

NOVA SCOTIA

Open to the world



Taking a new tack

Reviving a sail making tradition

Liquid assets: managing our waterways

Custom-built: Tri-Star's emergency systems

Annapolis Royal celebrates 400 years

**Doing business
in Chicago**

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OPEN TO THE WORLD, AUTUMN 2005



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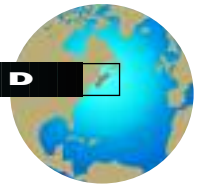
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Snap SHOTS



CREDIT

Come sail away: Michele Stevens carries on the family tradition of making sails for the most famous schooner in Canada.

Family tradition

Walking into Michele Stevens sail loft in Second Peninsula is like stepping back in time. Aside from the modern essentials—the industrial sewing machines and computers—everything remains as it was when the sail loft first opened almost a century ago to craft sails for local fishermen and schooners. Drawing on four generations of experience, Michelle Stevens Sailloft Ltd.

(www.tallships.ca/sailloft) recently designed one of the world's largest mainsails, a 386-square-metre one for Canada's most famed schooner, the *Bluenose II*.

The largest of seven sails, the main-sail was blown out in early August after continuous pressure of the sun and wind. The original *Bluenose*, which is immortalized on the Canadian dime, became a nautical legend by trouncing American fishing schooners during a series of famous races in the 1920s. Today the 49-metre-long *Bluenose II*, built after its predecessor foundered on a reef in the West Indies in 1946, travels the globe as

a floating ambassador for Canada. "It's a dream come true for me," says Michele Stevens, a sailmaker and the owner of the Sailloft. "My great-grandfather, Randolph Stevens, who built the sail loft, used to crew on the *Bluenose* as a sail trimmer. Later my grandfather and father both made sails for the vessel."

In 1985 the original company, R.B. Stevens and Sons, was sold to North Sails in Lunenburg. It wasn't until 1994 that Stevens revived the family tradition under the new name, Michele Stevens Sailloft. "At the time, I was enrolled as a mature student in university and needed a summer job," she recalls.

Hidden pearls



Three years ago Sherri McGregor was thumbing through a magazine in a secondhand store in Whistler, B.C., when she saw an article about Lunenburg. Already a UNESCO World Heritage site, the article said that Lunenburg had just won an award for the best painted town in Canada. The pictures of brightly decorated heritage houses reminded her of Europe. It was so unlike Whistler, she thought. “There is incredible scenery in Whistler,” says McGregor, now 55, “but it’s like a movie setting. It doesn’t touch you.”

A few months later, she packed her belongings and got on a plane to Halifax. She took a bus to Lunenburg, where she had rented a shop sight unseen. Six months after



that her son, Lee Lategan-McGregor, then 23, followed, after first going to China to buy pearls. It was in the Lunenburg space that they opened Pearls Etc., their first jewelry store in Nova Scotia.

A year later the pair moved their business to Mahone Bay, another scenic seaside spot a 10-kilometre drive away. Pearls Etc. fits in well with the other artisan shops on the town’s Main Street; there’s a pewter factory, an art gallery, potters, and upscale gift shops.

Lategan-McGregor opened a second shop in Chester, which he runs during the summer months. A goldsmith who learned his trade in Florence, Italy, he imports freshwater cultured pearls from China and gemstones from Arizona and designs all of the pieces himself. The pearl and gemstone jewelry is artfully displayed on well-lit shelves and in glass cases. The shop also has a collection of ceramics painted and glazed by McGregor and her business partner, Janet Cowan. The two women recently returned from Deruta in Umbria, a mountainous region northeast of Rome that is known as the ceramics capital of the world. There, McGregor and Cowan took a master course in majolica decoration, a style unique to that region that dates back to the 13th century.

Although Canadian born, McGregor lived most of her life in South Africa and Capri, Italy. For her, returning to Canada from South Africa was a revelation. She and her mother arrived in Whistler in May of 2001 “and the town was full of flower baskets,” she says. “It was such a shock to me that you could leave hanging baskets out all season and they wouldn’t be stolen. And then to come here [to Mahone Bay] and realize it was the same everywhere. That wouldn’t happen in South Africa. It’s a constant reminder that I live in a safe country now.” — **FAITH PICCOLO**

“I asked if I could open the sailloft for the summer. It’s been busy ever since.” Today the Stevens name adorns some of the highest-quality handcrafted sails in the world and is proudly raised on vessels in North America, including fishing schooners, yachts, and such tall ships as the *Concordia* and the *Picton Castle*.

With its new state-of-the-art mainsail, which includes a UV strip to protect it from the sun and wind, the *Bluenose II* should sail trouble free for the next 15 years. “To have played a part in the maintenance of such an icon is thrilling for us,” says Stevens. “I can only imagine it was equally thrilling for my great-grandfather.”

— **CORRIE FLETCHER-NAYLOR**



High-flying innkeepers

Nahman Korem is excited about a lot of things these days. It has been three years since the 51-year-old former Israeli fighter pilot came to Nova Scotia to open an eco-adventure resort after retiring from Elmo Motion Control, the tech company that he co-founded in Israel. This past spring, the multi-faceted Crown Jewel Resort (www.crownjewelresort.com) on 800 acres just outside of Baddeck, finally opened its guestrooms and restaurant and immediately attracted bookings from as far away as the United Kingdom.

The word “unique” may be overused these days, but the Crown Jewel resort is certainly unlike anything else in Nova Scotia. For one thing, it’s a tourist desti-

Form and function



Brian Gilbert has been passionate about the art of knife making for most of his life. Gilbert's father was a resourceful man who taught him to make many of the things they needed for their forays into the outdoors, including snowshoes, moccasins, and tools. He loved the knives they made together the most.

"My father made my first knife when I was a little boy," he recalls. "After that, I learned on my own." In university Gilbert started reading technical books about metallurgy and woodworking, studying ways to improve his knife-making skills. Shortly after he was married, he turned a corner of his small apartment into a workshop, much to his new wife's dismay.

Today it takes Gilbert, who lives in Bridgewater, 50 to 75 hours to make a typical knife. With a full-time job at Nova Scotia's Department of Natural Resources, he only finds time to make about half a dozen knives to sell each year, although he gives another five or six away as gifts or to charities. He also teaches knife-making courses and works with students to help them make their own knives. "I make bird and trout knives, pocketknives, and kitchen knives," he says. "I'm constantly looking for the balance between form and function."

A typical Gilbert knife sells for around \$800, with some of his more elaborate creations selling for more than \$5,000. Musician Bruce Cockburn tops the list of collectors who own a piece of Gilbert's art. Materials include high-grade custom steel blades, gold and silver fittings, and handles made of exotic woods, tusks and bone, often with elaborate scrimshaw work.

Gilbert bristles at the suggestion that his work has martial-art roots. "These aren't weapons," he insists. "Knives to the knife maker are what marble is to the sculptor. It's a very ancient thing. Civilization established itself when humans started decorating their tools. I'm just carrying on that tradition." — **TOM MASON**

nation built far from the province's most renowned tourism asset—its coastline. But guests can enjoy that spectacular feature by taking an air tour from the gravel airstrip Korem installed on his grounds.

Airstrip? Yep. The airstrip is a cornerstone of the year-round resort vision devised by Korem and his 39-year-old

wife and business partner Iris Kedmi. They believe pilots, an adventuresome lot, will come to an up-market, activity-based resort that they can fly to. They felt vindicated when their restaurant held its first Easter brunch and two pilots flew in simultaneously from mainland Nova Scotia—just for a meal.

Korem and Kedmi's business plan envisaged an eco-destination offering adventure activities throughout the year and drawing on several income streams. In addition to air tours and fishing in the glorious Baddeck River, Crown Jewel offers horseback riding, dogsledding, and other "eco-adventures." Korem is also helping preserve the rare Canadian Eskimo dog breed, which pull special scooters when there is no snow.

The Crown Jewel's assets also include a farm—it's organic, though not certified as such—with Highland cattle, blackface sheep, bees, and orchards. The woodlands are harvested using horsepower. The farm produces maple syrup; the hut where the syrup is made



was built partly from reclaimed antique beams and will one day be a get-away for honeymooners.

The resort uses only geothermal heat for its heavily insulated buildings. "The eco-traveller is willing to pay a bit more for a true eco-destination," says Korem. "The problem is you have to invest more up front." However, such installations should reduce future operating costs. The resort will keep growing; the construction of the lodge is the next big project.

Past that, Korem is looking to 2009, when pilots from around Canada will converge in Baddeck for the centenary celebration of the flight of the *Silver Dart*, Alexander Graham Bell's airplane. It will be good time to own the only airstrip in the area. "I wouldn't say it will be a make-or-break year, but I see 2009 as a crucial one in the long-term," says Korem. "It should put us on the map, not just locally but nationally and internationally." — **PETER MOREIRA**

Marching to his own beat

While the big oil and gas companies ponder their next moves, Tom Hickey is busy drumming up business around the world

After a decade in the safety business, Tom Hickey has figured out what the province needs to build a thriving oil and gas industry. "We can't depend on the big find," says the president of Frontline Safety (www.frontlinesafety.com) in Dartmouth and the person responsible for building the largest privately owned safety-training, consulting, and equipment company in Eastern Canada. Instead, Nova Scotian companies such as Frontline have to go out and find the work.

Hickey knows that a lot of hopes are being pinned on EnCana's Deep Panuke natural gas project. As the new chairman of the Offshore/Onshore Technologies Association of Nova Scotia (OTANS), one of his main tasks has been to find ways to bring the stalled project to the development stage and to encourage more exploration offshore. One of the first things Hickey did after assuming the chair's position in February was to sit down with EnCana executives to find out if there was anything the association could do to get things rolling again and prevent future roadblocks. "They were happy to see us come onsite," he says.

The province's efforts to increase drilling by being more flexible when awarding oil and gas leases sends a positive signal to companies such as EnCana. "We have created an environment in Nova Scotia that is very open for business," says Hickey. "I think we've done what we can."

