

REES' Pieces

Rural Nova Scotia an Endangered Species.

Before you read any further, please understand, I am not abandoning my position of the urgency improved internet and cell services for rural areas. However, there are a few things, which must be solved immediately prior to and are part of resurrecting the rural economy.

The build-out of any area for internet service is 24-30 months, and up to five years to complete provincially. There is greater urgency to solve matters inhibiting improving the rural areas.

So here goes the list then I'll expand on each one.

Rural Job losses: Stats Canada reports in 2018, HRM increased employment by 9,600, while the entire province created 6,900 new jobs. Simple math shows collectively there was a loss of 2,700 jobs in remaining areas.

Healthcare employment reduced: If you are wondering why people are complaining about healthcare, Stats Canada 2018 reports 3,600 fewer people employed in healthcare and social assistance categories than in 2017.

Resource industry declines: The resource industries including Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying and oil and gas, which are so important to rural areas showing a decrease of 1,100 jobs. However, agriculture showed an increase of 500.

Northern Pulp Mill: The government has mandated next January, Boat Harbour will close and nothing else can be added.

I've listed four problem areas, let's look for solutions. Politicians and political parties constantly look at the "next vote". Granted HRM with 234,200 employed compared to 455,900 throughout the entire province represents 51.3% of the entire workforce.

However, focusing on something that is successful is foolish. You can't take your foot off the accelerator, but you must divert more resources to failing areas. If school teachers spent most of their attention on the top students, what type of education system would we have?

When was the last time you witnessed, cabinet members and other MLAs going to rural areas, holding town halls with the invitation, "I need volunteers, from this community, who will form a committee, and tell me what you need? Form you committee, let me know when and I'll come back and spend a day with you looking for solutions."

Right now, the Northern Pulp Mill has the most urgency. If the mill closes next year, all sawmills from around the province will close within a month. Government needs to find a solution to the mill's continuance, or find a solution for local sawmills to have a sustainable market for bark, chips and residue. Secondly, government must ensure sawmills have a reliable source for saw logs.

A solution must be found for forestry cooperatives to have a market for the product which is harvested from their approximately 1,500 woodlot owner members. The mill in Abercrombie is just a cog in the wheel.

If we can send a man to the moon, surely technology can find a solution to Boat Harbour.

Looking at the employment chart elsewhere in this issue, I wonder if we have our priorities in the right place?

Information, culture and recreation showed an increase of 2,300 jobs, yet healthcare and social assistance lost 3,600 positions. Granted recreation might help make us healthier, but to that amount? Go figure. Did government money finance these positions?

Solving healthcare is another matter. Somehow, the sector needs an overhauling. For decades we've complained about primary healthcare, but it is inconceivable to understand the rationale of 3,600 less jobs in 2018 (68,400 positions) than 72,000 jobs in 2017. To make it even worse, we reached a peak in 2016 when 74,900 were employed in healthcare and social assistance.

Surely, the 2018 drop of 3,600 positions is not due to doctors retiring or leaving. I'd bet at least 3,300 lost jobs were from employment categories with less skills yet providing much needed services.

What needs to happen, is all MLAs, regardless of party, must direct and ensure the mindset in government offices change to "Rural Nova Scotia is an endangered species. This must be corrected immediately".

I can't solve the problems, but if residents complain loud enough changes will happen. If changes are to occur, you will make it happen.

The ball is in your court.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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OP-ED

You really shouldn't be reading this...

Rob Benn-Frenette, O.N.B

You really shouldn't be reading this... because a few months ago, I died. At least, temporarily. With a bit of luck, I came back.

Last August, while in the laundry room of my apartment building, my heart suddenly stopped and I collapsed. There was no medical rationale for this phenomenon. Like anyone, and perhaps even more than most, I have some medical issues. But none of them contributed to my cardiac arrest. My story isn't uncommon—sudden cardiac arrest happens to 35,000 to 45,000 Canadians every year. It could happen to you.

It was sheer luck that my building's superintendent was in the room. He called 911, and with guidance from the operator, performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on me. By doing this, he bought extra time until paramedics arrived and used a defibrillator to jump-start my heart. Doing this saved my life.

That 911 operator had asked my superintendent if there was an automated external defibrillator (AED) in the building. He admitted there was not.

Had my apartment stocked an AED onsite (as it now does), my chance of survival would have been much higher. Many others are grieved annually because they

didn't have the luck I had.

