

REES' Pieces

Toe the party line...

It's three days after the May 30th election. All election signs have not been removed; recounts in constituencies requiring them have not been held and there is already talk about major changes and probably at least one by-election. Jamie Baillie, who led the PC's to almost doubling the seat count has flown a test balloon, he'd lead the 17 PC MLA's through the upcoming session of the legislature.

However, he's also going to review his plans for the next four years. Essentially, he's saying that by late summer, or early fall he'll be resigning as party leader. Several party members expect since he lives in Halifax, he'll resign as Cumberland South MLA.

The next 30 months or so will be interesting to see who is sending signals they will not re-offer, or might resign part way through their mandate. With greater emphasis on social media, the microscopes get larger and more intense, there are a number who are at the age and have served enough time they could move on to the private sector and not have long to wait for their MLA pension to kick in once they reach the age of 55.

Who's in or who's out is not of greatest importance. What is important, and no one has an answer, why the ratio of people voting continues to drop. This election at 53%, we had the lowest voter participation in history. I'm have been eligible to vote for 50 years. I can remember when voter turn-out was in the mid-70's.

What's in the budget; what program is going to be enlarged, or what might be eliminated is important for today, but the most critical situation is how can we increase voter engagement? The way we are headed, there will be less than 40% will vote within two decades. Not everything is perfect in a democracy, but there are millions of people around the world who are craving for or dying for what we are squandering away.

Experts have been unable to reverse the trend of dropping voter turn-out. I don't have the answers either, but I'll give you a bit of my perception:

Political parties are so similar, it's hard to find a difference. Most promises are never fulfilled to voter expectation. Party platforms are not different enough to engage voters, who are feeling disenfranchised.

Politicians would be much more believable if they told us what they are going to cut to enable them to deliver their most recent promise.

Most MLA's head to Halifax and "toe" the party line; Very rarely, if at all, do members vote their conscience, or the wishes of their constituents;

Minority governments seem to work better. Parties have to work together, because no one wants to be guilty of causing another election.

In a majority government all party leaders work hard to keep members in line voting party policy;

HENCE, voters feel their opinions and voices are not heard, because party whips control how everyone votes not what voters want or need.

In Nova Scotia, we could get the voter participation up, if McNeil, Baillie and Burrill would implement changes to party policy. A good start would be to direct all MLA's to have a set number of town halls in the ridings. It may drive up participation and create greater response to issues.

In tandem with town hall meetings an increase in the number of free votes in the legislature might help spur voter interest relating to issues affecting different areas. These two changes could be implemented without any additional cost and would demonstrate MLA's are consulting with constituents.

It would be helpful to increase the emphasis of teaching civics at all grade levels and given as a credit. School Boards should be mandated to request MLA's make two or three presentations at a school assembly each school year to engage students which will indirectly engage parents.

My final suggestion is to have a good look at areas, where turn out is at it's lowest to see if there are particular reasons: Perhaps it's poll location, accessibility, economics, or local hot button issues where voters are feeling shunned.

Your thoughts? Please write to give me your thoughts.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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Dear Editor:

I enjoy receiving my copy of the Shoreline Journal, with fun reversal of front and back. I sometimes read the Cumberland South news first, sometimes save it till last, and always just love turning the paper upside down to continue reading. The joyful coverage you gave this month for both the geological park and the arts collective June project is hopeful and exciting. I also want to congratulate you on the full coverage you gave to the Cape Sharp Tidal situation.

I do, however, wish to point out that the arts in Parrsboro, and along the Shore generally, extend beyond the Art Bar. Very exciting one-of-a-kind events are held all summer long just across the road at the old Post Office, Main & Station, whose art director featured in two of the photos in your recent issue, supporting the Art Bar.

I'd love to see extensive

coverage of the Main & Station events in the Shoreline Journal, because they are also world class and a very significant contribution to tourism in Parrsboro. The town hosts a spectrum of arts, from folk to newest waves. Though public funding tends to favour the mid-range, I hope the newspapers can give space to all of it. You are the vehicle to get news of exciting ventures across national borders.

Thanks for your paper. Always a pleasure to read through.

**Sandra Stephenson
(113 r. St. Francois)
Rigaud, Quebec**

Dear Editor,

Most of us don't realize how valuable our car keys are until we lose them. With remote starters and built-in unlock systems, keys are not as simple or cheap as they used to be, with many owners paying hundreds of dollars in re-

placement fees.

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Although it's a free service, donations provide child amputees, and amputees across the country, with vital programs and financial assistance for the cost of artificial limbs. Growing up a double foot amputee myself, I can personally attest to the value of these programs in Nova Scotia.

