

# REES' Pieces

## A Solution to Iain Rankin's Tight Rope

The attitude of North Americans, including decisions to become more vocal and stand up against the establishment, is changing quickly. In the almost 15 months since Donald Trump was elected president, more and more people are coming forward with accusations they have been abused.

It might not be totally visible in Colchester County but there is a trickle down affect, which probably will become more prominent in months to come. So let's go back and review a few things. In fall of 2016 the "Hollywood tape" in which candidate Trump made statements of what he was able to do as a culmination of being prominent and powerful did not deter others from electing him as president.

Then early fall 2017 things changed quickly when accusations were made against Howard Weinstein. He was quickly removed from the company he co-founded with his brother. Immediately, women started coming forward with accusations against many other movie giants, television-radio hosts and additional politicians. Two senior politicians were forced to resign or retire.

As women became more comfortable coming forward, a few of Trump's accusers have started re-applying pressure. Yes, I watch a lot of CNN and always try to imagine how movements in USA might be affecting things in Canada. Already, we've seen female MP's become more vigilant in making accusations against other Members of Parliament in the House of Commons.

Locally, a Halifax female fire fighter has been issued an apology after she waged a 12 year battle. Others are becoming vocal about being refused treatment and career opportunities not just by themselves, but family members are speaking out about refusals for treatment, court attitudes and other things effecting them and loves ones.

As the trickle-downs stars to gain momentum, it's inter-

esting to note the battle which has been raging for nearly 50 years in Pictou County concerning the former Scott, now Great Northern pulp mill. The matter has started to gather traction, prominence and lots of press. The community might be divided, but for the first time, there's a strong movement or rallying around those who have expressed concerns about Northern Pulp's attitude towards the community, even though it is an important part of the economic engine of the much of the province. As society in North America changes, and the threat of global warming rises, a lot more people are starting to become vocal maintaining the environment is more important than the "almighty dollar".

Letters from current and retired mill employees and management to book stores caused cancellation of a book signing event by "The Mill Fifty Years of Pulp and Protest" author, Joan Baxter. However, the operators at Pictou Lodge came to the rescue by hosting the book signing.

Pictou Lodge's offer came after Northern Pulp cancelled this year's staff Christmas party after Pictou Lodge's, Wes Surret went public on December 9th with his beliefs the Abercrombie Mill has continued to display an arrogant "we can do whatever we want" attitude, which he says is detrimental to the community.

According to reports, the party cancellation cost the Lodge well in excess of \$10,000 and also caused many staff to lose work time. Surret indicated it hurt, but he still stood behind what he believes.

Pictou County is very closely knit, even though not everyone agrees all the time. It didn't take long for a fisherman's association to decide they would hold an event to show support and help the Lodge. Their reaction was primarily because Northern Pulp's solution for Boat Harbour appears to be run the effluent through a longer pipe and dump it into Northumberland Strait, which fishermen say will destroy the fishery.

As provincial residents become more vocal, it's going to be interesting to see how Iain Rankin, NS Minister of Environment, walks a tight rope. Earlier this summer, he gave approval for LaFarge to burn tires in its Brookfield kiln, which created headlines an existing tire shredder in HRM would be negatively impacted and probably would have to reduce staff, because tires would not be available.

Prior to Rankin's Ministerial approval LaFarge was courting municipalities requesting a deal to take their low

grade plastics as feed stock to the kiln. (See Letter to Editor on this page). Now with tire burning approval, LaFarge is not interested in low grade plastics.

The story becomes more complex, because municipalities can not send their low grade plastic to China, because it has imposed a ban effective December 31st. Colchester currently has thirteen 40' shipping containers of low grade plastics in storage and HRM has a lot more as do other municipalities. By law, NS Department of Environment refuses to let plastics be land-filled. Most municipal governments are asking for guidance from DOE and the Premier.

Minister Rankin and the Premier could easily solve the problem and create a lot friends, while at the same time eliminate a major problem for all municipalities, not only in Nova Scotia, but the entire Atlantic Region.

My solution is rather simple: Cancel LaFarge's tire burning permit; which would add some economic stability to the HRM- based tire shredding operation; twist LaFarge's arm, if necessary, to change their plans and take all the low grade plastics from the municipalities, who previously shipped all they had to China.

If Nova Scotia can't supply enough plastics as feed-stock, seek the required quantity from other provinces starting with New Brunswick and PEI. Create some friends in other provinces.

What a great Christmas or New Year's gift for municipalities. With that problem out of the way, next is to solve the Pictou County problem to the satisfaction of local residents. Two great ways to "Ring in the New Year".

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to everyone.