After someone's heart stops, each minute defibrillation is delayed their chance of survival drops by 7-10%. After just 12 minutes, an adult's survival rate is less than 5%.

In New Brunswick, the provincial government requires land ambulances to respond to an urban emergency within 9 minutes, or up to 22 minutes for rural calls. They are expected to meet or exceed these times only 90% of the time. Response times of 12 minutes aren't unusual.

If your heart were to stop, and there is any delay before someone finds you, calls 911, an ambulance is dispatched and travels to your location, your may not have a chance of survival.

That's why it's vital that AEDs become prevalent in our businesses, houses of worship, apartment buildings, and even our homes. AEDs are easy to use by anyone—they deliver clear voice prompts to guide their use and require minimal maintenance.

I'll be honest; my unexpected experience was terrifying and not just for me. My friends and family were understandably horrified, especially since I was only 29 when this occurred. The board, volunteers, and other stakeholders in the registered charity I run, BullyingCanada, were shocked. It's still hard for all of

us to grapple with this—even six months later.

None of us imagined I might not be here tomorrow. We hadn't yet done the succession planning required to ensure BullyingCanada will be around to provide support to the many tens of thousands of bullied Canadian youth who depend on us each year.

Life-saving AED technology is readily available and inexpensive, but it isn't yet commonly stocked in all public places. Perhaps one deterrent is the \$100 fee required to register an AED in the Ambulance New Brunswick registry. Why is there a cost to do so?

Unlike other provinces where this registry is publicly accessible and is programmed to alert emergency dispatchers to the location of the nearest AED, our provincial government has not implemented this. Besides, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are implementing software that alerts AED owners of nearby emergencies and requests they rush it over to the scene. This is easy and will no doubt save lives that would otherwise be lost needlessly.

My near-death experience was a big wake up call for me and those connected to me. I hope it is one for you as well. Join me in advocating for the broad implementation of AEDs—including common sense legislation requiring one

in all public buildings—and a public, interactive registry.

One day, an AED might help keep your family complete, as it did with mine.

Rob Benn-Frenette, O.N.B. lives with his husband in Fredericton, New Brunswick and is the co-founder and co-executive director of BullyingCanada, Canada's national anti-bullying charity. Rob Benn-Frenette and BullyingCanada hereby grant full, non-exclusive worldwide rights to any publication to publish this article online or in print. Copyright © 2019 BullyingCanada Inc, All rights reserved.

The Shoreline Journal

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Dominion Chair Factory Store

BIBLE HILL:
C.W. Fraser Pharmacy
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DEBERT:
Debert Mini-Mart

FIVE ISLANDS:
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GLENHOLME:
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Wilson's Gas

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CrossRoads Co-op
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Decoy Theatre Launches Inaugural Season

By Maurice Rees

A new theatre company has come to town and promises to gain a quick loyal following and offer opportunities for local artists to display their talents.

New Truro based theatre company, Decoy Theatre, will launch their inaugural season with Marion Bridge, written by Cape Breton's Daniel MacIvor and directed by Truro's own Jennifer Johnson. Performances will take place March 7-8, at the Marigold Cultural Centre in Truro. Tickets are \$20 at Ticketpro.ca or through the Marigold Cultural Centre box office.

"It made sense to have Marion Bridge as our first production," says Samantha Madore, co-founder of Decoy Theatre. "It has become a classic Nova Scotian play and we feel the Truro audience will really connect with the characters and the story."

Marion Bridge is the humorous and touching story of three daughters who go home to Cape Breton and must confront not only their dying mother, but also the lives they have come to lead. Each in their own way attempts to sort out

the emptiness and loneliness that has come to rule her day-to-day life. The ideas of what they wanted to be and what their mother wanted them to be is all the more torturous as the daughters begin to finally understand what they are and why they are that way.

Marion Bridge schedule is as follows: Thursday, March 7 - 7:30 p.m., \$20 and Friday, March 8 - 7:30 p.m., \$20.

Director Jennifer Johnson, Queen's University drama graduate and co-founder of Decoy Theatre, has worked with students coaching voice, drama, and musical theatre. She grew up doing shows at the Cobequid Educational Centre in Truro, participated in the Truro Music Festival and has been producing and directing shows in the Truro area for the past six years.

Marion Bridge features Truro talent Sacha Brake, Samantha Madore and Emma K. Smit as sisters Theresa, Agnes and Louise. Decoy Theatre aims to showcase local works and talent while allowing audiences to escape into their own worlds. For more information on Decoy Theatre, email decoytheatre@gmail.com.

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