

## Armed Robbers No Match for Angry Store Owner



Bruce MacAloney, owner of the Glenholme General Store, is prepared to defend his property. He was recently threatened with a knife, during an attempted robbery, but when he grabbed the man's arm and held on tight, the two intruders decided it was time to leave. (Harrington Photo)

By Linda Harrington

Anger and adrenalin is what made Bruce MacAloney, owner of Glenholme General Store, confront the man threatening him with a knife when two masked men entered his store just prior to closing time on Sept. 29th.

Bruce says he was sitting behind the cash register when the two masked intruders entered. One immediately came behind the counter, while the other stood nearby. "The one closest to me told me not to move and held a knife in my direction," says Bruce. "I sure didn't take long to react. I quickly reached out and grabbed the arm holding the knife. With my other hand I pulled down his mask and when I still couldn't see his face, I pulled back the hood on his jacket."

Bruce says this all happened in a matter of seconds and when the other intruder suggested they leave, both males dropped the garbage bags they were carrying and ran out the door.

"I was more mad than scared," says Bruce. "I wasn't ready to give anything away."

He immediately called the RCMP, who arrived quickly on scene. "At one point there were 7 RCMP cruisers in the

yard and they brought out the dog, too. They did a great job," Bruce reports.

Bruce told the RCMP he thought the men had run up Hwy #4 toward Masstown. He thinks the police dog was able to track them up as far as Hillcrest Rd., where they possibly entered a vehicle. He says the dog was able to locate a knife along the roadway.

This was not the first time Bruce has experienced an attempted robbery and he didn't let the thieves get away that time either. About a year ago he chased thieves up the road in his car and blocked their vehicle until they handed over the stolen cash. He then kept them blocked in until the RCMP arrived.

The RCMP are still looking for the two suspects in this recent armed robbery attempt. Bruce expects he will be meeting with a sketch artist soon but for now the description police have issued is that of a male 20 years of age, white with a dark tan complexion, short dark hair, approximately 5'6", slight build with full lips and unshaven.

Anyone with any information is asked to call Colchester RCMP at 893-6820 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

## Readers React To Reduced Hours Announcement

**To determine the reaction from area residents, the Shoreline Journal sent an email to subscribers, regular contributors and advertisers. Here's a few of their comments:**

**Tom Taggart, lifelong Bass River resident:** "I am, as are many others, disappointed in the decision by the Community Credit Union to reduce the hours of operation of the Bass River branch. I have had calls from many concerned residents and members of the Credit Union. I met with the branch manager Will Ross on Tuesday Oct 19 and had a very productive discussion. It was very evident during those discussions that this decision had to be made and I believe it was in the best interest of all. The credit Union is very important to all of us and I feel that if we are to maintain the level of service that is currently proposed we must increase our support and usage. There are currently approx 900 members of the Bass River Branch and only 2-3% are currently using the branch for the services that provide income to the branch and help to pay the wages of staff and overhead such as loans and investments. If we wish to grow our communities it is important that we maintain these services. I doubt very much that any of the other major financial institutions would ever consider operating in our community."

**Karen Casey, MLA, Colchester North:** Although I am not a member of the Credit Union, I am very concerned about the negative impact this closure (reduced hours and possible complete closure in the future) will have on the communities along the shore. Residents, both permanent and seasonal (of which there are hundreds) have an option to use this facility close to home. Local, capable and professional staff can find employment close to home. Let's get out of the mindset that everything needs to be centralized in the "city". This province has an economic base in rural Nova Scotia. The Board of Directors of the Credit Union should respect its founders (hard working Nova Scotians from small rural communities) and keep this service on a full time basis. Business will be lost as members and users will remember the services that have been taken from them and they will find alternate financial institutions to meet their needs. Most likely that will not be any other branch of the Credit Union.

**Ken Jamieson, Bass River Resident:** Both myself and my wife are members of the Bass River Credit Union. Regularly I will visit the Credit Union 2 to 3 times a week. New hours posted for credit union will definitely force a change in banking habits. If new hours are allowed to stay I will look for another banking service. Not only do I believe that the community should canvass to stop this reduced hours, but I believe they should never have been allowed to start without the permission of all members involved. I joined Bass River Credit Union, NOT Truro or Amherst.