With soaring natural gas prices, all signs are positive that EnCana should move forward with the big project, says the ever-optimistic Hickey. However, in his next breath he is quick to add that what the company chooses to do won't be decided by OTANS (www.otans.ca) or provincial officials but by a select group of business people behind closed boardroom doors.

While EnCana and other major oil and gas companies decide their next moves, Hickey isn't idly waiting. A self-described salesman, he is out drumming up new business around the world. While 90% of Frontline's work two years ago was in Canada, today that figure has dropped to about 70%. "Our bread and butter still comes from Eastern Canada," he says. Frontline works with more than 1,000 companies in Nova Scotia alone, and not just in the offshore. If it relied on the local offshore industry, it would be in trouble. This year only about 1% of its business in the region came from the offshore.

Hickey is now ironing out details on a new joint venture in the United Arab Emirates, which contains 98 billion barrels, or nearly

10% of the world's proven oil reserves. The plan is to offer safety services to the area's offshore industry. Last year Frontline established a subsidiary in Rio de Janeiro, which provides the Brazilian oil industry with safety equipment, training, safety audits, and other consulting services. In Brazil Frontline has a multimillion-dollar contract with South American oil and gas giant Petrobras.

Today Hickey is turning his sights to Mexico. His plan is to conduct market research over the next year and, by late 2006 or early 2007, set up an office in that country. "He's an example of what we need to do here," says Paul McEachern, the managing director of OTANS. "We can't exist just by relying on the energy sector in Nova Scotia."

INEXHAUSTIBLE

A native of Glace Bay on Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island, Hickey wasn't always focused on business. In the early 1990s, while studying civil engineering at the Technical University of Nova Scotia, he was trying out for the Halifax Citadels hockey team when he had to make a major decision. Confident he could succeed in the American Hockey League, he had to

decide whether to pursue engineering or try to play pro. He decided to stay in school—a decision he hasn't regretted.

In 1995 Hickey and a business partner started Frontline Safety. Having just graduated from university, he was working with a construction company when he saw a niche opening created with the province's new occupational health-and-safety laws. He soon took over the company, which now has between 50 and 60 employees and revenues of \$5 million. In 2001 he was named one of Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year award recipients, and the following year he was recognized as one of Canada's Top 40 under 40.

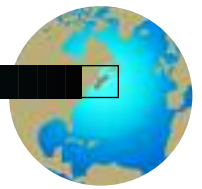
A father of two daughters aged two and four, Hickey still puts in 70-hour workweeks—not because he has to but because he wants to. "I really enjoy working," he says. "I think I'll probably retire at age 93 or 94." Calling him "inexhaustible," McEachern says Hickey represents a new generation of business leaders in the province. "[They] are trying to develop their businesses in Nova Scotia but then taking their business further afield," he says. "They will make a big impression on Nova Scotia."

"I think we have to celebrate entrepreneurship in eastern Canada," says Hickey. "I don't think we should have to be so conservative. We should celebrate our successes." —ALLISON LAWLOR

"We've created an environment that is open for business"



The workhorse: Hickey puts in 70-hour workweeks at Frontline Safety and OTANS.



Powering up

With mounting environmental concerns and recent widespread power outages, DynaGen Technologies is ready to fully supply the distributed power market

The timing couldn't be better for Sydney-based DynaGen Technologies Inc. (www.dynagen.ca). "Power outages are only the most visible part of a growing energy crisis," says company CEO Paul Wareham. "Distributed power is an emerging market worth \$5 billion (U.S.) in North America alone."

Distributed power is any electrical-power generation that takes place close to where it is being consumed. It is often used in homes, buildings, marine vessels, motorhomes, and trains for backup and off-grid power and to reduce demand on the power grid. DynaGen develops and manufactures the controls that run these power systems. More than 85% of its growing customer base is in the United States and includes giant original-equipment manufacturers (OEMs) such as Westerbeke Corp., Teleflex Inc., Coleman-Powermate, Gillette Generators, Amida Industries, and Power Technologies Southeast. These OEMs produce thousands of motorhomes, boats, and commercial vehicles and rely on DynaGen's controls to ensure continuous and reliable power sources for its appliances and electrical equipment.

Wareham started the company in 1997 while he was finishing a master's degree in engineering at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont. In his spare time, he worked on creating a cost-efficient power system capable of controlling and protecting engines for backup power, motorhomes, and military generators. The system, which he called Automatic Engine Controller, became DynaGen's first commercial product. "We had a product to sell right from day one," says Wareham. "We had one customer who distributed the product throughout the entire United States."

DynaGen quickly generated revenue and invested most of its profits back into its R&D activities. Today it has 31 full-

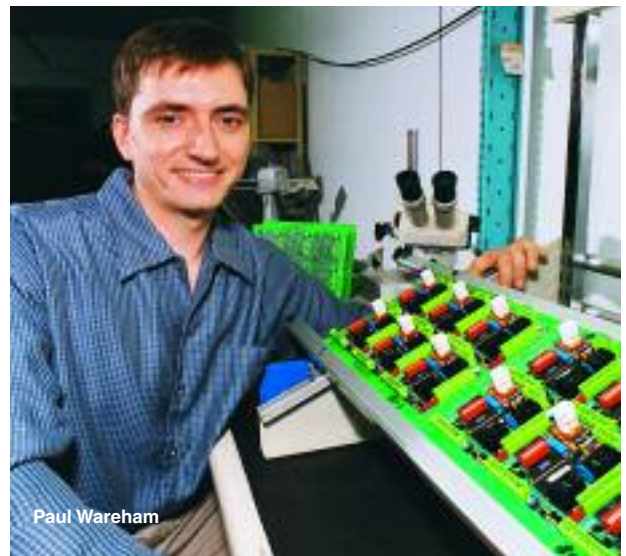
time employees and has grown from one distributed power product to nine. It's currently in the midst of launching four new products: Low Emissions Generators (LEG), Locomotive Power LEG and LCP are both environmentally focused and help power-generation stations, recreational boaters, and railway companies meet the new stringent anti-pollution standards. LEG can reduce carbon monoxide and other emissions by as much as 99%, while LCP reduces nitrogen oxide emissions, a major contributor to air pollution, by 90% during idle periods.

InPower and PowerFocus both address the backup-power market. InPower is a power-transfer switch that plugs into standard electric-meter sockets in every North American building. The premise is that each time the power goes off, InPower kicks in automatically and switches from the grid to a backup generator. When power is restored, InPower switches back to grid power.

PowerFocus's ability to individualize power management is appealing. The system allows building owners to manage each electrical circuit in a residence that is backed up by a generator. The owner can direct electricity to any room or appliance in the building with a remote control. The result: less demand on the power grid, which helps prevent large-scale blackouts.

DynaGen recently sought an equity investor to secure capital in order to commercialize its new product line and continue its R&D efforts. Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI), the province's busi-

ness-development agency, is focused on several key industries in the province, including advanced manufacturing. NSBI recognized DynaGen's innovative products, solid management team, and stable sales record and invested \$1 million in the company in December. "It's often a challenge to attract the right kinds of investors to Cape Breton, mostly because of our location and a shortage of venture capital



Paul Wareham

in Atlantic Canada," says Wareham. "NSBI helps fill that gap. We get the capital we need to grow, and [it's] on the ground floor of a profitable business investment while helping to create opportunities for Nova Scotians."

Although DynaGen is the only company in the world capable of supplying equipment to the distributed power market with a full spectrum of products, Wareham has bigger plans for the company. "In three years we hope to attract a partnership or merger with a large established company to help us further access global markets," he says. "Our ultimate goal is to become the world leader in power-control systems."

