

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Province should pay what NewPage hasn't

The Editor

A company goes into bankruptcy when it has no money to pay its bills. Premier Darrell Dexter said the province "is not an insurer" for creditors against a business's bankruptcy. This is understandable.

However, when a company the size of NewPage goes into bankruptcy, it has such an effect on the whole economy of Nova Scotia that steps must be taken to either replace the bankrupt company or find other ways to replace jobs lost.

Efforts put forward are to try to hold forestry operators together to see if a new buyer can be found so the mill is started up again.

To date, this effort is a failure as woodlot owners, harvesting contractors and truckers operating on private woodlots will be knocked out of the system if they are not paid in full for their last 10 days of deliveries.

These people supply 50 per cent of the required wood for the mill, making the whole system work and creating jobs for 600 mill employees and all the other spinoff jobs.

These operators are owed between \$10,000 and more than \$200,000 each. This is their operating cash flow or line of credit at the bank taken away from them and will end up ruining their credit ratings at their bank.

This was all caused by management at the mill who, after NewPage announced on August 22 that it was closing down, sent out several emails to contractors to ship all wood on hand to the mill by August 28th. They

even went so far as to hire extra trucks to help get the wood to their yard so their mill could continue to make paper out of it before the shutdowns on September 10th and 16th.

Had NewPage shut off deliveries when they knew they couldn't pay for it, contractors could have sold their wood to other markets and been in a position to keep operating if a new buyer is found or to supply wood to other markets.

The estimated amount owed to the wood suppliers is \$4 million. This money can be found by government and it would not be bailing out a bankrupt mill. The province has a commitment of \$25 million to the mill. The next payment - \$10 million - would be due in January if the mill was still operating. There is no reason why \$4 million of that can't be paid to wood suppliers as it was our tax dollars going to the mill in the first place.

When a crisis situation of this size hits our economy, we must all work together. Where are our MLAs for Cape Breton Island? The only statement I heard from them was some arguing over whose riding the mill was in. Let our MLAs call a public meeting of the wood suppliers to hear us out and put a plan in place to demand payment from the balance of government money that was to be paid to NewPage.

It takes goodwill to overcome failure. That goodwill is needed now more than ever.  
*Michael Dan MacNeil,  
Jamesville, NS*

**Editor's Note:** *NewPage has been granted creditor protection in court to avoid bankruptcy.*

### An open letter of concern

The Editor

The following is an open letter from the Inverness-Guysborough Presbytery of the United Church of Canada.

On behalf of the members of Presbytery, the executive wishes to express concern for the many people whose livelihoods will be affected if the NewPage Mill in Port Hawkesbury ceases to operate. We realize that mill workers, loggers, truckers and their families and the people of the wider community will feel the pain of uncertainty while the future of the mill is uncertain.

The Presbytery extends from Canso to Margaree and Baddeck and the ripple effect of this news is reaching throughout

the area. Many families, immediate and extended, are trying to deal with the anxiety that comes from this uncertainty. The Presbytery wishes you to know that our thoughts and prayers are with you.

It is our hope that a solution will be found that will benefit the workers and their families. We also hope that any closure will be for as short a period of time as possible. Our families need our support; our families need work; our families need to know that they are not alone in this seemingly discouraging situation.

For an equitable solution to this crisis, we hold you in prayer.

*Rev. Donna Tourneur, Secretary,  
Inverness-Guysboro Presbytery*

#### Letters to the Editor Policy

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## The Victoria Standard

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

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**Copy/Design/Subscriptions: John Johnson**

**Advertising/Sales: Jim Ryan**

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.



### A tribute to Debbie Osborne

The Editor

The sudden death of Debbie Osborne on Tuesday September 13, 2011 leaves a large empty hole in the fabric of the Village of Baddeck. This was evident on Tuesday morning when her stalwart employees and friends gathered there for a cup of coffee or tea sharing their commiseration over the fact that she had suffered a life ending cerebral aneurysm. Disbelief was rampant that someone of her vitality and stamina had been snuffed out so quickly. There is no justice here.

Debbie was always kind, gracious

and full of fun. She would often provide a treat along with her home style cuisine. She was equally kind to any pets that were on her door front. Her customers were loyal and the atmosphere always friendly.