**Jim (CHIP) Chipman, Bass River:** I don't know if I qualify in giving an answer, but the more I read about the profits of the financial institutions and the bonuses they give to their upper echelon, I can see this is just another way of keeping their profit margin up. This they are doing on the backs of their front line employees and I consider it an abuse. Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion.

**Jill McMullen, Broker, CD Armstrong Insurance, Truro:** This is such sad news. I do not use this branch myself, but I have been a member of the credit union in Truro, most of my adult life. This will have an impact on our seniors in the area, who, I am sure like my mother, like to do their banking in person, even if their cheques are deposited directly. I know this will impact the drug store as well. In winter people don't go as much and most go on pay day. If the bank is not open until 1pm and closes at 5 most people would not get home til after 5. Most seniors I know like to get things done in the mornings, the earlier the better. Just go for blood work at 6.30 am and the room is full of seniors. Working people also need time for banking. This is not the best news for the Bass River community and surrounding area. I am sure every member will be affected in their own way.

## Credit Union Reduces Hours

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it. Another reader responded, "It is best to focus on maintaining what we have".

Area residents and business people feel that since the Bass River branch is the only banking facility along the shore between Parrsboro and Truro, reduced hours will be devastating. Here's what one tourism operator from along the shore had this to say: "I don't need to be quoted, but I can tell you that there are guests who stay with us who use the services of the Credit Union. To cut back so drastically on the hours of operation would absolutely affect our area".

According to other industry sources, I contacted, they suggested perhaps most of the business was personal chequing accounts which is a service provided, but doesn't make money. Probably there isn't enough demand for mortgages, consumer loans and business portfolio's in volumes sufficient to permit small branches to reach the breakeven point.

As Tom Taggart pointed out in his comments (printed elsewhere), the branch has

approximately 900 members, but only 2-3% of members are using the branch for the products which help pay for salaries and other costs.

In checking with financing professionals outside the credit union, this writer learned that in order to reach a breakeven point, a branch similar to Bass River would need to have loan and transactions portfolio in excess of \$4-million. It is believed Bass River is operating at a level substantially less than \$1-million. One executive suggested that because loans would probably be amortized over 3 years, it would be necessary to actually be writing business in the range of \$10-million.

Many rural branches also face the situation of an aging population. Demographics play a big role in financial viability. A formula used by financial institutions is that less than 50% of the clientele should be seniors. Ideally, approximately 50% should be under the age of 40. It is suggested that in areas similar to Bass River, the clientele base may be as high as 75% in the seniors bracket.

**Dennis Ross, Five Islands:** When a business has to re-structure or cut back in order to maintain a profit or cut their losses to a minimum in order to supply a service to the community someone has to suffer as a result of the changes. I am not a member of the credit union in Bass River but I would think if the Board of Directors or the shareholders were prepared to take less dividends, a cut in salaries if applicable or were prepared to invest more in the Bank to cover any losses then there would be no reason to change the hours. If the Bank is operating with a profit and is trying to increase the profit at the expense of the employees then maybe the management should be looked at and their code of ethics questioned.

**Martha Brown, Bass River:** As a member of the Credit Union, my questions are simple: Who decided that BR branch is not viable? When and where was the public meeting held? When can we access the financial information to better understand this situation? Are funds on deposit, investments made at BR and loans negotiated by BR members all kept on BR books? The Bass River Branch of the Community Credit Union is more than a convenience. The ladies who work there have provided exceptional customer service to the members and also to the community. They put the "community" in Community Credit Union.

**Rudi Loeffler, President, Global Construction (Maritimes), formerly from Economy:** No, I am not a member of the Credit Union; however as a business person I can understand why the changes are being made. I am sure that if this bank were profitable they would continue with their normal hours. Most people that use this bank use it for cashing cheques, and savings deposits. Home loans or car loans have decreased in most rural areas. Car dealer's offer great financing deals, and as the population is decreasing in these areas, the need for home loans is less, and that is where the banks make their money. These hour changes will still allow for people to do their banking locally, it will just take some adjusting of their schedules. Most people do not bank daily anyway!! And there are bank machines!!!!

**Gudi Loeffler, formerly from Economy:** Since we moved to Debert in 2007, we use the Truro Branch 95%; we used Bass River before frequently.

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