

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cutting the mustard

The Editor

I recently had a dream that I woke up one morning to find that I was in the running to become Victoria County's sustainable economic development officer. The County has been unable to fulfill this position despite attempts to do so since the opportunity advertisement appeared in *The Victoria Standard* in October 2009. Victoria County has not had a development officer since Ross MacDonald vacated the position to work for Nova Scotia's Department of Economic Development several years ago.

My first reaction to the possibility of occupying such an important role in Victoria County's future was asking what can be accomplished as a community development officer. I would be working for the County under the direction and leadership of the Victoria County Council and its CAO.

To attract a sustainable economic development officer to this position would require a provable commitment on behalf of Council to be well informed about community economic development philosophy and to have adopted a development plan, a well formed action plan illustrating that the County council is able to provide the necessary leadership to set priorities to achieve its goals. A report card system to measure future successes would also need to be in place.

The conundrum one might face as the sustainable economic development officer is if the council expected the economic development officer to develop a plan, set priorities and provide the leadership. For Council not to do so would be an abrogation of its responsibilities.

As I see it, the role of the sustainable development officer is to carry out the community based sustainable economic development strategy that had been adopted by council through consultation with their constituents who had the opportunity to provide input through meetings held by each councilor in his district.

In the past I have attended local meetings on community based development planning when only a very few individuals have been present. This is not meaningful in terms of citizen input.

When I attended the meeting held in Baddeck for the Integrated Sustainable

Community Plan there were only four individuals present. The December forum that resulted in the Economic Development Strategy Possibilities document included only 21 invited participants and Victoria County Council members and its CAO.

Gordon McIntosh, President of the Local Government Leadership Institute, provided the 27 page summary document with both recommendations and time lines for putting in place the recommendations and necessary action plan. To date there has been no further involvement of the community. The McIntosh report recommended the creation of a citizen's advisory group to be constituted to work with the Victoria County Council in refining an economic development strategy and setting priorities. This requires commitment, hard work and trust, but most important Council leadership.

In the last *Victoria Standard* an article entitled "Council believes it is moving forward with County's development" detailed a hodge podge of "possible actions" under the notion of community economic development that Council is reportedly looking into. There is no suggestion of forming a citizen-based advisory committee. The first step in my mind is to develop broad based input into a community economic development strategy. As the sustainable community economic development officer, this would be my first request - set up the advisory committee.

Right now the Victoria County Council needs to prove it has the capacity to adopt a plan through consensus, carry it out by developing a doable action plan and putting sustainable community economic development on the top of its meeting agendas. Lip service is easy to embrace, but being able to perform is the true measure of administrative capability. As the potential suitable economic development officer for Victoria County I would be most hesitant to step into the position if I sensed that the Victoria County Council was awash in its leadership capacity regarding sustainable economic development.

Tuned Up!

Henry W. Fuller, Board Member
The Northside Economic Development Assistance Corporation

Letters to the Editor Policy

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Good job Keith Bain

The Editor

With gas prices and travel costs being at the heights they are, I would like to congratulate MLA Keith Bain on championing a tourism idea that shows a bit of forethought.

Tourism advertising campaigns in Nova Scotia for quite a few years have been stuck in the same old cycle. In my opinion we have fallen behind our Atlantic counterparts in the originality and appeal of our television advertising.

When I heard on the radio what Mr. Bain has been working on recently, it gave me a shimmer of hope that our governing tourism bodies might still include a few original thinkers.

The idea is that the province of Nova Scotia should partner with the Boston Red Socks to advertise our beautiful province as a destination. They're selling it as a similar venture to PEI's hosting of the Regis and Kelly Show earlier this summer.

This proposal excites me for two reasons. One, population. Fenway park, home of the Red Socks, holds about 40,000 people. That's 40,000 with direct contact with an advertising campaign who most likely would not otherwise have any contact at all. Then there's the city of Boston (not to mention outlying areas) with a population of almost 650,000. That's close to two thirds of our entire province. Then there's the entire eastern seaboard of the United States. All of these people

who would have had tenuous if any contact with our traditional advertising strategy.

Second point of interest, geography. As I mentioned at the very start, travel costs are high. Everyone knows it because everyone has to deal with it. But you can drive here from Boston. It's a long drive, but it's not outside the realm of possibility for the standard Everyday Joe. It's about the same distance or closer than Ontario, and it's certainly closer than Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta....most of Canada, in fact.

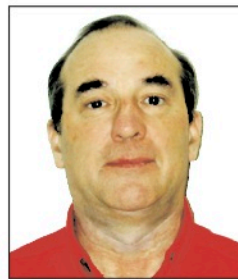
So, with a massive population within driving distance, I think it is well past time that a grand gesture was made in their direction. Apparently, the Red Socks had agreed two years ago to hold a Nova Scotia Week at Fenway. So why did it fall through? I don't know. Money, I would assume. The government couldn't justify the expenditure.

Well, sooner or later, you have to spend money to make money. I think that this should be a calculated risk Nova Scotia Tourism and the Nova Scotia Government be willing to take. Who knows, maybe Destination Cape Breton would chip in; even though we don't always want to admit it, we are Nova Scotians as well as Cape Bretoners.

Mr. Bain, thank you for pushing this idea and I hope people listen to you.

James Nicholson,
Big Baddeck

Chuck Thompson's "Along the Trail" "Glasses"



Is there a saying that all good things come in pairs? Or is that blue jeans? I wonder if the same applies to the dumbness factor. If so, I am

doubly blessed.

Last month was the adventure with the wallet and jeans that fortunately turned out well mainly because of good timing and honest people.

This week another adventure had the potential for an expensive disaster. I like to think these things could happen to anyone but I'm not so sure.

I had arrived home in the heat and it was suggested we jump in the "liquid nitrogen" known as Middle River and get cooled off. I thought this was a wonderful idea and grabbed a bottle of shampoo, and a towel, and headed to the splendid pool in back of our house. I never fail to jump in the river without thinking how blessed we are in live in this small corner of Mother Earth. I have to think it as my lips won't move in the cold to say it.

Anyway, we climbed down the rocks and I suffered the remarks about the shampoo being extra to my needs. As I catapulted myself into the deepest part, I felt, with a sickening realization, that I had jumped in with my glasses on and my glasses were heading to the very deepest part of the river. I could feel them briefly with my feet, and then they were gone. I went into full panic mode. The mask and snorkel were retrieved from the cabin

and I dove and dove with no luck. It looked like they were gone.

Fortunately a couple of the local MacIver boys, Zack and Jake arrived on the scene. When they were recruited to the cause, one asked why I had worn my glasses in the river. The reply was something to the effect of, did he realize who he was talking to. Oh, yea, was the answer. I think if I had not been so panicky I might have been offended.

At one point there was myself, the two MacIver lads and a stranger all diving and surfacing in search of the wayward glasses. It looked like a herd of grey seals in a school of herring. The cold eventually drove me out of the water and the day was just beginning to wane when Zack hollered, "I've got them." Truth be told I had given up hope and was wondering how I was going to get by with no glasses and at least a \$500 purchase. They say "hope springs eternal" but hope had long since left my head.

Maybe the more appropriate saying is "never give up." I did and the boys proved me wrong. Of course it didn't hurt that youth made them impervious to the cold and young eyesight made the outcome a successful one.

Shortly thereafter the day ended and everyone went their respective ways. Thanks to the efforts of others I was able to see my way home as well.

P.S. Thanks to the good folks at the Vet clinic for the card regarding Shadow. Nice touch.

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