

I nominate the community of **River John** for the 2015 Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award. The following anecdotes, reports and stories illustrate and demonstrate this community's unique strengths and its ability to build on them, high citizen participation in a wide range of activities and projects, strong community pride and co-operation, a welcoming attitude, and the hope and determination to create an enduring and sustainable future for River John. – *Robin Campbell, River John Community Action Society*

The community of River John consists of the so-named Pictou County village which straddles the River John, as well as smaller settlements of Marshville, Bigney, Cape John (or Westerly), Hodson, Seafoam, Toney River and Welsford, and surrounding countryside. The community can be described as the catchment area for River John Consolidated School, the households served by the local post office (B0K1N0), the outreach area for the village's churches, clubs, festivals and activities, or where Highway Six (Sunrise Trail) meets the TransCanada Trail, River John Road, West Branch Road, Cape John Road, Mountain Road, the river, the beaches and the harbours along the Northumberland Shore. The community also includes the people who live outside the perimeter of the above-mentioned places, but who proudly call themselves 'River Johners' or dedicate themselves to the community's development and improvement.

The population is generally older and of European descent, but includes and cherishes First Nations, recent immigrants, GLBT, people of various races and different faith traditions. The district's municipal councillor (and Pictou County Warden) Ron Baillie describes the population as about 700 to 800 people. Numbers swell each summer with the arrival of cottagers, who are valued community members in every aspect of River John life.

River John is home to four churches, a school, fire hall, heritage museum, post office, Legion, public library, halls for three service clubs, a ball field, playgrounds and parks, and several small but thriving businesses as well as the traditional resource-based industries of fishing and farming. Usual voter turnout in the district is more than 70 per cent, higher than current national and provincial averages (Elections Canada statistics). That's the big picture, but have a closer look. – *Monica Graham, Read by the Sea*

River John takes care of its people

I first learned about the unique spirit, the cohesiveness and habit of looking out for each other amongst River Johners when I taught at the regional high school from 1975-1981. The kids from River John stood out, some for their hard work ethic, others because of their sheer originality and courage. They were a distinct group. The entire community – old and young – is like this to this day. People help each other in times of small and great need, and everyone is proud of being from River John. Over the years, the community rallied and gave massive help to rebuild after terrible house and barn fires, like those suffered by the Silvers, O'Neills, Richardsons, Whites, Allans, and more. When River Johners experience accidents or illness, there is always a significant rally to raise funds, supplies and support. Most recently, funds were raised to help a little girl with juvenile Huntingdon's disease; a dance, auction and other events in January raised funds to help young Parker Keatley, victim of a car accident who was in serious

condition at the IWK; and a benefit is planned for April to raise funds for Marty Jollimore, now undergoing Halifax rehab after her car and an 18-wheeler collided. There always seems to be a donation jar at local businesses collecting money for a needy cause or persons. – *Susan Sellers, Read by the Sea co-founder and retired teacher.*

River John volunteers in unique ways

The success story of the River John Square Knitters exemplifies the community's spirit and dedication to projects with both local and international benefits. It began with a poster in the library in August, 2014, inviting interest in Knit-a-Square; a project which collects knitted and crocheted 8-inch squares from around the world and sews them into brightly-coloured blankets for the millions of African children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

The overwhelming response resulted in regular Friday morning knitting sessions (and knitting needle loans, and lessons) at the library involving more than 20 people who have mailed almost 1,000 squares as well as hats, booties and hand-warmers to a South African agency (knit-a-square.com). The group includes life-time as well as summer residents, people who knit at home and drop off their products, and people of all abilities and ages – the oldest is 91. The Square Knitters have formed partnerships with the post office, Scotiabank, library, Lismore Sheep Farm, Tatamagouche Brewing Company, newspapers, and the community at large. These agencies and businesses provide space, packing material, help with postage costs, yarn and knitting needles, wrapping parcels, transportation, awareness and moral support.

