

It is beginning to look a lot like our favourite time of year



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Season's Greetings!

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New Richmond High School hosts Christmas concert

Wendy Dawson

NEW RICHMOND: - During the afternoon of December 14, the primary students and staff of New Richmond High School hosted a Christmas concert for friends and parents of the students. Originally scheduled for the evening of December 13, bad weather forced a cancellation. Despite the change in schedule, the gym was almost full of spectators. Students from kindergarten to grade six performed a variety of songs and skits including classics such as *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* and more modern takes such as *Hip Hop Reindeer*. Door prizes donated by a variety of businesses from Cascapedia-St-Jules were drawn and the graduating class used the opportunity to raise funds for their year-end trip with both a bake sale and gift draw. It was a happy launch into the Christmas season!



Photos: Darlene Dimock



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 holiday season
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**Thank you for your
 valued patronage!**

Yes Virginia.....there is a Santa Claus

Wendy Dawson

NEW RICHMOND: - One thing is certain, for those of us that celebrate Christmas, the existence of Santa Claus is undeniable from our very first realization of his magic until the age of 8. From ages 8 to about 11, that belief wanes, until it is reborn again at around the age 12 until we see through our final Christmas.

The young mind is a sharp mind, and so of course logic forces its way through the whimsy and begins to create doubt when a child begins to wonder how can Santa possibly make his way to the home of everyone in 24 short hours? How can he be ageless? Flying reindeer, really? And how, exactly, can one person eat so many cookies?

Sinterklaas (as Santa Claus is known in some parts of the world) apparently comes from Turkey and seems to have appeared sometime in the third century. He was originally called Nicolas the Miracle-worker because he is said to have saved a town from starvation and was generous with the poor, placing coins and gifts in the shoes that people left outside their homes. It is said that he eventually moved to Spain, but where and why is a little unclear. While in Spain, Sinterklaas began to keep notes in a large red book (probably his original naughty and nice list) and he began to travel about on a dapple grey horse named Amerigo – his helpers in Spain, called the Pieten, helped him deliver presents through the chimney. While those are his origins, Santa Claus, has many forms and many traditions around the world. In Denmark, Julemanden (Christmas Man) travels by reindeer and works



Francis Pharcellus Church
courtesy of Newseum

with elves. In Poland, Swiety Mikolag (St. Nicholas) works with other gift givers including Gwiazdor (the Starman) – who will beat bad little children with a birch-rod! In Iceland, mischievous little boys called Jolasveinarnir come down from the mountains to leave gifts for children in the shoes that they leave on their windowsill. Naughty children will get a potato and a note that tells them to be good.

Growing up, Santa Claus came to my house on Christmas Eve and we would leave him a beer, some cookies and carrots for the reindeer. In our home there was no naughty list, but there was Black Peter, a blacked caped, grey bearded man who delivered coal, although thankfully, he never had to come to our house.

At about the age of 8, when I questioned the existence of Santa Claus, my dad felt the best way to deal with my question was with a letter – a letter written by an Editor of New York's "Sun" newspaper. This letter was a response to an enquiry that had been sent to the Editor by an 8-year-old girl named Virginia O'Hanlon – the exchange took place in 1897 and has stood the test of time. Unsigned when it was published, the letter was the



Virginia O'Hanlon courtesy
of Newseum

work of a journalist named Francis Pharcellus Church and is among one of the most reproduced newspaper items of all time. It has stayed with me always, and for those that are not familiar with the exchange, what better place than to share it than in a newspaper! Wishing you all a magical Christmas.

DEAR EDITOR: I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.' Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus? VIRGINIA O'HANLON. 115 WEST NINETY-FIFTH STREET.

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as cer-

tainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished. Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see.

Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, VIRGINIA, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

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*To all our residents
best wishes for this
holiday season and
health, peace and happiness
for the new year!*

Spec's Spectacular Christmas Quiz - ANSWERS

Hope you enjoyed testing yourself and researching the answers you did not know. Congratulations! You are a winner for even trying to answer the questions!

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Jacob Marley. | 14. Blitzen |
| 2. The Grinch. | 15. The Nutcracker is the most well known Christmas ballet. |
| 3. Pacific Ocean or Indian Ocean | 16. 'Underneath the mistletoe last night.' |
| 4. White Christmas by Bing Crosby is still the best selling Christmas song. (According to the Guinness book of World Records.) | 17. He says, "Bah, Humbug." |
| 5. Brenda Lee was rockin' around the Christmas tree. | 18. Traditionally Santa had 8 reindeer. They are Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donder, and Blitzen. Rudolph was not added until the 20th century. |
| 6. Rudolph is not mentioned in 'Twas the Night Before Christmas. | 19. We Three Kings of Orient Are |
| 7. Elvis sang about a Blue Christmas. | 20. Cabbage Patch Dolls |
| 8. A Christmas carol was first published in 1843. | 21. Kevin |
| 9. There were eight maids-a-milking. | 22. Christmas (December 25) is day # 359. |
| 10. Bing sang about a White Christmas. | 23. Not once. St. Nicholas/St. Nick is mentioned four times. |
| 11. Vixen. | 24. Tiny Tim |
| 12. Two Front Teeth! | 25. \$46 for a full year of reading, information, analysis, stories, politics, humour, recipes, contests, items for sale, events and more! |
| 13. You should kiss. | |

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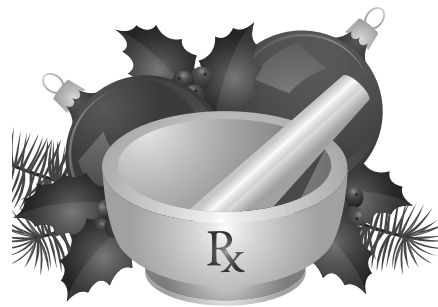
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and employees

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Santa and Tree Lighting Day

Elaine Sexton

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: - The annual tree lighting ceremony and Santa Day was once again a success, with more than 30 children attending. It was a nice, mild day, so Mr. and Mrs. Claus had no trouble arriving with their faithful pilot Jim Geraghty.