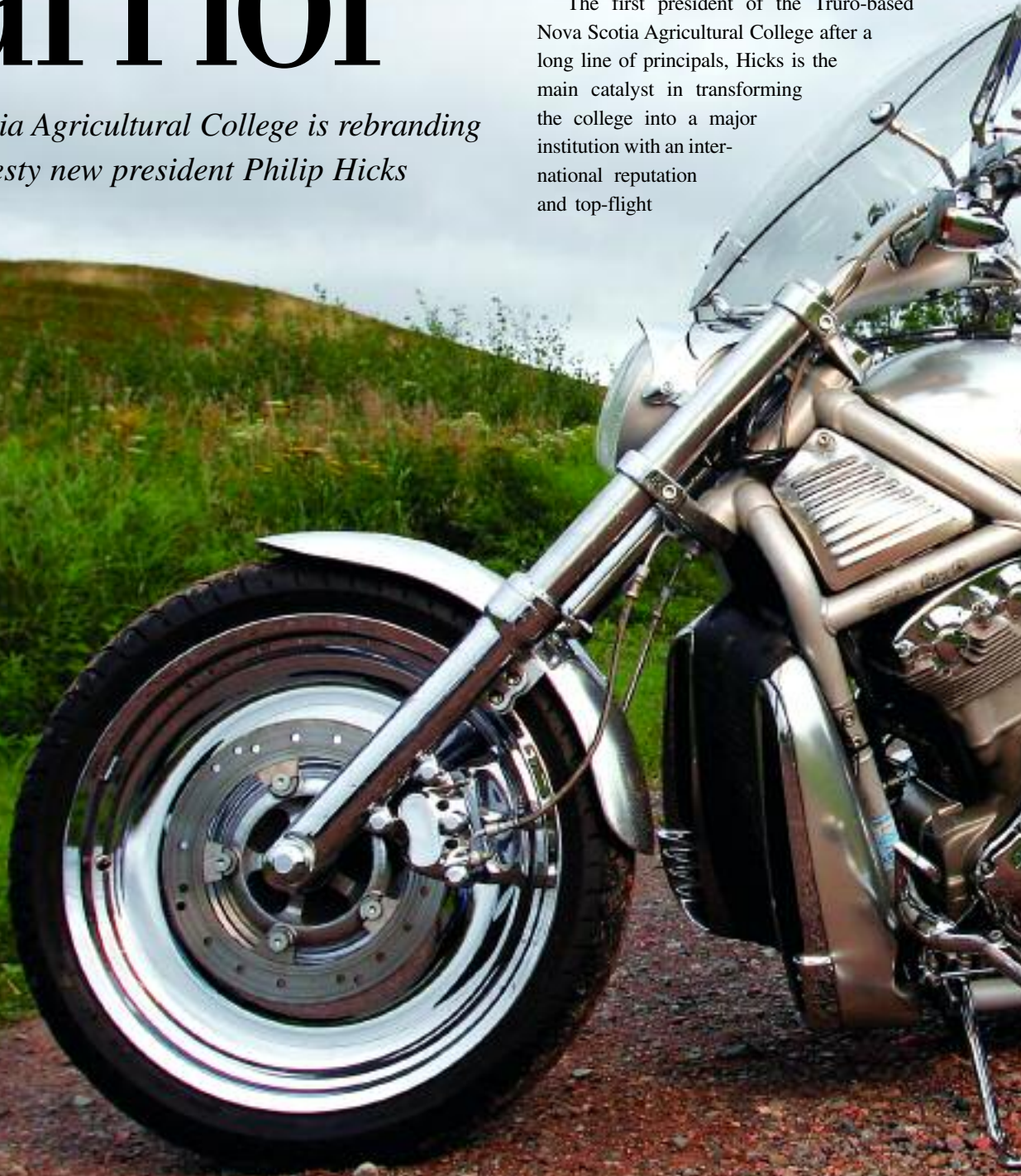
— CORRIE FLETCHER-NAYLOR

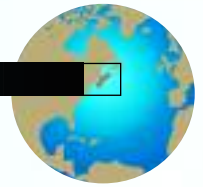
Road warrior

The Nova Scotia Agricultural College is rebranding itself led by feisty new president Philip Hicks

Philip Hicks is not your typical college president. A judo instructor with a black belt, Hicks, 52, rides a V-Rod, 1,125-horsepower, water-cooled Harley Davidson. “Maybe I just like surprising people,” he says with a grin. “You shouldn’t slot people into where you think they should be.”

The first president of the Truro-based Nova Scotia Agricultural College after a long line of principals, Hicks is the main catalyst in transforming the college into a major institution with an international reputation and top-flight





research programs. “I think NSAC has always known what it needed to do,” says Hicks, “but it felt a little bit of paralysis in moving forward.”

Robert Dykes, a professor in the faculty of medicine at McGill University, has known Hicks for more than 30 years and has worked

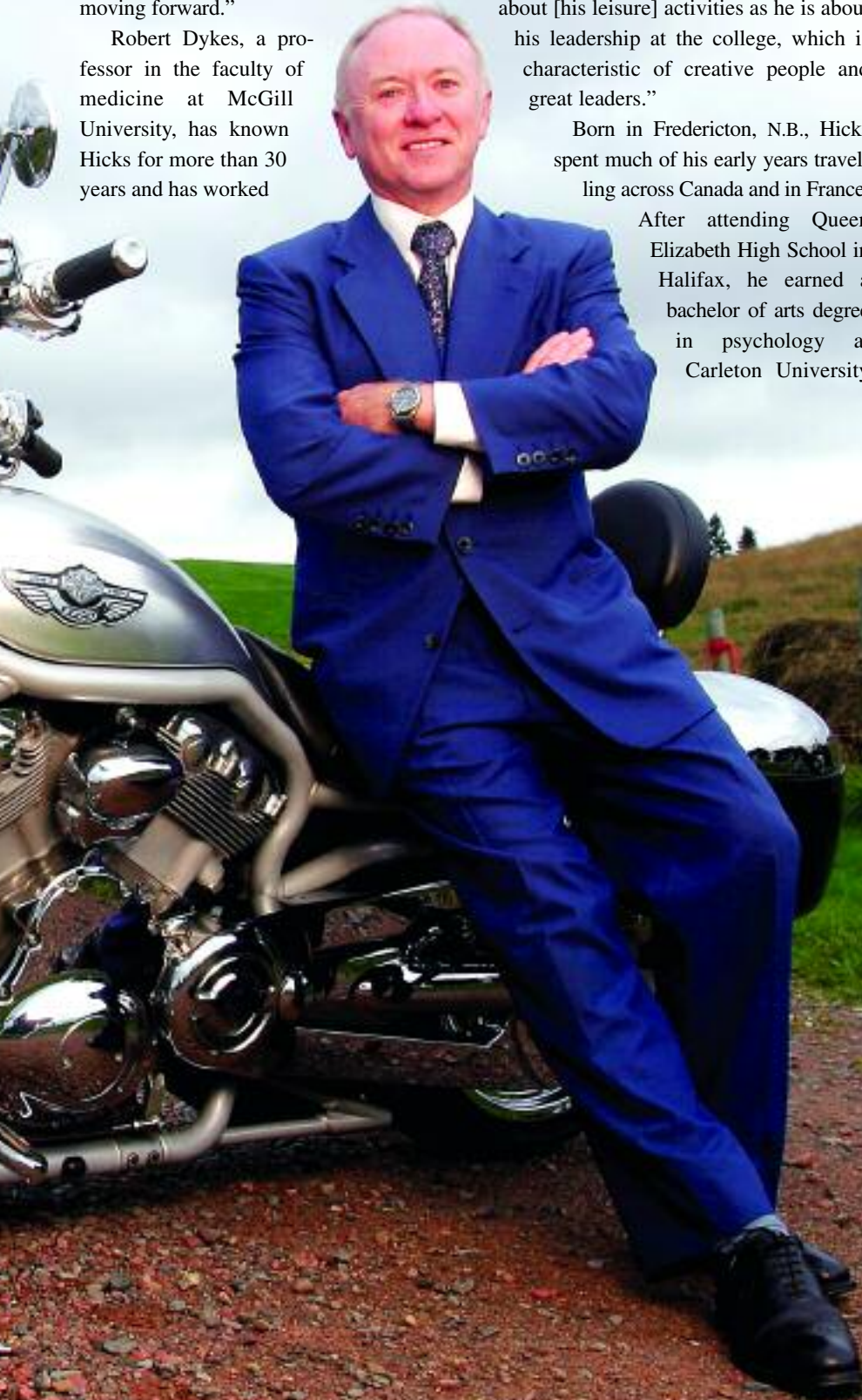
with him on many projects. “Philip has an intense pastime that is disconnected from the office,” says Dykes. “He is as intense about [his leisure] activities as he is about his leadership at the college, which is characteristic of creative people and great leaders.”

Born in Fredericton, N.B., Hicks spent much of his early years travelling across Canada and in France.

After attending Queen Elizabeth High School in Halifax, he earned a bachelor of arts degree in psychology at Carleton University

in Ottawa in 1973. “I was fascinated by areas of behaviour and brain function,” he says. Soon after, Hicks moved back to Halifax and enrolled in a science program at Dalhousie University.

After earning a PhD in physiology from the University of British Columbia, Hicks accepted a post-doctoral training position at the Max-Planck Institute in Germany. He trained under the supervision of Otto Creutzfeldt, whose father had discovered what today is known as mad cow disease, or Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. “He has a long pedigree in science,” says Hicks, “and I really thrived and flourished under his direction.”



While in Germany, Hicks met one of Creutzfeldt's long-term collaborators from Japan and expressed his interest in judo. Through this meeting, it was decided that Hicks would finish the last three months of his German contract in Japan. "I fell in love with Japan and the culture and its people," he says.

From 1981 to 1999, during stints at the University of Calgary, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and the National Research Council Canada, Hicks authored or co-authored 99 original refereed papers, served on the editorial boards of national and international scholarly journals, and won several research awards recognizing his contributions to physiology and

that the college's governance structure needs to be tweaked. "To run a university, you have to be at arm's length from the political fashions and fads that change on a daily or monthly basis," he says. "Universities exist to identify absolute truths and discover or create knowledge, irrespective of how elected officials and public servants may decide to employ that knowledge. Governments have as their highest priority serving the public good and establishing policies based on existing knowledge. These are not always mutually consistent missions."

Only 2.5% of NSAC students comes from outside Canada. Recruitment drives have been launched in Taiwan, Japan,

"To run a university, you have to be at arm's length from the political fashions and fads that change on a daily or monthly basis. Universities exist to identify absolute truths"

neuroscience. His next move was out of the controlled lab environment and into a job with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade as a science-and-technology counsellor back in Japan. "The job was to build bridges between researchers in Japan and those in Canada who work in academe, industry, and government," he says, "while at the same time catalyze research opportunities."

Hicks brought his skills to NSAC after the college put a strategic plan in place in 2003. "There were great goals put forward," says Hicks. "We need to internationalize and to look at our governance structure. We need to market ourselves better." For example, the college's name is an issue. "We're not exactly a college," he says. "We're not exactly just agriculture, and we're certainly not just for Nova Scotia. So every aspect of our name sends the wrong signal to potential students."

NSAC is one of the last post-secondary institutions in Canada to be controlled by the provincial government. Hicks believes

Korea, Central Europe, Brazil, and Jamaica. "I've been trying hard to recruit," says Hicks, "but you have to keep going back to the same countries and explaining what NSAC is and what it has to offer and that we have a PhD program that we want to implement in the near future." Despite the fact that NSAC has been training PhD students for many years, those students are granted their degrees from other universities. "We've always known that NSAC is a place of strong research," says Hicks, "but without a PhD program in place, it has been hard to hold our head up high."

Still, Hicks says the same things that cause students to hesitate attending NSAC are its selling points. "The strategy here is to frame the positive aspects to potential students," says Hicks. "Those include our small-town values, clean air and water, and close personal contact with professors, all of which are going to make a huge difference to international students in their educational experience." — JOE FITZGERALD

MAP of the WORLD



Keith Condon: "We prefer to concentrate on focused, quality-directed clients."

