, Hook and Shuttle,"** which displays the handwork of local artisans; and
- **The 2009 opening of the Settlers' Garden.**

Come One, Come All !

Settlers' Garden Springs to Life



On June 7, a small army of volunteers rejuvenated the Settlers' Garden. Here, Claudia Gahlinger supervises refurbishing of the garden pool.

Summer Camps At The Museum: Hands-On Heritage!

Two summer camps for children and youth are being offered at the Museum, with a focus on activities linked to our North Highlands heritage, both history and natural environment, with Heather MacIsaac of Sugar Loaf serving as the coordinator for the two camps. From July 20 to 24, a camp for grades 4, 5 and 6 will be held, followed by a camp for grades 7, 8 and 9, from July 27 to 31. Camp activities will include: whale watch trips; fly tying techniques; weaving; rope making; traditional games; a visit to South Harbor Farm; wooden lobster trap making; weather watching; plant and animal identification – and many other activities. Museum volunteers and demonstrators plus our Summer Student Guides will be helping Heather to make our heritage come alive – and fun! Camp runs from 9.00 am to 2.30 pm, Monday to Friday. Tuition for 5 days of fun is \$75.00. To register, call the Museum (383-2579) or stop by. Each camp is limited to 10 campers.

Want Your Lawn Mowed, For Free?

The NHCO is partnered with the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre on a project called the Seniors-Youth Volunteer Time Banking Project, which encourages community service volunteering by Seniors and Youth. It works like this: Young people register with the Project committing to 15 hours of volunteer work over the summer. Seniors who are volunteering their time to the community (at Church, Museum, Fire Hall, etc.) register with the Project, and report their hours of volunteer time to the Bank. For each hour of time volunteered, seniors are entitled to an hour of assistance by a youth with stacking wood, painting, cooking, grass cutting, etc. Everybody benefits! Deirdre Fraser is the Project Coordinator. To register, phone her at the Museum, at 383-2579. This project is funded by the Dept. of Justice and the Rural Communities Foundation.



Museum People

This summer, four local students will be working at the museum, thanks to funding from Young Canada Works and Service Canada. Here they are, introducing themselves:

Rebecca Blakeney is a student at Cabot High School. She enjoys listening to traditional Celtic music and plays the bodhran, the fiddle and the Irish whistle. She enjoys hiking and swimming and plays on her school's soccer and volleyball teams. She also acts in plays and participates in other community functions. Her dream is to become an archaeologist.



My name is **Olivia Burton**, I am 18 years of age and just graduated from Cabot High this year. I have big plans for my future. I am enrolled in the Continuing Care Assistant Program at NSCC's Marconi Campus. I love the outdoors, animals, and reading.



Hi! My name is **Jeffrey Grover** and I am a Grade 11 honours student at Cabot High School. I enjoy working in the forge at the Museum. My interests include riding my motorcycle and my snowmobile. I enjoy playing XBOX 360 and basketball. (The cat, lower right, is named Sassy and is 13 – ed.)



My name is **Tylor Morrison**, I live in Dingwall and I am in grade 10. I love to play guitar and hang out with friends. I also play other instruments including tin whistle and bass guitar!



We are delighted that **Deidre Fraser** of Sugarloaf has joined the Museum as Administrative Officer, working with Board members on funding applications and program implementations. Deidre comes with loads of experience gained at the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre and the North Highlands Arena. Welcome, Deidre!

Goings and Comings: **Kerry MacDonald** of Dingwall has stepped down from the Museum's Board of Directors. Our thanks to Kerry for giving her time and expertise as Treasurer. We welcome **Ron Nikkel** of south Harbour, and Maureen Grover of Dingwall, as our newest Board Members — Maureen as Treasurer.

North Highlands Community Organization Board of Directors

Rob Macdonald, Co-Chair—Sugar Loaf
David Rasmussen, Co-Chair — Bay St. Lawrence
Esther Danielson, Secretary—Smelt Brook
Maureen Grover, Treasurer — Dingwall
Murdoch Burton — White Point
Joe Capstick—Bay St. Lawrence
Kevin Chaisson—Big Intervale
Bill Danielson—Smelt Brook
Merne Ann Fitzgerald—Dingwall
Earl Gwynn—Cape North
Deirdre Macdonald — Sugar Loaf
Sharon MacNeil—Bay St. Lawrence
Heather Morrison—Big Intervale
Ken Murray — South Harbour
Ron Nikkel — South Harbour
Mark Stullenburger — Sunrise
Jim Wilkie — Sugar Loaf
Albert Zwicker — Sydney (formerly Bay St. Lawrence)

Lillian MacKinnon: 104 Years Young



On a sunny June morning with a clear blue Cape Breton sky and a gentle breeze, Lillian MacKinnon is outdoors at Highland Manor, Neil's Harbour, picking flowers: forget-me-nots, buttercups, and dandelions. She blows softly on a dandelion's puffball head and watches as the seeds with their gossamer sprays drift up and away on the breeze.

