

Judy Boutilier
Cultural Officer AFN
2012 Report

I have been working out of the Queens County Museum in Liverpool for the past year. In the spring of 2011 AFN and the Queens County Museum formed a partnership to bring our artifacts that are stored at The Nova Scotia Museum in Halifax, back to Queens County. With this partnership we was hoping to build an addition on the museum , so we would have a gallery to showcase our artifacts and have a place to showcase ten thousand year history of our people in this area. The months of January through June were filled with meeting and workgroups with government such as Nova Scotia Tourism and others in talks to bring this project to life. However in July it became clear that we had a big difference on what was important to each of us, so after much deliberation we decided to end this partnership. Our hopes of bringing our artifacts back is still very important and we are going to look at other options when we have some time to think everything through

I am now working out of the Greenfield office and working on some projects with the Region of Queens and the Art and Culture Council in Liverpool. The Art Council in Liverpool is newly formed and they are interested in having a place in Liverpool that will house all our artists and artisans in Queens County. They want to showcase all our different work in this area and help to give all recognition. I will be working with them for the Mi'kmaq art and culture, so it can be showcased as well when we have a home for the art council. Our Art and Culture Council also is working with Region of Queens to help them as they want the same goals as us in bringing to life our art and culture in Queens. So there are lots going on with this project as both parties have the same vision and working together will help it come life a lot faster.

I am putting together a data base of our artists and artisans and would like your help in this. I am collecting the names and email addresses of the artists and artisans in Queens and surrounding area so that I can send information out of art shows and craft fairs in the Queens and Lunenburg area, to try and get more of our crafts and artwork out their for people to see the great work that a lot of our people are doing. If any of you would like to be included in this list please call the Greenfield Office and leave your name and email address with me or at the front desk. Thank you.

I am also sitting on the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve tourism committee. This committee was put together to showcase market ready experiences in the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve area, which includes Yarmouth ,Digby, Annapolis , Shelburne and Queens. The Mi'kmaq experiences we have right now that is market ready is at Keji Park and Bear River has two. It is our hopes that down the road Acadia First Nation will have some experiences to offer.

I am having the opportunity this year to showcase our culture and traditions at the Nova Scotia Music Week. This year Liverpool is hosting Music Week from Nov. 8 through the

11th. At the International Reception we will be serving up bannock. At the official opening will be showcasing one of our own dancer, Emerald Wells doing a Jingle dance. I am also asked to present this year's Aboriginal artist of the year award. I worked with one of our crafters to make fifty medicine bags to put in gift bags for the international delegates that came to this event.

This event brings in 600 people to our area and the international delegates come from Germany and UK and United States. So it is very nice to be able to show some of our culture and traditions to people from other parts of the world.

Liverpool has a committee together to bring as many events as they can to our area and they are doing a great job. As they bring these events to our community Acadia First Nation will also have an opportunity to showcase our art and our culture and traditions.

I also am a member of Destination Southwest Nova Tourism; this is a tourism group that helps promote our area and what's happening in this end of the province. They also help promote any events that are coming up in our area.

As part of my job I also go into the schools and do programming with the different age groups. This is the part of my job that is a lot of fun. I get to work with Mi'kmaq children as well as others and they all seem to enjoy the programs and craft projects I do.

I have build up a good working relationship with the Region of Queens and have had two of our students work at the Visitor's Information Centre in Liverpool. During the summer they did Mi'kmaq crafts with the visitors that came to town and visited the centre. The Region has asked me if they could have them back next summer as they did a great job.

I am also a board member for Winner's World board and we meet once a month and take care of the running of the six stores on our reserves.

As the Cultural Officer I have got to know a lot of our artisans in the band and am amazed at the beautiful work I see in our communities. I love the work I do and as I promote our culture and traditions in the classroom and the community, I realize the beauty of our heritage. It is a learning experience for me as well and the more I learn the more I realize I need to learn.