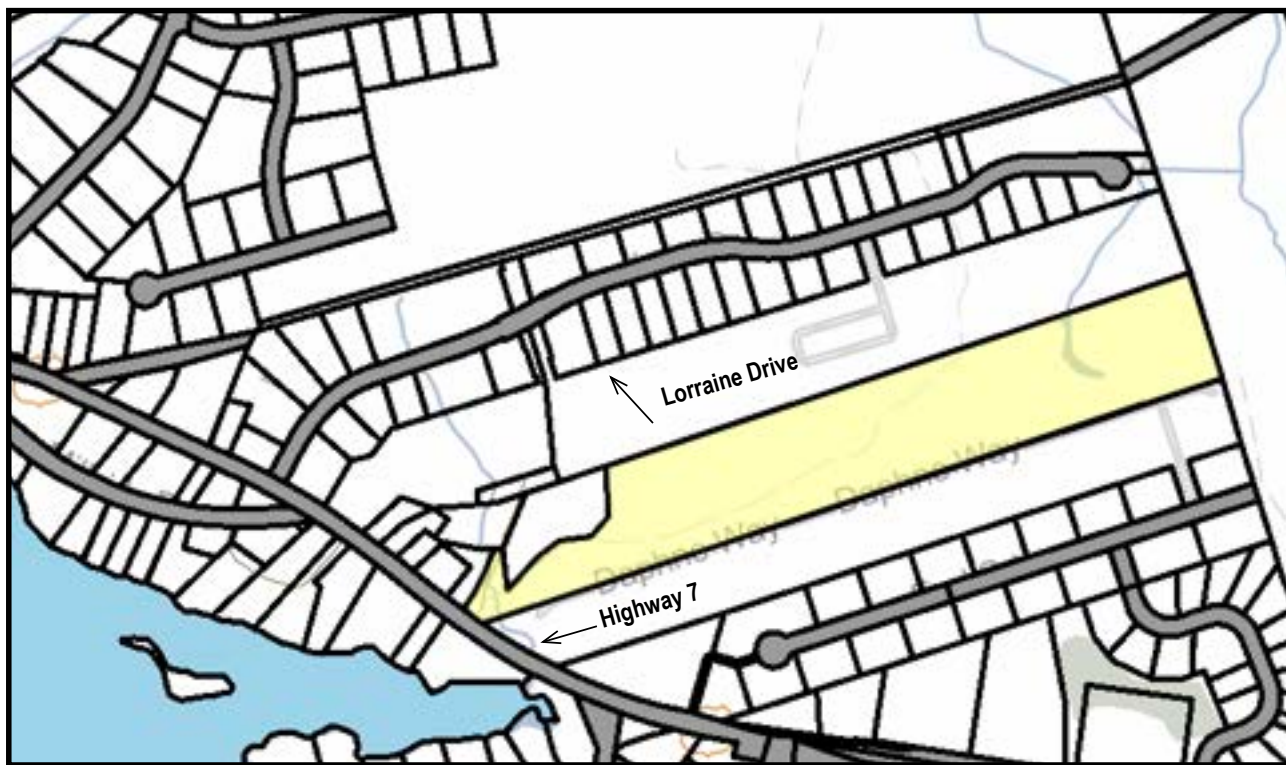


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Neighbours are concerned about the impact of a 167-unit development (in yellow) planned on Highway 7 in Porters Lake (see page 5).



The Houston government is permanently shutting down the Fisherman's Life Museum in Oyster Pond (see page 9).

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Renaissance Man, Artist's Eye

By Mary Elizabeth O'Toole

After years away from painting, Chezzetcook artist Stephen Parsons has picked up his brushes again. It's something he's wanted to do for some time – and now he's approaching it with new insight.

"It's been a return to something I was passionate about when I was young," Parsons says. "But when I started again a couple of years ago, it felt like a chore. It wasn't bringing me the joy it used to." What changed, he explains, was discovering a new way of working – and with it, a new way of seeing.

Parsons describes two ideas that now guide his practice: the spirit of the Renaissance man and what he calls "the eye of the artist."

"As I get older, I understand better than ever the idea of the Renaissance man," he says, quick to clarify he's not comparing himself to Leonardo da Vinci. Rather, he's inspired by that era's curiosita – the blending of art, science and technology, each informing the other. A woodworker, painter, and technologist, Parsons calls that experimentation "the spice of life." His current work often integrates all three. That integration extends beyond the canvas. Parsons builds his own frames from locally sourced reclaimed barnboard – a rustic presentation he feels complements his style and Maritime subjects.

A recent piece illustrates that integration. Inspired by a roadster parked at Ralph's Diner in Ship Harbour, Parsons used artificial intelligence to

recreate the image he envisioned – placing the car in front of an old gas station. "The first AI image wasn't even close," he laughs. "The car was wrong. The light was wrong." After many iterations, the digital reference aligned with his vision.



From there, he turned to older tools. Using a Camera Lucida – a centuries-old drawing aid – he mapped out general perspective and major shapes. The device itself was one he designed and printed on his 3D printer, blending historic technique with modern technology.

Traditional water colour techniques complete the process.

Through urban sketching studies, Parsons changed how he approaches composition. In the past, he would work en plein air trying to capture every detail. "I spent way too much time trying to record every brick and blade of grass," he says. "I'd get caught up in detail and lose the story." He now sketches large forms on site, takes reference photos, and refines details later in the studio – the stage, he says, where the story truly emerges.

...continued on page 17

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EASTERN SHORE COOPERATOR

APRIL DEADLINE

MARCH 18TH

167 Units Coming to Porters Lake

By Richard Bell

It was an unhappy group of local residents who crowded into the basement of the Porters Lake Community Centre on February 18 to an information session about a proposed 167-unit affordable housing development on Highway 7 just to the west of the Porters Lake Connector. (see map) Almost all of the dozens of attendees noted that the invitation to this meeting was the first they had heard of the proposal.

Councillor David Hendsbee bore the brunt of disbelief when attendees were informed that under HRM's zoning regulations, the development was "as of right," with no opportunity at all for public consultation.

According to Property Online, the property (PID 00483909) belongs to the company 4709460 Nova Scotia Limited, with David Anderson listed as the sole director. Hope for Homes, an indigenous-led non-profit, has teamed up with the Halifax-based MR Developments to build the 167 units.

According to the Hope for Homes website, all 167 units are "committed as affordable housing for a minimum of 20 years...Rents are tied to Area Median Household Income (AMHI) and range from approximately \$399 per month for very low-income one-bedroom units (0–25% AMHI), to \$1,260 per month for low-income two-bedroom units (26–50% AMHI), \$1,890–\$2,417

per month for moderate-income two- and three-bedroom units (51–75% AMHI), and up to \$2,400–\$3,000 per month for median-income family units (76–100% AMHI)."

The main entrance to the site will be from Highway 7, with secondary access at the far end through Earl's Court. The traffic engineer at the session said that they had completed the required traffic study, and that they found that the additional traffic would not require any changes. Several attendees were highly skeptical of this finding.

Many attendees were concerned about the impact of such a dense development on their wells. The poster on water and sewage said that wells would "placed at depths greater" than those in the adjacent residential areas. The wastewater system would use "21 individual Waterloo wire mesh basket septic systems." All of the other design work on the development is complete, except for the hydrogeological survey.

Glenn Bursey, vice-president and senior hydrogeologist of the firm that will do the water research (Fracflow Consultants), told the *Cooperator* that it was possible that his firm's explorations could find that there was not enough water to meet the total demand of the site, in which case the developers would have to

make whatever changes were necessary.

There was some confusion in the room about a statement on one of the posters that read, "The development is led by an indigenous not-for-profit organization and is intended to relieve poverty through the delivery of deeply affordable rental housing with a particular focus on indigenous and Métis households." Some attendees quickly questioned whether this statement meant that indigenous and Métis households would be given rental priority, but the development spokespeople said the units would be open to all.

There were also concerns about the whole range of issues that always come up around proposed developments, including possible negative effects on property values, too much traffic, overcrowded schools, and increased crime. These discussions are taking place at length on the Porters Lake—Community Issues Facebook page and elsewhere online.

MR Development also has an 84-unit affordable housing development in the works on Alps Road in Porters Lake. This development will be a member-owned housing cooperative.

Editorial: Top-Down Bureaucracy Will Be the Death of Us

The 60-year-old, 68,697 square foot former Eastern Shore District High School building sits empty on almost nine acres of land. It has been empty since February of 2025.

