

REES' Pieces

Why are we "sitting on our hands"?

With a large variety of topics, I am passionate about, choosing this month's theme is like being at a grandchild's birthday party and you get roped into playing "Pin the tail on the Donkey", while being blindfolded.

I could easily spout off about political musings in Ottawa about SNC-Lavalin; refusal of the provincial government to reveal costs associated with the new Yarmouth-Bar Harbour ferry; reducing meetings of the provincial Public Accounts Committee from 30 meetings to monthly and restricting the topics to be covered. I have enough information to compose two columns on Stats Canada revealing the industry categories that resulted in the Northern Region losing 2,500 jobs in 2018.

Another topic which is dear to every one's heart, is the restrictions invoked by Develop Nova Scotia to deliver modern high speed internet to rural areas, now that a \$190-Million Trust Fund has been established.

However, I have chosen to allocate most of available space to ask questions and seek answers why the RCMP commissioned a study in 2004, which eventually revealed three important "don't do" items and they ignored all three. I'm speaking about the decision to move 55 high-paying jobs from its Communication Centre on Prince Street, Truro to Dartmouth.

Bill Casey, MP has been fighting the possible decision for nearly three years, with very little outcry from the electorate. Let's face it, if this situation was occurring in Cape Breton, there would be a mammoth public outcry and "all hell to pay". I'm as sure as I am still alive, the Cape Bretoners wouldn't let it happen without public outcry and potentially public demonstrations at RCMP headquarters.

The electorate in Colchester and Truro haven't mounted any public campaign against the move. Seems like they are "sitting on their hands" and saying, "Oh, well".

In Cape Breton there would be many calls asking for RCMP officials to appear before CBRM council, and probably councils from adjoining municipalities.

I must ask. What have councils from Colchester, Truro, Stewiacke, commissioners from Bible Hill and Tatamagouche and Millbrook First Nation done? To my knowledge other than perhaps a letter, or some private discussion, not much.

Who, or which group(s), are going to challenge the RCMP's decision? Maybe organize a public meeting. The RECC or CEC should be large enough to hold a crowd who would wish to attend unless they wish to be an invertebrate. For those not familiar with the "invertebrate" term: "More than 90 percent of all living animal species are invertebrates. Worldwide in distribution, they include animals as diverse as sea stars, sea urchins, earthworms, sponges, jellyfish, lobsters, crabs, insects, spiders, snails, clams, and squid. In otherwise no backbone. Eels and snakes are in similar category.

In Bill Casey's column starting on Page 5, his original request for a copy of the report was denied. He then filed an Access to Information, which by law they had 45 days to respond. RCMP stalled for 730 days until Bill complained to the Information Commissioner.

Bill believes, the reason for the reluctance by RCMP to provide the report became very clear when he reviewed the material. Here are three quotes from this RCMP report:

"the RCMP (should) not locate their primary OCC within the Halifax Regional Municipality",

"the OCC Primary service delivery site be outside of HRM due to risks of placing 2 largest police communications centers in close proximity to each other".

"It is not recommended that the two largest police communications operations in Nova Scotia be placed within the same metropolitan area."

This report was commissioned by the RCMP. The warnings in these statements could not be clearer. Yet the RCMP has decided to disregard their own report and locate the two largest police communication centers together in Dartmouth. (For more details on Bill's column see page 5). This plan should be stopped.

If the job loss can't be stopped that is 2019. However, if the municipal governments in Colchester and electorate do nothing, the shame will be on them for not visibly trying. Where are the MLAs? Are they supposed to be leaders?

We'll help, but can't be the lead.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

MAIL TO: The Shoreline Journal, P.O. Box 41, Bass River, NS, B0M 1B0
(902) 647-2968; Fax: 902-647-2194 Email: maurice@theshorelinejournal.com

Hi Maurice

Thanks for reminding me to renew my subscription. I very much enjoy getting the paper as I don't get the Halifax paper and we don't have a Parrsboro paper anymore. You have a lot of the happenings in Parrsboro and areas all along the shore.

It is good to see the Obituaries. It's the only way to keep track of those to have passed. If it wasn't for your paper, we would not know who is gone. Thanks a lot.

Mrs Charles Priest
Diligent River.

Maurice:

Your story about possible removal of the Assessment Cap in the February issue reminded me of a letter I wrote to the Chronicle Herald, regarding a similar subject over a year ago. At that time my letter was a rebuttal to an opinion piece from Geoff Stewart, who was president of the Federation of Nova Scotia Municipalities. Since then he has moved up from being a Colchester Councillor to Deputy Mayor.

As a two-term Mayor of Colchester and a former UNSM (now FNSM) board member for four years, I'd like to further explain the frustration of the organization which represents all Nova Scotia Municipalities.

In November 2015, the UNSM board prepared a report entitled "Proposed Strategy To Tackle the Capped Assessment Program". It outlines the situation that the cap has caused, and I quote from that report: "the Property CAP is creating greater unfairness

in the property tax system. It is contrary to the concept that people with similar houses and similar services pay similar taxes. People with identical houses on the same street are paying different amounts due to the length of time they have been in their home. Young people buying their first house, newcomers to a community, seniors downsizing, people building new homes, - all could be paying more in property taxes than the person next to them. This is an issue of fairness, and the gap increases each year".

