

Parrsboro Band Association CONDUCTING FUNDRAISER



Patricia Burke, member of the Parrsboro Band Association, checks the fundraising details with the Shoreline Journal, while Johannes Hiesberger, association treasurer, scans a recent issue of the Shoreline Journal. The Band Association has partnered with the Shoreline Journal on a multi-year fundraising initiative to solicit subscriptions to the Journal. (Rees Photo)

With a need to generate funds to continue with improvements to the Band Hall, the Parrsboro Band Association is conducting a fund raiser until December 3rd. At a meeting of the association on Tuesday, October 12th, the executive approved an initiative to work with the Shoreline Journal to generate the much needed funds.

The Parrsboro Band Association will receive a generous commission for each subscription sold in the Cumberland South areas from Advocate Harbour to Southampton, Five Islands and the Town of Parrsboro and adjacent rural areas.

The 2010 fund raiser is Phase One of an ongoing relationship. It is planned as an annual event with the association receiving future commissions as local residents renew subscriptions to the Shoreline Journal.

The matter has been under consideration for a few months. Association representatives said, "We picked the fall, because it offers local residents an opportunity to purchase their own or "Christmas Gift" subscriptions for relatives and friends. We were especially aware of the number of people, who have moved away, but still want to be kept informed about activities from their home area".

The agreement was finalized at a meeting of Shoreline Journal and band representatives at the band hall on Thursday, October 14th. The association was represented by Patricia Burke and Johannes Hiesberger, Treasurer.

The association needs additional funds to complete a series of improvements to the hall. Currently it is in the process of interior and exterior painting of the front of the hall, and completion of wheel chair accessible washroom facilities on the ground floor. Since taking possession of the former church, the association has focused on major repairs, which included insulation, and a new roof.

Johannes Hiesberger, treasurer, said that the focus of

repairs to date are the ones which needed to be completed, took a lot of money, but showed little for the amount of investment. We're hoping now that the major structural repairs are completed, we can continue to undertake improvements, which will enhance the facility to be a greater asset to the community.

The association has big plans for hall improvements and to provide additional support for the famous town band, but money is hard to find. Patricia Burke commented that working with the Shoreline Journal will provide an immediate influx of funds, proportional to the number of people who participate, but more importantly, because we will participate in annual renewals, this will provide additional money each year.

The association has an active membership of approximately 400 people and is hopeful with a large community network, the association can raise additional funds to make even greater plans for next year.

To assist the association in their fund raising efforts, the November issue of the Shoreline Journal has been mailed to 2,100 homes in the communities of Advocate Harbour, Five Islands, Lr. Five Islands, Port Greville, Diligent River, Southampton as well as the Town of Parrsboro and rural routes.

Elsewhere in this issue (page 32) is an advertisement containing a Subscription Order form. Cheques should be made payable to the Parrsboro Band Association, which will receive all monies, process the orders, keep their commission and remit the balance to the Shoreline Journal.

December 3rd is deadline for the first phase. The Shoreline Journal will send a "Christmas Card" to those receiving a gift subscription indicating who purchased the gift. Next year as renewal time approaches the gift giver will receive notification, the subscription is coming up for renewal.

Continued Economic Downturn a Concern



Troy Melanson, who operates T&C "M" Taxi, Parrsboro with his wife Crystal, pictured with the one vehicle still operating. A few years ago, the Melansons operated four vehicles and eight drivers, but a plunging economy has reduced their operation to one vehicle and Troy. In addition to taxi fares, they offer a delivery service for the CrossRoads Co-op and other local businesses. (Rees Photo)

By Maurice Rees

Parrsboro's only taxi operator, Troy Melanson, is more than concerned. He's worried.

The continuing downward spiral of the economy in the Parrsboro area is of grave concern to the local entrepreneur.

However, Troy is hopeful the expansion and renovations to Cross Roads Co-op, construction of the Tidal Power Research Centre, plus word that two new businesses will occupy empty space on Main Street will be a catalyst to start turning the local economy around.

Seven years ago, Troy and wife, Crystal, started T & C "M" Taxi. They worked hard and business continued to grow. To provide an additional service to the area, they offered a delivery service delivering almost anything, pizza, groceries, mail and parcel pick up, prescriptions, you name it.

In 2008 when the global economy plummeted, the Parrsboro area economy started a downward spiral. For T & C Taxi, the last two years has been like a roller-coaster ride. In 2007, the company operated with four drivers and four vehicles. In 2009, they were up to eight drivers and four vehicles.

"However in the last six months it's like the bottom fell out, says Troy Melanson. We had to quickly eliminate overheads. One by one the drivers were released. Earlier this spring, Crystal decided to

take a job at the Clam Factory in Five Islands.

In fact business got so bad, Troy started using only cell phones. He eliminated the business telephone numbers, which have been in existence for over seven years. "I hated to do it, but we had to eliminate \$500 a month in overheads and that is what the business lines were costing us. We already had the monthly cellular expense of \$200.

Troy feels there are several reasons why the local economy is sputtering: High unemployment; a lot of people have left to work out west and residents are not supporting local businesses as much as they could.

Amherst is often a destination for health care, business with government departments, shopping for clothing and other services. As a result while they are there they are also purchasing groceries and other items which could just as easily be purchased locally. Even though Parrsboro is an hour from the New Brunswick border, many local business operators are feeling the pinch from lower taxation rates across the provincial border.

A local business executive told me a significant number of people from the area are spending more and more across the border.

He estimated a family, with two smokers, will save approximately \$100.00 per week simply by purchasing

"...it's like the bottom fell out, says Troy Melanson. We had to quickly eliminate overheads."

milk, gasoline and cigarettes in New Brunswick. If they are already in Amherst for doctors appointments or a government office, it's a short drive to save a lot of money.

To further illustrate how business has decreased, Troy said that six months ago, three people would be kept busy all day long on cheque days, but now there's not enough to keep him busy.

Another merchant, who did not want to be identified, said that on cheque days, its like a caravan leaving town as people head for Amherst and other areas to do their shopping. It's almost like a ghost town.

Troy mentioned that he can remember back in the 80's when there was an initiative to increase support of local businesses. He says at that time, people were encouraged to shop local or lose it. That's over 20 years ago, and we are still issuing the same encouragements.

Although sometimes discouraged, Troy has not given up. "Us, Parrsborians are tough. We've seen tough economic times before. With a couple of new businesses opening soon on Main Street; an expanded and renovated Cross Roads Co-op, plus the tidal power investments in the area, I'm sure more people will start to spend more money locally".

"We've already seen more deliveries for Cross Roads Co-op since they finished their renovations. It's a great store, and more and more people are talking about how nice it is. Maybe the tide is turning", Melanson concluded.



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