Many people helped make the event a success including the cute couple; Nikki Snow-Legouffe and Daryk Legouffe, the elves, Darlene Sexton, Sarah Nellis and her friend Emma (all the way from Australia!)

This year Linda Leblanc did face painting, and from CASA, Juliana Beebe and Tracy Major, had beautiful crafts and donated Christmas books to all the children. A truly wonderful gesture.

To all those who made the delicious cookies, Lena Carroll, Therese Gallant, Shauna Boudreau, Darlene Sexton, and those who set up the hall and tree and helped clean up afterwards your help was greatly appreciated.

Reverend Raymond Kragland attended the event again this year and officially blessed the tree, the community and the children.

The Eagles Club appreciates your support and wishes all of you a wonderful Christmas.

Let's have a round of applause! Yea! Hip Hip Hooray!

Sharon Howell

As a member of The Board of Directors of The SPEC I would like to acknowledge everyone who plays a role in the development, production, and distribution of our treasured English newspaper.

Let me begin by extending to Penny MacWhirter and Joan Imhoff a tremendous thank you for all of their hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm in making sure the paper is prepared, published, vibrant, and viable. They wear many hats and perform impressive and successful juggling routines daily to make sure that our well-respected paper appears each week. In addition to their regular duties they are constantly trying to find ways to initiate more readerships and to seek out more interesting articles for the paper. Most everyone is aware that due to many factors but predominantly financial constraints, there has been a big decline in the publications of newspapers and magazines throughout our country. The SPEC, like many other papers also struggles to stay in print. Penny and Joan are constantly trying to find avenues to keep getting the paper to you.

It is important to also acknowledge the valued contribution of Gilles Gagné for his willingness to cover a story at a moment's notice on top of his regular editorial work. The paper also relies on many others including the journalists: Thierry Haroun, Geneviève Gélina; the regular contributors: Wendy Dawson, Cynthia Dow, Jeanie LeLacheur, and Dianne Skinner Flowers; as well as other writers including Gary Briand in his "Why do we say ...," the Social Notes contributors, Donatien Grenier who is responsible for the Police Report and other individuals who submit very well written and appropriately timed articles.

Appreciation and acknowledgement is also extended to the proofreaders Carol Gilker and Jewell Roy whose attention to detail is a valued skill. Without the valuable assistance of the volunteers: Lee Leggo, Mary-Beth Assels, Ann Hall, and Elaine Almond who label and sort the papers in record time, then the deliverers: Daryl Beebe, Wayne Guignon, Marguerite and Dennis Palmer wouldn't be able to get the paper to you each week.

Each individual is important to the team in the production of the only English newspaper on the Gaspé coast. It is also important to acknowledge the contribution that you, our readers and regular subscribers play in keeping this paper in circulation.

To everyone my family and I wish a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and best wishes for a peaceful, joyous, healthy, and Happy New Year!



30 years of Christmas cheer

Elaine Sexton

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: - The 30th Christmas concert held at the Fifty Plus Club was once again well attended and showed how talented that everyone is. As the performers and audience arrived, they were treated to some hot cider. There was a bit of snow on the ground, so the warmth of the beverage warmed everyone from the cold.

The children once again got the evening under way with a special 30 year welcome poem ending with *Happy Anniversary to Us*, *Jingle Bells*, *Frosty*, *There's a Little Elf* and other fun ones including *The 12 Days of Christmas*. The Sexton Santa's, Jim, and Elaine also had solo performances. The Little River Band had everyone tapping their feet. The children ended the evening with the *ABCs of Christmas* and Santa arrived right on time to give his treats and ask the children what they wanted for Christmas. The door prizes included, two Christmas centrepieces donated by A&R Decorations, and a turkey and gift certificate from IGA, all donated from the Fifty Plus Club. Many helped make the event possible including faithful musicians Elaine Cochrane and Jim Cahill, and singers, Susan Sexton, Mackenzie Tourout and Lena Carroll. Elaine spoke of how this tradition began with the founder of the Club, Charlie Campbell. Delilah Hardy, Dorothy MacWhirter and Linda Hardy decorated. Linda Cahill and the ladies helped with the hot apple cider. To the men who set up, my sidekick Darlene Sexton and all the parents who came out to the practices, my heartfelt appreciation.

Congratulations to all the wonderful young performers. A fantastic job as always.

"I see my own children in many of these songs as they were singing ones that we sang through the 30 years." If you would like to be part of this great tradition write it in your agenda as the new year begins. On behalf of President Russell Campbell, we wish all the best of health and happiness in 2018.

Merry Christmas from the Fifty Plus.



Photo: D. Wellman

Chance Reid enjoyed Santa's visit.

A jolly event

Dawson Wellman

NEW CARLISLE: - On December 10, many people turned out to see Saint Nicholas, good ole Santa Claus at the Legion in New Carlisle. It was a wonderful event! Smiles upon smiles were seen all around during the event. Children received a bag of goodies and a toy of their choice.