

# REES' Pieces

## Reality vs. Perception

Since I was a little boy, growing up on a farm in Northwestern New Brunswick, I was always counseled that what you do becomes the perception of you.

Not all that is real is basic about reality, but perception, more often than not, takes over all other situations and, for the most part, becomes reality.

That's the reason it is ever so important to send appropriate vibes, as they often result in the "perceptive reality" of the situation regardless of what one has been saying.

Let me give you a few examples,

A while ago I was speaking with a community-minded person, who since retirement from an important health-care position was talking about being asked to go to a consultative session about changes to certain aspects within the healthcare and justice systems. They recounted about how many people gathered for a four or five hour session, during which invitees broke off into working groups to come up with possible solutions to the problem.

After a couple of hours discussing the subject matter, the facilitator asked for a member of each working group to present their summations. Each group was given 90 seconds to do so. My discussion colleague said at that point he got up and left.

**PERCEPTION:** Two perceptions occurred. The first being the consultative session was a matter of going through the exercise of appearing to be consultative. Secondly, regardless of how hard each group worked and regardless of the appropriateness of their summary presentation, the public servant facilitator just sent the message that regardless of what evolved from the day's session, the department had already made up its mind and would not be taking any of the solutions into consideration.

Throughout the entire world of politics, we see instances when government is under pressure; it appoints a commission or an investigative panel. The perception is they are listening and want to find out the answers. The reality is they "caved in". How do we know that? It's because they did not empower the investigative body to bring forth recommendations, nor did they make it mandatory that such solutions would be implemented.

Which brings us to another **Reality vs. Perception** situation. The public believes government will do whatever is necessary to save its skin, and then perceives government is always on its own agenda and will do whatever it wants rather than following through on what the public wants. As a result, we are constantly attracting fewer and fewer people to the voting booths.

During the summer it's difficult to find a "hot topic" to comment on, but this summer has been vastly different.

Every week, there seems to be a new topic, which people get passionate about. Each subject could take up more space that allotted for this column. So let's look back to last winter and see what is still hovering around us.

MLA expenses. Although steps have been taken and the public felt it had won the battle, the matter slipped backwards earlier this summer, when MLA's were permitted to increase their advertising budget. Yet another backward step and an increase in public cynicism. Now people are convinced government will do whatever it wants.

**PERCEPTION:** Ever since he was named in the MLA expense situation, Premier Darrell Dexter appears to be most timid. For a while, some people thought he would bounce back to his previous level of confidence. Not so, each time I notice him being interviewed, he casts his eyes away from looking directly into the camera; he seems to be picking his words and the tone of his voice portrays a feeling of nervousness. It appears as if he is not answering the questions to the full extent of his knowledge or ability.

As we move forward to the summer months, which normally is the time for MLA's, MP's and Senators to spend time in their constituency, attending local fairs, exhibition and BBQ's. But this summer is vastly different. We have certain states south of the border taking steps to avoid products made from "oilsands crude"; then we have the debate over the "long census form"; statements made that Canada is not taking care of our Veterans and there is more.

**PERCEPTION:** The public thinks nationally and provincially, we have been poorly governed for a long time. **REALITY:** The public is correct.

Maurice

# Letters to the editor

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

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### To Whom it may Concern:

We have anxiously awaited your annual 75km yard sale for the past year. Seven carloads (cars, vans, trucks) of us left the Annapolis Valley (Windsor area) at about 6 a.m. yesterday morning to start our day of doing yard sales in Onslow, arriving shortly before 8 a.m. Even though rain had been forecast, we noted you had advertised "Rain or Shine"....thus we anticipated a full day, until at least 5 pm...

We had a great morning! However, by about 1:30—2 p.m. we weren't even to Bass River yet and the yard sales were dwindling and many, many people had either closed up or were closing/putting away their tables. We still had many miles to go, as we intended to do yard sales all the way to Parrsboro and into Port Greville. There was pretty much nothing from Advocate to Parrsboro, nothing in Parrsboro, but a sign there said: 24 yard sales on route 209, Wharton to Brookville—we found ONE yardsale between Parrsboro and Port Greville. We stopped at the Tourist Bureau in Port Greville and had a cup of tea and then drove back home to Windsor.

We do the annual yard sales all over Nova Scotia and PEI every year—at least five carloads and sometimes there are eight or ten vehicles in our convoy—up to 55 people—all buying lunch/supper in the various communities, as well as shopping in the villages we go through, besides buying from the home-owners at their respective yard sales.

When we do the Musquodoboit Sale (our favourite) every September, they stay open at least until 5 p.m. to give people TIME TO DRIVE THE ROUTE from one end to the other—same story for the WALTON, MAITLAND, NOEL yard sales, and the STEWACKE/SHUBENACADIE community yard sales, also in September. We are doing CALEDONIA, (Liverpool area) the first Saturday in August—same story—these communities give visitors time to go from one end of the route to the other, a feat which takes ALL DAY if one wants to stop at most of the sales, even for a couple of minutes.

