

Celebrating 100 Years, as the Bass River Elementary Doors Close



Bass River School celebrated a 100th Anniversary with an Open House on June 20th. The school will close at the end of this school year. Students will now attend West Colchester Consolidated School just up the road.

By Linda Harrington

Many things change over a century but in some ways stepping inside the doors at Bass River Elementary (BRE) School is still a trip down memory lane. Unlike modern classrooms, there are no buzzers signalling the end of class. A hand bell still does the job just fine.

A steady stream of visitors dropped by Bass River Elementary School on June 20th to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the school but it was also a chance to say good bye. The school has been marked for closure by the CCRSB, with students moving on to West Colchester Consolidated School (WCCS) in fall of 2013.

There were plenty of conversations happening among former students and teachers, as they reminisced about their years spent at the school.

Burchell Fulmore had his 1937 Chevrolet 1/2 ton Panel Delivery vehicle parked outside BRE during the Open House. Burchell's father used to own B. L. Fulmore store in Economy from 1939 to 1954 and this vehicle was a restored replica of the truck used for deliveries and also for picking up all the kids from Economy to Bass River and delivering them to school. "We had the first unofficial school bus in Bass River," laughs Burchell.

He showed Betty (Taylor) Fulton wooden boxes in the back and asked if she remembers sitting on the butter boxes on the way to school. "There were no accidents but some anxious moments," says Betty, recalling how they drove to school even through snow storms. "We hardly ever missed a day nor were we ever late, thanks to Burchell. The snow plow never came until the day after a storm, but school was never closed."

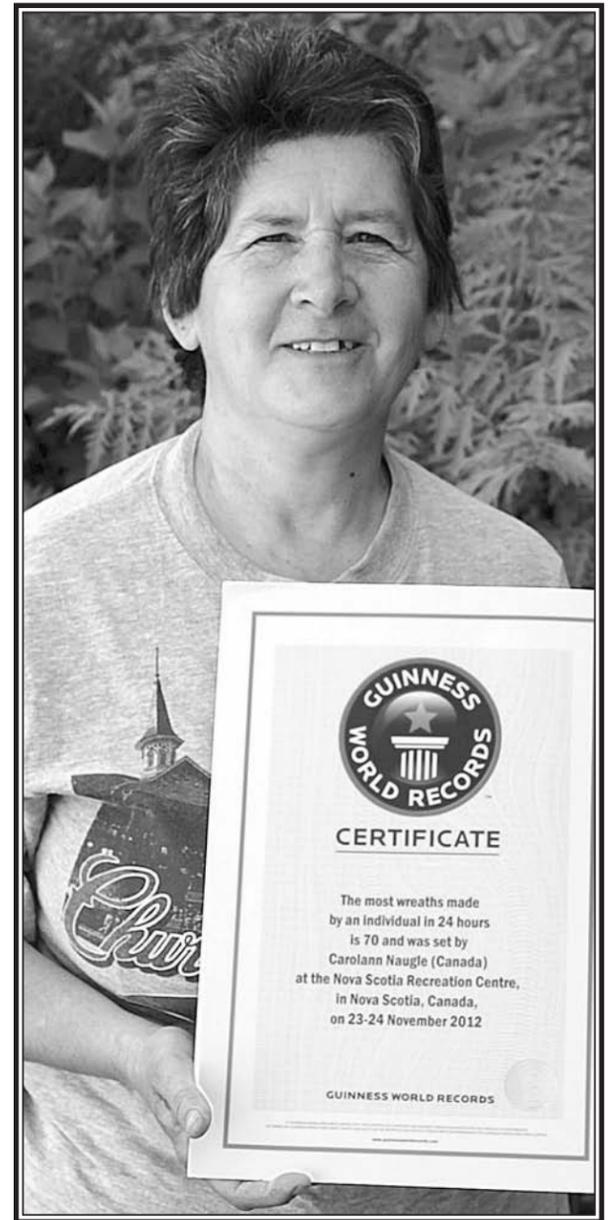
Darlene Smith was a teacher at BRE and WCCS for 35 years from 1970 to 2005. She has fond memories of teaching her grandson the year she retired and says the largest class she

taught was 33 students in two grades and the smallest was a two grade class of 17 students. "When I came here as a student I was in the back west room, the first year I taught I was a teacher in that room and the last year I taught I was also a teacher in the same room," recalls Mrs. Smith.

