

Halifax

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RIA MAE

GOES HER
OWN WAY

P. 16

JUNE 2018 \$3.95



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On our cover

From a shy teen to the top of the Canadian music scene, Halifax's Ria Mae follows her own path.

Photo: Lane Dorsey

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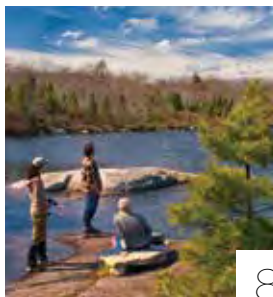


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PHOTO: TAMMY FANCY

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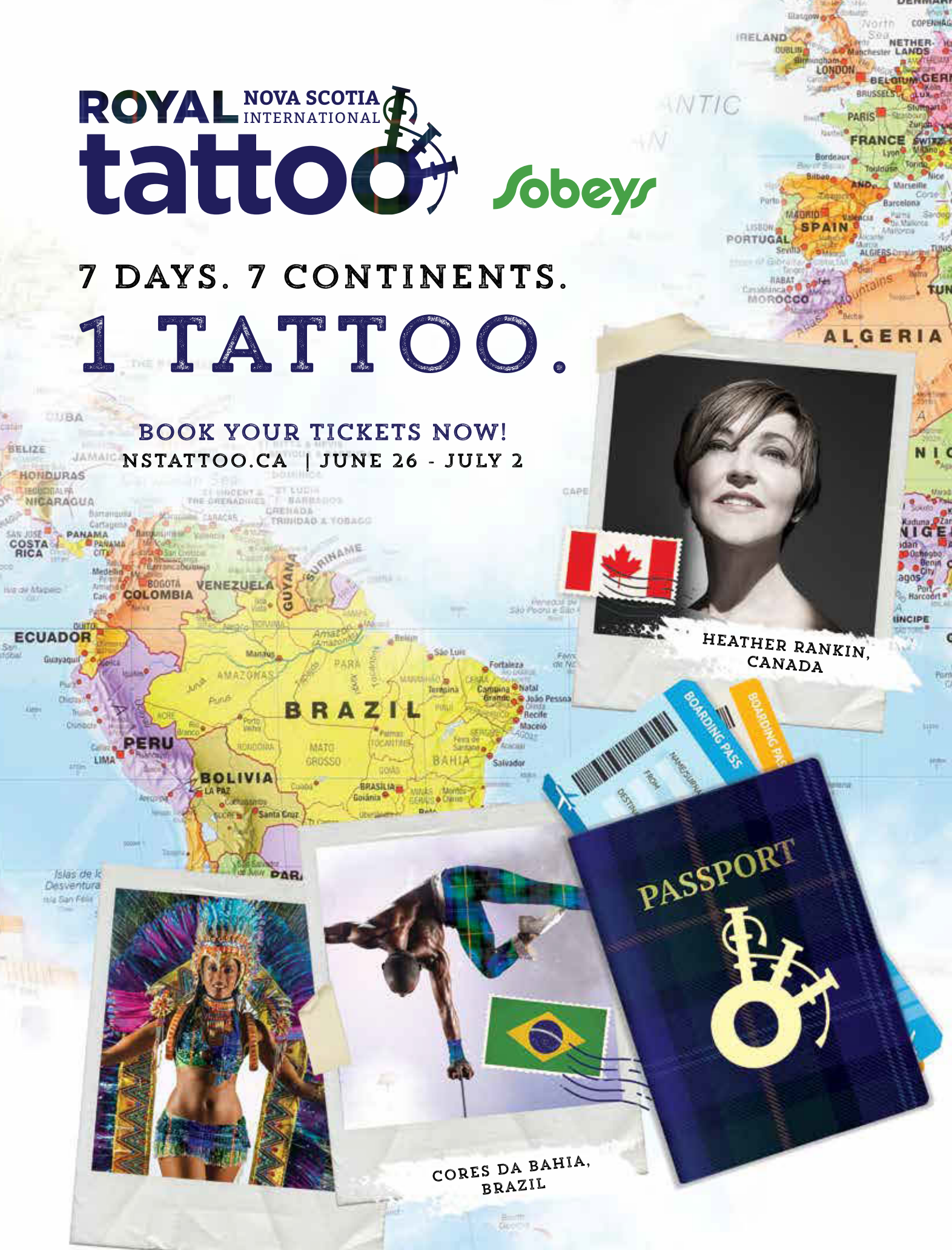
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The people inside the uniforms

BY TREVOR J. ADAMS

I have a cherished black-and-white photo of my Gramp before he enlisted in the army. It's a hazy summer day, circa 1936. He poses with his brother in front of a simple house. They're wearing beautifully outsized zoot suits and smoking enormous cigarettes. They look relaxed and happy. I can almost hear jazz on the phonograph as they relax in the sun.

The picture barely hints at the daily stress he lived under. The late 1930s weren't a great time to be a fisherman raising a young family. Yarmouth hadn't gotten word the Depression was over and, like his working-class friends and neighbours, he always worried about making ends meet.

When the Second World War started and the Canadian Army called for volunteers, he saw an opportunity to earn a steady pay cheque, a pension, and life insurance.

The next picture I have of him is from October 1939. At age 32, he's older than most of his fellow recruits. He looks stiff and self-conscious in his uniform. He told me later than he had hoped to be home in a year or two. He spent the next six years in the army, first as an anti-aircraft gunner and then an infantryman, lugging a Bren gun through Italian mountains and Dutch swamps.

He was a soldier of no great acclaim. He killed when he had to and was injured a few times. His war stories weren't about storming bunkers or leaping onto marauding tanks. He talked about his friends, the food, the civilians caught up in war's horrors. He served simply and pragmatically. It was a job to get through: he was providing for his family.

He returned to fishing when he came home. My grandmother said he was a little quieter, a little moodier. He sometimes drank too much. He never stopped thinking about the friends he lost. He was proud of his service but spoke of it rarely.

Gramp died in 2005 at age 97. He was just starting to share some of his experiences with me in the last year or two before he passed away. He's the reason military history so fascinates me. I love every visit to the Army Museum at the Halifax Citadel. I'm not interested in the strutting generals or the technical specs of a Tiger tank. It's the ordinary people doing their jobs in extraordinary circumstances that fascinate me.

In the rough old uniforms, misty photos, and battered and well-worn artifacts, I see countless links to my Gramp and the millions of people like him. My chance to talk with Gramp about his experiences is gone. Soon, no

one from his generation will remain. But the Army Museum gives us a chance to have some ethereal sense of what they experienced.

Good military museums aren't about glory. They're about people. Curator Ken Hynes believes this. It's evident in the carefully balanced exhibits, historically accurate, fair in their storytelling, proud but not jingoistic. One example: the Army Museum has embraced a program of art by and about soldiers.

"It creates a connection for people today," Hynes says. "It shows not just what these soldiers saw, but what they felt. There's something there you can't get in a photo."


As the museum reopened for the season last month, it showed off its artist-in-residence program. Through the summer, artist Richard Rudnicki is at the museum working on incredibly detailed murals. When I visited, he was depicting the No. 2 Construction Battalion, an all-black unit from Nova Scotia that served valiantly in the First World War. I've heard their history, but I can't say I ever thought



PHOTO: TAMMY FANCY

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much about what they thought and felt. Until I saw that mural coming together, heard the artist talking about the care he put into doing them justice.

Drop by to meet the artist and see his work. In the next issue of *Halifax Magazine*, photographer Tammy Fancy shares photos of the work in progress. 



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 Harry has been a journalist for
 61 years, working in Halifax
 for most of the last 46 years.
 His many awards include an
 Atlantic Journalism Award
 Lifetime Achievement Award.

PHOTO: MIKE DEMBECK



SARAH SAWLER
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 Sarah is an author and award-
 winning journalist whose
 work has appeared in such
 publications as *Halifax
 Magazine*, *Quill & Quire*,
Atlantic Business Magazine,
 and *ParentsCanada*.

PHOTO: NICOLA DAVIDSON



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 “Stepping out with my baby”
 Priya is the news anchor for
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 program in 2014.

PHOTO: SANDOR FIZLI



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 “Fifty years on the rocks”
 Tom is a proud Haligonian
 who has been writing about
 business, technology, travel,
 lifestyles, and Atlantic
 Canadian issues for
 three decades.



TAMMY FANCY
 Photos for Editor’s Message,
 “Fifty years on the rocks”
 Tammy has shot for *East Coast
 Living*, *Bedford Magazine*,
Profiles for Success, and *Our
 Children* magazines, plus two
 cookbooks. fancyfreefoto.com



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 “Ria Mae goes her own way,”
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 Ryan is a Halifax journalist,
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 Suzanne is an editor and writer
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 Business*, *Globe and Mail*, *Bakers
 Journal*, *Our Children*, and more.
 She hosts *Cobequid Magazine* on
 97.5 Community Radio.

GREEN SPACES

Inching towards a regional park

BY RYAN VAN HORNE



PHOTO: IRWIN BARRETT

If turnout is an indication of interest, the proposed Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes regional park is on people’s minds.

