



OCTOBER 2020

NAVIGATOR NEWS

Monthly Newsletter of the PEI Community Navigators,
an initiative of CBDC West Prince Ventures

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Maxine Rennie

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Individuals and families who choose to settle in rural PEI offer **incredible value to the communities that they settle**. In each of our numerous communities dotting the coastline or the inland rolling hills of our Island, you'll find a diverse group of community members who settled in PEI or were born as Islanders, **coming together to help each other and create a prosperous and fulfilling life in Rural PEI**.

Message from Maxine Rennie

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | CBDC WESTERN PEI

Happy autumn to all of our readers - new Islanders, community partners and volunteers. Our Navigators are once again sharing stories from their regions about inspiring new residents, community growth, and important individuals & organizations who make our project successful. There are also many community activities taking place in October, and we encourage you to take advantage of all that is happening in rural PEI this month.

~Maxine Rennie

Meet Donna Thompson:

Western Community Navigator Steering Committee Member
and the CAO for the Town of Alberton!

Hello! Good morning! Come on in!

These are the words that greet you as you enter the municipal office of the Alberton Town Hall. One of the many staff members who eagerly await to greet you is none other than the town's CAO, Donna Thompson.

Donna was raised in Brockton, PEI and is a graduate of local high school, Westisle Composite High School. Eventually she settled in Charlottetown, PEI and worked the next 20 years at the Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA/ now known as VAC). Following a career change, Donna found herself coming back "home" again to the Alberton area. She settled back into Alberton and began working on call at the local Canada Post office. Last year, the town's former CAO retired after many decades of service and when Donna saw the position became available, she knew it would be a position she would thrive in.

That was a year ago now, but **Donna feels like she has been in the position much longer with the long list of accomplishments they have been able to achieve over the last year. Donna brings a strong skill set to her position and enjoys her new role very much!**

It can be challenging, but that's what makes it fun! Often times, people feel that town halls may be private entities that only deal with private matters – but this most certainly is not the case in Alberton. **Donna wants people to know that they are open for business, offer many resource & services, and she is there to welcome both long-time and new residents alike.** There are four full-time staff, along with 3-4 part-time staff who are hired each summer.

In closing, we asked Donna: What's your favourite part of the Steering Committee work? ***"I really enjoy the steering committee work as we get to learn and see what others are doing. We need to continue to showcase our region (the West), create a draw to here, and therefore continue to build community together."***



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Western PEI Community Navigator

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Alberton, PEI

Check out what's NEW in Alberton!

- New businesses opening up
- Newly hired recreation director
- New beach volleyball area at the park by the library
- New sidewalks
- New dog park
- New disc golf course
- New wheel chair swing installed at the park by the library (operational in 2021)

We look forward sharing more on the Town of Alberton in a future issue!



Meet Alex Semonov, Owner & Operator



Alex and his family have been calling PEI home for a little over two years now and recently things have gotten more exciting as Alex officially opened his own business: Quality Mechanical, earlier this year.

Born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia, Alex studied big engine repairs for 4 years at a local Marine College and then at the age of 19, he and his family immigrated to Canada. They settled into Toronto, Ontario for much of the next 20 years, where Alex worked in both residential & commercial refrigeration. It was there that he met his wife, now a local nurse practitioner at the Western Hospital, and they started their family before all relocating to Western PEI.

Alex, how's life on PEI? ***"Great! It's small, quiet, and peaceful. I enjoy being able to see the water. There's a lot less traffic. People are friendly; it's easy to integrate and makes friends. As you are heading somewhere on the street, people are sure to greet you or stop and say hello!"***

Alex's father is Captain of an international cargo ship, so it is easy to see where his love of the water comes from!

Alex holds many credentials, with his business focusing on heat pump installations, heat pump cleanings, boilers, gas, piping, furnaces, and hot water tanks. If you have a need when it comes to any of the above, please consider giving Alex a call: (902) 960-1779 or email alex.qualitymechanical@gmail.com.

Alex understands how important word of mouth is in business, so if you have a positive experience, please consider passing it on to your neighbour. We want to congratulate Alex on new business venture and take a moment to say welcome to Alex & his family! We wish you much success as your business continues to grow and you all settle into life in Western PEI.





BUILDING COMMUNITY:

The PEI Community Navigators host its first Steering Committee Meeting for Central PEI!

The Central PEI Community Navigator Project has assembled a **keen group of community volunteers**, and together they will be supporting the needs of new Islanders to the region while building welcoming communities in rural PEI.

Steering Committee members come with **experience and perspectives** related to municipal governance, education, business, faith, recreation, youth, the Indigenous community, government and - very importantly - new residents.

