

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### *Lion's beach boat ferry service being jeopardized by red tape*

The Editor

Following is an open letter sent to MPs Peter MacKay and Mark Eyking on behalf of the Baddeck Lions Club

I am writing on behalf of the Baddeck Lions Club and the thousands of people who enjoy visiting Baddeck's Kidston Island each summer, be they local residents or tourists visiting our province and village. We receive hundreds of compliments each year on the ferry service we provide and the beautiful view afforded from the island which is otherwise unavailable to many.

You may not be aware of the process the Baddeck Lions Club has undertaken in an effort to receive Transport Canada approval to operate our ferry to and from Kidston Island during the summer months. We were notified that we would have to undertake numerous changes to the boat as well as our standard operating procedure in order to meet commercial standards and regulations. As we are a non-profit organization who has for fifty years provided lifeguards, swimming lessons, infrastructure and free transport to and from Kidston Island, we feel very strongly that some of these regulations should not apply to us.

Further, our boat never operates after

dark or in inclement weather. It travels approximately 500 metres across Baddeck harbour, passing numerous boats at anchor and always within eyesight of the Bras d'Or Yacht Club as well as Baddeck Marina and the dozens, if not hundreds of tourists and residents who may be on the Baddeck wharf or otherwise in a position to observe the travel of our boat which has undergone tens of thousands of dollars of improvements this past winter including the purchase and installation of a new motor.

A proposal was prepared requesting we receive an exemption to these regulations and forwarded to Ottawa. This proposal received the approval of the local inspectors in Sydney, their direct supervisor and the district supervisor in Halifax prior to being forwarded to Ottawa. Despite this, we have just received word that the Ottawa committee tasked with reviewing our proposal has denied it.

In closing, we the Baddeck Lions, feel very strongly that the service we provide has not only met with all reasonable safety practices in the past but, with the recent improvements to the boat, continues to do so. While we are determined to continue to provide this service for many years to come, we feel it can be safely

done without being forced to submit to regulations that were never designed for a service such as ours.

Any assistance you may offer in bringing this situation to a successful end

would be appreciated and feel free to contact me should you have further questions.

Brad Anderson,  
President, Baddeck Lions

### *Baddeck school kids don't need a bus*

The Editor

Having recently returned to Baddeck for a few days of vacation, I was shocked to see a school bus dropping kids off within the Village.

First, for a school that recently faced cuts to its proposed renovations over budget concerns, this seems like an unnecessary expense.

Second, in a population facing an increasing burden of childhood and adolescent obesity, taking away one of the few opportunities for exercise these kids have seems counterintuitive.

For parents of younger children, safety can be a concern, especially if the parents are not available to escort their children to and from school. But I can't help but think there are better ways than a bus to solve

this problem.

When I was in Grade 6 in Baddeck, one student from our class was released from last period every afternoon to walk younger kids through the Village. We got to miss last class and wear a reflective vest. What fun!

I bet paying a few of the older students to meet and walk with younger kids to and from school would be just as safe, far healthier and more cost effective than busing through the Village.

I encourage Baddeck parents and the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board to seriously consider getting rid of the bus through the Village by September, if not sooner.

Paul Morrison,  
Halifax

### *HST Hike's 1st Anniversary - big tax grab for Government*

The Editor

On the first anniversary of the HST hike, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) says the two percentage point increase has been a larger than expected tax grab for government and at a significant expense to the average taxpayer. The CTF estimates that on average Nova Scotians will pay \$418 more in HST than they did just one year before.

Nova Scotia is the highest taxed jurisdiction in all of Canada and its peak HST rate is partly to blame. Nova Scotians simply can't afford to keep handing so much of their money to the government. It's time for the province to reduce our burden.

At the time that the HST increase was introduced, the government said it expected to take an additional \$215

million more in 2010-11. Instead, the government's take increased by 20 per cent with taxpayers shelling out \$293 million more in provincial HST.

It's time for the government to take real action to address the heavy tax burden faced by taxpayers in Nova Scotia. We need to see significant reductions across the board in the taxes we pay.

The CTF is Canada's leading non-partisan citizens' advocacy group fighting for lower taxes, less waste and accountable government. Founded in 1990, the CTF has over 74,000 supporters and eight offices across Canada. The CTF is funded by free-will, non tax-receptable contributions. The CTF's website is at [www.taxpayer.com](http://www.taxpayer.com).

Kevin Lacey, Atlantic Director  
Canadian Taxpayers Federation

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### *Chuck Thompson's "Along the Trail"* **"Leisure Time"**



For absolutely no rational reason, the other day I began to think of the object that most symbolizes the age we live in. By the age we live in I mean the age

of leisure, more free time than at any other time in our history. Maybe it was the cold weather or the pollen in the air or a chemical reaction to the fly dope but my mind wandered down this line of thought.

There are obvious ideas such as all the electronic gadgets that now flood our lives. I-pads, cell phones, flat screen televisions, blackberries. They exist because we have time for them.

The proliferation of sports and the grip it has on people is an indication of how people have more time to do things like golf, fish, bowl, and then they watch people do the same thing. Only as long as people have the time and inclination to watch someone else hit a little white ball, throw a ball, roll a ball, kick a ball, better than they can will professional sports continue to grow out of proportion to its relative importance. You only have to look at the new "Cowboys Stadium" in Dallas to see how sports have replaced religion for many people.

Motorized toys are another indicator. Even if you had the money fifty years ago when would you have had the time to tour around on motor bikes, sea-doo's, snow machines, four wheelers? Today in rural Canada the landscape is dotted with all these new and expensive toys.

How about ride-on lawnmowers? Drive through the countryside and the land abounds with aging citizens sitting astride these machines.

I can remember visiting my Grandfather in Florence (industrial Cape Breton, not Italy) and sometimes wonder what he would make of it all. He spent his entire adult life scratching at a coal face deep under the ocean and when he had a little time at home, he was engaged in providing for his family. He had a cow, a pig, a few

chickens that took up whatever "leisure time" he had, all to make ends meet. His was a Spartan existence devoid of any kind of outside income such as CPP or EI or OAS. His back, but not his will, was broken in a mine cave in and retirement was not an option.

His one idle pleasure that I can remember was him sitting in front of the big wooden radio listening to the Boston Celtics playing basketball. This was all the more remarkable given he had never seen basketball in real life and could only imagine what it all looked like.

Having said all this, the one "toy" that most reflects our new life style, in my modest opinion, would be the "Whipper-snipper." People, me included, spent countless hours travelling the perimeters of our properties, trimming the grass that grows away from the path of the many lawn mowers that try to keep it in check. I can just imagine my grandfather, if he were alive today trying to make sense of all of us who have decided that grass in all its forms is an enemy. If he was lucky enough to get grass to grow on his hard scabble yard it would be fed to the cow or the pig or the chickens would be allowed to pick through it looking for insects.

I think it would be his conclusion that we have way too much time on our hands when we spend (waste) time on such utterly inane activity. The wholesale and willful attack on dandelions would take him to another level. The other day I ran out of twine, drove to Baddeck, burning precious fossil fuels, re-thread the gizmo, and wandered about whacking grass and for what? No one ever said logic had anything to do with it. I think Gramps would have quickly hustled me off to the potato patch to weed if I had that much time to waste.

It's an interesting contradiction that as our free time grows, the more we demand instant response to any situation. Speaking of which, I better go fill the hummingbird feeder and spend a few hours trying to catch that big trout behind the cabin.

With respect to Otis Redding, "summertime and the livin' is easy."

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