Since 1973, Tri-Star Industries has carved out a niche market exporting custom-made emergency vehicles around the globe

by TOM MASON

The world map on Keith Condon's office wall is covered with tiny stickers, the kind that teachers place in children's workbooks to signify a job well done. There are about 50 of them in all, each indicating a country where Condon has conducted business. Starting in Baghdad, the stickers trace the growth of Tri-Star Industries Ltd. (www.tristar.ca) in two huge arcs from east to west across the globe.

The bright, sparsely decorated office sits about a kilometre from Yarmouth

Harbour, in a large one-storey industrial building that the company purchased from the federal government in 1989. A framed medal hangs on the wall next to the map, the loose Jordanian equivalent of the Order of Canada that was presented to Condon by King Hussein and Queen Noor at a ceremony in Ottawa.

Tri-Star Industries started in 1973 as an

heavy work of welding and assembling frames and panels has been completed in a smaller production facility in the back. “We get a lot of clients coming here to see our operation,” says Condon. “We like to keep the dirty work out of their faces.”

A trip to Yarmouth is a vital part of Condon’s marketing strategy. He invites the heads of hospitals, government officials,

when Tri-Star was invited to the Iraqi capital to take part in a General Motors Corp. (GM) trade show. It picked up its first international contract at the show and a few more during stopovers on the way home. “In the early 1980s, we couldn’t fly in to Baghdad because of the Iran/Iraq War,” he says, “so we had to go either through Kuwait or Jordan.” Those countries have become



"We tour customers through the Annapolis Valley or down through the South Shore. By the time they get to Yarmouth, they love the place and they're already talking about coming back"

offshoot of a local car dealership, primarily as a manufacturer of ambulances and emergency vehicles. Since then it has carved out a lucrative niche market exporting custom-made emergency vehicles to countries around the globe. All of the ambulances in Nova Scotia are owned by Tri-Star; they lease them to the province complete with oxygen and medical equipment. At any one time, the company also is busy filling ambulance orders in six or seven countries around the world.

The office sits on a sprawling complex not far from Yarmouth’s downtown core, in a building that includes a hangar-like garage holding about two dozen ambulances in various stages of completion. A large RV and a racecar sit in one corner in a trailer, the trappings of the company principals’ off-hours’ hobby. The garage seems cleaner than most; it’s where final assembly and testing is carried out, after the

politicians—even the mechanics who will work on the ambulances—to make the journey to the Tri-Star plant, sometimes from as far away as the Middle East or South America. The fact that many visitors might see the town as out of the way is all part of the plan.

“We take a couple of days to bring them here from Halifax,” says Condon. “If we really want to impress them, we might set up a meeting with government officials, including the premier, first; that’s easy to do in a place the size of Nova Scotia. Then we tour them through the Annapolis Valley or down through the South Shore. By the time they get to Yarmouth, they love the place and they’re already talking about coming back.”

It works. Many of Tri-Star’s clients have been dealing with the company for more than 20 years. Condon started the international part of the business in Baghdad in 1979,

long-time Tri-Star customers as well.

Since then Condon estimates that he has been back to Iraq about 100 times—a relationship that is now in jeopardy because of the American invasion. He travels constantly, spending about 40% of his work year living out of a suitcase. In recent years, South America and the Caribbean have become an important focus for his marketing efforts. He’s even learning to speak Spanish. “I love Latin America,” he says. “It’s a great growth area for us.”

Despite the success in the export business, Tri-Star mostly has stayed away from American markets. “It’s a conscious decision,” says Condon. “We don’t want to be like other companies and count on the U.S. It’s a high-volume, low-price market. We prefer to concentrate on focused, quality-directed clients.”

Mitch Bonnar is Condon’s business partner and Tri-Star’s vice-president of

operations. A certified automotive specialist, Bonnar spent 20 years in a senior role working at one of the largest GM dealerships in Atlantic Canada. He prefers to leave the travelling to Condon, instead staying home to manage daily operations at the Yarmouth plant, an arrangement that Condon compares to a marriage. "It's a great comfort to me," he says. "I get to travel the world looking for new markets, and Mitch stays here and makes sure things run smoothly."

At the Yarmouth plant, Bonnar oversees an operation that produces about 300 vehicles a year, accounting for about \$15 million in sales. The ambulances come in many styles, depending on the needs of individual countries; most are built on a Ford chassis, but the company will build on anything. Tri-Star builds other emergency vehicles as well, including mobile-command posts, patient-transfer vehicles, fire trucks, and bomb-squad vehicles, most of them custom made to order.

The company also has designed and built blood-collection and organ-transfer vehicles and is currently working on a bulletproof ambulance for the motorcade of a world leader (Condon won't say who the new owner will be). "We gave up trying to standardize a long time ago," he says. "We love a challenge." Success also means that Tri-Star can be more discerning than it used to be. "Fifteen years ago, we would take anything," says Condon. "Now we focus on what we do best. We've got a lot more flexibility to turn down orders that don't fit in with our area of expertise."

In addition to the head office in Yarmouth, Tri-Star maintains an office in Ottawa and also has established "business arrangements" with distributor companies in 10 countries around the world, including Finland, Serbia, Turkey, Jordan, Ecuador, and the Netherlands. However, the Yarmouth plant is the centre of the company's world. About 70 employees work here, constructing aluminum frames and installing the complex wiring, communications, and medical systems, one vehicle at a time.

Condon has no plans to expand any time soon. "This year is the busiest year in our history so far," he says, "and we're still

only running one eight-hour shift per day." Once the vehicles are completed, each one is driven to Halifax, where it is shipped to customers around the world. "The 300-kilometre drive to Halifax gives us a great opportunity to test drive them."

The building of ambulances is just part of the story. The Tri-Star Group is actually a collection of six companies, none of which stray far from the core competency. Two retail companies are among them: Tri-Star Electronics sells retail electronics, including cellular telephones, computers, and radio systems, while Tri-Star Graphics is a commercial signage company specializing in vinyl-decal applications for commercial and personal vehicles.

Tri-Star International taps into Condon's considerable international experience to provide business-development expertise to companies interested in doing business overseas. In many ways, Tri-Star EHS represents the meat of the Tri-Star Group: The company markets customized emergency-medical systems to clients around the world. It's a formula that works

well in developing countries such as Jordan, Trinidad, and St. Kitts.

"We like to create EHS systems," says Condon. "We send consultants—doctors who are experts in the field of emergency medicine—into countries to assess their emergency-medical needs, then we design systems for them."

Among the experts the company relies on is former Nova Scotia health minister and Tri-Star EHS vice-president Ron Stewart. An EHS physician, Stewart is widely regarded as a pioneer in the field of pre-hospital medical care.

Despite the hectic pace, Condon has no plans to slow down. After all, there are still more than 100 countries on his map that don't have stickers on them. He says that he has just begun to tap into Latin America's potential, and there are large gaps where he has never been, such as sub-Saharan Africa and the Far East. "We're only concentrating on about 10% of the world market," he says. "There's still a lot of potential business out there. We've barely scratched the surface." ■

Cleaning

Nova Scotia is learning that community-based environmental management is a good way to preserve its precious water resources

by ROBERT MARTIN

Nova Scotia is almost entirely surrounded by water, a fact that has profoundly affected the history and development of the place nicknamed Canada's Ocean Playground. Yet it is water of a different sort—drinkable and safe to swim in—that is becoming more important in the 21st century, and Nova Scotia is taking its place as a world leader in both the protection of and productive use of the world's most precious commodity. "Most people think environmental issues are only that, but they're wrong," says Stephen Hawboldt, an environmentalist with the Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) in Annapolis Royal. "They're economic, public-health, and environmental issues."



up our act

Hawboldt knows what he's talking about. In June the executive director CARP (www.annapolisriver.ca) became the first Atlantic Canadian to win a gold medal from the Canadian Environmental Awards program. He received the award for his work in the restoration and rehabilitation of the river that gives the Annapolis Valley its name, its beauty, and its life.

As a result of the expertise Hawboldt has accumulated over the past 15 years, he has been invited to share his knowledge internationally. Through Dalhousie University and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), he participated in the Sino-Canadian Symposium on River Basin Management in China's Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces, an area formerly known as Manchuria. "They have horrendous problems there because of all the heavy industry," he says. "Oil refineries, coal-fired steel mills—everything ends up in the rivers, and there is so much suspended particle matter in the water that, well, you don't have to be God to walk on it. I'll give them credit; they're trying very hard to clean it up. They have come to the conclusion that their water qual-

ity, or lack of it, is undermining their development efforts. The purpose behind our trip was to exchange ideas. They wanted to know the approaches we use and they were quite interested because we educate and involve the people who live in the area. And the one thing they've got lots of is people."

Hawboldt also has made similar CIDA-sponsored trips to tiny Caribbean nations such as Trinidad and Tobago. He says that, regardless of the scale of the project, the methods practiced in Nova Scotia work because they are based on public participation. "The whole notion is that people should participate in finding out what the problems are and in finding the solutions to them," says Hawboldt. "That way, their sense of ownership is enhanced."

A community activist whose background is in journalism and local politics rather than science or academia, Hawboldt prefers low-tech, hands-on approaches that require local action and create a strong sense of stewardship. "I think the most powerful communication tool," he says, "is a conversation over a back fence."

The Annapolis River basin, located in the heart of Nova





Stephen Hawboldt: "People should participate in finding solutions to the problems."

SANDOR FIZLI

Over the years, as residents and landowners have become more careful about riverbank preservation, the Annapolis River has improved, fish have returned, and properties along the waterway have become more desirable

Scotia's agricultural food basket, never approached the levels of degradation found in China and wasn't even the dirtiest river in the province. While still relatively clean, the Annapolis River has faced many environmental indignities caused by land-use changes, hydro dams, and declining habitats. "Like everywhere else," says Hawboldt, "we humans are not kind to our landscapes."

