

Springhill Pauses for Miners' Memorial Day

Continued from page 1
for William Davis, a coal miner who was killed in 1925 during a protest by striking miners. The protest occurred near New Waterford in Cape Breton after the mining company cut off water and electricity during a long, bitter miners' strike. Residents marched on the pumping station at Waterford Lake demanding the utilities be restored.

During a confrontation with armed company police, shots were fired and Davis was killed. The Davis family had a strong connection to Springhill. The family immigrated to Canada and settled in Springhill around 1888. At the time, Davis would have been a year old.

During the service at St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church, Municipality of Cumberland Mayor Murray Scott said

Springhill will always be a community of heroes.

The mayor said he was only 12 when his father died of natural causes at age 47. Still, he remembers seeing the pain and suffering in many neighbourhoods and families at the loss of husbands, fathers, brothers and other family members.

He considers everyone involved to be heroes, from the men and boys who worked underground supporting their families in the face of danger, the miners who were trapped underground for days not knowing if they'd be found, the draegermen and barefaced miners who risked danger by going underground repeatedly to search for trapped miners, the wives and mothers of the miners and the community as a whole and how it responded

and continues to remember.

"I'm proud to say I am a Springhiller surrounded by heroes," the mayor said during the church service. "I grew up in a town filled with heroes. Not the type of heroes that kids are in awe of who are seen on television or the movies, sports or the books they read. Springhill heroes were and are real-life heroes, men, women and even children from different families and backgrounds."

"In today's world, the response to natural disasters is immediate with support put in place to assist families. But during those times there were little such supports," the mayor said. "There was very little support going forward for widows and their families. These women were basically left to determine their own futures."



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Public Readings Under Publicized

By Sandra Stephenson

There's a little big authors' series at Vickery House Books in Parrsboro every Saturday this summer. It's little because not well known, and big because the roster of authors is big, and authors are big news in a small town

In an intimate setting in a tent between the bookstore and the neighbouring house on a lane behind the Main Street, authors sit and wait for readers and the curious to arrive anytime from 1pm until 3. If asked or moved, they will read from their books and sign your copy, but it's mostly conversations one-on-one, usually with one or the other of the two owners of the bookstore present, but not always!

Authors' presentations in Canada have become very formal, with government funding for an honorarium, travel and accommodation expenses, sometimes meals or snacks, and authors treated like royalty. This one is unique - The authors are invited, they come at their own expense, hang out, sell a book or two for \$10 - 25, and leave. Simple.

In May and June, eight authors have visited already, Maritimers all. A compiler of some Mi'kmaw medicine plants, a children's poet, an historian, a novelist - sometimes they come in twos and sometimes alone. Donna Morrissey, Elaine McCluskey and her award-winning photographer husband, Lesley Choyce (novelist and publisher), Debra Camelin and others have been and gone with a handful of Parrsborians aware of their visit. Their books are for sale at the bookstore, along with a well-organized collection of second-hand books.

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Simple.**

Second hand books are everywhere in town and elsewhere along the Shore. Little free libraries crop up and are mysteriously maintained. A huge second hand bookstore in Parrsboro closed its doors at least temporarily last year at Main and Station, in the old post office and customs building. It was associated with Abe books until its owner's illness and death. Harvey Lev was a devoted bibliophile and his partner Judith Bauer regularly hosted readings and book launches at the big old building, including a collaborative book between herself and

Chad Norman. Chad visited Vickery House on June 21, coinciding with the annual Plein Air Painting Festival when 35 painters scattered in the area and set up to paint, making for plenty of artistic activity in the town of Parrsboro.

Vickery House Books is the remaining bookshop in town, at 83 Spring Street. It has a growing collection of Mi'kmaw books and Canadiana.

In July and August, you can meet and listen to more authors. Unfortunately, to get the line-up you have to go to Instagram or Facebook. Publicity for the events is lagging, and will have to improve to keep the series going. This is the second year, so it could become an annual thing with enough public support.

Sandra Stephenson is a Parrsboro-based writer, who routinely submits articles to the South Cumberland News. She can be reached at: mostlyczam@gmail.com

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(Extracted from Cumberland Connection 2024 Summer Issue)




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As a special incentive to boost attendance in nearly June, on June 9th anyone with a postal code starting with B0M had free admission to the Fundy Geological Museum. The day's enjoyment was enhanced with this outside display. The display was moved, later in the day to First Beach. It's a well-made dinosaur created from auto parts. Image was downloaded from the Fundy Museum site.

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