

# NOVA SCOTIA

*Open to the world*



## That's how we roll

Sharing cars is one way to live greener

- PLUS:** Sable Island arts and science • Digital genealogy  
• Origin BioMed: big little pharma • Export achievers  
• A place for reinvention • Next-gen filmmakers

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# *Snap* SHOTS



PHOTO COURTESY DANIELLE DUBE

Danielle Dube is the reigning Canadian Laser (Radial) sailing champion.

## Putting wind in their sails

Growing up on St. Margaret's Bay, Danielle Dube used to love to roll out of bed and rig her boat in her pyjamas. The 22-year-old athlete won't be rigging in her PJs this summer. Instead, she'll be training with the world's top sailors when the largest regatta in Canadian history, the Nautel Laser Worlds, comes to the St. Margaret Sailing Club (SMSC) from Aug. 17 to Sept. 5.

As part of the two-tiered championship, 580 competitors will descend on the SMSC, which sits on a small inlet on Nova

Scotia's South Shore. Dube is the current Canadian Laser (Radial) champion and, although she sails around the world, the bay remains special to her. "I still think of SMSC as home," says Dube, who is aiming for a spot on Canada's 2012 Olympic team competing in London, England.

Brian Todd, one of three national coaches, says the competitors can expect excellent conditions. The scenery consists of a winding coast and tree-studded islands. There are many porpoises and occasional whale sightings. Plus, St. Margaret's Bay

has clean waters and great winds and currents. "The configuration of the bay is one of the best wind generators in the province," says Todd. Those factors, combined with a supportive local community, have allowed the SMSC to host more and bigger regattas in recent years. The Laser Worlds is the pinnacle of that progress. "The Worlds will make SMSC known internationally," says Todd.

Planning the event has meant big changes at SMSC, including the construction of a breakwater and a race-

# Snap SHOTS



St. Margaret Sailing Club in Glen Haven, N.S.

management centre. The total cost of hosting the Worlds is \$1.5 million, almost half of which will come from various levels of government. Club commodore Wayne Trowse says the additions allow SMSC to meet the provincial

and national teams' sailing requirements and to plan for the future. "We're looking forward to hosting more world-level competitions," he says.

As the builders complete the work, almost 800 volunteers are being trained

to help manage two consecutive events: the Senior Men's Worlds and the Masters Worlds. The seniors are the current top sailors in the world; the masters must have a minimum age of 35. Everyone involved with the Worlds is determined to make it memorable (Canada last staged the Worlds in 1980 in Kingston, Ont.).

Two-time Olympian sailor Lisa Ross, who grew up in Lunenburg, N.S., is looking forward to some great "bay days." "They are just beautiful," says the athlete. "The water's a bit chilly, but that means there's a gorgeous wind." Like Dube, the 32-year-old has her sights set on a summer of intense training followed by the 2012 Olympics. "I want to bring home a medal," says Ross. — **CAROL MOREIRA**

## COLOUR CODING

Three years ago, Robert Smith was studying a piece of jewellery: two round windows of glass surrounded by a silver frame. In between the panes of glass was a coloured gemstone. "How cool would it be," he thought, "if you could push the windows out of the design and put in a coloured gemstone that you wanted to co-ordinate with what you were wearing that day?" That is the spark that created Kameleon Jewelry, Smith's new line of interchangeable jewelry. "Once I got a hold of the idea, I wouldn't let it go," says the designer. "Before I was just another silver-jewelry importer. With Kameleon I have something special."

Smith owns Dartmouth, N.S.-based JewelPop Inc. and the Kameleon Jewelry line. The line (including bracelets, earrings, rings, necklaces, and brooches) is retailing in 175 stores across Canada and over 500 stores in the U.S. The jewelry is interchangeable, which means you buy the basic silver frame and can change the style and colour through JewelPops, the small coloured jewels that pop in and out of the frames.

In just one year, Smith has made \$2.4 million in sales. The company has five full-time employees who handle the design, production, and marketing, and subcontracts to companies in Thailand to produce the sterling silver and semi-precious stones and crystals that appear in the jewelry. Kameleon is doing more than reaping profits; it's also giving back to local charities and organizations. The company uses only 100% recycled material in its packaging and in-store displays, and donates 1% of its sales to Halifax's Ecology Action Centre.

"The environmental movement really strikes home for me," says Smith. "There are people out there dedicating their lives to make sure we still have an environment. I wish I could do more than just donate money, but at this point that's what I can give."

The Kameleon line also features a breast cancer awareness jewel that

pops into a bracelet and ring, and 1% of the company's profit is also donated to the Canadian Breast Cancer Society. Smith's mother-in-law battled breast cancer and he's been involved in other breast cancer fundraisers, such as the Run for the Cure. "It's something I identify with, and it feels good to donate to the cause," says Smith. "It's important to me to help out these organizations because they are great causes that are underfunded."

Kameleon was originally based out of Smith's house, but last summer he moved to an office building. Coconut Creek in the Halifax Shopping Centre is one of the stores carrying Kameleon Jewelry.

Linda Clark, Coconut Creek's owner, says the product is hot. Her best-sellers, priced in the mid-\$20s, are usually brown amber or crystal JewelPops. "People like the genuine stones and the different colour options," she says. "We have repeat customers who are totally delighted with the product."

Smith says the line is doing so well because it appeals to many ages and the JewelPop inserts provide variety for customers. "We use cubic zirconia, Swarovsky crystals, and precious stones," he says.

"Plus all of our silver comes from Thailand, which is renowned for its beautiful and high-quality silver."

Smith has expanded the line to include sunglasses and plans to carry leather goods such as belts and wristbands and a line of denim featuring buttons that will accept the JewelPop inserts. "Our vision for Kameleon is to have as many fashion accessories as are out there using the JewelPop insert." — **ANGELINA CHAPIN**





## 30 years of pomp and precision

Ian Fraser's proudest Tattoo moment came on opening night in 1995, the year of the 50th anniversary of victory in Europe. Under the ethereal glow of blue floodlights two soldiers, one who fought for Germany, the other for Canada, stood at attention side by side. Robert Dietz and Dennis LeBlanc, veterans of the bloody Italian campaign, had been enemy combatants across the pock-marked frontline. Fraser's moment came as the massive Tattoo choir thundered out Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," in German and English, and the two old soldiers, wiping away tears, clasped hands in friendship.

Not everyone was moved. "We chose to make it a celebration of friendship and reconciliation, not a celebration of victory," Fraser recalls. "We took some criticism for that."

As the artistic director of one of Nova Scotia's most successful annual cultural events, Fraser doesn't apologize. For 30 years the Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo has paid tribute to the Canadian forces, peacekeepers, and young soldiers, and has showcased the spectacle of armies, navies, and police forces from around the

world. For the 60,000 spectators who flock to Halifax for the show's 10-day run, it is a multi-media extravaganza—part precision drill, part theatre-in-the-round, part circus with a touch of rock-concert stagecraft. Two thousand performers spend months preparing for the show.

And it's more than just entertainment. Fraser says the Tattoo is an economic engine that generates \$50 million in tourist dollars for the province every year. In 2008 more than 13,000 tourists indicated they were directly influenced to come to Nova Scotia to see the Tattoo—visitors who then went on to spend an average of 11 days exploring the province. "There's a tendency to take the Tattoo for granted after 30 years," he says, "but it's a tremendously important asset for our tourism industry."

