

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lining up the ducks - a new, attractive & informative website for our County

The Editor

The last issue of *The Victoria Standard* provided significant good news with regards to the task force that has been selected to develop a databased survey focusing on existing business profiles within Victoria County. This is a first step in following through on the county council’s new leadership role in promoting sustainable economic development. Now that a part time sustainable development officer is in place to lead the charge, all residents of Victoria County will hopefully support Nona MacDermid in her efforts to realize the goals and objectives that will foster a

drive for sustainable community development.

From comments offered by the current Victoria County council members, it sounds as though they are ready to take up the challenge. This challenge is an onerous one which requires planning, commitment, goal setting and accountability, combined with a willingness to involve interested citizens, i.e. individuals who are willing to work with and advise the council in setting priorities and time lines for implementing policy and economic development. Such a committee was recommended to be set up by Gordon McIntosh of the Local Govern-

ment Leadership Institute. Gordon facilitated two sessions organized to focus on leadership and sustainable economic development.

From where I sit, I believe, that the most important primary task is to construct a communication strategy that is accessible to all Victoria County residents. This should be relatively easy given that high speed internet connection is available to a majority of county residents. Communicating by computer is cheap, efficient and necessary.

Victoria County currently has a web site which is accessible to all those who are interested in the county and own a computer. I urged in a previous letter that this web site requires serious upgrading and redesigning to provide a high level of good information to local residents. The way it sits now this web site is poorly constructed, posts stale information much of which is out of date and fails to project the wonderful assets that Victoria County possesses.

Sectors of the web site are redundant especially the area which lists the various county committees the majority of which are defunct, i.e. do not meet. Nor, does the web provide a good profile of each councillor, i.e. personal qualifications and reasons for wanting to serve as a council member.

The county’s recent investment in

waste management equipment was a costly budget item that hopefully will lead to a sustainable county waste management collection enterprise. If thousands of dollars can be allocated to waste management, certainly the Victoria County Council can find a few thousand dollars to hire a professional web master to construct a new attractive web site for Victoria County. It should not be done in house.

This new web site should focus on the Municipality, its assets, its people, available programs, policies and the promotion of Victoria County as one of the best places to reside in Nova Scotia. The creation of a highly attractive web site requires both imagination and selectivity with regards to its content. This requires professional know how. It is stated on the current web site that Victoria County’s annual budget is about \$10,000,000 a year. Surely, funds can be allocated to developing a Victoria County web site of which we all can be proud. We need a good web site to be able to inform those interested in the business and beauties of Victoria County!

I challenge the Victoria County Council to mandate the creation and development of a professional web site for Victoria County. Make this task Council’s first New Year’s resolution.

Henry Fuller,
Big Harbour

2011 Democracy ... just imagine!

The Editor

Canada will have a great opportunity to improve its democratic process and the electoral turnout rate this year, during the federal elections. By consulting Canadians with a referendum on their priorities during the ballot, the country would indeed take a major step towards fairness, equality and common prosperity.

Of course, Conservatives and their sponsors would not enjoy having in place

a consultation that would move health, education and general well-being of Canadians before the actual huge military expenditures. It's thus the other four opposition parties' responsibility to push together with energy for such a great happening!

Just imagine what moving towards a real democracy would bring us...

Bruno Marquis,
Gatineau, QC

January is Alzheimer’s Awareness Month

The Editor

Every five minutes, someone in Canada develops dementia.

Dementia is a syndrome consisting of symptoms such as loss of memory, judgment and reasoning, and changes in mood, behaviour and communication abilities that affect their ability to function. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. It's described as a progressive, degenerative disease of the brain, which causes thinking and memory to become seriously impaired.

This January during Alzheimer Awareness Month, doctors in the province encourage Nova Scotians to make brain health a priority. By improving your overall brain health and leading a healthy lifestyle, it may be possible to reduce the risk of developing dementia.

Researchers believe there is no single cause or treatment of Alzheimer's; however, making healthy lifestyle choices may help reduce the risk of developing the disease. Living a healthy lifestyle through

exercising, eating well, keeping your brain active and engaging in social activities may help reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's or other dementia. Changes in the brain may start decades before symptoms appear, so it is never too early to adopt brain-healthy habits.

