

safe + secure

From Squid Jiggers, one of Heather Crout's watercolour paintings depicting life at sea.

Spreading the safety message one painting at a time

Artist creates a culture of safety in memory of her fisherman husband



Heather Crout uses the proceeds from the sale of her paintings to purchase workable life vests, which she donates to local fishermen.

It's easy to see how Heather Crout fell in love with Scott Clarke. Looking up from under a brown shag of hair and a bushy moustache, his relaxed grin shows why she called him her goofy Newfie. Crout exhales, sets the framed photograph down. The picture was taken in the fall of 2009, three days before her husband died.

The framed photo of Clarke was taken on the herring fishing boat he took his last trip on. Clarke and the other fishermen went into Fisherman's Cove in Eastern Passage to prepare for the job. He called his wife at 11 p.m. to say he wouldn't be home because they were going out for one more load.

"That was the last time I heard from him," she says. "They were eating pizza and talking. He said, 'I probably won't see you until tomorrow night. Love ya.' And that was it."

No one knows what happened that night. The best Crout can piece together is that the owner of the boat went into the cabin while Clarke worked on the deck. She says the owner thought he heard Clarke call out but when he went to check on him, he was gone.

"Scott knew what he was doing out there. He never took unnecessary chances," she says, but he wasn't wearing a life jacket. Hardly any of the fishermen did. The old ones were bulky and uncomfortable and the workable new ones cost too much. The fishermen trusted their luck would hold. In 2009, eight people died in Nova Scotia's fishing industry, including Clarke. Seven died in 2010.

Clarke didn't have any children to carry on his name and it broke Crout's heart to think he wouldn't have a legacy in Nova Scotia. She went to her studio and started painting. "I thought: these are going to be his children."

The first was *Sunrise at Old Bonaventure*, a watercolour of his birth village. More followed, depicting Clarke's life on the water.

Near the anniversary of Clarke's death, she started to sell each painting and used the money to buy a \$400 workable life vest with Clarke's name written inside. The paintings quickly sold out.

Crout donated the first vest to the man who was on the boat with Clarke and the second to a young, local fisherman. It was her way of giving back to the community that grieved with her.

Tommy Harper, a workplace consultant with the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, says fishing deaths tend to come from rural areas and devastate whole communities. The most effective way to prevent those deaths is a cultural shift to where personal flotation devices are automatically worn. He calls Crout a "safety champion" who can drive that change. That's part of the reason the WCB purchased one of Crout's paintings. "What she set out to do is very noble and it's a great cause. You can wear them and you can work," he says of the workable life vests.

Crout wants to buy 42 vests, one for each fisherman in Clarke's fleet. She knows they won't save everyone, but one might have saved her husband. At the very least, it would have allowed them to recover his body. She says it's encouraging to hear that her story is inspiring fishermen to wear life jackets.

"At least they have a fighting chance," she says. +

A triumphant return

To speak to George Sampson over the phone, you would swear you were talking to a man in his 50's. In fact, Sampson is 92. But talk to him long enough and you'll find it's only one of many remarkable things about him.

Sampson has been an employee of Graybar Canada Harris & Roome for the past 39 years, since the tender age of 53. That's longer than the combined careers he'd previously worked with General Electrical and Consolidated Supply, and including the time he'd served in the Canadian military during the Second World War.

In 2009, Sampson had a fleeting, although positive, experience with the WCB. As he was leaving Harris & Roome, where he works part-time as a mail clerk, he stopped to pick up a piece of mail that had dropped between the hopper and the mail machine. The next thing he knew he'd rolled over and was sitting on the floor.

Fortunately, a colleague came to his aid and called an ambulance. The paramedic

confirmed Sampson had broken his leg, right above the knee. The break required a clamp and a couple of screws to fix, but it didn't keep him down for long. Ten weeks later, he was back on the job.

"The doctor told me I must be a good healer," says Sampson. "And the staff at the Workers' Compensation Board took care of everything for me."

