

REES' Pieces

Are students challenged?

There are several things about our education system I find disturbing. Those concerns might play a significant role to the “root cause” why North America is dropping in Global rankings on the education stage.

A decline in rankings, regardless of the magnitude of the comparative analysis, should be a wake-up call for everyone, especially educators and those who pay the bills. When surveys about education are released “special interest” groups dispute the findings, or say the model does not apply to our situation.

Perhaps first question I would raise would be: “Is our education system challenging the student? I anticipate the answer would be no way or not enough.

Second question, “Why do we not hear about more students repeating another year because they failed?” Is it because all students are bright, or does not failing students camouflage weaknesses in the educators and make the system look good?

Many professors complain students enter university/ college with less than required reading and math skills. Why?

President Obama is on record as wanting students spending more time each day in the classroom, plus a longer school year. Sure such actions, regardless if in USA or rural Nova Scotia would cost more money. Spending more money might not be a bad thing, as long as the desired outcome is achieved.

North America will continue to lose jobs, and over time suffer a lower standard of living if we don't start overhauling education systems. An improved education system will also bring improvements in the general health of our population. Education and health are intertwined and both benefit if managed and delivered properly.

Obtaining the desired outcome to education negotiations is nothing more than a power struggle, between professionals, who want a greater package, and government trying to keep a lid on spending. Seldom do the parents/ guardians get opportunity for their individual small voices to be heard. However, that must change.

When agreements are reached it signifies a negotiated settlement, not what is best for the population as a whole.

As a start Nova Scotia, preferably Canada, needs one set of exams to measure how well the education system is working. To those who oppose, please tell us why?

First step is universal curriculum. If laid out in the teachers manual, each educator would know exactly what to teach. Provincial exams should be held on the same day province-wide. The exam for all grades should be no more than one hour, covering the total curriculum.

The purpose is not to add pressure students, but for each school board, or individual school to have a measuring stick to assess the quality of delivery. In guessing some of the results, I would bet my money schools in smaller areas would far outshine larger complexes.

Sure it would pit school against school, or board against board, but soon, parents and government would know the strengths and weaknesses. Within five years, we would see significant changes, including higher marks across the province because all of a sudden it was competitive environment.

A province wide exam is one litmus test which can be implemented for very little cost. Design of the exam is critical. Retired educators would be asked or “volunteered” to serve as markers. And yes, they can be volunteered, in the same way as we must show up for jury duty.

You might think these and other suggestions are harsh. Perhaps so, however, “tough love” is the best place to start. Not just on the students, but classroom educators, their bosses right up to senior staff and Minister of Education.

Parents must be become involved as well. They must get involved in their child's education and demand a certain outcome.

Do we want to risk our children's future by entering university with a grade six reading level or be under educated in math? What instrument do we have to measure the quality of education our children are receiving? To my knowledge there is no instrument to measure outcome. Hence no accountability.

Summary: Our students are not challenged, because they know they will go on to the next grade regardless of how much or how little work they do.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

MAIL TO: The Shoreline Journal, P.O. Box 41, Bass River, NS, B0M 1B0
(902) 647-2968; Fax: 902-647-2194 Email: maurice@theshorelinejournal.com



Maurice:
Enclosed is cheque to renew my subscription to the Shoreline Journal.
I look forward to each issue and read it from the first page to the last.
Thank you for a job well done.
Vera M. Kaitz
Coopersburg, PA

Dear Editor:
I have recently read a book titled, “The Five Love Languages”, men’s edition, by Gary Chapman, published by Northfield Publishing.
I must say this is one of the most amazing books, I have ever read. The insight Mr. Chapman shares on love blew me away. They are so profound yet simple and practical, “Happiness in Marriage is the by-product of feeling love”.
Dear Editor, I wish I could persuade all of your readers to get a copy of “The Five Love Languages” book. I truly believe they would be so blessed.
PS: I have a copy I will lend if anyone is interested. Contract me by mail - Box 24, Londonderry, NS B0M 1M0, or phone 902-957-0701.

Sincerely,
Curtis Eagles.

Dear Maurice
Just a note along with my renewal.
This is to inform you, I visited my homestead on Wednesday, July 29th at the Mac Elmon pond. While there I met a nice lady visiting from Toronto. Her remarks were, what a beautiful place for tourist to visit.
When I explained to here I was born and brought up there and gave her a summary of all the activities, she was amazed. I wrote the history of the MacElmon’s some time ago. A lot of the new residents don not realize the history there.
I also visited the museum, airport and industrial park. It’s hard to believe so many changes. The MacElmon Road overpass is where my dad had a field.
I thought you would be interested to know of my wonderful background growing up in the Lr Onslow, Belmont and Debert areas.

Wishing you all the best with the Journal, as I enjoy reading all the news.

Sincerely,
Grace Archibald, nee MacElmon.

Letter to the Editor
Several years ago Florence Adams sent an article for the shoreline about our visit to our son in Taloyoak Nu.
Mitchell is now living in Bridgewater and teaching in Caledonia, North Queens School. He is the PE teacher.

Recently he was welcomed to the school by having his motor bike decorated surreptiously.
I am attaching the picture he took after he got home. There was also a picture in the local paper, I think he said it was Lunenburg. It was a Nick Moore photo. The sign says “consider yourself welcomed to North Queens”
I think it was a wonderful way to say thanks for coming. Of course I am his mother!!
Sincerely,
Marion Bird.



