

REES' Pieces

Transparency Needs To Be #1

Over the past couple of decades we have noticed a significant drop in the percentage of voters who actually cast their vote compared to who is eligible. It's a concern across all levels of government and the drop is most noticeable at the municipal level. Ironic because they are the ones closest to the taxpayer.

Maybe changes are coming as the public become more engaged, from an increasing number of social media platforms, where many seem to climb on the bandwagon to voice their opinion. Most of the occurrences seem to be on the negative side, but maybe positive things will start to evolve as good things can happen at federal, provincial and municipal levels.

Historically, many people have expressed a dis-interest in politics, because they felt their voice or vote did not matter. For democracy to work properly every opinion is important and must be received with sincerity.

To achieve those levels of satisfaction transparency is possibly the most important component. Not only must transparency be done, it must appear to be done and treated as #1 priority. I mention this as a result of an observation at Colchester Council during a public meeting on Change of Land use bylaws.

A thick package was provided in advance and given to the media well in advance of the meeting. A quick review of the documents contained only positive comments. Not a murmur of any opposition or comments of concern from the general public.

However, the question of complete transparency arose as result of comments from Dr. Short who lives near the proposed residential development in Bible Hill. During his presentation he made reference to a letter he had submitted, but was not contained in the package. During his presentation he quoted excerpts from the letter.

It didn't take long for the letter to be retrieved and included in the minutes as part of the public hearing. My observation might be totally wrong and such submissions are not required to be included. However, if transparency is to appear to be done, I would suggest all submissions in support of, opposed to, or raising concern should be included.

Inclusion might not make any difference in the outcome. Staff and elected councillors would not be vulnerable for the public to feel and say their opinions were not considered or at least made public.

I'm not saying who is right or wrong, but to make an informed decision both sides of the matter must be included for public scrutiny and the public needs to be recognized. That is my conclusion on transparency. I'd appreciate written comments in support of my feelings, or from those who think I am "off base".

On another matter, Councillor Stewart is correct about dealing with tragedy. What will council's decision be on dealing with tragedy suffered by 17 Bible Hill residents who lost everything in a fire which destroyed a 12 unit apartment building on April 27th? Simply nothing. Council can not use taxpayer dollars for every tragedy, large or small.

On another matter Councillor Taggart is getting more aggressive asking for residents and businesses to voice their opinion and explain their needs for improved internet service. Like many others, Taggart is of the opinion fiber speed internet will make businesses more competitive; students will have access to on-line educational services and for the rural economy to grow internet accessibility needs improving.

In his job as a realtor, Taggart says realtors, locally and nationally are having problems selling properties where there is no or very poor internet service and added some realtors have stopped listing properties where that occurs.

Nationally, Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) anticipates rural population will increase by 7% over a couple of decades as rural internet service starts to match speeds in urban centres. To illustrate his point, Taggart says he knows of one West Colchester professional who works from home, but has been quoted costs ranging in thousands of dollars to get appropriate speed internet.

If residents in rural Colchester need or want fiber speed internet, they must speak up. My suggestion is call or email Councillor Taggart at: TTaggart@colchester.ca to help him build his case to go forward.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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New programs and services for Veterans

Looking for a new career? Interested in career guidance? Need help getting on the right path for your post-military life? Check out our new and enhanced benefits and services for Veterans! From education and training, to well-being and financial support, Veterans Affairs Canada has you covered.

Do your career goals mean more education? The Education and Training Benefit can provide the funding you need to achieve your education and career goals. If you released since April 1, 2006 and served at least six years, you may be eligible for this benefit. Whether you are furthering your education journey or beginning a new one, this is the place to start!

A meaningful career is an important part of your well-being. The Career Transition Services program has been re-designed to support you the whole way: from career counseling and coaching, job search and resume building, all the way to interview preparation and job placement assistance.

Are you a Veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces who has medically-released within

the last 120 days? Or do you have a health problem resulting from your military service that is making it difficult for you to adjust? You may qualify for rehabilitation services. Our purpose is to ensure that you improve your health to the fullest extent possible and adjust to life at home, in your community or at work.

And, access to the Veteran Family Program is now available across all Military Family Resource Centres.

We have also introduced the Caregiver Recognition Benefit, which provides a caregiver \$1,000 a month, tax-free.

Applying for these benefits is easy. You can do it in just a few steps. Do you have a My VAC account? If not, you can register for one anytime.

