

# Rees' Pieces

## Perception is Reality

Sometimes fiction is easier to believe than reality, but in most cases perception is reality. As the saying goes, where there's smoke there's fire.

In Colchester West most residents have their own wells, so at first glance the introductory party of this month's column might not seem a high priority. However, the reality is there is not much accountability. Let me explain.

There's a strong feeling the Department of Environment has been failing the test of public confidence in matters that affect the masses. At times the Department appears to be high handed, in that it seems to come down hard on individuals or small business in matters that in the big scheme of things don't amount to a hill of beans. But on the big picture they are either ineffective or tread lightly.

Take for instance the fracking water situation in Debert. From the beginning they were almost invisible in dealing with flow-back water from fracking in Kennetcook a few years ago. From personal experience in trying to get information about the situation, they were unreachable. Phone messages left unanswered to the point that it was impossible to talk to anyone, locally.

That invisibility has lead to most residents feeling the "department's a joke". Similar beliefs have spread over to municipal government. Take for instance Councillor Karen MacKenzie's statement, "I don't trust Department of Environment". Why does she feels that way?

Perhaps the answer lies in the recent Auditor General's recent report, which opened the eyes and raised the ire of a lot of Nova Scotians with its recent report on the lack of water testing in business, schools, institutions and municipalities. To think inspectors have failed test some for 10 years or to go back and take water samples from municipalities which fell victims to "boil water orders" is unbelievable.

I'm sure Karen Casey, MLA and Minister of Education and Childhood Development was not pleased to learn there could be unsafe drinking water in the schools. Maybe it would be more appropriate to say, Casey would be extremely upset she could not give parents, her strongest assurance, drinking water in all schools was tested and extremely safe.

I'm not picking on those who run and work at municipal water systems, water systems in rural schools or facilities, where the public may wish to have a glass of water. I will, however, point the finger at those in management, who failed to report testing was not being done in accordance with the law.

There's nothing wrong with making a mistake as long as you admit it, but there is serious flaws, when the matter is swept under the rug.

Where is the accountability?

In this era the public is expecting more. The perception is it's more of the same for Minister Furey to say he was confident drinking water was safe. Perhaps it was safe, but he certainly can't prove it.

We have a new government and they must do things differently. I'm not his speech writer, nor am I a spin doctor, but if I were, my prose for Minister Furey would have been a simple statement, "I believe the water is safe, but I can't prove it. This is unacceptable. I will correct the matter and will hold those in charge accountable. You have my assurance this will not happen again".

Plain and simple.

He would have addressed the situation head-on; taken charge, and assured us of accountability.

It's hard to trust, when you're not sure the water is safe to drink.

Closer to home, the Municipality of Colchester, Truro, Stewiacke and Millbrook have a lot of offer, but we are under performing. Managed correctly, and if municipalities were firing on all cylinders, to deliver top value to taxpayers, Colchester municipal units would be giving Halifax a run for its money, in being the top municipal unit in the province. However, we're not there yet.

The perception is widespread that there's more lip service about the harmony on municipal cooperation, than reality. It's not just me and the public. Industrialist, Tom Stanfield says, there's a lack of cooperation and it's hurting us.

Wake up guys and gals. Let's move ahead.

Maurice

# Letters to the editor

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

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### Dear Editor:

I would like to thank you and Linda Harrington for placing the Royal Canadian Legion Annual Literary & Poster Contest 2014 article in your May 2014 Shoreline Journal. I am always most pleased with student and teacher involvement in the Royal Canadian Legion Annual Literary and Poster Contest.

I know from experience this entails a lot of work and time on the part of the teachers and the students. Each year I am truly excited to go through students' submissions and each year I am always amazed with the creativity, sensitivity and sincerity in their final product.

I am very proud of all students and teachers who participate within Chignecto Central Regional School Board. A big heartfelt thank you goes out to the students who realize all the hardships endured by all military personnel, their families and friends because of the Armed Forces' involvement in past World Wars, Peacekeeping, and most recently the Afghanistan War. Because of these youth, the sacrifices made by all will not be forgotten. LEST WE FORGET

**Angela Reid, PRO  
Poppy Committee  
Colchester Royal Canadian Legion  
Branch 026**

### Editor:

Have you thought about offering multi-year renewal terms, 2 or 3 years?

**L.M. McKinnon  
Debert, NS**

**(EDITOR'S NOTE: I like your suggestion. Yes, we have discussed it. Certainly the rise of postage stamps to \$0.85 in booklets or rolls or \$1 for a single stamp has affected everyone. However, the problem with multi-year plans is complicated by the fact we don't know what increases they will announce in a year or two.)**

**If we might offer a long term plan, we have to reduce our average annual rate. With Canada Post changing postal rates with significant increases we could end up with less revenue if we absorb the recent 22 cent increase. We are hoping some people will automatically renew, as we have suggested without the need of sending a notice.**

**We also ask for subscribers to provide their phone number and email address. What we have started doing is email them. Also we put a note in the paper asking for people to check their address label. Thankfully, people have reacted to both.**

**While we also respect people need a reminder, we are hoping they will act on the first notice eliminating our need to send a second notice and then a FINAL NOTICE.**

### Dear Sir:

I am enclosing two postcards of Londonderry that were in my aunt's possession. She was a (grace) Mattatall, before marrying Fred Blair of Great Village.