It has been Fraser's own life too. He was a young army officer, and a writer of radio plays and magazine articles, when he got the call to produce his first Tattoo (the word "tattoo" refers to "doe den tap toe," meaning turn off the taps; it was how regimental drummers would call soldiers to the barracks and encourage innkeepers to close up for the night). It was the year

of Canada's centennial, 1967, and the show was a hit. When Halifax was looking for a novel way to celebrate the second International Gathering of the Clans in 1979, the idea was raised for a repeat performance. A scheduled one-night show was quickly held over for two. It then became an annual event.

Thirty years later the legacy of the Nova Scotia Tattoo runs deep. Performers have married on stage; Fraser has lost count of how many. Other performers have chosen to immigrate to Canada after a Tattoo appearance, and still more have returned to Halifax to enroll in university. Fraser often meets business leaders and government officials who cut their public teeth on the Tattoo stage.

2010 will be Fraser's last year as artistic director, and he's understandably nostalgic about his long career. Still, he modestly plays down his role as the driving force, preferring to give credit to the hundreds of volunteers, paid staff, and professional performers who put the show together every year. "There's a tendency to give credit to me, but that's wrong," he says. "All I really do is guide the horse." —**TOM MASON**



# Staying power

*Nova Scotia's nearshore financial services industry is a welcome beacon for attracting talented expats*



JOHN SHERLOCK

**Boom town:** International financial services companies continue to grow in Halifax.

**D**uring the current global recession causing widespread job losses, company downsizings, restructurings, and plant closures, there appear to be few opportunities amid numerous challenges. Not so in Nova Scotia—just ask Martin Murray, who moved away for work but has since returned to his home province.

When Murray graduated from Saint Mary's University in 1994, the economy was struggling and it was hard to find a job that matched his post-secondary training. "I remember doing the count once, and I believe I sent out 1,000 resumé and ended up getting three interviews," he recalls, "which either says my resumé was terrible or nobody was hiring."

Like many of his fellow graduates at that time, Murray left Nova Scotia hoping he

could come back to the province someday. While working in Japan and Ontario for the next 10 years, he continued to keep an eye open for a job back home. In 2006 he noticed an ad for a position as an account manager with a company in Halifax. He applied, had an interview, and got the job.

The company was Marsh Canada Limited, and Murray offers the following description of what the firm's operation in Halifax does as part of Marsh's Captive Solutions Group: "Basically, we do accounting and administration for off-shore insurance companies. One of the great things about Marsh is that we handle a really broad range of the accounting, right from getting a company set up to the end of their audit."

The same year Murray was hired, Marsh announced a five-year expansion with Nova

Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI) that is expected to create up to 150 jobs. If ever there was a year of exciting business growth in Nova Scotia, 2006 was memorable, particularly in the financial services industry. World-renowned companies were expanding in the province, unemployment was down, and job opportunities were plentiful.

Murray took advantage of the opportunity at Marsh in 2006 and has been with the company for three years and counting. So what's keeping him here? "The lifestyle, my family, and the cost of living are the three main reasons," he says. "When I worked in Toronto I was living in Cambridge, which is about a 100-kilometre commute. I wasted three hours in the car every day. Now I walk to work. I've travelled a lot, and nowhere compares to the way we do things here."

Working as a senior account manager for Marsh, Murray is in a position he describes as “one that you just can’t buy.” In light of the job losses that have swept the global financial services industry, demand for Marsh’s services has continued. In fact, the Halifax location started with two employees in 2006 and has grown to 26.

Underlying the firm’s growth here are two factors: cost and credibility. “Like all companies, ours is focused on serving its clients, making the firm a great place to work and strengthening its bottom line,” says Patrick Ferguson, a vice-president of Marsh Canada. “Those imperatives add to the incentive to move more work to Halifax for many of our global offices.” Another key reason for the company’s growth is credibility. “We have about 145 clients under management from all kinds of different offices,” says Ferguson. “We’ve established ourselves, so we have some credibility in the system.”

From Murray’s point of view, many of his contemporaries who first moved away like he did, are now returning—and it’s thanks to companies like Marsh. It’s also because of job opportunities offered by other international financial services companies, such as Flagstone, Nova Scotia’s first offshore international financial services company. Since opening its Halifax operation in 2005, Flagstone has grown its global footprint in the insurance and reinsurance areas of the financial services industry. In 2009 the company renewed its commitment to the province; NSBI’s payroll rebate, which is an earned incentive, will be applied to as many as 80 new jobs for the company over the next three years.

Not only are companies still growing and jobs staying intact, but many new ones are also being created in Nova Scotia. As a professional who sees this growth firsthand, Murray isn’t worried about the future. “I think once people settle down from a financial perspective, they are going to realize that all of these paper losses don’t amount to much when you’re thinking about what you’re doing next.” As for him? “I’m not going anywhere.”

— MARY-ELEANOR WALKER

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# Venture capitalist

*An online networking simulator for future entrepreneurs emerges from Sydney-based MediaSpark*

“**I**n our house *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* isn’t a movie, it’s a documentary,” says Mathew Georghiou, smiling. When he was three his family moved from Cyprus to Sydney, N.S., where they ran a restaurant. As a child Georghiou decided never to own his own business. “The last thing on my mind was being an entrepreneur,” he says. “I knew the long hours involved by watching my parents. I couldn’t wait to finish school and get a nine-to-five job.”

Today, somewhat to his own surprise, Georghiou is the president and CEO of MediaSpark Inc., a Sydney software-development and publishing company. After studying electrical/computer engineering and working for IBM in Toronto, in 1994 he saw an ad for Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation. The ECBC was offering start-up investments for recent graduates who wanted to become entrepreneurs in Cape Breton. In about a month Georghiou created a business plan, left IBM, got married, and moved home.

For more than 10 years MediaSpark has been marketing educational programs under the GoVenture banner.

The interactive programs are sold to schools, businesses, and governments throughout Canada, the U.S., and several other countries. Subjects include investing, entrepreneurship, and personal finance.

“You use the programs the same way a pilot would use a flight simulator,” says Georghiou. “You enter a simulated business or financial environment and work your way through it.” Users test-drive running a clothing store, a restaurant, or a \$100-million beverage company, make good and bad business choices, and so become better at business ventures. GoVenture is marketed through the Internet and direct mail and at trade shows in Canada and the U.S.

MediaSpark recently announced a new educational product line, EntreOasis. With the San Jose, Calif.-based giant software company Cisco Systems Inc. as a founding sponsor, EntreOasis is a social-networking platform similar to YouTube and Facebook. The difference: It’s aimed at entrepreneurs and those who influence and facilitate their success. “Entrepreneurial advice is readily available on the Internet, but the information is fragmented,” says



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“Entrepreneurial advice is readily available on the Internet, but the information is fragmented. EntreOasis can help you find what you’re looking for by asking other online entrepreneurs and educators” — **Mathew Georghiou**

Georghiou. “EntreOasis can help you find what you’re looking for by asking other online entrepreneurs and educators.”

Three things are top of Georghiou’s mind in this recession: entrepreneurship will get us out of it; most people have a general lack of understanding of personal finance; and there is a need for shrewd investing. “These have been the focus of our business for 10 years,” he says. “We already have the leading-edge products to handle these situations.”

Georghiou’s company is in a good position to survive the economic downturn. More stimulus money for education means MediaSpark might be able to expand even further. Always an advocate for young entrepreneurs, Georghiou believes access to private-investment financing could foster a healthier entrepreneurial spirit in Atlantic Canada. “There is some private money out there, but it’s focused on more traditional business ventures.” — **HAL DORNADIC**

*It's not just casual drivers getting behind the shared-wheels concept. More and more businesses are providing the service rather than owning company cars*

# Baby, you can share my car

**P**am Cooley has nothing against cars, she just thinks owning one is unnecessary. And in our culture of overabundance and consumption, she doesn't see why anyone should. "We share all the time," she says over coffee at a café in Halifax's North End. "We share videos, we time-share apartments—people even share boats—because not everyone needs to own everything."