When it became clear that the Nova Scotia Community College was not going to take on the building, MLA Kent Smith and Councillor David Hendsbee asked the Musquodoboit Harbour and Area Chamber of Commerce and Civic Affairs to gather information about community needs and desires. The Infrastructure Committee of the Chamber subsequently engaged community members in nine in-person community conversations and gathered responses to an online survey.

Over 200 responses resulted in a report, *What We Learned: A compilation of community responses regarding the repurposing of the former Eastern Shore District High School*. (<https://musquodoboitharbour.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/ESDHS-Final-Report.pdf>)

From the Report: "The interest from the community in the ESDHS building is real and passionate. There are palpable needs for which the building can provide solutions. The community overwhelmingly expressed that whatever happens to the building, the people want to be part of the decision-making process."

The Infrastructure Committee presented the report on January 15, 2026 to a meeting with all three levels of government: Councillor David Hendsbee, MLA Kent Smith, and MP Sean Fraser. While praising the report, MLA Smith announced that the province was likely to demolish the building and build the new Birches Nursing Home on the site. And on February 9, 2026, Bluenose Well Drilling drilled a test well in the southwest corner of the soccer field.

An outcry has begun. While acknowledging that a new Birches needs to be built, the demolition of this valuable community asset, especially one that could support many much-needed resources (childcare, day activities for seniors, a larger fitness centre – with showers, nonprofit, government, and retail spaces, youth programs, and more), is an insult to the communities that need these resources. (And don't forget, just tearing the building down will cost an estimated \$1.5 million.)

That the province is even considering destroying this multi-million-dollar community asset is a result of more than a decade of bureaucratic ineptitude across all the agencies involved, both at the provincial level and at HRM Planning. According to a press release, Premier Darrell Dexter announced on September 4, 2013 that as part of his new "Living Better: Nova Scotia's Plan for Seniors' Care," the Birches would be "the first long-term care home that will go into planning for replacement under the Living Better plan."

More than 12 years have passed since this announcement. In 2023, it looked like the new Birches would finally purchase land above the Railway Museum from John Wesley Chisholm. But the purchase was contingent on Chisholm negotiating HRM's byzantine process to "subdivide" his property. Every time Chisholm thought he had crossed the last hurdle, HRM came up with another.

Faced with delays caused by HRM Planning across HRM, the province passed a law giving the Housing Minister the power to override HRM planning by designating a project a "special planning area." Chisholm sought and received SPD status for his subdivision request. But then the Housing Minister John Lohr chose not to exercise this override power.

And finally, the province required a road that no one wanted to or could afford to build, including the province itself. Out more than \$800,000 over the three-year fight, Chisholm withdrew his offer.

This issue of the *Cooperator* contains several equally disturbing stories about the destructive impact on our communities of top-down decision making. The bureaucracy, the siloing, and the draconian steps that befall development in rural HRM create massive frustration and barriers, with both the Province and HRM at fault.

We want to be clear that we are not criticizing our MLA or Councillor, who have attempted to get the province and HRM to listen to what their constituents want. That we still face a possibility of losing the building demonstrates how little power any of our local elected officials have when confronting bureaucratic ossification. Not only are they not listening to us, the siloed agencies are not even listening to each other.

When power says, "we can do whatever we want," and bureaucracies offer only delays and denials, the people need to speak. The people have spoken. They want HRM and the province to turn the high school building into a much-needed multi-purpose community asset, with a Birches building nearby.

For more on the topic of ineptitude in the halls of power, see *Wind Power and Ending Amalgamation* (p. 6), *Only One Exit for Consolidated School* (p. 11), *Province Closing Fisherman's Life Museum* (p.9), and *167 Units Coming to Porters Lake* (above).

Wind Power and Ending Amalgamation

[Editor's Note: Having reported on multiple issues in which HRM has ignored or slighted the wishes of the people of the Eastern Shore, the Cooperator has long believed that the forced amalgamation in 1996 had, and continues to have, a negative effect on the economy and daily lives of the rural residents of HRM.]

This article is a condensation of a recent article ("The Eastern Nova Scotia Stewardship Region Shore and Valley – Why Eastern Nova Scotia Can't Be Governed from City Hall Anymore") by John Wesley Chisholm published on February 6, 2026 in "The Bee," his Substack journal. Eastern Nova Scotia consists of HRM Council District 1 (the northern part of Halifax County, and District 2, the southern part of Halifax County.) All boldface is in the original article.]

The province is planning a large offshore wind industry off the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia. John Wesley Chisholm, a highly regarded documentary film maker and a long time Eastern Shore resident, has published a call to reverse amalgamation to effectively govern the coming wind industry in rural HRM.

Chisholm pulls no punches: **"If the Province is even half-serious about offshore wind** and the future of Eastern Nova Scotia, it must pull Districts 1 and 2 out of HRM now. Not later. Not after another round of consultation, study, or tax increases."

"The Eastern Shore and Valley is not just another rural district. It is emerging as a strategic asset of provincial and national importance. Energy. Infrastructure. Trade. Environmental risk. These are not municipal side-files. They are core provincial responsibilities.

"Pulling Districts 1 and 2 out of HRM does three things at once:

- It frees Halifax to focus on urban growth management without carrying a geography it cannot properly govern.
- It gives the Shore and Valley a government built for stewardship, not neglect or surprise.
- And it puts the Province in the driver's seat of the most consequential economic geography in Nova Scotia for the next century.

Efficiency and Amalgamation

Chisholm writes that the 1996 amalgamation was driven by "a single, powerful idea: efficiency." But the focus was entirely on the urban core, not the rural areas of Halifax County: "Forests. Watersheds. Coastline. Small communities. Long roads. Working harbours. None of it part of the duplication problem. None of it central to the efficiency argument. And none of it designed for or even imagined in the HRM philosophy of amalgamation and big-box centralized government."

For decades, HRM basically ignored rural Halifax County. "The Shore and the Valley were treated as background scenery—woods and water, lightly

populated, slow-changing, marginal to the main action. That story is now dangerously out of date."

"Because the Shore is no longer peripheral. It is central to the nation's energy future and Nova Scotia's contribution to the national project."

"Offshore wind is not a talking point. It is not a pilot project. It is a transformational scale event.

"Whether you support it, oppose it, or just don't know what to think, offshore wind brings with it ports, laydown yards, transmission corridors, substations, workforce housing, new towns, revitalized villages, industrial zoning pressure, land speculation, environmental risk, and timelines driven by global capital and national policy."

Replacing Big Box Government

"And there is nothing – nothing – about what is coming in the next thirty years that is made simpler, cheaper, faster, or more democratic by trying to govern it through the big-box government, centralized city hall of Halifax Regional Municipality."

"This is not an insult to Halifax. It is an acknowledgment of what Halifax is, and it is proven by 30 years of experience in the Eastern Region dealing with City Hall."

"City Hall is built to manage urban intensity and commuter suburbs: transit, density, homelessness, downtown capital projects, policing, active transportation, and bike lanes. Its incentives, processes, problems, and political gravity all point inward, toward the Regional Centre."

"The Eastern Shore and Musquodoboit Valley face the opposite challenge. There, the future is about stewardship at scale – land, woods, and water together. Forests as infrastructure. Watersheds as assets. Coastline as both opportunity and risk. Decisions whose consequences last generations."

"Trying to do this from City Hall guarantees one of three outcomes: paralysis, override, or drift. All of them without representative government in any meaningful way. Taxation without representation. Delay as priorities collide. Override as bureaucratic government plans bypass truly local ideas and vision. Painful process. Drift, that classic slow walk of big government, as incremental decisions lock in a future no one consciously chose, and no one will be responsible or accountable for when, with certainty..."

"It all ends badly."

The Solution

"The solution is simple, bold, and entirely within provincial authority.

"The Province should legislate the immediate creation of an **Eastern Nova Scotia Stewardship Region**, pulling Districts 1 and 2 out of HRM, with

their own elected council, balanced budget, and clear mandate. This is the only way to prepare the region in a timely way for what is to come.

"No distant, disconnected big box city hall where the region is barely represented. A purpose made plan, a balanced budget, and a rooted government grown from love and living in the Eastern Region with an eye to the future and the shape of things to come.

"A new provincially empowered stewardship government of what could be the Eastern Nova Scotia Stewardship Region would save money immediately, give its citizens real representative government, focus local tax dollars, empower true local governance, save and protect what needs saving and protecting, unlock transformational long-term value, and make the Province – not City Hall – accountable and responsible for the most important economic geography in Nova Scotia for the next hundred years.

According to Chisholm's analysis of the HRM budget, Districts 1 and 2 already pay their own way: "Based on existing HRM budgets and property data, they generate well over **\$70 million a year in municipal taxes** today and consume slightly less in services. Under HRM, they show a **modest surplus**, not a deficit."