Some 200 people filled the hall at St. Peter’s Anglican Church for a meeting about the proposed park in early April. The Ecology Action Centre (EAC) and Halifax Northwest Trails Association (HNWTA) organized the meeting to rally support for a public group to lobby government and act as guardians for the park.

Organizers had to get out extra chairs but there were still people standing. There were politicians from three levels of government from many parts of the city, including Dartmouth MP Darren Fisher and Iain Rankin, the provincial environment minister.

“That shows you the level of interest across HRM,” said co-host Diana Whalen, a former provincial Liberal cabinet minister who has teamed up with former political rival and Progressive Conservative MLA Mary Ann McGrath to spearhead the effort to create a group informally called the Friends of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes.

Ray Plourde, the EAC’s wilderness co-ordinator, pushed for the meeting. He’s concerned that with the park idea growing in popularity, a group of volunteers is needed to act as caretakers and guides until the city can get organized. “More and more people are taking their first trip into Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes,” Plourde said. “We need feet on the ground. We’re looking at protecting the park, but also from a safety perspective, to help people.”

Added McGrath: “The secret is out of the bag and before too much more damage is done, we have to do some park planning.”

There has been “a sea change in elected staff and personnel” in the last few years, McGrath says, and wants people in the city to grow up being able to experience nature as she did when she was a kid. “Green space and wild land is good for people,” she said. “My father’s idea of a good weekend was to spend it in the woods with his kids ... and my mother’s idea of a successful weekend was for us to spend it with him.”

She marvelled at how after a 10-minute walk into the woods, you can’t hear the traffic on the highway anymore. That’s one reason why it’s already attracting newcomers to the city, including her new neighbours.

“This is a city-building project,” McGrath said.

Many of the people who attended the meeting in early April signed up to volunteer to help protect the park, keep it clean, and act as guides throughout the summer. Others vowed to help raise awareness of the movement to create Canada’s largest urban wilderness park.

To learn more about the effort to convince HRM to honour its commitment to create the park, surf to ourhrmalliance.ca/bmbcl. ■

Sheila Cole keeps working for change

BY SARAH SAWLER

MLAs in the Nova Scotia Legislature listened in April as environment minister Iain Rankin recognized longtime environmental activist Sheila Cole for three decades of work. The proclamation also celebrated Cole's Eco-Hero Lifetime Achievement Award, received from the Nova Scotia Environmental Network in November.

Rankin gave Cole the news in January. "It was a total and delightful surprise," Cole says. "A couple of colleagues and I were meeting with the minister... at the end of the meeting, the minister's executive assistant asked if I would mind if they recognized me in the legislature."

Her environmental efforts began with positions on the boards of the Ecology Action Centre, the Environmental Health Association of Nova Scotia, and the Nova Scotia Environmental Network.

But as years passed, she became increasingly involved in international work, including presenting at four World Urban Forums as a member of the Health Caucus of the Canadian Environmental Network. Two years ago, she also presented at the UN's Habitat III in Quito, Ecuador (see halifaxmag.com/cityscape/sheila-cole-warns-halifaxs-decision-makers/ from the *Halifax Magazine* archives), the United Nations every-twenty-years conference on housing and sustainable development.

Now, she's decided to shift her focus, spending less time on administration tasks. "What I am remaining involved in is all of the policy work that I love to do," says Cole. "I'm on the Nova Scotia Roundtable on Environment, and Sustainable Prosperity. That's a big piece. It reports directly to the Minister."

She'll also be continuing her involvement with the federal government's Chemicals Management Plan and National Pollutant Release Inventory, among other things. "It's time for me to take my knowledge and experience to a broader audience, and this will be through writing, and so forth, but mostly through public speaking," says Cole.

Reaching a broader audience is key to driving the change Cole wants to see. "We need a lot of people coming on board to shift things in the world," she says. "I find that [public speaking] is a great way to inspire and educate people on a range of environmental issues... I'm a solutions-based person, and I like to

help people by demystifying some of the overwhelming information that is out there."

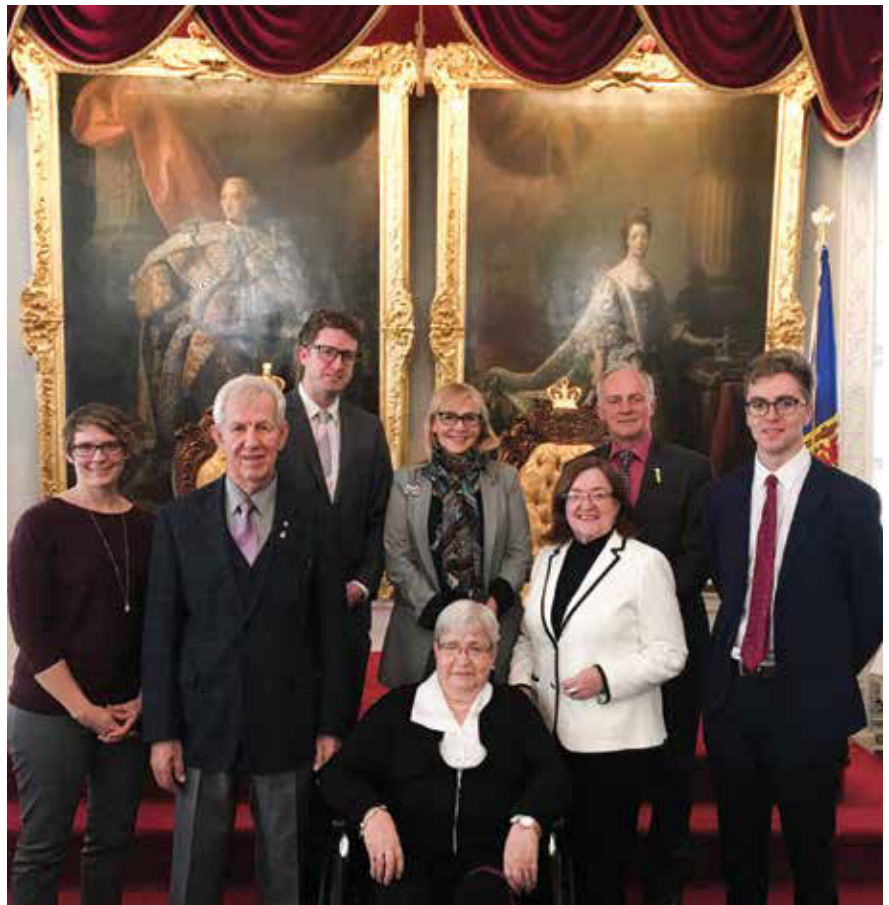
One of the topics she spends a lot of time on is the relationship between human health and the environment. Lately, these kinds of discussions have become fairly mainstream, but it's taken time and work from activists like Cole to get to this point.

"I was one of the founding members of the wilderness committee at the Ecology Action Centre," says Cole. "We had several scientists on this committee. And so, I would be talking about health related to the forests, and this person would say, 'Why are you always talking about health? We're talking about wilderness preservation.' And so, I found that even the environmentalists weren't getting the depth of the interconnection."

It's possible that we're starting to talk about these things as a society because, at this point, we have no choice. "I think we're at this moment in time, as the human race, where we are challenged with transitioning through our relationship to the Earth, and our survival as a species," Cole says.

She believes there's hope, if we all buckle down together. "I like to work with the opportunities where the light shines in on things," says Cole. "If I did not believe that we were capable of turning the ship around, I would not be doing this work." ■

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Sheila Cole (third from the right) was feted at Province House for her environmental research and activism.



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JUNE 22, 23

Casino Nova Scotia

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JUNE 16

Garrison’s Backlot Bash

Nova Scotia craft-beer granddaddy Garrison marks its birthday with a party at the Cunard Centre on Marginal Road. Entertainment includes The Glorious Sons, The Motorleague, and Hello Delaware. Enjoy beer from Garrison plus special releases, seasonal brews, and ciders. garrisonbrewing.com/community-2/#backlot-bash



JUNE 25

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

Today sees the opening of the new exhibition *Nova Scotia Spotlight: Laurie Swim*. Hailed as one of Canada’s leading textile artists, Swim graduated from NSCAD in Halifax in 1971. She’s won numerous awards and written the book on contemporary quilting: *The Joy of Quilting* (plus *Quilting* and *Rags to Riches: The Quilt as Art*). The *Nova Scotia Spotlight* series highlights recent acquisitions to the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia’s permanent collection by artists contributing to the province’s cultural heritage. artgalleryofnovascotia.ca

JUNE 10

Scotia Festival of Music

This two-week celebration of chamber music features talents from around the world. After concerts and masterclasses aplenty, it wraps up today with a matinee gala at the Dalhousie Arts Centre on University Avenue. Johannes Debus conducts by Bach’s *Concerto in D Minor*, Bartok’s *Divertimento for Strings*, and *Violin Concerto No. 2* by Philip Glass, the latter featuring a performance by violin virtuoso Tim Fain. scotiafestival.ns.ca



Johannes Debus

PHOTO: TONY HAUSER

CONTINUING

Neptune Theatre

If you feel like you’re the last person in the city who hasn’t seen *Mamma Mia!*, you’re in luck. The smash-hit production, featuring an original story set to the music of ABBA, has been extended through July 15. Jahlen Barnes, Danielle Benton, and Karen Burthwright star. neptunetheatre.com



JUNE 5

Dylan Moran

The Irish comic, writer, filmmaker, and actor (best known in North America as the love interest’s interloping flatmate in the zombie comedy *Shaun of the Dead*) hops across the pond for an evening of wry observational comedy. artscentre.dal.ca



Karen Burthwright



STEPPIN' OUT WITH

PORT CITY STROLLERS TAILORS FITNESS CLASSES FOR PEOPLE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

BY PRIYA SAM

Courtney Ceponis moved to Nova Scotia last year; a new mom in new surroundings. She was looking for a way to connect with other new parents and she found it using fitness.

