

Barbara Markovits

By Richard Bell

Barbara Markovits, one of Nova Scotia’s most dedicated environmentalists, passed away in early October. Through her long tenure heading the Eastern Shore Forest Watch Association, Barbara was a force to be reckoned with, taking on some of the toughest fights.

She had all the skills that make for a great citizen activist: she could organize with the best of them; she read through the fine print in thousands of pages of environmental impact statements; she rounded up support from experts; she worked with the whole panoply of local, provincial, and national environmental groups; she wrote untold letters to elected officials and staff at all levels of government. And most crucially, no

matter how one-sided the fight seemed to be, she never lost her wry sense of humour, and her great smile that could light up a room.

Barbara was a leader in the decade-long struggle to establish the Ship Harbour/Long Lake Wilderness Area, with its 14,700 hectares (36,000 acres) of old growth forests, large wetlands, raised bogs, and many wilderness lakes and waterways. Barbara led ESFWA’s formal interventions in the environmental impact statements for Atlantic Gold’s four open-pit gold mines (the “string of pearls”) forcing the province and the federal government to start addressing the threats of these mines. The company got the mine at Moose River into operation, but the

company has been unable to proceed on the other three. And when the McNeil government wheeled out its plan to sell Owls Head Provincial Park to an American billionaire who wanted to build luxury housing and three golf courses, Barbara was party to a lawsuit challenging the legitimacy of the secretive government decision.

Before the *Cooperator* began publishing in 2014, I served on the ESFWA board. After I left the board to edit the paper, I could always turn to Barbara to walk me through the most recent legal and regulatory environmental mazes. She presided over these sessions in her book-lined living room, surrounded by stacks of magazines and novels, a warm fire in the woodstove, and art works on

the walls, reminders of the years her late husband had lived and worked in Haiti. She was a wonderful friend, and I will miss her wise counsel.



Tree planting in memory of Barbara Markovits at the Deanery Project on October 22, 2023, at the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the organization she led for so many of those years, the Eastern Shore Forest Watch Association.

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EASTERN SHORE COOPERATOR

DECEMBER DEADLINE – NOVEMBER 15TH

Marike Finlay: Sailor and Writer in Many Waters

By Deirdre Dwyer

Marike Finlay is a talented writer and sailor and the author of *Sweet Brackish Salt*, published by Pottersfield Press. The novel tells the story of a “feminized gender non-conforming seafarer who works through various myths, encounters and kinds of water... to arrive at a more robust and nuanced self-understanding.”

Sweet Brackish Salt is a very readable book with an original, heartfelt tale of living a life. In her introduction, Marike writes, “[p]erhaps a sailor is always a diva who makes something out of trial or trauma, whether herself or a set of relationships. What if a sailor were a character who was always, at once, flying and landing beyond or beside others’ expectations, including strictly gendered charts and moorings. A modern woman or differently gendered sailor might be one who grapples with a new sort of paradox. To always be sailing would be static/Only by landing can one move on.”

Readers of the *Eastern Shore Cooperator* may be familiar with Marike’s work as excerpts from the novel have appeared in the newspaper. Marike Finlay was born in a tiny village near Strathcona and has ancestry linked to the Firth of Forth in Scotland. Her mother was a Dutch war bride, who was training as an opera singer in Rotterdam before the war broke out. Marike was raised in a cottage on the Bay of Quinte, on the north shore of Lake Ontario, where she started swimming and sailing. “I was enthralled by the first big boat I saw and was told it was for ‘millionaires and boys.’”

Marike worked as a psychoanalyst and for many years taught literature and communications at McGill, so she’s no stranger to academic writing. Eventually she became disenchanted with what she calls “gobblygook” and after many readings of Conrad’s *The Secret Sharer* and other books, started to do

more literary writing. She published a collection of short stories, *The Killing Ear*, and co-wrote with her partner Karin Cope, *Casting a Legend; The Story of the Lunenburg Foundry*.

Marike has sailed from Malcolm Island, BC, near Port McNeil, and all up and down the West Coast. Then Covid happened, and she sold her boat, reread Ulysses, and headed off on another adventure to the coastal waters of Spain, to Majorca, Corsica, Sardinia, and Sicily. “The fall is the best time to sail the Aegean because the Meltemi have abated,” Marike tells me. “The reality of sailing is salty wet, and you get diaper rash. Men don’t want to admit it. Women know that it needs treating,” she adds.

Published in 2023, *Sweet Brackish Salt* is Marike’s Covid project. The novel takes you to a sailing world dominated by men. On the book’s cover is Jenny Robinson’s compelling artwork of a boat floating on air, or sinking in water, or on a tapestry of lines, suggesting a weaving, the vertical drip of paint, while the lines of the boat itself suggest the seats of a dory, oars, and a loom’s weft and warp.