"A lean Stewardship government – a six-member elected council with a professional planning-heavy administration – would cost roughly **\$4 million a year** to run. Roads, fire, waste, and other services can be delivered by contract, just as they already are."

"The result?"

"A balanced operating budget from day one and a governance system built from the start to be good stewards of the region that may power Nova Scotia and much of Canada 30 years from now. Cleanly, efficiently, and profitably.

"Yes, the Province would incur some transition costs. Systems. Staffing. Legal work. Call it **\$5–10 million over a couple of years**. But now is the time. It will never get cheaper or easier to make the change than it is right now.

"What matters is the upside.

"Because once the energy plan starts to produce – once industrial lands, ports, transmission corridors, and workforce ecosystems begin generating real economic value – we need local, meaningful control of the development, the sequencing, and the long-term returns.

"Leaving that value trapped inside the labyrinth of City Hall would be irresponsible.

[You can find Chisholm's complete article at: <https://thebeens.substack.com/p/the-eastern-nova-scotia-stewardship>.]

Maybe the Tide is Turning?

By Brian CR Staple

A typical business topic that has always been near and dear to me is: Why has Musquodoboit Harbour's commercial development been so slow? I strongly believe that commercial growth in this quaint picturesque village is far below where it should be.

Having lived here since 1958, I have watched this one street lighted, unpaved country village grow into a bustling community. In the mid-sixties stood a large community billboard at the village's outskirts which read: **Musquodoboit Harbour is a friendly village – if you can't stop – wave as you go through.**

At its peak (1983), we had several restaurants, a couple of gas stations, two grocery stores, two schools, sawmills, and numerous other amenities too many to list. Today (2026) what has happened to our village? To me it has failed to rise to the challenge of a more sustainable community driven business centre.

In the early 70's during a town hall meeting, I (and others) chuckled when an elderly gentleman angrily stood up begging us not to support the 107-highway's proposal emptying into our village. The proposed 100 series highway was supposed to be the answer for all our small community businesses. Belief was vehicle traffic could get in and out of the village more quickly, hence encourage commerce growth within the village centre and hopefully attract new businesses to set up shop here. So, why hasn't there been significant commercial growth to sustain year-round employment for those not only wanting to work here, but to live here as well?

In the late 90's our village reminded me of a prosperous healthy apple tree with lots of precious hanging fruit (businesses) but over the next 20 plus years that apple tree was picked clean. Small businesses were closing/relocating and at one time there was talk of losing the rink/library and gym. I owned and operated a small rental space business for 38 years and felt my tenant's pain having to close their shop, as their dreams of making it big fell short.

Sure, there's potential for tourism. We have a beautiful, picturesque winding river, the largest sandy ocean beach in the province, renowned walking trails, and one-of-a-kind heritage – Train Station. These unique attractions support substantial value within our village, but to me there should be a bit more commercialism.

Staying positive, Musquodoboit Harbour is slowly getting back on its feet. Yes, over the past few years Tim's arrived, a few new coffee shops/restaurants that were able to stay open year around, and a new Family Practice Clinic is now being built across from the Twin Oaks Hospital.

Just recently the Sobey's property, better known as the old ESSO property, has been sold. The new owners are in prep stages to develop said land – can't wait to see what unfolds there! Another encouraging attribute is the thousands of spectators standing roadside basking in all the festive excitement during the village's annual Christmas parade – throw in the renown Lobster Trap tree proves our local volunteers also see the village's potential.

Seen as the *Gateway to the Eastern*

Satire: The Bewildered Bagpiper

As a bagpiper I played many gigs. Recently I was asked by a funeral director to perform at a graveside service for a homeless man. He had no family nor friends, so the service was to be held at a pauper's cemetery. As I was not familiar with the backwoods, I got lost and being a typical man - didn't stop for directions.

When I eventually arrived an hour late, it was clear the funeral had already ended, and the hearse was long gone – there were only the backfill crew left and they were eating lunch. Feeling badly I went over to apologize to them for being late. I then quietly slipped away and went over to the grave side and looked down, only to see that the casket was already in place and covered over with a few shovels of earth. I didn't know what else to do, so I started to

play.

The workers put down their lunches and began to gather around. I performed "Amazing Grace" – soft at first but eventually played my heart and soul out for this drifted poor soul. I played like I've never played it before. As I continued the workers began to weep, I wept, we all wept together. When I finished, I quietly packed up my bagpipes and started back towards the car. Although my head was hung low, my heart was full and somewhat satisfied.

As I opened the trunk of my car, I could hear one of the workers say, "I never seen anything like that before, and I've been putting in septic tanks for over twenty years now."

I believe that I can speak on behalf of a majority of residents in Musquodoboit Harbour & surrounding areas whose wells went dry last summer, that we owe everyone involved in the operation of the community well (Old School & others) an enormous thank you.

The water offered by HRM & the Province was not sufficient to operate our households.

Without the water provided by the community well, many of us would have been in big trouble which may have included closing our homes & moving in with family & friends who had water.

Hopefully, we won't require the use of the community well this year, but if we do, it's reassuring to know that that it's there.

Thank you all!
Gerry Davidson

Shore, I truly believe this quaint community will see better times ahead. Perhaps rebuilding Musquodoboit Harbour's core business within an established sector, would better promote much needed commercial development, thus making it easier for everyone to **Stop, Shop & Save**. Sound familiar?

Maybe the tide is turning. The new bridge is underway; there's paving going on within the village and the long-awaited expansion (parking) of Martinique Beach is nearing its final stages. These types of improvements will encourage those wishing to visit, maybe even stay a night, hence all helps to stimulate commercialism in our area. Hopefully 2026 will see a bit of new commercial development(s). Who knows – doesn't hurt to hope.

Harbour Lites Seniors Club

"What's Going On" in March

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Crib 1:30pm

Wednesday, March 11
Story Time 1:30pm

Wednesday, March 4
Directors Meeting at 1pm

Storm Date Wed., March 18
Dessert & Fruit Punch \$5.00

Thurs., March 5, 12, 19, 26
Jam 2-4pm

Friday, March 13 & 27
Karaoke 6:30-9:30pm

Tuesday, March 10
General Meeting 1:00pm
Pot Luck Lunch 12:30pm

Saturday, March 14
Kitchen Party 2-4pm



**CHECK OUR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR UPDATES
Harbour Lites Seniors Club (Facebook Page)**



167 Meaghers Grant Road

Bingo, March 17
2:00pm

Members Dinner, March 31
12:30pm

Story Time 1:30-3:30pm
MC Brian Staple with Guests.
Call Sandra (902 452-0520) if you would like to be a story teller.

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MLA MEMO

Hi everyone, I hope you're all managing well through the snowy winter we've experienced so far! I know I'm ready for longer days and warmer temperatures. Thanks to everyone who took the time to visit my Open House and Family Skate on Heritage Day, it was great to see everyone and I plan to make it an annual tradition.

As usual, we'll break this memo down to local news and provincial news, and I'll share as much as I can:

Local news:

Firstly, the future use of Eastern Shore District High in Musquodoboit Harbour is a hot topic at the moment. I can share that as of the time of printing, the Department of Seniors and Long Term Care is in investigating the site as a potential site for the Birches rebuild. I'm also very aware of the work done by the Musquodoboit Harbour and Area Chamber of Commerce & Civic Affairs to advocate for the building to remain an asset for the community, and they've completed a thoughtful report on consultations they've had locally. It's important to know that no decisions have been made yet, and as soon as there is more information to share, I will.

Secondly, new housing developments are coming to Porters Lake and Lawrencetown, brought forward by MR Developments. Information sessions were held in February to inform the communities. Reach out if you missed them and we'll share the information with you.

Lastly, we will soon see movement on the NSLC returning to the Jeddore area. I know it's been a long wait and I'm sorry I don't have many details right now, but I have been assured it's happening. I appreciate everyone's patience and am optimistic I'll be able to share more in next month's memo.

Provincial news:

The Spring session of the Legislature opened on February 23rd. This is the budget session, and it usually lasts around 4 weeks, but it's totally dependent on the length of debate on each bill that determines how long we sit for. I'll share information about the 2026-27 budget and other legislative changes next month.

Applications Open for the 2025-26 Heating Assistance Rebate Program

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program helps low-income Nova Scotians pay their home heating costs. You can receive \$400 per household.

Who can apply?

- If you pay for your own home heating
- If you are a family with a combined net income of up to \$45,000
- If you are single earning a net income up to \$30,000.



