

# REES' Pieces

## THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Last month in this space I suggested municipal leaders for rural and primarily non-urban areas from around the province should pressure Halifax and Ottawa to ensure the same level of funding as has been going to much larger Halifax Regional Municipality. If HRM has 40% of the population, the remainder of the province should had funding and special consideration at the rate of one and one half times that given to Halifax for convention centre, other projects and now possibly a stadium.

The plight of rural areas has been a long time coming. The lure of job opportunities combined with larger paychecks, bright lights, better services, greater vibrancy and more people their own age has been attractive to future leaders. How can we blame them? We send them off to university, giving them four or five years to set down their own roots.

Rural areas have been the last to receive almost everything – services, improved highways, technology advancement, yet are the first to feel the downside of centralization. Elimination of smaller schools, replaced by a fleet of larger busses hauling children for upwards of an hour each way to “factory-type” schools has probably been the most symbolic example leading to rural devastation. The attraction for young families to stay on or close to the family farm evaporated once local smaller schools closed.

Reducing the critical mass of rural areas has led to lessening of job opportunities and an increase in seasonal employment. With seasonal work comes an increase in reliance on Employment Insurance to provide basic family necessities. Some economists are saying relying on EI has stymied economic growth.

Some recent economic studies indicate that in Atlantic Canada approximately 17% of households in non-rural areas reported EI claims. However in rural areas, the occurrence was slightly over 28%. The problems facing rural areas are much deeper than closing rural schools and rising seasonal employment.

Its' a whole mindset which has existed for generations. We need to realize bigger is not always better.

In fact it's going to take the input and understanding of every sector of society to put vibrancy back into rural Nova Scotia.

I'm not so sure just because we de-focused trades training and insisted all our youth needed to go to university was a smart move. I feel that once we eliminated trade schools, including nursing schools, we started downward on a slippery slope.

Now we are facing a shortage of tradespeople, particularly younger ones who will still be working in 10-15 years.

Here's where I think we should start: Recognize not every child is university material, or wants to go to university. Some students are at risk of quitting school, but ways must be found to ensure they finish high school.

Even though they might want to be a mechanic, or woodsman, or a waitress, they need to further their education beyond high school. Rural businesses, who have not had much advantage, should be given the opportunity to start “at risk” students in a trade them giving them 10 hours a week of on-the-job experience, with a wage subsidy.

The criteria being stay in school and keep good grades. Students must put a large percentage of their earnings into a fund to pay for training after high school.

The apprenticeship program must be re-introduced. More emphasis must be placed on easier access for new entrants to a particular trade and probably done under a co-op type program, where they spend three months in classroom, then three months on the job until training is completed.

Rural businesses should be encouraged to implement a “new employee” program. Training and upgrading programs should exist for all those who are seasonally employed for a substantial amount of the time of the duration of EI benefits.

Many of these programs could be conducted in the vacant classrooms in area schools. Transportation to the courses could be via the fleet of school buses already on the roads morning and afternoon. I know the foregoing is not the final answer. We need to think outside the box, strive to better ourselves and do all of the above without incurring major cost increases. Eliminate duplication, reduce management costs of departments and boards, redirect current assets and funding to new training programs. Make it easier for business to operate.

Maurice

# Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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To the Editor:

That time of year is upon us again that we used to look so forward to, yes Christmas. I'm sure most people will agree with me that it has certainly changed over the years. I used to love the coming up to Christmas time when you would go visit family and friends and wish each other (and even strangers) Merry Christmas without worrying about offending someone. This would all culminate at the Candle Lighting Christmas Eve service at Church.

Now it seems like the whole Christmas season is such a chore, I have to go Christmas Shopping, then you get in an even worse mood standing in line ups to pay for your treasures. Sometimes you get lucky and come across the perfect item for someone but more often than not you are just buying something to cross that person off your list. This is what the stores are counting on and why they start the whole Christmas marketing earlier and earlier.

