



# Your MLA at WORK

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[www.howardepstein.ca](http://www.howardepstein.ca)



Howard Epstein • MLA Halifax Chebucto • Winter 2008

## Envisioning Nova Scotia

### Dear Resident:

We are at an important point in determining the future of our province.

Each day we hear news that the future looks bleak. The dollar is unstable. Our resource and manufacturing sectors are under pressure. In our cities there is infrastructure deterioration. And the most frightening of all predictions come in the form of climate change projections.

This is not the time for government to be doing the least amount of work possible! Why has the government let seven months go by between legislative sessions?

These are times when we all need to be part of the solution. As your elected representative I do raise the issues. Issues like student debt, which is driving a generation of educated Nova Scotians to the west so they can earn enough to handle their student loans. Issues like income assistance regulations which keep people in the



photo: Mary MacLachlan

welfare system, rather than effectively helping them to find employment. Issues like collective bargaining legislation which sidesteps the real issues in our health care system.

This is the time of year for New Years resolutions. I invite you to join me in becoming involved in seeking the changes needed to improve our province's future.

All the best in 2008.

Howard has been involved this year in the HRM By Design discussions, which are a component of the "envisioning Halifax of the future" plan. For information on past and upcoming meetings, go to [www.hrmbdesign.ca](http://www.hrmbdesign.ca).

**Do you have any questions,  
information or opinions?  
Contact me at:**

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keep in  
touch!

We send out regular email updates on issues of concern to citizens of Halifax Chebucto. To get on that list, send your email address to [hepstein@ns.aliantzinc.ca](mailto:hepstein@ns.aliantzinc.ca)

Canada Post does not deliver these newsletters to homes that display "No Flyers" signs. We are trying to change this policy for MLA newsletters. Meanwhile, please pass this newsletter on where appropriate. Copies are also available from the Constituency Office.

# HOWARD EPSTEIN

## From the floor of the Legislature

### Kyoto Accord

The Nova Scotia Environmental Network... presented a brief... to the Nova Scotia Round Table on Environment and Economy [in] 1991... it said [that]... the Power Corporation should be [required] to make reduction and use of alternative energy sources a part of its mandate. Scrubbers should be installed to reduce acid rain-causing emissions, and the province should adopt a 20 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions as a target for 2005... this was a good six years before the Kyoto Accord and we had identified in Nova Scotia—the environmental community had identified—not the minus five or minus six per cent level that became the Canadian national commitment under Kyoto; we were saying at the time that we should adopt a target in 1991 of minus 20 per cent. That meant minus 20 per cent compared with the levels that were prevailing in Nova Scotia at that time in 1990. We suggested that was achievable by 2005. Here we are in 2007, and no reduction. No reduction. Year in and year out, there's continued increase in our greenhouse gas emissions here.

Hansard, March 27, 2007

“Here we are in 2007, and no reduction. No reduction. Year in and year out, there's continued increase in our greenhouse gas emissions here.”

### 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Before 1982, I can tell you that we were not as well protected when it came to fundamental freedoms, as we are now with the Charter... Legal rights often have to do with people's encounters with the criminal justice system... there have been a number of cases that have established limits on police powers, limits on intrusion, certain kinds of freedom of privacy, rights to counsel, and so on. Fundamental freedoms—these are crucial. They have to do with freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. I think all of us endorse these and are happy that they are to be found in the Charter of Rights. The equality rights have... offered protections to individuals who have been part of groups that have been, historically, the victims of some form of prejudice. I think we're happy to find in our Charter, again, the kinds



Howard (second row, first on left) is shown here with the NDP Caucus.

of protections that those sections of the Charter offer to people.

Hansard, March 28, 2007

### Sustainable Prosperity Act

...congratulations are due to the minister for finally realizing that this is something that has to be moved ahead... [what] we see are targets that are five years, 10 years, 20 years into the future... let's take steps as immediately as we can, to begin to move in the appropriate directions.

