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FRONT PAGE BRIEFS March 2015

Nova Scotia's 2014 peak tourism season saw a five per cent increase in accommodation revenues, the largest increase in room nights sold in one year since 2002 according to numbers released on January 29th. Nova Scotia welcomed 1.8 million visitors in 2014 as of November 30, with more than half arriving during the peak season of June to September. Overall visitation in some key markets was also up with New England accounting for the largest increase of 19 per cent. Detailed results can be found at <http://novascotiaturismagency.ca/nova-scotia-tourism-performance>

The second session of the 62nd general assembly of the Nova Scotia Legislature will resume Thursday, March 26, at 1 p.m.

Nova Scotians can check to see when their road will be cleared by visiting the new plow tracker and plowing priorities websites. The goal is to provide another road condition tool to help Nova Scotians anticipate when it's safe to travel. The plow tracker site is a live snowplow activity map that uses moving plow symbols to show where trucks are working on Nova Scotia roads in real time. The plowing priorities site uses colour to depict plowing standards for each provincially maintained road. For example, a red-coloured road is cleared within eight hours after a storm. To visit the sites, go to <http://novascotia.ca/tran/winter/plowtracker.asp> and <http://novascotia.ca/tran/winter/losmap.asp>

Michel Samson, acting Energy Minister, is encouraging everyone to provide further input on a draft report that summarizes what he heard during Electricity System Review public consultations in the fall. The Energy Department will use the feedback in a final report, which will be tabled in the legislature this spring. Key findings from last fall's review indicates Nova Scotians want: long-term rate stabilization and predictable electricity rates; more accountability and transparency in setting electricity rates and a focus on the environment and support for renewable energy resources, if it doesn't significantly impact electricity rates. An English copy of the report and a French executive summary are available online. People can comment on the report before March 18 by visiting www.novascotia.ca/electricityfuture, emailing electricityreview@novascotia.ca or writing to the department.

.CA and the Community Investment Program. Through the Community Investment Program, .CA funds projects that demonstrate the capacity to improve the Internet for all Canadians. The .CA team manages Canada's country code top-level domain on behalf of all Canadians. A Member-driven organization, .CA represents the interests of Canada's Internet community internationally. The second round of the .CA Community Investment Program is now open for applications at www.cira.ca. To learn more about the CIP and to arrange interviews with the .CA Community Investment Program, please contact: Ryan Saxby Hill, Communications Manager for .CA, ryan.hill@cira.ca, Ph: 613-316-2397

Connecting older adults with mobile technology. The Nova Scotia Community Access Program (NSCAP) is launching a new initiative aimed at providing seniors with skills and confidence in using mobile technologies. The program, called "Connecting older adults with mobile technology" has been launched across the province. There are currently 167,000 people over the age of 65 in Nova Scotia, and NSCAP hopes to reach as many people as possible by offering this program in community-based CAP sites all across the province. The program will offer beginner, basic, and advanced training options and will include topics such as: choosing the right device, understanding the technology, finding useful applications, and accessing ongoing support. NSCAP is one of 29 organizations to receive funding in the first year of the .CA Community Investment Program. For more information on how to register for "Connecting older adults with mobile technology" visit www.nscap.ca or call 1-844-539-9063 (toll free).

Opportunity for Youth - FREE COURSES. Over the March Break, there will be three courses for youth offered at the Great Village Fire Hall, free of charge. We will present a first aid course for youth ages 7-11 which teaches them how to react in an emergency situation and when to call 911. Children attending this course will be asked to bring a lunch and the course will run from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. and they will receive a certificate of attendance. The second course is the Babysitters course. This course will also run from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Please bring your own lunch. It focuses on handling situations which may occur while youth are babysitting and includes some first aid skills. This is a certification course. Lastly, a CPR-C course will be offered during the week. This is open to anyone in the surrounding communities. All courses are being offered at no charge. Seating is limited and pre-registration is required. For further information and to register for any of these courses, please contact Kathy Giles at 668-2613 or leave a message at 668-2784.

HUMOUR CORNER: A wife asked her husband: "What do you like most in me, my pretty face or my sexy body?" He looked at her from head to toe and replied: "I like your sense of humour."

Casey Meets Queen in London

By **Maurice Rees**

Colchester North MLA, Karen Casey, met Queen Elizabeth II while representing Nova Scotia at the opening of Canada House at the Canadian Consulate in London, England week of

February 16th. Within Canada House, Nova Scotia has a special room in which everything was made in Nova Scotia.

During the opening ceremonies, Casey presented a painting to Canada's High Commissioner, Gordon

Campbell, former premier of British Columbia. The painting done by a member of the Group of 7 was previously purchased by the Fountain family of Halifax, who donated it to the Nova Scotia Art Gallery. The painting has now

been loaned to Canada House for a period of 10 years.

The carpet on the floor of the Nova Scotia room is hand woven with a Nova Scotia theme. The Nova Scotia room is important to Nova Scotia, because it provides an opportunity for the premier to meet business people from around the world who are interested in locating a business in Nova Scotia. Premier McNeil has already used the room and will be making another trip to London in May.

The Canada House official opening was followed in the evening by a State Dinner with Casey sitting at the head table with other head table guests, which included John Baird, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Canada's High Commissioner, Gordon Campbell.



While in London for the re-opening of Canada House in London, Karen Casey presented a painting on behalf of Nova Scotians. Casey is shown with Gordon Campbell, who became Canada's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom in September 2011, in front of the painting by Arthur Lismore - one of The Group of Seven. (Submitted)

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM - FEBRUARY 19: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II (L) meets Canadian artist Charles Pachter, from Pachter Hall and Moose Factory in Toronto, during a visit to officially reopen Canada House following an extensive programme of restoration and refurbishment February 19, 2015, in London, England. Canada



House is the official home to the Canadian High Commission in the United Kingdom. The building was first opened in 1925 by King George V. MLA Karen Casey is seen in the background after having been officially welcomed by the Queen. (Photo by Kirsty Wigglesworth - WPA Pool/Getty Images)

RASCALS to hold "Drop-In Mornings"

By **Joy Laking**

The new group, RASCALS (Rural Association for Sustainable Communities Along our Shore) had its first successful meeting on February 12. Rather than

thinking of our shore as various isolated communities, the RASCAL group is hoping to take on initiatives that support the one large community of "our shore"; Five Islands to Masstown.

At the first meeting, attendees brainstormed about all the big and small initiatives that RASCALS might work on. Some of the initiatives are already being taken care of by existing community groups and our aim is to help these other groups with communications and volunteers, and whatever else they need.

It is anticipated a website and social media venues will be up and running soon. This will act as a community bulletin board for all of our shore's groups.

Eventually, but not now it is hoped to we might also coordinate ride shares to events or town or doctors appointments and you'll be able to volunteer and/or express your opinions on this website as well. Please just consider attending our next meeting. Everyone is welcome and all ideas are appreciated. Our next meeting is March 12, at 7



Pictured above are a few of the folks at the first RASCALS meeting. (L-R); Front row: Joy Laking, Emily Lane, Karen Ewing, Back Row Anita MacLellan, Carol McNutt, Cathy Mazur and Jim Campbell. (Jim Wyatt Photo)

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