



HALIFAX WOMEN'S
HISTORY ♦ SOCIETY

Halifax Women's History Society Monthly Newsletter

Issue no. 1, July 2016

Message from the President



Welcome to the first issue of our new electronic newsletter. We aim to make this a continuing endeavour and it joins our other initiatives to improve our communication to you. As many of you know, we recently added Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to our portfolio of communication tools. Now the newsletter will be another way to keep you informed.

The target date for unveiling our monument, The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles, is 16 months away. We have much work still to do to make our goal of erecting the first monument to actual women in Halifax a reality. But we are well on our way and we got a tremendous boost on June 24 — and national media coverage — with the announcement by CN of a major donation of \$100,000. This announcement was made at a news conference by Robert Pace, chair of the board of directors of CN.

Throughout the war period, CN trains carried troops, family members and materials to and from Halifax. CN played an

[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

We now are at the \$250,000 mark for raising our goal of \$750,000 to commemorate and educate the public on the role that women volunteers played and are moving into high gear in our fund-raising efforts.

We also are very close to sending out, by invitation, the request for proposals to women sculptors for their interpretations of our three-figure monument. This is an exciting step and we will keep you informed in our next newsletter of our plans and progress on this vital commission.

There's also news about our next major event, which will be in the afternoon of Saturday, Oct. 1. It's a re-enactment of the famous North End Services Canteen on Russell Street — a popular spot for servicemen and mariners during the Second World War. While the original building housing the canteen is long gone, the Ward 5 Neighbourhood Centre is on the site and will be the fitting location for our event. Early plans include entertainment by the Dal/King's Swing Dancers, a duo singing Second World War songs, a lunch of wartime fare, and tables of knitted and baked goods. Tickets are \$15 and we are going to offer them to our members first — membership in HWHS does have its privileges! Plans are to have the tickets ready by late August. We will have more details soon about this fun event and hope many of you can attend.

We want this newsletter to be valuable to you so please share your feedback and suggestions to help us improve. Pass it on to any friends who may be interested and let people know they can sign up for a one-time membership fee of \$25 (\$5 for students) by going to the HWHS's [membership page](#). There is strength in numbers — women can, and do, accomplish great things together. There is no doubt in our minds that we will succeed and bring this project to fruition.

We want to thank you for supporting us in this major endeavour and for remaining at our side as we work toward erecting the most significant piece of public sculpture to women to be erected in Halifax in our lifetime.

Janet Guildford

Chair, Halifax Women's History Society and its Woman on the Waterfront Project

Woman of the Month: Viola Desmond

Who better for our inaugural woman of the month feature than Viola Desmond, whose story has recently been in the media. The Halifax-born civil rights activist is the namesake of Nova Scotia's newest ferry and is on the [long list](#) to be on an upcoming Canadian banknote, along with a truly inspirational group of Canadian women. She has even been immortalized in a much beloved [heritage minute](#).

[Viola Desmond](#) was born in Halifax in 1914 and was an entrepreneur and central figure of Nova Scotia's black community, mentoring young black women through her Desmond School of Beauty Culture. Yet it is because of her brave actions on November 8th, 1946 that she has become an icon of the Canadian civil rights movement. At a small movie theatre in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, Viola purchased a main floor ticket - an area reserved for white customers. When she was denied the seat and told to sit in the balcony, she refused and maintained that as she was capable of purchasing the more expensive floor ticket, she had every right to sit there and refused to move. The confrontation led to her arrest and a night in prison, during which she maintained her composure and is said to have sat bolt upright all night. She was ultimately fined \$26, and

[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

standing on her own as an icon of the civil rights movement. Her ferry is already docked in the harbour and is scheduled to make its maiden voyage on July 7.



