

Letter to the Editor

The residents of Elmhurst Seniors Home, a 30-unit building in Sheet Harbour, need your help.

Their problem is a television service that is unreliable and outdated. Residents have said that this has been an ongoing problem for over 10 years. Their service is inconsistent and is interrupted for days at a time.

The residents pay \$11.00 a month to Housing for TV service. Only a few have internet. They had very little television or sometimes none during Covid. Their mental health is what concerns me. Provincial Housing has failed to offer reliable television service, which keeps Seniors disconnected from the world and limits their access to information and news.

Four years ago some of the residents asked me to help them. Here's what I've done:

1. I contacted Bill Daley, Maintenance Supervisor at Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority. He was aware of the problem and was in the process of correcting it.
2. At my request, MP Sean Fraser visited Elmhurst and on September 21, 2020, wrote a letter to the Hon. Chuck Porter, Minister of Municipal

Affairs and Housing, outlining some of residents' issues including the lack of cable tv.

3. During this time I contacted Eastlink, their service provider. I spoke to 6 different staff members. They told me the cable equipment was outdated and they can't always get parts to repair the system. This staff were very good to return my calls.
4. I continually called Housing and was told repeatedly that the system would be repaired. During this time the residents had no television for 5 days. At one point I mentioned their problem to our Councillor David Hendsbee; he felt bad that residents couldn't watch Queen Elizabeth's funeral on their televisions.
5. On October 11, 2022, I invited MLA Kent Smith to meet with the residents. The residents brought up different issues including the lack of reliable television service. Smith sent me an email that said "Eastlink – Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority has no control, Eastlink is a service provider; cannot force them to upgrade equipment."
6. December 1, 2022, the Nova Scotia

- government merged all 5 Housing Authorities to form the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency. This change was to improve services to all their clients.
7. Throughout all this time, I would mention to the local politicians the lack of reliable television service.
8. The Hon. Sean Fraser again contacted the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Hon. John Lohr, regarding the television service at Elmhurst.
9. On February 22, 2023, I mailed letters to Pamela Menchenton (then at the Provincial Housing Authority), MLA Kent Smith, Hon. Sean Fraser, and Councillor David Hendsbee. The only person to acknowledge my letter was Hon. Sean Fraser.
10. This summer I contacted MLA Barbara Adams, Minister of Seniors and Longterm Care. She confirmed that what MLA Kent Smith had said was accurate. Eastlink cannot be forced to upgrade equipment. She spoke to the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing who apparently said it was a Communications issue and to contact my Federal MP.

11. In September 2023, I contacted Steven Woodman, who replaced Bill Daley, as Maintenance Supervisor at Elmhurst Seniors Home, who assured me he would look into the television issue. I have not heard from him since this conversation.

On behalf of the residents I am asking you to contact by phone or email the following people:

- Premier Tim Houston  
PREMIER@novascotia.ca  
Phone: 902-424-6600
- Pamela.menchenton@novascotia.ca  
902-420-6000
- Kent.smith@novascotia.ca  
902-989-3772
- Sean.Fraser@parl.gc.ca  
902-752-0226
- David.hendsbee@halifax.ca  
902-483-0705

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Please help these residents to get proper tv coverage.

– Bridget Boutilier

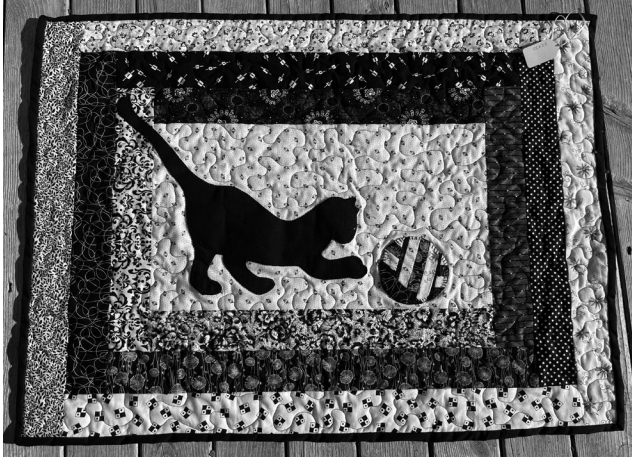
Halloween and Seaside Christmas



More than 1,000 people turned out for the Halloween Trail Walk on the Gaetz Brook Trail on October 28th.



Jams and pickles gleam on a table at L'Acadie de Chezzetcook Museum, Tearoom and Gift Shop.



Playful cat quilt at L'Acadie de Chezzetcook



Mary Jefferson's ornaments at Lawrencetown Sand and Surf.

## Winter Blues Busters

By Savayda Jarone, herbalist

Winter is officially still three weeks away, but for some of us, the winter blues start to creep in as daylight hours decrease in the fall, leaving people feeling sad and moody, with a distinct lack of energy and motivation.

This sunlight deficiency mood, also known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), is a condition in which one feels depressed specifically during the fall/winter seasons, with resolution by spring when daylight begins to increase. Additional symptoms may include sleep difficulties, lack of focus, carbohydrate cravings, and weight gain.

One of the best approaches to SAD is sunlight exposure. In our modern world we spend too much time under artificial lighting. Work and school schedules can also make it difficult to get outside during shorter daylight hours. Daylight exposure, first thing in the morning, for at least 15 minutes, is the best approach. But any time you can spend in the light of day will be beneficial.

On those dark and stormy days that keep you indoors, a full spectrum lamp could serve as a back-up. These special bulbs mimic the effects of sunlight, and can greatly improve your mood, energy, and sleep patterns in the winter and beyond. Thirty minutes of exposure in the early morning is a sufficient dose.

