

# BLOW·ME·DOWNER

ABOUT THE OUTER BAY OF ISLANDS, NEWFOUNDLAND

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NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

2016 April 01 Friday

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

LH=Lark Harbour    YH=York Harbour    JB=John's Beach  
 HC=Holy Communion    MP=Morning Prayer    EP=Evening Prayer  
 P&P=Prayer & Praise    HB=Baptism    MHS=Mem Hymn Sing  
 ☉ Full Moon

### 2016 APRIL 2016

10<sup>th</sup> Sun LH 11:00am: JB 7:00pm  
 17<sup>th</sup> Sun LH 7:00pm; JB 7:00pm  
 22<sup>nd</sup> Fri Earth Day ☉ Full Moon  
 24<sup>th</sup> Sun LH 7:00pm JB 10:30am

### 2016 MAY 2016

8<sup>th</sup> Sun Mother's Day  
 21<sup>st</sup> Sat ☉ Full Moon  
 23<sup>rd</sup> Mon Victoria Day

### 2016 JUNE 2016

Jun 19<sup>th</sup> Sun Father's Day  
 20<sup>th</sup> Mon Summer begins (Summer Solstice)  
 ☉ Full Moon  
 24<sup>th</sup> Fri St Jean-Baptiste - Fête Nationale du Québec

### 2016 ADVANCE DATES 2016

Jul 1<sup>st</sup> Fri CANADA DAY  
 19<sup>th</sup> Tue ☉ Full Moon  
 Aug 18<sup>th</sup> Thur ☉ Full Moon  
 Sep 5<sup>th</sup> Mon Labour Day  
 16<sup>th</sup> Fri ☉ Full Moon  
 22<sup>nd</sup> Thu Autumn begins (Autumnal Equinox)  
 Oct 10<sup>th</sup> Mon Thanksgiving Day  
 16<sup>th</sup> Sun ☉ Full Moon  
 24<sup>th</sup> Mon United Nations Day  
 31<sup>st</sup> Mon Hallowe'en  
 Nov 6<sup>th</sup> Sun Back to Standard Time, clocks back 1hr  
 11<sup>th</sup> Fri Remembrance Day  
 14<sup>th</sup> Mon ☉ Full Moon  
 20<sup>th</sup> Sun International Children's Day (UN)  
 Dec 13<sup>th</sup> Tue ☉ Full Moon  
 21<sup>st</sup> Wed Winter begins (Winter Solstice)  
 25<sup>th</sup> Sun Christmas Day

## BUSINESS & ORGANISATION DIRECTORY

*A list of local businesses and organisations. No charge.*

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*Several local businesses supported the BLOW·ME·DOWNER in the past. Their inclusion here is a recognition of that support. Other local businesses will be included at their request.*

*Listed alphabetically :-*

- **Byrne's Store, Main Street, York Harbour**  
groceries, hardware, gas & diesel, souvenirs 681-2040
  - **Captain Cook B&B & Cottages, York Harbour**  
Email: [info@captaincookbb.ca](mailto:info@captaincookbb.ca) 681-2906; 1-877-681-2906
  - **Curling ONE Stop Service Station, Corner Brook**  
*automotive repairs, servicing, fuel* 785-2619
  - **Drop In Lounge, 23 Main Street, Lark Harbour**  
*entertainment, food, licenced* 681-2103
  - **Eddie Joyce, MHA, Bay of Islands, Corner Brook**  
*Member, House of Assembly.* 634-7883
  - **Sheppard's Clover Farm Store, Lark Harbour**  
*groceries, hardware, gas, Sears agency, marine* 681-2160
- ● ● *Please support your local enterprises* ● ● ●

### WHILE WE HAVE NO RESIDENT CLERGY IN OUR PARISH

In case of Emergency in LH if you need a Clergy member please call George Sheppard at 681-2020 or Samuel Sheppard at 681-2894.

In case of Emergency in JB if you need a Clergy member please call Fred Humber at 789-3475 or Howard Parsons at 789-2945.

Due to technical problems we regret the late delivery of the April issue of the BlowMeDowner. Issue 100 for 2016 May is expected to be available on or before 2016 May 06.

