

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Thu, Jul 21 - 4:56 AM

Apply the science

Re: "Fish farm supporters reel in members" (July 18). Similar to the debate that rages in Shelburne County over proposed expansion to Jordan Bay by Cooke Aquaculture, certain facts have been excluded from this article, as have been opinions from the debate.

There was no mention of the open house on July 12, which was publicized as a venue where questions on the proposal could be asked and answered by government and company representatives. Questions concerning the fishing industry, some of which have been in the system for over three years and through a previous expansion approval, remain unanswered.

Ghastly theatrics, which featured the delivery of form letters of support for the project in a bright red wheelbarrow, overshadowed the big issue of fisheries concerns and aquaculture effects.

Fisheries Minister Sterling Belliveau has publicly stated that decisions to approve these proposals are based on sound science. This science has historically labelled Jordan Bay as significant to lobster reproduction.

This is not a numbers game where project supporters have an edge and mask the true effects on our fishery in their pseudo-election. This is a proposal that will affect the productivity and reproductivity of our bay. Apply the science and keep the sustainable fishery we have.

Ricky Foster Hallett, Lockeport

In 'avoid' category

Everywhere they operate, large-scale salmon farms have negatively impacted wild salmon and have been the source of harmful pollution and widespread degradation of marine and coastal environments. This is not speculation or prediction; this is the factual history in Canada and internationally.

Should we expect Nova Scotia's experience to be different because we are in need of rural economic development and an industry is indulging us with various job-creation numbers? Does the provincial government owe its citizens a real assessment of the jobs this industry will cost?

Tens of thousands of Nova Scotians depend directly on a healthy marine environment for fishing and tourism jobs, and in supporting our cultural heritage and coastal and rural lifestyles. Promotion and advancement of small-scale shellfish and seaweed aquaculture jobs, which rely on and contribute to clean healthy coastal environments, would be truly advocating for sustainable aquaculture.

SeaChoice seafood sustainability ranking reports (www.seachoice.org) use publicly available, peer-reviewed, science-based rankings to determine seafood sustainability. There are sustainable green aquaculture options for shellfish and closed containment fish farming. Industrial net-pen salmon farms, however, fall squarely in the red "avoid" category as unsustainable.

Rob Johnson,

Sustainable Seafood Coordinator,

Ecology Action Centre

Support evident

Re: "Voters expect to be heard" (July 14 letter). It is apparent that Daniel Mills is supportive of the legal action being taken regarding the approval of aquaculture sites just off Digby Neck.

That most certainly is his prerogative, but as a resident of Shelburne County, where support for Cooke Aquaculture to receive approval for the three sites applied for in the

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county is tremendous, I take exception to his implication that a majority of the full-time residents here support that lawsuit.

I believe the 400-plus signs displayed in people's yards, the 561 (to date) signed letters of support and the 400 people in attendance at the July 12 public meeting — where at least three-quarters were supporters of the project — speak a very different message and clearly articulate the support for the project to move forward.

So, Mr. Mills is correct that voters expect to be heard, but he should not assume to know the opinion of the full-time residents of Shelburne County based on his view and the view of a very few others.

Karen Mattatall, Shelburne

Think of environment

Re: "Fish farm supporters reel in members" (July 18).

It appears Sherri Harris has lost focus because of her contract with Cooke Aquaculture. If open-pen fin aquaculture is so clean and pristine, why is Ms. Harris not arguing to have the three additional proposed sites placed in Shelburne Harbour? Could the pollution, stink and other negative impacts on the environment have anything to do with it?

Ms. Harris also talks about local people heading west to seek employment. She suggests new fish farms and "maybe" a processing plant in Shelburne, if the government coughs up enough cash, will stop the stampede. A job posting in New Brunswick by Cooke is seeking labourers at \$11.25 an hour. So jobs, at just above Nova Scotia's minimum wage, are going to stop people in Shelburne County from going out west? I think not.

It's OK to pollute the environment, as long as we get some jobs, seems to be the order of the day for industry and government. Take, for example, biomass harvesting, open-pit mining and open-pen aquaculture. Shouldn't the environment be the No. 1 consideration and not trampled by excess and greed?

If Sterling Belliveau and the Dexter government are going to shell out in excess of \$100 million to Cooke to expand fin fish aquaculture in Nova Scotia and a processing plant in Shelburne County, I trust that closed contained sites will be the order of the day.

Darrell Tingley, President,

Medway River Salmon Association

Persistent myths

The July 13 letter "Safety top priority" repeats the same persistent myths about gun registries.

Ninety-two per cent of rank-and-file police members polled report that they don't find the registry useful. Only the "empire-building" Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police does.

Spousal assault/murder has more to do with dysfunctionality than with the means to kill/harm.

Spousal murder rates have been slowly declining since the 1970s. This was before the registry. Suicide rates have remained consistent. When people don't have access to firearms, they substitute — i.e. using a rope, knife, ledge, pills, etc. Gun control hasn't affected this.

Please refer to the National Firearms Association and the Canadian Shooting Sports Association websites for more information. In particular, please note Dr. Gary Mauser's excellent research on this topic.

Robert Bracken, Dartmouth

Nautical slip

The U.S. Coast Guard ship Eagle is not a barge (July 16 photo). It is a kind of full-rigged ship called a barque, because the mizzen (aftermost) mast is schooner-rigged, just like the Bluenose. Does it matter? Does anything matter anymore?

Under sail, the Eagle can do 19 knots, one knot being one nautical mile (1.852 km) per hour. A barge, usually without propulsion, just sits there.

If we want to become Canada's hub of shipbuilding during the next 30 years, we should smarten up, so we do not become the laughing stock of the shipping world. The Chronicle Herald should have a nautically minded person to proofread shipping news.

In this day and age, this ship is a very relevant thing. It is unique because the ship's manner of operation is non-polluting, it is a place where young people learn the ropes and for the rest of us, it is a thing of beauty and a marvel to behold.

Leo Næsager, New Minas

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