Happening in Halifax

Great Women Subdivision

All the streets in a new HRM subdivision are being named after [great Nova Scotian women](#). These women include Carrie Best, who was the first black woman to start her own newspaper, The Clarion, and played a key role in publicizing Viola Desmond's story in the 1940s; co-founder of the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 Ruth Goldbloom; Eliza Ritchie, suffragette, first female board member of Dalhousie University and one of the first women in Canada to achieve her PhD in 1889; Marie Marguerite Rose, who helped free black slaves; and Canada's first female high sheriff, Theresa MacNeil. There certainly is no shortage of inspirational women in Halifax's history, and it's gratifying to finally see their accomplishments and legacies getting the recognition they deserve.

Society News!

\$100,000 Donation from Canadian National Railway

Canadian National Railway (CN) has donated \$100,000 to the Woman on the Waterfront (WOW) project, bringing us to one third of our goal. The Halifax Port Authority has also donated a spot on the waterfront, between the current statues of Samuel Cunard and the Emigrant, as the future home of WOW. HWHS, working with CN and the Halifax Port Authority, hopes to erect the Woman on the Waterfront by the fall

Subscribe

Share ▼

Past Issues

Translate ▼



Upcoming Events:

"We'll Meet Again":

2WW North End Services Canteen Reenactment and Fundraiser

*October 1st, 2016, 1:30-4:30 pm at
Ward 5 Neighborhood Centre, 5540
Russell Street, Halifax
Tickets \$15*

Come join us as we celebrate one of Halifax women's key contributions to the war effort. Featuring 1940s-style dancers, singers and bands, authentic military rations (plus baked goods for the more discerning) and historically-accurate Second World War knitted scarves and hats for purchase. All proceeds go towards the Woman on the Waterfront project. Tickets will be available for \$15 and include a lunch, and a portion of the tickets will be available to members for advance purchase by late August. There will be two sittings, one at 1:30 and another at 3:00.

Volunteering Opportunities

Knitters!

We are looking for people willing to knit historic Second World War scarves and hats for our upcoming North End Service Canteen event. If interested, please contact Susan Dower at suedower@hotmail.com for the knitting patterns and more information.

Bakers!

We're looking for someone to help co-ordinate the sale baked goods. We are also looking for people to provide said baked goods, both historic and otherwise (historic recipes to be provided). If interested, email Sarah Toye at stoye1812@gmail.com.

General!

General volunteers are also needed to help us have a successful event. Roles may include ticket and item sales, food services and physical assistance to senior citizens.

[Subscribe](#)[Share ▼](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

Elinor Florence Book Signing and Talk

Author of *Bird's Eye View* [Elinor Florence](#) delighted at the Halifax Central Library on Sunday with her talk about the role of Canadian volunteer and service women in the Second World War, particularly regarding aerial photography. She came in authentic 1940s-style dress and signed copies of her book for attendees.

About the Society

Founded in 2013, the Halifax Women's History Society (HWHS) researches and makes known the untold story of the remarkable contributions that women have made to the history of Halifax. "A Woman on the Waterfront" is the Society's first project.

Membership is available for anyone who wishes to support us. Lifetime membership is \$25 for adults and \$5 for students, purchasable by paypal on our [website](#).

Women's work is too often invisible to the public, especially in the history of the Second World War, which focuses on men and rarely mentions women's volunteer work. Without the work of countless volunteers, Halifax would not have been able to meet the needs of the huge influx of people into the city or support the military personnel and their families who made Halifax home during the war. There are more than 100 cairns, steles, sculptures and plaques in Halifax. Less than a dozen are of female figures and most of these are from mythology or are symbolic. A monument — The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles — to women volunteers would honour them and provide public acknowledgement of their numerous contributions.



Newsletter Submissions

Have something you would like to see in our next newsletter? An event, news story, picture, piece of writing or historical figure that is relevant to our cause? Please send us the information and we would be delighted to consider it for next month. We ask that submissions be consistent with our mission of sharing

[Subscribe](#)

[Share](#) ▼

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate](#) ▼



Copyright © 2016 Halifax Women's History Society, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