Sustainability says let's take action now, let's think now and act now in ways that will not have negative consequences for the next generation, for people in the future. It doesn't say, let's put off to the future taking some action, let our children worry about it, let the next administration worry about it, let someone else do it, I'll be out of politics, I'll be retired thank you very much. That's not good enough, that's just not good enough...

Hansard, March 27, 2007

### Heritage Property Act

The net effect of this amendment would be to place municipally-designated heritage properties on exactly the same footing as provincially-designated heritage properties... The vital difference is that when a property is designated by a municipality and the owner wishes to either make an exterior change or... demolish that property, they are obliged to go to the municipality... and seek permission. At the provincial level, if the province declines to allow the demolition or the exterior alteration, that's [the] end of it. The owner might come back with another proposal of some sort, but that's the end of the matter. At the municipal level, if the property is only designated municipally, the owner can wait a year and then do what they want with their property. That has been a long-standing

“What has happened is we've lost buildings. Due to this difference, occasionally solutions have not been found that are mutually agreeable for the owner and for the municipality, and the owner has been able to wait a year and demolish the property...”

difference between designation at the provincial, and designation at the municipal level.

What has happened is we've lost buildings. Due to this difference, occasionally solutions have not been found that are mutually agreeable for the owner and for the municipality, and the owner has been able to wait a year and demolish the property... if this amendment is adopted, it will not prevent demolition absolutely, and it won't prevent exterior alterations absolutely. What it will do is it will require the municipality jointly with the owner to work out an agreement.

Hansard, March 28, 2007

### Call Centres

...call centres are here because of the subsidies that the government offers them, they're highly mobile jobs, they're the kind of businesses that could be located virtually anywhere in the world, all you need is a good phone system and that's about it, and they're mostly here not because they are Nova Scotia companies but because they're offered subsidies... I agree completely that in the... host communities for the call

centres, the jobs were very necessary and very welcome... But since there's an... international bidding war to offer subsidies to them in one form or another and they are very mobile, I think that we would be well advised to think of this as an interim emergency strategy rather than necessarily a fundamental of our long-term building of jobs.

Hansard, June 12, 2007

Standing Committee on Economic Development

### Nova Scotia Labour Market

The first thing I heard was that we have a problem when it comes to thinking about the overall position of the labour market in Nova Scotia.

The second thing I heard is that there's potential for the problem to worsen if the natural trends... continue without change.

One of the third things I heard was that the gains, if there have been any, have been significantly much more in HRM... that is... the growth has been in the service sector compared with the goods sector. I link those two because it seems to me that... as the service sector employment increased, so did employment in the urban areas, which is more the locus of the service sector, and it is the rural areas that one would probably normally look to as being... more resource-based... So there's been decline there.

Hansard, June 12, 2007

Standing Committee on Economic Development

### Kelowna Accord

On November 25, 2005, this province was a signatory to the Kelowna Accord. That deal—the result of 18 months of tough negotiations—committed the federal government to spending \$5.1 billion over five years to help improve Native education, housing, health and economic opportunities, but since the last federal election, the federal Conservatives have refused to live up to those commitments. My question to the premier is, what specific actions has his government undertaken to ensure that his federal counterparts honour this accord?

Hansard, April 3, 2007

The full text of these excerpts can be viewed at [www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/HOUSE\\_BUSINESS/hansard.html](http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/HOUSE_BUSINESS/hansard.html)

# THE SCANDAL SCORECARD



Howard has been a strong supporter of the residents of Chebucto Road who are currently fighting HRM's plan to widen the street at the Mumford Road intersection. Shown with Howard, left, is Jane MacMillan, a resident of the neighbourhood. See Municipal Monitor on back page for more information.

## The Premier, No.1

Rodney MacDonald undercuts fellow Atlantic province Newfoundland and Labrador by making a separate deal with Ottawa on offshore oil and gas revenues. Danny Williams calls him "weak".

## Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, No.1

The minister responsible for immigration announces that their program for investor immigrants has turned out to be a boondoggle and the government would be refunding up to \$60 million to the immigrants. I guess that's what happens when you single-source the contract for administering a program, and then don't even watch over it.

## Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, No. 2

The Premier shuffles his cabinet and takes immigration away from Carolyn. The message is that the mess is her fault. Say, wasn't Rodney the minister responsible for immigration when this program was getting underway?

## The Premier, No.2

After losing the October by-election in Cole Harbour - Eastern Passage, Tory candidate Mike Eddy tells voters they won't be getting much in the way of benefits from the government because they elected an opposition MLA. The premier backs him up.

## Michel Sampson

The Liberal MLA for Richmond rents his constituency office from the local municipality. Seems he got behind in his rent and when the local government folks made it public, Michel went ballistic. He attended a council meeting and gave councillors a tongue-lashing of staggering proportions. Better watch the blood pressure, Michel.

## Michael Baker

Lawyer, former Minister of Justice, Finance Minister and it turns out, co-owner of tourist cottages for rent on Henman's Island, the MLA for Lunenburg discovers a beneficial loophole in the property tax laws. The thriving business pays its property taxes at the residential rate rather than at the higher commercial rate. Turns out the loophole isn't actually in the law, it's just Tourism Department policy. Good eye for detail, Michael.

## Karen Casey

The Education Minister finds herself missing a university president. NS Agricultural College President, Philip Hicks, resigns in July, after pointing out that a research institution with degree-granting powers should not be a branch of the Department of Agriculture; it should be independent like other universities. Seems no one was listening.

## Ernie Fage

The former Minister of Economic Development faces a criminal trial for leaving the scene of an accident. A passing photographer gets the event on his cellphone's video feature.

## About Howard Epstein

Howard Epstein was first elected to represent Halifax Chebucto in March 1998.

He was re-elected in July 1999, August 2003 and June 2006. Previously he was on Municipal Council from 1994-96, and from 1996-98.

Educated at QEH, Dalhousie University and Carleton University, he teaches Land Use and Land Use Planning Law at Dalhousie University.

He has two children, Hannah and Noah. As a member of the NDP Official Opposition, his Critic areas are Conserve Nova Scotia, Intergovernmental Affairs, Gaming and the Heritage Properties Act.



## Nova Scotia EnerGuide for Houses

Find out where your home is losing energy by having a home energy evaluation done. You could qualify for a grant of up to \$6,500 (up to \$5,000 maximum from the federal government, up to \$1,500 maximum from the provincial government) depending on the energy efficiency improvements you choose to make to your home. Conserve Nova Scotia will also send participants an energy savings kit full of products that can help save up to \$100 per year in household energy costs.

To participate, your first step is to book a home energy evaluation. There are three organizations in Nova Scotia that offer this service:

SUSTAINABLE HOUSING (provincewide, including Halifax Regional Municipality)  
1.877.722.2842  
435-3637

CLEAN NOVA SCOTIA (Halifax Regional Municipality)  
1.800.665.5377

ACAP CAPE BRETON (Cape Breton Regional Municipality)  
902.567.1628

The provincial and federal grants depend on the work you carry out on your home.

Go to [www.conservens.ca/energiguide](http://www.conservens.ca/energiguide) for more information or contact Conserve Nova Scotia:

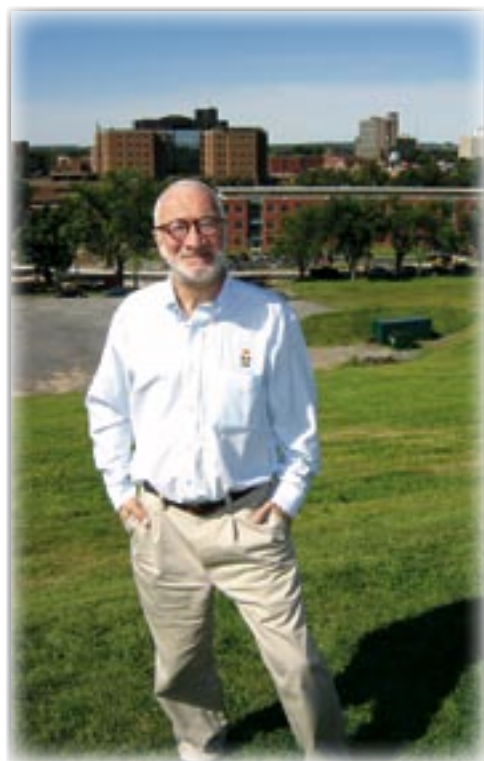
**Conserve Nova Scotia**  
1660 Hollis Street, Suite 302  
P. O. Box 153  
Halifax, N.S B3J 2M4  
(Phone) 902-424-0790  
(Fax) 902-424-0799  
conservens@gov.ns.ca