As far as Cooley is concerned, we should be sharing cars too. That's the philosophy behind CarShareHFX, a multi-vehicle car-sharing network that Cooley runs with her business partner, Peter Zimmer. Established in December of 2008, the company already has nine vehicles stationed in locations around peninsular Halifax. Members pay an annual fee that gives them access to a car, booked on an hourly basis, whenever they want one. Bookings are made online, and vehicles can be accessed almost instantly (depending on availability) or reserved up to three months in advance for periods ranging from one hour to three days. The service costs \$250 to join, \$200 per year to renew the membership, and \$9 to \$10 per hour (depending on the time of day) to drive a CarShareHFX vehicle, which includes the cost of gas, insurance, and bridge tolls.

Cooley can't talk about the concept of sharing cars without getting excited. "Every car-share vehicle that's used takes 15 cars off the road," she says. "Just imagine the peninsula, Bedford, Clayton Park, and Cole Harbour all spotted with CarShareHFX cars. Then imagine Metro Transit bringing people back and forth efficiently, good bike paths, and pedestrian-friendly streets. You'd have a seamless fabric of mobility options. It

wouldn't make sense to own a car."

Currently boasting more than 150 drivers, the CarShareHFX membership is increasing steadily as people see the value—both environmental and financial—in opting not to own their own vehicles. And it's not just individual drivers who are getting behind the wheel. Cooley says that more and more businesses are buying into the concept rather than providing company cars to individual employees. Signing up as corporate members not only helps private companies cut costs but also helps many of them meet environmental mandates. Cooley envisions having vehicles used during the day by businesses and after hours by individuals, thereby optimizing the use of each car.

Sue Sirrs and her partner, Laurie Stephenson, were among the first to join CarShareHFX. "It's really convenient and it's really easy to use," says Sirrs, a landscape architect who uses the service at



What's mine is yours: Pam Cooley and Peter Zimmer envision a future urban landscape full of shared cars.

SANDOR FIZLI

least a couple times every month.

Although the couple owns a car, there are days when they both need to go different places. When Sirrs needs to do field-work outside of the city, for example, she books a vehicle through CarShareHFX and bills her clients only for the few hours she has used the car rather than the day rate for a standard rental. "It's cheaper for my clients," she says. For outings with their young nieces and nephews, Sirrs says they'll often rent a larger vehicle from CarShareHFX, since the brood won't fit in their Volkswagen Rabbit.

Halifax federal MP Megan Leslie is a fan of CarShareHFX too, using the vehicles for work to travel around her vast riding, as well as for personal use. "This is the closest I've come to owning my own car," she says with a laugh. Since she spends a lot of time on the job in Ottawa, Leslie says it makes sense for her to have access to a car when she needs one, without "falling into the trap of driving every-

where. Plus, it's ridiculously easy to book."

CarShareHFX's current fleet of vehicles includes a hybrid and a micro van, and there are plans to add a cargo van and a Smart car in the near future. For Cooley, access to a range of cars is another advantage to car-sharing. "When you buy your own car," she says, "it's the only one you've got."

Halifax isn't the first city to venture into car sharing; Cooley says Quebec's Communauto was the first North American car-share organization. Founded 15 years ago, that company now boasts over 700 vehicles. There are similar networks in Vancouver (the Co-operative Auto Network, with 225 vehicles) and Toronto (where AutoShare now boasts over 7,000 members). The world's largest network, Zipcar, is in over 50 cities across North America and the U.K. and has outlets at over 100 universities in North America.

For Cooley, those numbers drive

home what's possible. "We hope to double our number of cars every year, if not faster," she says. "Within a couple of years we could have upward of 40 to 60 cars in the area; it just depends on demand." She envisions expanding into the rest of the province and then throughout the Maritimes, ultimately building a city-to-city network that would give members access to cars right across the country.

Ultimately, Cooley hopes CarShareHFX will give Haligonians more options when it comes to getting around the city. "It's human nature to be mobile," she says. That's why she's not suggesting we give up on cars altogether, only that we rethink how and when we use them. "Car-sharing is a really wonderful contribution to any city. We hope that it gets embraced in Halifax even more than it has been so far. We could change the face of the city."

— MEREDITH DAULT

# Little BIG pharma

by PETER MOREIRA



Origin BioMed was recently named a global company to watch by a U.S.-based VC watchdog—and 25,000 pharmacy customers can't be wrong



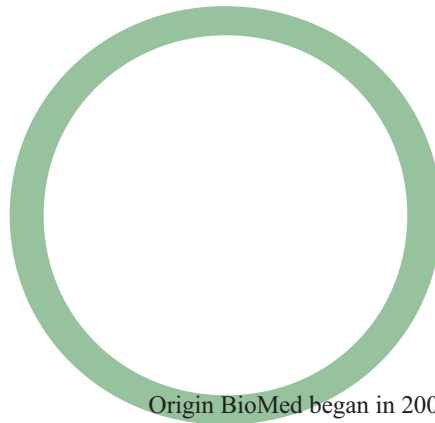
Robert Cervelli once joked to a crowd that his company, Origin BioMed Inc., is “the world’s smallest multinational drug company.” The line was aiming for a laugh, but it also reveals one reason Origin BioMed is so successful. The company has never been big or flashy and has never had spiffy offices in a gleaming bank tower. What it has had is incredible success in selling its cornerstone product, Neuragen, and a marketing plan that should make rivals sit up and take notice.

A non-prescription medicine for pain in nerve endings, Neuragen is now available at 25,000 pharmacies across North America, a remarkable achievement for a company that started from scratch eight years ago. Do the math: through all these years, Neuragen has been stocked by a new pharmacy about every three hours.



Origin BioMed has come a long way since the early days of packaging Neuragen in zip-lock bags.

“Origin BioMed has proven to be a company excelling in its industry, and its ripples have turned into waves,” says Alex Vieux, the publisher of San Diego-based *Red Herring* magazine, which named Origin BioMed one of the Red Herring Top 100 Global Companies. The Halifax firm was one of only four Canadian companies to make the list. “We look forward to the changes it makes to the non-prescription drug industry in the future,” says Vieux.



Origin BioMed began in 2001 when CEO and president Cervelli devised a business plan with strict criteria to license and sell over-the-counter (OTC) drugs internationally. First, the drugs had to be non-prescription (to cut down on approval times), produced under licence, and backed by university-validated research. The company had to be financed by angel investments, and it needed a low overhead.

Eventually the licences were purchased for a suite of non-prescription products: Neuragen, the herpes medication Herpestat, and a range of green tea products, including Green Tea Skin Cream. “The one that really took off was Neuragen because the demand was so strong,” says Cervelli, from his office above a downtown-Halifax restaurant. “We had to throw 95% of our resources behind it.”

Neuragen alleviates pain caused by diabetes, a disease that has grown dramatically in recent years. A 2007 University of Toronto study reported that incidences of the disease in Ontario alone increased 6% annually between 1995 and 2005. Diabetes



Company CEO and president Robert Cervelli. Origin was recently named Nova Scotia's Export Achiever for sales growth (see sidebar page 16)

# Diabetes sufferers can experience tingling pain in their extremities. Traditional painkillers offer little or no help, but Neuragen is effective in treating 70% of cases



sufferers who do not manage their sugar properly can experience a range of problems, including a tingling pain in their extremities. Traditional painkillers offer little or no help, but Neuragen is effective in treating 70% of cases.