Barb Dick, a teacher from 1974 to 1994, says Bass River was her first teaching assignment and she always felt it was a wonderful community. She recalls someone bringing a team of horses to the school one snowy winter's day and the students were delighted to go on an impromptu sleigh ride.

Monica Delaney, taught from 1977-1994 and she had fond memories of watching deer eating apples off a tree outside the classroom window. "We would stop everything and the students would sneak quietly over to the window," she says.

Sherry Patriquin has spent her entire teaching career at BRE and will move with the students to WCCS. She attended the school as a student, as did her father, her son and now her 2 grandsons are students. Her grandfather was a janitor, as



Not one but now 2 WORLD RECORDS! Carolann Naugle has recently received a certificate from Guinness World Records declaring her as the world record holder for making the most Christmas wreaths in one day. Carolann completed 70 wreaths in 24 hours last November. She previously held a Guinness Record for making the world's largest wreath in 2008. A celebration of her achievement was held on July 23rd at Douglas Street Recreation Centre. (Harrington Photo)



BRE student Sloane Turner-MacLean passes cake to Hazel Dickie, who was a former janitor at the school for 5 years.



Mrs. Sherry Patriquin serves cake to sisters Clara (Starratt) Galway and Joyce Starratt. The sisters took their grade 2 to 12 at the school beginning around 1930.



Former students George Burns (1952-62), Jim Campbell (1960-66), Randy Grue (1961-64) and Stan Corbett (1959-65) look over some of the year books on display.



Three former and one current teacher pose for a photo after sharing memories with each other. Left to right- Sherry Patriquin (1977 to present), Barn Dyck (1974-1983), Monica Delaney (1977-1994) and Darlene Smith (1970- 2005). All 4 teachers started their teaching career at BRE.



Students Chloe Faulkner, Blade MacLean, Taylor Banfield, CeCe McLaughlin and Cullen Patriquin (left to right) acted as tour guides at the Open House, along with former teacher Darlene Smith, who also rang the school bell in the traditional manner.

well.

Several BRE students lead tours during the Open House, accompanied by former teacher Darlene Smith, and at this time read excerpts from interviews with former staff and students.

Taylor Banfield interviewed former teacher Malcolm Campbell and he told the story of a three legged cat named Snookums who moved in to the school. "She would come to school every day," said Mr. Campbell. "She loved to lie in the sun in the library, which is now Mrs. Patriquin's room. We used to have a mouse problem but she took care of that."

Mason MacBurnie and Chloe Faulkner interviewed Bruce MacAloney, a student at BRE in 1954. The students learned back then there were 2 outhouses. "One for boys and one for girls," said Mr. MacAloney, "There were 3 holes- 1 for big, 1 for medium and 1 for small."

CeCe McLaughlin interviewed Judy Lewis, who attended the school when classes went from primary to Grade 12. She recalls the special graduation ceremonies held at the United Church, followed by a graduation dance. "The girls wore white dresses to the graduation and picked a red rose off a tree and put it on their dress. The boys wore a snowball blossom on their clothes," said Judy Lewis.

Cullen Patriquin interviewed his great-great aunt Nell and he says, "For lunch she liked bologna sandwiches on white homemade bread and cocoa that she carried in a small medicine bottle. At school there was a tank of warm water on the stove. They dipped their cocoa in the tank to warm it up but sometimes the bottom came out of the bottle. You didn't have any cocoa and the room smelled like chocolate."

The stories continued, sharing memories over a cup of tea and a piece of anniversary cake while looking at old year books and photos. If only the walls could talk, the tales they would tell.



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