

REES' Pieces

Potholes still here; Recession forgotten

When the weather starts to get spring-like, as it has the past week or so, one starts to think about the three week period when the outdoors looks very drab and dirty, but quickly it changes. Birds start arriving, deer are roaming farther out into the fields, and almost overnight winter is gone.

When I was a toddler, one of the first signs of spring was impassable country roads, when vehicles sank to their axles. Up went a couple of potato barrels and a cedar fence rail, the blockade was in place until the farmer took it down.

We're in that season now. Fewer birds arrive each year, roadbeds are not pools of mud, but the craters and potholes make the roads almost as impassable or more dangerous. In those days, a team of horses could pull you out or around the impassable areas, now it takes a wrecker and a few hundred repair dollars.

At this stage in our life, after destroying a tire, or bending another rim, on the way to or from work, we arrive at our destination in a depressed state, angry that our highways are in such deplorable condition.

However, residents of West Colchester who travel Highway # 2 are luckier than most. Thanks to the efforts of highway personnel and a lot of credit to Karen Casey, from the Glenholme corner to the bottom of the mountain near the county line, we have great highway.

In fact, Highway # 2 is in better overall condition than many sections of Hwy 104 between Cobequid Pass and Amherst. Hwy #102 Truro to Halifax has sections which are much more difficult to navigate than anything along West Colchester's # 2.

Regardless of more or fewer potholes, Nova Scotians, or shall I say Atlantic Canadians, are much better off than other parts of this Great Country. Alberta is forecasting a deficit as the economy tumbles, with the price of a barrel of oil plummeting faster than our softwood industry.

Meanwhile Ontario, once the boastful generator of high paid manufacturing jobs, faces trauma similar to fishermen in Newfoundland when the cod disappeared. In the United States 50% of all personal bankruptcies are linked to health-care costs. Canada is lucky, although wait times might be longer than we want; our families are not driven to financial despair.

For generations, when one sector of our economy failed, or took a nosedive, our heads bobbed above the surface somewhere else. We embraced High Tech; boutique manufacturing, whether it be aerospace or the offshore and tourism initiatives.

Even though we have never experienced the highs, we never got swallowed up in the real depths of a depression. Some say Atlantic Canadians are "bottom feeders", because our economy has always hovered near the bottom. Our resourcefulness has always seen us through.

We do have two areas of our economy which are very troublesome.

Tourism will suffer the most in the short-term. Alberta's downturn, Ontario's abandonment of manufacturing, combined with USA's sub-prime mortgage meltdown, which lead to a global crisis, simply means a lot of people will not be travelling this year.

We can come to the aid of our fellow operators, if we encourage family and friends to travel within Atlantic Canada.

Education is the one with the largest and longest lasting negative impact. Our demographics have changed. We do not have enough younger people coming into the education system; yet, government is bent on building more and bigger schools. Instead of spending hundreds of millions on new larger schools, why not renovate existing schools and, if necessary, transport some of the students from suburbs to rural high schools instead of students travelling the other way.

Regardless of what all the pundits say, all the money which this provincial government could spend will not rid us of pothole after pothole. I don't see a time, when our highways will be in a state of repair of which all of us are proud.

Unfortunately, some of the same potholes will be there, long after this recession has become a faint memory and that is what will cause rural communities to crumble. Fix the roads and rural areas will regenerate.

Maurice

Letters to the editor

This is an open forum for your opinions and comments.

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March 2, 2008

Letter to the Editor:

After reading the article in your paper titled "FBC to show Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed", I felt compelled to write and straighten out a few facts for the sake of education. This movie has an agenda, so blatant, that it almost is embarrassing to show it to the public. Its only reason for existing is to mislead, and support its own religious beliefs. There are so many claims made in this movie that are so staggeringly false, and incorrect, that to show it to a unprepared public is akin to intellectual abuse. It makes said claims, and then has absolutely zero ability to back those up. It attempts to make the case that Intelligent Design is a actual scientific movement on par with the study of evolution. This could not be further from the truth. ID is simply "creationism in a cheap tuxedo".

This "apparent design in nature..." is only apparent if you blind yourself from actual scientific study. If nature was

designed by a greater power, this power must be the worst engineer in the history of

existence. Just look at the stupid design in the universe. Most planet orbits are unstable. Most places in the universe will kill life instantly. The milky way is on a collision course with the Andromeda galaxy. Now think of earth alone. If it is intelligently designed, why is 2/3 of the surface unlivable. Why all the volcanoes, earthquakes.

Why has 99 percent of life on this planet gone extinct. Why is this solar system a basic shooting gallery, from comets, asteroids, etc. Now what about this wonderful human machine which is so perfectly designed.

We suffer countless diseases. A common argument is the wonders of the human eye. There are many creatures with a much more well adapted eye.

What about the brilliant idea of eating and breathing through the same hole in the body. This guarantees a number of people choke to death each year. And the most wondrous of all is why

did this clever engineer put the entertainment complex in the centre of a sewage system. There

are countless other stupid designs, which any remotely competent engineer would never consider to create.