As well as striving to help children on another continent, the Square Knitters also build community at the local level by providing an opportunity for social interaction,

blossoming friendships, learning, a sense of accomplishment, and pride in being part of a worthwhile project. Studies by occupational therapists and the Mayo Clinic say that knitting itself has therapeutic value for improving cognition and motor function and alleviating depression. By building on unique community talents, the River John Square Knitters highlight the kindness and creativity that make River John an ideal community for the 2015 Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award. – *Maureen Topley, Square Knitters*

River John citizens are deeply involved in the community

Almost every single person in the River John area volunteers in one way or another – there is plenty of opportunity. A partial list of volunteer organizations and committees includes Royal Canadian Legion Branch 108, Lions Club, International Order of Odd Fellows, Rebekahs, The RJs, River John Volunteer Fire Department and Ladies Auxiliary, Historical Society, River John and Area Recreation Association, 4-H, Square Knitters, Read-by-the-Sea Literary Festival, Meals on Wheels, Festival Days Committee, Janice Gill Memorial Library, River John Community Action Society, Support Our School, Friends of River John Library Society, C@P Society, choirs and Sunday schools at each church as well as ladies' guilds and missionary/ministry groups, a ladies' exercise club, bowling teams, RCMP Community Watch, Christmas house tours committee, Village Christmas Decorating Committee, SCORE pre-school program, and winter carnival committee. Volunteer projects within a given year include maintaining public parks, playgrounds, churches, halls and a museum; organizing barbecues, community walkabouts, wellness clinics, bottle drives, card games, craft

workshops, seniors' dinners, plays, writing workshops for all ages, cooking lessons, musical concerts, river paddling, boat tours, readings by prominent Canadian authors, fashion shows, rallies, exhibits, craft markets, music lessons, refugee and disaster relief, yoga and exercise classes, parades and fireworks, fund-raisers and community breakfasts; as well as visiting shut-ins, attending meetings, fighting fires and responding to medical and other emergencies - and more described later in this document.

There is co-operation rather than competition among these initiatives. Organizers are careful not to double-book fund-raisers for the same day and they promote community talent and expertise. Citizens patronize and support each other's events. There is always something to do in River John. -*Robin Campbell, River John Community Action Society*

River John co-operates to promote and develop the community

The River John Community Action Society (RJCAS) marks its tenth anniversary at the 2015 annual general meeting. It formed in 2005 to co-operatively promote and develop our community. As a legally incorporated not-for-profit society, the group can apply for grants to meet a variety of local needs. These include hiring youth to tend the Legion's Remembrance Garden, hiring a community events coordinator to run our Meals on Wheels service for seniors along with many other functions, preparing the community's five-year development plan, starting a community newspaper *The Pioneer*, supporting the recent establishment here of a Farmer's Market, and collaborating with our municipal counsellor regarding county improvements. The Society is currently establishing a community internet portal to allow local artisans and business people to sell products and services online through a single virtual storefront. It has also developed the engineering drawings, and is in the final planning stages, for a retractable dock on the River John waterfront, to improve accessibility for community events and small crafts.

RJCAS works with other community groups such as the Legion, the Library, the Historical Society, Read by the Sea Literary Festival and River John Festival Days to coordinate activities and identify opportunities for joint action. The Society's approximately 25 members meet monthly, and welcome anyone interested in making River John and surrounding areas a more vibrant and sustainable place to live, work and play. – *Rob Assels, editor of The Pioneer newspaper and RJCAS member.*

River John Consolidated School

It takes a village to raise a child. Because of village support, this school is one of a relative few in Canada marking the Feb. 15 anniversary of our Maple Leaf flag. Spearheaded by Rev. Donald Sutherland in the 1990s, the celebration packs the gymnasium, especially for the flag's 50th anniversary in 2015. School fund-raisers, graduations and other events experience similar attendance. The community comes out en masse for highly anticipated Christmas concerts, a highly-anticipated touchstone of life in River John. In 1982-83 a community campaign resulted in extending classes to grade nine. A high proportion of River John students have graduated in the top five at West Pictou District High School, Pictou Academy, North Colchester High, and Northumberland Regional High School. Alumni include film writer/producer/director Angus Swantee, Giller prize winner Johanna Skibsrud, Alberta entrepreneur Mark

MacLean, local businessman Terry Heighton, German translator Logan Kennedy, veterinarian Alan Langill, public relations guru Wendy Phillips and countless other professionals, tradespeople, fishermen, farmers and more.