Discussion at this first meeting centered around:

- The **inclusion** of new residents in community activities
- Ways to **address challenges** faced by newcomers
- Opportunities for **info exchange** between new & longtime residents
- The **contribution new residents make** toward growth in our communities.

Stay tuned for news on the committee's short, medium and long term plans for Central PEI.



Thanks so much to the individuals and community representatives involved (with more being added as we move forward)!



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Central PEI Community Navigator

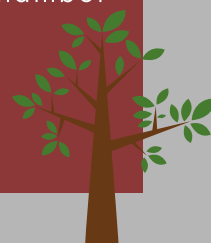
Office: Kensington Town Hall
(upstairs)
55 Victoria Street East



Congratulations to the Town of Kensington and its community partners, who in the last number of weeks have:

- 1) Announced the development of a **new business park**, bringing opportunities for business expansion and growth.
- 2) Dedicated the Murray Christian Centre as an **emergency shelter**.
- 3) Rededicated and enhanced the **John Hogg Kensington Public Forest** in partnership with the Heart of PEI, Chamber of Commerce & funding partners.

Way to grow!



From a dream to reality: The Lipnicki's owe it *all* to the *hall*

Charles & Laura Lipnicki had a dream of a slower pace of life. Working 16 hour days in Ontario, the pair crunched the numbers and decided to speed up their 5 year plan of moving to Prince Edward Island, buying a small farm property, and maintaining a strong quality of living.

After a short trip to PEI to check out a potential property (which turned out to be unsuitable), **they happened across the Wheatley River Hall, and spotted a sign for a pancake breakfast.**

They'd just eaten, but Laura's intuition was telling her they needed to make a stop. Entering the hall as the pancake breakfast was wrapping up, the gracious volunteers happily fired the griddle back up, took the chairs down from the tops of the tables, and served up a delicious dose of breakfast and conversation.

Laura seized the opportunity to quiz the locals about whether there were any farm properties nearby for sale. One man knew of a local woman who was considering selling, and after pancakes were consumed, he personally escorted them to the property. **The rest is history, and today Charles and Laura operate the Island Honey Wine Company in Wheatley River** (near Hunter River), where they sell artisanal mead (honey wine), honey, soap and other Island products.

Laura stresses the importance of a community's hall, which typically hosts pancake breakfasts, craft sales, musical performances, strawberry socials, youth & senior activities, and so many other events that bring neighbours & the community together.

"We love community events." says Laura, and speaks of visits to the community halls of York, Miltonvale, Clinton Hills and others, where they've partaken in community activities. Laura: "We got inspired - and then we were vendors (and began selling their products at local halls). "We are so grateful that we are here. This is a great gift that was given to us."

We'll be sharing more of Charles & Laura's story on the PEI Community Navigator social media channels (including instructions for making Envuelto de Mazorca (corn wraps), a favourite from Laura's birth country of Columbia).



The North Star Arena in North Rustico has been an integral part of the communities it services since it opened in 1971. After operating for 49 years, it is in need of replacement.

It was recently announced that **a new multi-use, year-round facility will be built** and will service the North Star Arena community for the next 50 years. The project consists of replacing the current 50-year-old ice arena with a brand new, high-efficiency, a fully energy-integrated wellness centre that would house an Olympic sized ice surface (200' x 100'), fitness centre, walking track and event centre.

Visit **www.FillTheJar.ca** to learn more about how you can support this community project.



Meet Makan of Sleep Concept!

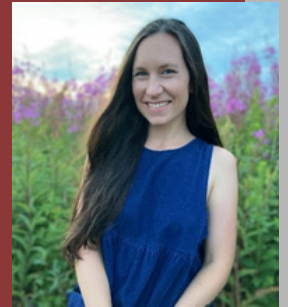


Sleep Concept is located at 518 Main Street, in Montague. In it, you'll find a bright and modern display of mattresses, box springs, headboards, pillows, and bedding. Makan opened the shop on Main Street in the spring of 2019, next to Pigeons Home Décor, after immigrating to Canada from Iran. **After having lived in Switzerland and Dubai, he and his wife, Hoda, decided that Canada was the country best suited for moving their family of four, for a better and brighter future for all.**

Prince Edward Island is known for having great opportunities for immigrants, so he decided he would begin the process of trying to immigrate to our small and mighty province. Before he could immigrate, he planned a trip to meet with local municipalities to determine if his business idea was appropriate for the area. He met with former CAO of Montague, Andrew Dagget, and was approved to apply. He worried that he would have trouble finding a space to rent when he arrived, a year and a half after the interview, but was pleased to secure a great, central location. He said the early days in the shop were slow, but **he made sure to attend community events and approach people to form relationships, something he says is imperative for newcomers.**

I asked Makan what sets him apart from big box stores. He said home delivery and great prices. He often has customers come in, check the prices and then head to Charlottetown to the big box stores. They return soon after, buying their mattresses at Sleep Concept, because Makan's prices are competitive.

