2011-2012

Concert to benefit centers

by Richard MacKenzie

It may not necessarily be, as the Beach Boys sang, *Rock in Roll to the Dance* but it's music helping out a worthy cause.

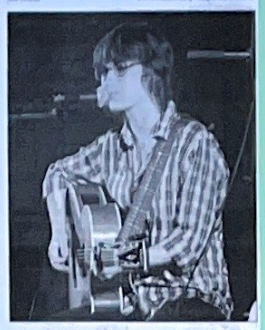
On Oct. 26, community partners and local musicians are uniting together to hold a fundraising concert in support of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) and the Men's Health Centre (MHC).

The concert will take place from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the Bauer Theatre and will feature a line-up that includes, Andrew Stalker, Allan Best, Betsy MacDonald, Brad Collins, Ed Thomson, Jason Sprackin, Joanne Borchard, Katie Jackson, Lenny Moore, Lisa Halpert, Molly Thomson, Mike Matchie, Shoemaik MacLeod and Terry Grady and Family.

Nancy MacDonald, director of family services of Eastern Nova Scotia which became the MHC and is a key community partner, talked about the work of the MHC and the concert.

"The MHC provides holistic health services and supports males 14 years old and up," MacDonald said. "This is the first and only men's health centre in the province. The benefit concert will help raise awareness of the centre, increase information sessions for men and provide emergency transportation between services."

Nancy MacDonald



Molly Thomson is part of an impressive line-up of musicians ready to perform at a fundraising concert for the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) and the Men's Health Centre (MHC) Oct. 26. (File photo)

"With support from and together with our community, we will continue to work for social and mental justice, justice for peace for a safe and healthy world in which all are valued, cared for and treated equally for our participation and our commencing," Harper said.

Tickets for the event are purchased at Brendan's Breakaway [illegible] AWRC [illegible]

AWRC executive director Lucille Harper spoke about how the community helps the centre for rent and provide emergency transportation between services.

Making the Connection: Hypersexualization and Violence against Women and Girls

FREE WORKSHOP

- February 29, People's Place Library, 9:30 am - 4:00 pm
- To register, RSVP to swc.awrc@ns.sympatico.ca by February 15
- Presented by the Resisting Violence Project Antigonish Women's Resource Centre

Visible commitment to end violence

Congratulations to the men of Antigonish who organized, supported and walked in the First Annual Respect for Women March. You sent a very powerful message to your sons, fathers, brothers, friends and colleagues that violence against women is not acceptable in our world. Thank you for offering a vision for a society in which women and girls are treated with respect and dignity.

Brief moments worth remembering are those of us who were a very supportive and safe environment for survivors of violence and abuse. We were able to offer a place where they could be heard, be believed, be supported and be validated. We were able to offer information and referrals to other agencies and services. We were able to offer a place where they could be with other women and girls who are going through the same experiences. We were able to offer a place where they could be with their sisters, mothers, mothers, sisters, friends and colleagues.

We know that most men are committed to women and girls being safe and free from violence. The league of Women Men's Committee and partnership with Antigonish Women's Resource Centre is a clear sign of men's commitment to ending violence against women and girls.

I appreciate all the speaking, making your commitment clear and your being a role model for youth.

Lucille Harper
Executive Director Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association

AWRC hosts annual meeting

by Richard MacKenzie

The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) wrapped up their annual general meeting (AGM) June 16 with a dynamic guest speaker and a few musical numbers.

The tunes were provided by the Wandering Minstrels while words were courtesy of Katherine Reed.

Reed talked about research she did and compiled into a presentation titled *How Could This Happen? The Exclusion of Low-Income Single Mothers from University in Nova Scotia*.

"I did research to look into how it happened. In 2001 in Nova Scotia, that government policies of the day singled out low-income, single parents and barred their access to university. Not college, not university," Reed said, summarizing her subject matter.