Jennifer Beckwith, the WCB case manager assigned to Sampson's file, says she'd barely had time to make contact with him before he was back on the job. "He had this incredible attitude toward work," she recalls. "He's a fellow who's so motivated, it's amazing."

Sampson is just as mutually complimentary of his return-to-work team. He was particularly impressed being contacted within a week of his injury by the WCB, and even more impressed when he received a cheque within two weeks.

"I was afraid to cash it," says Sampson, laughing. "Things don't usually work that quickly."



George Sampson, Graybar Canada Harris & Roome employee for 39 years, successfully returned to work after breaking his leg at the age of 90.

Sampson feels he was well looked after throughout his experience with the WCB. To this day, he can be found at Harris & Roome in Halifax delivering the mail and bantering with his co-workers. +

WCB-supported research sheds light on workplace safety issues

Ever wonder about safe handling procedures and nanoparticles? Or the impact of acoustics in nursing homes on worker safety? How about best practices for preventing needle-stick injuries in dentists' offices?

These are just a few of the innovative projects currently being supported by the WCB's research program.

The WCB partners with its colleagues in Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland & Labrador, New Brunswick and British Columbia to support research projects that contribute to the prevention of workplace injury and illness. This has meant greater opportunities for Nova Scotia researchers and the potential for improved safety outcomes for Nova Scotia workers and employers.

There are ongoing opportunities for Nova Scotia researchers to receive funding for workplace health and safety-related research. To learn more, contact Tracey Leary, WCB Education and Research Consultant, at 491-8109. +

Doing business with WCB more convenient thanks to online services

WCB-covered employers can now quickly and easily pay their assessment premiums online from personal bank accounts – in addition to corporate accounts.

My Payment is an electronic payment service, accessed through the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website, that allows individuals and businesses to send payments directly to CRA from their online banking account at a participating financial institution.

Visit www.cra-arc.gc.ca/mypayment to learn more.

Improved clearance letter access

Now all Nova Scotia employers with WCB coverage have access to the clearance letter function through MyAccount. Employers can also add these firm types to their subcontractor list and set up alerts to receive emails when the clearance for these accounts has changed.

Log in to MyAccount any time of day to generate a clearance letter for your business. If you're not registered, sign up today at my-account.ns.ca.



Safety and Return-to-work leaders honoured with Mainstay Awards



Employees of Edmonds Landscape and Construction Services Limited – winner of the “Safety Award of Excellence.”

Nova Scotia’s top workplace safety leaders were honoured with Mainstay Awards this fall.

The Mainstay Awards, sponsored by the WCB and the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education, recognize organizations, employers and individuals who excel in safety and return to work.

“Along with our colleagues at the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, we are proud to recognize people and organizations that are making significant efforts to enhance the safety of workplaces in our province,” said Stuart MacLean, Acting CEO of the WCB. “By recognizing their efforts, we hope to encourage others to follow their lead.”

Nine awards were handed out in six categories including the highest safety honour in Nova Scotia – the Safety Award of Excellence. The top honour went to Edmonds Landscape and Construction Services Limited for its role in making safety a priority in the landscaping industry.

In 1997, Edmonds says the industry didn’t have a highly regarded safety program, personal protective equipment was not used consistently, hazard assessments were not procedure,

and inspections were rare. Edmonds Landscape and Construction Services decided something needed to be done. Together with key stakeholders, the company helped establish an industry standard for health and safety compliance.

Since then, Edmonds has constantly engaged its employees, customers, and many partners to ensure safety is the top priority. The company set a goal of “zero injuries – each and every hour, day, month and year.”

With the help of employees, it provides Safe Work Practices and Safe Job Procedures specifically relating to the company and each of the services and equipment they provide. At any point in time, an employee can review, edit or update the documents, which are then reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee.

“We believe that to maintain a consistently safe work environment is to share and apply our depth of safety experience for the benefit of our employees and the communities we serve,” said Roger Edmonds, the company’s President.