The current 70 students are involved in several extracurricular programs, including sports teams and a games club; a leadership team of senior students; teams for yearbook and technology, spirit, art, and adventure; choir; and Earth Angels (environmental group). The school has a breakfast program, fluoride program, pre-school, and advisory council; and every student participates in the annual heritage fair that explores community history. Students participate in the River John 4-H Club, Squadron 596 Phoenix Air Cadets in Tatamagouche, Remembrance Day, church and other community events; and volunteer with festivals, suppers and more. Students' and teachers' influence expanded to support a small rural school in Guatemala, welcome international exchange students to River John, and gather necessities to help families in crisis. -*Susan Sellers, principal Bill Chisholm, retired vice-principal Brian MacLean*

River John believes in education

Rev. John Mitchell opened the first school in 1808 with Christopher Perrin as schoolmaster. It was in a home because the first school wasn't built until 1818, with teachers James Hogg and Edward Lynch. That school was replaced in 1886, and then a four-room school was built in 1902, costing \$2500. One-room schools were also built in the surrounding settlements, but in 1968 all those students started attending the new primary-to-six school in the village of River John. This school was enlarged in 1985 to include grades seven to nine.

The school has undertaken several class trips and student exchanges, including a trip to Taloyoak (Spence Bay, NWT) in 1993, followed by a visit to River John by Inuit students from Taloyoak; school trips to Quebec and to Boston, and hosting teachers from Guatemala. In 2012, River John Consolidated hosted four students from Colombia, and an educational assistant and a student from South Korea.

Enrolment went down to 77 in 2012-13, and to 70 in 2014-15. Between 2002 and 2012 our school survived three reviews for possible closure, until the district school board rejected a 2012 study's recommendation to keep it open. In March, 2013, the school board gave the HUB committee two years to get a new program up and running. Everyone has worked very hard. Our parents went to this school, and even had some of the same teachers we do. This is a great school, with a lot going on. - *students Cole, Patrick, Chase, Kaitlyn and Elizabeth Heighton, Brian MacLean (whose parents did not attend RJCS)*

River John fights for its children

The community rallied strongly in opposition to Chignecto-Central Regional School Board's decision last year to close River John Consolidated School in June, 2015, unless the community raises \$173,000 towards operating costs and another \$560,000 for deferred maintenance, as well as develop a plan for the school's future. A Support Our School (SOS) committee of parents, grandparents and concerned citizens held innovative fund-raisers and community-building events that received strong citizen support; created awareness through social and traditional media; garnered moral, financial and technical support and advice from across Canada (eg, pro bono

architectural work and web design). They attended dozens of meetings to lobby the school board, provincial education department and other ministries on behalf of the school. They cited the school's educational successes, and studies praising the educational, social, psychological and economic benefits of small community schools. They questioned projected savings derived from closing local schools in favour of busing students to other communities - where they might not be well-received. They voiced concern about the lingering effects on children's emotional and physical health caused by long twice-daily commutes for children as young as five. With no assistance from board administration, the committee developed a model for a "HUB" (Health, Unity, Building a brighter future) school themed around River John's shipbuilding history, with the working title of ScholarShip. The hands-on and experiential learning will meet curriculum outcomes, and involves the whole community in school life through an art gallery, shop, café, nature park and garden. The board will decide in June. Whether or not the school stays open, the committee's effort has crystallized the spirit of River John: co-operative, caring, courageous, intelligent and hard-working. River John does not give up. –*Valrie Suidgeest, Sheree Fitch, SOS*