Another boon for the drug is that pharmacies will devote exclusive shelves to only one disease, diabetes. That's because the affliction imposes a unique lifestyle on its sufferers, necessitating special dietary requirements and products such as syringes and medicine pouches. This special focus by retailers means opportunities for in-store promotions, one of the means Cervelli used to get the word out.

Marketing was a challenge because of the company's limited budget. "We were originally selling Neuragen in a zip-lock bag with all the printing done with an inkjet printer," says Cervelli. "That's what I mean by low overhead." The first significant investment was a \$100,000 injection from a pharmacist in Chicago.

What Origin BioMed lacked in capital early on it made up for with a sound marketing plan. It began to sell Neuragen regionally, then rolled it out to Canadian pharmacy chains, including Shoppers Drug Mart. It then

repeated its success in the U.S., seeking regional penetration before eventually getting national distribution with CVS and Walgreens.

The marketing "has been tremendous," says Peter MacNeil, the head of venture capital investing at Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI), which has put \$3 million into the company so far. He says the marketing team at Origin BioMed is top-notch, and the company has attracted a range of advisers with an invaluable range of experience and knowledge in marketing OTC drugs in Canada and the U.S.

Propelled by sales of Neuragen, the company's revenues have on average increased by 300% from 2001 to 2008 and currently top \$7 million. Cervelli projects that annual revenues will reach \$50 million by 2011, and he continues to raise capital. Origin BioMed now has 85 angel investors from across North America and has raised three rounds of venture capital funding from Calgary-based Avrio Ventures Management Corporation, NSBI, and GrowthWorks Atlantic Venture Fund Ltd., the regional office of the Vancouver-based labour-sponsored VC enterprise GrowthWorks. All together, the angels and VCs have invested almost \$13 million.

Cervelli won't say what the company was worth after the most recent round, a \$3.3-million funding in April (MacNeil says the value of NSBI's investment did rise), and he won't rule out raising more capital in the future. Though the company is almost cash-flow positive, Cervelli's short-term goal is to increase sales and grab market share rather than become profitable quickly. And marketing in the OTC drug sector requires cash.

In the near future, Origin BioMed wants to develop a range of products to treat pain, growing on its success with Neuragen. Does that mean it will sell off Herpestat and the green tea products? Cervelli says the company is considering licensing them to a third party or partnering with another company to market them; discussions have already taken place. The company also wants to continue winning market share for Neuragen. "Within 12 to 18 months, our goal is to become the dominant brand for the non-prescription nerve-pain-medicine market," says Cervelli. "And we're getting there." ■

# MEET MORE OF NOVA SCOTIA'S



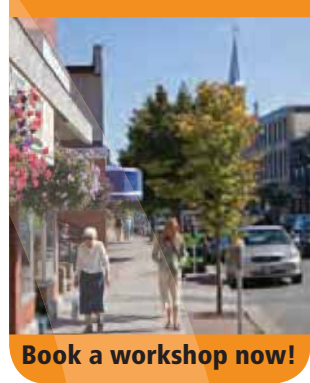
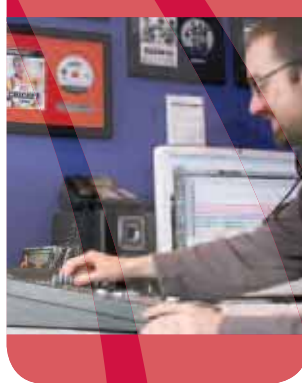
SANDOR FIZLI

Head of the class: Nautel's John Whyte and Tim Hardy.

Who says a recession can stifle growth? Nova Scotia companies continue to thrive in these uncertain economic times. Recently Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI) rewarded the top exporters of the province in the 26th annual Nova Scotia Export Achievement Awards.

Described by its CEO as a 40-year-old overnight success story, Nautel Limited walked away with top honours, winning Exporter of the Year. Based in Hackett's Cove, N.S., the company designs and manufactures radio-frequency products for AM and FM broadcasting, including radio navigation and industrial use. "We had a fabulous opportunity in this recession," says president and CEO Peter Conlon. "We turned our retained earnings into an investment for new products and people."

Nautel continues to gain market share internationally, including in the U.S. Its strategy is



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Conlon found the perfect way to commemorate winning the award: “I called everyone out of the plant at noon for a group photo, then told them to take the afternoon off.” — Julie Sobowale

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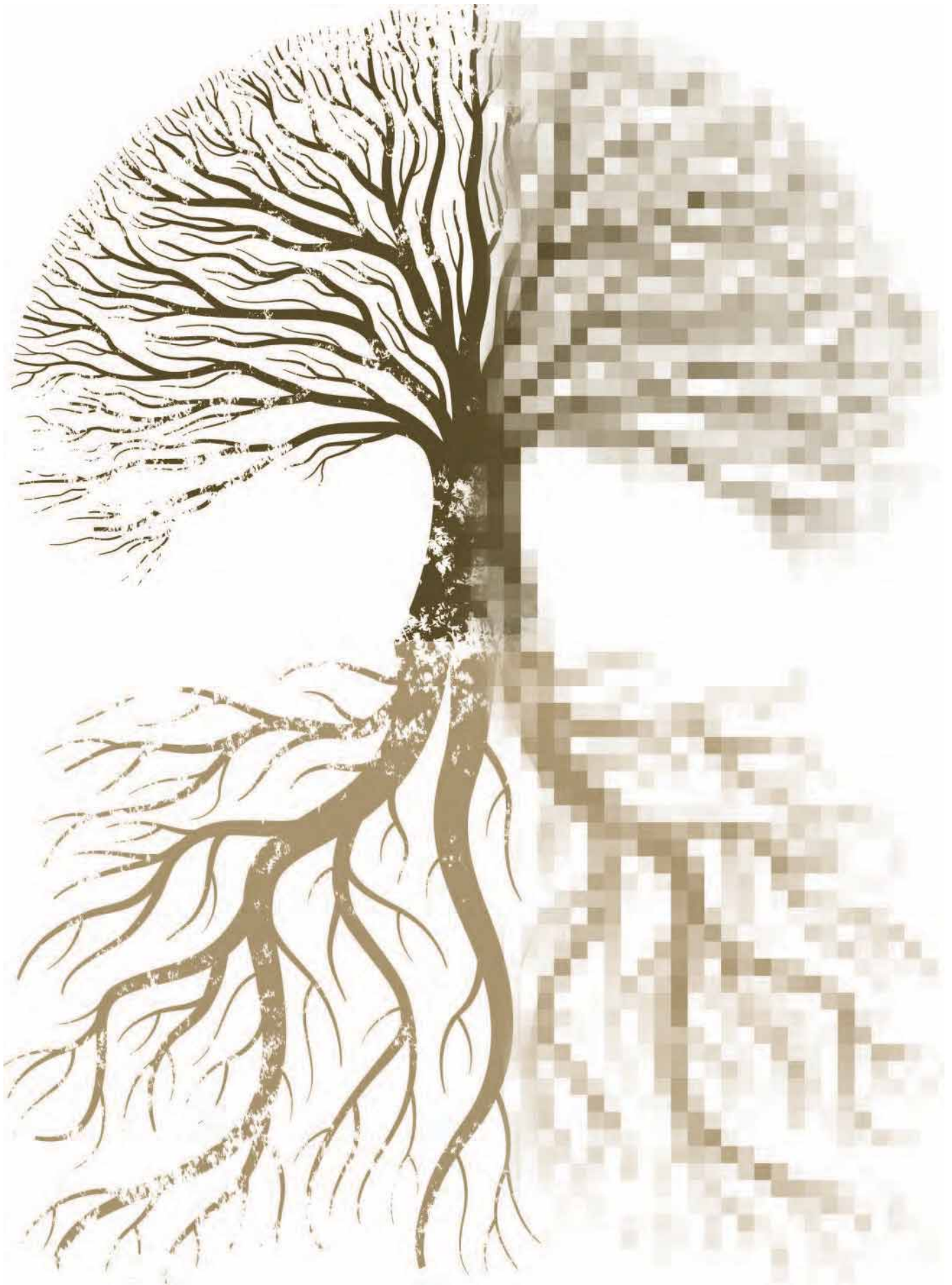
# GRASSROOTS GENEALOGY

