



Krista Walsh, owner of KC Collect in Montague, won the first Eastern P.E.I. Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year award, at a recent chamber banquet at the Belfast Recreation Centre. Premier Robert Ghiz, left, was the guest speaker, saying small- and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of the Island's economy. Also pictured is Blair Aitken, president of the Eastern P.E.I. Chamber of Commerce. Guardian photo by Dave Stewart

Montague collection agency named first Eastern P.E.I. Business of Year

By Dave Stewart
THE GUARDIAN

BELFAST — Krista Walsh didn't let anything stop her.

With endless support from family and friends and a lot of determination, Walsh managed to establish her own business three years ago at the age of 25, becoming the first P.E.I. woman to own and operate a collection agency.

That determination has certainly paid off. Her business — KC Collect in Montague — was named Eastern Prince Edward Island Business of the Year last week at the Eastern P.E.I. Chamber of Commerce's inaugural awards banquet at the Belfast Recreation Centre.

KC Collect provides debt recovery and management services to small- and medium-sized businesses. Walsh, who owns the business, was the first Canadian to earn her certified financial professional designation.

To avoid any perception of conflict, the provincial chamber of commerce selected the winner for the Eastern P.E.I. Chamber of Commerce.

"It was definitely with a lot of determination," Walsh, now 28, said in an interview. "It's only been three years. You want to be the best there is so I'm working hard, long hours every day to be the best out there."

Premier Robert Ghiz, the guest speaker at the banquet, said in these trying economic times it's businesses like KC Collect that can make or break small communities.

"I believe small business is the backbone of our economy," Ghiz said.

Others up for the big award were Cruise Manada Seal Watching Cruises, Derek Nicholson RHU, Cooper's Red & White, Island East Tourism Group Inc. and Guernsey Cove Parlour Productions.

Walsh's motto is helping small

THE FINALISTS

* KC Collect (the winner) — Provides debt recovery and management services to small- and medium-sized businesses. Established in 2005, owner Krista Walsh was the first Canadian to earn her certified financial collection professional development designation.

* Cruise Manada Seal Watching Cruises — Owned by Amanda and Joe Purchase, the business is celebrating its 24th year of operation and its fourth year under the Purchases.

* Derek Nicholson RHU — Founded by Nicholson in 1997 it became an award-winning insurance operation to include group insurance products under the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Group Insurance Plan and Sunlife Insurance.

* Cooper's Red & White — Owned and operated by Glenda and David Cooper, it is a community-based business that offers fuel, home supplies and food products. They support everything that happens in the area and it's done in a cheerful and giving manner.

* Island East Tourism Group Inc. — A membership-driven, not-for-profit organization working with tourism operators from across eastern P.E.I. Some of their programs include an ambassador program on the Northumberland Ferries Ltd. link between P.E.I. and Nova Scotia, a brochure program, membership website, social events and more.

* Guernsey Cove Parlour Productions — Owned and operated by Gordon Belsher, it's a recording studio in its 20th year, having produced more than 90 recordings featuring Island artists, many of whom are winners of ECMA and P.E.I. Music Awards.

business succeed in a big world. "It's a collection agency. Small- and medium-sized businesses on

P.E.I. don't (necessarily) have the time or resources to go out and collect their money. I started my business because there was no collection agency that was serving small- and medium-sized business on P.E.I. There was no agency out there that was looking out for them. The services I provide allows business owners the freedom to do what they are good at."

Her odyssey started in Winnipeg on a trip to visit her brother. She started flipping through the Yellow Pages, contacting collection agencies in the hopes of getting a meeting. Not only did she get a meeting but a mentor as well.

When she got back to the Island, Walsh, who worked with an Island heating company before going out on her own, said it took her six months to get licensed.

"I thought it was going to be real easy to go in and get a licence (but) I was rejected three times. My initial reaction at this point was to give up but a family friend encouraged me, saying 'this is where you are going to determine if you are a successful entrepreneur and former business owner. You can give up now or you can keep going for your licence.'"

She even came up with a unique idea to stand out. Instead of a business card she has a book of matches with the words, "don't get burned by your debts" inscribed on them.

Blair Aitken, president of the Eastern P.E.I. Chamber of Commerce, said the purpose of launching the awards banquet was to give businesses the exposure they deserve.

"(They are) the heart and soul of our business community. (They) affect people in ways we don't even think about. I hope this will establish itself as something we can do every year and it will just grow bigger and bigger. The province couldn't survive without small businesses. They are extremely important. They keep communities alive."