Ceponis lived in the United States before moving to Halifax, but she grew up in the Canadian Prairies. Her husband is in the military so she is no stranger to moving around a lot, but this was the first time she was doing it with a baby in tow.

While living in North Carolina, she joined a fitness class for moms and babies and found it a helpful way to meet other parents while staying in shape. She was hoping to find something similar here and when she didn't, she decided to create it herself. That's how Port City Strollers was born. Ceponis now offers several weekly classes for parents and caregivers who can bring their babies and strollers with them.

"I try to do a full body workout each class," says Ceponis. "But we also do endurance training because, as moms, we can't always do heavy lifting because we have to be able to take care of our babies the next day."

Ceponis, who is a certified CanFitPro group fitness instructor and Registered Dietitian, designed the program specifically for new mothers. As for the babies, the classes are made for their enjoyment, too.

"I just have so much fun coming up with the songs and the workouts and testing them out then doing them with the moms," says Ceponis.

During some of the exercises, participants will sing kid-friendly songs to go along with the movements they're doing as a way to keep the babies engaged. And Ceponis also finds creative ways to make the strollers a part of the activity.

There are also modifications for students at different stages. Ceponis recommends that babies be at least 6 weeks old and that parents have doctor clearance before coming to the classes. From there, exercises adapt for different levels of fitness.

For Ceponis and her students, the classes are a great way to stay fit while connecting with other moms. "It's the networking with other moms," says student Stephanie Comeau. "But also the support of seeing other moms who are at the same level as you."

It's also an opportunity to get out of the house and take a baby along. "A lot of new moms get stuck at the house with a new baby who's not sleeping," says student Amanda Guitard. "It's a great place to meet other moms and get a good workout in."

And crying fits and diaper changes are no problem. Before class begins, Ceponis always explains that it's OK to stop, make a trip to the washroom, or do whatever is necessary to make sure your baby is comfortable before re-joining the class. Being surrounded by other new parents means everyone understands.

"There's strength in knowing that someone is going through the same thing as you," says Ceponis. "The moms compare: what kind of sleep patterns are you dealing with? How did you introduce this type of solid? So it's not only working out but it's getting to know people that are going through that stage of childhood."

As the popularity of the classes continues to grow, Ceponis plans to add more options at different locations. Classes move indoors during bad weather but she prefers outdoor venues.

And while moms are in the majority, the group is open to anyone with kids. "Moms, dads, nannies...we're all caregivers and like to get fit while caring for our kids," says Ceponis. "This supportive environment is great for anyone looking to exercise, meet people and spend time with their kids."

It's also a way to find a community if you're new to the city or parenting, or both," she adds. "It's a community, it's our village, and that's how we work. We just support and we're judgment-free and we just love getting out together. It's a social opportunity, too." ■



MY BABY

“IT’S A COMMUNITY, IT’S OUR VILLAGE, AND THAT’S HOW WE WORK. WE JUST SUPPORT AND WE’RE JUDGMENT-FREE AND WE JUST LOVE GETTING OUT TOGETHER.”

—COURTNEY CEPONIS



PHOTOS: KIM GRIMARD

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NUMBER OF GREAT
WRITERS, BUT WE
DON'T GIVE THEM
THE RECOGNITION
THEY DESERVE

BY HARRY BRUCE



Margaret Marshall Saunders of Halifax wrote *Beautiful Joe* in 1889. It was the first book by a Canadian to sell a million copies. It's about a terrier's rescue by an animal-loving family from a sadistic owner who cut off his ears. The book eventually sold seven million copies and Saunders published 23 more, but aside from a portrait that Just Us café recently installed, you won't find public recognition of Saunders anywhere in the city, not even a plaque on her old home across Carleton Street from the café. A developer will soon demolish the building.

That's what happened to Hugh MacLennan's home opposite the Public Gardens on South Park Street. He won five Governor General's Awards, still more than anyone else, and his *Barometer Rising* (1941) is the first authentically Canadian novel. Its key background is the Halifax Explosion and, while a schoolboy living in that house, MacLennan felt reverberations of the blast, and saw blood it spilled. Writers campaigned in 1993 for the preservation of the place, but failed. A developer tore it down.

Saunders and MacLennan were part of a Nova Scotian phenomenon that no one has ever properly acknowledged. For a small province, it's been home to an amazing number of nationally and internationally recognized writers.

Judge and politician Thomas Chandler Haliburton of Windsor in 1836 published the first international bestseller in what would become Canada, *The Clockmaker, or the Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville*. Slick was a Yankee wiseguy. His mockery of colonial Nova Scotians and their relations with Britain and the U.S. was hugely popular in both countries. Before Dickens, Haliburton became the most popular writer of comic fiction in English, and a founder of North American humour.

Farley Mowat, winner of a Governor General's Award, a dozen other prizes and nine honorary degrees, joked that he spent several months every year at his house in Cape Breton because the fog was so boring the place was perfect for writing. Maybe it's not fog, but something in the air here inspires exceptional writers.

In 1952, Ernest Buckler, who breathed the air of the Annapolis Valley nearly his entire life, published *The Mountain and the Valley*, a first novel that moved U.S. critics to compare him to Hemingway, Steinbeck, D. H. Lawrence, and Willa Cather. It influenced the fiction of Alice Munro and Margaret Atwood, and remains a CanLit staple.

Atwood, by the way, learned to love reading during summer-long visits as a child from Ottawa to relatives at Clyde River in southwest Nova Scotia. Their house had no electricity and, she recalled, "If you grew up there, you read."

For her, it was but a short step from loving reading to loving writing. At six, she began writing poems and plays, setting her on her path to unparalleled success as a Canadian novelist.

Thomas Raddall, best-selling author of books of history and historical fiction (three Governor General's Awards), lived in Liverpool, and once told my father he got ideas for his novels from old men he met while ambling on local beaches. They told him what they'd heard as children about their ancestors' adventures during the era of the American Revolution.

That, my father thought enviously, was the perfect life for a writer. He was born in Guysborough County, found himself stuck in Toronto with a full-time job as a newspaperman, and a yearning for "down home" so powerful it expressed itself in poetry that won a Governor General's Award in 1951, and a novel that was runner-up for another in 1954.

Pictou-born Kenneth Leslie was not only a Christian Socialist, antifascist, and notoriously leftist political activist in the U.S. during the '30s and '40s, but a remarkable poet. Indeed, he was "God's Red Poet." *The Times Literary Supplement* in London called his poetry "burningly alive" and in 1938 he won a Governor General's Award for it.

Alden Nowlan grew up poor, near Windsor in a neighbourhood he would recall as "Desolation Creek." His mother gave birth to him at 14, and promptly vanished, leaving him in the care of the mother of his father, a sometimes labourer. The Nowlans sneered at formal schooling. Alden finished only four grades, but devoured library books. "I wrote [as I read] in secret," he remembered. "My father would have as soon seen me wear lipstick." He escaped to New Brunswick at 19. Only 15 years later, in 1967, he was one of Canada's most treasured poets and another Nova Scotia-born winner of the Governor General's Award for poetry.

The only black Canadian ever to win that was George Elliott Clarke in 2001. He was born in Windsor Plains, raised in Halifax, and by 2016 was Canada's Parliamentary Poet and the winner of a score of other prizes and honours. In 2007, Cape Breton-born Don Domanski won his Governor General's Award for one of seven collections of poetry. His work has been translated into nine languages.

Poet Elizabeth Bishop was born in 1911 in Massachusetts but after her father died and her mother vanished inside a mental home, she was still only five, and lived for the next 2.5 years with her maternal grandparents in Great Village, Nova Scotia. Her father's family "kidnapped" her back to Massachusetts, but every summer until the 1930s she returned to Great Village.

She eventually won a Pulitzer Prize, U.S. National Book Award, and recognition as one of the great poets of the 20th century. Professional critics and lovers of her wise and beautiful work alike understood, that brief as her young life in Nova Scotia was, it was there that the seeds of her blossoming as a poet were planted.