Council wades in on internet problems.

By Maurice Rees
Some residents of West Colchester have been having high speed internet problems and have taken the matter to Councilor Tom Taggart for his action. Taggart first introduced the matter at a council committee meeting on August 13th.

At the meeting Councilor Taggart indicated he has received emails and phone calls from residents in his district who are experiencing adverse effects on their high speed internet service provided by North Nova Cable. The residents feel that the disruption is being caused by Seaside Communications tower being located in close proximity to that of North Nova Cable.

Councilors unanimously agreed to send a letter to the premier, minister of Economic Development & Rural Development, local MLA's and CRTC requesting steps be taken to ensure North Nova Cable and Seaside Communications work together to ensure no disruption in existing high-speed internet service to the residents of Colchester County. At the irregular council meeting on August 26th, Councilor Taggart pursued the matter inquiring as to whether Seaside Communications had been contacted regarding a presentation to Council on high speed internet installation problems being experienced by residents in his district.

Taggart stressed in the request to Seaside, he would like asked why it appears that only Colchester County is having problems with the internet providers not being able to work together and share frequencies in order to provide service.

Staff advised that a letter to Seaside Communications would be out by the end of the week.

In mid-October, the Shoreline Journal attempted to get an update on the matter by

contacting Department of Economic Development, the department who awarded the contract to Seaside Communications to deliver high speed services for the area.

On Wednesday, Oct. 21st, the Shoreline received an email reply from Economic Development spokesperson, Mary Jane Fumerton stating, “I have been out of the office and unable to contact those in the know for an update. I will be in contact with you in the next day or so”.

As of press-time, the Shoreline had not received a further update.

Seaside Communications are holding information sessions in Economy and Debert on Wednesday, November 4th & 5th commencing at 7:00 pm.

Rotary Club of Truro supports Hospice Society in Counselling initiative

The Rotary Club of Truro recently presented Colchester East Hants Hospice Society with a generous gift of \$10,000 to support the addition of a counselor to the Hospice team.

Club President, Brian Matthews, and Cathrine Yuill, Hospice Executive Director, were on hand to celebrate this major support and discuss plans for this much needed initiative.

“The Hospice Society is honoured to receive the support of the Rotary Club of Truro on this initiative” noted Ms. Yuill. “The Rotary Club really leads the way in supporting community based initiatives that strengthen local families and this project does just that. Hospice provides support directly to families primarily through trained volunteers. With the addition of a counselor to our team the Hospice will be able to respond to family needs that go beyond what a volunteer can provide. A counselor will also be able to guide and mentor our volunteers and others in the community who may be in contact with families facing loss. We see this as a significant addition to the services we will be able to provide.”

“Rotary's motto is Service Above Self” stated Brian Matthews, President of the Rotary Club of Truro. “Sometimes that means we have to support groups in our community that have an expertise in fields we are not capable of. The Rotary Club of Truro is pleased to assist Colchester East Hants Hospice Society in bringing a new level of capability to our community”.

Colchester East Hants Hospice Society has been providing care and support to families facing terminal illness and grief for over 5 years. The Hospice Society works closely with the Regional Palliative Care team to compliment and supplement the excellent care they deliver to palliative patients. With the support of individual donors and organizations like Rotary the Hospice has been able to serve local families by supporting quality in life, dignity in death and comfort through the bereavement process.

For more information:
Cathrine Yuill, Executive Director,
(902) 893-3265

The Shoreline Journal (circ. 1300) is a monthly community newspaper serving communities along the Glooscap Trail from Truro to Parrsboro, Nova Scotia serving the communities of Belmont/Debert, Wentworth/Londonderry, Onslow/Masstown along the shore to Great Village, Bass River, Economy, Five Islands and Lower Five Islands. It is published on the last Wednesday of each month (earlier in December) with a deadline of the 20th of the month.

MAILING ADDRESS: The Shoreline Journal, P.O. Box 41, Bass River, Nova Scotia, B0M 1B0.

PHONE: 902-647-2968; **Fax:** 902-647-2194 **Toll Free** 1-800-406-1426; **Cell:** 902-890-9850 • **E-MAIL:** maurice@theshorelinejournal.com

EDITOR PUBLISHER: Maurice Rees • **ADVERTISING & CIRCULATION:** Dorothy Rees

Canadian Publications Mail Products Agreement #4686039, ISSN #1209-9198

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
LOCAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: B0M / B2N - \$23.00, PLUS HST = \$25.99 • **ALL PARTS OF NS:** \$26.00 plus HST = \$29.38
ALL OTHER AREAS OF CANADA: \$28.00, plus HST = \$31.64 • **USA SUBSCRIPTIONS:** \$40.00
HST: #890564404RT001. Printed by Advocate Printing & Publishing Ltd, Pictou, Nova Scotia

All rights reserved. Material published in The Shoreline Journal may not be reproduced in an form without prior approval of the publisher. Material to be returned to sender must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

1996 Heritage Award recipient. Listed with Canadian Advertising Rates & Data (CARD) and Bowden's Media Monitoring Service.

The publisher is not responsible for minor errors in ads, which do not lessen the value of the item(s). The publisher is not responsible for space beyond that portion of the advertisement containing the item(s) in error. Letters to the editor are subject to editing or rejection, must be signed by the author and contain a phone number.