Province, NSCC Launch Institute of Skilled Trades

The Province and Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) are launching the Institute of Skilled Trades (IST) to provide students and apprentices with modern training and equipment to develop the skills employers need – today and in the future.

Major investments in housing, transportation, defence, clean energy, manufacturing and infrastructure all depend on a strong, highly skilled trades workforce. The Institute of Skilled Trades, will raise the bar and it will be a leading training institution in Canada. It will align with industry and focus on critical workplace skills, and it will prepare people for rewarding careers that will power the province and the country.

The new institute will be supported by a five-year, \$25-million investment for new innovative equipment and tools to enhance classrooms, training and workshops across the province – allowing students and apprentices to better prepare for the latest job-site practices and emerging technologies.

The IST will support training across construction, industrial and manufacturing, motive power and service trades. Industry representatives will shape programs to better align with today's workplace requirements, evolving skill sets and labour market demand.

Initial trade and program reviews began in January. Additional reviews are scheduled for priority programming throughout 2026.

New First-Time Homebuyers Program Reduces Minimum Down Payment

A new program launched on February 3 will make it easier for Nova Scotians to become homeowners, faster.

Through the First-time Homebuyers Program, the required down payment is two per cent of the purchase price, which is less than half the usual minimum down payment. The Province is partnering with Atlantic Central and credit unions across Nova Scotia to deliver this pilot program as a way to help Nova Scotians overcome one of the barriers to buying a home.

In today's market, it can be a struggle to save the down payment to buy a new home. This program makes it more affordable to come up with a down payment and easier to make the dream of homeownership a reality.

To qualify for the program, the borrower must be a resident of Nova Scotia and also meet the following criteria:

- have a household income of \$200,000 or less
- pass the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. stress test to determine the maximum mortgage they can carry
- have a credit score of 630 or higher

- be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or an immigrant with an endorsement certificate from the Nova Scotia provincial immigration program.

Previous homeowners who have not owned a home in the last four years may also be eligible.

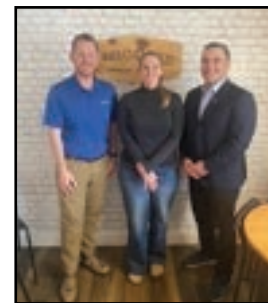
There is a cap on the price of homes for buyers in the program – \$570,000 in Halifax Regional Municipality and the Municipality of East Hants and \$500,000 in the rest of the province.

Housing starts are up 36 per cent over the past two years, and in the first two years of the Province's five-year housing plan, every goal has been exceeded, with the conditions created for more than 68,000 new housing units. The plan is working to reduce barriers, speed up development and get thousands of people in housing need in new homes, faster.

Offshore Wind Energy Agreement

On February 4th, Premier Tim Houston and Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey signed an agreement to work toward Nova Scotia supplying the state with clean energy from offshore wind. New England, like many markets, anticipates growing energy needs that could be met in part by Nova Scotia's budding offshore wind industry.

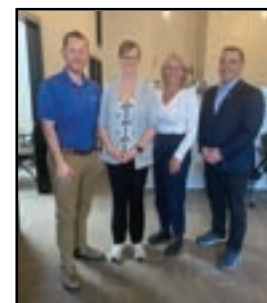
The province is on the verge of the first call for bids to license the first off shore wind projects in Canada. The agreement with Massachusetts signals to developers that markets for their clean energy are solidifying, giving them even more confidence to invest in Nova Scotia's new off shore wind industry. The province is excited to share this clean energy with Massachusetts, powering economic opportunities for the New England region, and creating thousands of jobs and billions in investment in Nova Scotia. The memorandum of understanding between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts affirms the strong, collaborative relationship between the two. It advances shared goals to develop clean, reliable and affordable energy; facilitate the development of resilient regional infrastructure; and create high-quality jobs throughout the supply chain.



Uprooted Café



MacKenzie Tool & Dye



Minister Colton Leblanc visit to Eastern Shore CBDC Bluewater



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Happy
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Province Closing Fisherman's Life Museum

By Richard Bell

The province is permanently closing one of the Eastern Shore's most beloved tourist attractions, the Fisherman's Life Museum in Oyster Pond. The museum recently re-opened after being closed for several years for renovations. Ervin Myers, a second-generation inshore fisherman, inherited the house and 8 acres of property in 1915. He and his wife Ethelda went on to raise their 13 daughters in the house (although all 13 were never in the house at once.)

In addition to the house and its furnishings, visitors also got to see the farm outbuildings, vegetable gardens, and the fish shed and dock. The staff often welcomed people into the house with fresh-baked cookies, and held occasional fairs on the lawn with local vendors.

It remains possible that supporters of the museum could form an organization that would take over the operation of the museum and raise the operating funds. Overall, the budget cuts funding for provincial museums by 20% over last year's.

Greg Puncher, a grandson of Ervin Myers, has a moving series of videos on his Facebook page about his family's history with the site. He walks through the snow to show the house and the fishing shack on Navy Pool.



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Saint John of the Cross Roman Catholic Parish Holy Week Masses (Easter)

Holy Week is an important time for Christians throughout the world. Holy Week, the final week of Lent, begins on Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter. Holy Week is a time when Catholics gather to remember and participate in the Passion of Jesus Christ. The Passion was the final period of Christ's life in Jerusalem. It spans from when He arrived in Jerusalem to when He was crucified. We at St. John of the Cross Parish welcome all to our services throughout the week.

Palm Sunday

Saturday, March 28, 2026

St Genevieve's – 4:00pm

St Denis – 6:00pm

Sunday, March 29, 2026

St Peter's – 9:00am

St Genevieve's - 11:30am

Holy Thursday – April 2, 2026

St Denis – No Mass

St Genevieve's – 7:00pm

St Peter's – 7:00pm

Good Friday - April 3, 2026

St Denis – No Service

St Genevieve's – 3:00pm

St Peter's – 3:00pm

Saturday Vigil – April 4, 2026

St Denis – No Mass

St Genevieve's – 8:00pm

St Peter's – No Mass

Easter Sunday – April 5, 2026

St Denis – 9:30am

St Genevieve's – 11:30am

St Peter's – 10:00am



St. John of the Cross Parish Office

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✓ **Costs about the same as a movie** — but with a chance to take cash home!

Whether you're a seasoned bingo fan or trying it for the very first time, you'll feel right at home. The atmosphere is friendly, the games are exciting, and every number called brings a little buzz to the room.

And here's the best part:

All proceeds go right back into the community, supporting local projects and **Lions charities** that make a real difference in Lake Echo and beyond.

So instead of another night scrolling or streaming, come out, grab a card, and be part of something good.

Play

Lake Echo Lions Bingo **Win**

Give Back

Everyone welcome. Bring a friend — or make a few while you're here!

Where: Lake Echo Community Centre, 3168 Highway # 7, Lake Echo

When: Every Sunday (except long weekends). Doors open at 5:45 pm Mini Bingo 6:30 Regular Bingo 7pm

Updates: Facebook (Lake Echo Lions Bingo) or ask to join our email list



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The "Fewer Permits Faster" project launched in 2025 is modernizing the Province's permitting system to make services faster, simpler and more efficient.



Improvements include:

- Eliminating permits associated with low-risk activities.
- Lengthening time frames for renewal, adding service standards, which all new permits will now be required to have.
- Streamlining application processes and restructuring fees.

The improvements are expected to save Nova Scotia businesses about \$737,000 annually.



The Province is helping Canadian Armed Forces veterans, reservists and their family members transition to construction careers.

The assistance is through the new Skills Bridge initiative that will support up to 100 people over the next three years. The program, funded by the Province and delivered by the non-profit organization Helmets to Hardhats, offers training, coaching and direct pathways into apprenticeship and employment opportunities across the province. The Program runs to October 1, 2028.



Applications Open for the 2025-26 **Heating Assistance Rebate Program.**

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program helps low-income Nova Scotians pay their home heating costs. You can receive

\$400 per household.

Who can apply?

- If you pay for your own home heating
- If you are a family with a combined net income of up to \$45,000
- If you are single earning a net income up to \$30,000

Find out more at www.novascotia.ca/heatinghelp, or call Access Nova Scotia at (902) 424-5200 or 1-800-670-4357. Deadline to apply: March 31, 2026



The **First-time Homebuyers Program** was launched on February 3rd, to make it easier for Nova Scotians to become homeowners, faster. The required down payment is two per cent of the purchase price, which is less than half the usual minimum down payment. The Province is partnering with Atlantic Central and credit unions across Nova Scotia to deliver this pilot program.