Alistair MacLeod, proclaimed by a *Globe and Mail* critic as “the greatest living Canadian writer,” was born in Saskatchewan and spent decades as a professor in Ontario, but always knew “home” was the old family farm on the west coast of Cape Breton. It was there he spent his long summertime escapes from teaching, retreating each morning to a shack overlooking the sea to write in longhand just one published novel, *No Great Mischieff* (1999), and 16 short stories. Enough to win him reverence throughout the English-reading world, each was a masterpiece.

With *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, a huge hit that ran on Broadway and in London’s West End, ex-rock musician John Gray of Truro, along with actor Eric Peterson, won the Governor General’s Award (1982) for English-language drama. Catherine Banks of Sambro collected it in both

2008 and 2012, and Sydney-borne Dan MacIvor in 2006. Former NDP MP Wendy Lill of Dartmouth, short-listed for it four times, has seen her plays performed in Scotland, Denmark, Germany, and across Canada.

Evelyn Richardson won a Governor General’s Award (1945) for non-fiction for her memoirs about raising a family and helping her husband run a lighthouse off the South Shore. Raddall’s and MacLennan’s Governor General’s Awards each included two for non-fiction. Haligonian Charles Ritchie, whose highly distinguished diplomatic career included service as Canada’s ambassador to the U.S., won one in 1974 for his diaries, *The Siren Years*, and in 1999 Marq de Villiers of Eagle Head near Port Medway, nailed yet another, for *Water: Our Most Precious Resource*.

I haven’t room here to list all the superior Nova Scotian authors whose books I wish I’d written, but I’m sure no other province can boast of such a lusty proliferation of fine writers per capita. They are an asset unique to us, like *Bluenose II* (but without the repair costs).

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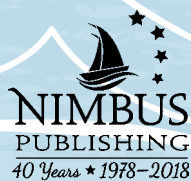
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to our history and culture by soldiers, country singers and highland dancers, pilots, pioneers and privateers, miners, mariners and manufacturers, farmers, fishermen and firefighters, etc. Halifax alone boasts a whole bunch of museums, plus the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame.

Fine, but where’s our Nova Scotia Writers’ Hall of Fame? **❑**

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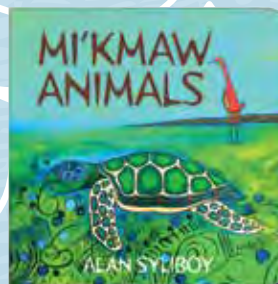
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RIA MAE GOES

THE SINGER HAS COME A LONG WAY SINCE A FAMILY FRIEND TRICKED HER INTO DOING HER FIRST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE

BY RYAN VAN HORNE



PHOTOS: LANE DORSEY

Ria Mae has played the underdog so much, she's not used to the position she's in now.

The Halifax singer/songwriter is a self-made woman who worked odd jobs and hustled to finance the production of her first album and her breakthrough single "Clothes Off."

Asif Illyas, who produced her first album *Under Your Skin* says her story of tirelessly knocking on doors inspires him. CKUL 96.5 FM in Halifax was the only station to play "Clothes Off," but a representative from Sony Music heard it and offered her a record deal. That song earned her a Juno nomination and propelled her career to the next level.

Her latest journey with her record label was much different.

"I said 'I want to make another album' and Sony is like 'OK, tell us what you want to do,'" Mae says.

It's an adjustment because, for years, the skepticism of others has motivated her.

"I work really well when I feel like when no one thinks I'm going to do it and I do," Mae says from Toronto as she prepares to head back into the studio to work on her next album.



HER OWN WAY

Mae's musical mentor, Pat Riley, a Halifax-based producer, songwriter and musician, thinks she'll be fine and won't run into the same wall many successful musicians have. "She has a lot more upstairs," says Riley, who has known Mae since she was 14. "She knows who she is."

From the moment they met at Summer Rock Camp at the Maritime Conservatory of Performing Arts, Riley saw something in the singer-songwriter even though Mae was "shy and hid in the corner" on the first day.

On the second day, Mae brought in some demo tapes of songs that she had written in her room while teaching herself to play the guitar. "I was kind of embarrassed that I had this secret world," she recalls. "He recognized how much work I'd put into them and how serious I took it."

Riley recalls what he told Mae at the time: "This is good, don't hide this. People will want to hear this."

Riley put Mae into an ensemble that needed a singer and she sang in rehearsal. But all along, he schemed to get Mae to sing her songs at the camp's final show; it took some encouraging from bandmates to get her on stage.

She wowed the crowd in the high-school gym and even though Mae says Riley "tricked" her into singing, they remain close and she thanks him on her albums. "He could tell that I was ready to run," Mae says. "He's a really special person to me and to our family."

Riley was friends with Frank Trainor, Mae's uncle on her mother's side. Trainor was a songwriter based in Nashville and helped Riley get a job during hard times on Prince Edward Island. Throughout high school, Mae continued working with Riley to develop her talent. She loved basketball and was on the St. Patrick's varsity team. As much as she loved the sport but not the way she loved music. "It didn't even compete with music once I caught the bug for performing," Mae says.

She quit the basketball team so she could be available for a non-paying showcase gig at the East Coast Music Awards. "That showed me where my priorities were," she says.

Though many suggested going to university to study music, Mae went to Alberta and bounced from job to job. "I was always scared that if I don't do music, I'm going to have a life where I don't care about anything enough," she

says. "Nothing was as good as that alone time when I was creating music."

Mae, battling a cold during the interview, laughs at herself and her selective work ethic. "Now, I'm as sick as I could ever be, and I would never cancel a show," she says. "But if it's not for music, I'm not reliable and no one should hire me."

Mae knew she needed to do something that was "not working in bars and drinking alcohol," so she came home to go to school. She took a two-year program at Nova Scotia Community College and landed a job as assistant to the project manager overseeing the construction of King's Wharf on the Dartmouth waterfront.

"I liked it, but it was really obvious to me that I needed to not have that take up too many years," Mae says. When an opportunity came to move on, she had a little nest egg built up and decided to make a go of it in music.

Around that time, The Company House opened on Gottingen Street and the music venue with a seating capacity of 120 was the perfect size. "I got a job working the door part-time and they let me open for anyone that came in," Mae says.

Mary Ann Daye and Heather Gibson were the owners then. “Ria needed some extra cash and we needed a door person,” Daye says.

Mae’s music was different. Slow, acoustic, folk, and sad. “Not quite the upbeat stuff that she has now,” says Daye. “But we loved having her onstage and providing her with that opportunity.” Mae also provided the venue with a steady draw as she built up a local fan following. That’s how Mae met Melissa Ferrick and got a chance to tour the U.S. “It was my first American tour; it was like going to university for touring,” Mae says of that big break 10 years ago.

Mae is open about her sexuality but doesn’t put it at the forefront. Still, she is keenly aware how important a video like “Gold” is to young people. She was initially reticent about the video, in which she kisses another woman, but she then embraced it because she wanted to create a positive image of that kind of relationship.

“I love talking about this topic,” she says. “But some people will call me an activist and I always get resentful. If Classified talks about his wife and kids, it’s not shocking. I just talk about my life and my breakup with a woman and it becomes political and people think I’m trying to take a stance on something. Sometimes, it sucks.”

Although her musical style has evolved, the constant in Mae’s work are lyrics that speak to relationships in a way that appeals to all sexualities and genders. “I never assume that I’m alone,” she says. “If I’m feeling this, there must be a 100,000 people that feel like this.”


She hopes for a day when a celebrity’s sexuality is not a news story, like it was with Ellen Page. “Ellen felt she had to hide her sexuality,” Mae said. “Hopefully, in the future, it will be a non-issue.”

Daye says Mae’s approach reflects a balance of showing that a person’s sexuality is not something that anybody needs to talk about and fighting for equal rights. “She’s not out there waving the pride flag, but she was willing to speak up and stand up for rights,” Daye says. She’s referring to Mae taking on YouTube when it slapped a restricted label on the video for “Gold.” Mae convinced YouTube to remove the label.

Although Mae lives in Toronto currently, she remembers her Halifax roots. When she won an East Coast Music Award in 2012 for *Under Your Skin*, she commissioned a separate award to give to Illyas. Mae had learned that despite getting 33 nominations with his band Mir, Illyas had never won an East Coast Music Award. When Mae came home at Christmas that year, she had a gift for Illyas in a paper bag. “That’s the type of person she is,” Illyas said. “It was wonderful, I almost teared up.”

Mae also sent a letter to Riley that he reads to kids attending Summer Rock Camp. “That week changed the course of my life. I gained confidence as a songwriter and continued to work hard at it,” Mae wrote in the letter.

Years later, that confidence made her choose music over construction management.

“I still sometimes can’t believe that I pulled that off,” Mae says of her decision to leave her job at King’s Wharf. “If my kid was doing that and left her big job for songwriting, I don’t know that I would be able to support them. It was just such a risk.” 

THE BIO

Born: Halifax

Full given name: Ria Mae MacNutt.