Although it's still not possible to discuss absolute prevention, research increasingly confirms that you can reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's disease or any form of dementia by participating in brain-healthy activities such as crosswords, Sudoku and word search puzzles.

Alzheimer's is not just an "old person's disease" and preventative action should start early in life.

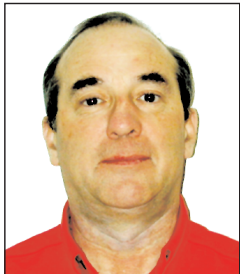
Doctors Nova Scotia encourages individuals to talk to their doctors about Alzheimer's and become familiar with the symptoms. For more information about the disease, visit <http://alzheimer.ns.ca>.

Jane Brooks, MD, PhD, CCFP
President, Doctors Nova Scotia

Letters to the Editor Policy

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Chuck Thompson’s “Along the Trail”
“The New Year”



After reading my last column someone asked if I got my tree up. Yes, I replied, I got it up on the 20th. And the 21st. And on the 22nd.

It was starting to look like a re-make of Mickey Gilley in “URBAN COWBOY” where he spends days trying to tame the mechanical bull. I would wrestle the fir into the stand; raise it to the rafters only to have it come tumbling down around me.

Same thing with the outdoor one. As darkness fell I would repeat the wrestling exercise with the same pitiful results. Every time my wife looked out the window she would see a large green thing (the tree) with a person (me) attached rolling across the deck and tumbling to the ground. By the time I finally got the ditch spruce up, the birds had stopped flying to the feeders, they had become afraid to come anywhere near the food due to all the commotion.

In 2011 it looks strongly like I may increase my carbon footprint. I can see a lovely plastic knock off twinkling in the appropriate corner and outdoors may find a scraggly wild apple suitably adorned. Ah, the joys of Christmas.

Actually, the Holiday season was fun and yet I have no regrets seeing the end. My blood was starting to flow like maple sugar on a frosty morning and my pants were shrinking even as they hung in the closet.

Chocolate was starting to ease into the Canada Food Guide’s 4 main groupings along with cookies, pies, and gravies. I figure that in order to offset the season’s excesses I will have to walk around the Trail with weights on each ankle. Oh, well, tis or was the season.

This week saw the return of the green

things (salad) and other delightful choices such as rice cakes and plain yogurt. Meat has begun to disappear from the dinner plate and there are more and larger servings of the “good stuff”, carrots, Brussels sprouts, beans. Joy to the World!

Winter has put in an appearance, if somewhat belatedly. Crisp, clear nights and cold dry days herald the winter season. There are no black flies. Ponds have begun to freeze over and soon the Lakes will be covered with snow and Sydney Miners in pursuit of the wily smelt. The more athletic among us have already waxed the skis and cleaned the snowshoes as the white stuff being to reach acceptable heights in the Highlands. The evenings are starting to get longer as it is no longer pitch dark when I head out on my evening trek. Even as winter reaches its peak, you can sense there is renewal in the land.

The New Year finds us settled on MacLennan’s Cross and there are houses springing up around us. Two new and one renovation must put our little cross road near the top of Cape Breton renewal. What is in store for 2011? Good health is the first wish, the rest is academic.

I am going to learn to read the compass, write some more, and maybe, just maybe, there will be a new “Terrier Mix” with a wet nose greeting me at the door when I come home. It’s been five months now and there is something missing. Yes, that last trip to the vet is unspeakably hard but all the joy in between has to be remembered. I will walk out to Shadow’s final resting spot to discuss it all but I think she would be okay with it. Soon, very soon, we may swing open the door of the SPCA and try not to look at all of them as we pick one fortunate one to bring back to the Highlands. Then both the land and I will begin the season of renewal.

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The Victoria Standard

The Victoria Standard is published fortnightly by Bras d’Or Graphic Marketing Services.

Editor and General Manager: James Morrow
Copy/Design/Subscriptions: John Johnson
Advertising/Sales: Jim Ryan

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