In her novel, Marike’s main character sails in the sweet water of the Great Lakes, the brackish water of Chesapeake Bay, and the salt water of rural Nova Scotia – thus her title. The last section of the book, *Salt of the Sea*, refers to the character, a “secret sharer”, Seamus, who helps the narrator learn more about herself as she works with him to retrofit an old Stevens wooden schooner. “Who was this basset hound of a man with curly roan hair, wearing white carpenter’s overalls. He stood facing me silently, his eyes averted from mine.” *Sweet Brackish Salt* is a lovely book about sailing but also finding home and community. It is a great read; with all the waters of the world I recommend it!

...The French Duck Continued

working for the RCMP on procurement. Both had farming backgrounds. Bruce grew up on a dairy farm in southern Ontario, and Stephanie’s father raced harness racehorses.

They moved to the farm in the spring of 2022 and set about creating the farm that they wanted. “Our biggest thing is that we wanted to become sustainable,” Bruce said. “The lesson from growing up on a dairy farm was that breaking even was a good year. So our mentality was how do we make income.”

The farm’s primary food product is chicken and duck eggs. They do not eat any of the animals they raise. They’ve started breeding baby goats that they sell as pets. And they’ve been staging events, using the large loft in the upstairs of their barn. “We’re doing farm tours now,” Stephanie said, “and we just had an open house in September. We’re holding goat yoga classes. We’re planning a big Halloween party, and a paint workshop, and we’ll be open for Seaside Christmas. We ran two summer camps for kids this summer. We’ve done some birthday parties, although that seems more popular in the spring. And next year, we’re aiming to do a couple of weddings.”

Along the way, they’ve been learning

more and more about the ins and outs of small-scale animal farming. “Thank God for Goggle and the internet,” Bruce said with a laugh. “We have really appreciated all the help we’ve gotten from more experienced local farmers.” Their goats have posed a special challenge. “Goats don’t show pain,” Bruce said. “It’s very hard to diagnose anything until it’s almost too late, especially with the babies. It’s so hard, they’re running around as happy little goats and three hours later they’re dead. We’ve gotten much better at telling when one of them is just not themselves.”

“My favourite animals are the turkeys,” Stephanie said. “They’ve just got their own personalities. And they’re so inquisitive. They always want to know what’s going on.” “They’re like inspectors of whatever I’m doing in the yard,” Bruce said, whether he’s on the roof doing singles or down in the yard building a chicken coop.

“Goats are my favourite,” Bruce said. “They’re very relaxing. People tell us that doing yoga with a goat sitting next to you is calming. Some people come for the yoga, and the goats are an addition. And others come for the goats, and it’s the yoga that’s the addition.”

Canadian Navigable Waters Act

Nova Scotia Department of Public Works hereby gives notice that a submission has been added to the Common Project Search (online registry) pursuant to the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* described herein and its description.

Pursuant to paragraph 4(1) of the said Act,

Nova Scotia Department of Public Works has deposited a notification of a minor work in accordance with the requirements set out on the *External Submission Site*, on the online Common Project Search Registry (<http://cps.canada.ca/>) and under registry number **8463**, a description of the following work:

The proposed project includes replacing the existing Musquodoboit Bridge. The current 47-metre-long metal truss bridge is in disrepair and will be replaced with 48-metre-span, 65-metre-long, 13.25-metre-wide plate girder bridge. The new bridge will offer 7.8 metres of clearance above the ordinary high-water mark.

The project will take place across the **Musquodoboit River** at **Trunk 7** between **Memory Road** and **Myers Drive**.

Posted at **Musquodoboit Harbour, Nova Scotia** this **2nd** day of **October, 2023**

Nova Scotia Department of Public Works

From the Family of Gary Thompson, West Petpeswick

We would like to extend our deepest thanks for the outpouring of love, kindness, concern, and generosity in these days and weeks since Gary’s passing. We are humbled and comforted by the community of people, near and far, who have joined us in our grief.

The many notes, cards, letters, phone calls, visits, and messages of condolence meant a great deal to us, as did the donations made in Gary’s name. We heard often how much he will be missed. We are grateful for all the gifts of food, and the shared meals they provided.

We’d like to thank Reverend Joan Griffin, members of the First United Pastoral Charge, and the musicians for helping us honour Gary’s life. We’d also like to acknowledge the Royal Canadian Legion Eastern Marine Branch 161, where Gary was a member for so many years.

“Grief is the terrible reminder of the depths of our love, and like love, grief is non-negotiable. If we love, we grieve. That’s the deal.”

Sincerely,
Glenda, Tamara, Amy, Lena, and David Thompson

Taylor Timbermart Remembrance Day Display

Taylor Timbermart in Musquodoboit Harbour does a beautiful Remembrance Day display in their entry every year.

