

# REES' Pieces

## Start with a 1% Reduction

Before I start off on my tangent(s) about violence in the world; state of the economy, or how Trudeau might continue to have high approval ratings, let me mention something dear to our hearts in our downtime away from the day's stress.

Many rural residents don't have cable service, and the choice of television programming is limited compared to urban areas. Why couldn't we watch Blue Jays baseball on at least one of the Canadian channels in basic cable packages? With regard to Blue Jays baseball availability, the CTRC needs to take matters in hand.

Yes a cable media conglomerate owns the Jays, but if Canada is to adopt them as "Canada's" team, we need to follow their every move. The lack of choices for rural residents is not confined to Blue Jays baseball, the list is long and I'm not going to get into it now.

I don't expect Trudeau's Liberals to do much about it as they have other far more important to deal with, but a quick five minute conversation with the CRTC might start the ball rolling. Maybe a public "mandate letter" is in order, just as Justin sent mandate letters to cabinet ministers, then made them public.

Violence throughout the world is worrisome. Bombings in Paris; massive police investigations in France, Belgium and thousands of refugees fleeing Syria elsewhere is tragic. I don't know the answer, but applaud Justin on maintaining his promise to remove fighter jets from the bombing missions. In France and Belgium, from what I gleaned from media reports, a major cause could be poverty driven by reports of marginalization, ghettos, and little employment for those of other ethnic origins.

If there was an emphasis on equal treatment, less poverty and more jobs, maybe a large number of those frustrated youth, who get paid to be terrorists, would not be so vulnerable.

As Canadians let's welcome the 25,000 new people chosen to live in Canada with open arms and do our utmost ensuring relocation to Canada is a worthy experience, benefitting us as well as them.

We know our economy is in rough shape and the province's debt load is so high it hinders expansion of the economy. Hopefully, Stephen McNeil can get all the labour contracts settled without strike or major financial impacts on our economy.

Nova Scotia receives major funding through equalization payments from other provinces, we need to keep our eye focused on what is going to happen in two or three years, when today's downward economy impacts on other province's ability to pay.

How can residents help solve the problem and improve the economy? For too long residents, businesses, community and industry groups have relied upon government to provide the cash. That must change starting now. The first step is to reduce our expectations of what we want from government.

Look around to notice how much money is spent on non-necessary items: fancier car, handful of lottery tickets, expensive vacations, houses and personal belonging far exceeding what most people in the world have or need. Instead of buying something larger, we should focus on reducing energy footprints; help save the environment, keeping more money in our pocket.

All of us could start the process by reducing our expenditures by 1%. On a \$30,000 income it might only be \$25 per month, but if everyone did it, consider the magnitude.

Simultaneously, we need to improve and use our entrepreneurial skills. CNTA is facing a major economic hit with significant amounts of funding being eliminated. It's a hard pill to swallow, but considering the province economic situation, it probably is necessary. As long as all areas are treated equally, it could turn to be a benefit. Each industry group, whether tourism or forestry, can build stronger sectors by cooperating and bringing all partners together for a common cause.

You think there is no money around? Consider the \$-Millions spent on "Chase the Ace" in Inverness. And they are doing it again. To correct economic woes, government has to create the environment; get out of the way and let individuals and communities work at the grassroots to do what is necessary.

Bottom up always works better than top down.

**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

Dear Editor,

I am a member of The War Amps Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program, and its Operation Legacy, which is made up of members and graduates of CHAMP who are dedicated to teaching the younger generation about the importance of remembrance.

Amputee veterans started The War Amps nearly 100 years ago, and later created CHAMP to share their knowledge and assistance with us. Operation Legacy allows us to honour them and carry their legacy into the future.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. This Remembrance Day, it is important for Canadians to reflect on the significance of this anniversary and the sacrifices made so we could lead better lives.

For me, Remembrance Day is when I reflect on how fortunate I am to live in a free and safe country. It is when we all give thanks to those who fought for our country, and honour them at our schools, workplaces, on the streets, or in our homes. On November 11th, we come together as a country to remember the Canadians who fought for us, and the legacy they left behind.

Sincerely, Emily Gerhardt, 17  
Operation Legacy Member,  
Halifax

Dear Editor

I want to second Tom Taggart's opinion on the need for reform at Elections Canada, concerning the recent Federal election. Officials tried to keep my wife from voting when she showed up with three pieces of government issued id. She doesn't drive a car, but she did have her passport, her social insurance card and her Elections Canada poll notice. All three of these were given to her by the federal government, but none were acceptable to them as identification. It boggles the mind.

