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AROUND & ABOUT

Your Community Connection

February 19, 2013 Issue 8 - Volume 17
www.aroundandabout.ca

"Yes, there will be higher taxes," Deputy Mayor Jill Beer

By Chloe Kneer - Espanola residents were invited to a "town hall" style meeting last Wednesday evening to hear about how the recent Domtar mill reassessment will affect their property taxes. The January 31 interim decision by the Assessment Review Board saw the value of the mill drop from an anticipated \$19 million to just over \$9 million for the years 2008-2012, resulting in the Town of Espanola having to refund \$4.9 million in property taxes (approximately \$900,000 is the education portion that will come from the Ministry of Education).

At the appeals hearing in Toronto, Espanola Clerk/Treasurer/Administrator Cynthia Townsend pled the town's case as to why the assessment should be more in line with previous years'. She tried to impress upon the board "the substantial impact to our funding models and our costing formula" a lowered assessment would bring, and that she hoped for a result that would be fair to both parties. The board, however, was unsympathetic saying, "I understand the impact on the assessment base for the town, but can only say that those financial implications are not a material consideration to the issue of current value."

A grim case was made in the appeal, detailing the fibre industry as a declining one. That, combined with more efficient operations and cheaper energy costs globally, makes the Espanola operation near functional and economic obsolescence, despite being profitable. "The decline in property value attributable to the decline in the industry will cause the municipality

Continued on page three...



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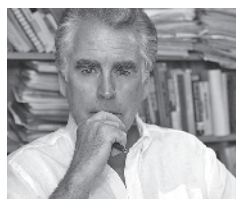
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All The World's A Circus

William Thomas

williamjthomas@gmail.com



What Is With These Great Canadian Food Heists?

First, somebody stole the maple syrup. I don't mean somebody pocketed the dispenser bottle from a tabletop at Le Breakfast Club. I mean robbers in Saint-Louis-de-Blandford, Quebec drove container trucks up to the province's cartel warehouse and siphoned off 3.75 million litres of maple syrup, enough to fill one and a half Olympic size swimming pools. That's 10 million liquid pounds in 15,000 barrels which represents 80% of the world's supply of maple syrup. That's \$30 million dollars worth of liquid that's darker than honey and faster than molasses. The Quebec provincial police are looking for a group of men with Class 3 truck driver's licenses and very, very, very sticky fingers. Quebec is obviously transforming its economy from an organized crime base to one that's high in nutrition.

I have no idea what these guys plan to do with 15,000 barrels of maple syrup, but if it's for personal use, they're going to need a waffle the size of West Virginia. 100,000 gallons is more maple syrup than the Rob and Doug Ford could put away on one of their foreign policy fact-finding missions to the International House of Pancakes.

That's just so Canadian, that we would be stockpiling maple syrup the way North Korea is accumulating nuclear weapons. And don't think that wouldn't be a boon to world peace – using tanker drones to drop 100,000 gallons of maple syrup on Kim Jong-un's nuclear power plant. You think Dim Kim has bad hair now; wait until he has to shampoo with Goo Gone. Then thieves stole 100 rabbits from a farm near Owen Sound, Ontario. Police didn't even bother to investigate this one. When you have the luck of 400 rabbit's feet going for you, nobody's going to track you down.

Then here in Niagara, three men including a police officer were charged with cheese

smuggling. "The large-scale smuggling scheme" involved \$200,000 worth of low-cost American cheese destined for Canadian pizzerias. If nothing else, this confirms that the \$649 billion spent so far by U.S. Homeland Security was money well spent. They haven't caught a terrorist yet but wheels of domestic cheddar are going to think twice before they attempt to illegally enter Canada.

Homeland Security Director Janet Napolitano who insanely believes that the 9/11 terrorists got into The United States through Canada called it "a gouda day for law enforcement."

Large quantities of maple syrup, meat and cheese being stolen in Canada at approximately the same time? This could only mean one thing – al-Qaeda is planning a massive high calorie food attack on Canada. Code name: "Denny's Jihadist Grand Slam Breakfast."

Seriously, you throw link sausages and a pile of pancakes into all this stolen property and you could drive every Bob Evans fast food restaurant in America out of business thereby precipitating another global economic meltdown. (And yes, the cheese is for the meltdown.)

Sorry, but I don't get this sudden outbreak of robberies in Canada involving food products. I get art theft. I don't get pop tart theft. It's as if criminals in this country have lost their sense of integrity. For whatever reason – the flat economy, the high price of consumer goods, soaring taxes – we are no longer producing a generation of honorable thieves. We don't have bank robbers in Canada anymore; we have crooks with low esteem who would rather rob food banks! Once a nation of highway robbers, we now have a bunch of bandits bent on stealing highways.

