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## Anchoring tourism opportunities

By JIM HILDEBRAND

THE PILOT

TWILLINGATE/NEW WORLD ISLAND — Steve Moss, executive director for the Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation brought good news to a meeting of stakeholders of the tourism industry in Twillingate last week.

"I'm here this evening to tell you about an exciting opportunity for Twillingate, its surrounding communities, and the surrounding region," said Mr. Moss. "This opportunity aims to enhance your tourism industry by bringing more visitors to the region, by providing additional products and services that will make travelers more satisfied, and by putting more money in the pockets of local operators.

"We are committed to making this place a true anchor for the tourism industry in the province so we can show the rest of the province, and the world, how it's done."

Mr. Moss unveiled the Tourism Atlantic's Strategic Tourism Expansion Program, "an innovative and comprehensive process that closes 'experiential tourism' capacity gaps by providing communities and entrepreneurs with a better understanding of destination development, industry trends, and experiential tourism development."

This pilot project for sustainable tourism development is a first in the province, and will bring together individuals with an interest in the tourism industry in the Twillingate - New World Island region.

"Through the services of a professional tourism consultant, we will take a thorough look at what the community currently has in terms of tourism products and services," Mr. Moss Explained. "In addition, we will conduct a series of workshops, where the community



A good crowd attended the announcement of the pilot project at the Twillingate Lions Club on May 3, but there is certainly more room for those who want to become involved with steering committees or to attend workshops. Jim Hildebrand photos



Steve Moss is looking for involvement of area tourist stakeholders to implement Tourism Atlantic's Strategic Tourism Expansion Program for the Twillingate/New World Island Area.

will identify what else is needed in this area to complement its existing products, enhance the communities' tourism offerings, and come up with additional business opportunities."

The Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism Board was tasked to pick a community after the 2011 Provincial budget where \$300,000 was given to support and develop authentic multi-seasonal products, services, and experiences, and to focus on the development in two high potential areas - Labrador and Twillingate-New World Island area.

The Twillingate-New World Island area was the unanimous choice of the board as Mr. Moss explains, "Twillingate is a community that has a vibrant tourism industry with an enormous potential for growth. It is recognized as one of the most unique destinations in the province."

Now the Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation is looking for help.

"We put together a small committee of operators, funding partners, municipalities, and industry associations to do the necessary preliminary work - this included administrative details, ie: paperwork, securing funding, and getting the process started," he said. "We've completed all the steps required to move forward.

"We will start with the development of a plan, and in order to develop it, we need the tourism stakeholder, to tell us what needs to go in it. We're looking for industry champions to participate in the project steering committee, and we're also looking for as many people as we can to participate in the planning workshops and to share ideas on how to move the tourism sector forward in Twillingate and the surrounding area."

Mr. Moss said most importantly, "we need you to implement these opportunities over the next few seasons."

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## Recalling the sinking of the Francis P. Duke

By DANETTE DOOLEY

SPECIAL TO THE PILOT

FOGO ISLAND — Patrick Miller, a master mariner from Fogo has lived through many sorrows that only those who make their living from the sea could understand.

The hardest blow came on Dec. 17, 1947 when Mr. Miller lost his brothers William (Bill) Miller and Ignatius (Nish) Miller during the wreck of the family's fishing schooner The Francis P. Duke.

Mr. Miller's father, also named Patrick Miller, owned the ship but it was his son Bill who captioned the Duke during its final voyage.

The loss of their sons was too much for his parents (Agnes and Patrick Miller) to handle, Mr. Miller says.

"It was their ruination. They never got over it. Only one of my brother's bodies was found. It cut right through our family," the 83-year-old says.

While there have been several stories written about the disaster which claimed the life of six people, Mr. Miller says some of the information is not correct.

The 47-ton schooner wasn't headed to St. John's, he says, rather was making its way to the Fisherman's Union Trading Company at Catalina with its catch of cod fish when it left Fogo on Dec. 16.

