THE INFORMER

November 2023 Issue # Fifteen imhs.ca

:Isle Madame Historical Society
708 Veterans Memorial Drive
P.O. Box 223
Arichat, NS, B0E 1A0
TELEPHONE 902 226 9364
TELEPHONE 902 226 2880

From the Desk of the Editor: S. Marchand - Terrio

It's November, a time of reflection and preparation for most of us!

The summer season at LeNoir Landing was productive, our students Victoria Bowen & Keyanna Landry-Boudreau were busy researching and cataloguing archival documents and artifact donations. They assisted with the planned programs, poured tea and gave museum tours. After several slow covid seasons we noted an increase in visitors to the museum which was most welcome. Programs were well attended and blacksmithing classes were fully booked. Our former blacksmith Richard Boudreau retired his hammer for the summer and was replaced by Ciaran Lachlan Leavitt. Richard returned in October for classes during the Celtic Colours Festival.

We were honoured this summer to host "Portraits of Cape Breton" a traveling exhibit of photos by Alfred LeBlanc. The official opening, held on July 9th, was well attended, and the exhibit had visitors daily for the remainder of its stay with us.

With financial support from Destination Cape Breton, we instituted a new four day "Living History" program during the month of August. This event was created to bring our local history to life by featuring community interpreters taking on the personas of former residents of Isle Madame. Different areas of the museum were set in different time periods, allowing us to tell the stories of W.W. II and its effect on the island, food preservation, life in a one room school and their eventual closing. We also shared the story of a local female entrepreneur and were given opportunity to discuss the Married Women's Property Act which was passed in 1882. The last area was set in present day and gave us an opportunity to share information on the history of our beautiful stone building. It was very successful and we are hoping to expand the project next year!

The Summer Learning Series was well attended. We had 3 presentations; one on "Mysterious Isle Madame" with author Jeanne Joyce Stone, another on the one room school by Earl Doyle and last, but not least, a painting workshop with Therese Boudreau. All were successful and plans for next year's series are beginning to form.

The Isle Madame Historical Society's mission is to collect, preserve and exhibit artifacts and documents relating to the social, cultural and natural history of Isle Madame for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations.



The Pool Hall D'Escousse IMHS Ref. # DO-285



Petit de Grat IMHS # JAMC-263



Pondville, IMHS, #LPO-019

Photos: IMHS Archives

This spring we were lucky to participate in a research project in partnership with our local Legion (Branch 150) and Cape Breton University. We were assigned a student, Ainsley Pelley, who did 100 hours of research into WW I Isle Madame Veterans for us. She created a database of 170 Veterans and we expect that more will be added as time goes on. If you know of a WW I Veteran feel free to touch base with us to see if he is on our list.

Another project / partnership that we have been involved in this year is "Lunch with Seniors", a film series that is taking place at Telile. A group of local seniors are invited to lunch and afterward a discussion is facilitated around a particular topic such as education, entrepreneurship or Christmas traditions. Memories are shared and stories are told. This series when completed will become part of our Living Archives.

2023 saw the completion of a huge building renovation project for the society. With the help of the Dept. of Community, Culture, Tourism & Heritage, St. Joseph's Credit Union, and the Municipality of the County of Richmond we were able to refurbish retaining walls, decks and ramps making our site safe for visitors and ensuring that this community gathering spot will be available for years to come. We are so grateful! Happy Christmas Everyone!

Fund-raising & Society Membership

For 2023 our major fundraiser is a photographic calendar of Isle Madame Communities. The money raised by the sale of the calendar will offset renovation costs to the exterior of the Lorenzo building. We are grateful for the support received from our funding partners, however, our (IMHS) portion came to well over $10,000.00 and it is essential that we refill the coffers. If you are interested in purchasing a calendar please contact us by email: islemadamehistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Calendars are also available at the Telile office, Jeantie's Mini Mart in Arichat and at the Shamrock store in D'Escousse. If you are not living locally but would like to purchase a calendar we would be happy to mail one to you. Someone mentioned to me when purchasing a calendar that they were making a donation and receiving a beautiful selection of historic photos as a thank you!

