

REES' Pieces

I stand corrected and called to task

Rather than spout off on one topic, I'll provide some comments on a variety of subject which have a direct impact on the Shoreline's coverage area, with a few odd-ball items thrown in for good measure. First would be our weather. We are having an unusually non-summer weather for July.

Western Canada particularly British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan are on-file with an unusually higher amount of forest fires and an unusually drier than normal spring and early summer, while we are getting a lot of rain and very little heat.

I just got back from a three day trek to PEI for the first annual Summerside Motorcycle Rally. On all three days the weather was unpleasant; constantly changing from sunny intervals to mist, then showers and torrential downpours and strong Northeast winds and almost freezing temperatures.

One person reminded me that PEI stands for "Potatoes Every Inch". Potato tops look nice and green but the fields are soggy. Equally soggy was the ground at a midway carnival in Summerside. Earlier in the week the ground was so wet they were laying down plywood so people didn't have to walk in ankle deep mud.

The high volume of snow last winter followed by nontraditional weather for spring and on into mid-July causes me to wonder if we'll get an extremely nice fall from mid-August into mid-November. Maybe climate change will move summer starting six weeks later from the start to the end.

Another thing I've noticed is the significantly high volume of traffic on the country roads compared to previous summers. Unofficially, my observation is the American tourist has arrived. I've seen more USA license plates on Class A and Class B motor homes so far this summer than in the entire summer of 2014.

Perhaps the 75 to 80 cent dollar will have a positive impact on the provinces tourism industry. Let's hope so.

Last month in talking about the CCRSB board's decision to close Maitland, River John and Wentworth Schools, I spouted off saying "Three more schools have closed and there is no appeal process. I'm not suggesting all schools should remain open. Changes would eliminate the worry about many more closures and ensure school boards worked to find a way to keep a school open. It's hard to blame the school boards as they are working within current financial parameters".

It didn't take long for a reader to rake me over the coals for not providing another side to the story and a few days later for a few more concerned parents to rattle my chain. They were upset with my comment that you can't blame the school board for closure of the schools on June 30, 2015.

Where I had gone amiss was I had totally forgotten that over a year ago, Education and Early Childhood Development Minister, Karen Casey had written the school board and asked them to delay a possible closure of the schools by at least a year. In addition to this major omission on my part, I was informed that the board did not vote on the proposals to establish "Hub Schools".

So I have to retract my statement, "It's hard to blame the school boards as they are working within current financial parameters". The conclusion is the board members individually and collectively are to blame for the schools closing on June 30, 2015.

I understand there is some discussion or a "move afoot" to establish "charter schools". Charter schools are loosely defined as applying to the Province to take possession of existing schools; establish a "local" governing body for the community charger school; guarantee to follow the Department's curriculum guidelines.

The real kicker is operating similar to a private school; they would hire teachers under private contract and also apply to the Department of Education to transfer to "the charter school administration" the amount of funding, on a per student basis, which is currently transferred to existing school boards.

If charter schools were established, it would be interesting to see how "charter school students" would rank in national testing within a five year period.

Finally, it's nice to see two projects have been funded with provincial and federal funding: flood control remediation of the Great Village River and over \$1-Million for expansion of the province's low bush blueberry industry.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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An Open Letter to the President and Chief Operating Officer,

Mr. Deepak Chopra,
President and Chief
Operating Officer,
Canada Post,
2701 Riverside Dr, Box 90022,
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deepak.chopra@canadapost.ca

Dear Mr. Chopra,

I respectfully request that Canada Post stop its announced conversion of 6,428 postal addresses to community mailboxes in Truro and Colchester County, Nova Scotia. It is only reasonable and fair to delay this decision until after the upcoming election scheduled for October, 2015.

A new EKOS poll released three days ago indicates a 63.1% of voters in this area support parties that have committed to halting the closures of door-to-door delivery. The Liberals, the NDP and the Green Party have established policies against these conversions. It is not fair to rush this decision through until the voters have spoken in the October election. Surely, the opinion of the people must still count.

Furthermore, Cumberland Colchester has the oldest average age population in the country. Cumberland Colchester also has one of the highest rates of people with disabilities and also a high population of veterans. These communities, in particular, will incur hardship from your decision to end door to door

delivery and reduce rural mail delivery.

Media reports indicate that Canada Post intends to convert one third of Canadian addresses to community mailboxes. I would suggest that Truro and Colchester County should not be targeted as part of this selected group of communities considering the above circumstances.

