

Letter to the Editor

What a fall it has been at the Deanery Project in Ship Harbour!

It began with a beautiful community celebration, in recognition of being mortgage-free. Wow! There aren't words enough to thank all the amazing volunteers who, since our start up in 2011, have supported a vision of working together to steward the precious lands and waters in our care.

The Eastern Shore is blessed with generous, wise indigenous elders who are walking with the settler community to build stronger, healthier communities – learning together.

In our work at the Deanery, we pay especial attention to “Etuaptmumk,”

or Two-Eyed Seeing, which elders Albert and Murdena Marshall defined as “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing and to using both of these eyes together.”

These are stressful times as we navigate rising costs of living and balance those realities with so many other changes in life in the 21st century. The environmental costs and benefits of decisions we make today have far reaching impacts, that most of us seriously undervalue.

The Deanery tries to clarify the inter-relatedness of these issues by acting

as a “Climate Action Living Lab”. As an interdisciplinary demonstration and field research site, we aim to accelerate communities’ understanding of low-impact and regenerative opportunities for the built environment, agriculture, and our oceans, to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

By taking an intersectoral approach to community engagement, education, and hands-on learning, we hope to share long-term carbon reduction solutions that are scalable and replicable. Equity and two-eyed seeing sit at the heart of this work.

Traditional rural skills and systems thinking are part of this approach also, and are increasingly being recognized

as valuable resources we need to cultivate in order to thrive as healthy communities. With that end in mind, we invite you to join us at our monthly Open House, December 3rd, where we will be processing flax for linen fibre. Our small crop, grown on site, is part of the “Flax Mobile Project.” More info on our FB page. There will surely be tunes round the wood stove also! Hope to see you there. Best wishes for the Holiday Season!

– Kim Thompson, Executive Director of The Deanery Project

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EASTERN SHORE COOPERATOR

JANUARY-FEBRUARY DEADLINE

JANUARY 3<sup>RD</sup>

## Smith Dives in at DFA

By Richard Bell

MLA Kent Smith had a rocket start in his new role as Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. In a short phone interview, Smith talked about his first months in office.

“At 11 AM on September 14, I was sworn in,” Smith said. “The Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance was holding their annual general meeting that day. By 6 PM, I was at one of their events, starting to meet all the companies the department issues licenses for. And at a business session the next morning, I gave a 20-minute talk.”

“It’s been an incredibly exciting period of time,” Smith said. “I’ve learned a ton. My family weren’t fishers, but growing up in Sheet Harbour, I knew a ton of fisherfolk. The economic impact of fishing across the province is huge. Our fishery exports of \$2.6 billion are more than three times larger than Nova Scotia’s next largest export market.”

Smith emphasized his department’s role in licensing the industry’s buyers and processors, which he summed up as overseeing “where the water meets the wharf.” The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans regulates ocean fishing itself. As for aquaculture sites, both shellfish and finfish, it’s the independent Aquaculture Review Board that now issues licenses, not DFA.

Smith agreed that the Eastern Shore was now punching way above its weight in provincial government, with Eastern Shore MLAs now holding down four of the province’s ministries: African Nova Scotian Affairs (MLA Twila Grosse), the Public Service Commission (MLA Twila Grosse), Agriculture (MLA Greg Morrow), and DFA. In an example of how MLAs can help each other out, Smith said that his constituency office executive assistant had been sharing what she learned in her first two years on the job with Grosse’s constituency staffer.

## Sheet Harbour Marina Moving Along

By Richard Bell

The Sheet Harbour Marina Association had a sold-out fundraising banquet and silent/live auction on October 21 at the Sheet Harbour Lions Centre. The evening featured guest speaker Adam Langley, president and founder of Super Yacht East Coast. Langley formerly oversaw marine operations and development for Develop Nova Scotia. And Sober Island Oysters generously provided a complimentary Oyster Bar.

Association president Marilyn Munroe told the *Cooperator* that the Association is also raising funds with a compete stock of SHM logo gear for sale, including hats, t-shirts, and hoodies. Gear is available

online at the Association’s website, <https://sheetharbourmarina.com>.

The marina has a ways to go before it starts serving recreational boaters. But the Association is renting space over the winter to the *Scotia Tide* barge, the large black catamaran-style vessel you can see from the East River bridge on the south side. The heavy-lift barge was built by the Acon Group in Pictou in 2015 to lower and retrieve the giant turbines that companies were beginning to test in the Bay of Fundy. The barge is reported to be the largest heavy-lift barge in Atlantic Canada. The 650-ton barge is 64-metres long and 37-metres wide.

## Major Increase in Illegal Dumping Fees

The Department of Natural Resources and Renewables has announced whopping increases in the fines for illegal dumping on Crown lands. Under the Crown Lands Act, the fine for a first offense will jump from \$352.50 for a first offense to \$812.50. The fine for repeat offenses was also \$325.50. Repeat fines will now be \$2,422.50. Police and conservation can issue tickets for fines on the spot.