# Municipal Monitor

## Citadel High School

It is open. It is handsome. It is full. Projected to have around 1200 students, its enrollment is about 1400 students. There are two gyms. And fundraising is underway for a performance space. The initiative is known as the *Legacy Campaign*—find out more at [chslegacy@hrsb.ns.ca](mailto:chslegacy@hrsb.ns.ca). The goal is to raise approximately \$2.5 million.

The former QEH site is to be the subject of a land use consultation by HRM. Part of the site is being developed by the QEII Health Sciences Centre for an expanded emergency area. For the former St. Pat's High School site, the School Board is now using the building so no immediate question has come to HRM for future planning.



Howard is shown with Citadel High in the background. The new high school opened in September and is the replacement for Queen Elizabeth and St. Patrick's High Schools, both of which were longtime fixtures on the peninsula. Discussions are underway to determine what will be done with the land where the two schools are located. The public is encouraged to get involved in this process.

## Twin Towers

In October the NSUARB dismissed the appeal of HRM Council's approval of two 27-storey towers proposed for the centre of downtown. The proposal is for a hotel in one tower and condominiums or apartments in the other, on the site of the former TexPark garage. Although it has now achieved formal approval, it is not clear that the project will go ahead. Market forces are putting the development in doubt. Also, HRM's current long-range planning exercise, HRM By Design, is favouring a much lower height limit for the central Halifax core.

## Chebucto Road traffic

HRM continues with plans to expropriate property from homeowners on Chebucto Road in an effort to ease traffic congestion both to and from the Armdale roundabout. Local residents have opposed the move to widen Chebucto Road and have created an online petition requesting that Council reconsider the plan. To date, the petition has approximately 3,000 signatures ([www.keepitlivable.org](http://www.keepitlivable.org)). Chebucto Road residents believe that HRM should be focusing on the protection of neighbourhoods and should not be encouraging increased movement of private vehicles onto the peninsula.

Signs stating "People Not Cars" have been posted on lawns along the affected area and public meetings and rallies have been organized to get this message out to other HRM residents. On November 20, Council voted to move ahead with the widening. Residents will continue to oppose this project and plan to take the expropriations to court.

## Sheila Fougere throws her hat into the ring

District 14 HRM Councillor, Sheila Fougere, has announced her intention to seek the position of mayor of HRM. Current mayor, Peter Kelly, will be re-offering for the post in the up-coming municipal elections which will take place in the fall of 2008. Ms. Fougere has been the councillor in District 14 since she replaced Howard Epstein in 1998 after he was elected to the legislature.

# local heroes

## Betty Peterson

Longtime Chebucto resident, Betty Peterson, celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on December 1. Betty has been a community activist for peace, a member of the local *Raging Grannies*, and a member of the Voice of Women. She has long been active in the fight to eliminate nuclear weapons and is a strong advocate for protection of the environment. Betty requested that all who attended her party, instead of bringing her gifts, make donations to the Stephen Lewis *African Grannies* Fund. Happy birthday, Betty and many happy returns.