"For the first time in Canada, since the key day of social programs in the 1960s, we had one group in society that was being told, 'everybody else can go to university and become professionals but you only have college as such as an option. You can only do training or work.'

"I thought that was extraordinary so I looked into how that could have happened. What were they thinking? Why would people write social policy that would discriminate, so clearly against what was 50 percent a female group in society?"

Reed's general conclusion is that it was policy being made by people out-of-touch with the situation they were making decisions on.

In her presentation, she broke it down into more precise language.

"There was more of a commitment to equality of access to post-secondary education," she wrote, as one of her findings.

"The absence of the perspective of low-income single mothers throughout the debates and in the other documents analysed, logically seemed to lead to policies that could not address the [illegible] the same kinds of assumptions of people," Reed said. "For example it's good to force the mothers of children, as young as one year of age, into full time work.

"Even when they're very poor and don't have the supports to place that a higher income family would have."

Reed added that it's often very hard and low-paying work as well.

"And that's supposed to be good for that family?" she asked rhetorically.

AWRC executive director Lucille Harper, in commenting on Reed's presentation, talked about what she feels should be supported.

"It's not every single mom in Nova Scotia who can go to university who is able to go to university but for those single moms who need social assistance in order to survive, we should be fully supporting their goal for university because there is a huge chance of income because they've completed a degree," Harper said.

Reed said she was grateful for the chance to present at the conclusion of the AGM, noting it's good for a researcher to have immediate feedback.

"[illegible] that it does in, you show off your ideas and then reflect off your ideas and [illegible]," Reed said.

"It really gives you some ideas and a lot of other questions and it would be important to expand your thinking [illegible] Finally, you also engage a lot of people who've [illegible] what you've had to [illegible]."

With the Wandering Minstrels performing in the background, guest speaker Katherine Reed (right) chats with Marie Brumble. Reed spoke at the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre's annual general meeting June 16. (Richard MacKenzie photo)

Workshop provides activism skill

by Richard MacKenzie

[illegible]

AWRC to start financial program

[illegible] "financial literacy" may seem new to many but it's, in today's financial climate, a term people will be hearing more and more.

Statistics released by the credit rating agency Transunion shows Canadians on average owe just under $22,000 from lines of credit, credit cards and auto loans.

In an effort to help those who find themselves overwhelmed by debt or other financial concerns, the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) is setting up a program regarding financial literacy.

Having been awarded a TD Financial Literacy Grant, given by Social and Enterprise Development Innovations (SEDI), the AWRC is first going to be visiting different communities in the area and connecting with people who could benefit from the program as well as businesses or institutions who may have resources and information to help the program's goals.

"We'll try and address (financial literacy) from both the individual needs, trying to inform people about financial literacy and provide space for them to ask questions, and also work with institutions in our various communities to [illegible] how can we better support people who are living on very low income and on strained circumstances," AWRC executive director Lucille Harper said.

Harper and Tara Sutherland is the AWRC staff person who will be doing a lot of the gathering of information and resources during the summer months.

"She will also be putting together some resources for people so that people will have an information package, as well as being able to do some of the problem solving."

Harper noted the AWRC does a lot of work around poverty.

"It (poverty) has many different faces in the community and what we see is, women and their families experience poverty at different stages of their lives," she said. "It's really difficult to negotiate it."

These difficult negotiations can leave people vulnerable to items like high interest credit cards, which can add to a person's financial troubles, Harper added.

"And other they (people who find themselves in trouble) don't know what they can ask for at their financial institutions," she said. "Are they at a financial institution that can perhaps offer lower interest rates? Are they with a financial institution which does have some small loans that are made available to people living in strained circumstances?"

As for local circumstances which can be part of financial difficulties, Harper talked about some of the aspects they see at the AWRC.

"What we see here is, one, there is not a lot of employment in the area that is well paid employment," she said. "So a lot of people we see living in difficult economic circumstances are working, but they're working in low paying, part-time, insecure jobs."

