Michael Gaultois shows WCCS Grade Six student Sylvie Taylor a mask he wore for many months to help his burns heal. Walter McElhinney (left) is a member of Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade and the Colchester FireFighters Association who sponsored Michael's visit to this area. (Harrington Photo)

After surviving a fire that burned 90% of his body, Michael Gaultois is a motivational speaker who would would rather help others find joy in the journey of life than focus on his painful physical and emotional past. He stopped by West Colchester Consolidated School, Bass River on Oct. 24th. (Harrington Photo)

Important to Choose the Right Path

By Linda Harrington

Burn survivor Michael Gaultois, of Irishtown, N.L. brought thought provoking messages to area Junior High students on his three day tour of Colchester County.

At the age of 15, Gaultois suffered third-degree burns to almost 90 per cent of his body in a fire, which sent two other boys to hospital and claimed the life of a 13-year-old boy. He spent 6 months at the Shriner's Burn Hospital in Boston, where he began the painful road of recovery, including undergoing 16 operations. He arrived at Shiner's hospital blind and in danger of losing his hands. It was also unknown whether he would ever walk again.

Walter McElhinney, member of the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade, says he first heard Michael Gaultois speak at the Maritime Fire Chiefs Association meeting in Gander, N.L. and he, and the local delegation, were so impressed by Michael's story they wanted to have him come talk to students in area schools. "We felt that his presentation not only dealt with fire prevention and burn survival, but showed lessons in building what is left after a crisis."

Students at West Colchester Consolidated School listened intently as Micheal talked about his life's experiences. "Be mindful of the choices you make, they could be life changing," he said referring to how poor choices in his own young life led him to the camp that night.

Students watched a slide show titled, "The Night I Made a Choice that Changed My Life Forever". Some photos graphically depicted Michael's burned body and months of recovery. "As I look back on the pictures, I could say to myself, look what happened I messed up my life but instead I say I am very fortunate," says Michael. "I chose to survive."

Michael showed students where he has lost his thumb and tips of several fingers and asked, "Should I focus on what I lost or what I have?" He encouraged students to be positive thinkers and make the most of what they have saying, "you can always learn to adapt".

Fire prevention was another focus of Michael's presentation, as he explained how a $5 smoke detector might have saved his friend, who died of smoke inhalation in the fire. He encouraged students to make sure they have them installed at home and they are working.

A $5 bill was used to illustrate another important message of self-worth. "No matter how much our feelings are crumpled or we might be kicked to the ground, our life is still worth something," said Michael referring to the monetary value of a balled up, stepped on five dollar bill. One student, Sylvie Taylor offered insight into how our lives are different from the $5 bill, "We can always get more money but we can't get another life." She was given the $5 and asked to make a donation to any charity. Sylvie says she plans to donate the money to the Shriner's Hospital and hopes others might add to the donation.

Students were given a chance to ask questions at the end of the presentation. Michael left them with the inspirational message, "may the choices you make today be the ones that will lead you to a safer and brighter tomorrow."

Gaultois visited junior high schools in Bass River, CCJHS, Tatamagouche, Truro, Brookfield, and Bible Hill plus a shortened presentation at Bass River Elementary School and a public presentation at Bible Hill Fire Hall. The tour is sponsored by the Colchester Firefighters Association.

Out and About with Ken

By Ken Kennedy

Whew! Just came in from raking leaves. There seems to be more this year but I know that can't be since my neighbour Bob and I cut down a bunch of hardwood trees last Fall. It must be my age, I guess, but thank God I can still get out and about.

We spent about ten days in Newfoundland over the past couple of weeks. We hadn't been back to my hometown for over three years and my brother isn't doing that well in a nursing home in Kelligrews. We stayed at my sister Barbara's except for the 8th and 9th of October when we spent our 47th anniversary at The Battery Hotel on Signal Hill overlooking the St. John's harbour.

Other than that Newfie trip we have been staying close to home. As for the goings on in the Debert area, you will have to drop by the Glenholme Petrocan restaurant any morning around 9:00 am or Tim Hortons around 7:00 pm where all the news is debated by some of the smartest people from the area. As for me and my wife, we have found the Masstown Market restaurant a nice inexpensive place to relax with a mug of coffee ($1.25) and a slice of strawberry-rhubarb pie for $1.99. There's lots of room and you can choose to sit at a table or booth. (I wish they would find some way to take the calories out of that pie!)

If you happen to be living or visiting Debert these days you should try to avoid Middle Road since the railway crossing in now worse than when they "fixed" it. I see some markings on Plain's Road which makes me think that someone is looking to upgrade that road – not before it needs it.

That's all for now. See you next time. Don't forget to remember our war veterans on Remembrance Day.

Onslow Belmont Notes

By Debbie Weatherby

It is sure a pleasure to have the store up and running again in our community. Taking a few times to get used to the fact it is open and hoping all goes great for Daniel and Peter. Will take them a bit to get the shelves stocked. Totally awesome to be able to buy gas once again as well. So far, have heard nothing but wonderful comments on the fact that the store is back. Here's to many many years of operation and welcome home.

Services are held every Sunday at the Trinity United Church in Onslow at 10:00 a.m. Trinity is at the corner of Meeting House Road and Onslow Road. All are welcome to attend and we hope to see you there.

Belmont Baptist Church services are held every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. with Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. Prayer meeting is held Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m.