Over the years, as Hawboldt's educational teams have worked in schools and town halls, as residents have participated in cleanups, and as landowners have become more careful about riverbank preservation, the Annapolis River has improved, fish have returned, and properties along the waterway have become more desirable. That's why Hawboldt believes water quality is firstly an economic issue. "A property on a pristine waterway will sell faster for a higher price,"

he says. "Because of higher assessed values, tax rates can be lower. Plus, if people eat fruit and vegetables that have been exposed to dirty water, they can get sick. That means time lost from work, reduced producer incomes, and high public-health cost."

Hawboldt points to a recent Gardner Pinfold Economic Consulting five-year study showing the efficiency of community-based environmental management. First, it calculates public costs for the traditional approach of field offices and field staff to be about \$71 million. It then confirms that Environment Canada invested \$6 million over five years to the 14 community organizations participating in the Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) and another \$17 million in non-ACAP money, which paid back to the government \$8 million in payroll and other taxes.

"This is an efficient use of tax dollars that

not only has created 485 person years of work but also has provided indirect spinoffs through payroll taxes and increased economic activity," he says. "In addition, our expertise is very much an exportable commodity. Some ACAP sites have been involved in projects in Russia and South America. With Saint Mary's University in Halifax, we've worked on joint efforts with organizations in the Caribbean and Latin America."

Marq de Villiers, an editor and journalist who lives in Lunenburg and who is the author of *Water: The Fate of Our Most Precious Resource*, highlights several truths about water for complacent Canadians who think they live in a land of liquid plenty. "The notion that Canada has 'two-thirds of the world's freshwater resources' (is) a commonplace in news stories," he writes. "Though it is entirely wrong. The real number is around 6% of

annual global runoff.”

As a result, Canadians in general have been wasteful in their water usage. De Villers calls us “water hogs, second in the world only to the United States in per capita consumption of water, taking three times more per day than the average German, for example...More than half of Canadian households are not metered and use as much water as they like for a low flat fee. A third of Canadians are not even served by waste-treatment plants.”

Much of the situation is historical and related to Canada’s rural beginnings. For example, it was easy to dump sewage into Halifax Harbour when the city was a colonial outpost. Now that it’s a metropolis with a population of over a quarter of a million, Halifax Regional Municipality is building a series of waste-treatment plants and cleaning up its act, much to the joy of residents and tourists.

LEADING THE WAY

On a smaller scale, municipalities such as the town of Chester on the South Shore are doing pioneering work in their approaches to waste water treatment. Tom Austin, the president of ABL Environmental Consultants (www.ablenvironmental.com) in Dartmouth, is using innovative technology, much of it developed in Canada, to prevent landfill wastewater from leaching into the water table by treatment and then turning it into rain or snow. Landfills aren’t something most people associate with water, but leachate, or water that percolates through garbage, can amount to 1.2 metres, or four feet, of water every year per square foot of open ground.

Chester residents don’t want contaminants trickling into their well water or nearby streams, and Austin, a biologist and engineer with 20 years of experience, says that his approach to chemicals at a landfill is “they don’t get past the gate. We stop them here.” Instead of dumping garbage in a landfill, Austin is helping Chester’s Public Works department develop a system for treating the leachate with an advanced patented oxidation process developed by Purifics ES Inc. of London, Ont., that involves the release of free radicals that are voracious eaters of manmade chemicals.

Will the salmon run again?

Salmon-fishing enthusiasts are precise people: They know exactly where the right fly should be flicked lightly onto a dark pool of water, where a frisky Atlantic salmon lurks. Members of the Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF) are equally meticulous about recording every river or stream where salmon are—or should be—found. The federation’s website lists an impressive 151 salmon rivers in Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, 52 of them no longer have any salmon at all, while an additional 21 are listed as endangered.

One of the principle causes, according to Nova Scotia regional director Lewis Hinks, is acid rain. Another map on ASF’s website (www.asf.ca), suitably decorated with skull-and-crossbones symbols, cuts a red swath across the southern half of the province from west to east, from Digby Neck to the Strait of Canso. The rain, much of which originates in the industrial northeastern United States, has wiped out about 60% of the indigenous salmon population, from the western tip of Nova Scotia around Yarmouth along the South Shore up to Halifax and along the entire length of the Eastern Shore.

“Despite the creation of the Clean Air Act in the U.S. in the early 1990s, we’re not seeing the improvements we expected,” says Hinks. “We’ve learned that even if all acid rain stopped today—and it has merely been reduced—it would still take between 50 and 100 years for the stocks’ river chemistry to return to normal and hopefully an increase in salmon numbers.” Since most of today’s salmon-fishing enthusiasts don’t expect to be around that long, they’re trying to give nature a boost.

Experiments with placing lime on the ice on headwater lakes to restore pH balance during spring runoff have helped. For example, the Meteghan and Tusket rivers have been restored, but there are lots of rivers left. Many

of them don’t have suitable headwater lakes, and some coastal areas don’t freeze enough to provide safe ice for volunteers to work on. So the ASF and the Nova Scotia Salmon Association have invested more than \$100,000 of its members’ money on an experiment in automated liming. They have bought some Norwegian/Swedish technology, a computer-controlled lime-dousing machine that releases lime into a river based on the water-flow rate at that point, and have built a silo that holds 50 tonnes of lime on the West River in Sheet Harbour. The machinery was installed in August.

Hinks describes the project as “very ambitious for a non-profit organization,” adding that Neenah Paper Inc., formerly Kimberly-Clark, along with many others, is also helping with the 10-year project—two lifecycles of salmon—in order to see if it’s effective. Hinks is hopeful, aware that the Norwegians have been using the technology for some time on their own streams affected by European acid rain. — R.M.



NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND HERITAGE



On a smaller scale, Chester is doing pioneering work in its approach to wastewater treatment

“The objective is to produce high-quality water,” he says, “but not to put it back into the system.”

The water that is produced with the Purifics technology doesn’t have any of the nasty bacteria such as the E. coli that poisoned the water in Walkerton, Ont., in 2000, but it does contain heavy metals such as iron and manganese that “are tied up with the water as inert particles,” says Austin.

Another innovative aspect of Chester’s system is the use of EVC technology—provided by Northern Watertek Corp. of Vars, Ont.—for the disposal of the treated water. The EVC separates particles by spraying the water as a fine mist over a portion of the landfill. The water evaporates, and the particles fall back to earth on the landfill. About 80% of the water evaporates; the rest penetrates the topsoil and is used by plants. The misting system is used on sunny days when evaporative potential is high, and the mist travels no more than 200 to 300 metres. In the winter, the EVC system is used to make snow on the landfill.

“The advantage with snow is that it melts slowly so there is no runoff,” says Austin. Again, the key to the system is evaporation: the water goes, the particles stay. The Chester system combines several processes into a unique treatment that is both necessary for the municipality, because it has no adequate-size waste water-

treatment plant to accept the leachate and wants to keep its groundwater pure and potentially good for the province as well. “The system is widely applicable in Nova Scotia and throughout the world,” says Austin. It is relatively low cost—\$500,000 to \$750,000 worth of equipment, plus the price of site development, which varies widely depending on local land and labour costs—and environmentally friendly, and it works well regardless of climate.

WATER BUSINESS

Nova Scotia also is at the forefront of providing pure and economical bottled drinking water. One success story is Canadian Springs (www.canadiansprings.com), formerly Sparkling Springs, which since 1971 has been bottling 18-litre jugs of water at its own bottling plant in Valley, near Truro.

According to financial manager Joey Cotroneo, although the 18-litre delivered jug remains the core of the business, the company has expanded its formats into the 500-ml and four-litre containers, and in July it introduced a new eight-litre size, all of which are available through retail outlets. However, the 500-ml bottle is produced by a sister company in Mirabel, Que. Since 2002 Canadian Springs has been part of Groupe Danone of Paris, when former Nova Scotian Stewart Allen and his partners, John Krediet and Dillon Schickli,

sold Sparkling Springs Holdings. (The deal closed in early 2003, according to a local newspaper report.)

Canadian Springs owns about 75 hectares of land around the water source, so it's protected from development that might affect quality. According to Cotroneo, the area around Truro has one of the higher natural water pressures in the province, and there is no concern that the water source will ever be depleted. Through the company's hydro-geological studies and regular analysis, its natural spring water is of the highest quality. Even though the water coming right out of the ground is potable, to ensure quality, rigid controls are in place at the bottling facility that meet and exceed government and industry standards. The plant is available for tours by customers but not by the general public, although Cotroneo says the company is considering holding public tours in the future.

In addition to contributing to the overall economy of the province (sales figures aren't available for competitive reasons), Canadian Springs is community minded and supplies free water to many not-for-

According to Canadian Springs, Truro has one of the higher natural water pressures in the province, and there is no concern that the water source will ever be depleted

profit groups such as Sport Nova Scotia. The company's website includes an application form for groups that would like free water for special events.

