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Feb 7, 2010

> Dear Mr. Premier:

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> My name is Jane Nicholson and I am writing to you about Annapolis
> Royal, the birthplace of Canada. I am an award-winning heritage
> renovator and have a small business in the town. My husband, Peter
> Nicholson, grew up in Annapolis Royal and we still maintain our family
> home here. You may be familiar with his father, the Honourable Peter
> M. Nicholson, for 23 years the MLA for Annapolis West and the deputy
> premier and finance minister in the Regan government.

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> I am setting out my "credentials", so to speak, so that you will
> understand that although this could be construed as an emotional
> letter, it is not a rant. Rather, it is a plea, based on facts and a
> pretty thorough understanding of how politics works.

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> I am imploring you to help save Annapolis Royal.

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> Founded in 1605, the Town has survived economic and military
> vicissitudes for 405 years, but it cannot survive death by a thousand
> policy cuts. In the last two years, for example, we have:

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> - had our tax base severely cut by the previous government's
> changes to the way "grants in lieu of taxes" are portioned out to
> municipal units. We now have a Town Council that cannot even find the
> money to fund the Visitor Information Centre.

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> - learned that we are about to lose one of our two schools
> because education policy must be adjusted to take into account the
> declining rural population base

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> - had to cope with the cancellation (due to economics) of the
> ferry service from Bar Harbour to Yarmouth, with reduced traffic from
> the United States severely impacting tourism, our main industry. Who
> knows how long we will be able to depend on the Digby- Saint John
> connection?

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> With all this on our plate, you can understand why the spectre of the
> impending closure of the Emergency Room (ER) at the Annapolis
> Community Health Centre is the last straw. You simply cannot let this
> happen to "the most livable small town in the world". This closure
> will undoubtedly undermine the Town and surrounding area's ability to
> retain population - our only economic hope - by leading to a spiral of
> decline. Who will want to live here without a suitable health care
> facility? Retired people? Young families with children? New
> doctors? I don't think so.

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> Here's the thing...our Town survives because we are different. We are
> the past that works in the present. We are what people still want to
> believe in and can't believe still exists. We are beautiful, we are
> safe, we are full of pretty houses and picket fences. We have a
> farmer's market and a world recognized heritage public garden and a
> performance theatre, two National Historic sites and two house
> museums. We have the highest concentration of heritage buildings per
> population of any place in Canada. We have a health centre and a
> really good Home Hardware and an internet café and a main street that
> still has stores on it. We are a real place...not some bump on a rural
> road.

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> Although the Town of Annapolis Royal itself is home to fewer than 500
> people, it is the hub of a vibrant, creative and generous community
> with a catchment area of over 10,000 folk who view it as their
> "centre". The population includes artists and designers who have

> moved from other parts of Canada, the US and Europe, joining the
> growing concentration of artists and specialized craft and trades
> people in an area recognized for its beauty, quality of life,
> sustainable life style and historic connections with the wider world.
> Practically every one of us in Town is a volunteer in at least one, if
> not several, of the 30 plus organizations that run everything from
> children's picnics to graveyard tours to fancy dress fundraisers for
> the community pool. Hardly a day goes by when I don't hear about some
> citizen-based initiative that might bring a job or business to the
> area. We love our Town, we invest in our Town and we take its future
> very seriously.

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> Annapolis Royal is the jewel in Nova Scotia's crown and it can't be
> allowed to die. That is why I am writing to you, Mr. Premier. I am
> asking you to make a personal commitment to protect the Town by
> ensuring that policy decisions - such as the one involving the
> Annapolis Royal ER - take its unique national position into
> consideration.

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> The next time you host an "Order of Good Cheer" dinner, remember where
> the first one was held in the winter of 1605. Think about the vision
> it took to see a new country from that frozen Annapolis Basin shore.
> It's the kind of vision I am asking of you. You simply cannot go down
> in history as the man who killed the Town that started Canada.

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> Yours most sincerely,

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>
> Jane Nicholson
> Mrs. Nicholson Inc.
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