Schools attended: Saint Mary’s Elementary, Gorsebrook Junior High School, St. Patrick’s High School, Nova Scotia Community College.


Where she grew up: “South End, West End ... my family moved a lot. When I go for a run in Halifax, I pass two of my old houses, minimum, each run.”

Year she graduated from high school: “Just say St. Pat’s and people can do their own math.”

Discography: Two LPs. *Under Your Skin* (on her own label in August 2011) and her self-titled album released by Sony in June 2016. Two EPs. *Between the Bad* (on her own label in November 2009) and *My Love*, which was released last fall by Sony Canada.



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THE HALIFAX MAGAZINE GUIDE TO

Bedford

BY SUZANNE RENT

Days



HALIFAX



COME TOGETHER

WITH AN EVER-EVOLVING PROGRAM,
BEDFORD DAYS FOSTERS COMMUNITY SPIRIT

ERIKA PROCTOR OFTEN took her two children to the events at Bedford Days.

“When I first moved here, it was a smaller event, but I watched it grow over the years,” she says.

Proctor’s children have grown too, but Bedford Days is still a big part of her life. She started volunteering five years ago, helping out with smaller events over the four-day festival and sitting in on planning meetings. She says her experience taking her young children gave her insight as a volunteer. Three years ago, she became chair of the Bedford Days committee.

“I knew what people liked because I was one of those people in the crowd,” she says.

A small group of volunteers, plus staff from the HRM Civic Events, make Bedford Days happen. There are seven people on the planning committee. Another handful of volunteers help with planning and hosting community activities. The committee starts planning for the next year shortly after Bedford Days wraps up.

“It’s a dedication of time and effort to pull this off,” Proctor says. “People are amazed we don’t have a team of 50 people. There are fewer than 10 people working on this.”

This year’s event runs from June 28 to July 2. There are activities for all ages, including the Kids Extravaganza, pancake breakfast, beer tent, cake cutting, movie night, the Canada Day fireworks, concerts in DeWolf Park, an ice

cream social, and Rouge et Blanc, a signature event for anyone over the age of 19. A favorite with young and old, Raina Mermaid will be back again this year.

While Bedford Days is a celebration of the community of Bedford, Proctor says it attracts families from other communities, such as Fall River, Lower Sackville, Clayton Park, and beyond.

“It’s interesting when you’re there how many people you don’t know,” she says. “It’s interesting to see the reach. A lot of people are benefiting.”

Proctor says Bedford Days is a success because the committee is always looking for ways to evolve and try something new. She says every year, new and interesting suggestions come their way. For instance, a new addition to the community lineup this year is an event for teens at The Board Room Games Café on the Friday night. Other community events are scheduled around the same time.

But she adds it’s also an event for families, some of whom have been attending for years, bringing their children and then their grandchildren.

“They know they can come and bring their chairs and blankets and be part of the community,” Proctor says. **■**



MLA, BEDFORD

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AT THE HEART OF THINGS

ONE VOLUNTEER AT BEDFORD DAYS TURNS HIS EXPERIENCE INTO A CAREER

SCOTT MacKENDRICK'S FIRST role as a volunteer with Bedford Days had him in costume for Teddy Bears on Parade.

"It was 100°F outside and you're wearing the suit and it's 100°F inside the suit," MacKendrick says.

MacKendrick heard about volunteer opportunities through a friend who was taking piano lessons with the event's volunteer coordinator. He was in Grade 10 at the time at CP Allen High School. "I said I'd love to go down and check out how Bedford Days is run and give some time back to the community," he says.


He signed on for one day but, despite the heat, enjoyed his experience so much that he stayed on for the entire event. Besides wearing the teddy bear suit, MacKendrick helped park cars, cut and served cake, and worked with the public attending the events. He went back to volunteer year after year.

Now MacKendrick is part of the team that organizes Bedford Days. His volunteer experiences with Bedford Days inspired him to study public relations. He graduated from Mount Saint Vincent and his program included co-op work experience. In 2017, he took a four-month contract with HRM working as a civic-events coordinator. He's back this year and Bedford Days is one of the events he helps organize.

"Realizing everything takes months and months of planning and seeing it on the forefront as a volunteer and then being in an active role, it's definite a shift in mind set," MacKendrick says.

MacKendrick says volunteering and working on Bedford Days taught him a lot of new skills, primarily time management and scheduling. Organizing for the event starts just days after the previous year's event. And, he says, working with the Bedford Days team, which includes volunteers and HRM staff, has been his favourite part of the experience. "If your staff isn't fun, positive, or energetic, then it becomes very stressful and there never was any of that," he says.

MacKendrick says he'd like to eventually work in a non-profit. But whatever his job, he says he'd like to be organizing events. "Taking a lot of the skills I learned from the HRM team is good to have in your back pocket," he says.

MacKendrick says he encourages others to volunteer at Bedford Days. "It's a community event, it's where you live," MacKendrick says. "Why not give back to those who give so much to you. And you can wear a 100°F mascot costume." 





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schedule

THURSDAY JUNE 28

- **TD Summer Reading Club Kick-Off Party**
10 a.m.–11:30 a.m.
- **Bouncy Castles**
6 p.m.–9 p.m.
- **Lions Club Bingo**
6 p.m.–9 p.m.
- **Hemlock Ravine Hike**
6:30 p.m.–8 p.m.
- **Art Panel Mural Painting**
7 p.m.–9 p.m.
- **TD Kids Extravaganza**
7 p.m.–9 p.m.
Unique circus acts set to energizing music. Other entertainment includes appearance from Theodore Tugboat, face painting, horse drawn carriage rides, mermaids, and a firework display.

FRIDAY JUNE 29

- **Beer Fest**
6 p.m.–midnight
A lively evening featuring live bands and DJ music. Cash bar.
- **Teen Night at the Board Room Game Café**
7 p.m.–10 p.m.

SATURDAY JUNE 30

- **Kids Triathlon**
8:30 a.m.–noon
- **Moshka Yoga**
10:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.
- **Crossfit**
Noon–2 p.m.
- **Rouge et Blanc**
7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m.
Live musical performances, free hors d'oeuvres from local restaurants, and wine tasting. Enjoy art and photography. Red and white summer attire encouraged.

SUNDAY JULY 1

- **Pancake Breakfast**
9 a.m.–11 a.m.
- **Bouncy Castles**
9 a.m.–3 p.m.
- **Scott Manor House Season Opening**
10 a.m.–4 p.m.
- **Music on Main Stage**
11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.
- **Kids' Canada Day Party**
1 p.m.–3 p.m.
- **North Street Singers**
3:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
- **Bouncy Castles**
6 p.m.–9:45 p.m.
- **Bedford Days Canada Day Celebration**
8 p.m.–10 p.m.
Live music by Donair Supply plus a children's act, enjoyable for all ages. Fireworks starting at 10 p.m.

MONDAY JULY 2

- **Zumba**
10:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.
- **Ice Cream Social**
2 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
- **Outdoor Movie**
9:30 p.m.–11 p.m.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

SATURDAY JUNE 23

- **Georgian Tea at Scott Manor House**
2:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 27

(rain date June 28)

- **Northwood Community Block Party**
3 p.m.–7 p.m.

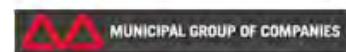
Schedule accurate at time of printing but subject to change. Find more information at bedforddays.ca

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SHOWCASING LOCAL FOOD AND WINE, ROUGE ET BLANC HAS BECOME A FESTIVAL FAVOURITE

ROUGE ET BLANC has become one of the highlights of Bedford Days over the past few years. Bedford Days has traditionally been a popular event with families, but Rouge et Blanc is specifically for the 19-plus crowd. This year's event is on Saturday, June 30 and completely free.

"We have a lot of wonderful events for kids and always have, but other than the beer fest, there's not been a lot for the older group," says Donna Lugar, volunteer sponsorship coordinator with Bedford Days. "This is a nice night out."

Lugar got the idea for Rouge et Blanc after visiting the Saltscapes Expo. She thought Bedford could use a

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similar expo to highlight and promote businesses in Bedford. Organizers focused Rouge et Blanc on food and wine, naming it for the red and white wines served. The theme also suits Canada Day, which falls during Bedford Days.

“I had the aha moment and after talking with the Bedford Days group we came up with the concept,” Lugar says.

For several years, the event was at Basinview Elementary School. But for the past three years, Rouge et Blanc has taken over Sunnyside Mall for one evening. The mall with its scenic avenue stroll down its core, fits in well with the theme of the event. But the change in venue meant more exposure, too. Attendance went from a couple of

hundred guests when it was held at Basinview to between 600 and 800 at Sunnyside Mall, which has free parking and is on a bus route.

The event offers visitors a chance to try cuisine from restaurants in Bedford. This year’s participants have not yet been finalized but past participants included Resto, Pete’s Frootique, Liquid Gold, Papa Mario’s, Nayya Pizza, Butcher’s Block, and more. “It’s really a benefit for the restaurants as well to get residents into their establishment,” Lugar says.