**Maurice**

## Letters to the editor

*This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.*

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*NOTE: Even though I'm publisher, I could do whatever I wanted, but believe my opinions and observations should be published in the same way as I would handle a letter from a reader. As a result my thoughts appear as Letter to the Editor. This issue contains two items about which I feel strongly.*

November 29, 2017  
Dear Editor:

I've been in publishing in Nova Scotia since 1970 and

have watched the decline of rural areas, and in recent years how those same rural areas are at the disadvantage, but today, I learned the worst of off decisions by big business.

Effective January 1, 2018, customers will not be able to pay their land line or mobility bill with cash at Bell Aliant stores or other retail outlets which take payments. Apparently only debit or credit cards will be accepted.

How do seniors, or those who do not have a credit or

debit card pay their monthly commitments? Years ago we moved from a barter system to cash. For decades cash has been accepted as payment. When did Canadian paper money not become legal tender?

I understand it is the electronic system being used, something called "MMS". I was told by a representative at a Bell Aliant store, when we paid cash we were not paying Bell but a different company, and they were only accepting "cash as a favour".

burden of taxes is distributed among property owners. The current legislation dictates how this is done, not councils.

We are asking for a review to ensure the homeowners who need assistance to stay in their homes are getting it. There are alternatives. Assistance to lower-income property owners would be expected.

A spike protection may also be considered, so that those

*continued on page 6*

I am upset and going to see what I can arrange for a social media campaign. If others are upset send an email to: maurice@theshorelinejournal.com and let's get a media campaign organized.

Sincerely yours  
Maurice Rees, Publisher  
The Shoreline Journal

(PS: After this letter appeared in the Chronicle Herald, I have been a guest on CBC Maritime Noon and twice on the Rick Howe Show at 95.7 FM)

December 15, 2017  
Dear Editor:

Environment Minister, Iain Rankin is in a tough spot. Earlier this summer he approved LaFarge to burn 20 tonnes of whole tires at its cement kiln in Brookfield to replace 15% of its fossil fuel consumption. Immediately it became public knowledge an existing Halifax based tire shredding company's future could be in question. Residents near the Brookfield plant have taken legal action for a judicial review in March claiming toxins are a health hazard.

Rankin's problem centers around China's ban on accepting low grade plastics on December 31st, which is causing cachous for all municipal recy-

cling facilities across North America. The Municipality of Colchester has 13 full shipping contains of the plastics and no place to ship them. HRM has filled all its storage facilities and is in the process of asking the provincial Department of Environment (NSDOE) to permit land-filling. For more than 10 weeks NSDOE has not given permission. Other municipalities are facing similar situations.

Colchester Municipal Council was informed on November 30th that five months ago LaFarge was courting the municipality to supply low grade plastics as feedstock for its kiln. Now since getting ministerial approval LaFarge has lost interest in low grade plastics.

Minister Rankin holds all the cards. He could rescind his decision given to LaFarge which would help an existing HRM business, and make Brookfield area residents happy. His next card would be to instruct LaFarge to resume discussions with municipalities for all their low grade plastic feedstock.

To permit incineration of low grade plastics, which otherwise would have to be land-filled, as there is no market nor is none expected within the next five years would solve a problem facing every resident and business. Rankin's decision to incinerate low grade plastics in Brookfield would make him a hero of every municipality in Atlantic Canada.

As an aside note, due to China's ban, the state of Oregon has just eliminated its recycling program.

Yours truly  
Maurice Rees, Publisher  
The Shoreline Journal

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## OP-ED

By Geoff Stewart

Homeowners want and need to know what their taxes will be and for those taxes to be affordable.

The organization I represent understands this, and does not want to do anything that would result in people having to sell their homes and move because they could not afford significant increases in property taxes due to rising assessments.

The provincial property tax program (CAP) came into effect in 2001 to ensure this didn't happen. However, the program has never been reviewed to ensure it was achieving the intended effect, and there are anecdotal stories that suggest it is not. The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities is asking for a review of the program to determine if it is achieving its goal, and if it is not, to explore alternatives.

The CAP program does save some people money. But

for every dollar one person saves, another person is paying a dollar more. The question is whether the people who are saving money are the ones who need it the most, and whether the people who need help the most are receiving the help they need.

All provinces in Canada have granted property tax as the primary revenue tool for municipalities to pay for local services. Property tax is a tax on wealth.

Just as people with higher incomes are expected to pay higher taxes, people with higher property values are expected to pay higher property taxes. In looking at what is happening under the CAP program, one can

see that owners of some houses with higher market assessed values are paying less in property taxes than others in the same community with lower assessed values.

This is not about how much is raised through property taxes — that is up to councils to explain to their citizens. This is about how the

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