*Nova Scotia's archival history is growing online.  
That's good news for millions of family trees*

by MARILYN SMULDERS

**A**rchivist Lois Yorke calls them “Kleenex moments”—those times when she helps someone reach back through the past and connect with a family member. Like the woman from Louisiana who called in tears to say she had discovered the record of her great-great-great grandfather, his name inscribed in loopy handwriting by a parish priest in Annapolis Royal 250 years before.

In a province where the question “Who’s your father?” is as commonplace as “How are you?,” Nova Scotians have always been fascinated with their family histories. The fact that so many people passed through Nova Scotia makes it a focal point for genealogical research worldwide.





Terry Punch and Lois Yorke in the 1750s cemetery of the Little Dutch Church in Halifax.

## More than 750,000 records were posted online, along with one million names

“Imagine that Nova Scotia is a funnel,” says Terry Punch, one of the foremost genealogical experts in the Maritimes. He talks genealogy on CBC Radio’s *Maritime Noon*, writes columns for three magazines, and has written several books on the topic, including *Genealogical Research in Nova Scotia* (Nimbus), now in its fourth edition. “A lot of people came through here and then went on. We’re the neck of the funnel where everyone squeezes through.”

Back when Punch (the name derives from the French *ponts*, or in English, bridge) was researching his own family history in the 1970s, resources were scarce. “At that time there was nothing, so foolishly I wrote the book,” says Punch, a fourth-generation Haligonian. His research spurred a decades-long fascination with the migration of people. In Nova Scotia migration happens a lot, with citizens coming (the New England planters in the 1760s) and going (the Acadians forced out of Nova Scotia by the British in the 1750s-60s). Throughout the 19th century Nova Scotians moved in waves to New England, the American Midwest, and California. In the 20th century,

immigrants arrived at Pier 21 in Halifax and scattered across Canada.

Conducting genealogical research in Nova Scotia has recently undergone a seismic shift. Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management has put an enormous amount of material online, including birth registrations up to 1908, marriage records up to 1933, and death records up to 1958. More than 750,000 records were posted, along with one million names—a massive job that took more than three years.

And that’s not all. The Archives’ website also includes searchable databases of Nova Scotia parish records, poll-tax rolls for Halifax dating back to the 1780s, the *Halifax Explosion Remembrance Book*, and the *Book of Negroes*. Three million visitors accessed the site last year, and about 14,000 people dropped by the Archives in person.

“We’ve got databases with a million names, and each of those names is linked to a corresponding record,” says Yorke. “You can look at the original right on your computer screen. If you want to purchase that record, you can buy an

# Much remains to be discovered in the archives and community museums of towns and villages in rural Nova Scotia

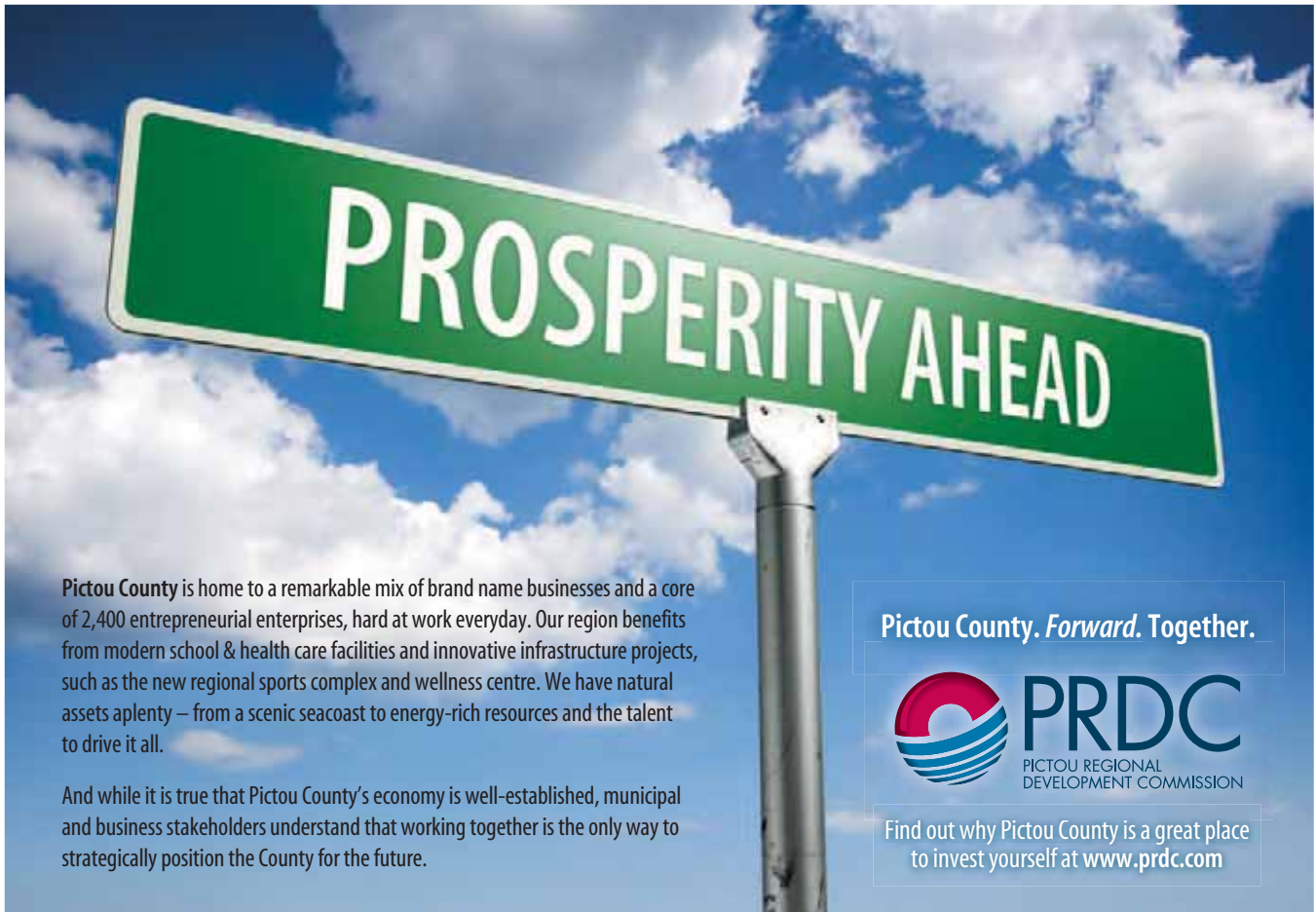
electronic copy and download it right away. If you want a paper copy you'll get it, stamped and embossed, within 10 business days. People everywhere in the world now have access to this information."

Each record is just a starting point. For example, a death record might include how long the individual lived in the community, his or her street address, occupation, and the cause of death. "This is what family historians are interested in—the full measure of the person," says Yorke. "What kind of life was crammed in between the birth and death dates."