It started quite small the first year with a desire to represent the veterans of those local families that live along the inlets, bays and harbours of the Eastern Shore. You will see very familiar family names like Baker, Marks, Kent, Lockerbie, Ritcey, Lively, Bonn, Monk, DeWolfe, Weagle, Bellefontaine, Webber, Faulkner, Mitchell, Power and so many more.



What began as a small area of images of those men and women who served gradually grew into a full entry display with dozens of veterans. Each year more faces were added and more stories were shared. There are stories of loss, stories of loves and marriages, and stories of courageous acts of extreme bravery.

More information and artifacts came from local legions and museum archives that were delighted with the growing display and offered their assistance.

You will see uniforms and recruiting posters as well as an old 1940's radio that gives regular broadcasts



They are always hoping to get more representation and recognition for the local men and women who served their country during times of war. If you have a family member you would like to see honoured in their display please contact Tara Smith at Taylor Timbermart and she would love to assist you.

Lest We Forget.



of the progression of World War II. There is an old worn black photo album with clippings and photos of the Second World War as well as a whole series of photos on the V E Day riots in Halifax. There are posters of the *Halifax Herald* newspaper announcing the end of the war and include other news of the day. The display has grown to include vets from Afghanistan including uniforms and images of experiences in Afghanistan and the troops who served.

What's Bugging Me This Month

By Jeddore John

Made a big mistake this month. Had a look at the HRM residential tax rates. Shouldn't have done it because now I'm perpetually angry. My annoyance centers around the difference between the urban tax rate and the rural rate. The rural rate is roughly 5% lower than the urban rate. It should be much lower, like 50% lower.

I can hear you asking "Why?" so I'll tell you.

There are a whole bunch of things that urban homeowners get that us hicks in the sticks don't need, want, or get. For instance:

- We don't get curbs and sidewalks and the maintenance and plowing that goes with them.
- We don't get routine police patrols. A cruiser once or twice a month down East Jeddore Road just doesn't qualify.
- We don't get storm sewers to carry storm water away from our properties. We deal with it ourselves.
- We don't get potable water provided. Again, we provide it ourselves.
- Same for drinking water testing which is built into the municipal water system. (Some would say that urban residents cover this with their water bill, but I can't believe that this revenue stream would cover all the equipment maintenance, personnel, vehicles, and ongoing system expansion costs required to provide this valuable service.)
- We don't have sanitary sewers provided. We provide our own in the form of our septic systems.

- We don't get timely repair and replacement of our bridges. Think the green bridge in Musquodoboit Harbour, or the Wyse Road bridge.
- We don't get public transit service. A few buses per day to Porters Lake also doesn't qualify.
- We don't get easy access to municipal government services.
- We don't get quality maintenance of our roads. For example, pick a road in Halifax or Dartmouth – let's say the Montague Mines Road. Check out that patchwork of black lines about 4 inches wide. That is crack sealing. We don't get that out here, and as a result the cracks in our roads get worse every winter from water freezing in the cracks. Dumb.
- We get little or no municipal help after natural disasters such as hurricanes. After Juan, it was the residents of the Eastern Shore who got out our chainsaws and opened the roads. Same after White Juan.

I could go on with many more examples, but I think you probably get the point.

Don't get me wrong – I'm not saying we in the boonies should get all these things and more. What I am saying is that we are being taken advantage of. It is ridiculous to propose that in not providing all the above services (and more), HRM is only saving 5% of the overall cost of providing services to us versus the cost of servicing urban residents.

Perhaps the municipal council thinks we are all

illiterate out here, or that we can't do simple math. I don't like it. And I can't imagine how the people in Port Dufferin or Necum Teuch or Mooseland or Mushaboom feel about it. We are all subsidizing the infrastructure in the urban part of the HRM.

So let's get the torches and pitchforks ready and march on City Hall chanting "WE WANT FIFTY PERCENT!" Just kidding, I abhor violence, but we must find a way to let downtown HRM know that we are not happy.

If you have a comment about this, or a story to tell about the effects of amalgamation, please don't hesitate to send it to me at jeddorejohn@easternshorecooperator.ca

Cheers, Jeddore John

Flu Vaccines Available

Bookings for the standard-dose and high-dose influenza vaccine are now available. Public health recommends vaccination for everyone aged six months and older to better protect against influenza. The high-dose influenza vaccine, which is free for Nova Scotians this year, is recommended for people aged 65 years and older. It is safe and efficient to get the influenza and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time. People can book an appointment at a pharmacy clinic at: <http://novascotia.flow.canimmunize.ca/en/covid-flu-booking>. For assistance booking appointments call 1-833-797-7772 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., seven days a week, including holidays.