At almost 104 – she was born on August 3, 1905 – Lillian remains joyful despite adversity, a wisp of a woman with an intrepid spirit who continues to take pleasure in the world around her.

One of her greatest pleasures is visiting with her youngest son, Stan, who often drops by The Manor to chat with her and the other residents, and to play a tune or two on his fiddle. Today, he's brought along an old friend, piper Iain MacHarg.

Before his set with Iain, Stan bends down to hug Lillian, asking, "How's my precious mother?" Her face brightens as she replies, "Good, dear, good." Then, as Stan makes the rounds, joking and chatting with the other residents, Lillian observes with a chuckle: "Look at him talking to all the old women!"

Spend an hour or two with Lillian and you'll soon see how lightly she wears her age. She's dressed in a cornflower blue skirt, pink and blue blouse, and white eyelet sweater. Her silvery hair is tucked neatly behind her ears, her delicate face is animated.

The set over, Stan decides to head up to Meat Cove with Lillian to savour this perfect Cape Breton day, and play more music with Iain. In a jiffy, Stan's lifted Lillian, clearly delighted, into the passenger seat of his car. As we drive northwards, Stan and Lillian reminisce about her life and about the community she came to as a young teacher of 18.

Lillian was born in Margaree Forks, Inverness County, the eldest child of Emma Tompkins and her husband, William Elmourne, a highwire artist and circus performer from Newark, New Jersey. Emma's parents, Tom Tompkins and Anne Dennison, ran a general store in Margaree Forks, currently the antique store, Myles From Nowhere. Emma had met William in Boston, where she'd gone to study at an art college. They were married in East Margaree and went on to have three children: Lillian, Mary, and Tommy. Before Tommy was born, however, William (Stan calls him a bit of a "rascal") had abandoned the family.

Emma, resourceful and adaptable, helped in the family store. When her parents died, she continued to manage it, supplementing her income by selling sandwiches and her own paintings, hooking rugs and raising hens. She sent all three of her children to Normal College in Truro.

Lillian graduated in 1923 and, after a year teaching in Kingsville, near Glendale, was offered a contract at

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Students at North Highlands Elementary School recently completed a unit on story-telling. In this cartoon, Selena MacDonald, a student in Karey Lee Donovan's grade 4 class, tells a funny family story. Work by Selena and other students was featured in a Historica Fair on June 13 and 14 in the Museum's new Gallery.

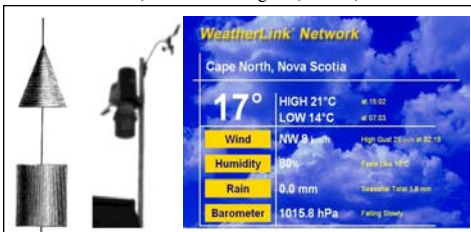
Museum Launches Weather Projects

A new weather exhibit is taking shape at the Museum, reflecting the weather's influence on North Highlands life – past and present. A weather recording station, mounted on the Museum building's ridgepole, now transmits data to a display indoors and to the Internet – every 60 seconds. To check our latest weather conditions, visit the Museum's website, at north-highlandsmuseum.ca, and click on the "Weather" link. The Museum is grateful to the County of Victoria for funding this project.

In addition, a storm drum tower, like those used in the first half of last century, is under construction. Storm drums were signals used to inform mariners of stormy weather on the way. Each day this summer, the Museum's storm drums will indicate the weather expected.

Bill Danielson, author of *Cape Breton Weather Watching*, is the weather project's contact person. You can catch Bill on CBC's Weather Call-in program on the third Monday of each month, from 6 to 7 a.m. (No hard questions, please!)

Weather devices old and new. Left, storm drum signals; centre, Museum's new weather station; right, typical Museum report on the Internet. The storm drum pattern signifies "heavy gale from the west."



Crafting and Dancing Through The Dark Months

During the Fall of 2008 and Winter of 2009, the Museum offered an array of workshops by local artisans designed to promote traditional crafts of the Highlands, including: weaving (Esther Danielson); rug hooking (Claudia Gahlinger); knitting (offered at Cabot High by Maggie Smith and Deirdre Macdonald); and wood carving (Garfield Wilkie). As well, twice monthly square dances were held in the United Church Hall and the Cabot Fire Hall. Two Square Dance and Pub evenings were well attended.

Dancers weave across the floor, accompanied by music of local musicians, at the Cabot Fire Hall. Thanks to The Nova Scotia Dept. of Tourism, Culture and Heritage for its financial support.