Even with all this information online, much remains to be discovered in the archives and community museums of towns and villages in rural Nova Scotia. Those archives are staffed by volunteers who receive training in archival management through the Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA). "Our members have a very rich

knowledge that we rely on to help people with their genealogical research," says Karen White, the CNSA's archives advisor. "They're very welcoming and may even be able to say, 'I know your cousin, let me call him.' You get a lot of impromptu family reunions that way."


It's this grassroots know-how the council is harnessing for a niche tourism initiative called Routes to Your Roots. Now in development, project organizers will create an interactive website where people can search their surname and be directed to the relevant community archives. The website will include suggestions for accommodations, dining, and entertainment. The entire project is expected to be completed by next summer. "We know genealogy is a big draw to Nova Scotia," says White. "People want to see the old homestead or visit a gravesite. Routes to Your Roots will help people connect the dots more easily." ■



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# The timeless island

Sable Island, a sliver of sand in the North Atlantic, is *terra incognita*. Except, that is, for some plucky scientists and a New York photographer who feels blessed to have captured the island's fragile beauty

by CAROL MOREIRA

“I felt like I was the last being in the world.  
I felt profound humility and fortune to  
witness all this beauty” — Roberto Dutesco



Il day Roberto Dutesco had been photographing wild horses. Now dusk, it was time to return to camp. Reluctantly, he packed his cameras and set out across the endless dunes.

The renowned New York photographer has worked with supermodels, but this time his subjects were the beautiful wild creatures living on Sable Island, a narrow stretch of sand in the Atlantic Ocean 300 kilometres southeast of Halifax. “I felt like I was the last being in the world,” says Dutesco. “I felt profound humility and fortune to witness all this beauty.”

Sable Island is remote. For centuries settlers tried to tame the island, only to be defeated by its harsh climate and isolation. This part of the North Atlantic endures intense fogs and storms. In wild weather the island’s dimensions (44 kilometres by one kilometre) transform. Dunes drift, reaching 30 metres in places and disappearing in others. Sable is named for the French word for sand. The area has been the site of hundreds of shipwrecks; occasionally one is revealed and submerged again.

This past decade has seen the growth of scientific research and the nearby development of the largest construction venture ever undertaken in Nova Scotia: the Sable Offshore Energy Project, which extracts natural gas from 5,000 metres below the ocean floor. The natural gas platforms are visible from the island. Run by five partners, the project produces 400 to 500 million cubic feet of natural gas and 20,000 barrels of natural gas liquids a day.

Scientists working in the area explore subjects as diverse as seismic monitoring, marine litter, dune dynamics, terrain management, and many fields of biological and marine research. The atmosphere is studied for substances, including greenhouse gases, ozone, and fog toxicity.

Still, Sable is known primarily for wildlife. Surviving here is not easy, but many species of birds and animals do. Most famous are the several hundred wild horses that roam the dunes in family bands. There are also seals and birds, including the rare roseate tern and Ipswich sparrow.

To protect the island, the Canadian government restricts access to approved scientists, researchers, and artists. Fewer than 250 people a year get to visit, and Dutesco is one of the

few permitted to return. He has been back several times since 1994 and is supported in his work by long-term island residents, superintendent Gerry Forbes, and naturalist Zoe Lucas (see sidebar “Tracking families” on page 27).

### Head on head

Dutesco is fascinated by the island’s fragile beauty. “I thought, perhaps if I’m lucky enough, naïve enough, and aware enough, I might be there to capture what is, without any words,” he says in an interview from New York.

When photographing, Dutesco prefers to work alone. Visitors to Sable are not supposed to touch the horses, so he communicates with them by crouching, talking, and gesturing. The horses respond, returning his respectful curiosity. Often they come close. On the last day of his 2007 visit Dutesco, absorbed in his work, stayed out late. Walking back to camp, he wondered whether the animals—thought to be descended from horses imported sometime after 1738—would continue to thrive in such a harsh environment. His path took him over a dry lake. In the darkness, he stepped off the trail and was surprised to find himself in quicksand.

“It gave me an idea of what the island may have been to the people who perished in storms,” says Dutesco. “Finally I got out, and walking back to camp I was enclosed by a band of horses. I could only see their shadows, not their eyes. There was just a bit of luminosity from the sky. One came close and I could feel the mist from his breath. He put his head on my head and stayed there while the others stood around. I felt as if they were telling me that they would be all right.”

The horses continue to inspire Dutesco and others. He and his work have been the subject of a documentary produced by Halifax-based Arcadia Entertainment called *Chasing Wild Horses*. His exhibition “The Wild Horses of Sable Island” is so popular it has been showing at the New York gallery he operates with art dealer Peter Tunney for three years. The gallery is at street level and the rough manes, powerful bodies, and soulful eyes of the horses draw people in. “Many are mesmerized, silent,” says Dutesco. “Most people will never see Sable Island, but for now it exists in a gallery off Crosby Street—a place that is the opposite of Sable Island.”

For more information, please visit [www.dutescoart.com](http://www.dutescoart.com)  
“The Wild Horses Of Sable Island” Gallery,  
13 Crosby street in SOHO, New York City.

All Photographs © 2009 by Roberto Dutesco





Sable Island: There has been a small human presence on Sable Island since 1801.

DAVID NICHOLS, PRISMA PRODUCTIONS

### The face of the intruder

While Dutesco finds beauty in Sable’s horses, researcher Kat Dillon finds magic in the island’s birds—specifically the terns that nest on the sand by the thousands. Dillon studies three species of tern: common, Arctic, and roseate. Roseates are endangered, and researchers were recently delighted to discover five nesting roseate pairs. Last year, only two pairs were found.

Dillon enjoys her work, even though the birds fiercely object to being studied. “Terns are fabulously obnoxious seabirds. They’re fearless when it comes to defending their colony and will eagerly attack if intruders come too close. Along with the daring strike of a pointy beak, terns will purposely and quite successfully defecate at will. What seems to be the target of choice is the head and, if lucky, the face of the intruder. It’s marvelous, grossly and ridiculously marvelous.”

Dillon has been doing work on Sable for nearly 10 years. She arrives at the end of May, as nesting begins. The terns call Sable home two to three months of the year while they breed. In 2009 Dillon will focus on the roseates and attempt to discover why they choose Sable and how they relate to the larger colony. When the terns start hatching, her observations will include parenting behaviour, what the chicks eat, what’s preying on them (probably seagulls), and what is stressing them or not.

Dillon, who is completing her master’s degree at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, says her research may lead to helping terns elsewhere too. “Sable has one of the largest communal breeding colonies of terns in the Maritimes. Determining the health of these colonies is important to sustaining and possibly restoring the population of roseate terns around the world.”

Dillon is the right woman for the job, and not just because she doesn’t mind being covered with guano, says Rick Welsford, the executive director of the Sable Island Preservation Trust, the non-profit society that helps preserve and protect the island and its ecosystem. “Kat has got that eye—she can pick



PHOTO COURTESY KAT DILLON

Kat Dillon: when the terns hit their fan

out the varying colours on the terns’ beaks,” he says. “She can hear the difference in their calling; most people can’t.”

Welsford, who joined the Trust two years ago after a career in lighthouse preservation, has visited Sable twice in as many years. His first voyage was aboard a schooner that sailed from the historic seafaring town of Lunenburg on Nova Scotia’s South Shore. “We arrived at 2 a.m.,” he says. “There was a full moon and a clear sky. I could see the two remaining lighthouses and the flames coming out of the tops of the two nearby natural gas platforms. I was awestruck.”