River John recreation

A group of volunteers formed River John and Area Recreation Development in 1977 to provide organized sports for children up to age 15, a limit lowered to age 12 a few years ago. For the past 25 years the program co-operated with the municipal recreation department to offer swimming lessons in the ocean as well as first aid and CPR courses to students. For the past eight years it has offered summer day camp for children up to age 12, providing a safe and supervised place for parents to drop off their children for summer activities. The program hires summer students through provincial and federal summer employment grants, who are supervised by the community co-ordinator. The student employees help organize activities for River John Festival Days as well as helping other non-profit organizations with their projects. Recreation Development works closely with River John Lions Club, Friends of the Library, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 108, Winter Carnival Committee, and the River John Community Action Society. –*JoAnne Wilkins, community co-ordinator*

River John sings and dances and plays a few instruments, too

Music plays an important role in River John life. The school has a well-trained choir, and each church has an organist and a choir with members who sing soprano, alto, tenor, bass and descant parts. The fire hall hosts an annual fiddling championship which draws competitors from all over the Atlantic region. There are a number of bands and individuals who play a variety of music styles, including classical, bluegrass, country, folk, and rock, performing their own compositions as well as covers. The Legion, and the Anglican and United churches, host musical jam sessions, and they and other agencies offer their premises for concerts, charity benefits and visiting performers. The Slow Pickers, Route Six, and River Run frequently lend their talents to dances, concerts, and for worship. Local musicians – beginners and professionals and all ages - join together on snowy Friday mornings for kitchen sessions; or camp in a back field on fine summer weekends to sing and play around a leaping fire. There are teachers here for voice, piano, guitar, violin and ukulele, among others. –*Carol Smith, River Run*

River John loves books - and cutting edge technology

Janice Murray Gill Memorial Library started as a book-mobile that travelled here every three or four weeks from the Pictou Antigonish Regional Library. In 1984 a committee trying to establish rural libraries noticed River John strong interest in the bookmobile, and chose our community as the first rural library, a model for others. It opened on Aug. 23, 1986, as The River John Library, located in part of the River John Lions' Den. In 14 years it outgrew the space, because of a growing population and popular new technology. Our library was a pilot project for federal C@P sites, so we had Internet here before a lot of other rural communities. Thus, the village has several web-sites and Facebook pages, including riverjohn.com, parl.ns.ca/woodenships/, riverjohnsos.com, and readbythesea.ca, to name a few. The Friends of River John Library Society formed in 1986 to build a new library, which opened in 2001. It took 20 volunteers 90 minutes to transport all the books from the old library across the road to the new library. In 2013 the library was named after Janice Murray Gill, who had died in November, 2012. Born in River John, Janice was a writer, municipal politician and a driving force behind the library's establishment in 1986 and in building the new facility. This library is a busy and welcoming place. – *Derek Andrews, River John C@P Society*

River John has a proud history

River John was founded in 1785 and had a population of 1067 by 1828. The first European settlers were French Protestants and the Scots. The Mi'kmaq called this place *Kajeboogwek*, or "flowing through wilderness." It was also called *Deception River* because the mouth of the river is hard to find from the sea. A bridge built across the river in 1808 collapsed in 1984 and a new one was built. River John was known for ship-building (more than 140 wooden ships were built here between 1825 and 1918, with *Warrior* being the largest), the railroad, and the stage coach - which once transported Edward Prince of Wales and also Queen Elizabeth. The coach is in the United States now with Wells Fargo Company. Today River John is mostly known for fishing and farming and our annual River John Festival Days, which started in 1985 on our 200th anniversary. The whole community gets involved and people come from all over to celebrate with us. The festival has home cooking, family activities, concerts, music contests, dances, a big street parade, fireworks and much more. The festival is always held in the week in which July 25 falls.

