

[Page 27 - Advert: Archie Neil: From the Life and Stories of Archie Neil Chisholm or Margaree Forks, Cape Breton](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 61](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1992/8/1

We're proud to announce the publication of our newest book: Archie Neil The triumph of a life and a triumph of a book! Archie Neil is a beautifully written collaboration that will keep alive forever the life and stories of Archie Neil Chisholm. Saddled with polio, pride, and a lack of discipline, Archie Neil lived out the contradictory life of a terrific teacher floundering in alcoholism. His growth, plunge, and rise as an extraordinarily valuable person in the Cape Breton community is good, lasting reading. From outrageous good humour to excellent storytelling, this book is a remarkable achievement for writer Mary Anne Ducharme, as the life itself, at once graceful and generous, is a remarkable achievement for Archie Neil. Here is a selection from the book by Mary Anne Ducharme Chapter 17 The English language was Hector Dan MacGillivray's enemy. He was twelve years old and he figured that the subject had it in for him. Way back, some dumb old people started doing stupid things to English, just to make his life miserable. Teachers tried to drum the grammar into his head. But he always wanted to know the why about things. All they usually told him was "It's in the book," just like church, even when it didn't make any sense to him at all. They tried to beat grammar into him with a ruler, blackmail, nasty reports to his parents, and depriving him of recess and lunch. None of it worked. Now this new teacher with the crooked legs was at it again. The only thing Hector Dan really liked about school was talking to the other boys about boxing. Ever since his father bought a radio through T. Eaton's catalogue, this was his obsession. Every boxing night, a crowd of people came to the MacGillivray house to listen. Other than Hector and his father, no one dared make so much as a cough during a broadcast or they might get tossed out. Father and son gloried in it. And Hector was the authority on boxing at the school. But this wasn't even regular school, with the other boys to talk to. A perfectly good Saturday was rained. Hector Dan's father sent him over to John A.'s. Just for stupid irregular verbs, irregular plurals and that other garbage, he thought. Well, nobody was going to cram it down his throat. "Thank you a good deal indeed," Hector Dan's father said Your Nova Scotia Government Bookstore Outlet in Cape Breton Cape Breton Books First-Rate Literature A Wide Range of Books from Popular to Scholarly "THE DOWNTOWN BOOKSTORE" 361 Charlotte St. Sydney B1P1E1 539-8551 and Lewis Parker Cards: PORTRAIT OF CAPE BRETON HISTORY BOOKS ARE A GREAT GIFT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR Front Cover of Archie Neil. To order, see page 30. to Archie Neil, ready to leave his son behind. A burly farmer, he stood with his hat in his hand at the kitchen door. He respected teachers. They were right up there with God. "The Sulivans, they told me you've been helping kids extra, evenings and weekends. Hector Dan, he doesn't do good, grade-wise." "We'll do fine," Archie Neil said, with a wink at the boy, one of his most difficult students. He was bright enough, and he wasn't unruly. He just wouldn't do anything he didn't want to do. And he didn't want to do anything with English grammar. After Hector Dan's father left, Archie Neil leaned back in his chair and stretched a good,



long, lazy stretch. "Listen, if you don't tell on me," he said, "we'll just • well, you know, shoot the breeze. Have a few laughs. Nobody will know but you and me. How about a cup of coffee? You take cream and sugar?" - 40 YEARS OF SERVICE TO CAPE BRETON " Slje (WitUircn'a Att 'octctu af (tope Breton p QSD' INTAKE HOME STUDIES PROTECTION FOSTER HOMES ADOPTION' probiem identification; referral support services; crisis intervention all ages, in permanent homes CHILDREN IN CARE 1 Suite 7, Provincial Building, 360 Prince Street, Sydney, Nova Scotia B1P 5L1 (562-5506) I SINGLE MOTHERS counselling; support I THE COMMUNITY'S RESPONSffILITY IS TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN I counselling; support d "A UNITED WAY SERVICE AGENCY"