Global village presentation raises cultural diversity awareness in schools

Display at P.E.I. Teachers' Federation convention

By Al MacLeod
THE GUARDIAN

More and more families with varying cultural backgrounds are moving to P.E.I. and enrolling their children in the provincial school system.

In response, the English as an Additional Language (EAL)/French as an Additional Language (FAL) team with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development facilitated an interactive cultural event and display to promote diverse cultural awareness during the P.E.I. Teachers' Federation annual convention held last week in Charlottetown.

The display featured clothing, crafts, books and other traditional items from about 16 different cultures with live presentations featuring musicians and other performers during the event.

Richard Brown, minister of Innovation and Advanced Learning, said raising cultural diversity awareness is a huge asset for all new residents of P.E.I.

"Overcoming language barriers is a significant factor in helping newcomers settle into our Island community."

Gerard Greenan, minister of Education and Early Childhood, said understanding the language challenges students are facing in the classroom is a huge factor in the success of the EAL programs.

"Efforts to raise awareness of these challenges will help both the student and the teacher meet their goals," Greenan said.

The EAL/FAL team was put



Nancy Clement plays a Celtic melody on the tin whistle as part of the global village presentation to raise awareness of cultural diversity in P.E.I. schools during the recent P.E.I. Teachers' Federation annual convention at the Delta Prince Edward Hotel and Convention Centre in Charlottetown. Guardian photo by Al MacLeod

together in 2007 to provide language-learning services to foreign students entering the P.E.I. school system.

There are 20 itinerant teachers who travel the 35 schools, including elementary, junior and senior high levels, to assist students who do not have English as a first language.

New students with language challenges are registered at EAL-FAL reception when enrolled to locate and assist them in settling into the school system.



Staff members at Souris Hospital celebrated 20 years last week with a barbecue to mark the event. Representing the entire staff, from left, are Gail Chaisson, Lillian Humphrey, Donna Malone, Terry Campbell and Lloyd Burke. Guardian photo by Nancy Willis

Souris Hospital marks 20th anniversary

By Nancy Willis
THE GUARDIAN

SOURIS — Staff members and workers at the Souris Hospital celebrated 20 years in operation last week with a barbecue.

The small, rural hospital is known for its warm and caring staff. As people filtered in and out of the barbecue, they commented on how quickly the time had flown since the then state-of-the-art facility was completed.

Hospital director Terry Campbell said much has changed over the years, with both gains and losses, and it remains such a positive place for both employees and patients,

that more than 35 per cent of the original staff is still there.

"We have a wonderful staff, and our building is in terrific shape because everyone takes such good care of it, they treat it like home," he said.

"In what other hospital do you see the front door lined with visitors' shoes, just like it was home?"

Since Souris Hospital opened its doors, the bed count has dropped from 25 to 17, babies are no longer delivered there, and the emergency room has closed.

However, numerous other services have been added to the complex like the mental health centre, the addictions centre and others.

Today is School Library Day

Students across the province will have many fun opportunities to read today, which has been proclaimed School Library Day by Education and Early Child Development Minister Gerard Greenan.

"I s l a n d teachers, teacher-librarians and school library contacts are to be commended for the many innovative ways that they make learning fun and encourage students to read on National School Library Day and throughout the school year," said Greenan.



Greenan

One of the main School Library Day events is the Million Minute Challenge which challenges schools to prove that they can read for a total of one million minutes in a day. The event is sponsored by the P.E.I. Teacher-Librarians' Association, the P.E.I. Literacy Alliance and the UPEI Faculty of Education.

Last year, Prince Edward Island students tallied 1,334,671 minutes spent reading on School Library Day.

They are hoping that number will grow even further this year through the many events that schools have organized to encourage a love of reading.

A range of activities is planned such as Drop Everything And Read sessions, celebrity reader visits and library reward programs.

Thank You

To the people of Cardigan Riding, my thanks.

I want to express my appreciation for the welcome I was shown and the words of encouragement everywhere I went across the riding during the past Federal Election campaign. My thanks to the many volunteers who worked tirelessly on my behalf.

I also want to congratulate the other Cardigan candidates for a well fought campaign.

I look forward to continuing to work hard and serve the people of Cardigan Riding.

Lawrence MacAulay,
P.C., M.P.
Member of Parliament for Cardigan

www.lawrencemacaulay.ca

ANNOUNCEMENT



Shane Laybolt

Fair Isle Ford would like to welcome Shane Laybolt to our Sales team. Shane brings over 15 years sales and service to our organization. Shane would like to welcome all clients past and present to contact him for all their vehicle needs. Shane can be reached at 368-3673..



**116 St. Peters Road
368-3673**

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