Nova Scotians interested in obtaining a mortgage through the First-time Homebuyers Program should contract their local participating credit union. More information on the program, including a list of participating credit unions can be found at: <https://novascotia.ca/first-time-home-buyers-program-pilot>

To qualify for the program, the borrower must be a resident of Nova Scotia and also meet the following criteria:

- Have a household income of \$200,000 or less;
- Pass the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. stress test to determine the maximum mortgage they can carry;
- Have a credit score of 630 or higher, and
- A Canadian citizen, permanent resident or an immigrant with a sponsorship letter from the Nova Scotia provincial immigration program.



Spring Begins March 20, 2026

*"Spring adds new life and new beauty to all that is."
- Jessica Harrelson*



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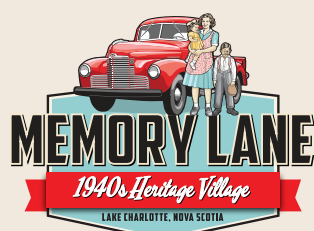
The Lake Charlotte Area Heritage Society is seeking new board members. Help guide this vibrant organization while gaining valuable community connections and leadership skills.

Applicants with a diverse range of expertise, cultural backgrounds and experiences are most welcome.

Our Purpose...

"To inspire an enduring appreciation for the cultural heritage of Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore between Lawrencetown and Ecum Secum, while fostering a sense of community in both residents and visitors."

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**We are Lions!!! Hear Us ROAR!!
Where there's a need, there's a Lion**

Hopefully as we welcome March, we can bid farewell to the worst of the winter weather and begin to enjoy the longer daylight hours, warmer temperatures and looking forward to putting the snow shovels in storage.

Breakfast: Saturday February 28th – **\$10.00** per person – children under 10 eat free. Please join us and community members for a tasty morning meal. Ham and sausages, eggs, hashbrowns, pancakes, coffee/tea, juice/milk, toast and best of all camaraderie. The monthly breakfast is really such a wonderful opportunity to catch up with folks and support a good cause.

Lions Cribbage is ongoing every Thursday night at 7:00 – must have a partner and a good sense of humor. Congratulations to recent Jackpot winners Russel Faulkner and Ron Jennex and to Donna Hartlin for her rare and impressive **28 point high-hand win**. Woo Hoo!!!

100 Club Ticket Draws – Weekly draws for \$10, \$15 and \$25 dollar prizes. \$500 Grand Prize draw on April 6th. Good Luck to all ticket holders.

Interested in becoming a Lion – we meet the second and fourth Monday of every month – feel free to drop in or call the club at 902-889-2725 for more information.

Lionism is incredibly rewarding.

Hosting an upcoming event, the Lions Club is available for rent (capacity 60). Convenient location, full kitchen facilities and WiFi. (902) 889-2725 or follow the e-clubhouse.org.

Please remember that if you, or anyone you know, is in need – we are here to help.

Our mission is to serve. Contact us at 902-889-2725 or via Facebook private messenger.



Happy St Patrick's Day



Only One Exit for Consolidated School

By Richard Bell

One of the rarely discussed aspects of the controversial decision to build a school in the Eastern Shore Industrial Park in East Chezzetcook was the province's failure to provide a second exit in the event of a fire. The issue came up at the February town hall meeting of the Muquodoboit Harbour and Area Chamber of Commerce and Civic Affairs.

The decision to locate any school in an industrial park was unusual on its face. Even more striking is the failure of the province to respond to the lessons learned from the severe forest fires in 2023, in which one of the main issues was the absence of a second exit from some subdivisions. There is only one road entering and exiting the school site, Mott Drive. The school site is almost surrounded by forest. The threat of a nearby fire could create a massive traffic jam, with school buses attempting to leave the site while desperate parents jammed the roads trying to reach the school.

Several parents in attendance at the Chamber meeting vowed to follow up with the school and HRCE to find out how quickly a second exit could

be put in place. According to a note the *Cooperator* received later from one parent, "As a parent, I place my confidence in our decision-making bodies to prioritize safety and well-being over any other measures. In this case, I was completely incorrect. In making the decision whether to open a school in an area with single entrance/egress, the red flags should have been obvious. With our province's recent history, I would have thought this would have been top of mind. The school shouldn't have opened with these inadequacies."

The *Cooperator* will be investigating what the province intends to do to correct this grave public safety problem.



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WE WELCOME NEW CLIENTS

Café Crawl is Coming!

The Café Crawl will take place from Friday March 20th to Sunday March 22nd. Each cafe will have their own business hours and a special deal each priced at just \$10 showcasing their products and beverages. There will be a contest coming up and more details over the coming weeks.



they would have “our 10 dollar combo, a tea or regular coffee, iced or hot with your choice of any treat, baked good in the case.” And at the Martinique

“This idea came to be when my friend Meg and I would find ourselves visiting multiple cafes in one day,” said Ola Jackson, owner of the Martinique Desserterie. “We loved trying different blends of coffees, espresso, pastries, and seeing what other Nova Scotian businesses had to offer. Every small business has their own flare and prior to opening a cafe myself, visiting coffee shops was kind of a passion of mine. It's nice to be able to do something nice for yourself like go get a little treat! I'm excited to have the pleasure of working with these amazing women-owned businesses and hoping we can do this annually.”



Desserterie, crawlers will find a “Molassas Brown Bread Donut and Iced Inka Latte (decaffeinated coffee-like drink made with rye and barley and very popular in Poland.)”

Three of the participants have already decided what they will be offering. At Uprooted, manager Larah Metelka said they would have a “Cafe Crawl combo of a half sandwich, coffee and a treat.” At the Pure Café, manager Ellie Leblanc said



The other three participants are Splurge, Webbers, and the Marmalade Cafe.



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- You can apply if you meet the following criteria:
- have a current Employment Insurance (EI) claim
- have had an EI claim that ended within the last 60 months
- have received benefits under the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) within the previous 60 months
- have been employed with gross insurable earnings of \$2000 or higher annually, in at least 5 of the last 10 years

The Program:

- Supports new business or an existing one in which you had no prior ownership.
- Provides up to 40 weeks of funding to cover living expenses
- Requires you to devote at least 35 hours each week to develop and carry out your business plan. You must also show proof of personal financial investment in the business.

CBDC Blue Water is proud to be the coordinator for the Self Employment Benefits Program.

For further information, contact Sheila Spicer, Self Employment Benefits Coordinator, at 902-827-5564 or toll-free at 1-800-565-2773.
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HALIFAX

DISTRICT 2 COUNCILLOR'S COMMUNIQUE MARCH 2026 — ISSUE #340 — HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY



HRM COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

The HRM Community Grants Program provides aid to registered non-profit organizations and charities throughout the municipality to help with their endeavours. The program provides annual cash grants to registered non-profit organizations and charities located throughout the region. There are two grants available – a project grant of up to \$5,000 or a capital grant of up to \$25,000.

The program has seven funding categories, which include the following: community arts; diversity and accessibility; environment and climate change; emergency assistance and neighbourhood safety; community histories; leisure; and recreation. Applicants must indicate the category which best matches the funding category.

Applicants should review the guidebook prior to applying. https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/business/grants/2026-community-grants-program_guidebook-web.pdf. First-time applicants are encouraged to contact municipal staff prior to submitting an application. The application deadline is Tuesday, March 31st. More information can be found at: www.halifax.ca/business/doing-business-halifax/community-grants. HRM Grants Guidebook & Applications can be obtained from a HRM Service Centre or by email: nonprofitgrants@Halifax.ca or call: 902-497-0479. For more details: www.halifax.ca/community-grants.

PROFESSIONAL ARTS GRANTS PROGRAM

HRM is now accepting applications for the 2025/26 Grants to Professional Arts Organizations Program. This program supports the operating and artistic capacity of producing and presenting art organizations in the region that advance the profile of the local arts sector, with an overarching goal to foster broad public access to public art. There are two funding streams: operating assistance and project assistance. The municipality provides up to three-year funding agreements towards the operating funds of eligible groups and annual funding agreements supporting distinct artistic projects. For more information about the program or to discuss your project or eligibility, groups are invited to book a virtual meeting, contact Lindsay Cory, Community Developer (Public Arts), at 902-456-8384 or by email: lindsay.cory@halifax.ca. To learn more and apply, visit our HRM Website (www.halifax.ca/parks-recreation/arts-culture-heritage/opportunities-artists-art-organizations) The deadline for the applications is Tuesday, March 31st.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS MARCH 8

It's time to "Spring Forward". Be sure to set your clocks ahead one (1) hour on Sunday, MARCH 8th. And please check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. For more information on this, visit: www.halifax.ca/fire-police/fire/fire-prevention-safety/smoke-alarms.