The increase in fines fulfills one of the charges in DNRR Minister Tony Rushton’s mandate letter of September 14, 2021, which called for amending “the Crown

Lands Act to increase the fine for the offence of dumping or depositing materials on Crown lands, without legal justification or the permission of the Minister.”

In a November 17th statement about the increase, Minister Rushton said, “We’re serious about protecting our lands and forests. We’re delivering on a promise to increase the fine for dumping on Crown land. Higher fines will serve as a greater deterrent and help keep our natural spaces clean.”

## NS Health Fixes Doc Recruiting Problem

By Richard Bell

The *Cooperator* has learned that NS Health has recently made a change in how it manages the recruitment of new doctors that will make it much easier for communities to assist in helping new doctors settle in.

Greg Cross, who works on the community doctor recruitment committee in Sheet Harbour, explained in an interview why he wanted NS Health to give communities sufficient lead time to work with newly assigned doctors on basic things like finding a place to live.

Under the Nova Scotia Practice Ready Assessment Program, a doctor must complete two six-week assessments in communities outside the one that doctor will be assigned to practice in.

NS Health was concerned that a community might be disappointed if people were expecting a doctor, and that doctor failed their assessment. So NS Health decided not to inform host communities until after the doctor had passed both assessments, leaving as little as two weeks for the new doctor to move to the community where they would start serving.

“This policy has been a real sore spot for me,” Cross said. He pointed out that two weeks was far too little time for someone to find housing, given the housing crisis. “I’ve been fighting with NS Health about this. They shouldn’t be doing this to host communities, and they shouldn’t be doing it to the physicians.”

Cross said that his group had succeeded

in finding the name of the physician who was supposed to come to Sheet Harbour. “We had to do a roundabout way to get in touch with her, with no help from NS Health. We invited her and her husband and took them on a tour. We looked at the available housing, and found a place for them to rent, and got them settled in when she passed her assignments.”

The *Cooperator* contacted NS Health about the problems that withholding the names of new physicians was causing for communities and for physicians. In an email on December 17, Jennifer Lewandowski, Senior Advisor for Media Relations at NS Health, said that NS Health has changed this policy, which was adopted in 2019 before the housing crunch, and would begin providing more advance notice.

Here is her explanation of the change in the notification policy:

“This is a situation unique to the Nova Scotia Practice Ready Assessment Program (NS PRAP). This program requires that a physician complete two six-week assessments in a community outside of the one where they will work. Historically, we have had an agreement with the NS PRAP program administration wherein we did not notify a community until the physician in question had successfully completed their assessment. It is important to note that this process preserved/preserves the dignity of the physician if they are, indeed, the unsuccessful candidate.

...continued on page 17

## Thank You

*Your words have comforted us, your support has strengthened us, and your love has sustained us. We extend our deepest thanks to family, friends & community for their kindness during our great sadness. We appreciate it more than words can express and it will always be remembered.*

*The family of Ben Clattenburg*





What’s Bugging Me This Month

By Jeddore John

I was walking my old dog Dork down the road by the house, enjoying the sunny, mild, late-fall day by the sea. I usually pick up the odd bit of trash on these daily walks, but yesterday was especially trash-laden. I got two T-shirts, a Tim’s paper cup with lid, a nondescript paper cup, a 411 ml Bud Light can, a regular sized Coors can, an empty milk jug, three bottle caps, two nondescript soggy lumps of white paper-ish stuff (that I hoped was paper towel or napkins) and one of those tooth flossing thingies that are shaped like the letter P. And I found it all in less than a half mile. What a haul. Am I a lucky guy or what?

This got me thinking, “What kind of person thinks it’s OK to throw their trash out the car window on my road?” I can understand the tooth flossing thingie because of the huge effort it would have taken to take it home, carry it in the house, and put it in the recycling bin.

And I know why the beer cans were there—you have to toss them out the window in case you get stopped by The Fuzz and charged with Criminal Stupidity for drinking and driving. And I know why the Tim’s cup was there because they are everywhere. The white mushy lumps we will leave to your imagination.

But the T-shirts were a mystery. Did some guy think these T-shirts were getting kind of ratty? I think I’ll drive down to Dork Lane and toss’em out the window! And the empty milk jug? You would expect that if someone were a jug tosser, there would lots of them in the toss zone, at least one a week. But no, just this one sad lonely jug.

By the way, if you are on a tight budget but still want to get some of those flossy thingies, check out the Sobeys parking lot in Head of Jeddore. On any given day you can find eight or ten of them there just waiting to be picked up. Soak’em overnight in some Listerine and they are as good as new. At least that’s what I’m told.

