

Defining a goldmine

Would the real goldmine please stand up?

In 1996, the Nova Scotia government set aside 31 proposed protected areas within the province, increasing the amount of land protected in Nova Scotia from 2 to 8 per cent.

This move won the Nova Scotia government the Gold Leaf Award for conservation from the Canadian Council of Ecological Areas. It also earned us an "A" in the World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) 1996 *Endangered Species Progress Report*.

Among these proposed protected areas was the now infamous Jim Campbell's Barren. Covering more than 1,500 acres in the Cape Breton Highlands, it is home to many rare and endangered species.

It is a prime site for protection. But the barren is believed to be sitting on rock that is rich in mineral deposits — most importantly, gold. A prime site for economic development.

An independent geological survey that concluded the barren should be removed from protected status was used by local business leaders in lobbying the government to remove the barren from the list of candidate protected areas.

It worked.

In the fall of 1996, the barren was de-listed by the Savage government. An ecological goldmine was traded for an economic one.

Since the decision to de-list the barren was made public, much controversy has surfaced. The independent geological survey was shown to be biased, with a pro-mining slant, and the mining company with interests in the barren is now being investigated for insider trading. This prompted an RCMP investigation into possible

cabinet leaks, as well as document tampering.

The controversy has turned what was originally an unpopular decision into a political nightmare.

As such, Nova Scotia Premier Russell MacLellan has decided to review the case.

Reinstating the protected status of the barren would be the smart choice for the new premier. Nobody liked Savage, so the more of Savage's decisions that MacLellan can undo, the better. De-listing the barren was a wildly

provide jobs, attract other businesses, and provide incentive to settle and stay in the area.

Can MacLellan turn his back on the needs of these people, some of whom are his constituents? Not so soon before an election.

If MacLellan agrees to uphold the de-listing of the Jim Campbell Barren, he may get re-elected, but he loses with the rest of the province.

In the background is the fate of the thirty other candidate protected areas. If one can be de-listed, so can two, five, or twenty. The government has to stop making environmentally responsible promises and start making environmentally responsible commitments.

It comes down to an issue of trust. The government said it would protect these areas, but now that there is a profit to be made from one of them, it is suddenly no longer worth saving. If someone was to offer a huge sum of money to clear-cut another candidate area, would they find an independent study that justified de-listing it as well? At this point, they've given us no reason to believe they wouldn't.

So what is the right choice? Where do our moral obligations lie — with the unemployed communities in Northern Cape Breton or with the rare and endangered communities within the barren? This is not an question of a park versus a goldmine, but a question of which is the real goldmine.

Late on Wednesday, Premier MacLellan announced that Jim Campbell's Barren is to be returned to the protected areas list.

BY NATALIE MACLELLAN

Editorial

unpopular decision — environmental groups everywhere protested, as did many local residents. As well, Nova Scotia's grade dropped from an "A" to a "C-" in the WWF's 1997 *Endangered Species Progress Report*.

Protecting the area would be useful in gaining support for the new premier.

Unless of course, you're an unemployed Cape Bretoner.

The communities surrounding Jim Campbell's Barren are severely economically depressed. The collapse of the cod fishery took \$10 million annually from their economy, and roughly a quarter of the population is unemployed. Populations are decreasing because there is no longer any incentive to stay, and schools are closing because of a lack of students. 1,500 hectares of preserved land may support a few rare species, but it will do nothing for the residents of the Cape Breton Highlands.

A goldmine, on the other hand, is a dream come true. It would

Letters

Fill Your Cultural Void

To the Editor,

I have been writing this letter in my head for weeks. But the reason it has taken me so long to finally sit down and write it is because I really did not know how to say what I wanted to say. You see, I graduated from Dalhousie in May 1997 and I am now at Queen's University doing graduate work. I have been at Queen's for two months and I have to say that Dalhousie is a school to be proud of.

The experience at Dalhousie far outweighs that at Queen's. But this is not to say that Queen's is a bad school, it is not, it is a wonderful, spirit driven, alumni-loving school. This letter is not about Queen's. This letter is not even about how Dalhousie is better than Queen's. This letter is about Dalhousie.

Walk around Dal and you can see different people, from different places, speaking

different languages, doing outrageous things. Dalhousie does not look a certain way. Dalhousie does not have a typical student population. Take notice of what Dal offers in terms of who goes there, who is walking down the path next to you when you leave the A&A, who is lined up at the bank machine in the SUB. Dalhousie is a cultural experience. This is not to say that other Canadian universities are not diverse, this is to say that Dalhousie is diverse enough to notice.

This is what I miss. Dalhousie is a great school, Halifax is a cool city. My four years has provided me with a great degree, but more importantly, it provided me with amazing people, diversity, conflict, challenges and energy. Talk to people around you, join a club, smile, start to fill your cultural void. I know I did.

NALINI NAIDOO

OPINIONS

PK, but not PC

In October 1995, the Million Man March took the Capitol by storm. The crowd was estimated at close to a half million men, it emphasized the importance of spirituality and remaining faithful to their wives. Hugh Price, then president of the National Urban League, said, "I think this may have been the largest family values rally in the history of America." People saw it as a positive step while mistrusting its organizer, Rev. Louis Farrakhan.

Almost two years later, another rally descending on Washington saw America mistrusting the whole group. With numbers between six hundred thousand and one million, the Promise Keeper rally eclipsed the Million Man March in both attendance and controversy.

The Promise Keepers is a fairly new organization with no known political affiliation and is totally privately funded. Founder and president William McCartney emphasizes a community spirit and that men should start acting more like...well, men. Acting more as community, family, and spiritually oriented rather than the self-centred stereotypes by which men are constantly portrayed.

The question is, do we really want men acting this way? Critics have been quick to judge these men as controlling misogynists and bigots. Patricia Ireland, president of the Nation Organization for Women, contends that rallies like these (and the whole concept of marriage as well) emphasize the need men have to dominate women. Come again? Just how does a man control a woman anyway? From just about every marriage I've seen, I think we know who had the final say in everything.

The Promise Keepers do not preach dominance over wives, merely servitude. In case you have never seen any of these

rallies, some large enough to fill football stadiums, these grown men are seen embracing, holding hands, and reduced to tears. Are these the brutes who are dominating their wives? It makes me wonder what kind of agenda Patricia Ireland has if she is questioning the importance of all men.

It's not as if the press has been any fairer to them either. Our very own Globe and Mail described the rally crowd as "predominantly white." Exactly what were they insinuating anyway? That somehow the Promise Keepers are a bunch of bigots? If anything they emphasize equality under the eyes of God (President William McCartney himself has two grandkids of mixed race). And if the crowds on the Capitol were composed mostly of whites, so what? According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States is eighty percent white. If the large majority of the U.S. population is white, doesn't it make sense that the Promise Keepers would be as well? Now if anyone had watched "Frontline" on PBS with the coverage they had, you would have seen clips of blacks and whites embracing and holding hands. There's a lesson to be learned here: stop buying newspapers if you value facts and start watching television.

Do you want to know the real problem people have with the Promise Keepers? They are just too bloody nice. Anybody who would disagree with the group based on their philosophies must think that men who commit adultery and use drugs are preferable. Those who remain faithful, love God, and stay sober are the most politically incorrect (and therefore dangerous) beings on the planet. In response to the PK rally, I suggest we hold a "Promise Breakers" rally as well.

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OH SWEETIE, I DO WISH YOU
WOULD WRITE MORE OFTEN...

THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

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