Thank you for considering this request. I hope you agree that Truro and Colchester County should not be part of the one third of postal addresses to be converted to community mailboxes.

Sincerely, Bill Casey
Former Member of Parliament
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Dear Editor:

Yesterday I started feeling like a crow.... my skin tone didn't change, nor did I sprout feathers... but still... crow-like. I was one of a small group of community members pecking around the corpse of our local school.

We were there because over the 56 years of the building's existence, there were items placed in the school - not donated to, but placed in the building for the shared use of students, staff and community - which were the community's property. For 55 of its 56 years our school had been a place for community activities, something that came to an abrupt halt in July

2014 when our school board suddenly came to the realization that community use of the building constituted a threat to the "safety and security of students and staff at the school" and locked the community out.

We had requested of the board the return of community property and given them a list. Considering the behaviour of school board administrative staff over the past several years, we felt a great deal of trepidation before arriving at the school at the time appointed to collect the items. Would the school board honour the document stating the library was to go to the community?

Would the board acknowledge that items bought by the community and placed in the school for shared use were community property? What would we find waiting for us? When given access we found, for whatever reason, most of the items in question were made available.

A half-century of community affiliation tends to leave a mark on a building and the people involved. Our group consisted of two former teachers, two former parents, one community volunteer and two teen-aged boys who had attended the school. Everything we saw, everything we touched elicited "remember?" and we did...we remembered the students, the parents, the teachers, the good things and the not-so-good.... our lives in review. It was not an easy task.

Are we saying goodbye to education in our community forever? I don't think so. I believe our young people will still want to live here and will work to make that possible, even if it means finding an alternate way to educate their children. I believe that the young people of today will see through the ruses used by people in authority to maintain control over people's lives. I believe young people today want a better life than that mapped out for them by people with so little vision or understanding that they do not see the value of a life well-lived in a small community.

Crow or not I have hope.

Carol Hyslop, Wentworth Valley
902-548-2381

The Shoreline Journal

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KEN'S CORNER

By Ken Kennedy

I've been in church so much lately I'll soon be sprouting wings! Some of you may know that Velma and I attend Debert Baptist Church and the congregation has recently welcomed Rev. Dr. Frank Guinta as interim minister back in May. He will be with us until end of September to see if he can help us get back on our feet both spiritually and financially. One of the first things Pastor Guinta asked me to do was to coordinate a meeting with Pastor Danny Gibson of the Fellowship Centre, and Rev. Carol Gillard off the UCC. These "Three Musketeers" have been meeting for prayer and general discussion on things ecclesiastical concerning all three denominations.

A couple of Sunday's ago I was in church three times in one day! Since Rev. Gillard was holding services in Debert that day at 10:00 a.m I thought I would catch that service and still be in time to attend Pastor Guinta's by 10:45. Wrong! Sensing that Rev. Gillard's message was going to be long-winded, I had to skip out about 10:50 and high-tail it up to the Baptist church in time for the offering. (Very important!) I enjoyed the Debert UCC service and especially



the well-dressed choir with Carrie McCully back to her roots and playing the piano. There were about 50 souls in attendance which encompassed members of Debert, Masstown, Glenholme, and Great Village. With July 5th being the first Sunday of the month, by 2:00 p.m I was back in church again helping the Baptists conduct a service at Debert Court Shannex facility. Whew!

Still on the subject of churches, I must say I am impressed, since moving to Truro, that Saint Andrew's UCC still rings a bell at certain times of the day. This makes me wonder how many churches in West Colchester ring a bell before a church service. As a kid growing up in the Church of England in Nfld, there were church bells galore - much to the chagrin of shift-workers on Sunday mornings. When I think of church bells these days I remember quite fondly the sound of the church bell at Belmont Baptist rung by Alvin Crowe before a service. The whole building would shiver and the kids held his or her hands over their ears.

That's about it for this issue. Hope you didn't find it too "churchy." Just remember the old saying: Any fool can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the apples in a seed.

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.

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

Canadian Publications Mail Products Agreement #40048924, ISSN #1209-9198



SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

LOCAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: B0M / B2N - \$23.00, PLUS HST = \$26.45 • ALL PARTS OF NS: \$26.00 plus HST = \$29.90
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HST: #890564404RT001. Printed by Advocate Printing & Publishing Ltd, Pictou, Nova Scotia

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

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