



HALIFAX WOMEN'S
HISTORY ♦ SOCIETY

Halifax Women's History Society Monthly Newsletter

Issue no. 7, January 2017

2017 Will Be the Year of WOW

Happy New Year to all our members. I am very excited to see the calendar turn over to 2017 because it's the year our Woman on the Waterfront project will become a reality after more than four years of planning, work and fund-raising. Thank you to all of you for your continuing support. Without you, we would not be completing this amazing project together.

There are many steps before the monument is completed this year. First, I want to invite members to our design announcement on **Thursday, March 9 at 10 a.m. at City Hall**. Mayor Mike Savage will join me in making the announcement of the winning design for our monument, The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles. This will be a watershed moment for the project — the reveal of what the actual monument will look like when it is unveiled later in the year. More details about the March 9 event will follow in February.

Work will get under way when the winter is over to prepare the site on the Halifax waterfront for the placement of the monument. If you are at the Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market in early spring, take a walk beyond the monument to Samuel Cunard at the north end of the market plaza and you will probably see work under way across the way. Our site is next to the statute called The Emigrant and directly across the walkway from the Halifax Port Authority — the generous donors of this site. It will be fenced off to protect it and the many pedestrians, including the thousands of cruise ship tourists, until the monument is in place in late fall. We hope to erect a sign at the site, announcing the site as the permanent home of The Volunteers/Les Bénévoles.

successful in 2016. We are hoping that 2017 will be equally as bountiful and see us raise all the funds necessary to complete the project, the site preparation and interpretative panels.

As you know, this will be the first monument to recognize the work of women in the city's history. So the unveiling — targeted for November of this year — will be a huge occasion for celebration. We will keep you informed as all our plans unfold.

Happy 2017 — the Year of Woman on the Waterfront!

Woman of the Month: Carrie Mae Best (1903-2001)

In light of famed Nova Scotian civil rights activist Viola Desmond being named as the new face of the Canadian \$10 bill, this month we wanted to highlight a lesser-known but equally influential activist who worked with Desmond.

Carrie Mae Best (née Prevoe) was born in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia in 1903 to African-Nova Scotian parents, and was raised to be proud and knowledgeable of her heritage in a time of racial discrimination. Best was an ambitious and intelligent young woman, writing poetry and opinion pieces for her local newspapers from a very young age, but was frustrated with the lack of career and educational options for African-Nova Scotian women.

In 1941, after hearing that some black teenage girls had been forcibly removed from the Roseland Theatre (now of Viola Desmond fame), Best protested via letters and in person, but was eventually driven to attend the theatre herself. She and her son bought tickets and sat in the white section of the theatre only to be dragged out and arrested. Best attempted to sue the theatre but racial discrimination within the legal system prevented her from succeeding. This motivated Best to found *The Clarion* in 1946 - the first Nova Scotian newspaper owned and operated by African-Canadians. Notably, the newspaper played a key role in supporting and publicizing Viola Desmond's actions at the theatre the very year of its founding. Without Best's tireless activism and journalism, Desmond's actions would not have resonated the way they did and set the Canadian civil rights movement in motion.

Best went on to host a beloved radio program, *The Quiet Corner*, for twelve years. She then wrote a weekly column on human rights for the *Pictou Advocate*

reports of the poor living conditions of African-Nova Scotians to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and in 1975 founded the Kay Livingstone Visible Minority Women's Society which advocates and fundraises for black women's education.

In 1974 she was named a Member of the Order of Canada, then only five years later she was promoted to Officer of the Order of Canada. Many more awards and honours were to follow as people recognized the massive contribution she made to human rights in Nova Scotia and all of Canada. Best died peacefully in her sleep in her New Glasgow home in 2001.



Canada Post's February 2011 stamp featuring Carrie Mae Best.

Happening in Halifax

Dalhousie Feminist Seminar Series

“The politics of judicial appointment and gender diversity on Nova Scotia’s courts.”

Erin Crandall, Department of Politics (Acadia University)

January 13, 12:30-1:30pm Marion McCain 2021

Dalhousie Black Student Advising Centre

Black Lives Matter Panel

January 16, 6-8pm, 6136 University Ave

Facebook event [here](#)

January 21, 1-3pm

Facebook event [here](#)

Dalhousie Feminist Seminar Series

“The Abuse of Older Adults: Intersections of Gender and Age.”

Lori Weeks, School of Nursing (Dalhousie), and Rina Arsenault, Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (University of New Brunswick)

January 27, 12:30-1:30pm Marion McCain 2021

Society News!

In Memoriam/Gift Donations and Memberships

A meaningful gift to a loved one or a way to commemorate someone who has passed is to purchase a membership (\$25) or make a donation in their name.

Send an email to womanwaterfront@gmail.com and mark the subject line: "Gift" or "In Memoriam". Provide your name and address, AND the name, address and email of the person receiving your gift (if applicable). HWHS will send out a WOW notecard, informing them of the gift from you, or to you acknowledging the commemoration.

You can go to our web site at <http://halifaxwomenshistory.ca> and pay via PayPal by clicking the membership or donation buttons at the top. Or you can send a cheque to the Halifax Women's History Society. PO Box 60022, Halifax Professional Centre PO, Halifax, N.S. B3H 4R7 and mark it "In Memoriam" or "Gift"

The WOW project is in its final year with the unveiling of the monument, targeted for November, 2017. Buying a membership or giving a donation for a friend or family member is a wonderful way for them to become part of the first monument in Halifax to honour women's place in this city's history.

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.

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 the untold stories of women in the history of Nova Scotia and Halifax - any that do not will not be included.



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