ESGSAR SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

The Eastern Shore Ground Search and Rescue (ESGSAR) will be hosting a New Members Recruitment

Night on Tuesday, March 24th at 7 PM at their facility at #5688 Hwy # 7 in Head of Chezzetcook.

This is a great opportunity to join with some dedicated community volunteers and develop some lifesaving skills and survival tips. And learn how to conduct search missions. For more information about this organization, please visit their website : www.ESGSAR.org

For an application form, contact: esgsar.mchair@gmail.com.

OPEN-AIR BURNING: MARCH 15

Normally open-air burning season begins on MARCH 15th. There is an online fire index that ensures everyone knows the risks of wildfire in all areas of the province each day: www.novascotia.ca/burnsafe/. The map will show green, red, or yellow in each county to let us know if it is safe to burn, unsafe to burn, or safe with restrictions. The map and recorded phone message will be updated daily. Call Burn Safe toll-free 1-855-564-2876. These changes affect brush burning on domestic properties, such as rural residential lots, woodlots, fishing camps and cottage lots. However, commercial or industrial brush burning still requires a permit from a DNR&R office. Be sure to follow all instructions, rules of conduct and be respectful of your neighbours when you want to burn. Please be careful when burning.

COMMUNITY SURVEY ON POLICING

The HRM Board of Police Commissioners has engaged Narrative Research to conduct a Community Survey on Policing. The goal of this survey is to gather insights and feedback from community members 18 years of age or older about their perceptions, experiences, and suggestions on policing in the Halifax region. As part of the process to solicit public input on important policing-related topics, the HRM Board of Police Commissioners is inviting community members to complete the survey at this link - <https://www.narrativeresearchsurveys.ca/S2/87/2556709/>. Results of the survey will be reported quarterly, in addition to a report and final presentation to be delivered to the Board of Police Commissioners in Fall 2026.

FIREARMS COMPENSATION PROGRAM

As part of its long-standing commitment to tackling gun violence in Canadian communities, the Federal Government has banned more than 2,500 makes and models of assault-style firearms since May 2020. The Assault-Style Firearms Compensation Program (ASFCP) was developed to provide an option for eligible businesses and individuals who own these prohibited firearms to comply with the law. Those who choose to participate in the program may receive compensation subject to availability of program funds. Gunowners must declare their intent to participate in the compensation program by March 31st, 2026. Following the declaration period, eligible participants will be able to schedule an appointment for the collection of their firearms by the Halifax Regional Police (HRP) in the Spring. Compensation will be coordinated and administered by the Federal Government. While participating in the

program is voluntary, compliance with the law is not. Businesses and individual firearm owners must safely dispose of or permanently deactivate their assault-style firearms before the amnesty period ends on October 30th, 2026, or risk criminal liability for the illegal possession of a prohibited firearm. All participating HRP officers will be working on overtime shifts paid for totally by the federal government. This format ensures there will be no impact to front-line service or investigative policing. For more information on the ASFCP, visit: www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/firearms-buyback.html.

ENGAGE NS - QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY

On February 23rd, 2026, Engage Nova Scotia and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing launched the largest Quality of Life population survey in North America, delivering invitations to 412,000+ residents across the province to share their experience of life in Nova Scotia. The survey period will be until mid-April. This survey is a groundbreaking opportunity to help improve quality of life in our communities and covers a range of topics including health, affordability, public safety, access to recreation, experiences of loneliness and discrimination, belonging to community, trust in institutions, and more. For municipal governments in particular, this survey represents a unique opportunity to gather data about topics impacting residents, including notable strengths and/or challenges in comparison to provincial averages. If enough residents participate, the resulting analysis will provide reliable data sets to compare experiences across neighborhoods, villages, and counties within a single municipality, as well as differences in experiences based on demographics (age, sex, income, race, etc.). Please sign up for Engage NS survey and quarterly newsletter to get project updates and opportunities, upcoming events, and wellbeing research and resources. www.engagenovascotia.ca.

CANADA CENSUS 2026

The next Census of Population will take place in May 2026. To support this important project, Statistics Canada is hiring for supervisory and non-supervisory positions. Approximately 32,000 jobs are available across Canada! They are looking for local people to help them collect accurate data in your community. These data are vital for planning and evaluating programs and services such as education, health care, childcare, housing, emergency services, roads, public transportation and job training. More details about census jobs can be found at this website: www.census.gc.ca/jobs.



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The Saga of a Summer Fair

By Edyth Shuman

[Editor's note: Edyth Shuman wrote up the early history of the Musquoboit Harbour Summer Fair on the 65th anniversary of the Fair in 2013. Organizers are considering reviving the fair this summer, and this article is a reminder of its rich history.]

The first fair took place in the summer of 1948, when work was starting on a community hospital on land donated by John Henry Rowlings with two oak trees. Local men constructed a place to hold suppers, a place to dance, and some games of chance. The Twin Oaks Memorial Hospital was a fundraiser for the much-anticipated new hospital.

With the opening of Twin Oaks Hospital in 1949, the Summer Fair moved to Lazy Tide Lodge dance hall located on the Clam Shell Road at the top of Petpeswick Inlet.

Fulton Rowlings and Bill Dickie were responsible for most of the carpentry on both the hospital and the summer fair. Harold Rowlings, an apprentice electrician at that time, recalled wiring

both locations.

One of the most popular games according to Jim Turner was the Rabbit Game. People would buy a leaf of lettuce, put their name on it. When enough leaves were sold the leaves were placed in a large tub and a rabbit was put in the same tub. Whoever's lettuce was eaten first would be the winner. Jim's mother Pearl Turner recalled one year the rabbit game had to be cancelled because the rabbit was pregnant.

From the beginning the fair was very much a community project. The Red Cross Ladies took great pride in ownership of the well-attended suppers. Each lady would supply a tablecloth, salt/pepper shakers, cream/sugar dishes and cutlery for her own table, as she strove to have the BEST!

As time went on more attractions were added to the fair festivities. Almost from the beginning there were two parades. Tina Shuman looked after the Saturday morning parade and the

Thursday night parade for many years, with Debra Hinds eventually taking over the Saturday parade. Pearl Turner recalls farmers from as far away as Stewiacke bringing their decorated horses, oxen, and covered wagons to show in the parade.

As with most small and large community fairs, "Queen of the Fair" was a favourite event. Local merchants would choose a young lady, 13-15 years old, and sponsor her in the fair pageant. The sponsor would incur any expenses the young lady might have. After days of preparations, there would be a Queen and two Princesses as well as a Miss Congeniality. The girls would ride in the Saturday morning Fair Parade.

Toward the end of the 1960s, the fair moved from the Lazy Tide Dance floor to the grounds of the new Musquodoboit Harbour high school. In 1973 the Eastern Shore Community Centre opened and in 1974, the fair moved there. The first year the rink wasn't ready to put on a supper, so the organizers put a plastic roof over the

tennis court. Each person I talked to had a vivid memory of a downpour of rain during that supper. The next year and many years after the suppers were held in the rink.

For many of those years, Betty Anne and Charlie Gaetz, and Robert Arnold held String Jamborees on Friday night of the fair. Joan Flewwelling took charge of the Art display. Chris Cullen lent her talent to the Photo contest.

Dave Shuman and his fellow carvers took great pride in the popularity of the wood carving display, contest and demo they held each year. Wayne Brown and his gardening friends started a Flower show that the Eastern Shore Garden Club eventually took over.

I think many of us would like to bring Musquodoboit Harbour and Area Summer Fair back so our children, grandchildren and great-grand children might experience what we did in "Years Gone By."

Natural Sleep Support: Herbal Strategies for Better Rest

By Savayda Jarone, Herbalist

Why Sleep Matters

Winter is a natural time to rest. With the longer hours of darkness, many of us feel the pull to sleep more – and this seasonal rhythm can be an opportunity to support restorative sleep hygiene.

Sleep is one of the primary pillars of health, alongside nutrition, exercise, and inner peace. Unfortunately, many people experience regular sleep disturbances, and chronic sleep deprivation has become one of the defining health problems of modern society. This reality is made abundantly clear in the book *Why We Sleep* by Dr. Matthew Walker. As noted in the conclusion of the book, "...the decimation of sleep throughout industrialized nations is having a clear impact on our health, our life expectancy, our safety, our productivity, and the education of our children."

Common Causes of Sleep Disturbance

There are two basic types of sleep disturbance: difficulty falling asleep, and waking during the night. Common causes of insomnia include stimulant use, stress, urinary problems, hormonal changes, and pain.

Simply taking a sedative—herbal or pharmaceutical—treats the symptom

rather than the cause. To achieve lasting results, a broader investigation is needed to determine the root cause of the sleep disturbance.