This is the third Mainstay Award for the company. In 2010, it was named *Transformation Safety Champion* and *Employer Safety Champion*.

And the Mainstay goes to...

Safety Award of Excellence

- Edmonds Landscape and Construction Services Limited

Safety Award of Excellence: Individual

- Peter Hollett, Halifax Harbour Bridges

Safety Transformation

- Irving Shipbuilding Ltd.

Individual Safety Champion

- Karla Hamilton, Ultra Electronics Maritime Systems

Employer Safety Champion

- Aecon Atlantic
- Sobeys

Employer Return-to-Work Champion

- Cape Breton District Health Authority
- Sobeys
- Clearwater Seafoods Limited Partnership

To learn more about the Mainstay Awards, visit www.mainstayawards.ca. +



We believe that to maintain a consistently safe work environment is to share and apply our depth of safety experience for the benefit of our employees and the communities we serve. Roger Edmonds, President, Edmonds Landscape and Construction Services Limited

More tools for the safety toolbox

Rod Stickman, the WCB's animated safety champion, has become increasingly popular since making his first appearance in videos that talked about safety and return to work in an entertaining way.

The most recent video covers what young workers, and their employers, should know about occupational health and safety.

"Young people may not have a lot of experience recognizing work hazards, and this video encourages them to have a voice in creating a safer workplace for themselves and others around them," says Tracy Leary, a WCB Research and Education Consultant.

Discussion guides accompany the videos so that employers can help focus conversations and make them relevant to their own operations. The guides can be used as part of a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee agenda item, for toolbox talks at department meetings or as part of a new or young worker's orientation.

The videos and discussion guides can be downloaded from worksafeforlife.ca. Be sure to include them in your next safety talk with employees and discover a fresh, new way to look at safety in your workplace.+



Don't touch that dial!



Workplace safety may be coming to a television screen near you.

WorkSafeTV delivers safety messages, in combination with real-time news, weather and sports updates over the Internet to a dedicated TV in the workplace.

WorkSafeTV reinforces workplace safety messages by reaching workers where they gather – for example, lunch rooms or cafeterias.

During a pilot program at Cape Breton District Health Authority, 96% of respondents to a survey said they noticed the WorkSafeTV digital display. Of those, 79% said the messages were making them think more about health and safety in the workplace. And according to 55% of respondents, WorkSafeTV was positively influencing their behaviour at work.

"WorkSafeTV is an interactive way for our hospital to communicate key safety messages to our staff," Greg Boone, Director of Communications with the Cape Breton District Health Authority, said at the time. "It's easy and our staff has responded very well to it."


Three channels have been developed – fisheries, healthcare and a general channel, with more to come as demand increases. To learn more, visit worksafetv.ca. +

WCB is proud to be a top employer in Canada!

The *Canada's Top 100 Employers* project is a national competition to determine which employers lead their industries in offering exceptional workplaces for their employees. Employers are evaluated using eight criteria, including health, financial and family benefits, employee communications, training and skills development and community involvement. The WCB is one of only four Nova Scotian employers to make the list for 2012.



Seasonal Safety Tip



Winter weather can make for dangerous driving. If driving is part of your job, get your vehicle maintenance checked and switch to winter tires. Check the road and weather conditions before heading out and drive carefully.

Looking for more health and safety news?

The Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education now offers an electronic newsletter. Sign up today at www.gov.ns.ca/lae/healthandsafety/ohsnews.asp

safe+secure, the corporate newsletter of the WCB, is distributed semi-annually to all business addresses in Nova Scotia, under the WCB's mandate for prevention of workplace injury in all workplaces. © Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, 2011.

Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia
PO Box 1150, Halifax, NS, B3J 2Y2
Tel. 902.491.8100 | Fax 902.491.8002
Email editor@wcb.gov.ns.ca
Corporate site: wcb.ns.ca
Social Marketing: worksafeforlife.ca
Young workers: somanymways.ca