The current year 2016 marks our twelfth year of publication as well as Issue number 100 for May.

## CRUELTY TO ANIMALS COULD IT ENDANGER PEOPLE ?

Readers of last month's BMD (Issue 98, March 2016) may recall a short article on page 4, dealing with the topic of cruelty to animals. It was my intention to research that topic further for an expanded article in the April issue, but since the March issue went online, disturbing reports have been published about cruelty on a dairy farm in BC. I decided therefore to widen the scope of my article further to include two shocking reports from Chilliwack, BC, that came to my notice after I posted BMD98 online. ([The Province, Vancouver, BC](#) report, and [Huffington Post](#) report)

Both articles are quite graphic in their detail, and also contain some photographs taken secretly by concerned individuals. Many people may remark that cows are "only animals", which of course is true, but it is a relatively short move from such a remark to another that should concern us. There must have been among the Hitler Nazis a view that those condemned to the gas chambers of the concentration camps were "only Jews", or whatever other race was being persecuted.

In recent years we have been presented with instances of slaughter of racial minorities under the heading of "racial cleansing", which is only another name for *genocide*. Retired Lieutenant Romeo Dallaire, now a Canadian Senator, exposed the horrific genocide in Rwanda during his United Nations peacekeeping command there in the 1990s. This was a genocidal war between two tribes, the Hutu and the Tutsi. It was a long-standing dispute between the two races, but as things heated up the Hutu began to threaten the Tutsi, until hostility became rife. Due to the small cohort of soldiers he had under his command, General Dallaire was powerless to stop it. As a result, some 800,000 Tutsi, including 300,000 children, "died an agonizing death from machete wounds inside hundreds of sweltering churches, chapels and missions where they'd gone to seek God's protection," writes the General. [Read General Dallaire's full account here.](#)

I quote General Dallaire because this is a horrifying event that occurred as recently as about 1995. We tend to think of such things as involving only people in far-off countries and in times past. But it is also true that such events happen now. We have the ISIS militias perpetrating equally, perhaps even worse, crimes against humanity, and apparently enjoying it. I find it hard to imagine that the same was not true of those in Rwanda. And similar events can happen even in our own country, as evidenced by murderers like [Robert Pickton](#) in British Columbia some 10 years ago. Pickton was a pig farmer, and we do not know how he treated his pigs, but it would be surprising if he showed more compassion for his human victims than for his pigs.

I am not a psychologist, nor have I studied criminology, but I find it very believable that some of those who are cruel to animals may also be cruel to their fellow human beings. When one hears of cases of unlawful confinement, for example, where an individual has been kidnapped and imprisoned for long periods, sometimes of many years, one has to think that there may be a connection here. Most of us would not treat our dogs in such a way. An [article by PETA](#) (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) states :

*The deadly violence that has shattered schools in recent years [in the USA] has, in most cases, begun with cruelty to animals*

*Continued in next column*



Skulls and bones of some of the murdered Tutsi people collected in the Murambi Genocide Memorial, Rwanda, the school building where they had previously died.

*Continued from previous column*

*High-school killers such as Kip Kinkel in Springfield Oregon, and Luke Woodham, in Pearl, Mississippi, tortured animals before starting their shooting sprees.*

A [document published by the Humane Society of the United States](#) makes the following statements:

*Of 36 convicted multiple murderers questioned in one study, 46% admitted committing acts of animal torture as adolescents. And of seven school shootings that took place across the country between 1997 and 2001, all involved boys who had previously committed acts of animal cruelty. . . .*

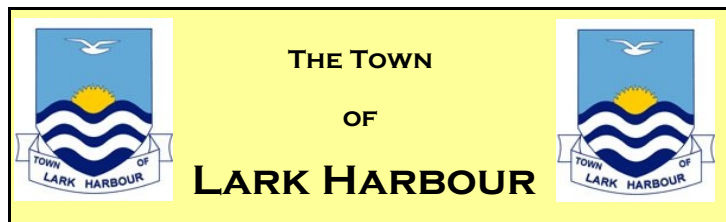
*Police know that in homes where animal abuse is a problem, other issues are often concurrent. Acts of animal cruelty are linked to a variety of other crimes, including violence against people, property crimes, and drug or disorderly conduct offenses.*

So it seems quite possible that many people who for whatever reason have developed a propensity for mistreating or even torturing animals, may often be the same individuals as those responsible for mistreating animals. We should therefore be concerned to see that those responsible for the Chilliwack reports should be charged and brought to court, and if found guilty should be sentenced appropriately, not imprisonment only, but also with some form of remedial treatment.