The Village Kitchen was a gathering place for all stripes...a visual melting pot of social intercourse. For those of us who frequented the Village Kitchen her loss is immeasurable.

Debbie's family should know that we all suffer with them her loss.

*Henry Fuller,  
Big Harbour*

### News TV 'filler' of animal in distress is not "fun"!

The Editor

I was deeply disturbed recently while watching the CBC evening news at 6 pm. The news and weather crew were showing a photo of an obviously tortured crocodile. The crew seemed to find this quite amusing - laughing and making inane comments.

This behavior promotes animal abuse. I was not surprised that this capture took

place in the Phillipines - a country well-known for its barbaric treatment of animals. I would not though, have expected to see this callous exploitive behavior on Canadian television.

The public deserves an apology. Shame on you CBC!

*Jessie M. Stone,  
Baddeck*

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

## "The Wood Shed"



If I was still in school I would have more labels than the preserve section at the County Fair. ADD, ADHD, Learning Disabled, and Spectrum Disorder, to name but a

few. I remember Lorne Eliot former host of "Wildly Off in All Directions" saying the worst thing that ever happened to him was getting a diagnosis for his scholastic efforts. He found out he was just dumb.

After numerous years roaming the hall in High School there was some concern by my parents that it was becoming an if, not a when, regarding my pending graduation.

Well as it turned out I did stagger out the doors of Thompson High even with a two year stint in grade eleven. I took some comfort in the knowledge that Einstein was considered a dunce in prep school and he did alright. The comparison fades at that point.

All this is to say I decided in the spring that I would attempt, on my own, to build a wood shed. I made numerous visits to a neighbour, looking at how he did it, measuring, sizing up, studying, and the summer passed.

As the swallows, then the hummingbirds left, the project remained untested and untried.

I lacked the nerve to start. I kept telling myself it was a wood shed, not a house but it did not move my anxious brain. The necessary wood, screws, and shingles remained on the ground, collecting earwigs instead of rain and sunlight.

As the days shortened and frost picked at the edge of the tomatoes, I knew it was now or never. I voted for never but better minds than mine overruled me and gently but firmly used the ancient art of persuasion to get me to get it done!

So I did - sort of.

The same kind and gentle man who peered out the window to see me most of the summer studying his wood shed offered to help me. Help like a neuro-surgeon helps the scrub nurse put in your pig valve. In other words both he and I knew that it would be him doing the cutting, figuring, measuring and stapling. I would be handing tools and

materials to him as things took shape.

And take shape they did. I know now that whatever undiagnosed disability I have it includes but is not restricted to angles. Whereas Number 1 (the neighbour) can stand back, rub his chin, cock his head, ponder the situation and finally pronounce with absolute certainty what to do I would still be back at chin rubbing.

It's not just lack of experience or confidence, it is the complete inability to see what the problem is and what the various options are, beyond more chin scratching.

Put a level or square in my sweaty hands and you might as well pass me a hand grenade with the pin removed. I run away from the offending item and can't wait to drop it to the ground protesting complete ignorance in the task ahead.

I remarked that the only tool I felt reasonably safe with was a tape measure and number 1 told a wonderful story of his youth. It seems that his Dad had been given a tape measure by a family member from Boston upon his return to Cape Breton many, many years ago. This was the first ever tape measure in these parts and it was a sight to behold. It was considered so valuable and rare that all children were sworn away from ever touching this marvel of invention.

The story goes that when a friend some time later asked how long it was, the father admitted he had no idea as he was so scared he might break this prized possession if he expanded it to its full length.

Well back in the present with the guidance, wisdom, and leadership of Number 1, I am now the proud owner of a state of the art wood shed. It may draw people in off the road.

The next problem to be solved is how to get a few cords of wood in that shed with all limbs still intact. Chain saws are a whole different story for this handyman. Now we are talking about a tool with the ability to bite. It's hard to hurt yourself with a Tape measure.

Maybe I should restrict myself to looking officious and measuring the pile as it is dumped in the yard. I'll pretend it was time not talent that restricted my ability to cut my own wood.

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