

The early August Prospectors Street Party drew a large crowd to Parrsboro's Main Street. Many sidewalk vendors, antique cars and trucks, entertainment and plenty of motorcycles keep the large crowds busy throughout the evening.

(Lawrence R. Nicoll Photo)



The HIGHWAYMEN & Friends



Old Wentworth Valley Schoolhouse

By Hope Bridgewater

The Old Wentworth Valley Schoolhouse still exists after 112 years! Incredible! Yes, it still exists, but only due to the many years of volunteer work in maintenance and repair by the descendants of its students and friends after the one-room school for grades one to eleven officially closed in 1958. It was built in 1903 by Alexander Munroe for \$540, and it still stands on the same lot with two-seated desks for students still inside for seating. In 1959 the Community Hall Association was formed to buy the school building and use it as a community hall (a Rifle Club and Ski Club sessions) and kept doing many renovations and repairs. The Community Hall Association changed its legal name to Friends of the Old Valley School House, did more maintenance and repairs: painting, deck waterproofing, building a storage shed, door repairing, floor scrubbing, window washing, firewood stacking, making new steps, installing curtains, nearby forest clearing, landscaping, grass

mowing, snow plowing, and erosion protection from a nearby brook. I list all these things to show that if this maintenance was not done, the school would have been swallowed up by the woods nearby.

Then, in 2010 with government grants and local fund-raising by the Friends the following necessary renovations were done: a new wheelchair accessible ramp, a new well and water system, a new septic system, a new foundation, a kitchen with stove, sinks, refrigerator, cupboards, two toilets, and a storage room. One clapboard from the old woodshed with the names of students attending at that time scribbled in their own handwriting has been placed in the new kitchen wall as a memory from the past. The miracle of volunteering with a passion and hard work makes each annual reunion of the Old Valley Schoolhouse a joy with the blending of the past with the present.

In 2015 the Friends of the Old Valley Schoolhouse need recognition and praise for all their work: Andy Hunt, Shannon Letcher, Carol Hyslop, Doris Letcher, Norah and Chris Topping, Butch and Debi Atkinson, Debbie and Harold Barclay, Bobby and Francie Hunt, Howard Waugh, and Ernest Wood.

The Reunion/Open House on August 1, 2015, began at 10 am with a three hour hike up to High Head, the tallest peak in this area of the Cobequid Mountains and led by Andy Hunt, Harold Barclay, and Howard Waugh who guided six brave people who signed up (unfortunately, I do not have their names). At 2 pm the program began at the school with Carol Hyslop and Debbie Barclay signing people in and required for admission a dona-

tion for the planned auction. Hyslop and Barclay also had 50/50 tickets, raffle tickets for a basket, and door prizes.

Out in the beautiful environment of the back yard with its greenery all around, its sunshine, blue sky, and a nearby brook, the skilled and enthusiastic auctioneer Bob Lafrance had a full table and area loaded with many fantastic items to sell to an interested crowd gathered on outdoor seating. As one young man, Jonathan Saulnier, said, "The auctioneer was very professional, entertaining, and energetic. Good Work!"

Games available on another section of the large yard were washer toss, tennis ball game and croquette.

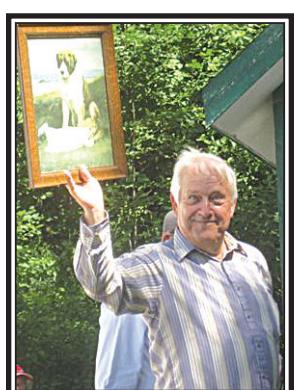
After the successful auction, an outdoor barbecue was set up in yet another part of the yard. Wilson's Home Heating, sent free of charge, was available for the cooking at the barbecue. The outdoors with the air full of the smell of tasty food made people even more hungry as they lined up for the menu selections: barbecued chicken, hamburgers, hot dogs, pasta salad, potato salad, KFC coleslaw, strawberry shortcake with homemade biscuits and whipped cream, bottled water, coffee, tea and pop. All delicious! Some people took their food inside the school to eat and others found places to eat outdoors. Volunteer workers cooking and serving the barbecue menu were Joanne Ferdinand, Stephen Ferdinand, Justin Ferdinand, Ben Ferdinand, and Jordan Sprague.

Entertainment throughout the afternoon and evening consisted of talented volunteer musicians: Arden Hayman (violin) and Carol Hanson (piano); Larry Hunt (guitar and vocals), Laverne Webb and Norma

Moore (guitars and vocals), and Shannon Letcher (guitar and vocals).

During the evening, Carol Hyslop gave out prizes: the 50/50 prize was won by Doris Conway; the raffle for the Basket was won by Doreen Barclay Black; the second raffle prize was won by Donna Brown (a book about Don Messer); and third raffle prize was won by WeeWana Sprague (a hat and cd's); several door prizes were won (names not recorded).

The Old Wentworth Valley Schoolhouse has been designated as a Heritage School, and, as a symbol representing the hundreds of one-room schools of the past, it belongs to all of Nova Scotia as well as to the Wentworth community.



Robert Lafrance, a skilled and enthusiastic auctioneer, sells a beautiful painting at the auction being held at the Old Wentworth Valley Schoolhouse. (Bridgewater)

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