In River John's early days there were 47 buildings on both sides of Main Street, including Riverside Hotel, Co-op store, school, theatre, barber shop, hat shop, restaurant, Post Office, drug store, doctor's office and two newspapers (The Pioneer began in 1878 and the Temperance Herald started in 1864).

We collected historic information for our school heritage project because we like to learn about River John's past and compare it to today. We are cousins, born and raised in River John just like all our parents. – *The Heightons: Patrick, Chase, Cole, Kaitlyn and Elizabeth*

River John keeps what's good – and shares it

In 1885 Charles McLellan built the three-storey Riverside Hotel with a winding staircase (it's still there), two marble fireplaces and nine-foot-high doorways (People used to say

you could ride a horse right through the hotel because of the doorways). It was a stop for the Sydney to Boston bus route in the early 1900s. When the great fire of 1944 destroyed several homes and businesses, people saved the hotel by standing on its roof and dumping buckets of water on it – another example of how our community comes together at a time of need. It remained a hotel until the 1950s, when it became an ice cream parlour, then a convenience store, hardware store, restaurant, general store and pizza shop. It stood vacant from 1997 to 2005, when Gary and Sharon Johnson bought it and renovated it extensively. They operated The Stage Coach Emporium tea room and gift shop and later turned the building into apartments. They welcome international exchange students and teachers into their home, from Colombia, Belgium, Korea, Japan and other places. We're glad they do this, so we can have students from other countries at our school. The Lions playground has a big wooden play ship in memory of our shipbuilding heritage. Village signs show paintings of tall ships that were built here, and similar paintings inside the school show historic places in our community. We also have a new outdoor history kiosk next to the River John and Area Historical Society Museum, which was a church many years ago. – *students Patrick, Chase, Cole, Kaitlyn and Elizabeth Heighton; historical society member Linda Reid.*

River John's churches

St John's Anglican, St George's Presbyterian and Salem United churches each have a long-standing presence in River John. St Michael's Roman Catholic Church was built more recently outside the village but prior to the construction the congregation worshipped in the Anglican building. The churches have a long history of co-operation, including taking turns hosting ecumenical services during Holy Week, Lent, Advent, and Remembrance Day, sharing special Christmas services, and joining together for the annual ecumenical Festival Days worship at Salem and for Vacation Bible School. The choirs join together for funerals, and church members patronize each other's fundraisers. The churches participate in the annual Christmas house tours organized by the Legion, come to each other's aid in times of need, and welcome everyone to worship and other events. The churches also have their own women's groups, choirs and other musicians, Sunday schools, missionary groups, lay ministers, and events unique to each congregation. They strongly support community endeavours by prayer and by physical involvement. The congregations are noted for great food, music and hospitality. They are currently planning an all-faith child and family worship at the school for June 7. – *Cathe MacLean, Mary Beth Sutherland, Mary Tothill*

River John Legion is not just for veterans

In 1990, River John Legion members dreamed of a community park surrounding the Legion building. It took almost five years to purchase the five-acre parcel of land. The Legion employed a professional to design the gardens and renovations to the building. Memorial trees and benches were sold to raise funds to match a government grant, and donations in kind helped get the grounds levelled and seeded and the Legion renovated for accessibility. Members published and sold a compilation of verse by former resident Carol Daggitt and by Dal Robinson, who scribbled rhymes on scraps of paper that were often lost or given away (making them hard to collect). The River John Remembrance

Gardens opened in 1997, and is maintained by a student employee and volunteers. It hosts the annual Read by the Sea literary festival, once attracting 700 people to a reading by Margaret Atwood. It is also hosts weddings, concerts, Easter egg hunts, pond hockey tournaments, summer children's camp, sports activities and kids' sleepovers. Visitors and local residents stroll among the trees, and camper sometimes stop for the night as there are outdoor washrooms and a pump. The building renovations allow its use for Meals on Wheels, health clinics, seniors' services and other community events.