In other news, the stories have started to trickle in. Some residents in Pleasant Point are considering seceding from the HRM. They would change the little bridge leading to the point to a lift bridge with the residents having the remotes to operate it – they should call the bridge Pleasant Pont. (You didn’t know I spoke French did you?) They would do their own road maintenance, maybe build a small school, and save thousands on services paid for but not delivered. We can print this here because no one in Halifax knows that there is a Pleasant Point, let alone where it is.

A friend of mine was living in Lawrencetown when Amalgamation happened. He reports that within five years, his residential taxes had more than doubled, but nothing else had changed.

We have heard from Musquodoboit Harbour, West Jeddore, and Sheet Harbour with statements of discontent with the HRM rural residential tax rate. I would welcome more input about your take on this issue, and any examples of inequities that you can provide. You can ring my bell at [jeddorejohn@easternshorecooperator.com](mailto:jeddorejohn@easternshorecooperator.com).

Your responses will be kept completely confidential unless you wish otherwise.

PS. Yes yes, I know Dork is a terrible name for a dog, especially here. Sometimes I go out on the back porch to call him. I yell “Dork! Come!” and occasionally the neighbour’s kid shows up. I think his parents should treat him better.

Managing Financial Challenges

By David Clarke

Mortgage interest rates are high and the most common question I’ve been receiving in the last 6 to 9 months is what can I do about my renewal. These people are commonly renewing their mortgage at 2% to 4% higher than what their interest rate was and the payment shock from that is a heavy thing to try to deal with.

People are feeling the effects of higher interest rates not just on their mortgages but on their other credit products as well. There’s not always a perfect solution. Sometimes the best or only thing you can do is a solution that helps you for a couple of years before you have to pivot your plan when hopefully rates are lower. Try to wrap up debt or extend your amortization to drop your monthly payment.

Essentially try to get as low a monthly payment as possible for the next two or three years while it’s expensive to buy chicken, let alone pay off your mortgage in an accelerated way. When life is cheaper, reevaluate your loans, and make a change if it makes sense.

I know we’ve been taught that there’s a “proper” way to handle your finances and that you should pay off your house, not have credit card debt, and have savings to cushion any unexpected expenses.

Well, that’s not the reality for many people. 47% of Canadians report that they are living paycheck to pay cheque. That’s half of us. The rules have changed. Life’s expensive. You used to be able to put a percentage of your income away to retire while paying off your medium-sized house. Now it’s hard to buy a house at all and retirement isn’t a realistic goal for most people.

The rules changed and the people who wrote those rules didn’t go through a pandemic. And if they did, I’m sure they wouldn’t have had their country’s bank raise interest rates over and over in an unprecedented way. Add an increase in general house prices, an increase in rent, a new carbon tax, and an overall higher cost of living and, understandably, money feels tight, and we’re scared.

There are two purposes to this article – it’s not to make you scared. Purpose number one is kind of boring: shop around and ask questions with your mortgage, car loan, investment products, and every financial thing you have. In a perfect world, they’re going to say you’re already in a great product and if you’re not, you can get some advice on what you can do.

Purpose number two is to let you know that you’re not alone. Sometimes because of the stigma of money, we don’t share our down periods with our neighbors, and we only show success stories through social media and conversation.

I talk to people every day who are struggling and are worried. So hopefully knowing others are in the same boat not only makes you feel better but also gets you talking more openly about what you’re going through with your friends. Making connections helps, and you can compare notes and discover they’re doing something useful that you’re not, and vice versa. And talk to your financial support people and get information. Be prepared.

Lastly, be kind to each other and share your ideas and struggles. Not everyone is going to have a solution to your finances. But maybe if you’re lucky, you can help out someone who makes a mean pie. Life’s better with pie.

David Clarke is your Friendly Neighbourhood Mortgage Broker.

Customers of Maritime Fuels Need to Act

If you’ve been buying your home heating oil on a prepayment plan from Maritime Fuels, you need to contact your financial institution or credit card company and cancel any pre-scheduled payments to the company immediately.

Maritime Fuels declared bankruptcy on November 16, 2023. According to a November 17, 2023, press release from Service Canada, a licensed insolvency trustee with the company Price Waterhouse Cooper (PwC) was appointed on November 16. This trustee is in charge of dealing with the company’s creditors. If you have already paid for fuel you did not or will not now receive, you should contact PwC. The trustee is in charge of making arrangements to pay off the company’s debts.

You can find additional information on PwC’s Maritime Fuels bankruptcy information page: <https://www.pwc.com/ca/en/services/insolvency-assignments/maritimefuels.html>

Flu Vaccines Available

Bookings for the standard-dose and high-dose influenza vaccine are now available. The high-dose influenza vaccine, which is free for Nova Scotians this year, is recommended for people aged 65 years and older. People can book an appointment at a pharmacy clinic at: <http://novascotia.flow.canimmunize.ca/en/covid-flu-booking>. For assistance booking appointments call 1-833-797-7772.