Sunlight shining in the eyes balances serotonin and melatonin, which are neurotransmitters responsible for improving mood and energy during the day, and drowsiness at night.

Serotonin is produced in the body from an amino acid called tryptophan; good food sources include spirulina, soy products, almonds, brewer's yeast, dairy, and most poultry. The B complex vitamins are especially important

for the conversion of tryptophan to serotonin.

The herb St. John's Wort has been well researched and proven to regulate neurotransmitters in the brain, including the inhibition of synaptic uptake of serotonin, much like SSRI anti-depressants. It has also been shown to increase nocturnal melatonin levels that make us drowsy, aiding in reducing insomnia. To maximize St. John's Wort's benefits, start in the fall, gradually increasing the dose as the season progresses into winter, then tapering off in the spring. Tincture is the best form, ideally made from the fresh herb, taken in a small amount of water, several times daily. St. John's Wort has a cheerful yellow blossom and grows as a wild "weedy" herb in Nova Scotia; it's easily cultivated in the garden.

You can take an uplifting herbal tea during the day to clear your mind. I like a combination of peppermint, rosemary, and gotu kola. Stress-reducing herbs like eleuthero, ginseng, withania, or rhodeola help your body adapt to the physiological stresses from seasonal shifts.

A whole food diet, low in simple carbohydrates, more time spent outdoors, regular exercise, and supportive herbal remedies, can all make a tremendous difference in how we feel during the dark winter months.

The symptoms of SAD can be due to other health issues. If you think this may be the case, or if there is depression from other causes, it's best to consult with an herbalist or other healthcare provider for support.

I wish you a bright and cheerful holiday season, and I hope for clear, sunny winter days to enjoy the outdoors.

## On Christmas

By John English

*"It's the most wonderful time of the year."*

Song by Edward Pola and George Wyle, 1963

Well, for some people it is. The excitement of shopping and wrapping presents, lights and trees up in November, turkey and stuffing and cranberry sauce and eggnog and Christmas concerts with angelic five-year-olds, carollers singing songs of joy and peace, the scent of pine and spruce. For some it is a magical time, and for people of faith it is a time of spiritual celebration. Friends and family come together in goodwill, and we try our best to be full of Christmas cheer, in both emotional and liquid form.

It is also a time of great expectations, both of ourselves and of others. I think it is a time when family and relationship baggage can become triggered as individuals with diverse values and opinions come together, often for the only time of the year, in a very intense and sometimes stressful home environment. All families have histories, and the noise, exuberance and indulgences of Christmas gatherings may provide an unexpected opportunity to air grievances.

I am also bombarded by images of perfect families gathered around the fire or the dinner table, showing me how I am supposed to feel about the

holidays and inducing a certain degree of regret or guilt to rise from its usually secure hiding place in my psyche. This sense of not being "normal" because I'm not feeling happy and excited and full of cheer can take a toll. There's nothing more deflating, if I'm already feeling down, than being labelled a Grinch, a Scrooge or a "Debbie Downer."

I also think of all the lonely people, the elderly or marginal among us, our homeless or impoverished or mentally challenged brothers and sisters who feel like outsiders, or that they don't have a seat at the table. Fortunately there are numerous organizations and individuals within communities who provide extra support and solace during the holiday season, but all that goodwill doesn't always last beyond the New Year.

So, at Christmas time, I try to give a thought to all those people who have mixed feelings about this most wonderful time. I try to empathize with the lonely and abandoned and suffering among us. I look for joy in Christmas music, in walks in crisp December air, in the love I feel towards, and coming from, family and friends. I try to avoid the "hype" and expectations, knowing that the best kind of goodwill is the kind that shines throughout the year, and that the best gift of all is love. No wrapping required!

## CHRISTMAS MUSICAL EVENTS

**Musical Friends will be performing on  
DECEMBER 8 AT 7pm  
AT FIRST UNITED CHURCH, MUSQUODOBOIT HARBOUR  
COME join us for a CHRISTMAS MUSICAL EVENING  
FREE Will Offering**



**DECEMBER 13 FROM 6:30-7:30pm  
FIRST UNITED CHURCH CHOIR AND RIVERSONG  
will be singing CHRISTMAS SONGS  
AT Old No. 7 RESTAURANT AND SPORTS BAR  
A FREE Will Offering would be APPRECIATED  
in support of  
Souls HARBOUR RESCUE MISSION WOMEN'S SHELTER.**

## ...Doctor Recruiting Continued from page 5

Additionally, there have been matters of securing housing and initiating leasing or purchase agreements for a candidate before their job was secured. This remains a concern today.

"That said, this agreement was reached in 2019 – a time previous to the housing challenges we currently face. While it is a very difficult balance, we agree that communities can now be contacted earlier in the process as long as that community understands that the work may be completed for a candidate even though they may not be successful. Furthermore, the community must also understand that they may be working in less direct contact with the candidate while that candidate is completing their assessment in another community. As a result, we have worked with the NS PRAP program to allow for earlier notification to ensure we have adequate time to explore housing options."





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## Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry (VVPR)

The VVPR is a voluntary self-referral list intended for municipal residents who may require more support during emergency situations.

The VVPR provides important information to first responders and Emergency Management staff and volunteers to help appropriately respond to resident needs in situations like sustained power outages, severe storms and more.

### Where can I learn more or register for the VVPR?

Registering for the VVPR is easy and starts by completing a self-referral intake form. To get started, you can scan the QR code, visit the link below, or call **311**.



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**halifax.ca/vvpr**