From its humble beginnings, Canadian Springs has grown to employ 71 full-time

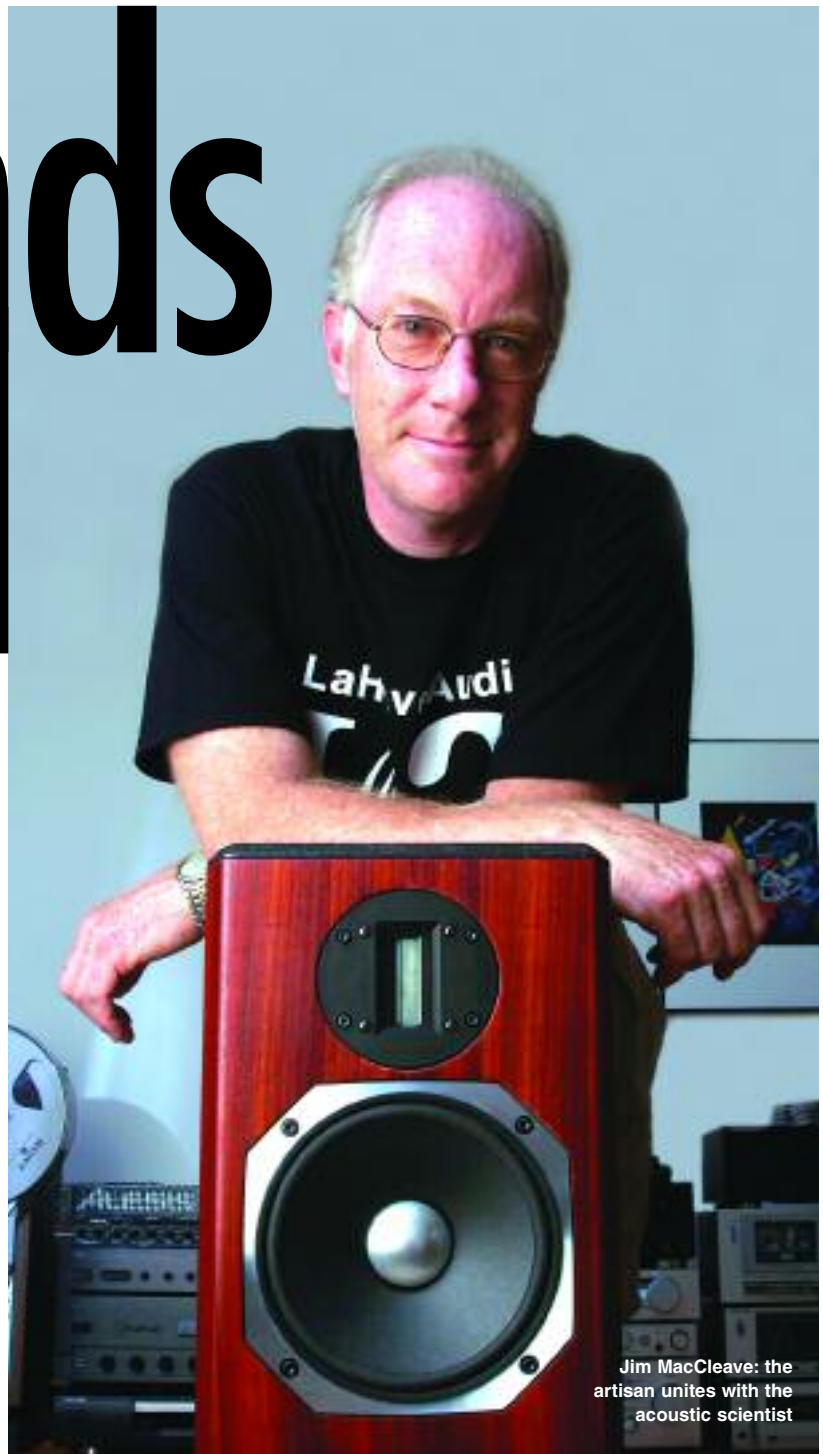
employees, plus 32 part-time and casual workers in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. It also supplies its 18-litre jugs to the French overseas territory of Saint Pierre et Miquelon off the south coast of Newfoundland. However, Cotroneo says that Canadian Springs isn't really in the export trade because its core business of supplying returnable, refillable, 18-litre jugs limits the company to a relatively small area around the source. Exporting small bottles for the designer-water trade to places such as France, which is home to Evian and Perrier, wouldn't be profitable.

In fact, in the water business, it seems that small and local is beautiful. As de Villiers writes in *Water*, the concept of selling water in bulk makes no business sense. With the cost of desalination dropping rapidly, grandiose multibillion-dollar schemes to redirect rivers or construct massive pipelines are uneconomical. Instead, it's better to concentrate on preserving what you already have and cleaning up what you've dirtied—and that's precisely what Nova Scotia is doing. ■

Sounds good

Building business relationships in Chicago means the chance to strike large deals and break open new U.S. markets

by JOE FITZGERALD



Jim MacCleave: the artisan unites with the acoustic scientist

for more than 25 years, LaHave Audio Products of Bridgewater has been designing and handcrafting speakers for discerning customers in Atlantic Canada. Company owner Jim MacCleave has a background in the craft of making fiddles, and when he made the crossover with electronic technology, the result was a world-class product.

Philippe Djokic, a music professor

at Dalhousie University, has compared LaHave Audio speakers to a Stradivarius violin, while concert-jazz pianist and composer Adam Makowicz evaluated his *Songs for Manhattan* CD recording on LaHave speakers and considers them to be the best around. LaHave Audio carefully crafts every aspect of its speakers, from the technical, electronic, and acoustic components to their physical design. That

meticulous attention is impressing more and more audiophiles.

“The sound quality and lack of distortion blew me away,” says Marek Roland-Mieszkowski, the president of Digital Recordings (www.digital-recordings.com) in Halifax, who has a PhD in physics with a major in acoustics. “When I tested them, it was one of the few times in my professional life that I was so impressed.” Roland-

Mieszkowski was eager to collaborate with MacCleave and LaHave Audio Products. “We usually distribute our own product, things like aids and tests for speech and hearing, tests for audio equipment, and software for audiometric testing,” he says, “but I thought LaHave’s product was so outstanding that I wanted to sell it worldwide.”

Ever since the artisan and the acoustic scientist joined forces, LaHave has been trying to break into the international market. In April of this year, Roland-

HEALTHFUL BENEFITS

The wild blueberry juice concept had been in Casey Van Dyk’s mind for quite some time, given his familiarity with blueberries and the success of blueberry juice as a health drink in Europe. This knowledge, coupled with the increased awareness of the potential health benefits of wild blueberries, resulted in the development of Van Dyk’s 100% Pure Wild Blueberry Juice.

Van Dyk’s Health Juice Products (www.vandykblueberries.ca) of Caledonia

helped the company enter a market it hadn’t considered before. “Initially, we were focused on the east coast of the U.S.,” says Randy MacDonald, the company’s business manager. “Other people in the industry had told me that the health-food market in the U.S. is bicoastal, meaning it’s California or the East Coast.”

MacDonald represented Van Dyk’s at the Chicago trade mission and praises the events staged by Team Canada Atlantic and the matchmaking that was facilitated



The clincher for Van Dyk’s came when MacDonald met with the regional buyer for U.S. health-food retailer Whole Foods

Mieszkowski attended a Chicago trade mission on behalf of LaHave Audio Products; he believes it significantly raised the profile of the company and its product. He spoke to five dealers in Chicago who expressed interest in the speakers. “It was great not only for networking with people on the U.S. side,” he says, “but we also made new connections with Canadian manufacturers. There were a lot of high-ranking people from government and various marketing agencies.” As a show of support, Nova Scotia Premier John Hamm was spotted sporting a LaHave T-shirt.

LaHave Audio Products was just one of an enterprising group of companies from Nova Scotia that stormed the bustling business environs of Chicago on that April trade mission, intent on establishing a beachhead for export trade to the U.S. Midwest and other lucrative markets throughout America. Among the Nova Scotia delegation were two other diverse companies—Van Dyk’s Health Juice Products Ltd. and Intelivote Systems Inc.—also on the cusp of growth and increased market share.

produces an all-natural, 100% pure wild blueberry juice made from locally grown berries. During the late 1960s, when the Van Dyk family became interested in developing a wild blueberry industry in Queens County, they bought fields from abandoned farms with as little as 10% wild blueberry coverage. Today these same fields are covered with at least 80% wild blueberry plants, and more growth is expected. They are the first commercially grown wild blueberries in the county.

The company spent the first two years doing research, in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and support from the National Research Council of Canada, on how to take frozen Grade A wild blueberries and produce a quality product high in antioxidants that also tastes good. After testing the juice in Halifax and getting a positive response, Van Dyk’s distribution and coverage has continued to grow across Canada and into the U.S. market.

The road to success in the American Midwest presented special challenges for Van Dyk’s. The trade mission to Chicago

by the mission’s organizers. “There were many events that enabled the whole networking thing between companies,” he says. The clincher for Van Dyk’s came when MacDonald met with the regional buyer for Whole Foods, the largest health-food retailer in the U.S. “The meeting was only possible because of Team Canada Atlantic synergies and the efforts of the match-making team.” Whole Foods’ flagship Canadian store is in Toronto, where Van Dyk’s sells its juice. The Midwest buyer was able to go online then and there, check Van Dyk’s Toronto sales, and decide the product would do well in the Midwest.

MacDonald stresses the importance of the Whole Foods meeting, pointing to the difficulty in getting an audience with such a sought-after major player. “In retrospect, the Midwest was a perfect opportunity for us,” he says. “I don’t think it’s targeted quite as heavily as the two coastal regions. I met with the right people through the trade mission, which showcased a professional presentation of Atlantic Canada. Those things came together for us.”

CALLING ALL VOTERS

Why change the way people vote? “Around the world, participation rates are dropping,” says Mike Pollard, the vice-president of marketing for Dartmouth, N.S.-based Intelivote Systems (www.intelivote.com). “Traditionally, older people like to go to the polls and cast a paper ballot, while younger people prefer using the Internet or their cellphones. You have to integrate them all or you disenfranchise parts of the population.” Intelivote is integrating the traditional voting method with the ability to vote by telephone, cellphone, Internet, or some PDAs.

Regardless of how many people show up for an election, electoral officers must gear up assuming that everyone who is eligible to vote will do so, which can be extremely expensive. As participation rates

given a strong mandate to run the government. Intelivote’s systems address the data-collection and reporting requirements for corporate surveys, opinion polls, and other activities that require mass participation, but the company’s main market is municipalities, which all face the issue of young voters not participating because the technology they prefer to use isn’t available to them.