At the same time it is useless to remark on the increased incidence of cruelty to animals, and not to seek some remedies for it. We need to give serious attention to *why* such behaviour occurs, since it may be "the canary in the coal mine" for some less obvious social malaise such as poverty or unemployment that we need to address and which is causing alienation of segments of the population.

There is a definite link between cruelty to animals and violence to other human beings, and it seems to be on the increase in North America, if the growing number of shootings in schools and other similar environments is any indication. If we ignore it, as we have so far largely ignored the alienation of some of our unemployed youth who end up joining criminal gangs and even movements like ISIS, we may do so at our own peril.

— SLH



REPORT OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
2016 FEBRUARY 15

**Present:** Mayor Jamie Park  
Deputy Mayor Olivia Spurrell  
Councillors: Melanie Joyce, Rose Sheppard,  
Dennis Sheppard  
Clerks: Joanna Pottle (Recording Minutes)  
Peggy Sheppard

*Meeting commenced at 6:30 pm*

- Minutes of regular meeting minutes of January 19, 2016 adopted.
- Water/Sewer Update: Clerk has contacted Office of Minister of Municipal Affairs Mr Eddie Joyce. No update to be given on Phase 2 funding at this time.
- Devils Head: Agreed to meet with OBIEC once a reply is received from Municipal Affairs.
- Global GeoPark: Mayor Jamie will be a part of the steering committee. Members of the committee will have to meet and set down points of interest for our area.
- Financial Report: Approved. No accounts payable at this time.
- Budget Variance: Report presented with no follow up necessary.
- Building Permits Applications: No permits at this time.
- Write Offs: Approved write-offs of \$2,798.50.
- Disclosure Statements: All members of Council and Clerks signed disclosure statements.
- Review Commissioner: Mr Paul Keetch has agreed to fill this position.
- Upcoming Training: Review of training sessions.
- Complaint received regarding roaming dog.
- Letter received from homeowner in reply to dilapidated property.
- Letter to be sent to the Harbour Authority to support their request for an armour stone breakwater.
- Inquiry from Harbour Authority re: snow clearing of wharves. Clerk to follow up on this.
- Application to be made for a small Infrastructure Project to purchase new playground equipment.
- Reply to be sent to tax payer re: Parking Space.
- Approved purchase of Fire Department equipment.
- All correspondence viewed with no follow up necessary.

*Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.*

## THE PLIGHT OF REFUGEES

IT IS EASY TO BE CRITICAL of the European nations which have closed their borders to refugees from the Middle East during the past few months, but we must understand that their environment is vastly different from ours in North America.

Many parts of Western Europe in particular have had industrial development for two centuries or more, and some of their resources have been depleted. Their cities have existed far longer than have most cities of North America, and their populations are more urbanised. Land and mineral resources are often inadequate to support the population, so that many food items as well as other commodities like lumber and oil must be imported.

But perhaps one of the greatest differences between Europe and North America is that Europe has seen war and invasion for centuries, while North America has remained mostly unscathed. War in Europe extends back thousands of years, to the Roman invasions of 2,000 years ago, the Fall of Rome, the Crusades, wars in the Medieval and Reformation periods, and then in more modern times the Napoleonic Wars, and two World Wars.

Contrast this with North America which, despite its often violent history of settlement, has had relatively little strife. The Mexican-American War (1846-1847), the War of 1812, and the American Civil War (1861-1865), although they were bad, like all wars, either did not affect the entire continent, or did not last so long. Anyone who did not witness the effects that World War Two had in Europe, for example, cannot imagine what it was like. Therefore it is not surprising that Europeans are more sensitive to war and its effects on the population than are North Americans.