Is this what a developed country with a reasonable good living standard aspires to be?

Continued on page three...

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Continued from page two...

Some sort of weird larcenous nation of food criminals where armed lunatics run around shooting holes in Fruit Loops and calling themselves cereal killers?! I think not.

What the hell is happening to us!!? We used to have well-trained bank robbers with classic names like "The Boyd Gang" and "The Stopwatch Gang." Now what do we have? "The Maple Syrup Six"? "The Saint-Louis Sappers"! "The Bunny Snatchers of Grey County"? "The Cross-Border Cheese Doodlers"?

This is ridiculous. If we cannot sustain or indeed, enhance our great heritage of grand larceny, how can we possibly compete in a fast-changing world of high-technology misappropriation? Are the Chinese

– now the masters of identity theft and hard-drive hacking not now laughing hysterically at a country where citizens have their feet stuck firmly in a pool of maple syrup? Are the Russians – now capable of decoding highly sensitive passwords from U.S. Pentagon computers not looking upon Canadians as a bunch of "Wayne Worlders" who build secret smuggling compartments into cars and then filled them with cheese!! Theft is the hot commodity of the future and we need to get a lot better at it.

For comments, ideas and copies of The True Story of Wainfleet, go to
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"Yes, there will be higher taxes," Deputy Mayor Jill Beer

Continued from front page...

to lose a significant portion of its assessment base, and that is unfortunately the town's share of the cost resulting from that decline," the decision states.

The Espanola Domtar mill is a 1.2 million square foot building sitting on 67.92 acres of property. There are also tanks on the property, which are currently valued at \$5 million, but were not considered as part of this assessment appeal because of pending litigation.

To compare the mill property with other commercial complexes in Espanola, the current combined assessed values of Winkel's Independent Grocery Store and Canadian Tire, both on Centre Street, sits at just over \$9 million. The total land area of these is just under 12 acres.

Beer's presentation to a larger-than-anticipated crowd at the complex detailed that in 1998, Domtar's taxes covered 50% of the town's annual budget. With the new assessment figure, they are now covering 11.5%. She also cited that the town is responsible for having to pay the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board an extra \$200,000 per year and has received less grant money from the province. All of these factors combined has led to a major budgetary shortfall. She said council will have to cut the annual operating budget by \$.8 - \$1.2 million.

"All capital projects are on hold unless (investing in something) will show us an immediate and long-term cost savings," said Beer. She also said that services will likely be cut as well. All department managers were told at a February 7 meeting that they need to find savings in their budgets.

Residents listened patiently while Beer explained that council had

established a "rainy day fund" to deal with a Domtar reassessment, but, unfortunately, that fund will only cover approximately \$1.7 million of the shortfall.

After Beer's slideshow, she opened the floor to questions from ratepayers. "This is the part that scares me the most," she conceded. Residents were vocal on many fronts, partly addressing the flawed reassessment of Domtar, but also calling into question council's openness and spending practices for the last several years. It was clear that Espanola residents are not only frustrated with the level of communication coming from the municipality (including the mayor's absence from this meeting), but also with how they choose to spend tax dollars.

One angry resident made a heated comment to Beer, "this town has been over-spending for years... and now that Uncle Domtar isn't paying as much as they used to, you are coming to me, raising my property taxes, once again, to make up the shortfall." He also said, "it's your job to go to your department heads and tell them what they have to spend, not the other way around."

Many expressed that they feel they cannot trust council to make the hard decisions that need to be made and that they instead will take the route of making ratepayers shoulder the financial burden.

From here, the town has several measures in place to try to overturn the assessment. First, Espanola will send a delegation to the March 25 Good Roads Conference to meet with the finance minister. After that, meetings with other municipalities such as Dryden, Fort Frances, and Thunder Bay are to take place in hopes that there is strength in numbers in trying to get a fair assessment of all paper mills in Ontario.



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Recipe

Chicken wings are all the rage right now. Everyone loves "wing night" at many local restaurants. It was even rumoured that there was a chicken wing shortage for the past Super Bowl weekend. I have found a recipe for wings that you can make at home and are a healthier version because they are cooked in the oven as opposed to deep fried. You want to know the secret to crispy baked chicken wings? Parboiling them before you put them in the oven. This removes some of the extra fat and results in a crispy wing. They can be tossed in any sauce of your choice if you are not a hot sauce fan. I have made them several times already and I personally like to combine the hot sauce and butter mixture with my favourite barbecue sauce and toss the wings in it. I line my baking sheet with parchment paper to prevent sticking, but others haven't had a problem with the wings sticking. Everyone's baking sheets and ovens are different. Try it and see what works best for you.