Caffeine and Sleep

Before considering other interventions, it is prudent to assess caffeine intake. Some individuals are particularly sensitive to caffeine and may not recognize its effects on their system. There are many reliable herbs and strategies for weaning off caffeine; I will save that topic for another article.

Stress, Anxiety, and Herbal Sedatives

Stress and anxiety are common causes of both short and long-term sleep disturbances.

Herbal sedatives can help the body relax into sleep. Some of my favourites include passionflower, hops, kava, and valerian. Simple chamomile tea works for some people (use two tea bags per cup or ideally good quality loose tea).

My dosing strategy for sedatives is to take one dose in the early evening and another at bedtime. These tinctures typically have a daily dosage range of 5–15 ml. Begin with the lowest dose and increase gradually as needed, keeping

in mind that higher doses may cause morning drowsiness.

Daytime use of herbal nerve tonics and adaptogens can reduce the effects of stress and improve sleep over the long run. Try a combo of holy basil, withania, and oatseed.

Supporting Melatonin Naturally

Melatonin, a hormone produced by the pineal gland, plays a major role in regulating sleep patterns. Its release is stimulated by darkness, so reducing evening lighting and ensuring the bedroom is completely dark can be very helpful. Wearing an eye mask may be beneficial if total darkness is not possible. Cooler room temps are best.

Conversely, exposure to natural light in the morning supports the body's circadian rhythm and promotes healthy melatonin production later in the day.

Lifestyle Habits That Improve Sleep

Simple lifestyle adjustments can significantly improve sleep quality. Here are a few tried and true strategies:

- Enjoy a 30-minute walk after dinner, which helps reduce stress hormones and supports digestion.
- Avoid heavy meals, snacks, and

beverages in the evening.

- A soothing evening bath (or foot bath) with relaxing essential oils such as lavender, ylang ylang, or spikenard can further promote relaxation.
- Light, pleasurable reading before bed can help quiet mental activity and release the day's worries. Soothing music helps too.
- Television and computer screens should be turned off at least one hour before bedtime.

According to research cited in *Why We Sleep*, it is best to avoid alcohol in the evening; while it may be relaxing it interferes with sleep quality by preventing deep REM sleep.

Dr. Walker also shares evidence that pharmaceutical sleeping pills are not a good long-term strategy. Like alcohol, they can interfere with sleep quality.

The Importance of Routine

Establishing consistent and regular sleep patterns is one of the most effective long-term strategies for improving sleep quality. Aim to get to bed and rise in the morning at the same times each day. Use the darkness of winter as an opportunity to practice good sleep hygiene, and finally get the sleep you deserve.

RCL Four Harbours Legion Branch 120



East Ship Harbour News – 15463 Hwy #7, Tangier, NS

March Events

Crib every Thursday night... partners \$10 pp. Start time 7 pm.

March 7th Crib Tournament, 10 am start, \$15 pp, must bring a partner. Lunch is provided.

March 28th Kitchen Party, time 2-4:30, no charge. We would love you to come join us for some great entertainment provided by **Bruce Carpenter and the Hwy 7 Band**. Have a Dance on us.

March 11th, Veterans' Social. Join other Vets at Four Harbours Branch at 9:00am for Fellowship. **No requirement to be a Legion member**. For further info or assistance for Veterans contact: Eleanor Clarke 902 429-4090 Ext. 3 or clarke0168@gmail.com. **The services provided by Legion Service Officers are always free of charge whether you are a Legion Member or not.**



President Richard presented Comrade Floyd with his Life Membership at the February General Meeting. Congratulations on your 50 years Floyd!

Memorial Hearts Service & Luncheon

First United Church, Musquodoboit Harbour

By Sandra Beazley

Sunday, February 15th, First United Church held their Annual Memorial Hearts Service. There were approximately 600 hearts placed on their Memorial Hearts Tree. These hearts are placed on the tree with the names people wish to remember. It is a major event for the church and supported by community members of all denominations.



It is always amazing to see how many hearts are displayed year after year. This is their 12th year of holding the service and continues to be a favourite event. The names and photos of those being remembered scroll down the TV screens for everyone to see. It brings back fond and loving memories of those being shown. There have even been a few favourite pets being displayed.

After the church service, everyone heads for the basement where a delicious potluck luncheon is prepared. This is always an enjoyable time with people meeting up with those they haven't seen for awhile. Edyth Shuman has headed this event since the beginning. There is alot of work involved to bring this together every year.

Next year if you wish to remember someone, watch for announcements, usually December and January and let a committee member know before the 1st of February and take part in the next Memorial Hearts Annual Event.



The Memorial Hearts Service was well attended and the Potluck Luncheon was delicious. Thank you to all who attended and all those who made it happen.

Harbour Lites Seniors Club

By Sandra Beazley

Things are starting to take shape at the local Seniors Club. On the first and third Sunday afternoon is Crib at 1:30pm; the second Tuesday of the month is their General Meeting, the third Tuesday is Bingo at 2pm and the fourth is their Homemade Dinner at 12:30pm (Members Only). February 's dinner was Stuffed Pork Loin, Mashed Potatoes, Vegetables and Dessert with Coffee/tea.

The first Wednesday is their Directors Meeting, the second Wednesday is Story Time at 1:30pm, the third is reserved for Story Time in case of cancellation due to weather.

Every Thursday afternoon there is a Jam Session from 2-4pm.

On every second Friday evening there is Karaoke.

Once a month on Saturday afternoon there is a Kitchen Party. House band is Bruce Carpenter and the Hwy 7 Band. So if you like to sing (Karaoke) or if you like to dance or just like music, join us for some enteraining fun.

If there are people interested in 45's, and could help with this, that could be something else they could be holding at the club.

So if you are looking for a place to go, think of the Harbour Lites Seniors Club, it only costs \$20 a year to join and you could be having some fun when you find yourself getting bored. If you are thinking about being part of something, why not give them a try. They strive to be a fun place for everyone.



Everyone was having a great time at the Kitchen Party on February 14th. Make plans to join us at our next one.



First United Church Pancake Supper on Tuesday, Feb. 17th was a success with many people stopping by for Pancakes. There was also a delicious assortment of desserts to choose from. Many thanks to the kitchen staff who took good care of those attending.

Home Seller Concerns

By Jason Dick

Selling a home can be an overwhelming task, and for homeowners in rural Nova Scotia, this process often comes with a unique set of challenges and worries. The housing market is constantly changing, sometimes daily, so understanding these concerns is important for both sellers and potential buyers.

One of the biggest worries rural homeowners have is fluctuating market conditions. With varying demand for properties in less populated areas, sellers may find themselves uncertain about the value of their homes. The fear of overpricing (leading to extended time on the market) or underpricing (resulting in financial loss) creates a significant amount of stress. Many homeowners are struggling to find the right balance, leading them to hold off or seek guidance from real estate professionals who can provide valuable insights into current market trends.

Another concern people often have is the condition of their home. As time passes, wear and tear can take a toll on a property, necessitating repairs or renovations. Homeowners are often anxious about the potential costs involved in updating their homes before sale and wonder whether they'll get their return on that investment, not to mention the time and effort required to undertake these tasks. A home in poor condition may deter potential buyers, as most buyers today have trouble seeing 'potential' - so this can also cause stress during the selling process.

Marketing strategies also weigh heavily on the minds of sellers. In rural communities, visibility can be limited, you're not going to have as many people driving by your sale sign and wanting more information, making it challenging to attract potential

buyers. Homeowners worry about the effectiveness of marketing efforts, fearing that their property may not receive the exposure it needs to attract interested buyers. Creating an effective marketing strategy is crucial on the Eastern Shore to ensure that listings stand out in today's marketplace.

Moreover, the buyer pool has been a common concern lately. Sellers on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia may worry about the number of potential buyers willing to invest in a property a bit further from urban centres. The potentially negative perception of a home that is further from the city can be a concern for some, but not everyone shares that negative perception. In fact, lately a lot more people are starting to realize everything that the Eastern Shore has to offer – and many prefer it to living in the city!

Emotional attachment is another aspect that many sellers grapple with, understandably. A family home often holds decades of memories, making the thought of selling not just a financial transaction but an extremely emotional one. The thought of leaving behind a cherished and comfortable space and community can weigh heavily on sellers' minds.

Jason Dick/ Realtor with Royal LePage Atlantic
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...Renaissance Man Continued

The shift has reshaped how he experiences his surroundings. He finds himself drawn to derelict buildings, rusted tractors and abandoned structures – subjects that carry both thematic weight and visual appeal. Weathered wood and oxidized metal reflect light differently than new surfaces, giving them a distinct character. This perspective is what he calls the eye of the artist.