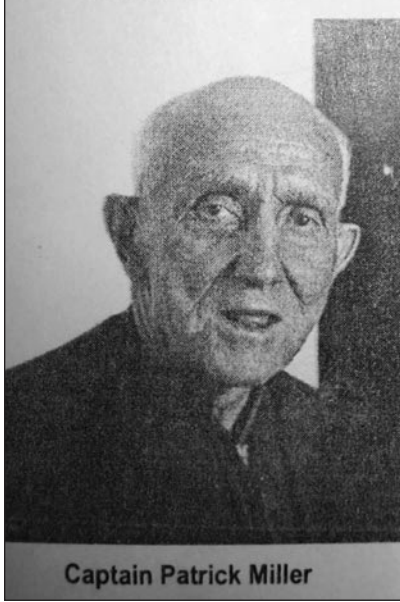
Mr. Miller, who ran Miller Shipping Ltd. out of Fogo Island for many years, now lives in a retirement complex in St. John's where he recently shared his memories of the disaster with The Pilot.

A teenager at the time of the tragedy, Mr. Miller says he was the last person aboard the schooner before it left for Catalina.

"I was the one that went out and helped them heave up the anchor



Captain Bill Miller



Captain Patrick Miller



ABOVE: Patrick Miller, 83, and his sister Grace (Miller) Harris, 89, look at some scrapbook photos. Danette Dooley photo

LEFT: Captain William (Bill) Miller lost his life in December 1947 in the Francis P. Duke shipwreck. Bill's father, Captain Patrick Miller owned the schooner but wasn't on the ship at the time of the disaster. Patrick Miller also lost another son Ignatius (Nish) Miller in the disaster.

Mr. Miller still wonders today why his brother didn't seek shelter in Seldom rather than continue through the storm.

"The storm overtook them out in the bay. He (Bill) should have stayed in Seldom overnight. It's a good harbor there... But Bill decided he better try to make Valleyfield. He knew Valleyfield. But there were two islands you had to go in between and you had to really know your way to get in there."

Mr. Miller thinks the approaching Christmas season was perhaps the main reason why his brother didn't take shelter and wait out the storm.

"He wanted to get up there and get clear of it (the fish)."

Mr. Miller believes the short

pieces of long line got entangled in the wheel chains and likely damaged the schooner's rudder.

"We used to haul the log up and throw it on the wheel box. I think when she got into shoal water she heaved a few times and probably hove the log down in the wheel chains that led to the wheel house. By the time they got the log chopped up and cleared it was too late. I think some of them might have got in a dory and rowed away from her and never made it ashore."

Mr. Miller says his brother Bill was 33-years-old at the time of the disaster. He was a seasoned fishing captain. Their father had no qualms about putting him in charge of the schooner, he said.

"Bill was a very dependable man.

He was as good as my father. Whatever Bill told us to do, we done."

Ignatius was 21-years-old.

The morning after the tragedy, Mr. Miller says, people from the Badger's Quay area saw pieces of the wreckage.

At first, Mr. Miller says, no one knew which schooner had run aground.

As word spread about the wreck, Mr. Miller and his father hoped and prayed it was not their ship.

"My father and me called around a few places like Musgrave Harbour and Wesleyville and inquired if anybody had seen our schooner. Later on in the evening, I got a message back from Valleyfield saying they found a box from the Duke with my father's name on it."

The bodies of Captain William Miller, Gus Pickett and Maxwell Payne were recovered. The bodies of Stewart Keefe, Ignatius Miller and Alfred Mullins were never found.

While some reports say there were seven men on the ship including Donovan Bryan, Mr. Miller says there were only six men in total. Mr. Bryan wasn't onboard the schooner rather died in another fishing disaster around the same time, he says.

"Don Bryan wasn't on that schooner. He got drowned up in Botwood. He came home about the same time Bill and them were getting buried. And shortly afterwards we were burying him."

All six men were from Fogo, Mr. Miller says - a devastating blow to the community.

Mr. Pickett had served in the Royal Navy during the war years. He'd come back home only to lose his life in the disaster.

While the loss was devastating, Mr. Miller's sister Grace Miller

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