REES' Pieces

The ice is too thin

The trade war between USA and China will have very negative impact on Nova Scotia. The changing pattern for export destinations for Nova Scotia has been declining since the Age of Sail.

Our ancestors talked about Nova Scotia's sailing ships sent to sea as soon as they were launched. Piled high with lumber they returned with molasses and rum from Jamaica. Built in rural Nova Scotia, our ships touched shores around the world. We were famous for shipbuilding expertise; captains who knew their way around the world and the ability to conduct trade.

Since WW II instead of global trade, we focused on north-south transactions. As trade with USA continued to occupy more of our time, we de-emphasized travelling the world.

Now we are in the cross-hairs of Trump's battle with China. The crippling result might not be critical for a few years. However, here is where we are headed and why.

Trump is attempting to by-pass China by increasing trade and signing trade agreements with Asian counties such as Singapore, Korea, Japan, Indonesia, and even Australia.

Another part of Trump's battle with China is Huawei Technologies, which he has declared dangerous to national security. In forbidding USA companies to deal with the company, the US government is also pressuring trading partners to succumb to his request. The problem with this approach is most of the targeted countries, Asian, East Asian and South Asian, including Australia, have larger trading patterns with China than the USA.

If Trump sticks to his guns, he will draw Canada even further into the battle, as he has already done by asking for the extradition of Wanzhou Meng, 46, the chief financial officer of Huawei Technologies arrested on December 1 at Vancouver International Airport while changing planes.

Canada's inability to un-ravel itself from the mess has already seen exports of wheat, soybeans, pork and other products banned from China. More embargoes from China on Canadian products are expected.

Nova Scotia fish and lobster exporters are very nervous expecting their industry might be next. Nova Scotia might have some say about Canadian exports, but we can only ask Ottawa to find a solution before it becomes a problem.

Since the early 40's there has been significant decline in the number of countries, which Nova Scotians could call a "favoured" trading destination.

Here's some historical figures to consider as you try to determine what is ahead for Nova Scotia's Exports:

From 2007 to 2012, value of Nova Scotia's exports decreased at an average annual rate of 6.6%;

The province's exports as a share of the value of Canada's global exports declined from 1.2% in 2007 to 0.8% in 2012;

Nova Scotia's exports decreased by 14.3% between 2011 and 2012.

In 2012, manufactured goods accounted for 83.9% of the value of Nova Scotia's exports, with resource-based goods representing the remaining 16.1%. This composition had changed since 2007, when manufactured goods and resource-based goods accounted for 66.7% and 33.3% of the value of the province's exports. (***Next month:*** *Forestry could pick up the slack on resource-based exports).*

Nova Scotia's highest-valued exports in 2012 were pneumatic rubber tires, crustaceans and chemical wood pulp accounting for 45.0% of the province's exports. Nova Scotia's pneumatic rubber tire exports increased from $746.4 million in 2007 to $984.9 million in 2012. Crustacean and chemical wood pulp exports decreased from $573.3 million and $168.4 million in 2007 to $572.7 million and $163.9 million in 2012.

In 2012, the United States was Nova Scotia's most significant export destination, with exports valued at $2.7 billion. China, France, the United Kingdom and Japan were among the top five export destinations in 2012. Together, these four countries accounted for 10.0% compared to 7.1% in 2007.

There is not enough room here to illustrate what has happened since 2012. However you get a feel for the downward spiral.

We can't turn our back on trade with the USA, but for our own preservation, we need to increase trade with other countries, including re-uniting with favourites from the Age of Sail.

Increasing exports is just one of the challenges facing our provincial leaders, but it's critical. Do you have any suggestions?

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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Dear Editor:

(Note: See story by David Stevenson and Greg Watson elsewhere in this issue.)

Plans are underway to start a new community-based company in northern NS to promote sustainable forestry.

As part of the process, we wish to present people in all your "Shoreline Journal" areas with the picture of a sustainable future in forestry.

This contrasts with the difficulties over the Pictou mill and possibilities from gold mining in our shared hills.

Indeed, we need to promote our strengths, occasions to innovate and faith in our community support for future generations.

Attached is our first in a series of articles that put our forest resources in the spotlight. We hope you will be able to share them with your readers.

As always I am available by e-mail and telephone.

David Stevenson, President
Colchester-Cumberland Wind Field Ltd.
902 657-1064

Dear Editor:

While on my way home from the headquarters, I slowed down enough to read new signs that I had noticed the day before and, because they had green lettering, I thought must be new signs from the Green Party. However, they were not at a distance from the side of the road which we must place our political signs. This aroused my curiosity.