## Susan Klabunde

The arts community of Chebucto and greater Nova Scotia was dealt a terrible blow in September with the sudden death of Sue Klabunde at the age of 43. Sue had in the past been co-owner of *Spots Pots~fabulous and funky*, had done special projects at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, worked in art and production on various films, and was vice president of Silver Leaf Productions at the time of her death. In addition, Sue was involved in local productions of *The Vagina Monologues* and *Titz 'n Glitz*. She was active in politics, having worked in several election campaigns and pre-election workshops in the province. She leaves behind her husband, Ed Higdon, three children and a huge group of friends.

## Lou Collins

On September 1, longtime Chebucto resident and Halifax historian Lou Collins passed away after a lengthy illness. Dr. Collins was best remembered as a tireless protector of Halifax's heritage and history. He was involved in the design and development of Historic Properties on the Halifax Waterfront and in 1996, his efforts in this role were recognized when he was presented the Order of Canada.

Dr. Collins was a founding member of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union and founding member of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union Credit Union. During his long teaching career in the city, he taught at Westmount School, Richmond School and at Cornwallis Junior High and was instrumental in establishing the Halifax Schools Science Fair. He was chairman of the Halifax Landmarks Commission, a long-time member of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and served as honorary Halifax Civic Historian. He was the recipient of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and a Heritage Canada Medal in recognition of his work to preserve the heritage buildings of the City of Halifax. "The name Lou Collins is synonymous with heritage preservation in Nova Scotia," confirmed Philip Pacey, president of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia. "He had great wit and he made heritage fun. We owe him a tremendous debt."

## Donna Morrissey

Donna Morrissey, a resident of Halifax Chebucto, was awarded the *Established Artist Recognition Award* by the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council on October 18. *Kit's Law*, Morrissey's first novel, was nominated for many prizes, winning the Canadian Booksellers Association Libris Award, England's Winifred Holtby Prize and the American Library Association Alex Award. Her second novel, *Downhill Chance*, was a national bestseller, and won the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award. At the 2002 Gemini Awards, Morrissey's screenplay, *Clothesline Patch*, was nominated in two categories, and won for best production. *Sylvanus Now*, her most recent novel, garnered her a second Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Prize and was short-listed for a Commonwealth Writers Prize.

## Important Phone Numbers

Adsum House	429-4443
AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia	429-7922
Bryony House	422-7650
Crisis Line	422-7650
Inquiries	423-7183
Canada Employment Centre	1-800-523-4732
Chebucto Links (Seniors)	422-3525
Children's Aid Society	477-2777
Community Action on Homelessness	420-2186
Dalhousie Legal Aid	423-8105
Dept. Community Services (Intake)	424-4150
<b>Emergency</b>	<b>911</b>
Federal MP, Alexa McDonough	426-8691
HRM Councillors' Office	490-4050

IWK (Emergency)	470-8050
Kid's Helpline	1-890-668-6868
Mainline Needle Exchange	423-9991
Mayor Peter Kelly	490-4010
Metro Food Bank	457-1900
Metro Transit	490-4000
Metropolitan Housing Authority	420-6000
NDP Caucus Office	424-4134
NS Drug Dependency	424-5920
NS Human Rights Commission	424-4111
NS Legal Aid	420-3450
Premier's Office	424-6600
Phoenix House	422-5583

HRM Police (Incident Reports)	490-5016
QE II Health Sciences (Emerg)	423-2043
Residential Tenancies	424-5200
Senior Citizen Directorate	424-4737
Stepping Stone	420-0103
SPCA Metro Animal Control	468-9219
Workers' Compensation Board	491-8999
Youth Helpline	420-TEEN (420-8336)
<b>Provincial</b>	
Workers Comp., Income Assistance, Home Care, Student Loans, Property Assessment	
<b>Howard Epstein</b>	<b>425-8521</b>

## Municipal

Roads, Traffic, Tax Rate, Police and Fire Services, Solid Waste removal	
District 14 - Sheila Fougere	452-3209
District 11 - Pat Murphy	490-4050
District 13 - Sue Uteck	425-1724

## Federal

Canada Pension, Employment Insurance, Citizenship and Immigration, CRTCC	
<b>Alexa McDonough</b>	<b>426-8691</b>