

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lets start the conversation

The Editor

What would it take for me to come home? For me to stay here? For me to live here, year-round?

In a recent editorial in this paper, Jim Morrow said the municipality ought to convene a gathering of post-secondary students and have them answer these questions, in the hope that this community could then work towards bringing these ideas to life.

I'm too impatient to wait for the County to have an official event, though. This is a very pertinent topic for me and my friends. I'm in my twenties, I live here year-round, and I'm bound and determined to keep doing so. I believe Victoria County is one of the most beautiful and rich places on Earth, and there is nowhere else I'd rather live.

Unfortunately, it's not rich in some really important ways. Young people leave here every year - are raised in our close and strong communities, all the way to Grade 12, and then leave for university. Those who would like to be able to come back, often do not. Our strengths - small communities, wild spaces - are in a way our weakness, because we do not have the large population that can sustain a great number of jobs.

Yet there must be something that can

be done. The recent farmers' markets that have sprung up in Baddeck and Bay St. Lawrence are proof that a group of people can see a need, and organize to fill it, without too much fuss or money. Through their hard work and plain old "just getting it done", now we have a resource in our community for local farmers to sell their wares, and everyone else to get local, fresh, healthy food once a week.

Our community needs young people. Young people do want to live here, and experience the many benefits our County has to offer. So let's get this conversation going. There are young people here. How are they making a living? Do they have to leave part of the time to make money? What would it take to keep them here year-round? Perhaps we should talk to the people in their 30's and younger about what it would take to make them feel their lives here are self-sustaining.

Josh Green is a 23 year old man who grew up in Baddeck. He's gone away for school and has come back to live at home while he works off his student loan debt. Currently he's employed in a seasonal industry, but he never knows when that will end. He sums up his needs in one word: "Jobs."

Leah Noble,
Baddeck, Nova Scotia

Helmets reduce risk of head injury

The Editor

Every year in Nova Scotia adults and children suffer head injuries related to activities where, in most cases, helmets weren't worn.

Activities like ice skating, rollerblading, skiing, and bike riding require a helmet to be worn. Activities that require a helmet for safety but aren't as commonly used include skateboarding, tobogganing, riding a scooter and horseback riding.

Each type of helmet is designed to protect the head from injuries associated with specific activities. Only wear a helmet approved for the activity you are participating in. Also be sure to replace your helmet after an impact and after two to three years of use, depending on wear. Your helmet should fit your head properly and should be fastened at all times during the activity.

Being experienced at an activity or

sport doesn't reduce the risk for injury. As a doctor and an avid cyclist, I know the importance of wearing a helmet to reduce the possibility of injury and to ensure the adventure is as safe as possible. Often there is insufficient time to break your unexpected fall from an upright position. The helmet is often the only thing preventing you from a life-altering event.

Head injuries can range from bruises and concussions to paralysis and death. Injuries can happen at any time and to anyone. By wearing a helmet we can protect ourselves get back to having fun.

While injuries can't always be prevented, we need to make sure that we take the necessary precautions when being active and make safety a priority.

John Chiasson, BSc, MD,
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Letters to the Editor Policy

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Mail to P.O. Box 629, Baddeck, Nova Scotia B0E 1B0

Kids say, "please get us our rink"

The Editor

Following are 2 letters from concerned kids about the lack of ice at their local community centre.

Hi! I'm Cole Barry and I am from Cape North Cape Breton and I think we should finish our rink at North Victoria Community Centre. Our rink should be finished so we can play like everyone else.

I would play hockey every day if we had ice. I feel sad that I can only play for 2 weeks a year.

How can I play for the Montreal Canadiens if we don't have ice?

My name is Jonah Dunphy and hockey is my life! I live in Dingwall and I travel

one hour away, over 3 mountains, to get to hockey practice in Cheticamp. I have to do this four days a week, from October to March, and I find it hard.

I know it is dangerous travelling over mountains in the winter, but my local arena, the North Victoria Community Centre in Cape North, only has ice for a few weeks in the winter.

Hockey is the best sport in the world and I feel bad for my friends that don't get to play. I wish the Cape North arena could get artificial ice so my friends and I could play hockey together and I wouldn't have to travel so far.

Two very avid hockey players,
Northern Victoria County

Young tour guide an asset to the area

The Editor

I would like to say that my wife and I really enjoyed our tour of the Cabot Trail with James Nicholson.

He was very articulate, informed

and polite. It would be a great asset to the Province to have more people like him.

Sincerely, Florence & Frank Leaman,
Halifax, Nova Scotia

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



This summer saw a return to Newfoundland for the first time in many years. Way back when the earth was cooling (the 60s) my father managed to get me a job as an assistant steward on a coastal boat that plied the waters from Port aux Basques to Terrenceville, near St. John's. Day after day, the only link to the outside world would plow the South-West coast, bringing people and goods to the isolated communities.

These many years later I see the logic in what I then considered madness. My astute dad noticed that I had finished High School and seemed to be taking up permanent residence on the family coach, stirring only to borrow the car. He must have figured a summer on the boats, away from anyone or anything I knew and maybe, just maybe, I would rise up and move on with my life.

It worked like magic!

After a very lonely summer working alone all night, surrounded by strangers I had a small but intense light come on that said "It's time to move on and do something else for the next 40 years or so." Belatedly, well done, dad.

I can remember clearly that it was the first summer of Joey Smallwood's relocation initiative. I can still see, rounding a point of land and meeting a fisherman dragging his house behind his boat, immersed up to the second story window, across the bay to some new spot because his premier had dictated so. It was fifty years ago and it was yesterday.

The clever and slick TV ads show the same salt box houses, dories dotting the coves, wooden fences winding their way around the villages. Most of what you still see portrayed on TV though, has been replaced by a new look - the look of prosperity.

We travelled from Bay Roberts to Fogo Island and every house, and I mean, every house was covered in vinyl siding. I can't help but wonder who the

salesman was for that. He probably lives in Florida six months of the year.

The outposts we visited had many new, huge houses sprouting up like mushrooms on a September morning. When I asked what was the cause of all this sudden prosperity I was told logically, "oil, my son, oil." And not just Hibernia oil, but Alberta oil, the same oil that draws so many Cape Breton youth away.

The one thing that has managed to stay the same is the people. The same self-effacing humor permeates the day to day conversation of anyone you meet. The same people who came to your rescue years ago still exist. Now they talk to you with a new confidence, a feeling of equality that was absent those so many years ago.

The transition from the "mainland" to the big island now is seamless. No longer are grocery stores absent of fruit or good vegetables. What we have, they have as well. One thing they now have that we can only dream about is good roads - mile after mile of straight, seamless hardtop. While we dodge potholes and run up on patch after patch, they cruise along with only moose to worry about.

No one in their right mind (which may include me) would wish a return to the tough times of yesterday.

As I watched the people of Fogo Island text and chat on their cell phones I again remembered one of my dad's favourite rants. "We live 10 miles from where the telephone was invented and we still can't get a private line." That would apply to today's digital age. Fogo Island has been designated one of the four corners of the earth by the "Flat Earth Society", yet they can communicate with the other three corners seamlessly. While here, in Middle River, we have to climb trees or drive up mountain roads to send a cell phone message.

Yes, Newfoundland has been changed forever. Forgive me if I salute their new-found prosperity but quietly miss what has been relegated to the bin of time.

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