And it brings more people to Sunnyside Mall. “The first year we had it at the mall, I heard quite frequently, ‘I didn’t know this store was here,’” Lugar says.

The organizers also incorporate artistic elements into Rouge et Blanc.

Local painters, photographers, and musicians provide entertainment. Volunteers from Scott Manor House, dressed in period costumes, host displays and greet guests at the doors.

Like the rest of Bedford Days, Rouge et Blanc evolves. The team is also working on having live jazz at this year’s event. A local musician who was interested in being involved approached organizers; Lugar suggested setting up a jazz room in an empty storefront.

Lugar remains involved with Rouge et Blanc, volunteering the night of the event. “That’s one of the events I help come set up for and help it run smoothly,” Lugar says. “It’s not my baby, but it’s one of my favourite events we do now.” **■**



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YOUR FIRST DOG

What you need to know before opening your home, your wallet, and your heart

By Heather Laura Clarke

Dogs love their owners more than they love themselves, and there's something pretty wonderful about a waggy-tailed, smiling creature who celebrates your arrival home from work every single day.

But if you feel you're ready to adopt a dog, be sure to consider what kind of dog would be a good fit—not just which one is the cutest, the friendliest, or the most convenient to bring home.

"Is this the right breed for me?"

Dr. Charlotte Ramey with the Fairview Animal Hospital on Bayers Rd. in Halifax says potential dog-owners need to start by being realistic about their lifestyle and what they could offer a dog.

"People fall in love with these gorgeous breeds and their great personalities, but they don't necessarily put a lot of thought into what the dog was bred to do," says Ramey. "Dogs like German Shepherds and Huskies are meant to be active all day. They're not going to be good apartment dogs."

"How much exercise can I give a dog?"

Not everyone's willing or able to go on long runs with their dog twice a day, or pay for doggie daycare while they're at work.

Ramey says small breeds are always popular "city dogs" for people who don't have a yard or much space. Just because a dog is large, however, doesn't mean they're automatically going to need tons of exercise.

"Greyhounds actually tend to be good apartment dogs because they're bred to run for five minutes and sleep 23 hours a day," says Ramey. "Or you could adopt a senior dog. They make wonderful companions and still have a lot of love to give."

"Can I meet this dog's other needs?"

Whether it's exercise or special care, she says future dog-owners need to ask themselves if they're going to be able to meet a particular dog's needs. If they can't, they may experience behaviour issues like aggression, boredom, separation anxiety, or chewing.

Toy breeds are very susceptible to tooth decay and dental issues. Shih Tzus and Yorkies require a certain amount of grooming so they don't get matted. Pugs need daily facial cleansings to keep their "face folds" from smelling yeasty.

"Will this dog be a good fit with young children?"

Ramey says families often like the idea of adopting a small dog if they have young children. But some purse-sized pups like Chihuahuas have a high prey drive that can be triggered by a child's loud noises and sudden movements.

She says classic family dogs are still Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers because they "tend to be pretty chilled out." Of course, she says you should always supervise young children around any dog.

"Do I have the time and money for a dog?"

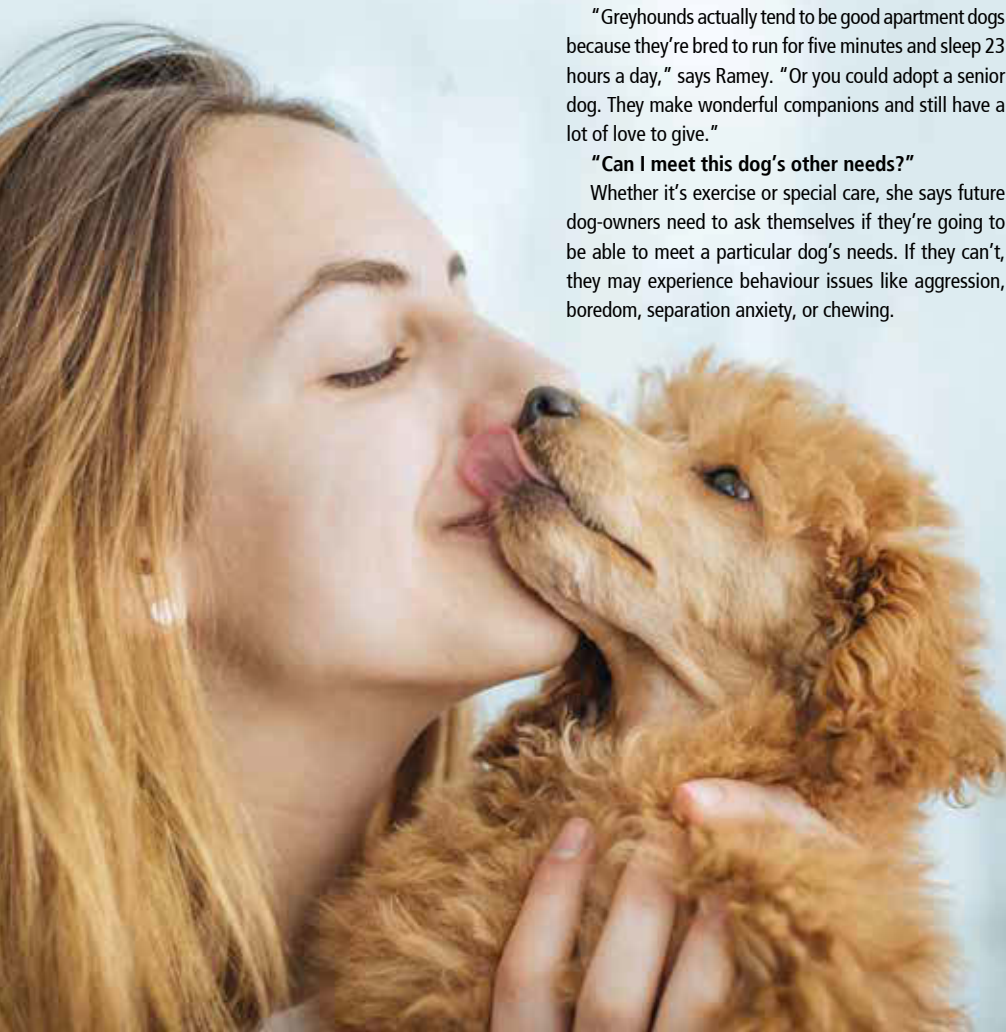
If you have limited free time and/or funds, a puppy may not be a good fit. Ramey says puppies require huge time and financial commitments during the first few months.

"You have to get up overnight to take them out, put in the time to train them, and take them to puppy class each week," says Ramey. "During their first year of life—between spaying/neutering, vaccines, flea treatment, deworming, etc.—you're probably looking at around \$800."

While you don't want to put the collar ahead of the leash and rush into this decision, there are numerous benefits to bringing a dog into your life. Dog owners tend to get more exercise, have better heart health, and experience lower stress levels.

Kirsty Riemersma, a registered veterinary technician with Clayton Park Veterinary Hospital on Lacewood Drive, says her dog has significantly improved her quality of life.

"I have depression and having a dog really helps me," says Riemersma. "He can sense if I'm having a down day, and he'll be even closer to me. His companionship has been so helpful." 🐾





A HAPPY, HEALTHY INDOOR CAT

Your house is their whole world. But is it a good one?

By Heather Laura Clarke

You don't need to worry about an indoor cat roaming the neighbourhood, fighting, getting hit by drivers, or surprising you with a litter of kittens. But keeping your cat indoors full-time means you have a responsibility to keep things interesting.

"Indoor cats tend to live longer, but the big thing is that we want to make sure they're happy," says Kirsty Riemersma, a registered veterinary technician with Clayton Park Veterinary Hospital on Lacewood Drive.

She says owners should be sure to give their indoor cat lots of scratching opportunities with different textures. It's something they're going to do anyway, and you can't blame them for scratching your furniture if you haven't provided them with a good alternative.

Cat towers and tall perches encourage them to climb and jump—things they'd be doing "in the wild" if they were outside. Riemersma likes to position hers by windows so her cats can look outside and enjoy the sights.

Candace Crocket, a veterinary technician at the Atlantic Cat Hospital on Quinpool Rd. in Halifax, says it's important for indoor cats to have an assortment of different toys and regular playtime with their owners.

"It's all about giving them the kind of interesting stimulation they would be getting if they went outside," explains Crocket. "Engaging with them through play is good for bonding. I even clicker-trained my cat: he can sit and he can jump on my back."

When it comes to feeding an indoor cat, Crocket says you need to be mindful of how much they really need. She says "free feeding" (topping up the food dish whenever it's low) isn't a good idea because you don't know how many calories your cat is consuming.

The serving recommendations on most cat food packaging are designed for active cats, so an indoor cat can easily take in too many calories if you aren't careful.

"It's best to get a veterinarian to do an exam and have them do an actual food recommendation," says Crocket. "Different foods have different calorie counts per cup, so you need know what's best for your cat and their particular lifestyle."

Once you've determined your cat's ideal daily ration, Riemersma suggests the method of "zoo feeding," where there are several dishes hidden around the house.