One of the most ardent supporters of ID is Dr. Michael Behe. His idea of Irreducible complexity is a core idea of ID. It claims that many biological systems are too complex to have evolved from simpler predecessors. That if you remove any part from the system, then it will cease to function. One example commonly used is a mousetrap. He claims that if any part is missing from the simple trap, then it does not function. BUT, although it may not function as a trap, it will still function in some context. It could be used as a paper clip, maybe a tie clip. But the important point is that it still functions in some manner. Also a mousetrap not being a biological entity does not fall under the umbrella of evolution, but

still the example stands to show the complete misunderstanding that many people have of evolution, including this embarrassingly inept movie.

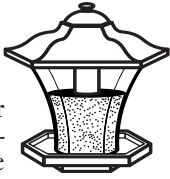
In conclusion it has to be said that this debate of whether or not evolution exists, is not a issue with the majority of scientist, and those that have an issue with this field are attempting to support their own agenda. And as far as these educators experiencing persecution for supporting ID, I have but one question. Would you continue to support a teacher who decides to teach that 2+6=45, just because he believes that?

I think not. Are these people persecuted because of their belief in ID, or because of inadequacies, and inabilities in the field of science because of their unfounded beliefs in ID. Basically to be a scientist and ID supporter, you must abandon the scientific method, and ignore so much evidence, that you are going to be a poor scientist.

Sincerely
Troy Spencer, Great Village

Nature Notes

by Fran Spalding • 647-2837



This is primarily an end of winter report, but it includes portents of spring one doesn't always think of as such. For instance, in the first week of March redpolls and snow buntings weren't always to be seen at our feeders.

Taking note of the lengthening days they've grown restless and are starting to head north. Snow buntings especially have a long way to go to their breeding grounds north of the arctic circle. Redpolls go a shorter distance; as some nest in Newfoundland, and their nests have even been looked for in the Highlands of Cape Breton, so far without success.

Bohemian waxwings have also been seen along our shore this winter; they'll head off in a northwesterly direction to the forests of northern Manitoba and Alberta. An article in the New York Times tells how miniaturized information-collectors weighing a gram-and-a-half have been strapped to the backs of small migrants in Pennsylvania before they headed south and collected on their return the following year from Central and South America.

Needless to say only a very few individuals were recovered (it's a wonder any were). The data showed their migration paths and where they were each day. Most of

our summering birds that come from the tropics won't even be thinking of heading north for another month or so, but by the time you read this you should have seen robins, grackles and red-winged blackbirds, as well as a few sparrow species (and remember the junco is a sparrow).

Mrs. Sharon Maclean called from Onslow to say she has had two pairs of cardinals all winter at her place. Now if we could only get more summer sightings down the shore (from the turnoff onto Rte. 2 at Masstown) they might lead to a first breeding record for the area. Hawks have been active in the Economy area: Keith Chisholm has reported a sharp-shinned hawk at his place killing a starling and a mourning dove, and attacking a large flock of snow buntings with undetermined results. Sometimes a large flock dispersing in all directions confuses the hawk and they all get away.

Doreen Cooke watched a rarer sight when she saw a goshawk trying to kill a crow at their place on the Swamp Road in Economy. She was attracted to the scene by the clamor of all the crows in the neighbourhood, and her presence finally ended with the crow's escaping into a near-by spruce, but how it finally ended she doesn't

know. For some predators the hard snow surface has been a problem this winter.

On March 4th Sandy Welton saw a barred owl looking tired and hungry in an apple tree near her place on the River Road; she strewed a bit of hamburger nearby, but with what success I don't know. She did get a good picture of the owl, though.

On an Amherst Christmas Count years ago I saw one seeming to topple out of a maple tree and stumble around its base before managing to fly off. Old age, maybe, I thought at the time, and wished him well.

On the River Road before one gets to the Dugway the

snow banks are close to the river. In late winter, when it's not too cold, you might see scores of tiny black insects creeping about on them. They may be snow fleas, a primitive insect not closely related to fleas, but these didn't hop as snow fleas are said to do, but rather walked about on the snow.

There were even a couple of spiders on the snow with them, and what was perhaps a winter crane fly, all very lethargic. Still, signs of life are hard to find these days, so the spectacle was an encouraging one.

On March 15th, two days before the deadline for this article, Val Meredith told me five fresh-looking robins were on patches of snow-free ground at the Farm Gate in Highland Village. Nature's spring, if not the calendar's, had arrived.

Outstanding Teachers to be recognized

Students, parents, community members, and teaching colleagues to invited nominate extraordinary teachers for Excellence in Teaching Awards given to those who have a significant impact on students.

The annual awards, jointly sponsored by the CCRSB and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, are designed to recognize outstanding teachers. Candidates are to be nominated by three people, including

a school administrator, a teacher colleague, and a member of the public that may include a student.

Nomination forms are available at all school offices and through all Principals, School Advisory Council Chairs, and Home and School Associations. Up to 15 awards will be handed out with no more than five being awarded to teachers in each NSTU Local. Deadline for nominations is Friday, April 17, 2009.

The Shoreline Journal (circ. 1300) is a monthly community newspaper serving communities along the Glooscap Trail from Truro to Parrsboro, Nova Scotia serving the communities of Belmont/Debert, Wentworth/Londonderry, Onslow/Masstown along the shore to Great Village, Bass River, Economy, Five Islands and Lower Five Islands. It is published on the last Wednesday of each month (earlier in December) with a deadline of the 20th of the month.

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