

# Community

## Neighbourhood groups work together

In August 1999, representatives from the Commons North Neighbourhood Association and the Peninsula South Community Association decided to act on an idea we had been tossing around for some time: to see if we could get all the neighbourhood groups on the peninsula together to talk about our common problems.

Earlier that year the city's planning and development department had proposed a controversial change to the municipal development plan that would have made it easier for developers to sidestep approval requirements for several pieces of land.

Two of these parcels were on Robie Street, just north and south of the Commons.

Originally, the idea was for the two associations to co-operate in opposing these changes. But then we began to talk about expanding

the idea to include all the groups we could find.

Stephen Esposito, then president of the Commons North association, agreed to serve as the chairman, and arranged for us to meet at All-Nations Reformed Church.

Calling the meeting wasn't a very scientific process. We simply put out the word and called people we knew who had been involved in neighbourhood issues.

Representatives from nine organizations showed up. Geographically, they ranged from the Barrington Street South association to the Novalea Community Group, and the Westmount Neighbourhood Watch in the north and west.

In between, in addition to the Commons North and Peninsula South groups, we had representatives from the Brunswick Heritage Area Residents' Association, the Bloomfield Neighbourhood Associ-



**BEVERLY MILLER**  
PENINSULAR HALIFAX

ation, the Creighton-Gerrish Neighbourhood Watch and the Ward Five Community Centre.

To an outside observer this may have seemed like a pretty motley group; most of us had never seen one another, and on the surface our neighbourhoods probably didn't appear to have a lot in common.

But by the end of that meeting we had agreed unanimously on what many of us had suspected: no

matter where we lived on the peninsula, we had the same problems.

Unsightly and unhealthy living conditions topped the list of complaints: garbage, dangerous and unsightly premises, dirty streets with no trash cans, parking and traffic problems, and insufficient policing and bylaw enforcement.

A second group of concerns related to our relationships with HRM: there was poor communication, the neighbourhoods were not part of decisions that affected them, and HRM lacked a vision for the peninsula that included neighbourhood concerns.

The peninsula also did not have a community council, so all the issues related to planning and development in our neighbourhoods were decided by the whole HRM council.

With a great deal of enthusiasm the group agreed to meet four times

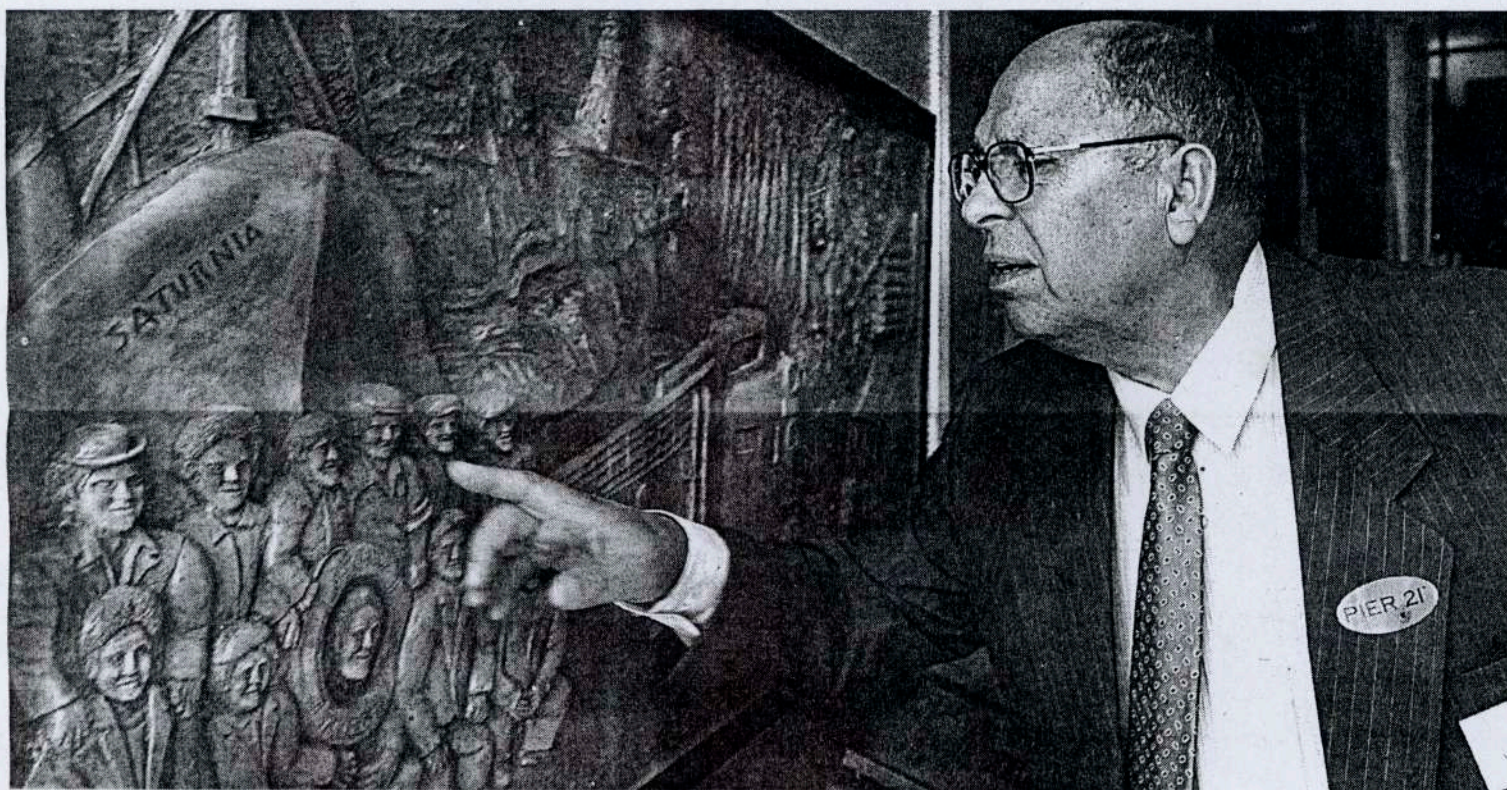
a year, and the next summer it was successful in getting the Peninsula community council reinstated.