Both the Sable Offshore Energy Project and the Sable Trust have been operating for 10 years. Welsford says the energy industry is an enthusiastic supporter of the Trust’s conservation work. All agree that Sable is important to Nova Scotians, and there is huge interest in the island even though so few people are allowed to visit. Live video feed via satellite has been proposed as a way of furthering research and allowing public involvement. “It would enable researchers to monitor activity on the island without high overheads or regularly impacting wildlife,” says Welsford. “We’d be able to bring Sable to people



DAVID NICHOLS, PRISMA PRODUCTIONS

The Thebaud platform, part of the Sable Offshore Energy Project, is visible from the island.

without taking them there.”

Superintendent Forbes agrees that it’s important to support the work undertaken on Sable while reducing the human footprint as much as possible. Once or twice a year, the Coast Guard delivers heavy or bulky supplies to the government station. Regular supplies are delivered by aircraft; more than 80 aircraft land annually. The island’s three dozen buildings include staff residences, visitors’ quarters, vehicle-maintenance garages, power generation buildings, workshops, laboratories, a grocery store, and a water-treatment station.

There has been a small human presence on Sable since 1801 when the colonial government, appalled by the loss of life in numerous shipwrecks, founded a lifesaving station. Recently the Trust republished *Sable Island Journals*, by James R. Morris, the island’s first superintendent; Morris lived on the island from 1801 to 1804. The book gives a clear picture of Morris’ struggle to survive on Sable. Welsford plans to donate a copy to every school, library, and research centre in the province. The trust also recently sponsored musician Scott MacMillan to compose a classical music suite called “The Currents of Sable Island.”

Sable’s remote splendour speaks to many. Dutesco thinks it’s because beauty triggers emotions. “When we’re surrounded by beauty, our deeper feelings come to the surface,” he says. “With that, perhaps a better world will come about.”

Next year Dutesco hopes that his exhibit will hit the road. He would especially like it to get to Nova Scotia. “I’d love the pictures to be on the streets of Halifax, not necessarily in a gallery or a museum,” he says. “People deserve to look toward the horizon and know that Sable Island is just a short flight away—yet unreachable, untouchable, and unhindered by human hands.” ■



Zoe Lucas registers a new arrival.

# TRACKING FAMILIES

There are between a few and several dozen people on the island at any one time, including federal government employees, researchers, scientists, and artists. Superintendent Gerry Forbes and naturalist Zoe Lucas have both lived on Sable for several years.

Lucas has been collecting data on Sable’s horses for about two decades. Her springtime work includes roaming through the fog to keep track of the arrival of new foals. When not recording foals’ birthdays, Lucas is busy with a range of research and monitoring projects that she conducts alone or with specialists.

A current shark-predation study has Lucas combining her knowledge of shark-inflicted wounds on seals with the expertise of shark-feeding expert Lisa Natanson, a scientist with the National Marine Fisheries Service. Lucas also writes manuscripts and material for the Sable Island website ([www.GreenHorseSociety.com](http://www.GreenHorseSociety.com)) and works with Halifax-based Ecology Action Centre on Sable issues. Lucas spends about two months a year off the island giving presentations to public-interest groups, schools, and universities.

“The work enhances an understanding of the island,” says Lucas. She credits other groups—including seal researchers at Dalhousie University and Fisheries & Oceans Canada and scientists at Canada’s Meteorological Service—with publishing a great deal of valuable information. “Much of their research not only increases knowledge about Sable,” says Lucas, “but also contributes to broader understanding of regional and, in some cases, global issues.” — C.M.

# Lights! Cameras! Post!

*Nova Scotia's creative economy is alive and well, and its thriving film industry is just one aspect*

by TOM MASON

**G**reg Hemmings takes out a digital SLR camera, flips to the LED screen, and shows off photos of his three-day-old daughter. After ooohs and aahs, the youthful-looking 32-year-old television producer gets down to business. Lights fade, plunging the editing suite into darkness. On the giant screen in front of us starts a television show, *Kardinal Sinners*, a reality program Hemmings House Pictures is making for the Rush HD television network.

*Kardinal Sinners* is a gritty passion play, a behind-the-scenes tale of an aging troupe of professional wrestlers trying to scratch out a living touring small towns from Atlantic Canada to Ontario. The show reveals the dramas that make wrestling so intriguing to its fans: bitter rivalries, bravado, ridiculous stunts, barroom arguments, moments of anger, and hilarious hijinks.

The soundtrack plays flawlessly to an untrained ear, but Hemmings and editor Andrew MacCormack notice small mistakes: a handclap slightly out of sync, a few garbled words spoken in a crowded bar, audience-reaction noises that aren't quite loud enough. After each flaw mixer Corey Tedford stops the show, manipulates the soundboard, and fixes the mistake. It takes about 45 minutes to sound mix the

whole half-hour episode.

This is Hemmings' second foray into the world of professional wrestling, and the project puts him on both sides of the camera—as a producer and a sort of travelling host. He spent two weeks with the wrestlers, joining them in their van on the drive from Cape Breton to Ottawa. “I was never a wrestling fan,” admits Hemmings, “but because of these shows I’ve become something of a name in the wrestling world. I think it’s hilarious.”

The travel part is nothing new. Since beginning his company in his hometown of Saint John seven years ago, Hemmings has gone all over the world shooting documentaries and reality shows. He has followed in the footsteps of the well heeled for the first show he associate produced and directed, *Planet Luxury*. He has made music videos for such artists as Grand Theft Bus, The Jimmy Swift Band, Jessica Rhaye, and Matt Andersen. He has visited Northern Canada to document the effects of global warming on the Arctic and shot footage in exotic locations, including Indonesia, Italy, France, China, Portugal, Switzerland, and Venezuela. Yet in spite of his professional wanderlust, his home base has remained in the Maritimes.

Last year Hemmings opened a new office of Hemmings



Journeyman: Greg Hemmings moved to Halifax to be where the action is. The state-of-the-art equipment doesn't hurt either.

House in Halifax, the centre of the Maritime film industry. “Really, the industry is here,” he says. “There’s so much talent here, there are millions of dollars worth of facilities here and equipment that we could never afford to buy ourselves.” The studio we’re sitting in proves the point. PowerPost Productions Ltd. is located right downtown; it’s the only post-production studio east of Montreal with state-of-the-art Dolby 5.1 capability. Hemmings House Pictures and PowerPost have joined forces to create a commercial-production company called Power Films that will enter the Nova Scotia corporate scene this summer.

Whether the project is a small art film or a Hollywood blockbuster, in the last couple of decades Nova Scotia has become a one-stop location for moviemakers. The province boasts more than 1,000 experienced film-crew workers: cinematogra-

phers, makeup artists, location scouts, props wranglers, set designers, and more. As well, some of Canada’s top animation studios and a network of state-of-the-art video and audio postproduction facilities are here. Full-service production studios are located in Halifax and Shelburne. And best of all, communities all over the province embrace film crews with a hospitality that’s hard to find in bigger centres.

## *Talent is a tradition in Nova Scotia— whether it’s crafting a ship, carving folk art, or making a movie*

phers, makeup artists, location scouts, props wranglers, set designers, and more. As well, some of Canada’s top animation studios and a network of state-of-the-art video and audio postproduction facilities are here. Full-service production studios are located in Halifax and Shelburne. And best of all, communities all over the province embrace film crews with a hospitality that’s hard to find in bigger centres.