– *Bonnie Murray, Branch 108, Royal Canadian Legion*

River John celebrates book love

A few local women established Read by the Sea Literary Festival in 2000 to bring Canada's finest writers to the area's avid readers. This July book-lovers from all over will flood into the Legion Memorial Garden with their sunhats and lawn chairs (yes, there IS a rain venue – the school!) to enjoy the 16th annual celebration of great Canadian writing. They will meet their favourite writers and discover new ones. Authors from all over Canada vie to participate in this festival, which relies on River John's natural beauty and home-grown hospitality. The festival includes WordPlay for children, Writing on Fire workshops for teens, and a PageTurners book-sharing program for area book clubs. Read by the Sea has welcomed authors Margaret Atwood, Guy Vanderhaeghe, Eleanor Wachtel, Wayson Choy, Leo Yerxa, Don McKay, Alistair MacLeod, David Adams Richards, George Elliott Clarke, Michael Crummey, Budge Wilson, Shantay Grant, Deborah Ellis, Lisa Moore, River John's own Johanna Skibsrud and Sheree Fitch – and many, many more. This year the featured authors are Maureen Jennings, Giles Blunt, Linden MacIntyre, Isabel Huggan, Starr Dobson, Andy Jones, Linda Little of River John, El Jones, Sue Goyette, Steve Vernon and Josh MacDonald. The whole community pitches in to help, making the festival a source of local pride.

To quote festival alumnus Alexander MacLeod: "This is a festival that comes from the houses of the village." Who would have thought that a little village could become a literary mecca for a weekend every summer? River Johners, that's who! – *Linda Little, Read by the Sea Committee*

River John Festival Days

In 1985 Janice Gill spearheaded an event to mark River John's bicentenary, which continued in ensuing years as the volunteer-run River John Festival Days. This year is the 30th anniversary, when babies born in 1985 will be recognized – among other salutes. Because of Festival Days, River John has its own anthem, commemorative licence plates, an annual fiddling contest, an anniversary church service and many other traditions celebrated in the week in which July 25 falls. Festival Days has grown and evolved to encompass daily breakfasts and evening music on the Lions Club verandah, a big street parade and a children's costume parade, bed races, canoeing and kayaking on the river, community beach parties, rubber duck races, sports and card tournaments, lobster crate runs, scavenger hunt, farmer's market, quilt exhibit, trivia contest, cake decorating contests, dances, car show, fireworks, lobster dinners and hot dog barbecues and wardens teas and strawberry luncheons and lots more food - there is something for everyone. Families come home from away, the cottagers are in

residence, the village is decorated and the sun shines for Festival Days. – *Linda Reid, Gary Johnson, Festival Days*

River John is beautiful

Citizens take pride in the community's appearance, demonstrated in flower gardens, well-kept properties, and the care given to public areas. Volunteers cleaned up garbage at Cape John to turn the site into a park with picnic tables, a pristine beach and picturesque fishing wharf, and they've conducted similar clean-up at other beaches. The old bridge abutments and Bissell Park, named after a daughter of River John and late owner of the Bissell cleaning machine company, are well maintained. Early one Sunday morning some years ago Elaine Reid and Joan Redmond were on Main Street sweeping up debris from Saturday night revelry. No one paid them – it was their pride in River John. The RJs women's service club exemplifies community spirit in beautifying the village, and Ann Holmes donates her time and plants to maintain the library garden. Signage, pretty churches, tidy cemeteries, the Lions playground, the derelict building painted by parents and schoolkids, and the school's history mural all demonstrate pride in appearance. Citizens are faithful recyclers, re-users and re-purposers, and the school environmental group, Earth Angels, is helping to train the next generation to take care of the Earth. - *Susan Sellers*

What would River John do without Meh?