Much of Parsons' work is rooted in the Eastern Shore. He has painted the Belle Claire Hotel, scenes along Highway 207, and other local landmarks, as well as locations elsewhere in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

He describes his evolving style as impressionistic rather than photorealistic. "I don't want to paint like anybody else," he says. "I want to include enough detail so people familiar with the site will recognize it – but there should still be the artist's interpretation. The goal is not to document every element. It's about expressing why it appeals to you – what story you want to tell."

Ultimately, for Parsons, painting – like woodworking or any creative art – is about telling a story from your heart, your perspective and hoping it resonates.

"And if it doesn't," he shrugs, "well, too bad. At least you told your story."

Parsons is the partner of the writer. Contact Parsons at 902-466-3249 or see his work on FB@ ChezCraft or at ChezCraft.ca

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Peer Support Developing at Well-Being HUB

The Well-Being HUB is planning a celebratory launch event for its peer support program in April 2026. This community celebration will mark the official launch of peer support services on the Eastern Shore and Middle Musquodoboit communities, providing an opportunity for community members to learn more about how to access support and become volunteers. With peer support volunteers currently completing training through PeerWorks' Peer Support Core Essentials Training Program, the HUB is on track to begin accepting referrals this spring. The program will provide one-on-one peer support to navigate mental health challenges, offering the unique perspective and hope that comes from connection with someone who has walked a similar path.

The Well-Being HUB Shares Co-Design Journey at National Conferences

At the Peer Support Strong Virtual Conference, Outreach & Education Coordinator Sarah Ryan and Peer Support Specialist Bruno Baurin shared a unique approach to building a peer support program from the ground up, unique to Nova Scotian rural communities where peer supporters lead the design process every step of the way.

"We weren't presenting as experts who have all the answers," says Ryan. "We shared what we've learned about genuinely sharing power during program development. The working group makes the actual decisions – from interview questions to training selection to boundary protocols. Their lived experience expertise is leading this work."

The presentation highlighted six months of collaborative design work with the Peer Support Working Group, emphasizing what makes rural community programs distinct.

"Transportation barriers, tight-knit communities where everyone knows everyone, and existing informal support networks – these realities shaped our program in ways an urban model never could," explained Baurin during the presentation. "Co-design ensures the program actually fits our community."

The virtual conference, hosted by Lived Experience & Recovery Network (LERN) and PeerWorks, featured presentations on topics ranging from peer support in the age of AI to navigating organizational resistance to peer support work. The Well-Being HUB's co-design story resonated with peer support practitioners and organizations across Canada, generating valuable

connections and conversations about rural program development.

Mental Wellness Ambassador Program Continues Community Impact

The Well-Being HUB's Mental Wellness Ambassador Program (MWAP) continues to make an impact in rural Nova Scotian communities. Mental Wellness Ambassadors provide education, awareness, and support around mental health topics, helping to reduce stigma and build mental health literacy across all age groups. The Ambassador program complements peer support services by creating a broader culture of mental wellness awareness throughout the region.

As the Well-Being HUB moves forward with its peer support program launch, the organization remains committed to its core mission: building mental health and wellness supports that truly serve and reflect the needs of the rural Eastern Shore, Middle Musquodoboit, and surrounding communities.

Those interested in accessing peer support services or becoming a volunteer can contact Sarah at 902-237-5065 or toll-free at 1-833-393-2298 or visit wellbeinghub.ca. Stay tuned.

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The Fisher and the Porcupine

By Eric Cole

Leaving the weather out of it for now, we enjoy many benefits living in this quiet rural spot on the Eastern Shore. The silence can be profound at times. The bay and the ocean beyond provide remarkable and ever-changing vistas. On clear nights, with less light pollution here, the constellations are more fulsome, the stars more immediate.

Another benefit is an undisturbed landscape for days following a snowfall. No machine or human foot had intruded on a recent deposit of the white stuff when we came across tracks we hadn't seen before. Five clawed toes in a front paw print that size had to be a large Mustelid. Its trail across our pond showed a loping gait, with hind feet smaller than the front paws, both characteristics of a Fisher. We've seen Otters here, but their tracks have webbing, and there are always signs of sliding or a tail dragging after. Coyote, fox, or bobcat tracks only have four toe prints, and raccoons, which do show five, leave longer finger-like prints.

Fishers are large members of the weasel family. They live in mature forests across North America, with a stronghold in the Boreal. They were extirpated from forty percent of their historic range early in the last century due to unregulated trapping and deforestation. By nineteen thirty there were none left in Nova Scotia. The first ever reintroduction of fishers, and there have been many, both in the States and the Provinces, was a dozen ranch-raised animals released in the late forties in western Nova Scotia.

Then in the sixties a hundred wild caught individuals from Maine were released in the eastern part of the province. Their descendants from these

releases have spread through most of mainland Nova Scotia, though our eastern population is more robust because it has more genetic diversity than those ranch-raised originals released up near Digby. Recently fishers have been reported in Cape Breton, by way of the Canso Causeway presumably.

Despite their resurgence you'd be very lucky to see one. By nature elusive and nocturnal, fishers are particularly wary of humans. They are however fierce and opportunistic predators. Rabbits, rodents, and birds are all on the menu. They can run up and down a tree faster than any other animal, so no squirrel is safe. Despite their name, fishers they are not.

But perhaps their main claim to fame, and the reason that so many reintroductions have been undertaken in their original range, is their ability to kill porcupines, which are considered pests by forest managers. Not many predators bother with a porcupine, for reasons well known to many dog owners. The much more subtle fisher will dodge and dart around a porcupine trying to get access to the quill-free head or underbelly.

Meanwhile the normally ponderous porcupine rapidly turns and trusts its rear end with its shield of quills and spiky tail for all its worth to keep those quills in the fisher's face. This age-old deadly dance does not always end in a fatal bite to the head and a meal for the fisher. If the porcupine can keep its head safe or is in a tree or a den where it can lodge itself in an impenetrable position, it will live to browse another day, the fisher moving on to find an easier meal.

I have to say we were relieved to see our little local porcupine, who we have watched grow up around our place, come out to graze in evenings since we saw the tracks of this fisher.

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On Loving Too Much

By John English

In a recent visit with my sister, the idea of her acquiring a cat or dog for amusement and company came up in the conversation. She lives alone and often finds a sense of loneliness seeping into her days. She said that she had thought about it, but decided against the idea as "I would love it too much."

This statement both saddened and intrigued me. I began wondering if it is possible to love too much, and within what context this might be true. I have always believed that my capacity for love is endless, but does love have a cost when it exceeds certain boundaries or limits?

For my sister, the prospect of inevitably losing a pet was what tipped the balance, and what constituted the cost. And we all, at certain points in our lives, lose something or someone we love deeply – parents, partners, children, homes, friends, pets. It is indeed a very heavy price to pay, for the loss incurs pain that often lingers as a dull ache for the remainder of our years. If that pain has been experienced before, the commitment to loving may be

perceived as having too great a cost.

One would think that there is a balance to be struck between the degree of our love and the prospect of loss. One might say, "I will only love this much so that the pain of losing the object of my love will be less intense." Someone else may say, "It's only a cat. Get a grip and get another one." But love challenges rationality. It is not a measurable commodity, but rather an intense emotional experience with its own rules and imperatives, and pays little attention to convention or formula.

There is also the question of losing oneself if we love too much. To what extent am I prepared to sacrifice my needs and values in loving another? Am I prepared to remain in a hurtful relationship, endangering myself and possibly others close to me?

We must all decide for ourselves whether to love fully, unconditionally, and with complete abandon, or to reduce the pain of loss by dipping only one foot into the waters.



Happy St Patrick's Day!

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The Chezzetcook and District Lions Club would like to invite you all to our St Patrick's Day Dance. Come, celebrate with old friends & new at the Chezzetcook and District Lions Hall on March 13, 2026. Band will be 4Way Stop, doors open at 8:30 pm. To order advanced tickets call 902-478-3938 or 902-440-1385. Tickets on sale for \$10 each or \$15 at the door. Come ready to party and have some fun!!

Regular bingo continues every Monday night. Bingo starts at 7pm, doors open @ 5:30pm.

If you are interested in **servicing your community** do not hesitate to visit our club. Meetings take place on the **1st and 3rd Tuesday** of every month starting at 7 pm.

Our Branch Club the Sociable Cupcakes are always looking for additional service and or volunteers, if you have any ideas or questions please feel free to reach out by calling 902.827.5871.

For hall rentals call 902.221.7983.

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