

# REES' Pieces

## Where do we go from here?

If you have been reading newspapers or watching television, especially CNN, your head is probably spinning wondering how we got here and where are we going to end up.

Sure climate change is starting to show some effects around here. Colour foliage stayed nearly two weeks longer than what I remember from ten years ago. However, I'm sure climate change has not had any relevance on what I'm referring to. Unless, that is, it has caused a lot of people to think differently and expect a lot more.

First, we are removed from the municipal election cycle for the next four years. Those who were acclaimed, or won at the polls have lots of difficult choices to make. With the mood of the electorate, there is no room for spending money foolishly. Everything must not only be transparent, but also appear to be totally transparent.

Definitely no room for any activity, which auditor's and media reports say has been happening in Richmond County. Thank heavens Colchester, and also Truro have a "no liquor" policy, and the administrators seem to have a good handle on policy which the respective elected put in place.

Again I am not sure what makes some people tick. For what seemed several years people complained about Prime Minister Harper not meeting groups, unless it was well scripted. Now we have a prime minister who can't wait to meet with a group. The other day he meets to consult with a youth group about their issues and concerns.

What happens a group of protestors stand up and turn their back on him while he is speaking. I was always taught, the way to resolve a problem is to talk. I can't figure people why some people do what they do.

Same thing for Margaret Miller, Minister of Department of Environment walking out of an Ottawa meeting with her colleagues, when the Prime Minister announced in House of Commons for the provinces to put programs in place, or he would implement a Carbon Tax in 2018. She acted like a kid in the school yard taking their pail and shovel from the sandbox.

To get your point across and to help win the battle or the war, you have to be part of the discussion. Plus she failed to display the politeness and hospitality for which Nova Scotians are famous.

Now onto the NSTU and Department of Education. The government has negotiated and finalized two agreements with the union bargaining team, only to be turned down by over 9,000 teachers. I hope the teachers are not legislated back to work; there is no strike and Bill C-148 is not proclaimed. The outcome depends on who blinks first.

I will say this. If Premier McNeil gets into the corner, where he feels there is no way out, Watch out.

He has consistently said, he will never sign a labour contract, which he feels the province cannot afford. If he's pushed hard enough, he just might call an election, even though it's close to Christmas and its winter.

I would much rather suggest a peaceful solution. However, extensive polling suggests, if he called an election over the teachers situation, he'll win with a larger majority, as they would be very little public sentiment for teachers.

The next major disruption in this province is going to come from fishery groups and associations. There are getting organized across the various species. Every day they are getting more support from influential groups, outside the fishery, regarding their request for more scientific research and establishing baseline studies regarding installation of tidal turbines in the Minas Channel.

We need the energy and jobs, which would be created by a successful tidal power development program, but it must be done correctly. The fishery is a \$2-billion multi-generational industry and way of life. With our economy we cannot and must not permit anything to happen which will have significant or minor negative effects on the industry.

The last item. Will it be Trump or Clinton? In the summer it appeared like Trump. Then he put both feet in his mouth. Now it's up for grabs with the FBI jumping back in. We'll know sometime after November 8th.

**Maurice**

# Letters to the editor

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

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October 28, 2016

BY EMAIL

PREMIER@novascotia.ca

Dear Mr. Premier:

I am writing on behalf of the ACE Team, Advocates for the Care of the Elderly. We are made up of concerned family members who had or have loved ones living in nursing homes in this province. We want to help improve the living standards in these facilities.

We have followed closely the debate about the state of long-term care in the Legislature during the last two weeks. To say the least, we are very troubled that your government does not appear to recognize the deteriorating situation in our nursing homes, especially in light of your government's funding cutbacks during the last two fiscal years to these facilities. The disturbing revelations of local nursing home administrators only confirms what we have seen and brought to the Minister's attention when we met with him on July 26.

These cutbacks have reduced the number of front-line workers and the number of hours they work, while the lack of supervision contributes to neglect in these facilities. The consequences of this neglect include bedsores, infection, and some abuse of residents.

Poor diet and nutrition is yet another consequence of this funding restraint. Based on as little as \$6-\$7 a day per resident, this has meant the use of less than healthy food choices, and in some cases, no food at all. Already stressed immune systems are severely compromised which could result in worsening health, and even, premature deaths.

Your government's Speech from the Throne stated that "Long-Term care continues to be a priority for this government", and that "Our government has listened to what families are telling us..." This is simply not true. If it was, your government would be acting now to reverse the funding cuts in the last two fiscal years, and recognizing that there is a crisis in long-term care with serious systemic problems.

Surely, your government does not need to hear further from affected nursing homes to know that you have to act now to address these serious problems. It is urgent that you not wait for what may be offered in a new budget.

All of our loved ones deserve better than this dismal treatment in the final years of life.

Yours sincerely,

**Gary MacLeod**  
Chairperson, The ACE Team  
**c. Hon. Leo Glavine, Minister of Health and Wellness**  
**Jamie Baillie, Leader of the Opposition**  
**Gary Burrill, Leader of the NDP**

To the Editor,

On October 18, I sent a letter to the president of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union. The letter restated our government's commitment to continue discussions with teachers so we can work together to improve our children's classrooms. Because of that commitment, the second tentative agreement presented to teachers created the Strategic Partnership on Working Conditions.

This partnership's goal is to find ways to improve teach-

ers' working conditions and make changes so we can improve our students' classrooms.

In the letter, I invited the NSTU to start taking part in this new partnership before the end of this month. I am happy to say the NSTU accepted our invitation. This partnership will see representatives from the education department, school boards, and the NSTU work together to find solutions that can improve working conditions in our schools.

We care about our teachers and will continue to listen and work with them to create a stronger public education system in Nova Scotia.

**Karen Casey, MLA**  
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

To the Editor,

Flood mitigation must remain a priority

The recent municipal elections have resulted in a handful of changes to the makeup of the municipal councils. As the new councils meet and get comfortable in their roles, addressing the concerns of the constituents that were raised while candidates canvassed door to door, will no doubt be a high priority. Transitioning to a new council takes time, however, the important committee work established by past councils must continue unabated.

I reflect on the efforts by the Town of Truro and County of Colchester Joint Flood Advisory Committee as a good example. The Truro region has been prone to flooding for a number of

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## Premier's U-Tube Message to Teachers

"I want to talk to you about education.

Teachers have a critical decision to make, one that will affect your children.

I'm disappointed that we're at this point.

Education is a priority of our government and I believe it is the great equalizer.

The previous government had a choice.

They chose to give a seven-and-a-half percent pay raise at the same time they took 65 million dollars out of your children's classrooms.

Our government has made a different choice.

We have provided what we believe is a fair wage package — an increase of three percent over four years and we are freezing the long service awards. No one is losing any benefits. At the same time we are reinvesting the 65 million dollars in the needs of the classroom.

Teachers told us they wanted smaller classes, so we capped class sizes. We hired 500 new

teachers, not replacement teachers but new teachers.

Teachers told us the classes are complex and we agreed.

We heard more mental health clinicians and math mentors and we are reinstating Reading Recovery, a program to help children get the proper start in literacy.

Is there more to do? Yes. And we will continue to listen to teachers to meet the ongoing complex needs of the classroom.

I want teachers to remain in the classroom with your children, but I will respect the choice they make. I want you to know though, of all the complex challenges I have faced as your premier, I have never wavered on my commitment to your children's education.

And as we enter this potentially unprecedented time, I will stay focused on your children and their futures."

The  
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Journal

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