

## The View from Here

### Checkin' out the Budget

By Jay McGrath

In the last edition I wrote about the positives of this province and suggested that the view from here was not as negative as its cracked up to be.

But alas we had a federal budget to receive and our leader, Premier Williams, has insinuated that the equalization formula is a game of smoke and mirrors and that we Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should be wary of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Of course Premier Williams is not the only one with an opinion on the budget. His provincial opposition, Liberal MHA Gerry Reid, has agreed that the effects of the budget will have a big negative impact on the province, and Federal Conservative MP and Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Loyola Hearn claims that the province does not lose anything for now and that we have five years yet to ensure that this province's benefits under the Atlantic Accord continue.

Various community representatives have weighed in, with varying comments. I have read much on the opinions of others, including that the average worker doesn't benefit from the budget, that it's a great deal for small business, that the manufacturing sector will become more productive and competitive, community mental health will benefit, and that, in the long run, we will be hard hit by the numbers and policies from the contents of Prime Minister Harper's work.

Some of you may now be wondering what MY opinion is on the 2007 federal budget.

Well, I'm not giving it.

That's not my point here. My goal in this article is to encourage those of you reading to go search out information and form an opinion of your OWN.

Its one thing to read or listen to the opinions of those with specified interests, but Google the budget document and make an attempt to get through it. After all it's the opinion of all of us that truly matters here.

This is such an important issue for our province and indeed the country right now, I hope that some of you feel the same obligation that I do – an obligation to be informed and educated on the matter.

So soak in the opinions of others, have a look at the document, and form your own views on the topic.

Maybe you'll agree with it, maybe you won't, but you'll have a voice.

Maybe some of you will call in to Open Line, and maybe of you will only share it with yourself, but it will be there.

This article isn't an attempt by me to share my views with you, instead my intention here is to encourage you to think about what your views are and, in your opinion, determine what the view from here is really like. ■

*Jay McGrath is a 23-year-old business student at Memorial University and past chair of FINALY!*

### From Labrador to Guatemala

By Amanda Cull

Recently I have been accepted to go on a young adult delegation, through the **Breaking the Silence Project**, offered by the Tatamagouche Centre in Halifax. I am proud to say I am the only Newfoundland and Labradorian going on this specific delegation out of approximately 12 of us.

May 5<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> a group of diverse youth will be traveling to Guatemala to spend two weeks with representatives of the fair trade coffee farmers, representatives of HIJOS ( a youth based organization) as well as staying with a rural family.

This delegation will not be the picture perfect resort vacation, it is one that will be emotionally as well as physically draining. We will travel though Guatemalan villages and experience first hand the lifestyle in which they live.

Not one like we experience with our high speed internet connections and cell phones. Their life is full of poverty with a history of scorched earth policies as well as massacres...

Through going on this delegation I hope to bring back to Newfoundland and Labrador my experiences and be able to explain in a clear way, through first-hand knowledge that maybe cell phones are not all that important and we really do not need a new ski-doo every winter.

Youth and adults alike these days seem to have lost track of the important things in life, and grasp too tightly onto the material. I am not trying to push everyone to become a saint, but to remember that there is more outside of our communities and Canada as a whole.

It will do us all good to think every now and again about what is happening around us, without necessarily trying to change the world. Awareness and knowledge are the first steps to making a difference. ■

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