If you are receiving this newsletter you are already a community member of the Isle Madame Historical Society and we thank you for supporting our work. In the coming months we will be pursuing our goal of sustaining and increasing our membership. You might ask why is membership important, it's not a large amount of money ($10.00 for a year) and you are correct. However, it shows support for the organization and the work we do in our community. Many funding applications ask "Do you have a membership base? How many paid members support your organization?". Membership fees collectively can help with the some of the costs associated with running the organization. 100 members paying a yearly fee brings $1000.00 revenue which can pay for internet access, new plants for the gardens, a display case or programming supplies. 300 members would mean $3000.00. Many people when asked to join the society think we are asking them to volunteer or take on a board position. However, becoming a community member does not mean a time commitment unless you wish to be involved in a bigger way. Please consider giving an IMHS membership as a small gift to someone that might enjoy reading our newsletters. If you are able when renewing your membership consider adding a donation to the society. We will issue a tax receipt for all donations. We are grateful for the support we have received from our membership! Together we will ensure our collection of artifacts, photos and documents that tell our stories will be available to future generations.

IMHS 2024 Calendar
$20.00



Board of Directors 2023-2024
Anne Leavitt - *Chair*
Renee Samson - *Vice Chair*
Brittany Benoit - *Secretary*
Joan Clannon - *Treasurer*
Directors: Odilon Boudreau, Nancy Samson, Marg Herdman, Susan Marchand-Terrio

Volunteers Corner
Become a volunteer with IMHS:
* You are needed.
* You love history.
* You want to see the Isle Madame Historical Society offer great exhibits that tell our visitors the story of Isle Madame.

Volunteer opportunities are available in many areas.If you are interested in a volunteer position please contact our office 902 226 9364 or 902 226 2880







An Old Fashion Christmas on Isle Madame

Several years ago I went on a Christmas House Tour. At one house which was beautifully decorated I noticed a small fir tree that intrigued me and I asked the hostess about that tree and with a smile and sigh she said "That is the tree of my childhood!" She went on to explain that when she was little there wasn't money for store bought decorations so her mother would save tinfoil all year. At Christmas they would cut out shapes from cardboard of stars and balls and cover them with tinfoil to decorate their tree. They would save scraps of colourful material and cut out shapes and stuff them with wool making quilted ornaments. They would save old Christmas cards that were sent from the states and those would be kept year after year and used to decorate their tree. They would pick and string berries and those too would get added to the tree. She went on to say she couldn't really remember if there were presents under it, but she always remembered the tree.

That little tree that most people just walked by represented something so special. This was an example of a woman who didn't spend time wishing for store bought decorations that she couldn't afford but created something special from what she could gather around her. This story isn't unique to our island, but it reminded me of all those traditions that surround the celebration of Christmas!

The following is an excerpt from *Project 80: The History of the Villages on the Northern Side Of Isle Madame* by Beverly Keating.

"The biggest event of the year for the school children was the Christmas concert. Around the 1st of December the teacher assign recitations, monologues and plays which were memorized and practiced, many children participated by playing an instrument or dancing. For the occasion the school was decorated with fir branches and crape paper streamers. The audience was made up of parents, people from the community as well as neighbouring communities. Christmas time brought about gatherings. All the people got together and went to Church for mid-night mass. After mass they would gather in homes and have meat or rabbit pie."

On behalf of the IMHS Board of Directors we hope you have a wonderful holiday and take the opportunity to share your traditions with those around you!

Christmas 2023

Photos:

Top Left: Homemade Decorations

Middle: LeNoir Landing Tree 2015

Top Right: Arichat Ladies "Dashing Through The Snow"





Snapshots of the Summer & Fall

Top Left: Kids Day at the Museum (IMHS)

Top Right: New Steps & Ramp. Renovations 2023 (IMHS)

Middle: New Cement Deck, Steps, Retaining Walls and Ramp. Renovations 2023 (IMHS)

Bottom Right: Traveling Exhibit (IMHS)

Bottom Middle: Blacksmithing Class (IMHS)

Bottom Left: Living History Poster (IMHS)