"Cats are prey animals, they're hunters, so don't just give them a single dish of food sitting out," says Riemersma. "You can also buy puzzle toys where they have to bat at it to get the food out. That sense of achievement can help them live a more enriched life." 🐾

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VACCINES, MEDS, AND CHECK-UPS—OH MY!

What you need to know about taking care of your cats and dogs

By Heather Laura Clarke

How do I know if my dog/cat is due for a vaccine? I've lost track. Oops!

Kittens and puppies usually get their first set of vaccines around eight weeks, and then additional rounds at 12 and 16 weeks depending on the vet. Once they're done those initial rounds, they'll only need boosters every one to three years.

My kitten is going to be an indoor cat. Do I even need to vaccinate her?

Even if you plan on keeping your cat indoors at all times, many veterinarians recommend you give them every vaccine during their first year of life. After the first year, owners of indoor cats sometimes choose not to continue boosting their cat's rabies vaccine or feline leukemia vaccine. Cats going outdoors should receive annual boosters of both vaccines for their protection.

Does my dog need a Lyme disease vaccination?

Dogs who live in rural areas, spend time at cottages, or go in the woods (even just in Point Pleasant Park) benefit from a Lyme disease vaccination because of possible tick exposure.

How often should I take my cat/dog to the vet for a check-up?

After they've outgrown their "kitten/puppy visits" where they get their vaccines and booster shots, cats and dogs should be brought in once a year for an annual check-up. Once your cat or dog is between seven and 10 years old, they're considered a "senior" and should come in every six months. A year is a long time between visits for an older pet, and they're good at hiding things that might be wrong.

How often does my pet really need blood work? Why do they need it when they're perfectly healthy?

Ideally, your pet should have bloodwork done once a year but veterinarians recognize not everyone can afford this. If finances are an issue, try to have it done every couple of years. Why is this important? Well, if your pet gets sick down the road, being able to compare that bloodwork to their "healthy" blood work will give the veterinarian a better idea of what's normal for them.

My cat is indoors all of the time. Why would she need a flea treatment?

Surprise! Even indoor cats can get fleas and you might be responsible for passing them along. Flea can hitch a ride on us, or come in riding a fellow pet. Once a pet is infested with fleas, it can take 3–4 months to get rid of the full life cycle. It's much easier, and less itchy, to treat them regularly to prevent fleas.



Which months do I need to give my cat/dog flea prevention treatment?

It used to be that fleas and ticks were only an issue during the summer months, and pet owners could get away with doing flea treatments April through October. But our winters are getting milder, and now many veterinarians recommend year-round flea treatments.

What about heartworm prevention?

Heartworm is not a huge concern here in Nova Scotia, but it is certainly an issue for snowbirds who spend winters in Florida with their pets. And many veterinarians suspect it may become a concern here in the next five years or so. Certain flea medications include heartworm medication, so talk to your veterinarian to be sure your dog is taking what they need.

How can I get better about remembering when my cat/dog is due for another dose of flea/tick/heartworm treatment?

As soon as you give them a dose, mark their next required dose in the calendar on your phone—bonus points for setting a reminder for a week ahead of that, so you can call the vet to arrange for a refill.

At the Clayton Park Veterinary Hospital on Lacewood Drive, registered veterinary technician Kirsty Riemersma says they use cute little passports to track a pet's vaccination records. Their computer system keeps track of when a pet is due for their next vaccination and will call the owner to remind them. If a pet is taking a flea/tick medication that requires a dose every 12 weeks, Riemersma says they'll automatically call the owner for that, too.

I heard a lot of dogs got sick last year in Halifax. What happened, and do I need to vaccinate them against something new?

There was a serious leptospirosis outbreak in Halifax last year. While the city would normally see maybe three cases a year, there were dozens of confirmed cases and dozens more suspected. The disease can lead to kidney and liver failure and symptoms include a loss of appetite, lethargy, jaundice, vomiting, diarrhea, and seizures.

Dr. Charlotte Ramey with the Fairview Animal Hospital says some veterinary clinics have started vaccinating against leptospirosis because of the outbreak.

"We used to only see it in dogs spending lots of time in the woods, and suddenly we were seeing it in healthy young dogs who live in condos and only ever walk down Barrington Street," says Ramey.

Leptospirosis is transmitted by contact with the urine of infected animals, and Ramey says the outbreak was strongly suspected to be related to the construction in downtown Halifax displacing rats and raccoons. 🦋



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FIFTY YEARS ON THE ROCKS

THE FORMULA AT THE SOU'WESTER HAS NEVER CHANGED:
GOOD FOOD, MARITIME HOSPITALITY, AND AN UNBEATABLE LOCATION

BY TOM MASON | PHOTOS BY TAMMY FANCY

Some people questioned Jack Campbell's sense when he left his home in Windsor, Nova Scotia in 1966, bought a small lunch counter in a tiny fishing village and moved his family there.

It was 1966 and he had deep roots in Windsor. His parents operated a store, Campbell's Red and White, near the crossroad to Martock and Chester, and were heavily involved in local politics. And he had a young family to support.

It was a calculated risk. That year, preparations for Canada's centennial, a major tourism event, were well underway. Gas was cheap and young families across North America were buying cars and setting out to explore the continent.

Jack felt that tourism was a business of the future for Nova Scotia. After a few renovations and some menu upgrades he opened the Sou'Wester Restaurant in Peggy's Cove early on Mother's Day weekend 1967 with plans to serve meals all day. He closed at 2:00 p.m. after running out of food.

He had a winning business.

Jack's son John was just two years old when his family made the move to Peggy's Cove. By the time he reached elementary school, the little village was home and the families that lived there were his friends.

On his way home from school John would often stop at the artist Bill deGarthe's house



John Campbell

at the other end of the village. Sometimes deGarthe would hand him a chisel and allow him to chip away at the large granite boulder that he was painstakingly turning into a memorial to local fishermen.

None of the detailed stuff, recalls John. "He only let me work on the spots where he needed the rock taken in a lot."

Today the granite memorial is one of the most photographed pieces of art in the province. "There were only about four people who had a hand in that," he says. "I was one of them."

Today John runs the restaurant and gift shop business that his father started. With less than 40 permanent residents, many of them active fishermen, Peggy's Cove offers cruise ship passengers and tourists a chance to experience a Nova Scotian fishing village.

Dennis Campbell (no relation to John) started taking tourists to Peggy's Cove and the Sou'Wester when he was just 15 years old. Thirty-four years later Dennis owns Ambassatours Gray Line, one of the largest tour companies in Eastern Canada, taking about 75,000 tourists to Peggy's Cove every year. He says the Sou'Wester is an "absolutely critical" part of the tourism infrastructure in the cove.

"We couldn't operate the way we do without it," he explains. "The Campbells have done an amazing job. The view is spectacular, the food is great and it's not overpriced like you might expect at a busy tourist spot. Our customers are always surprised that it's as good as it is."

The Sou'Wester boasts fresh seafood, dramatic panoramic views, and East Coast hospitality. "Here you can still come to a village in Nova Scotia and have a really good chance of seeing fishermen out working," says John Campbell. "Sometimes you can even see tuna being hauled out of the boat."

He helps the experience along even further by providing space for a local lobster fisherman to fix his gear in his parking lot.





But popularity is a double-edged sword. On busy summer days, the influx of thousands of tourists can overwhelm the village. Tour buses crowd the narrow roads, making it slow and difficult for everyone to get around.

It usually falls on Campbell, the owner of the only large parking lot in the village, to do something about it. He provides free parking for hordes of visitors in cars and 20 or more tour buses at a time, whether they patronize his business or not. Over the years he's paid out of his own pocket to maintain the village trails and invested around \$400,000 in washroom facilities that he lets the general public use.


He even gets involved in life and death issues. During the Swissair disaster the Sou'Wester became a marshalling point for media and military personnel. Campbell and his staff are often at the centre of high-profile rescues, when hapless tourists stray too far out on the rocks, sometimes ending up in the turbulent waters.

But most days are good days there on the rocks. Today, 50 years after opening, the Sou'Wester is busier than ever. As Peggy's Cove has grown in popularity, so has the restaurant.

But Campbell, like his father before him, accepts that success in measured tones, resisting the urge to expand the business much beyond the food and souvenirs that have become its mainstay.

He has no plans to change the signature items on the menu (lobster, fish and chips, seafood chowder, and ginger bread) and no plans to expand the Sou'Wester's building. "I'm not sure what we could do to expand," he says. "I could build another building but this building is as big as its allowed to get."

Instead Campbell has plans to honour his old friend Bill deGarthe. His father and deGarthe were close friends and Jack Campbell bought the rights to much of deGarthe's work before the artist's death.

John has started to reproduce them and plans to create a space dedicated to deGarthe and his work next summer. "Bill deserves a lot of credit for what happened here in Peggy's Cove," says Campbell. "I think it will be a nice addition to the shop." 

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The More You Know!



