

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Distinguishing right from wrong - the question of fracking

The Editor

For me, this issue of the drilling for oil in the Lake Ainslie area is not about being for or against "development".

As a member of the development association in Judique for 8 of the past 10 years I can tell you I'm 100% in favour of development. But there's a right way to do things and a wrong way to do things and right now, what's happening in Lake Ainslie – and what may eventually happen in every community from Judique to Margaree – is happening the wrong way.

Let's pretend for a minute that the oil and gas industry is indeed operating in a safe enough manner that our water will not be contaminated, that our health, safety and overall well-being will be protected. If so, then please tell me why I would need a full environmental impact assessment done in order to put up a windmill, but to drill for oil and gas the provincial Dept of Energy has streamlined the approval and regu-

latory processes for this industry. Those are their own words from their own website. In other words, no environmental impact assessment has been done, or will be required.

Why is our Department of Environment more concerned with an ice cream spill than an oil spill? Why is it that obvious errors in Petroworth's permit application are being ignored, such as an apparent misrepresentation of a stream that flows right by the drilling site into the lake, and thus, the entire Margaree watershed? And why, just a couple weeks ago, did a man whom I met in the Whycocomagh area who said he has worked in the industry for 30 years and has fracked wells in other places and says it's entirely safe – why did he refuse to tell me his name when I introduced myself and asked him who he was? What kind of credence does a person lend himself and his words when he won't tell you his own name? If the oil and gas industry is not dangerous to human health, then why is the commu-

nity of Fort Chipewyan, a community of about 1000 people downstream of Fort McMurray – why does this community have one of the highest rates of rare and lethal cancers in the country?

There's nothing I want more in this world than to see Cape Breton be a place where staying or leaving is nothing more than a choice – and not a necessity for anyone. But we have to ask ourselves why it is that we want to live here and what it is that makes this place so special. It is our way of life – our quality of life – and without that, Cape Breton Island would just be another place on a map.

As I said before, there's a right way and a wrong way to do things and at this moment what's happening is being done the wrong way. That is a fact. And that is why so many people are opposed to it. They are not extremists. They are not against progress. They are like you and me: people who live here, love it here, and who care about Cape Breton. I don't know about you, but I love to smell and taste the salt in the air when I walk the beaches and trails of Cape Breton and the thought that that taste and smell might be changed to one of pungent, toxic oil has me quite concerned – ask someone from Fort Worth, Texas and they can tell you all about the oily taste the air leaves on their tongue. I also relish the fact that I can turn on my tap and drink the water that flows – unlike many people in

Granville, Pennsylvania who can literally light their tap water on fire. These are the sorts of things that have me quite concerned and I hope they concern you too – because it is a very real possibility – if they do drill and find oil in Lake Ainslie you know as well as I do they won't stop there – there will be oil rigs around every corner of Route 19, every twist and turn of the 252, and along every stretch of backroad in the county.

If I'm right – if it does concern you – that doesn't mean you're an "environmentalist" – it simply means you are a human being capable of distinguishing right from wrong – and you have the ability to do something about it – something very simple – there is a toll-free number you can call that goes right to an answering machine and you can leave a message to Premier Darrell Dexter: call 1-800-267-1993 and you will be asked to leave your message.

Ask the Premier to protect you, your health, your safety and your well-being, by withdrawing the lease to Petroworth, to ensure a full environmental assessment is completed before any new drilling permits are issued in the province, and that Nova Scotia implements a complete ban on fracking. And if you want to do more or want more information, please call me and we'll talk about it.

*Dwayne MacEachern,
Judique, Nova Scotia*

Regular Pap tests save lives

The Editor

Nova Scotia has one of the highest rates of cervical cancer in the country. Every year approximately 60 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in the province. Of those, half will die from the disease.

Pap Test Awareness Week was recently and we continue to remind women that regular Pap tests are the best protection against cervical cancer.

Pap tests can find abnormal cell changes in the cervix, which then can be treated before they have a chance to become cancerous. Almost all cervical cancer is preventable if cell changes are detected early enough.

Early changes to cells in the cervix can happen without pain or symptoms. If these changes aren't found and treated, they can develop into cancer. Regular Pap tests prevent approximately 95 per cent of all cervical cancers. However, Pap tests don't detect ovari-

an cancer.

All women are encouraged to have their first Pap test within three years of becoming sexually active or at age 21, whichever comes first. Women should have a Pap test every year for three years and if all three test results are negative (normal or clear), they can have Pap tests every two years after that.

Most women who have had a hysterectomy no longer need a Pap test although some still do.

All women are advised to talk to their family doctor about when they need their next Pap test and what regular screening means to them.

For more information or to request your Pap screening history, contact Cancer Care Nova Scotia's Cervical Cancer Prevention Program at 1-888-480-8588.

*John Chiasson, BSc, MD
President, Doctors Nova Scotia*

Letters to the Editor Policy

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Chuck Thompson's "Along the Trail" **"The Season"**



"See you, Chuck. See you next June for sure!"

"Ok, buddy, looking forward to it!"

With the customary good-byes, car doors slammed in a swirl of leaves and tail lights disappeared down the driveway. It was the end of the annual salmon fishing expedition, something that many years ago came to mean much more than just fish.

People often ask, "Why do you hook and release, why do you spend so much time just to throw them back, it makes no sense." Of course they are right, it makes no sense, but neither does hitting a little white ball all day long, or chasing a piece of black rubber around an arena. Sports and salmon fishing with a rod is, after all, a sport, is a recreation for some, a passion for others. For me it is a spiritual experience, something that brings me as close to the answer to some of the really big questions: what is life, what is next, how did it start, is there more? It is not about catching and releasing - catching and releasing is just an excuse to be with friends, be outdoors, and get in touch with my inner self. It would not be much of an overstatement to say it gives my existence meaning. Without it, my life would be much diminished.

It was way back in 1974 that a friend and I laid four big salmon on the banks of the Middle River, and then asked ourselves, "why?" We did not need them for food, yet we wanted the

experience of being together on the river. There was no other way and we have not kept a fall fish since.

The three brothers have been part of all of this for upwards of 28 consecutive years.

Everyone is aware that in order to come for 28 years in a row you have to have extraordinary luck. You also have to age with decent results.

The eldest member is now 82 and although no one dwells on it all are aware that time has moved relentlessly, sometimes at a pace that frightens. Next year is another year full of promise, full of excitement and suspense. But it is still next year, and next year can be a long way off.

The last number of years, salmon have not returned in numbers one would have hoped for. 2011, thankfully, has reversed the trend and all those who love the rivers and the fish in them (anglers, First Nations, the creatures), are all buoyed by a renewed sense of optimism. Hopefully there will be enough for all to share as the lack of access has frustrated those who wish to take one home be it for a family meal or as part of a community celebration.

Every season is a cycle of hope, despair, excitement or disappointment.

It will take a lot of good timing and good luck to make it all happen again in 2012. With the days shortening and temperatures dropping, thinking of the alternative is just not where one wants to go. Where I want to go is to the river with all its spirituality and meaning.

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