The more I thought about them the more upset I became for a number of reasons. One is that the message, "Nova Scotia NEEDS (big green letters) forestry." It was not that we need forests but that we need forestry. My suspicion is that the forest industry wants to send a message to the general public that "forestry" is in danger.

But it is not "forestry" which is in peril. It is our forests which are at the mercy of, and in the hands of the forestry industry trying to keep up with the demands of the pulp mills.

A second concern I have about the signs is that, possibly, like me, (unless they stop their cars and get out to read them) others might believe that these signs are either sponsored by or supported by the Greens.

What is not being put out there by the industry for public scrutiny is what the "forestry" industry has done to the "forests". Thanks to the forest management practices followed by the industry, less that one percent of the Acadian forests are left in the province. (And, oh yes, I forgot to mention that the industry claims that their management practices are based upon "science".) The science research I have read over the past several years indicates that what is going on in the "science-based" practices of the forestry is anything but peer reviewed science research. The nutrients in the soils are being decimated due to leaching after a clear-cut, the species in replanting projects are not natural to the area and tend to be monocultures, the carbon dioxide given off after a clear-cut continues to be elevated for years, the species of flora and fauna are negatively affected and trees which take the most carbon out of the atmosphere (those seventy-five years and older) are being cut at an unsustainable rate. Then there is the spraying which prevents a wide spectrum of species from growing to replace the forests which have been cut.

In spite of their message, the forestry industry can prosper without their having to wipe out huge tracts of forests. Responsible forestry practices do exist and are being carried out by conscientious woodlot owners throughout the province. If the industry did not have access to crown lands to the extent they do, then independent woodlot owners would have an opportunity to get a good return for their product. Presently, they are being shafted.

I am reminded of the glib, glossy signs and videos of the fracking industry to try to convince the populous that, not only was it necessary (jobs, jobs, jobs), but that it was a harmless process to pump unknown chemicals into the rock to force the gas up to the surface. It was simple, environmentally harmless and beneficial to the economy. They downplayed the fact that ground water would quite possibly be contaminated. How could anyone object? Well, fortunately, many people objected and the process has been (temporally, at least) banned.

Another similar battle with the same industry argument being presently waged is the gold mining proposed in the Warwick Mountain area. No mention from the company of the arsenic or cyanide residue left behind to contaminate the land for generations. Just jobs, jobs, jobs.

Jobs are necessary for a healthy economy. However, there are opportunities for many more jobs in a green economy than there are in the various dying energy and paper industries.

Many of these jobs are in the forests themselves. There needs to be the desire to change how workers work in the forests. We have seen many industries disappear from Nova Scotia. We will see more in the future. We are Maritimes. We adapt and get on with new endeavors. Maybe it is time to do that with the mill.

Jim Harpell,
Shortt's Lake

Dear Editor:

(I wanted to share this photo with you. I've written a (*this*) letter to the editor - but really want the youth recognized. I don't know their names but they left school in September 27th to protest climate change).

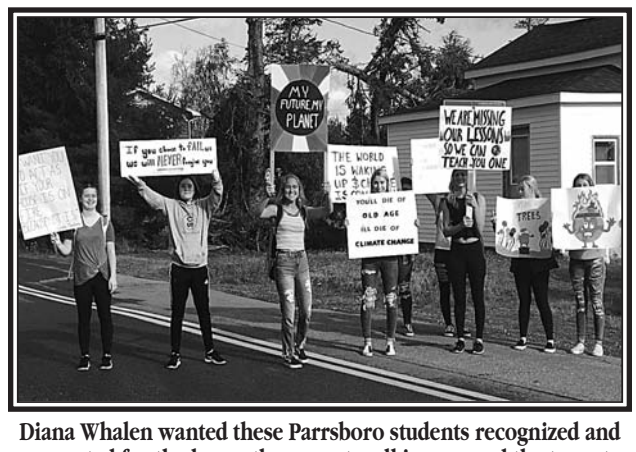
I am a summer resident in Parrsboro and I found myself there on September 27. It was the day when ten thousand students and supporters of all ages walked in Halifax and thousands more around the world.

I was so surprised and impressed to see these students on the streets of Parrsboro on the same mission. Their signs called on all of us to wake up and see the urgency of climate change.

The students walked all over town for many hours and I think they are amazing to take this action and to be so aware of the urgency of climate action. I see the coastal erosion every summer and this year there have been huge rainfall events that caused widespread road damage. Those are the top of the ice burg.

These young people deserve our respect and I hope they never lose their activism.

Diana Whalen



Diana Whalen wanted these Parrsboro students recognized and supported for the hours they spent walking around the town to raise the awareness of Climate Change as outlined in her Letter to the Editor, above. (Diana Whalen Photo)

The Shoreline Journal

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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

Canadian Media Circulation Audit

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

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