

INSIDE TOMORROW

Food columnist Karl Wells considers the humble snail — with relish.



See Saturday's Telegram

TODAY ON OUR WEBSITE

- ▶ The date of the 82nd Tely 10 Mile Road Race is coming up fast. Check out all the information you will need to take part in Sunday's race, organized by the Newfoundland and Labrador Athletics Association.
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- ▶ Check out Weblocal, a new Transcontinental website to help viewers find such things as local products, services and companies.

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WEATHER

	TOMORROW	SUNDAY	MONDAY
High	18	High	17
Low	11	Low	11
		P.O.P.	70%

Sun sets today at 8:45 p.m.
Sun rises tomorrow at 5:29 a.m.
See detailed weather on page A8

For up-to-the-minute weather, visit www.thetelegram.com



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As a sexually active gay male, Robert Hillier is not permitted to donate blood. As a part of a protest organized Thursday by St. John's Pride Week Planning, he recruited friend Judy Morrison to donate in his place. — Photo by Gary Hebbard/The Telegram

It's a bit outdated' ... Continued from page A1

"It's a bit outdated," she said. "I think the heterosexual (infection) numbers are crawling very quickly up to where homosexual numbers are and I think it's time to change policies."

While Hillier is adamant that the policy should be changed, he said the Pride Week organizers decided to hold a peaceful rally and work with blood services to stage the event in a way that wouldn't stop anyone from donating blood, but would still get their message across.

"In Western Canada there was a similar movement," he said.

"That was very successful in raising the awareness and opening the dialogue."

"A really big issue with being aggressive is, if you're very aggressive, people are going to die because there's not enough blood. It's known there's a blood shortage in Canada."

He said Canadian Blood Services has been very co-operative and has been reviewing the policy.

Canadian Blood Services spokes-



Susanne Gulliver

Jillian Brown

woman Jillian Brown said the organization was pleased to work with the community to raise awareness about the policy.

She said the policy isn't meant to discriminate, but to reduce any possible risk.

She said public-health statistics show that the highest risk group for HIV/AIDS is men who have sex with men.

While the organization is reviewing the policy and considering different ways of screening people, it maintains it's taking the safest course.

Brown said the argument that he

blood can simply be tested for the virus is faulty because the most advanced screening tests can't detect the virus within a certain two-week window after the disease is contracted.

"If someone donates blood and they've just contracted the virus within that window period, our tests ... will not pick it up."

But Susanne Gulliver, chairwoman for Pride Week planning, said there's more to the issue than risk assessments based on statistics. She said a supposed tendency towards unprotected sex underlies the policy, presumptions she challenges.

"They say 'Oh well, gay people don't know what their partners are doing,' and the fact of the matter is, it doesn't matter who you sleep with, you don't always know what your partners are doing," she said. "It's just ridiculous to assume one group is more trustworthy than another."

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Data aids management ... Continued from page A1

For example, Bratney said, last year's numbers show a low catch rate — a good thing from DFO's perspective.

"Basically, between three and seven per cent of the fish were captured in the fishery last year, which is fairly low. Really, that's what we're looking for," he said.

All that information helps the department manage the fishery, as well as give an indication on how the species is doing as a whole.

Bratney said the information provided from fishermen can even give them an indication as to how fast the fish are growing.

"When you have several hundred pieces of information like that, we can start to see what's happening."

And while he said "there's still a lot of unknowns about cod," science is showing the fish are rebounding in the province's waters.

"The report on the scientific assessment was released in March this year, and the indications were the stock is increasing on the north east coast," he said, noting that mortality rates have dropped significantly over the past 10 years, down to about 20 per cent from 60 per cent in the 1990s and early 2000s.

"They don't seem to be producing

lots more offspring or anything like that, it's just that survival has improved," he said.

There are a lot of theories about why that's happening, including everything from warmer waters promoting better growth to the make-up of the species changing due to fishing.

For Best, the importance of all the research is in getting the fishery back running. He said he'd like to see larger — but sustainable — quotas in the future, though he said it seems DFO is hesitant to increase quotas in the wake of the collapse.

He said people have sat out of the fishery for more than 15 years to see it rebuild, and now that there seems to be growth, they're waiting to be able to return to the livelihood.

But for now, many will have to be content with the five fish they jig during the recreational fishery and, if they're lucky, the financial bonus of finding the coloured tag attached to a fish.

Tags can be sent to:
 DFO cod tagging program,
 P.O. Box 5667
 St. John, N.L.
 A1C 5X1

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Nobody asked for secret minutes, Noel says ... Continued from page A1

But that wasn't happening. "I can't believe that all kinds of money was paid out in cheque form without somebody noticing tens of thousands of dollars went to a few individuals," Noel told the court.

During cross-examination, the defence continued its strategy of hammering at the legislature's secrecy and lack of controls. French pressed Noel about a second, secret set of minutes for the powerful Internal Economy Commission, or IEC. Those minutes detailed decisions only vaguely referenced in public documents. Most of the decisions gave more cash to MHAs.

Noel said politicians directed him to edit the public minutes to remove information because it would be "embarrassing to them."

The defence lawyer pointed to minutes for three meetings in January and February 2002.

The public minutes simply indicated that no decisions had been made by the IEC.

The private minutes showed IEC concern over the fallout from a

Expensive proposition, cab owner says

... Continued from page A1

One of the major stumbling blocks is the cost of retrofitting a minivan with the necessary equipment to be able to bring a heavy, powered wheelchair onboard, a cost which Ellsworth said is around \$20,000.

"I did a lot of research into the costs, and the business plan on it and I was almost there," said Tom Hollett, owner of Jiffy Cabs. "Just to put on 10 cars would have cost probably pretty close to a quarter of a million dollars."

Many operators see the money which St. John's puts into the other transportation systems, and balk at going it alone.

"You have the buses which are heavily subsidized, you have the Wheelway which is heavily subsidized, but in the case of the actual accessible taxis all they've done is say 'we'll give you a licence if you'll do it yourself,'" Hollett said.

One intermediate step which the para-transit review explores is to use regular taxis as an alternative to the big Wheelway buses on which the system currently relies.

The cost of a para-transit run for the city is about \$10, and many users of the system who are blind or who use folding wheel chairs could travel in a regular taxi for a much cheaper price.

The report is still in draft form with public consultation scheduled for mid-August before a final version is passed by council. It's unlikely any measures forcing cab companies to do anything will be in that final version, since without a business model, forcing companies to have accessible cabs won't work.

"What accessible cabs would do is give the disabled population and the seniors population a choice which under the present system they don't have," said Cecil Whitten, who chairs the para-transit committee. "You have to convince the industry that there is money there."

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