We were sadly disappointed in your sales this year because of lack of participants either: being open in the rain, as advertised, and/or closing up by shortly after noon (not

advertised). Many of the people in our cars said they would never make the trip again, as there were community yard sales the same day in Wolfville and New Minas areas, as well as Belmont/Avondale communities in which they could have shopped all day. I don't know if we will go again or not—we came home with almost nothing in the way of purchases and we usually have the vans loaded to the max.

Before we make our plans for our trips next year—we start early in the Spring to make our lists of where we are going, (as you know, because I have emailed you several times to get the info on yard sales, starting in the spring), we will need to think long and hard about going back to do your "75-km", (which doesn't turn out to be 75 km at all, because they don't give the people time to do the whole route before they close up), and we may decide to change our plans to do another area of NS instead of going your way, sadly, because your area is so beautiful.

I know it's too late to change anything for this year, but please keep me informed, if you would be so kind, with your plans for next year, and if they are only going to be open until noon or so..., please advertise this so we will know not to go, as already stated, to start in Onslow at 8 a.m., it takes at least until 1p.m. to get to Bass River, at least!

I wish to make note of one HIGH POINT of our trip yesterday—the good people in Great Village, in the heat and high humidity of the day, set up their little community hall/lending library with tables and chairs for us to eat lunch there, as we had several elderly people with us on the trip—they couldn't do enough to accommodate us and they were so very helpful and friendly, we left a donation to them when we left, with assurances from everybody in that village that the yard sales continued all the way into Parrsboro and beyond, as obviously everybody thought to be true and stated in good faith.

We would strongly suggest that you advise people, if they want to register their yard sales with you and advertise as such, that they stay open to allow people time to complete the route for a full day of yard sales. Also, if it is advertised "rain or shine", these same people should have not closed up, but should have

planned to set up with neighbours with garages, tarps, etc., so as to continue in the showers, if necessary.

Please let us know if things will be different for next year, so we can plan accordingly. If you detect a touch of bitterness or anger in this letter, you are not mistaken, as we are all very disappointed in our trip yesterday.

Please keep us informed, if you would be so kind, and pass this "complaint" and suggestions on to the people in the communities, if you are so inclined.

Thank you, C. Lawrence.

### Dear Editor:

On August 3, The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) formally released a new policy document aimed at driving change in Canada's health-care system.

In the report, titled "Health Care Transformation in Canada: Change that Works, Care That Lasts" the CMA announced its readiness to take a leadership position in confronting the challenges facing Canada's health-care system.

In our province there are long wait times for many services, overworked and discouraged health-care providers and growing health-care costs. These challenges have made the need for health reform undeniable.

The CMA's report provides a framework for looking at the system on a national level; however, each province has issues unique to their system. Despite numerous challenges in Nova Scotia, there have been advancements and some of the report's recommendations are already being implemented in this province. For example, due to the changing needs of the patient population, physicians have a new focus on comprehensive and chronic disease care. Although successes are happening, we have a long way to go to ensure that Nova Scotians are receiving the best possible care available.

While change has started to occur in Nova Scotia, and in fact across the country, too often these changes have occurred in silos. Doctors Nova Scotia hopes that this report will highlight the need for partnership and coordination in making transformation successful. The association is eager to work with physicians, colleagues and governments to provide a more coordinated approach to transforming the

health-care system.

As we work to improve patient care in this province it's important that physicians, government, other allied health professionals, and the public use this report as a stepping off point. We all know the inadequacies in our system and it's time we make a coordinated effort to address them.

Sincerely,

Jane Brooks, MD, PhD, CCFP  
President, Doctors Nova Scotia  
www.doctorsns.com

### Dear Editor:

I am responding to a letter submitted by Natural Resources Minister John MacDonell on concerns from woodlot owners.

Minister MacDonell credits their "upset and concern" to the recommendations in the recent report "A Natural Balance". In fact, their upset and concern is a result of the Minister's utterances since the report was issued.

There are literally dozens of recommendations in the report, many which would have a direct impact on 30-thousand landowners and how they manage their properties. The Minister has given no indication which recommendations will be adopted, except to say there is an over-use of clear cutting in the province. In effect he is saying to these 30-thousand Nova Scotians "trust us".

In this vacuum, woodlot owners are left to read the dozens of recommendations, and fear a strategy, policies, legislation and regulations which will limit their livelihoods.

All Nova Scotians want sustainable, responsible harvesting and management of our forests, whether they are located on crown land or private land. Included in that group are 30-thousand private woodlot owners, the vast majority of who take pride in the stewardship of their land.

Minister MacDonell has ruled out further public consultation on this issue. Rest assured he will be getting input from woodlot owners whether he asked for it or not. We encourage the Minister to engage with these woodlot owners, and spell out exactly which recommendations this government endorses.

That's the fair thing to do.

This is the plan which will impact our forests for the next 75 years. It is important that we get it right.

Leo Glavine  
Liberal Natural Resources Critic

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