The refrain is repeated often about Meh Yap, who emigrated to River John from Malaysia with her family in the late 1970s and developed one of the community's most prominent businesses. They bought a service station, hardware store and restaurant that had been established by Anthony Swantee in the 1950s and changed hands until Meh bought it. For more than 30 years Meh, as everyone knows her, has adapted her LeeTik Service Centre to meet changing needs. Now it includes an Esso service station, grocery store and restaurant (dine-in and take-out). Meh's also sells pet supplies, office supplies and services, hunting and fishing gear, propane refills and animal bedding, and is a popular gathering place for coffee and chat. Although Meh works long hours she has time to participate in community activities or get up in the middle of the night to help someone in need. She is considered an influential entrepreneur and a role model for the village. Sterling and Christine Heighton worked for Meh and when their children were born, Meh asked them to call her Aunt. Many other fairly recent imports to River John have also become great community members, like the Campbells, Heukshorsts, Assels, Fitch-Plantes, Whites, Crawfords, Giles, MacLeans, Topleys, Dicksons, Johnsons and more. So many people here are from somewhere else! – *Linda Reid*

River John works

The River John area is home to many entrepreneurs: Cape John Trap Builders, Lismore Sheep Farm & Wool Shop, Timeless Stitches Fabric and Quilt Shop, Winmill's Electric, Landlubbers Lobster, Simpsons Appliances & Repair, CG Fulton Pharmacy, Kayak Shak/Coastal Spirit Expeditions, Mammy's Pizza, Reid's Cottages, Sunrise Brokerage and Sales, T&E Heighton Construction Ltd, Mertin's Excavating, Jo Dearing's Southern Smoke BBQ and Grill, and Seafoam Campground, as well as number of self-employed farmers, fishermen, foresters, writers, photographers, consultants, artists, woodworkers,

crafters and others who choose to live and work here. They are integral parts of an appreciative community. – *Monica Graham*

River John Fire Department and Auxiliary

As early as 1869, River John had a Hook and Ladder Company. A 1939 attempt to establish a fire department was interrupted by the Second World War, so it didn't start until 1951. It began with a converted army truck but now has ultra-modern vehicles. The volunteers have fought fatal house fires as well as barn fires where animals perished. Most of the 60-70 calls a year are for traffic collisions and medical emergencies. The volunteers have the same training as professional fire-fighters, and the department has a training house on Mountain Road. There are no fire hydrants in River John, so tankers are used. A hard-working Ladies' Auxiliary helps raise the money to buy the equipment and pay for training. – *student Jennie MacLean, Fire Chief Dave Brown.*

River John communicates and reaches out

River John was introduced early to Internet technology by piloting the C@P site, which allowed the online sale of unique products like spurtles to distant markets, promotion of River John lifestyle on the World Wide Web; and the development of expertise to produce CDs for music and marketing purposes. The community has long realized the value of communication, with two newspapers published in River John in the 1800s. The longest-running, *The Pioneer* (1870-1942) was recently reborn as a quarterly newspaper. With the assistance of the River John Historical Society, the River John Community Action Society and funding from the Community Health Board for one issue, it published its first edition on Canada Day, 2014. The volunteer editorial board represents the surrounding communities, and regular columnists write about the local economic staples of farming, forestry and fishing. Local churches take turns submitting columns, and space is reserved for students and staff at River John Consolidated School; and for the Support our School committee that has valiantly re-envisioned the heart of our community. The *Pioneer* is funded by advertising and distributed free to 600 residents within the B0K1N0 postal code. By its third edition in December, 2014, the non-profit publication's revenues exceeded its expenses. This stability is due to River John businesses signing long-term advertising contracts to ensure *The Pioneer's* success. In return, *The Pioneer* commits to accepting advertising from local businesses only. Surrounding communities have requested *The Pioneer* cover their areas, indicating a wider need, so the editorial board is developing strategies to help other places build their own community newspapers. We've learned as an editorial board that no matter how proud we are of our collective past, we are more excited by the future. – *Rob Assels, The Pioneer*