

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

University/college bound students & identity theft

*The Editor*

College students have enough to juggle when it comes to school, work and their social life and fighting fraud often doesn't make the list of priorities. Because students are so susceptible to identity theft, Better Business Bureau recommends that they take eight simple steps to protect themselves on campus.

According to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre Annual Statistical Report, more than \$53,000,000 was lost to mass marketing fraud in 2010. Young adults aged 20-29 reported over \$1,500,000 in losses.

"Identity thieves don't care if you're a struggling student and don't have a penny to your name; sometimes all they want is to exploit your clean credit record," said Don MacKinnon, BBB president and CEO. "Young adults that establish good habits for monitoring and detecting fraud are laying a path that will help create a healthy financial road for the rest of their lives."

BBB recommends that university/college-bound students take the following eight steps to fight identity theft on campus:

- School mailboxes are not always secure and can often be easily accessed in a dorm or apartment. To combat sticky fingers in the mailroom, have sensitive mail sent to a permanent address such as the parents' home or a PO Box.
- Important documents should be stored under lock and key—such as in a filing cabinet. This includes social insurance card, passport and bank and credit card state-

ments. Shred any paper documents that have sensitive financial information rather than just tossing them out. Also shred any credit card offers that come in the mail.

- Never loan your credit or debit card to anyone, even if they are a friend. Also just say no if your friend wants you to cosign for a loan or financing for items like a TV.
- Make sure your computer has up-to-date antivirus and spyware software. Always install any updates and patches to your computer's operating system or browser software, which help keep your computer safe from any new advances by identity thieves online.
- Always check your credit or debit card statements closely for any suspicious activity. The sooner you identify any potential fraud, the less you'll suffer in the long run.
- When shopping on unfamiliar web sites, always check the company out first with BBB online. Also look for the BBB Accredited Business seal along with other trust seals; click on the seals to confirm that they are legitimate.
- Don't publish birth date, email address, mother's maiden name, pets name or other identifying personal information on social networking sites. Use privacy settings to control who has access to your profile.
- Check your credit report at least once a year.

*Better Business Bureau of the Maritime Provinces, Halifax, Nova Scotia*

Doctors encourage active transportation

*The Editor*

Currently Nova Scotia has the highest rate of obesity in Canada. With physical inactivity and an increasing rate of obesity overtaking smoking as the number one public health concern in the province, Doctors Nova Scotia is committed to making active transportation a priority for all Nova Scotians.

Active transportation means "human-powered" travel, such as walking and bicycling, which can be incorporated into routine daily activities in an effort to increase physical activity in Nova Scotia. As the association that represents all physicians in the province, we have an obligation to protect the health of our community members.

With a rise in the number of chronic illnesses in our province, doctors are urging Nova Scotians to make their own health a priority. Active transportation can be as easy as walking or bicycling to work, school, the grocery store or a friend's house. Incorporating additional activity into your day can be as simple as parking farther away from entrances, choosing the stairs over the elevator or hiking with your family.

It's crucial for Nova Scotians to begin to take steps to help improve their own health and active transportation is a great way to start!

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

Nutrition and activity important to students

*The Editor*

Nova Scotia has one of the highest rates of obesity in Canada. With inactivity and unhealthy eating becoming more prevalent, doctors in the province encourage children and youth to lead the way to a healthier society.

Good nutrition is essential for children to develop into healthy adults. Parents can play an important role in shaping their children's eating habits. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Without it children may be tired, irritable and find it difficult to concentrate in class. Children who eat breakfast tend to feel better and often perform better in school.

Despite best efforts, it can be difficult to monitor what children eat when they're not at home. Packing a 'paper-bag' lunch is one way to provide healthy lunch options for your children. Choose a variety of foods from the four food groups of Canada's Food Guide, make sandwiches with different kinds of grain products and add vegetables and fruits.

Parents should also educate children about the dangers of caffeinated beverages.

While many students believe energy drinks will provide them with increased energy and alertness, Health Canada reports that too much caffeine can result in nausea and vomiting and/or heart irregularities and anxiety. A small amount of caffeine could also cause sleeping problems, headaches, irritability and nervousness.

Being healthy also means being physically active every day. Whether your child is a member of the Doctors Nova Scotia Youth Running for Fun program, a sport team, participates in extracurricular activities or simply walks to school, it's imperative for young Nova Scotians to be physically active in order to sustain good overall health.

Physicians encourage parents, children and youth to eat breakfast every day, include physical activity as much as possible and make healthy choices when preparing meals. Taking control of your life begins with caring for and respecting your body. It has to last you a lifetime.

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

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



It's hard to believe but we are already at the end of our "Two Short Summer."

Tear August from the calendar and you know that the jig is up. Oh, there will still be fly bites, sunburn, a last trip to the beach, warm sunny days, but summer 2011 is toast. Now before the switch board lights up at *The Victoria Standard* and John gets "receptionist ear" Two Short Summer" is not a typo, it was indeed a two short summer.

After the few warm days at the start of July, I never donned a pair of shorts again until late in August. Jeans were the fashion statement during what is supposed to be the height of summer. It was weather better suited to hiking and biking than beaching. One trip to Chimney Corner in July killed any lingering doubts that this was one of the most successful summers ever launched against "global warming."

As the days shorten and the evenings cool, the shorts will once again be relegated to the third drawer of my vast wardrobe for another long ten months. Buried under tee-shirts, thin socks, and the bathing suit. Their appearance was shorter than a vegan at a chicken BBQ.

The sum total of the entire summer will be one pair of shorts worn twice or two pair worn once. However you look at it, it was a "Two Short Summer."

Now for those of you who mourn the loss of mosquitoes, sunscreen (and sunburn), allergies, sleepless nights, humidity, I offer my most insincere condolences. Good-bye, summer, a speedy exit to you.

I knew the summer wasn't going to be much (by the above standards) when the Tree Swallows fledged and

not a toe was in the water yet.

For those of you who don't know "fledge" from a hockey puck, or paint primer or Dan Huey's rhubarb, it is the time the young leave the nest, a defining moment that you wish your oldest son would emulate.

You could sense the summer season was going to be less than spectacular when the Maples started to turn at the beginning of August. It may have happened before but I can't remember when I saw colour so early. It was hardly worthwhile leafing out in the first place.

There are other signs that summer has given up the ghost. The male hummingbirds have long since left for warmer climes. One of the great mysteries of nature is why do they travel so far for so little time. Here in mid May they are gone by early September, the males by mid-August. They spend less time here than Joe Clark did in power.

Now we move on to earth's greatest gift to us all, autumn. Vibrant colours, mostly fly-less days, warm, clear skies, praise be to the all too short fall season. The outdoors beckon golfers, fishermen (and fisher women), hikers, bird watchers, sailors, in fact anyone who would rather be out than locked on a flickering computer screen.

If you have to be indoors consider the Cabot Trail Writer's Festival the first days of October. There will be real writers there and a good time can be held by all. Circle the calendar for September 30th.

I will shed not a tear as summer staggers away leaving a season of unfulfilled promise.

I will rejoice and welcome what is surely coming.

I may even get carried away with this sudden rush of euphoria and start dreaming of snowflakes.

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