Harper also noted the fact Antigonish is a university town with no public transportation system as a factor.

"A university [illegible] pressure on housing is significant and increase price of housing," she said. "[illegible] housing in town is exp[illegible] and it's cheaper if you live in the county but, we [illegible] public transportation, you have to get to the grocery st[illegible]."

Harper talked about demographics such as people with disabilities who tend to live on low income and difficult financial situations, seniors on fixed incomes and students graduating with the burden of a heavy student loan.

"And of course social assistance is completely inadequate to cover the costs of daily life," she added. "So someone living on social assistance is living significantly below the low income cut-off line. As low as in the range of $7,000 a year, if you're a single person."

Harper anticipates people from all these sectors could benefit from the financial literacy program they're putting together.

"(We'll) take advantage of the fact it's the summer [illegible] and there are a lot of events for us to g[illegible] people aware the [illegible] is happening," [illegible] should set up [illegible] fall where we can just come in and roll it out."

"*It (poverty) has many different faces in the community and what we see is, women and their families experience poverty at different stages of their lives.*"

— Lucille Harper

AWRC broader focus for violence against women event

by Corey LeBlanc

The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women takes place Dec. 6.

The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) and Sexual Assault Services Association (SASA) will mark the day of remembrance with a community gathering next Friday (Dec. 6), beginning at 7 p.m. at the CACE Workshop on Harvest in Antigonish.

"We hope to share the message that violence against women is systemic and is linked to the oppressive structures of racism and poverty. We also want to take a critical look at war and militarism and their impact on the lives of women," Betsy MacDonald, Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association counseling violence project co-ordinator, said when asked what message event organizers hope to deliver.

"Finally, we want to encourage all community members to join together to envision and work toward a non-violent world," she added.

MacDonald agreed the [illegible] is an important one [illegible] committee.

"[illegible] provide services [illegible] support to women and adolescent girls. AWRC and SASA is mostly aware of the prevalence of violence against women in all its forms," she said, noting it can include physical, emotional, sexual and structural.

For the gathering will be Rose Julius, Pagtnkek First Nation economic development officer. She is also a member of the Sisters in Spirit campaign.

"She will be speaking about the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women across the country," MacDonald said.

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) launched the national Sisters in Spirit Campaign in March 2005 to raise public awareness of the alarmingly high rates of violence against Aboriginal women in Canada.

At the Antigonish event, MacDonald and Lucille Harper, AWRC and SASA executive director, will share an analysis of militarization and its connection to violence against women.

MacDonald said the Wandering Minstrels will share women positive songs to "facilitate reflection and inspiration," and Kim's Boots, a Pagtnkek based drumming group will honour our lost sisters through singing and drumming.

"These speakers performers share a common thread in highlighting the relationship between justice and peace, which emerges as the event's central theme," MacDonald added.

She agreed it is important for people to remember that the event is a community gathering.

"It is important that all community members recognize that they can be part of the solution to violence against women and girls. Violence is everybody's issue, and it requires a collective response on the part of decision-makers, educators, community leaders, youth, and all concerned citizens.

"As a community with deep roots in social justice and co-operative traditions, we have the potential to enact real and lasting change," MacDonald said.

Noting that the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women originated as a day to remember the 14 women - engineering students at Ecole Polytechnique - who were murdered solely because they were women in a 1989 shooting, MacDonald said the Antigonish event will broaden its focus.

"This year we will be honouring all women who have lost their lives to violence, especially in our own community. Until we see an end to violence against women, events like this will be important as spaces for remembering and committing to take action," she said.

One of the guest speakers

March sends strong message

On May 31 I participated in the Antigonish March in Respect for Women. March in respect for women? Respect for women? Respect for women?