The Chicago trade mission allowed Intelivote to scout the American market. “In that corridor to the Midwestern states, Chicago is the pre-eminent place to be,” says Pollard. “City officials are generally running everything for the state, not just the county, so we wanted to see what kind of an acceptance level or rejection level we would get.”

In the U.S., electronic voting is perceived as computer touch screens at polling sta-

people who were involved in the election process. It also angled for companies who knew the industry territory and were interested enough to market its product in the U.S. “I would say we were successful on all fronts,” says Pollard.

As for how the trade mission helped expand Intelivote’s unique market, Pollard asked the organizers to set up meetings with the Canadian consulate in Chicago to find out who the city’s electoral players were. “I got an e-mail back from the organizers in 10 minutes,” he says. “They’re excited to work with you if you’re excited to work with them.” Intelivote met with two representatives from companies it was wooing at the Taste of the Atlantic Dinner put on by the mission, and, despite the fact that they had travelled from far outside the Chicago core,

Regardless of how many people show up for an election, electoral officers must gear up assuming that everyone who is eligible to vote will do so, which can be extremely expensive. Intelivote studied those trends and decided to improve the voting system

go down, costs continue to escalate, causing the cost per voter to rise instead of fall. Other problems can crop up in the democratic system; for example, when participation rates are so low that a strong mandate is virtually impossible for winning candidates. “If you elect someone with 34% of the eligible voters showing up,” says Pollard, “50% of those voters only represent 17% of the electorate, and you don’t have any official mandate to be running a government.”

Intelivote studied those trends and decided that several steps were needed to improve the voting system. First, all eligible voters who don’t traditionally vote or who can’t vote needed to be addressed. Second, the cost of setting up polling stations and printing electoral lists needed to be reduced. Finally, winning candidates needed to be

tions, but that kind of technology doesn’t encourage eligible voters between 18 and 27 years of age to cast a ballot because they still have to go to the polling station—plus the computers are expensive. “If you decided not to go with electronic voting from a kiosk point of view and putting that equipment in those locations,” says Pollard, “with the cost you would save on that equipment alone, we could probably run your elections for the next 10 years.” That theory raised a lot of eyebrows in Chicago. Since Intelivote’s systems don’t require any capital equipment or monetary investment, the company bills its clients as a service and as part of the clients’ normal election costs.

While in Chicago, Intelivote arranged meetings with specific counties and met the

representatives stayed for two hours after the dinner. “The combination of high-profile speakers and beautiful venues automatically draws your market to you,” says Pollard. “If you can’t work a room like that, then you don’t deserve to be there.” ■

The Nova Scotia companies featured in this article were part of the Team Canada Atlantic Trade Mission, a partnership of ACOA, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Industry Canada, Foreign Affairs Canada, International Trade Canada, and the four Atlantic provinces. Team Canada Atlantic is committed to strengthening the trade-and-investment relationship between the U.S. and Atlantic Canada by organizing trade missions to the U.S. This was the first visit to Chicago. For more information, visit www.teamcanadaatlantic.com.

Living heritage

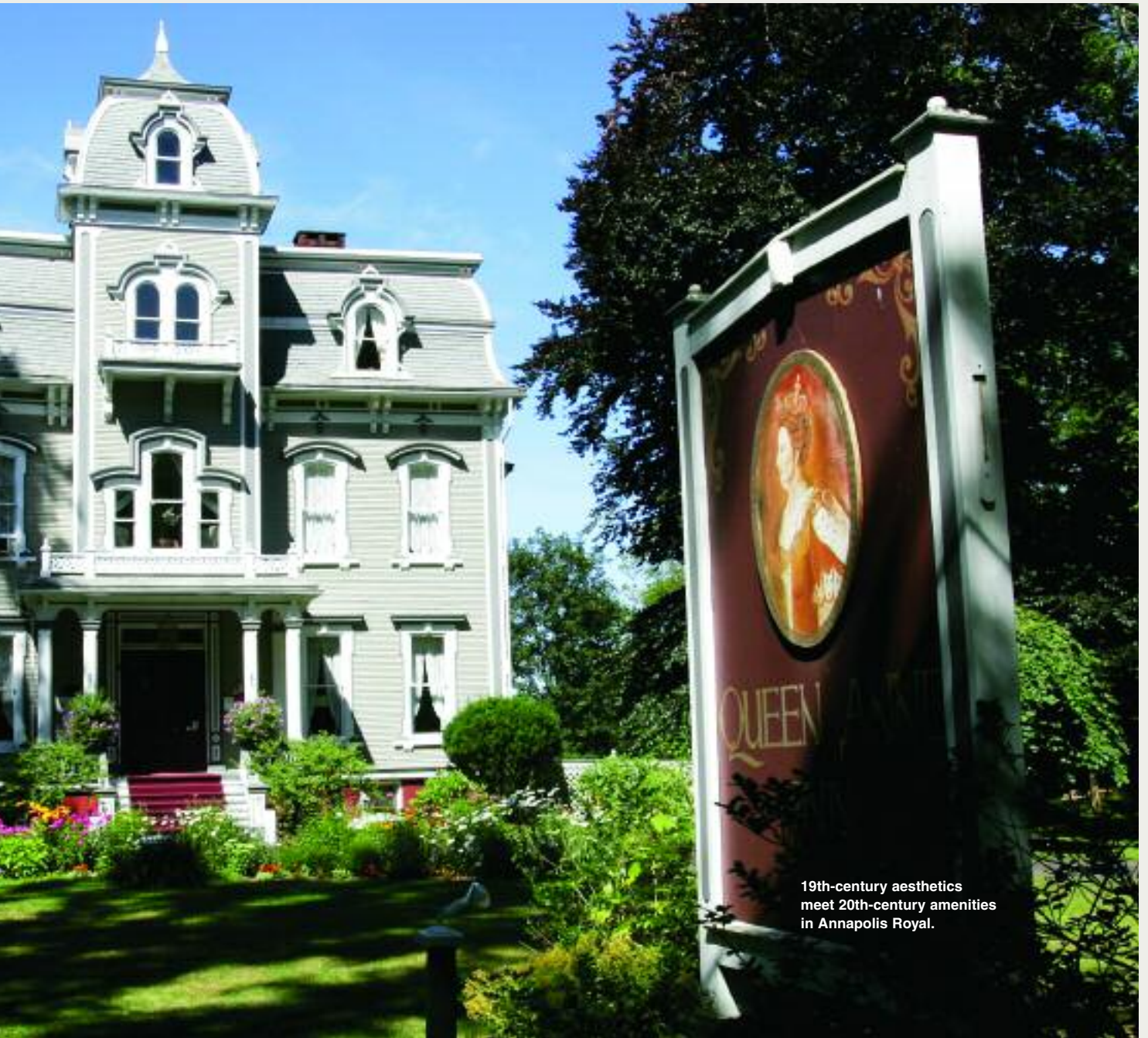
Celebrating its 400th anniversary this year, Annapolis Royal finds that history grows out of every nook and cranny

by TOM MASON *photography by SANDOR FIZLI*

Despite its name, the Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens (www.historicgardens.com) is just a generation old, but the DNA that it preserves is much older. The four-hectare garden preserves many plants that are rarely found in modern backyards and farms. The facility allows tourists and garden aficionados to walk through a succession of gardens that represent the town's rich and varied history: a humble kitchen garden that helped sustain 17th-century French settlers, a Georgian English garden from the 18th century, a Victorian garden from Nova Scotia's Golden Age of Sail. There also are more modern themed sections and a large rose garden with roses set in chronological order of origin.

Created in 1981 with the help of a consulting firm after a series of community meetings, the Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens started as a way to take advantage of valuable, if intangible, assets. Annapolis Royal isn't blessed with a large population or a diversified industrial base. Most of the businesses here are small cottage industries. The town is off the main highway and shipping routes out of Nova Scotia, but it has one thing in generous portions: preserved history.





19th-century aesthetics meet 20th-century amenities in Annapolis Royal.



You can still detect a trace of a British accent in Kevin Burnell's speech, a product of the 22 years that the British Columbia native spent living and working in England. When he decided to move home to Canada, he chose the East Coast, mainly because of its proximity to England. He fell in love with Annapolis Royal's "New England feel." Now in his third year in Annapolis County, he has no regrets about the move. "It's a lot like the area in England where we came from," he says. "I love the setting."

says. "We put a lot of money and work into them to bring them up to a three-and-a-half-star facility. It has been a very successful business for us."

It's also a highly seasonal business. Burnell fills the long winter months by serving as president of the Annapolis District Board of Trade (www.tradeannapolis.com); he also recently took on the position of manager of human resources at Upper Clements Park (www.upperclementspark.com), the family amusement park that has become one

for regional development, says Burnell: "We are an ideal spot for anyone thinking of locating a manufacturing business. There are plenty of sites that can be procured at a low cost, and we've got lots of available human resources."

If Annapolis Royal has a natural wonder, it's the tides that rise and fall more than seven metres every day. Although a few in Quebec's remote Ungava Bay might argue the point, the Bay of Fundy tides have long been reputed to be the highest in the world, generating a near-infinite amount of potential energy twice daily. Annapolis Royal has cashed in on at least part of that potential; the town's most distinct industry is its tidal-power plant, one of only three such power-generating stations in the world (the other two are in France and Russia).

The principle is simple: tidal water is allowed to enter the Annapolis River, which acts as a head pond through two sluice gates that are opened with the rising tide. When the head pond is full and the tide recedes, the water is forced through the wicket gates—a series of Venetian-blind-like structures—driving turbines as the tide recedes.

Every 12 hours and 25 minutes, the Annapolis Tidal Generating Station feeds power into the Nova Scotia Power grid at a rate of about 50 gigawatts per year. However, the tidal station isn't a large employer, and for the most part, tidal power has become what almost everything tends to be in Annapolis Royal: a tourist attraction.

