

A Mountain Biking Poet

[Note: This article is excerpted by permission from a May 2023 interview with Mackenzie Myatt by her publisher, Strong Girl Publishing founder Molly Hurford. Myatt competes in U.S., Canadian, and World Cup mountain biking.]

Which came first, riding or writing?

Oooh, good question. My dad got me into mountain biking ASAP, so I think it's a tie! I learned to ride a bike about 5 or 6 years old in the basketball court of my high school.

Do you remember the first athlete-related poem you did? When you did write that first one, was there a 'click,' like 'ahh, this is what I should be doing!'?

The two things were always very separate sides of me, the sporty, competitive side, and the part of me that loved books and writing, playing with language. And being active, whether it was cycling or whatever we were doing in gym class was always just – how hard can you go? There wasn't much thinking there.

It was only very recently when I took ownership of my training that I really started digging into the mental side of

sport and trying to figure out what was working for me and what wasn't and why on a very personal level. But after that, for sure I felt a click.

There aren't many poets who write about more physical things like riding a bike—who are some of your inspirations?

I'm a big fan of spoken word poetry, poetry that is relatable and easy to understand. I think poetry should be for everyone. Andrea Gibson, Olivia Gatwood and Rudy Francisco and Neil Hilborn are some of my favourites. None of those are sport-related, but they do pack a punch. Andrea Gibson is the first person who showed me that you can write a good poem about joy and that art doesn't always have to be sad. However, it took years for me to start writing about joy.

You write about riding a lot, but do you get ideas while on the bike or do they come to you after?

Nowadays I get a lot of ideas on the bike, especially solo rides. I try my best to remember them, but sometimes I do make a note on my phone if it's more than one line.

Has writing poetry about biking

changed anything for you on the bike?

It has made me more mindful of joy and therefore more likely to feel joy. It has made me a happier person. I also like to turn frustration into humour and be able to laugh at things. After all, it's just bikes! I always look for a smile or a laugh, that's what I want my poetry to produce.

Proudest moment in cycling?

What I am most proud of now is being able to listen to myself and understand what is best for my body and for my head. Last year I considered 'retiring' from trying to become a professional cyclist, but now I am more excited and motivated than ever to see what I'm capable of. I am more in love with the sport than I have ever been. Publishing my first book with Strong Girl Publishing is also one of my proudest moments.

And when you're not writing or riding, what do you do for fun?

I love to cook (and eat!), listen to music, dance in the kitchen, and float in the ocean.

You can order the book from Strong Girl Publishing at: <https://stronggirlpublishing.com/product/in-defense-of-big-dreams>

Bad Hair Day

I have a lot of trouble admitting  
I'm having a bad hair day  
I keep thinking that it's my fault  
That there must be something I can do better  
I must be able to fix it  
With more control and more details  
And more lists  
But the more I try to hold on to  
Any sense of productivity  
The more I'm dropping literal things  
In the parking lot  
Gloves, water bottles,  
Skittles, a vest,  
Sunglasses, my nerves  
And any hope that I'm going to be able to  
Salvage my training  
My computer tells me I have no heart beat  
And soon after the battery gives up altogether  
I have a choice  
I can give up or give in  
It's that simple  
I choose to give joy a chance  
And just go for a bike ride  
No numbers  
No worries  
No problem  
Just me, my front wheel and  
The wind in my hair.

# Solid Waste Strategy Review

Halifax Regional Municipality is updating its solid waste strategy to provide strategic direction for managing the region's waste to meet 2030 objectives while setting the system on a path to meet 2050 objectives.

As part of this review, we want to hear from you! Your feedback will help create a solid waste system that meets our objectives.

.....

It is easy to complete the survey online at [shapeyourcityhalifax.ca](https://shapeyourcityhalifax.ca) or call 311 to request a paper copy.