If you did not receive a War Amps key tag, you can order them at waramps.ca or call toll free 1-800-250-3030.

**Tim Verney
War Amps Regional
Representative, Nova Scotia**

There is Still Beauty in Wentworth

By Carol Hyslop

I live in Wentworth, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia. I was born here, in a little house half-way between the valley floor and the railroad track and a short distance from where I now reside. Although I did not spend my childhood here, I visited, spent 10 years here with my parents and have lived here permanently for another 46 years.

Wentworth has always been known for its beautiful valley.

I remember when it was truly beautiful...so beautiful it twisted your heart. When the nights were quiet, the air clear and the water in the streams so pure you could drink it. There were forests, waterfalls, all manner of vegetation, birds and wild animals. And it was there for anyone who wished to observe and enjoy. It was to me, literally, Paradise.

Then came the Trans-Canada highway, later to be called highway 104, and my beautiful world changed forever.

Wentworth Valley is still beautiful but it has taken constant vigilance and citizen action to keep it that way. The twin powers that rule our lives - big business and government - care little for beauty. They have no appreciation for sunrises, sunsets, quiet nights or for clean air, pure water, forests and wild animals. Their lives are focused on the acquisition of money and power. They confuse the value of life with the value of their possessions.

Life for those who care for the valley has been a continuous matter of fighting for the things which should be their right. It is a tiring way to live, always apprehensively

awaiting the next assault on your home.

The NS power company wanted to string a line of high transmission poles down the centre of the valley - that was fought.

The government of Nova Scotia wanted to route the new, improved four lane 104 highway down the middle of the valley leaving no room even for access roads at the valley's south end - that was fought.

The constant threat of clear cutting is continually being fought.

Yesterday, on my way home from points north in Wentworth I suddenly noticed an odd change in the outline of our mountains. Someone was cutting a huge number of trees at the top of Higgins Mountain! I suddenly recalled my neighbour saying to me that there were more windmills being constructed in that area and my inner voice said to me "Here we go again!"

The province of Nova Scotia is diverse in its natural geography. We have, or have had, areas of exquisite scenery of all sorts. Our provincial tourism department trumpets this abroad hoping to lure visitors who will help strengthen our economy. From that point of view alone, why are our beautiful areas being constantly whittled away? One would think they would be held as provincial assets to be used to encourage the business of tourism.

Our county of Cumberland has been severely clearcut on crown land. When I was young, I understood 'crown land' to be areas held by our government for all of us to enjoy and would not be used for lumbering. What an idealistic fool

I was!

All around our valley, if you listen in the evening, you can hear the clearcutting machines snorting and rumbling as they tear at our forests. Why? We are told the people of Nova Scotia need the money more than they need the trees. I would venture to guess the money obtained by these undertakings never touches the people of Nova Scotia and that most of it drains away to places, or people, outside our province.

Regarding the recent assault on Higgins Mountain, I don't think you will find people here adverse to NSP moving towards a more sustainable method of supplying us with electrical power. It is that consideration to maintaining our remaining forested areas is not part of the equation. Neither is consultation with people who live around the areas affected.

I am disgusted with the way life has evolved during my time here on earth. I don't like that people are constantly urged to buy things and are all but told the total personal value of their life will be equal to the amount of possessions they can amass. I don't like the way the department of education equates 'good' education with big new factory schools. I don't like that public transportation businesses will carry people only on 100 series highways between urban centres, as they consider the people who live in between and who would value the service, to few to serve. I don't like the way internet providers will not provide service to areas with sparse population. The list goes on.

Here in our beautiful (for now) valley, it makes me very tired to think another battle is on the horizon.

The
Shoreline
Journal

Here's where
to find us:

BASS RIVER:

Bayside Pharmacy
Dominion Chair Factory Store

BIBLE HILL:

C.W. Fraser Pharmacy
MacQuarries Pharmacy

DEBERT:

Barnhill's Superette
Debert Mini-Mart

FIVE ISLANDS:

Masstown Market Five Islands

GLENHOLME:

Double "C" Truckstop
Glenholme General Store

GREAT VILLAGE:

Wilson's Gas

MAITLAND:

Frieze & Roy General Store

MASSTOWN:

Masstown Market
MTM Retail Gas (Petro-Can)

NORTH RIVER:

Grant's Grocery

ONSLow:

Onslow Market

PARRSBORO:

CrossRoads Co-op
Ken's Grocery
Wright's Pharmasave

TRURO:

Atlantic Superstore
MacQuarrie's Pharmasave
(Esplanade)

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