While the idea that Christmas is too commercialized is nothing new, we've been complaining about it for years, maybe it's time we did something about it. I've always believed that we have no right to complain or criticize unless you are prepared to offer an alternative. I would like to challenge my family and friends to do just that, offer an alternative. Instead of buying someone a gift for the sake of getting something, (however, if it's something they need or something that suits them, go for it, nothing wrong with that), but why not send them a card instead saying, I made a donation in your name to: (a cause of your choice), doesn't have to say how much, just that you did it.

Churches have been doing this for years; you could get info from a church on how and where to donate to a third world country to help whole communities. Also, there are many good causes closer to home that you could donate to, or ask the person if they have a particular cause that is near and dear to them (that's what I'm going to do this year and ask that you please do the same for me).

Merry Christmas!  
Betty Jennings

Letter to Editor  
Hi Folks.

Am enclosing a cheque for renewing the three subscriptions.

We really appreciate getting the Shoreline and news of what's happening with our friends and neighbours.

Keep up the good work and good health and happiness to your folks.

Fran Forman  
Debert

Dear Editor,

November 11, 2011 (11-11) marks the anniversary of the end of the First World War, and is a day for Canadians to honour and remember those who fought for their country and for those who continue to serve.

The First World War began in 1914. At the time, Canada was considered part of the British Empire, which meant it was automatically involved the moment Britain declared war. Canada's sacrifices and contributions to the war changed its history, earning Canada the right to sign the Peace Treaty as an independent nation. This “birth of a nation” came at a cost. More than 65,000 Canadian soldiers gave their lives, and more than 170,000 were wounded during the Great War, significant numbers considering Canada's population was only eight million at the time.

I am a member of The War Amps Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program and its Operation Legacy a group of committed young people who are dedicated to preserving Canada's military heritage. We are highlighting this anniversary by making the public aware that The War Amps, is re-releasing the First World War documentaries In Flanders Fields, The Blue Puttees, No Man's Land, A Vimy Veteran Remembers and If Ye Break Faith.

Vignettes highlighting these documentaries and our newest release, The Canadian Army Newsreels, can be viewed on our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/user/warampsofcanada](http://www.youtube.com/user/warampsofcanada).

These productions are part of The War Amps Canadian Military Heritage Series and are available at a cost-recovery price by calling 1 800 250-3030 or visiting [www.waramps.ca](http://www.waramps.ca).

Sincerely,  
Ian Selig, 18  
Operation Legacy Member,  
Middle Sackville

Letter to the Editor

I wonder how many of the Shoreline Journal readers can readily remember where they were, or what they were doing on October 1, 2011. For me, it was a day, I will not easily forget. It was a wet day, messy underfoot, but these are the only negative comments I could express about that day.

That weekend, but that day in particular, provided the most smiles, positive comments and positive gestures I have witnessed in one place for as long as I care to remember. I am proud to say, that I attended the 4-H Provincial Show at the Exhibition Grounds in Bible Hill.

This show brought together representative 4-H members from the entire province - members who had placed well at the regional level and qualified to move forward. This gave the members the opportunity to meet and interact with 4-H members from the whole province - what a great experience.

This Pro Show was totally amazing. It is hard to believe that so many young people can be so organized, so focused and so HAPPY about what they are doing. It's too bad everyone doesn't experience all the good things 4-H has to offer, but for those of you who enjoy 4-H, I have to say “Keep up the good work”. Too often we observe and comment on the negative behaviours of young people,

but only positive behaviour was evident at the Pro Show.

These young people work hard to receive the honour of participating at the Pro Show and need to be commended for their hard work throughout the year. It is wonderful to see so many youth interested in learning new skills which they will remember for the rest of their lives. However, they are not alone in this venture - they are assisted by patient, dedicated leaders to help them with their projects and general learning experiences.

Good leaders, interested learners and supportive parents make a winning team. Enthusiastic spectators at local Achievement Days, local exhibitions and Provincial Shows can reinforce the positive efforts and behaviours of our youth.

If this inspires you to “go and see what I am talking about”, take note of 4-H events advertised in newspapers and on radio. Make it a point to support these individuals who are making a positive move forward.

Darlene Smith

Spread the news  
of your Community

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**TRURO:**

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MacQuarrie's Pharmasave  
(Esplanade)

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