From the sounds of things the Fall Auction once again was a big success for the Firemen. Congrats on a job well done.

At the Onslow Community Centre things are starting to run again. Cards are in full swing again as of October 15th beginning at 7:00 p.m. Yoga takes place on Wednesdays at 6:00-7:00 and 7:30-8:30. Classes are also scheduled on Fridays from 12:30-1:30. Open Mike night also started up again on October 4th at 6:30 p.m.

Congratulations go out to Daniel and Tara Dargavel of Lower Onslow on the arrival of their baby girl weighing in at 7 lbs.10 ozs.

Have seen lots of deer over the last couple of weeks but alas the season starts on the 26th so may not see them as often. What a gorgeous animal they are.

Remembrance Day is coming up soon so please remember to honour our veterans by wearing a Poppy and bow our heads in silence.

Halloween' is coming up on the 31st so drivers be aware of the kids as they are out trick or treating as they can sometimes get excited and forget to watch out for you. Have fun kids and don't eat too much candy.

Until next time take care and hunters be safe out there in the woods.

Londonderry Community Council News

By Sally Richard

By now you likely have read Maurice's article on the latest vandalism at our community centre. The Council is very appreciative that Maurice has offered us major support in the Shoreline Journal. We asked him to do an article to inform our community of the vandalism taking place at their Community Centre.

As a result, he had written the article, delivered a free copy of the Journal to all households on our mail route, offered a partnership with subscriptions as a fund raiser and has helped to organize and chair a public community meeting concerning vandalism and how we can work to prevent it. Now that is amazing help and overwhelming support from outside our community. It is an excellent example of how the Shoreline Journal brings West Colchester together in unity.

We were very saddened to learn of the passing of Rev. Lawrence Corey, Woodstock, NB. Rev. Corey was a well respected pastor at the Reformed Baptist church in Londonderry in the mid to late 1950's. His new bride Mary taught school in Londonderry Station for one year.

Together the couple involved themselves with the youth in the community and organized a youth group providing many memorable events and trips for at least 40 teens. Rev. Corey even built a small boxing ring in the basement of the church for boys to enjoy the sport. To this day this outstanding Christian man's name still comes up when folks reminisce the good old times during the mid 1950's.

Maxine Richard had a complete knee replacement operation recently. She is recovering and is anxious to get mobile. She is an organizer around the Community Centre and is greatly missed. Best wishes from the Council for a speedy recovery.

Our condolences to Doug Cooke and family on the passing of his mother. It was a difficult situation for Doug as he was in the last few days of his election campaign for county councillor.

An 80th birthday party was held for Ivan (Pete) Johnson at the Community Centre on October 21. Two of Pete's daughters (Andrea and Laura Lee) were able to attend from outside the province as well as grandchildren and other family members. Karen Casey MLA was there to present Pete with a certificate. The ladies from the Council catered the lunch. They were pleased to have Makayla O'Brien, Hannah Lane and Jena Otterson help with setting up the tables and serving the lunch. It was their first time to work at an event. Birthday wishes were also sang to Winnie Spencer on her 67th birthday.

Margaret Barnes proved she can still attract a man's attention and have lots of fun. None other than Stephen MacNeil, leader of the Liberal party. Several ladies from here attended the Autumn Liberal fundraiser dinner in Debert on October 2. They were lucky enough to have Stephen MacNeil chose a seat opposite them. Marg started the footsy game (accidently she says) and that opened up a very enjoyable evening with witty conversation and laughs with Stephen.

Congratulations to Tom Taggart on his re-election to County Council serving District 10. Risha-Jaide Rushton, daughter of Valerie Carter, visited her mother for the month of September. Risha is a student at the University of Saskatchewan and will graduate in April, 2013. While home Risha visited many family members and friends.

The usual Remembrance Day legion service will be held at Memorial Square on November 11 at 2 pm. If the weather is inclement the service will be moved to the Community Centre. Please take time to honour our veterans and show your support for the men and women presently serving our country. Following the service refreshments will be served at the Community Centre. The door-to-door poppy campaign will start on October 26. Someone will be calling at your door.

As a result of the recent damage to the Community Centre, a caring person not wishing to be identified, has stepped forward and offered the Community Council a helping hand. A lottery has been established and this person has solicited over $4,000 in prizes from many businesses throughout the area on behalf of the Londonderry Community Council.

It is hoped the sale of tickets will generate enough funds to replace the windows, fix the siding and purchase a security system. Tickets are now on sale for $5.00 each or 5 for $20.00. This kind gesture has created a real come-together community spirit. Defeat and discouragement are now behind us with all the goodness shining through.

Don't forget to make a note on your calendar for the public meeting being held at the Centre on Wednesday, November 14 at 7 pm. Come out in support of your Community Centre and offer your ideas and input. This is the only facility left in our area and it belongs to the community for all to use and enjoy.

Hunters breakfasts start on Saturday, October 27 and will continue until Saturday, December 1, the last day of deer hunting season. This is our most popular fundraiser. Breakfast starts at 8 am and goes until 11 am. You don't have to be a hunter to enjoy this country treat. Thank you to the Great Village Legion for offering to loan us their equipment to run our breakfasts. We were able to replace our losses.

Card parties are held on Monday nights at 7 pm. A light lunch is served. Our monthly meetings are held on the first Sunday of each month at 7 pm. The next one to be held on November 4. Everyone is welcome.

For hall rentals please contact Amanda Langille at 668-2300.