This warm welcome goes back half a century. The same Lunenburg shipwrights who built the tall ship *Bluenose II* also constructed one of the greatest movie props of all time: a full-size replica of the 18th-century square-rigger that served as Marlon Brando’s stage in the 1962 film *Mutiny on the Bounty*. By the 1980s, Hollywood was regularly using Nova Scotian locations and crews to make hits. The Shelburne waterfront doubled as 17th-century New England in *The Scarlet Letter*. Mahone Bay was transformed into Stephen King’s rural Maine for *Dolores Claiborne*. Halifax Harbour served as a Soviet submarine base in *K-19: The Widowmaker* and as the frigid North Atlantic

in *Titanic*. Meanwhile, homegrown companies, including Salter Street Films and DHX Media Ltd., made important inroads in both television and film productions.

**C**reative Atlantic Communications is one of those homegrown companies. It launched in 1989 when two video producers joined forces to make corporate videos and advertising for clients, including Maritime Tel & Tel, National Sea Products, and Nova Scotia Power. Today Janice Evans and Greg Jones produce content for the small screen; they have forged relationships with all of Canada’s major TV networks and many of the country’s specialty channels, plus they have international co-production partners. Co-production achievements include the critically acclaimed CTV series *Robson Arms* and *The*

*Mighty Jungle* for CBC children’s television. Creative Atlantic has produced documentaries about hockey coach Ted Nolan, Celtic music star John Allan Cameron, the Halifax rap scene, and fiddler Natalie MacMaster. It has created the Comedy Network series *Liocracy* and a performance special with Codco’s Andy Jones. It currently has a number of international productions in development, including one to revive the 1970s cult comic *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*.

Evans and Jones agree that Halifax is the perfect place for a small production house to thrive and grow. “Here, if you’re smart and motivated and have common sense,” says Evans, “you can be anything you want to be in this business.” Jones points to the deep talent pool: “The production crew in Halifax has enough talent to supply any company that comes out of L.A. or New York with whatever they need.”

Talent is a tradition in Nova Scotia—whether it’s crafting a ship, carving folk art, or making a movie. The hardscrabble existence that sustained Nova Scotians for cen-

turies forged a powerful art scene in the province, says Windsor-based photographer Catherine Jamieson. You see examples everywhere: in well-tended gardens among the rocks, in brightly coloured houses that dot the rural landscape, and in the sound of fiddles wafting from kitchen windows on Saturday nights. “Art is part of the way we cope,” says Jamieson. “It’s a human defence against adversity. We don’t see art as an extra, as something nice to have around. It’s part of what we are.”

Jamieson grew up in Windsor, then moved to Winnipeg, where she lived for 25 years. Like many Nova Scotians who leave home for work, she eventually returned, taking up photography as a hobby and creating a website to display her work. Called Utata, a word she made up, the site evolved into a virtual showcase for her photographer and artist friends.

Today Utata has a more physical presence; it’s a new art centre in the heart of Jamieson’s hometown. In a waterfront building near Windsor’s main street, Utata is unimpressive on the outside—a weather-beaten garage that was once a thriving Ford dealership. Inside, though, it has the austere warmth typical of fine art galleries. Large rooms that once displayed the latest Model T and Galaxy cars now show off local craftsmanship. Walls still marked with the pencil calculations of mechanics display the paintings of several dozen artists. Rooms down the hall host weekly classes in painting, dancing, and yoga. Jamieson admits she’s an idealist when it comes to the healing properties of art. “I believe art has the power to improve this world of ours and to revitalize a community like Windsor,” she says. “Let’s face it, nobody does art better than we do here in Nova Scotia.”

Greg Hemmings, too, has found a creative home in Nova Scotia. A self-described “serial entrepreneur since the age of 12,” he aims for Hemmings House to be a major multimedia company. He has recently taken his brother Mark, a well-known photographer and visual artist, on as a creative partner and is eyeing new projects in advertising, corporate multimedia, and dramatic productions. “We want to position ourselves as international experts in the multimedia industry,” says Hemmings. “And Halifax is a perfect base of operations for that.” ■



# The next chapter

*In a place where reinvention is a creed, it's never too late to rewrite your life story*

Once heard of a guy in the witness-protection program, a Mafia accountant who had settled in an unnamed seaside village to stare at the ocean and paint watercolours. I remember thinking it a singularly bad idea: If I was a displeased mobster searching for someone who was trying to escape their old life, Nova Scotia is the first place I would look. A second act isn't just possible here; redemption and change are a person's inalienable right.

This epiphany came to me a few years back when, during a stretch of travel through the province, I met a contractor

Consider, if you will, Jonathan Murray. The Scottish-born ear, nose, throat, and allergy specialist is a restless soul who practiced medicine in South Africa, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, and Scotland before heading to Bermuda. One day seven years ago, he and his wife went to visit her two children who were attending school in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley. Liking what they saw, Murray and his wife moved there too.

Now Murray owns 230 acres of land near Wolfville, 16 of which have been planted with grapes. Next year the first bottling from Muir Murray Estate Winery

and make a ton of money. Or I could stay here and reinvent myself."

Drake settled for attending law school at the University of New Brunswick, even though he was closing in on 50, because he thought it would allow him to find work back in his beloved Cape Breton. In 2004 he became UNB's oldest law school graduate. Days later he was back in Sydney where, now 54, he's a Crown prosecutor specializing in youth. Self-effacingly, he describes himself as "a coal miner with a law degree."

This place, on the other hand, also has its share of people who need change for some deep-seated personal reason. As executive editor of the *Shambhala Sun*, a prominent Buddhist lifestyle magazine based in Halifax, Andrea McQuillin spent her days writing about and editing some of the continent's leading spiritual thinkers. So friends and colleagues were a tad surprised the day she announced that she was starting a new career as a power-utility lineman.

"I always had an affinity for the physical labour and the purity of this kind of work," says McQuillin. "When you're up a transmission pole 70 feet off the ground, there's a one-pointedness to things. I didn't get that kind of absorption in writing or editing." Now 40, she's the oldest person and only woman in her apprentice program, but the young lads she works with don't bat an eye. "In Nova Scotia," says McQuillin, who grew up in Ontario, "pluck seems to be respected." And it's never too late for a person to rewrite their own story. ■

*John DeMont is a writer living in Halifax. His most recent book, Coal Black Heart, is published by Doubleday Canada.*

## A second act isn't just possible here; redemption and change are a person's inalienable right

from Florida who had chucked it all to hunt for Captain Kidd's treasure, a missionary from Japan who had opened an oriental art gallery on the Bay of Fundy, a clinical psychologist from Warsaw who was now the head of a Buddhist abbey perched on a Cape Breton cliff, and an ex-NASA scientist who had decided that what the world needed was a space museum smack dab in the middle of Yarmouth County.

Something about Nova Scotia, I concluded, made it a magnet for people who decided there was something else they'd rather be doing, then went out and did it. This proclivity for reinvention makes for great cocktail-party conversation. I also believe it bodes well for a future when the old competitive advantages such as geography and natural resources matter less than flexibility, courage, and creativity.

will be ready for drinking. "I've never been so happy in my life," says Murray, now active in the province's wine industry. "I practice a little medicine in Halifax, which allows me to help people. But I love being outdoors and making wine. It's like I've been born again."

You hear that a lot around here, even from those who reboot their careers out of economic necessity.

The son of a New Waterford coal miner, Steve Drake went into the pit himself at age 21. In time he became president of the fabled District 26 of the United Mine Workers of America, which represented Cape Breton's coal miners until the Island's last underground coal mine closed in 2001. "I had two options," says Drake, who along the way had earned his electrician's papers. "I could move out West with my buddies