



# The Old Train Station News

This old railway station was once, without a doubt, one of the most interesting gathering places in Antigonish what with the comings and goings of people from all over the town and county. The arrival of the railway in 1879 opened up a whole new world for the local residents as well as folks from the outlying communities. In fact, this very station was the community's most important link with the outside world. While the coming of the railway provided growth and new markets, it also presented a means of escape for sons and daughters, not to mention entire families, looking for a better way of life. Indeed, the railway arrived at an opportune moment - a time when many were looking to escape the downturn in the local economy. In but a short few years, thousands left this station for western Canada or the greener pastures of the Boston States. It was from this station, too, that soldiers ventured off to fight on the battlefields of Europe. For the young, adventurous youth of Antigonish, this station was a window to the great world of opportunity that lay beyond. Think of the countless sad partings, not to mention, the many joyful reunions right here, down by the tracks. If only the walls of this old station could speak!

Things have quietened down somewhat since the heyday of the railway era. Today, activity of a different nature transpires at the museum. Indeed, this beautiful old building is a friendly gathering place for local history buffs, genealogists, historians, and students of all ages. Jocelyn Gillis, the curator, bustles about her daily activities, all the while chatting with one inquisitive visitor or another. Many do not know that this quiet little corner of the East End of Main Street houses thousands of artifacts, books, and collections as well as countless tidbits of local history and it is these little snippets of information brought in by the locals and visitors alike that make this place so interesting and this community so alive.

I, too, am one of the regulars who frequent the museum looking for little scraps of information to add to my growing collection of the history of our community of Maryvale. My husband and children are direct descendants of one of the early families who settled the valley almost two hundred years ago. Is that, in itself, not enough reason to be interested in the history of your home community? Some time ago, while chatting with Jocelyn, I suggested that we share our fascinating little world with others in the community and so we decided to start a newsletter that will keep interested readers up-to-date with the comings and goings at the museum. In it we will post a list of up-coming events informing you of what is new and maybe show you what some of the regulars are researching. Everyone has a story and every story is interesting. I hope you'll stop by on a regular basis.



Until the next time, *Catherine MacGillivray*

## UP COMING EVENTS

**The Garden Club Annual Plant Sale** will be held on May 16, 2009 from 10 a.m. until noon. Proceeds are in support of the museum. Volunteers will be needed for this event.

In celebration of 100 years of **Nursing in Nova Scotia**, a tea will be held at the Antigonish Heritage Museum as part of their festivities. Date to be announced.

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### Clan MacLean Gathering

May 15, 16 and 17, 2009

Welcoming all MacLeans and friends of MacLeans!

#### Guest Speakers:

Rob Dunbar: "Bard MacLean"

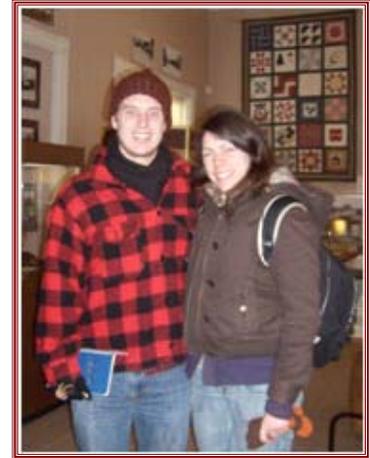
Dr. Michael Linkletter: "A. Sinclair MacLean's Character & Teaching Skills"

Dr. Ken Neilson: "D. M. Sinclair"

Don't miss the dedication of the MacLean Cairn of the Dinner at KMC

For further information contact Fiona MacLean at [fionamaclean@eastlink.ca](mailto:fionamaclean@eastlink.ca)

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St. F.X. students, Colby and Hilary, from Claire Fawcett's Anthropology of Tourism class, recently visited the Museum.

## NOTICES

**Wanted:** Anyone renovating their kitchen? The museum is looking for an upper cupboard for storage.

**To Give Away:** Anyone interested in old windows? Early bird gardeners could certainly use them for their spring cold frames (74 x 29 and 74 x 34; Panes 2 over 2). Please give Jocelyn a call

**Going High Tech:** With financial assistance from the Antigonish Garden Club (\$250.00), the museum was recently able to purchase a projector B just one more way to present our collection of artifacts and photographs. Thank you to our friends at the Garden Club!

## LOCAL RESEARCHER

**Yvonne Maas** of Pleasant Valley is an avid genealogist who has made a considerable contribution to the local community with her work researching and recording her Scottish and Irish family roots. The name "Maas" belies the fact that Yvonne is, in fact, an Antigonisher who can trace her ancestors back to their early settlement in the local community more than two hundred years ago. Yvonne's husband, Francis, is of Dutch descent; needless to say, their four almost-grown children have inherited a varied and most interesting ancestry. A busy wife and mother, as well as a passionate gardener, Yvonne spends any free time collecting historical facts, photographs, and tidbits of information to add to her growing collection of local history. To date she has compiled a significant amount of data on her father's "Charleston" MacDonalds and "Loddy" MacDonalds as well as her mother's Maryvale/Lakevale MacDonalds. She has worked on her maternal grandmother's Floyds, the Boyds from Upper South River as well as the MacDougall's from Rear Doctor's Brook. It is folks like Yvonne who keep our local history alive.

**NEXT ISSUE** Antigonish has long been known for its use of nicknames to identify individuals with common surnames. In our next issue we will explore this old Highland practice of naming.