The UNSM would like to see that CAP phased out over time. The province does not appear to see this as an issue important enough to address. It is municipal officials who are most often asked to explain why one person's taxes are higher than their neighbours. This is not an assessment issue, nor a tax rate issue - it is a provincial policy issue.

The CAP is eroding the market value assessment system. While not perfect, the market value system is considered the fairest property tax system. It is the most widely used system, as it is easily understood and easy to administer. The farther we move away from the market value system under the current program, the greater the inequalities that will occur. This issue will not be solved without intervention by the province. In fact the situation will only worsen.

To give an example of the unfairness of the CAP, as mayor, I was approached by a friend, eight years ago, about his concern over his assess-

ment. He had recently bought a waterside property in Colchester County for \$220,000. However, his next door neighbour with a similar property has his assessment capped at \$90,000. He wanted me to explain to him why he had to pay more than twice as much in property taxes as his neighbour. This situation remains the same eight years later. There are many situations like this across this province which all elected municipal officials are faced with. It is an unfair situation to put municipalities in.

In 2016, in Colchester County, for example, if the assessment CAP was lifted, the county could and would reduce the residential tax rate by 15 cents per \$100 of assessment. This would be revenue-neutral to the county and province and a fair residential property tax to ratepayers.

In my four years as a UNSM board member, there were a number of joint meetings with provincial ministers to resolve this situation. Our representations fell on deaf ears, as it "wasn't the popular thing to do". It was more important to worry about being re-elected. As all three political parties had approved the establishment of the CAP, a request was made to the province to form an all-party committee to deal with this. This request was also denied. The public has to be aware of the unfairness of the CAP.

Thank you for the space.

Bob Taylor, Bible Hill.
Bob Taylor is the former Mayor of Colchester County.

February 9, 2019

Hi Maurice,

My daughter and I want to thank you very much for placing the ad for her dog "Sookie". My daughter met with an older couple in Debert on Sunday, who had recently lost their own lab. Sookie and the couple took to each other right away.

My daughter, Meagan, received a call from the new owners this Wednesday expressing their joy with Sookie and how much she is enjoying her new owners. Again thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Joni Pratt and Meagan Lipp

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
Kennedy's Deli - Ryland Ave
- DEBERT:**
Debert Mini-Mart
- FIVE ISLANDS:**
Masstown Market Five Islands
- GLENHOLME:**
Double "C" Truckstop
- 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; Chignosis 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

OP-ED

Transitioning the Forest Industry for Nova Scotia

By Don Wilson

A considerable amount of mis-information has been written about forestry in years to come. Some have ignored Northern Pulp might be closed. It is looking more and more that might be sooner than later. Northern Pulp has procrastinated with a plan to clean up waste water and reduce boiler stack emissions. They have misjudged public sentiment, Government resolve and PLFN final resolve. But moving along.

Groups of Private Forest Lot owners and managers are looking for an alternative to being told what and when to cut and having to accept whatever low price was offered by Northern Pulp. Alternatives are available today.

Latest design band saw mills are faster and better designed than ever before. Acceptable production is available - especially with saws that cut in both forward and backward directions.

Controls are digital on these latest saws. Old wide kerf circular saws are able to get as little as 45% of the lumber in a log while band saw narrow kerf saws get about one third more lumber and far less slabs. The result is more dimensional lumber from fewer logs.

Some are saying we need the Northern Pulp mill to get rid of our small wood and slabs. They don't seem to be aware that NSP at Port Hawkesbury are importing biomass chips and bark from two J D Irving sawmills in N.B. as well as several other sawmills in N.B. If Northern Pulp closed the expensive importing could be stopped while Nova Scotia sawmills filled the demand from NSP.

Band saw lumber yields will force old sawmills in N.S. to modernize and install Band saw primary saws in order to increase lumber yields and reduce waste wood. Dimensional lum-

continued on page 6

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.

MAILING ADDRESS: The Shoreline Journal, P.O. Box 41, Bass River, Nova Scotia, B0M 1B0.

PHONE: 902-647-2968; Fax: 902-647-2194 Toll Free 1-800-406-1426; Cell: 902-890-9850 • E-MAIL: maurice@theshorelinejournal.com

EDITOR PUBLISHER: Maurice Rees • ADVERTISING: Maurice Rees • CIRCULATION: Dorothy Rees

Canadian Publications Mail Products Agreement #40048924, ISSN #1209-9198



SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

LOCAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: B0M / B2N / B6L - \$23.00, PLUS HST = \$26.45 • OTHER PARTS OF NS: \$28.00 plus HST = \$32.20
ALL OTHER AREAS OF CANADA: \$30.00, plus HST = \$34.50 • USA SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$45.00
HST: #890564404RT001. Printed by Advocate Printing & Publishing Ltd, Pictou, Nova Scotia

All rights reserved. Material published in The Shoreline Journal may not be reproduced in any form without prior approval of the publisher. Material to be returned to sender must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

1996 Heritage Award recipient. Listed with Canadian Advertising Rates & Data (CARD) and Bowden's Media Monitoring Service.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada. | Canada



NEWSPAPERS ATLANTIC
TRUSTED | CONNECTED | TARGETED

The publisher is not responsible for minor errors in ads, which do not lessen the value of the item(s). The publisher is not responsible for space beyond that portion of the advertisement containing the item(s) in error. Letters to the editor are subject to editing or rejection, must be signed by the author and contain a phone number.