Ted Parker, Economy

Turmoil in the Community

By Carol Hyslop

My attempt to read the first chapter of the report put out by One Nova Scotia entitled "Early Years: Starting Strong" was foiled by anger bubbling up like hot lava. This occurs anytime I attempt to read about schooling in Nova Scotia. It is a reaction caused by the turmoil to which our community was subjected during the last nine years of the life of our elementary school. My problem.... partly caused by

the fact that no one has been held accountable for the treatment meted out to the people of my community by a government department. At present children young as four years of age are subjected to bus rides of up to and beyond 2 hours a day to attend schools in other communities. Our government makes statements like "Investing in our children - starting with how we welcome them into our communities at birth - is a compelling priority that will provide meaningful economic, health, and social returns." (ONE Nova Scotia Collaborative Action Plan: 01 the Early Years: Starting Strong). I happen to agree with this statement, but right now government treatment of our school-age children needs to be changed before we embark on a new government project involving pre-schoolers. I am not sure government should be in charge of children's education.

Consider this: (this has happened) A government department decides to erect a large new school building that will hold all a town's children on the edge town then proceeds to close the neighbourhood schools and bus the children to the new building. In rural areas, children are picked up by school busses before sunrise and arrive back home as the sun is setting. In Disrupting the Status Quo - Report of the Minister's Panel on Education it is stated that schools play a 'unique' role in "engaging students in active living through.....encouraging students to walk or bike to school...." (pg. 51)

Consider this: The Nova Scotia Education Act states in Section 5 (1) All public schools established or conducted pursuant to this Act are free schools. Are our schools "free"? If, as some studies have suggested, the worth of a child's time expressed in \$ per hour is considered, how much does that long bus drive really cost? How many hours and dollars do parents spend on transporting their children to much touted extra-curricular activities? Not to mention all the supplies now "necessary" for learning.

Consider this: Our tax dollars pay for our educational system. We should be able to expect from government the wise handling of these dollars. Much of the cost of education is made up of teachers' salaries, most of us accept that. What is questionable is the administrative costs required by large, top-heavy school boards. Why, when most school administrative duties have been downloaded to principals, is there still such a

large number of highly paid board staff?

Consider this: Our government obviously believes large new buildings equates better education. I think this because there is always money for constructing new buildings even when there is no money for the maintenance of buildings already in use. I think this because, although study after study has shown that young children learn best in a small school setting, government insists on continuing to build large new buildings and closing small schools. I think this because our government, after building a large new school, has to tell the world what a wonderful thing they have done and how lucky the children are to have such a large new building to learn in.

I would like to see a school system that really puts our children first, that considers the fact that they are young and need time and motion to grow healthy in mind and body. Young children need to be educated in their own community, with their own friends and neighbours around them, to feel part of that community and have the security that feeling provides. They are, after all, just starting their lives. This is a young rural child's school day: up before dawn, sit on bus (still and quiet, please), arrive at school, sit in class (still and quiet, please), 15 minute recess, sit in class (still and quiet, please), 45 minute or less noon hour, sit in class (still and quiet please), sit on bus (still and quiet please), arrive home. Granted, there are gym classes once or twice a week, but that's basically it.

Time: Everything is compressed to accommodate bus schedules. Noon hours have been shrunk from an hour and a half, to one hour, to 45 minutes and, in some schools, 30 minutes. It is rush, rush, rush, with no time for thinking. Small children need time out of the classroom as well as in during a school day.

Motion: There is not much chance for motion in a rural child's school day. Small children need to move and talk to learn. I would like for our schools to be managed by people who understand they are serving

the public and who show respect for students, parents and community members. I would like our schools to be managed by people with a vision of what an education system can be and who are able to see beyond their next paycheck. I would like a school system that is not hampered by

unnecessary government regulations.

I would like a school system managed by people who are open to discussion and who will work with parents and community members to create schools that are suitable for their areas and their children. I doubt our government, bureaucracy-bound as it is, can provide what our children need - room to breathe, freedom to explore and create, a chance to grow in a warm, nurturing environment, or what our communities need - an educational system that includes them, that recognizes their strengths and their rights and will work with them to provide what they feel is best for their children. One can live in hope, I suppose.

Carol Hyslop Wentworth Valley  
NS 902-548-2381

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

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