For now, as it has been for the last half century, the area's fortunes mostly rise and fall with the tide of tourists that passes through every year. The town is close to ferry connections to New Brunswick and Maine and to natural attractions such as Brier Island and Kejimikujik National Park. Throw in a re-creation of the oldest French settlement in North America, an amusement park, resorts, and a town with a distinctly 19th-century appeal, and the draw is irresistible to the thousands of tourists who travel through there every year.

Most businesses in the area have focused on this tide of tourism. The Annapolis District Board of Trade has joined forces with eight other area boards of trade to create the Sunshine Coast Chambers of Commerce. The group is



Prestige awards have been given to the town for its preservation of its arts and culture

Burnell isn't the only one who sees Annapolis Royal's assets. Over the last year the town has won two prestigious awards: Most Liveable Community Awards from the United Nations Environment Programme and a national Cultural Capitals of Canada award. Both were given to the town for its efforts in preserving its arts and culture.

Like most of his neighbours, Burnell's business depends on the influx of tourists that make their way to Annapolis Royal every year. He owns and operates Winchester Cottages, a complex of seven two-bedroom cottages near the Port-Royal National Historic Site. "They were in need of modernization when we took over," he

of the area's biggest tourist draws. "This is very much a tourist-driven area," he says. "We have a low population base that makes it difficult to establish large industry. The town has been working to promote the local lifestyle to try to get more people to move in."

Most of the local manufacturing industry is centered around Cornwallis Park. The former military base was a revenue generator for the region for a long time. When it was decommissioned in the 1990s, it became an industrial park that now employs more than twice as many people as it did when it was a base. The park is one of the most appealing marketing points

PRESERVING HISTORY



A cannon at Fort Anne overlooks the Annapolis River.

Officially, Annapolis Royal (www.annapolisroyal.com) was founded in 1605, but the town itself is a much later creation. The original settlement was on the other side of the river at a place the French named Port Royal. The French adventurers who chose the mouth of the Annapolis River to build their settlement picked it for a reason. The town that eventually came to be called Annapolis Royal sits on one of the most exceptional spots in Nova Scotia: at the crossroads of the Annapolis River that winds through a fertile valley of the same name and the Allains River that connects with the great interior river system that was a main highway for the Mi'kmaq people. The town's harbour sits on the Annapolis Basin, a large bay almost completely surrounded by high hills that can be accessed by sea only through a narrow cleft in the North Mountain called the Digby Gut.

The town was first settled in 1605, two years before Jamestown was founded and 14 years before settlers arrived on the *Mayflower*, making Annapolis the oldest continuously settled European community in North America north of Florida. For the next 100 years, the town site traded hands several times, becoming a permanent British possession in 1713. It served as the capital of Nova Scotia until Halifax was founded in 1749.

Today much of the history of Canada's oldest town has been preserved. Along with the British military stronghold of Fort Anne, the town has more than 150 heritage buildings on display, including the oldest existing wooden house in Canada, the deGannes-Cosby House, which was built in 1708. Several stately Victorian-era homes that line the town's main streets have been turned into heritage inns, and one is now the O'Dell House Museum. — T.M.

focused on building up the area's tourist attractions and packaging them to promote to the outside world. "It should be an easy sell," says Burnell, "but until now, we haven't been pushing hard enough."

Upper Clements Park is a big part of that plan. Created by the Nova Scotia provincial government in 1988, the park has become known for attractions such as Atlantic Canada's largest roller coaster and a classic carousel. Burnell took over the job as HR manager early this year. "We've been making a lot of changes," he says, "modernizing the business and marketing it a lot louder than it has been marketed in the past."

Ye Olde Towne Pub will be one of the beneficiaries of that marketing strategy. Run by Brian Keevill and his wife, Carol, the pub has the distinction of being the smallest licensed pub in Nova Scotia history. "The original licence was for three tables," says Keevill. Since that original licence was issued, it has gone through a couple of expansions. Today the Keevills have a staff of 23 in the summer, a number that drops to six during the winter. "The tourist season is very important to us," says Keevill. "We have an active board of trade here in Annapolis Royal and we get a lot of support from the town for things like marketing and

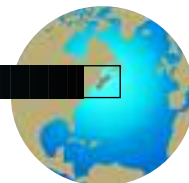
event planning." Despite his dependence on tourism, Keevill resists the temptation to cater specifically to visitors. "We figure if it's good enough for the locals, the tourists will love it."

Like Ye Olde Towne Pub, Patrice Duggan and her husband, Gordon Totten, have located their retail business in Annapolis Royal's downtown core. When the couple fell in love with the town 22 years ago, they were Halifax-based publishers' reps. They were having lunch with a client when he mentioned that a historic building on the town's main street was for sale. "By the time we got to Greenwood on the way home," recalls Duggan, "we had decided to buy it."

Books were the couple's first love, so they quickly established Mad Hatter Bookstore in the attractive retail space overlooking the Annapolis River. Totten's family had another business, an Ontario-based leather tannery that they had established in 1894 to sell fine leather and wool goods under the Bainton's Old Mill label. The couple used the family connection to open a Bainton's outlet in Annapolis Royal. It features a huge supply of leather, suede, and wool coats and jackets; moccasins; wool blankets; sheepskin rugs; motorcycle leathers; and other leather products, carrying both the Bainton's label and other designer labels.

While tourists account for much of Bainton's business, the outlet survives year round, in part because it has become well-known around the Maritimes as a reputable leather-goods retailer. Advertising has been vital. "We hired Burke and Burke Halifax to create an award-winning print campaign for us," says Duggan. "It produced a lot of results."

For Duggan, the beauty and solitude of the Annapolis Basin was the biggest selling feature, but Annapolis Royal made business sense too. The benefits of locating in Annapolis Royal make up for the fact that retail traffic is lower than it would be in a larger centre such as Halifax. "We did the math," she says. "Our expenses are much lower here than they would be in a city. We own our own building, our taxes are lower. It equals out in the end. This is very much a lifestyle business, and we have a great lifestyle here." ■



Definitely quaffable

When you bring together the wine of the land with the food of the land, good things happen, according to wine-tour operator Sean Buckland

As six wine lovers and a tour guide traipse single file between rows of grapevines on a hillside at Falmouth's Sainte-Famille Wineries, you can't help but think of the movie *Sideways*. In midsummer, the apple-green clusters of grapes are as hard as marbles, but by late fall they will be plump and explode with sweet juice when you pop them in your mouth.

Miles just might enjoy himself here in the Annapolis Valley. After all, there are no Merlot grapes—Merlot, if you recall, prompts a tirade from Miles in last year's sleeper hit film about two middle-aged friends on a road trip through California's wine country—but there's no Pinot Noir, either, or at least not yet. Instead, he could wax poetic about Nova Scotia's L'Acadie Blanc grape, which makes a dry, crisp, white wine, or Maréchal Foch, resulting in a full-bodied red wine with the aroma of ripe berries, raisins, and chocolate. As Miles's buddy Jack would say, "Tastes pretty good to me."

It just so happens that *Sideways* is one of Sean Buckland's favourite movies. When it came out last fall, art was imitating life. Buckland, then 27, and Mark DeWolf, then 31, two Halifax sommeliers, had just launched Valley Wine Tours, taking people in their 14-passenger van to family-owned wineries in the Annapolis Valley, where, increasingly, apple orchards are making way for vineyards on south-facing hillsides. In the 25 years since the corks popped on the first bottles of commercially produced wines, Nova Scotia growers have come to rely on hybrid varieties that combine the flavours of European wine grapes with the hardiness of native North American varieties.

"We try to take the snobbery out of the wine experience and just have fun with it,"

says the amiable Buckland, who is also the assistant manager of Halifax's Five Fishermen Restaurant. "The best thing is facilitating the best food and wine experiences, and that happens when you bring together the wine of the land with the food of the land." Recently, *Wine*



Mark DeWolf (left) and Sean Buckland

"We try to take the snobbery out of the wine experience and just have fun with it"

Spectator magazine awarded its Award for Excellence to the venerable 30-year-old seafood restaurant for its wine list, which is weighted heavily with local flavours.

Buckland and DeWolf usually lead three or more tours a week and offer a variety of experiences: The Wine Enthusiast, a day trip to three wineries, a gourmet lunch, and a repast of icewine and cheese in a wine cellar; Epicurean Adventure, a tour of two wineries, plus a chef's selection dinner paired with different wines for each of the four courses; and Wine Weekend

Wolfville, which includes a wine-tasting, dinner, and an overnight stay at the Old Lantern Inn and Vineyard. The pair of entrepreneurs also has branched out to offer team-building exercises to corporate groups, wine-education seminars to restaurant staff, and wine-and-food-pairing demonstrations at various wineries.

Fun is the key word. On the drive down to the Valley, Buckland charms his wine enthusiasts with entertaining commentary—about Sam Slick and his creator Thomas Chandler Haliburton and about Howard Dill's gigantic pumpkins—as the van closes in on Windsor (the out-of-towners are delighted). He also engages in a game of "name that scent" as he passes around 25 small black glass bottles and urges his passengers to inhale deeply. (Lemony! Oaky! Buttery!) The adjectives get hauled out all day—there are exclamations of "pear!" after a sip of Seyval Blanc at Sainte-Famille and "grapefruit!" after a refreshing taste of New York Muscat over a delectable lunch at Domaine de Grand Pré's exquisite Le Caveau Restaurant.

Much later, the tired but giddy group sits among the oak barrels and stainless-steel vats in the cool candlelit cellar at Gaspereau Vineyards, nibbling on herbed cheeses and sipping icewine. "A sweet balanced wine with refreshing acidity," says Buckland with a wink, swirling the thick liquid around the bottom of his glass. As Miles would say, "Quaffable. Definitely quaffable."

— MARILYN SMULDERS

Wine Enthusiast six-hour tour, \$95; Epicurean Adventure, six-hour evening tour, \$129.95; Wine Weekend Wolfville (in January and February), \$375/couple. Visit www.valleywinetours.ca for more information.