IF YOU REALLY WANT TO UNDERSTAND
GOOD BEER, LEARN TO MAKE IT

BY KIM HART MACNEILL

When I started home brewing, I thought I understood what makes a good beer. I read a lot about beer and ingredients, talked to brewers, and drank even more beer. But my early beers were bad. As I improved as a brewer, I learned to appreciate beer on a new level, elevating how I think and talk about the brews I enjoy.

THE RIGHT STUFF

I spent a lot of time drinking beer before I started brewing it, but there is nothing like tasting each ingredient to understand its contribution to the overall flavour.

"Home brewers typically develop their palates a little quicker than those who just go out a lot," says Shean Higgins, co-owner of Tidehouse Brewing in Halifax. Before starting Tidehouse, he worked at Noble Grape, and started home brewing in 2008.

You can know that Maris Otter malts are "biscuity," but tasting the hot grain straight out of your mash tun allows you to isolate that flavour in a way that appreciating it in a beer can mask.

GETTING WHAT YOU PAY FOR

It's easy to complain about a \$12 bottle or \$8 pint until you've bellied up to the cash at your local home brew store and paid \$70 for a bag of grain. Now ponder that your average local brewery is pouring 10 (or more) of those into a single brew. Add to that hops, other ingredients, taxes, employee salaries and benefits, and more. The price makes more sense.

In addition to helping you appreciate the time and expense that goes into making your favourite local beers, home brewing helps you make the beer you like at home for less.

"When I first started home brewing, I realized I had a constant supply of flavours I enjoyed at home, so I was more apt to go out and try a new beer," says Stephen Crane, new assistant brewer at Spindrift Brewing in Burnside, a former Noble Grape employee and enthusiastic home brewer since 2013.

WHITE WHALES

Living in Atlantic Canada, there are many beers we'll hear about, but never find locally like Heady Topper by The Alchemist from Stowe, Vermont, but online "clone" recipes abound. You also might be surprised how easily local breweries will share their recipes (and advice) if you ask nicely.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Much of what I've learned about beer I learned in the grain room at Noble Grape on Oxford Street. In that room, the size of a generous bathroom stall, you're surrounded by grains and hops to smell and taste. More than once I've learned or shared a tip with someone who asked what I'm brewing.

You don't need to hang out in the grain room all day to learn a thing or two. Brewnosers, an Atlantic Canadian web forum and brew club, offers abundant opportunities to ask advice on brewing process and ingredients. Plus, there are many local brewing groups to discover on Facebook.


"I'm part of this Dartmouth home brew club, and all of them are dads and I'm not yet," says Crane. "Some of the guys are really serious about it, and some of them just come out to chat about beer. In any other situation we'd never have met."

LEARNING FROM FAILURE

When you start home brewing, the first thing that you'll learn is that you'll make a lot of bad beer until you get the hang of it. I've poured out at least a barrel. But from each of those 23-litre buckets you dump, you learn something about what went wrong and how to make it right. Your beer will improve. You'll learn to identify those flavours in other beers. You'll nod knowingly the next time someone says a beer tastes buttery.

RESPECT FOR BREWERIES

Stemming from that last point, failure is part of trying new things. By learning your craft at home, you'll develop a deeper appreciation for how much work local brewers pour into their product.

"It's similar to kneading bread with your hands," says Crane. "You can't understand textures and tastes if you don't experience it. Being able to home brew, you get more of an intimate knowledge of the ingredients and what you're drinking. And you have an increased respect for what you're drinking and the person who brewed it." 

KIM HART MACNEILL

Kim is a freelance journalist and editor of *East Coast Living*. Read her weekly beer blog on HalifaxMag.com and follow her on Twitter. [@kimhartmacneill](https://twitter.com/kimhartmacneill)



Must-try beers: Home brewers turned pro



IPA

Spindrift Brewing | Burnside, N.S. | 6.1%

Change is afoot at Burnside's lager brewery. It recently welcomed head brewer Kyle Jeppsen (formerly of Gahan Harbourside) and assistant brewer Stephen Crane to the team, and bid goodbye to founding brewer Kellye Robertson (off to Shipwright Brewing Co. in Lunenburg, N.S.). Concurrently, the formerly-lager-only brewery is now offering ales. It is as an IPA should be, bitter, piney, with a hint of floral. Watch for it in the NSLC this month.



Weak Sauce (pale ale)

Tidehouse Brewing | Halifax | 0.5%

Tidehouse is making a near beer. "I am personally trying to drink less," says Higgins. "My habitual nature is to grab a beer when I come home, and then another, which isn't good for a productive Wednesday." Most malt-flavoured beverages are too bland to drink, but this is packed with a striking amount of Citra hops. Alcohol tends to destroy the flavour of dry hops, those added after fermentation to lend a big hop flavour. This beer brings the hops you need without the hangover you don't.



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SEIZE THE DAY

THE PIECES ARE IN PLACE TO CREATE THE BLUE MOUNTAIN BIRCH COVE LAKES REGIONAL PARK, BUT HRM NEEDS TO GET MOVING

BY RYAN VAN HORNE

In the first 11 years after unveiling its regional plan in 2006, which included a commitment to create the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes regional park, HRM failed to buy any land.

While the province signed over 1,740 hectares of Crown land that also got wilderness protection, it appears as though the city was slow to contact all the landowners. As recently as a year ago, some of the people who owned smaller parcels said they still hadn't heard from any HRM representatives. It negotiated with some of the larger ones, some of whom were driving a hard bargain and wanted more than the city would pay.

The city won't talk about land negotiations, so they might have reached out to all the landowners since then. If I was committed to making the park happen, I would have most certainly had conversations with every landowner in the first couple of years as a prelude to more detailed negotiations within the first five years. By the end of five years, I would have had a pretty good idea of what all the land was going to cost, with a range that included a breakdown of landowners' asking prices and possible lower negotiated prices that reflect market value.

If the city didn't do this, blaming anyone but themselves for this failure is foolhardy. Furthermore, if they've failed to engage in meaningful discussions with other landowners it might have put the city at risk of squandering two glorious opportunities. It's no secret that the city's budget is limited and they can't afford to buy all the land themselves, at least not as fast as many would like. To buy all the land required for the proposed park, Halifax will need some federal money. And Ottawa recently announced a couple of programs that seem tailor-made for Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes.

But they aren't going to sign a blank cheque, so hopefully, the city has sharpened its pencil and put together a detailed proposal to allow it to apply for funding from two federal

programs. Ray Plourde of the Ecology Action Centre raised this idea at the public meeting in early April and publicly urged the city to follow through on this.

The first federal program is a \$1.3-billion fund for land conservation, which was announced in February. This would help acquire the additional land (approximately 500 hectares) most of which is owned by the Annapolis Group and the Stevens Group.

THE CITY ALREADY HAS ENOUGH DEVELOPABLE LAND FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS, SO IT DOESN'T NEED TO CHANGE THE ZONING TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY.

Ottawa also announced an \$828-million plan for infrastructure projects in Nova Scotia and some of this is earmarked for green projects. The proposed Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes regional park, which would create a mini-Kejimikujik within the city limits, should qualify as a green project.

The park checks off a number of boxes because it achieves these objectives: prevents urban sprawl, encourages active living, protects valuable habitat, and provide a wilderness experience that would be accessible by bus in Atlantic Canada's largest city.

If it hasn't already done so, it's time for the city to put together a budget with a ticket price for acquiring the land and a budget for developing some of that. If they have, then the regional park announcement we've all been waiting for is just a matter of time.

None of the provincial land already given wilderness protection can be developed. It will largely be left untouched and remain a wilderness. That's the whole idea behind wilderness protection, which is something that developers like the Stevens Group and the Annapolis Group don't seem to understand.

They think that because the province has given all this land, that this creates the park. Not so. The land that will be heavily used for picnics, hiking trails, canoe rentals, and washrooms is land the city will get from private landowners.

The city already has enough developable land for the next 30 years, so it doesn't need to change the zoning to stimulate the economy. Much of the land it wishes to acquire is zoned Urban Reserve until 2031.

There is support at the provincial and federal level for this park. In 2015, a facilitator's report that recommended developing the land galvanized public support for the park and led to a large letter-writing campaign to Council.

If ever there was a time that Halifax could achieve this goal, it is now. By the end of 2019, the preliminary work to acquire land and funding to create the infrastructure should be a done deal. If not, it's because the people whose job it is to make this happen didn't act quickly enough to take advantage of some great opportunities. **■**

RYAN VAN HORNE

Ryan is a Halifax journalist, playwright, and documentary film director. His work appears in magazines and newspapers from coast to coast and at ryanvanhorne.com.





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We all need to bring sustainable practices to our workplace. We don't just talk about it – we've made real changes to our downtown work and retail spaces for the better:

- Our parkade features car charging stations, parking guidance system, dedicated carpool parking, and is bullfrogpowered with **100% green energy**
- Our Bicycle Storage Facility has earned us the title of Most Cycling-friendly Landlord from the Halifax Cycling Coalition

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Every building in our complex is proudly BOMA BEST Certified Gold