Crispy Oven Chicken Wings

- 2 lbs chicken wing pieces
- salt
- 3 tbsp Frank's hot sauce
- 2 tbsp butter

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. Heat up a big pot of boiling water. Season the water like you would for cooking pasta (taste the water, it should taste a little repulsively salty, like sea water). Boil the chicken wings for 7-8 minutes, then remove them to a wire rack so the excess water can drain off. Let them drip dry a little bit, then dry them well with a paper towel. Season the chicken wings lightly with salt (though if you salted the boiling water enough, it won't need much, if any). Place the chicken wings directly on a sheet pan. Bake the chicken wings for 30 minutes on one side, then flip the wings and bake for another 10 minutes on the other side. In a small saucepan or in the microwave, heat up the hot sauce and butter until melted. Whisk to combine, then toss the hot wings in the sauce, and serve immediately.

Kids Korner

Add food colouring to a simple mixture of flour, salt, and water, and you get puffy, glossy paints that sparkle with salt crystals when dry.

Puffy Glimmer Paint

- ½ cup salt
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup water
- food colouring



Mix together the salt, flour, and water; the mixture should be about the consistency of pudding.

Add food colouring until the desired shade is reached, then use a funnel to transfer the paint to a squeeze bottle. You can also transfer the paints to a Ziploc bag, and then snip off one tiny corner of the bag for a make-it-yourself applicator. Use on finger-paint paper or other heavy paper and allow your paintings to air-dry overnight. Store leftover paints in the refrigerator in airtight containers for up to three days; stir or shake before using.

COMMUNITY NOTES

Spaghetti Supper - Includes dessert and beverage at the Massey Winter Carnival Friday, February 22, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Catered by St Andrew's United Church.

Espanola United Church - Fun/Talent Night Saturday, March 2 at 7:00 p.m. Come and be entertained by a wide variety of local talent. Refreshments will be served. Don't miss the fun! Admission at the door.

Queensway Pentecostal Church-- STOMP - Every Friday night between 7:00-8:30 p.m. for tweens grades 4-7. Fun, free and everyone is welcome.

World Day of Prayer - Friday, March 1, 7:00 p.m. at the St. Georges Anglican Church. 213 Tudhope St., Espanola. Theme "I was a stranger and you have welcomed me"

Community Luncheon - February 26 at the Lighthouse in Espanola (across from the Royal Bank) from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. NO CHARGE. Everyone welcome.

Espanola Skating Club Annual Carnival - Saturday, March 30, at the Espanola Recreation Complex. Fund-raiser in support of the skating club. For information, call 705-862-2501.

Free Community Skate - Hosted by RBC Massey. Friday February 22, 2013 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Massey Arena. Skating, free hot chocolate, a visit with Leo the Lion, and face painting! Also stop by the RBC Play Hockey Shootout tent from 6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Relay for Life Fund-raiser - Collecting refundable bottles, will pick up at your home. Please call Marlene Wilson. 705-869-8365 or 705-285-0048.

Meat Roll Offs - Friday nights in February at the Royal Canadian Legion #39 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Help support junior curling and the legion.

Royal Purple Lunches - March 7 serving Spaghetti. For orders call Gert 705-869-2669 or kitchen 705-869-4888 (leave message). All orders must be in no later than Tuesday evening (March 5).

Espanola Elks Cribbage Tournaments - Sunday, February 24. Pre-registrations (teams of two). For registrations call 705-869-6237 or 705-869-1931.

Do you have a NOTE for the Community?

We invite not-for-profit organizations to submit information on their up-coming events in writing no later than Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m. 25 Word Limit.

Fax: 705-869-3342 or E-mail: around@aroundandabout.ca

Nick's Kawasaki Racing Team Member Wins Rider of the Year



Motocross racer Justin Pothier heads up Nick's Kawasaki Racing Team. He won a 2013 KX250F bike & \$3000 for being named Kawasaki Canada's Team Green Rider of the Year. Pictured are: Mark Tessier, Justin Pothier, Jeff Comello, Mike McCendie, & Jeff Quilty at the February 12th presentation at Nick's in Espanola. The racing season starts again in April at Gopher Dunes in Courtland, ON.

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To access the guide online, visit rainbowschools.ca. Click on the Parents section.

For more information, contact your Rainbow secondary school or email info@rainbowschools.ca.

JOIN US!

All Grade 8 students and their parents/guardians are invited to the Information Nights, regardless of which elementary school students currently attend.