The meetings take place less often now — more like once or twice a year — and a couple of the original groups are less active, perhaps because neighbourhood associations are very issue- and crisis-driven. The Creighton-Gerrish Neighbourhood Watch developed into the Central Halifax Neighbourhood Association, and a relatively new group, the Old South End Neighbourhood Watch, had representatives at our last meeting.

In spite of not meeting as often, the group still works on common issues. But the most important result is the communication that has resulted: sharing advice on how to deal with problems and letting others know about important meetings.

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### PORTUGUESE PORT OF ENTRY



**NEWCOMERS:** Artist Mauricio Almida discusses his carving depicting immigration in Canada, from pioneer settlement to the recent past. The carving

was unveiled at Pier 21 yesterday, as part of celebrations marking 50 years of Portuguese immigration to Canada.

### Community Calendar

#### TODAY:

**BRUNCH:** The Dartmouth Seniors' Service Centre is holding a Mother's Day brunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and include meal, entertainment and door prizes.

**CAMPS:** The Lung Association of Nova Scotia is accepting applications for Camp Treasure Chest 2003. Any child between 8 and 11 years of age with moderate to severe asthma is eligible to attend free of charge. For more information, contact the Lung Association at 443-8141, or 1-888-566-5864.

#### TOMORROW:

**COMPUTER CLASS:** The Spring Garden Road Library is holding a computer class, How to Navigate the Internet, today at 10 a.m. For more information for this free session, call the library at 490-5700.

**SEMINAR:** The Association of Records Managers and Administrators Halifax Chapter holds its 18th Annual Spring Seminar from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Westin Nova Scotian Hotel. For more information please contact Patricia Studley at 424-5867.

**BLOOD DONOR CLINICS:** Clinics will be held in Halifax at the Bayers Lake Nova Scotia Liquor Corp. Training Room, 93 Chain Lake Drive, from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m., and in Berwick, Kings Co., at the Berwick Lions Hall, 169 Brown St., from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. For more information or to make an appointment, call 1-888-2donate.

**SEND US YOUR EVENT NOTICES** to dbartolacci@hfxnews.ca or to Community Calendar P.O. Box 8330, Stn. A, Halifax, NS, B3K 5M1.

## Do you know a community hero?

Has your group won an award, raised funds for a worthy cause or presented a major scholarship to a student?

The Daily News is launching a weekly page called Community Heroes that will be full of photographs dedicated to celebrating people who are striving to make the Halifax Regional Municipality a better place to live.

Submit your photographs, along with the names of the people pictured, to:

Community Heroes  
The Daily News  
P.O. Box 8330, Station A  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3K 5M1

Or e-mail us the photo (as a jpeg at 200 DPI) and outline to:

dbartolacci@hfxnews.ca

Please ensure the photo you're submitting is clear and focused, and includes no more than a handful of people. A full caption identifying all those pictured in the photo is also required, along with details about your group and activity.

Look forward to our new Community Heroes page in the coming weeks.