**Survey deadline: October 31, 2023**



HALIFAX

Solid Waste Strategy

## Sweet Brackish Salt

***By Marike Finlay***

[Note: In this excerpt from Marike Finlay's new novel, *Sweet Brackish Salt*, the skipper is in her dinghy with her dog Negrita on a shallow tidal river along the Chesapeake Bay, looking for a good dog field for Negrita when she heads toward a woman in distress on the shore.]

As I drew nearer, and she saw that I was going to come to her, she ceased her yelling and gesticulating. Then I saw it. A crumpled lump at her feet, half in, half out of the water. A premonition of loathing made me throttle back, dead slow.

"What's that?" I asked timidly, knowing the answer.

"My husband!" she panted, hysterical.  
"Help me – I can't pull him any further."

Oh no, I thought but did not say. I rushed in to the dock, jumped out of the dinghy, and told Negrita to stay put. Surprisingly, she obeyed. I dashed to the misshapen form on the muddy shore. It was face down, soaking wet, slimy with black viscous mud. I tried to pull it further up, but it was a dead

weight too heavy and too slippery to budge. So I rolled it over and peered down at it in horror. Eyes open and milky. No breathing. Mouth agape.

How I wanted to flee this stomach-twisting, insistent presence of disgustingness. But years ago I had received training in CPR. A voice came to me. It was my father's: "You would never forgive yourself if you did not try to resuscitate this pitiful being."

Mouth to mouth? I asked myself: Do I really have to apply my mouth to that gaping hole full of I dare not imagine what from the bottom of this muddy creek? They don't tell you about this at the St. John's Ambulance training. About how repulsive the victim may be. About the intensity of feeling that you just don't want to do it.

I knelt down slowly, without conviction, rolled the body over onto its side just as I'd been taught, and banged it on the back between the shoulders, stuck my fingers deep into its gaping mouth, back to the throat, snagged a gob of goop, pulled it out, then let the body roll back onto its back. Down on your knees! I ordered myself. Why hadn't they prepared me for this? Am I the only one so callow as to experience

these feelings, that a response to them was not a part of the program?

Even more slowly, even less deliberately I placed my mouth over the bluish cold lips. Blew in. There was an obstruction. My own wind farted back out at me from between our unsealed lips. Perform the passage clearing operation again, the memorized instruction

manual ordered me. I did as I was told. I blew and blew. The chest did rise and fall slightly. I pumped and pumped the area around the heart and blew some more. To no avail.

[You can order the book from the publisher, Nimbus - <https://nimbus.ca/store/sweet-brackish-salt.html>]

# The First United Church

## Musquodoboit Harbour

7964 Highway #7, Musquodoboit Harbour

# Turkey Supper

## Saturday, October 21st

4:30 – 6:00 pm

Price \$22.00

**Suppers MUST be pre-ordered by Oct. 13**

Contact: Olga at 902-845-2006.

## Turkey with all the Trimmings

**Dessert: Apple or Pumpkin Pie or Carrot Cake**



Assuage  
wellness centre

# NOTICE

## ***Assuage Wellness Centre now offering BOTOX COSMETIC® treatments***

Exciting news for those in search of BOTOX COSMETIC® treatments on the Eastern Shore! Look no further than the Assuage Wellness Centre in Musquodoboit Harbour where the talented Dr. Beth Briand is now offering her expertise. With a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from Dalhousie University, Dr. Briand brings a wealth of knowledge to her practice. Notably, she recently completed Certification in Orofacial Pain from Rutgers University.

Currently serving as a Surgeon at both the Cumberland Regional Health Care Facility in Amherst and The Aberdeen in New Glasgow, Dr. Briand has dedicated years to specializing in TMJ pain. During this time, she had the privilege of working with pain patients at the Amherst Hospital, honing her skills in various injection techniques.

Dr. Briand is delighted to extend her services at the Assuage Wellness Centre, catering to both cosmetic and therapeutic needs. She can address forehead lines, crow's feet, and wrinkles between the eyes, sometimes referred to as scowl lines or the "elevens." Additionally, she is proficient in achieving brow lifts using BOTOX COSMETIC®. If you are seeking relief from headaches, migraines, or muscle pain caused by tooth clenching, Dr. Briand is here to assist.

Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your appearance and improve your well-being under the expert care of Dr. Beth Briand at the Assuage Wellness Centre.

Plan to Join Us!

***Open House***  
***October 12 from 6-8 pm***

There will be prize draws, mini treatments and more.  
Might want to mark your calendars.

Have Some Fun!



Sheet Harbour Marina Association Presents

**"2nd Annual Fundraising  
BANQUET with  
"Live & Silent Auction"**



**Saturday, October 21st**

Sheet Harbour Lions Centre

Cocktails & Viewing at 6pm

Roast Beef Dinner at 7pm

Silent Auction starts at 6 and goes to 8:30pm

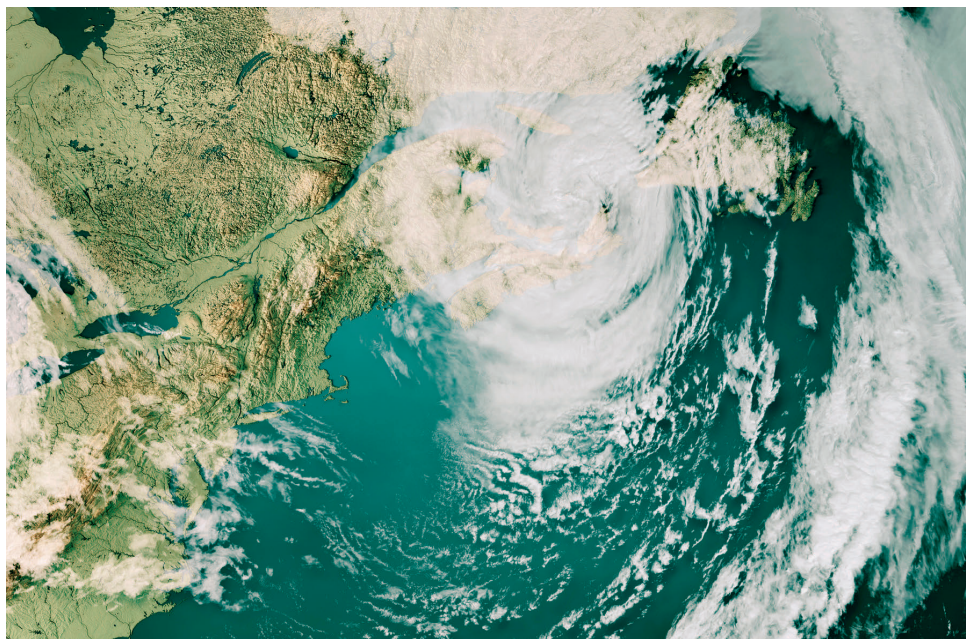
**\$30.00 per person**

**Guest Speaker Adam Langley**

President and founder of Super Yacht East Coast and formerly, he oversaw marine operations and development for Develop Nova Scotia, a government initiative. That initiative was as much for attracting visitors as it was for supporting the local community.

Tickets available at **East Coast Credit Union**,  
Sheet Harbour

or online at [sheetharbourmarina.com](http://sheetharbourmarina.com)



**Hazard,  
Risk and  
Vulnerability  
Assessment.**

Attend a public engagement session in your district or participate in our online survey. Help the municipality's Emergency Management Division improve how we make decisions, understand community vulnerabilities, and mitigate emergency risks and hazards.

**HALIFAX**



For complete details, visit  
[shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/hrva](http://shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/hrva)

CENTRAL NOVA

**SEANFRASER,MP**



☎ 1-844-641-5886

✉ [sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca](mailto:sean.fraser@parl.gc.ca)

f /SeanFraserMP

www [seanfrasemp.ca](http://seanfrasemp.ca)

Fall is here and as the leaves begin to turn I encourage everyone to get out and enjoy the beautiful scenery we're lucky to have in our area.