You served your country with honour and are ready for what's next. Our mission, at Veterans Affairs Canada, is to support you and your family through the next phase of your life.

To learn more about these programs and how they may help you or your family, please visit veterans.gc.ca.

Michel Doiron
Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Delivery
Veterans Affairs Canada

Youth expo a showcase of rich, diverse opportunities

To the Editor,

Nova Scotia has been struggling with the retention of young adults in the province for many years. The outmigration of this demographic is often cited on challenges finding employment and a desire to seek unique and bountiful experiences elsewhere.

While recent trends have shown a greater number of youth are choosing to remain in the province, investing in the area's youth remains a priority for the sustainability of the region. Such an investment occurred at the Don Henderson Memorial Sportsplex in Brookfield on April 21, where youth were celebrated and engaged at an exposition organized by the organization Women That Hunt.

The event offered youth a variety of athletic, outdoor, cultural, fun and career booths, many with an interactive component to an intuitive experience. The event showcased the many rich and diverse opportunities present in the area which will no doubt shape and influence future decisions.

On behalf of the board, staff

and members of the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce, we extend our compliments and appreciation to Woman That Hunt for organizing such an amazing and important event that engaged many youth and parents; to the participating businesses and organizations for supporting the vision of the event; and to the area residents for embracing the event, making the expo an outstanding success that enriched the youth and appeal of the area.

Sincerely,
Joanne McRae, President
Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce

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:**
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)
- MILLBROOK:**
Super 8 Motel
Hampton Inn & Suites
- NORTH RIVER:**
Grant's Grocery
- PARRSBORO:**
CrossRoads Co-op
Ken's Grocery
Wright's Pharmasave
- TRURO:**
Atlantic Superstore
Best Western Glengarry
Holiday Inn
MacQuarrie's Pharmasave (Esplanade)
Rath Eastlink Comm Centre
Colchester East Hants Health Centre - Coffee Shop
- NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION:**
Each classroom at the following schools will receive a copy of the Shoreline Journal:
Bass River Consolidated;
Great Village Elementary; Debert Elementary; Chiganois Elementary; Central Colchester Junior High School; Parrsboro Elementary and Parrsboro Regional High School.

We are interested in placing the Shoreline Journal in additional locations. If you have a suggestion, or wish to have the Shoreline available from your store, please contact:
Maurice Rees, Publisher,
902-647-2968, or E-MAIL:
maurice@theshorelinejournal.com

Rural Communities Foundation TO MEET IN TRURO

By Maurice Rees

Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia's will hold its AGM on May 31st in the Lecture Theatre, Forrester Hall, NSCC Truro, 36 Arthur St., Truro. NS from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. The public is encouraged to attend. The AGM program will feature the Rural Vitality Grants Panel.

RCF Vice Chair Greg Levy will moderate the panel comprised of: Levi Cliche, Clean Annapolis Valley River Project Society; Jim Mustard & Christine Villneff, Raising the Villages; Bob Cervelli & Andy Horsnell, The Centre for Local Prosperity; Brennan Googoo, Ulnooweg Development Group and Gwen Wilson and Melissa Merritt, Digby Neck Collective. Panelists will give presentations on their projects which received funding from RCF.

The Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia supports community-based initiatives which: Seek to improve understanding of is-

suues facing rural and coastal communities in Nova Scotia; Offer solutions to problems and challenges of rural and coastal Nova Scotia and Create an environment that enhances and sustains rural

and coastal Nova Scotia. To learn more visit the RCF website at <http://www.ruralcommunitiesfdn.ca/>

Building Vibrant Communities Funding Announced

Colchester Transportation Cooperative and Nova Scotia Native Women's Association each received \$5,000 in the first year of Nova Scotia's Building Vibrant Communities grants program. They were the only two projects from Colchester area to receive funding.

A total of \$600,000, announced on May 1st, included 49 projects aimed at helping break down barriers to transportation and helping youth learn about farming and growing community food security.

The program is part of government's poverty reduction commitment. Communities, Culture and Heritage Minister Leo Glavine and Community Services Minister Kelly Regan announced the year-one recipients of the Building Vibrant Communities grants program.

The only recipient in Cumberland County was the Cumberland County Transportation Services Society receiving \$5,000 for Accessible Transportation in Cumberland County.

The Shoreline Journal (circ. 1650) 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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