Story-Telling Socials: Telling Tales of Times Gone By

Story Telling Socials were held in five of our communities during the winter months: Cape North (Early Gwynn's home); Dingwall (Alex Capstick Manor); Neils Harbour (Highland Manor); Bay St. Lawrence (Margrit Gahlinger and Fred Lawrence's home); Meat Cove (Meat Cove Welcome Centre, courtesy of Derek MacLellan). These events are an important way to capture the oral history of our area, and passing this history between generations. The Social held in Meat Cove included 5 visitors "from away," who were fascinated with the stories, especially those of George MacLellan and Tamara Rasmussen.

Lillian MacKinnon (Continued from Page 2) . . . the Middle Ridge School in Cape North. Her journey alone from Margaree Forks to Cape North was an early sign of her independence. She travelled from Margaree Forks to Inverness by horse and wagon, then by train from Inverness to Port Hastings, where she took a second train to North Sydney. There, she boarded The Aspy for Neil's Harbour (her first boat ride). In Neil's Harbour, Neil Angus MacDonald, a school board trustee, met Lillian and drove her by truck to her lodging at John Morrison's. Stan asks Lillian, whose summer tan alarmed some residents, "Do you remember what Old Donald William MacPherson asked you when you first arrived?" She laughs and queries, mimicking Donald's deep rolling voice, "Are you a Christian?"

Soon after arriving in Cape North, Lillian met Kenny MacKinnon (1899-1991), whose family farmed in South Ridge at "Glen Nevis." They were married in 1925. Lillian continued to teach for several years, but around 1927, like many Cape North people, she and Kenny moved to Boston. By the early 1930s, they'd returned to Cape North to manage the family farm and start a family: Mary Ann (b.1931), Effie (b. 1934), Elmourne (b.1938), Kenneth (b.1941), and Stanley (b.1944).

The two tragedies that shadowed Lillian's early life were the sudden deaths of her daughters. Effie died in 1944 of a ruptured appendix while Lillian was giving birth to Stan. In 1953, Mary Ann, recently married and a much admired teacher at the school in Dingwall, died of an abdominal obstruction. Lillian's son, Kenneth, died in 2003.

When I ask Lillian if Stan was a handful growing up, she shoots back, "He was two handfuls." Stan remembers a mother forever on the go, who played a vital role in operating their busy household. In 1933, Kenny and Lillian bought the Telegraph House in Dingwall and opened a store there. Kenny was also the agent for The Aspy and later became a magistrate. The flourishing gypsum quarry brought people and commerce to the community. As a child, Stan was particularly proud of Lillian's ability to drive. Indeed, she was the first local woman to drive a dump truck and once even drove a load of dynamite from Cheticamp to the quarry.

Lillian was always full of fun. Old Mrs Whiteley, who often came to visit from Sugar Loaf, set off one day from Lillian's house with a few clothespins Lillian had playfully attached to the back of her dress. On another occasion, Lillian returned from North Sydney with some grapes that were hard as rocks. When her neighbour Edgar Young dropped by for a visit, she asked him innocently, "Would you care for a grape, Mr. Young?"

She was wise about her health and her family's health and never wasteful. And she made a point of walking, even in her 80s and 90s when she was living at Capstick Manor. Motorists who offered her a lift as she walked to and from Cape North on errands were rebuffed. At 102, Lillian had both legs amputated because of poor circulation; everyone marvelled at her recovery. When she experienced a brief moment of self pity following the surgery, Stan was there to remind her, with the wry wit characteristic of their banter, that she'd probably have lost her legs at 75 if she hadn't walked so much in her life.

As we head down into Meat Cove, Stan tells Lillian that she's back in Inverness, the County of her birth. Her face lights up. Stan helps her into her wheelchair near the campground and we head over to the grass at the cliff's edge to bask in the warmth of the sun, the view, and Iain's piping. Later, we drop by the Meat Cove Welcome Centre for tea, rhubarb pie and ice cream. In the dappled light of the Centre's magical back deck, we talk and listen to more music. Iain plays "The Drunken Piper" and "Donald MacLean's Fairwell to Oban" while a swallowtail swoops and soars on the currents of air. Lillian MacKinnon, intrepid traveller, drinks it all in.



Museum Membership Free for 2009

We're eager to have community members enjoy their Museum and Culture Centre. Please sign up below for free membership, which gives you admission to the Museum and many Museum-sponsored events!

North Highlands Community Museum Membership Application

Yes! I/We would like a FREE 2009 Museum Membership. Family Individual

Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address: _____ Email : _____

In addition, I would like to make a tax-deductible donation of:

- \$ 25 as a Museum Supporter \$ 50 as a Museum Sponsor \$ 100 as a Museum Benefactor
 \$ 250 as a Patron/Matron \$1,000 as a Museum Angel _____ (other amount)
 I would like to volunteer at the Museum. Please call me.

Thank you for your support!

Mail to: North Highlands Community Museum,
Box 1, Unit 3 Dingwall NS B0C 1G0