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NEWS

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one year later

ARTS & CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

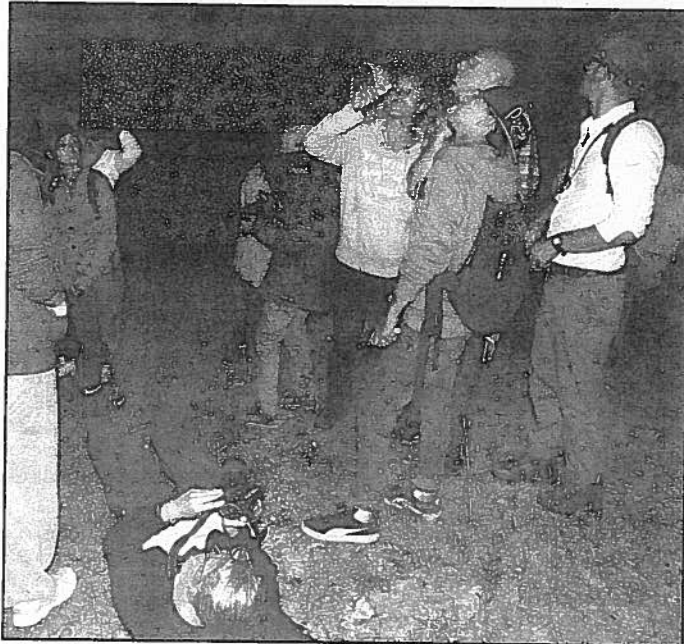
Water Puppets open
in Cheticamp

SPORTS

Mosquito Ravens host province's
best this weekend

WEEKLY PEARL

Always keep an open mind and a
compassionate heart.
Phil Jackson



Star gazing was a popular activity, with some trying to spot shooting stars while others tried to photograph the stationary stars.

Nightwalks with Teenagers explored Cape Breton

-by Joyce MacDonald

My headlamp draws moths, brushing my face with their powdery wings. I am seeing more moths closer up than I ever have before. The only solution is to turn off my light, but then I am walking through the woods in the dark, uncertain of my footing. I am surrounded by teenagers from Toronto, before me and behind, me as we file up a narrow forest trail. They joke that this is where Lady Gaga filmed the video for "Animal" as we push through ferns and blackberry brambles.

This is a hike, but also a production of the Mammalian Diving Reflex theatre company from Toronto. The idea is, take

and suddenly the field is full of bobbing lights as everyone searches for a wild blueberry snack. Then everyone lays down, recklessly disregarding the potential for crushed blueberry stains on clothing. After a bit, everyone agrees to turn out their lights and be quiet. We look up at the stars in an awed silence that stretches a long time. A million billion stars are visible, and satellites, and airplanes, and only one ground-bound light from a human home.

"I wish we had this in Toronto," someone says, and "Can we sleep here tonight?" asks someone else. It is a warm summer night, and the idea of sleeping under these stars is appealing. But sitting

has driven down to spend a week in Cape Breton and do three public walks at night, one along the shore in Broad Cove, one in the forest in Piper's Glen, and one in the town of Inverness. Amish Morrell, originally of Margaree and now living in Toronto, was one of the organizers.

"Nightwalks with Teenagers" brings together people from communities who might not otherwise meet each other, to share experiences entirely unique to a time and place, he said.

Darren O'Donnell of Mammalian Diving Reflex said their performances are intended to create connections between people.

"We were a theatre company that did regular theatre," he said. "Then we did this one funny project *Haircuts by Children*. We started working with Parkdale Public School."

For that show in 2006 they taught children how to give haircuts. Some of the members have been involved in the group since they were nine years old.

"We're a performance kind of company," said 15-year-old Ahash Jeeva, describing the first show he was involved in, *East the Street*. "We went to a bunch of restaurants on a street and critiqued the food."

People were invited to come along and take part in that performance, too.

"It's actually very fun," said Dana Liu, another of the young Torontonians.

"Nightwalks with Teenagers" happened on August 18th, 19th and 20th. The young participants have returned to Toronto, but anyone who chose to walk with them will not soon forget the experience.



The Torontonians teen members of the Mammalian Diving Reflex theatre company take some time to goof around before beginning a nighttime hike in Piper's Glen.

the group's teen members to Cape Breton, take them on nighttime hikes with whomever wants to come along, and see what happens.

What happens is, we reach the top of the hill and break into a meadow. It is filled with blueberries,

still becomes difficult for this energetic group, so we get up and hike back down to the home of Jim Mustard and Margaret Thompson, catching toads along the way.

The project is called *Nightwalks with Teenagers*. The group from Toronto