2011-2012

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"The benefit concert will help raise awareness of the centre, increase information sessions for men and provide emergency transportation between services."
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AWRC broader focus for violence against women event

by Corey LeBlanc

Group raising awareness of sexual assaults

March sends strong message

Funding for affordable housing plan

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-Lucille Harper

Herrera to speak on violence against women

Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association

Upcoming Events ...

Dealing with Depression for Young Women:
Information session October 6
- For young women looking for support on dealing with depression

Journal Writing Workshop Series:
October 18, October 25, November 1
- Marjorie Riders support women through writing exercises, encouraging self discovery and personal expression

Women and Anger:
October 29, November 2, 8, & 15
- Develop tools to manage your anger and reduce stress

Limited space. To pre-register or for more information call 863-6121
All AWRC & SASA events are free

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Heather Gunn	Vivian Hamilton
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Donna MacDonald	Janet MacDonald
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Paula Cameron	Poverty Reductions Project Coordinator
Emily Gosse	Summer Student
Jillian Hennick	Summer Student
Tiffany Hargreaves	Summer Student

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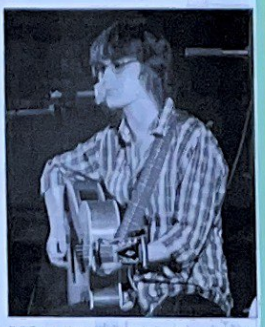

Molly Thomson is part of an impromptu line-up of musicians ready to perform at a fundraising concert for the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) and the Men's Health Centre (MHC) Oct. 28. (File photo)

Joanne Burchard, Katie Jamieson, Leroy Moore, Lisa Hallett, Molly Thomson, Mike Meichan, Rhonnah McLeod and Terry Grady and Bernie

Nancy MacDonald, director of family services of Eastern Nova Scotia which houses the MHC and is a key community partner, talked about the work of the MHC and the concert.

"The MHC provides holistic health services and supports males 15 years old and up," MacDonald said. "This is the first and only men's health centre in the province. The benefit concert will be [illegible] awareness of [illegible] barriers."

AWRC executive director Lucille Harper spoke about how the concert helps the centre.

"With support from and together with our volunteering we will continue to work for social and emotional justice, for people live a safe and healthy world in which all are valued, cared for and supported equally for our [illegible] and our communities," Harper said.

Tickets for the event are purchased at [illegible] Scotiabank [illegible] AWRC [illegible]

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The issues were presented by the Wandering Minstrels while words were sung by Katherine Reed.

Reed talked about research she did and compiled into a presentation titled *How Could This Happen? The Evolution of Low-Income Single Mothers from University to Non-Issue.*

"I did research to look into how it happened, in 2011 in Nova Scotia, that government policies of the day singled out low-income, single parents and barred their access to university but college, but university," Reed said, summarizing her subject matter.

"For the first time in Canada, since the hey-day of social programs in the 1960s, we had one group in society that was being told, 'everybody else can go to university and become professionals but you only have college or work on-or-option. You can only do training or work.'

"I thought that was extraordinary so I looked another that could have happened. What were they thinking? Why would people write social policy that would discriminate, so directly against what was 40 percent a female group in society?"

Reed's general conclusion is that it was policy being made by people out of touch with the situation they were making decisions on.

In her presentation, she broke it down into more precise language.

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"The absence of the perspective of low-income single mothers throughout the debates and in the other documents analysed, logically seemed to lead to policies that [illegible]

[illegible] Reed said. "For example it's good to have the mothers of children, as young as one year of age, into full time work.

"Every week they're sent back and don't have the supports in place that a higher income family would have."

Reed added that it's often very hard and low-paying work as well.

"And that's supposed to be good for that family?" she asked rhetorically.

