

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Doctors encourage swimming safely

The Editor

As the rain becomes less and the temperature rises, many Nova Scotians retreat to the water for some relief from the heat. It's common for people to swim in residential pools, neighborhood lakes or at the beach. No matter how you choose to cool off this summer, doctors ask that you do it safely.

Swimming is not only a great way to incorporate exercise into your day, but it's a great way to beat the heat. Unfortunately, warmer temperatures present an increase in water related injuries and drowning rates. No matter where you swim or how good of a swimmer you are, accidents can happen. It's important that you take the proper steps to stay safe in the water.

To prevent backyard swimming injuries, doctors in the province encourage child supervision at all times. Children can be enticed to

water if toys are left in and around a pool. Be sure to clear all toys out of the water and away from the pool's edge. Home swimming pools should be surrounded by a fence and have an automatic, self-closing and self-latching gate.

Adults also need to practice water safety. Being a strong swimmer may not prevent injury or drowning. It is important to pay attention to the distance from shore, water temperature and currents. Don't consume alcohol before or during swimming or boating activities and always wear a fastened lifejacket when boating.

Doctors across the province wish all Nova Scotians a happy, healthy, and safe summer. Remember to keep yourself hydrated by drinking plenty of water and practice sun-safety at all times.

John Chiasson, BSc, MD
President, Doctors Nova Scotia
www.doctorsns.com

Have you received your free My Parks Pass yet?

The Editor

Nature Canada has joined with Parks Canada and the Historica-Dominion Institute to give every Grade 8 student in Canada a free pass to any Parks Canada-administered national park or national historic site. The pass is good for a whole year, and so the family doesn't feel left out, students can flash their pass for an instant discount on a daily family or group pass, too.

With 42 national parks, 167 national historic sites and 4 national marine conservation areas across the country, there are many things you can do with a My Parks Pass. Hiking through the Rocky Mountains. Sailing down a historic canal. Following in the footsteps of Canada's great historical figures. Which adventure you take is up to you.

If you share your My Parks Pass experiences through photos and stories on the My Parks Pass Web site (www.myparkspass.ca) you can win great prizes. Send in a photo of your adventure at a national park, national historic site or national marine conser-

vation area, or if you can't make it out to one of those destinations, take a picture of yourself with the pass. Your photo could get you an iPod Touch or an iTunes gift card.

The passes were distributed to schools across the country, including in your community, so if you have a Grade 8 student in your house, he or she should have it by now. Any Grade 8 students, including home schooled students who were missed during the distribution, can request a My Parks Pass through the Parks Canada National Information Service at 1-888-773-8888 or information@pc.gc.ca.

As Canadians, we are remarkably fortunate to have abundant opportunities to connect with nature. For so many of us, some of our favourite childhood memories involve being outdoors – and children today can still have those same memorable moments. So I encourage you to use the My Parks Pass, get outside and have fun!

Ian Davidson
Executive Director, Nature Canada

Letters to the Editor Policy

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Animals as 'entertainment' must end!

The Editor

While watching television recently I listened to a reporter on the CBC gushing over the royal visit of William and Kate. She mentioned that the royal family has a great affinity for horses.

I would suggest that the Calgary stampede was an unfortunate stop for the royals. Last year six horses died at the stampede. A senseless slaughter for the vicarious pleasure of the

spectators. It calls to mind the Roman chariot races, and reminds us that civilization has not progressed very far.

The word stampede envisions violence, no doubt chosen to promote the sale of tickets.

It's time for a major cleanup of this spectacle, and an end to animal abuse.

Jessie M. Stone,
Baddeck

How hot is your car?

The Editor

With summer weather finally upon us, the RCMP would like to remind Nova Scotians not to leave their children or pets unattended in the car.

During summer months, it can take only minutes for a car to reach over 35 degrees, which can be deadly. Rolling down a window or park-

ing in the shade doesn't guarantee protection either, since temperatures can still climb into harmful zones. RCMP have already received complaints this summer related to unattended pets in vehicles.

If you see a child or pet unattended in a vehicle on a hot day, call the police.

RCMP, Media Relations

Chuck Thompson's "Along the Trail"

"The Spark"



It was one of those "you had to be there" or maybe more appropriately, "you had to see it to believe it" moments - the kind my life has

been full of, to the point of excess.

It had been decided by a higher power that the time had long since expired for me to hang up some curtain rods. Now we are talking curtain rods here, not a motor job, or siding the house. It's all a matter of perspective or scale. Put a tool, any tool, in my hand and anxiety goes to heretofore unknown heights. The problem is I have no ability to see the answer, just the problem. As my late father-in-law once said to me as I was closing the car door on his new hand crafted fishing rod, "I don't know how anyone so stupid could live so long." I kind of took that personally but I guess he was somewhat upset at the moment as the rod tip crumbled to the ground in three, unrepairable pieces.

Anyway, here we are, balancing on a chair trying to do the math and get the chore done before I can pick up the one tool that gives me pleasure, a fishing rod, and hit the river.

Now I am a firm believer that everyone has some skill and can find a match for their talents. My search continues for mine.

I try but I am totally dysfunctional when it comes to doing the math on any project. The curtain rods proved no exception. "Measure how far across and then down, move the ends, and do the same on the other end." The voice of reason might as well have been asking me to change the route of re-entry of the space shuttle.

I was drilling more holes than a

woodpecker on a dying spruce tree and gyproc was falling like a fine winter snow.

At this moment the Gods shone upon me and a fishing friend who also happens to be a talented electrician dropped in to see if I wanted to cast a few flies before dark.

He watched in some amusement my contortions as I fought to get the job done and escape.

After a brief period, he couldn't stand it any longer and got involved, guided me along and the first rod was hung straight and true. I stood back, wiped the sweat from my brow, and admired my work, like Michaelangelo looking over the Sistine Chapel.

The second one was a piece of cake, or should have been.

Ten over and one and a half down. With my friend's skilled eye, it went as smooth as glass.

Almost!

As I drove the last of several holes a spark the size of a golf ball rolled out of the hole and the smell of burning wire filled the basement air. I had hit the wiring going to various plugs around the basement. He looked at me with 'eyes of wonder'. "You really do everything you write about, don't you?"

"Fraid so," was my weak reply.

I retired to the recesses of the now dark basement to find the circuit breakers and restore both light and dignity to the whole process.

The good news was the man watching was a certified electrician, otherwise I would have been on the blower to the local fire chief in a state of panic.

In the end, everything turned out fine, the smell and the anxiety diminished, and we finally got to the river where my modest skills were put to better use.

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