My dad (Warren) was her brother and Viola, another sister moved to the states when she was 18. They went to school in Londonderry (now the community centre, I believe).

I was very interested in the old pictures of the Montrose School as I attended there. We lived next door to Pearl & Alden Knight in the old Carr place. Jean Knight was the teacher at that time.

I don't have any old pictures, but remember the area, as we drive around a couple of times a year, when we are visiting.

I love the paper and look forward to getting it every month and reading all about the area.

**Thank you  
Beryl Nicholson**

PS: My grandparents - Londonderry Levi and Maude Mattatall; son Warren; daughter Grace, daughter Viola - daughter Elizabeth, son Gary went to school in Great Village.

# 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

**NORTH RIVER:**  
Grant's Grocery

**ONSLOW:**  
Onslow Market

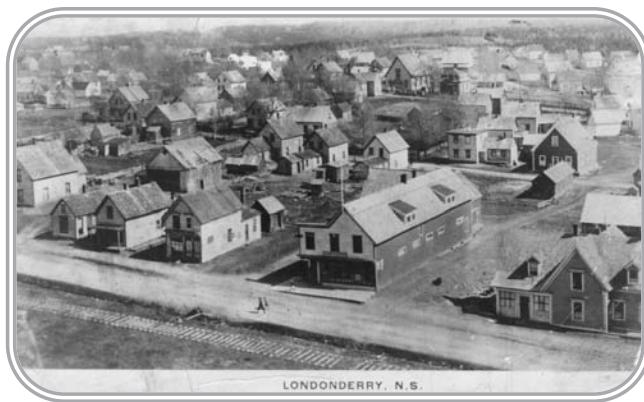
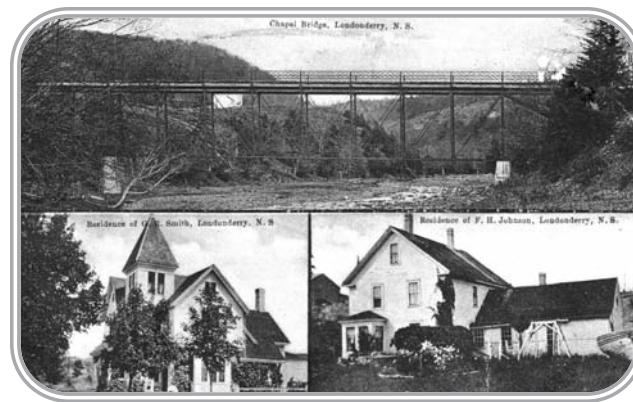
**PARRSBORO:**  
CrossRoads Co-op  
Ken's Grocery  
Wright's Pharmasave

**TRURO:**  
Atlantic Superstore  
MacQuarrie's Pharmasave  
(Esplanade)  
tshirtsrus.ca

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## Do you have a Disability?

By Christine Urquhart

Do you have a disability? Do you find it hard to walk? Hard to hear? Hard to see? Did you know that most fire deaths happen in the home?

Everyone should have a fire escape plan and practice how to get outside, especially if you have disabilities! Here are a few tips:

Home fire sprinklers can contain and may even put out a fire in less time than it would take the fire department to arrive. When choosing an apartment or remodeling or purchasing a home, look for a residence that has home fire sprinklers.

Include everyone in planning and practicing home fire drills. People with disabilities can provide input on the best methods for them to escape.

People with disabilities should discuss what assistance they may need with everyone in the home (and with neighbours).

In an apartment building, know the location of all exit stairs and arrange for assistance in case of an emergency.

Choose an outside meeting place for everyone to meet after escaping.

Keep a telephone or phone with TDD (telecommunication device for the deaf) in the sleeping room within reach of the bed.

Install smoke alarms inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of your home. For the best protection, interconnect all the smoke alarms so that when one sounds, they all sound.

Smoke alarms and alert devices, called accessories, are available for people who are deaf. Strobe lights throughout the home are activated by smoke alarms and alert people who are deaf to fire conditions. When people who are deaf are asleep, a high-intensity strobe light along with a pillow shaker or a bed shaker can wake them up and alert them to fire conditions.

Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button. If you are unable to safely reach the alarm, ask for help. Some alarms have features that make them easier to test, such as with a flashlight or the television remote.

Practice your home fire escape drill twice a year.



**The Shoreline Journal** (circ. 1300) is a monthly community newspaper serving communities along the Glooscap Trail from Truro to Parrsboro, Nova Scotia serving the communities of Belmont/Debert/Wentworth/Londonderry/Onslow/Masstown along the shore to Great Village, Bass River, Economy, Five Islands and Lower Five Islands. It is published on the last Wednesday of each month (earlier in December) with a deadline of the 20th of the month.

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