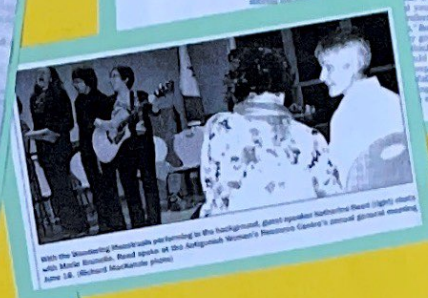
AWRC executive director Lucille Harper, in commenting on Reed's presentation, talked about what she feels should be supported.

"It's not every single mom in Nova Scotia who can go to university, who is able to go to university but for those single moms who need some assistance in order to survive, we should be fully supporting their goal for university because there is a huge chance of women because they're very motivated," Harper said.

Reed said she was grateful for the chance to present at the conclusion of the AGM, noting it's good for a researcher to have [illegible] feedback.

"What it does is, you shop your ideas and then [illegible] off your time and [illegible]," Reed said.

"It gives you more ideas [illegible] of other questions [illegible] would be important to [illegible] expand your thinking [illegible] daily you also expand [illegible] of people who've [illegible] what you've had to [illegible]



With the Wandering Minstrels performing in the background, guest speaker Katherine Reed (right) chats with Marie Reardon. Reed spoke at the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre's annual general meeting June 18. (Richard MacKenzie photo)

AWRC to start financial program

"It (poverty) has many different faces in the community and what we see is, women and their families experience poverty at different stages of their lives."
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gathering of information and resources during the summer months.

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Harper noted the AWRC does a lot of work around poverty.

"It (poverty) has many different faces in the community and what we see is, women and their families experience poverty at different stages of their lives," she said. "It's really difficult to negotiate it."

"Those difficult negotiations can leave people vulnerable to items like high interest credit cards, which can add to a person's financial troubles, Harper added.

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which does have some small loans that are made available to people living in strained circumstances?"

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Harper also noted the fact Antigonish is a university town with no public transportation system as a factor.

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Harper anticipates people from all these sectors could benefit from the financial literacy program they're putting together.

"We'll take advantage of the fact it's the [illegible] and focus on [illegible] events for us to [illegible] people aware that [illegible] is happening," she said. "We should set up [illegible] fall where we can [illegible] and it out."

AWRC broader focus for violence against women event

by Corey Leblanc

The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women takes place Dec. 6.

The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) and Sexual Assault Services Association (SASA) will mark the day of remembrance with a community gathering and walk Dec. 6, beginning at 7 p.m. at the CACL Working on Wellness.

"We hope to share the message that violence against women is epidemic and is linked to the oppressive structures of racism and poverty. We want to take a critical look at war and militarism and their impact on the lives of women," Remy MacDonald, Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association outreach violence against women co-ordinator, said when asked what message event organizers hope to deliver.

"Finally, we want to encourage all community members to join together to [illegible] and work towards a safer world," she added.

MacDonald agreed the [illegible] is an important one [illegible] communities.

[illegible] provide services [illegible] support to women and [illegible] girls, AWRC and SASA is acutely aware of the prevalence of violence against women in all its forms," she said, noting it can include physical, emotional, sexual and structural.

For the gathering will be Rose Julien, Pictonian First Nations economic development officer. She is also a member of the Sister's In Spirit campaign.

"She will be speaking about the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women across the country," MacDonald said.

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) launched the national Sisters in Spirit Campaign in March 2005 to raise public awareness of the alarmingly high rates of violence against Aboriginal women in Canada.

At the Antigonish event, MacDonald said Lucille Harper, AWRC and SASA executive director, will share an analysis of militarism and its connection to violence against women.

MacDonald said the Wandering Minstrels will show women positive songs in "feminism reflection and inspiration," and Eyes Boys, a Pictonian-based drumming group, will honour our lost sisters through singing and drumming.

"These spoken performances share a common thread in highlighting the relationship between violence and peace, which emerges as the event's central theme," MacDonald added.

Noting that the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women originated as a day to remember the 14 women — engineering students at Ecole Polytechnique — who were murdered solely because they were women in a 1989 shooting, MacDonald told the Antigonish event will broaden its focus.