Makan believes in community and is happy to share his immigration story. He believes in quality products and quality customer service. Next time you're in need of a mattress, duvet, or ergonomic orthopedic pillows, stop in to Sleep Concept!



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(one day per week)

"For people who really want to immigrate for a better life for their children, Canada is the best option. It's designed for immigrants, you don't feel you're apart from someone else, once you're here - you feel like you're a part of everything."

You have to be open to new things. It is hard in the beginning, when I first arrived, I approached them, they finally started to come to me later on. No one wanted to bother me, unless they felt I was open to them first"

As far as the kids go, how do they feel about the move?

"They love it here, they enjoy everything so far."

~ Makan



Wigwam in Greenwich National Park

If you've travelled to the floating boardwalk at Greenwich National Park recently, you may have noticed something different along the way.



The Mi'kmaq Confederacy of P.E.I. partnered with Parks Canada, to bring a living heritage site to life on the right hand side of the trail.

Mi'kmaq Elder, Junior Peter Paul, of Epekwitk (Abegweit) First Nation, worked hard pulling black spruce roots and harvesting thick swaths of birch bark and trees to build the wikuom, or wigwam, on site. The wikuom is comprised of small trees in a cone shape, overlaid with large sheets of birch bark, and sewn together with the root of black spruce. When asked if it was difficult to 'sew' the birch bark together with a long piece of root, Junior Peter Paul replied that it was quite easy, at least for him.

Wikuom, or wigwam, is a term used to describe a dwelling made of poles and birchbark. The word teepee was never used in Mi'kmaq language, and describes a dwelling covered in animal skin, rather than birchbark. As the Mi'kmaq were often moving from place to place, the wikuoms were quickly disassembled and reassembled, often rebuilt within a day.

Junior Peter Paul said he took three weeks to build his wikuom, but he took his time and enjoyed the process. If you visit the site while Junior Peter Paul is present, you may see other necessities of Mi'kmaq life including a birchbark canoe.

With their close relationship to the land, the Mi'kmaq people are a rich source of knowledge, with a deep culture worth celebrating.

You can visit the wikuom in Greenwich, and another at Skmaqn-Port-la-Joye-Fort Amherst National Historic Site in Rocky Point.



OCTOBER CALENDAR



October 2 - 9 | Sukkot

Commonly called the Feast of Tabernacles; a biblical Jewish holiday celebrated on the 15th day of the seventh month, Tishrei.

October 4 - 10: Fire Prevention Week

This year's theme is "Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!" Learn more about fire prevention at www.nfpa.org.

Saturday, October 10 | World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day is an international day for global mental health education, awareness and advocacy against social stigma. PEI Mental Health and Addictions Information Line: 1-833-533-9333.

Monday, October 12 | Thanksgiving (no school)

Thanksgiving is an annual Canadian holiday, occurring on the second Monday in October, which celebrates the harvest and other blessings of the past year.

Thursday, October 15 | International Day of Rural Women

Women and girls play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of rural households and communities, improving rural livelihoods and overall wellbeing. www.un.org/en/events/ruralwomensday

October 18-24 Small Business Week

Recognizing the resilience of Canadian entrepreneurs. Inquire with your local Chamber of Commerce or CBDC Office regarding local events; or visit site.bdc.ca/sbwevents.

October 19-25 | Waste Reduction Week

Promoting individual and collective environmental efforts and achievements while encouraging new innovative ideas and solutions. www.canada.com

Thursday, October 29 | Mawlid

Mawlid or Mawlid al-Nabi al-Sharif is the observance of the birthday of Islamic prophet Muhammad which is commemorated in Rabi' al-awwal, the third month in the Islamic calendar.

Saturday, October 31 | Halloween

Halloween activities include trick-or-treating, attending Halloween costume parties, carving pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns, lighting bonfires, apple bobbing, visiting haunted attractions, telling scary stories, as well as watching horror films. This year in consideration of COVID-19, trick-or-treating will be permitted on PEI but children should only visit households in their neighbourhood or apartment building with people they know; treats should be placed on a table or other surface that can be easily cleaned and disinfected. Treats should not be taken out of a communal dish.

October is Disability Employment Awareness Month

The inclusion of people with disabilities generates measurable business improvements in performance, innovation, retention, and company image! #DEAM

Fresh Air Fridays

The PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada hosts a free 'Fresh Air Friday' walk every week in a different location (and plans to do this all winter). To sign up for future PEIANC events, visit <https://www.peianc.com>



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Website | www.cbdc.ca/en/resources/contact-cbdc-west-prince-ventures
Like the PEI Community Navigators Facebook Page at
www.facebook.com/PEICommunityNavigators