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"As a community with deep roots in social justice and co-operative traditions, we have the potential to exert real and lasting change," MacDonald said.

March sends strong message

Michelle Roach
Executive Director
National Society for Victims of Family Violence
Antigonish

Group raising awareness of sexual assaults

Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association

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- Develop tools to manage your anger and reduce stress

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All AWRC &SASA events are free

Funding for affordable housing plan

Work on environmentally and economically sustainable housing in the region received a boost from the Rural Communities Foundation and its Rural Innovation Fund.

On Sept. 8, it was announced the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre (AWRC) and Sexual Assault Services Association (SASA), in cooperation with the Antigonish Poverty Reduction Coalition, received $48,873 to produce an action plan to develop environmentally and economically sustainable housing for low income community members.

"One of the first things we want to do is go back and review the work that has been done in the community on affordable housing," AWRC and SASA executive director Lucille Harper said.

"And work with multi-sector panel (also) on local housing needs and assets. Put together a five year community action plan that will help us design, delivery and put in place affordable housing in Antigonish."

The focus of the work comes mostly from the Antigonish Poverty Reduction Coalition, Harper said, noting that as they address needs, housing comes up time and time again.

"There is not only a need [illegible] housing units but also in the county for different types of affordable, sustainable housing," Harper said. "For example, one of the things that people have talked about in different communities in the real desire to keep their seniors in their communities and that is a whole part of [illegible] are older.

"They've been inefficient as we see an opportunity in building affordable housing to build housing that is affordable over the long term and making it not only green and sustainable but very low efficient."

Harper said looking at different models in one already is a good way to develop a plan and one of those models may be social enterprise (applying capitalistic strategies to achieving philanthropic goals).

"It's definitely an interesting model where we're looking at building housing and continuing, slowly over the years, to try and expand that in response to the needs of various parts of our town and country."

Harper said one of the positives in developing the plan are that there is already a lot of expertise in the community on housing.

She said AWRC and SASA is pleased to have Katherine Reed heading the project.

"She has a wealth of information and experience on housing as do people in the community who have worked with us in the past on affordable housing," Harper said.

"We have some really good models as well in St. Andrews and other areas and parts of the province and country for us to looking for and wide of models and also looking close to home for the expertise to get it going."

"We're looking for and wide at models and also looking close to home for the expertise to get it going."
-Lucille Harper

affordable housing that we don't necessarily put under that label. But it's another piece we want to look at and talk with communities about and say 'how can we do this?'"

Harper also talked the environmental goals and about how they tie into affordability.

"We want to make it (housing) as green and heat efficient as possible," she said.

"What we see, and are very clearly not only through the women's centre but also with the Antigonish Emergency Fuel Fund, is the fact that people really have difficulty heating their homes and part of the reason for that is a lot of the

Herrera to speak on violence against women

On Thursday, March 6, the Antigonish Breaking the Silence Guatemala solidarity group is hosting a discussion about the committee of violence against women in Guatemala, and what social justice activists, and solidarity networks are doing to stop this targeted violence.

The talk and discussion starts at 6:30 p.m. at the Antigonish Women's Centre, 2nd floor, Kirk building.

Norma Herrera, co-ordinator of the Non-violence and Peace-building Program at the National Union of Guatemalan Women, will be the speaker. Herrera's program works to prevent and eradicate violence against women in a country ravaged by war.

During the decade-long genocide, Herrera's organization worked in exile, trying to bring world attention to the events in her country.

She is an experienced advocate for human rights. In addition to her work with the National Coalition Against Violence Against Women, Herrera is a [illegible] and has [illegible] advanced studies into issues of security and the role and participation of women.

Herrera is visiting Antigonish as part of her tour of Maritime communities, hosted by Breaking the Silence.

For information, contact Wynne at [illegible] or Jackie at [illegible] gmail.com.

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