Given these considerations, it is therefore hardly surprising that Europeans may have mixed feelings about the arrival of thousands of refugees across their borders. Xenophobia can become a real problem, causing demands for closure of borders as we have seen in the areas of Europe closest to the routes taken by refugees from the Middle East heading for the relative safety of northern Europe. And with some European countries affected by poverty, like Greece, or quite crowded, like Germany, or simply on the route taken by these thousands of homeless people, it is no surprise that they have become hostile to the refugees who kept on coming in a never-ending stream of poverty. And if you are unfortunate enough to live near a refugee camp, there is probably much greater fear of disease and crime which are endemic where people live in crowded, squalid conditions.

Although it is understandable why European countries are much less welcoming of refugees than they were a few months ago, it is particularly unfortunate that it should occur at this time. With summer approaching, more refugees are arriving at the borders, with a much greater proportion of women and children among them than before when the majority were men. Consequently they are far more vulnerable, and it is likely that there will be many more deaths among them now. This will place much greater stress on the countries of arrival, where provision for refugees is either stretched beyond reasonable limits or completely nonexistent. To avert a calamity of unprecedented proportions, it will be necessary for other countries such as Canada and the USA to accept many more refugees than they have so far accepted.

— SLH

## SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

*Gems gleaned from my perusal of the Internet*

Click on the title, the URL, or the graphic.

### 'ONLY IN CANADA':

#### SMART CAR TRANSFORMED INTO SNOW-CAR

CTVNews.ca, 2016 March 04

Here is a neat little machine that could become very popular in N&L and many other parts of Canada. At the moment it is not legally operable on roads, but since many other vehicles are also not legal here, yet they still use the roads, it's probably not long before someone starts building this little machine and selling them, and we'll see them on the roads anyway. After all, Mr Anderson's little machine isn't as surprising an invention as was [Joseph-Armand Bombardier's](#) invention of the snowmobile in the 1930s.



<http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/only-in-canada-smart-car-transformed-into-snow-car-1.2804583>

### NEW POTENTIAL VIKING SITE DISCOVERED IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Sarah Kaplan, *The Washington Post*, 2016 April 01

After the discovery about fifty years ago by Helge Ingstad of the 1,000-year-old Norse (Viking) Settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows at the northern tip of the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, it seems that there may be another similar settlement about 700km south at Point Rosee near Cape Anguille on the SW corner of the Island. Traces of bog iron, the form of iron produced from bog water in the process the Norsemen used were found there last summer by a team led by archeologist Sarah Parcak. No evidence of this process being used anywhere in the Americas at that time in history, other than at L'Anse aux Meadows, has ever been found. until this discovery.

The discovery made by detailed examination of photographs from space showed unnatural-looking regular shapes in the local topography, similar to those reported to Helge Ingstad by George Decker half a century earlier. Ms Parcak and her team then visited the spot in summer of 2015. They plan to return again this summer and continue their work.

Ingstad's work at L'Anse aux Meadows has been disputed by some archeologists, but this discovery of a similar site at Point Rosee should, if authenticated, dispel the doubts of any but the most sceptical, clearly establishing Newfoundland's importance as Europe's gateway to North America.

<http://www.torontosun.com/2016/04/01/new-potential-viking-site-discovered-in-newfoundland>

Also two reports by CBC News

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/research-sheds-new-light-on-viking-travels-in-n-l-1.1375575>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/vikings-point-rosee-nl-discovery-1.3518020>

### HUMANS AND DOGS WERE VERY CLOSE EVEN IN PREHISTORIC TIMES

*Dispatch Tribunal*, 2016 March 07

Robert Losey, an anthropologist at the University of Alberta has been researching the relationship between us, humans, and our best friends, canines. He has studied human burials dating back five thousand to eight thousand years in Siberia, and discovered one case of the remains of dogs buried in the same grave as their owner. Analysis of bones also revealed that dogs lived on the same diet as the humans.

Our connection with dogs is among the most interesting symbiotic relationships. Read this article for more interesting facts discovered by Mr Losey in his research about this ancient relationship between man and his best friend.

<http://www.dispatchtribunal.com/university-of-alberta-researcher-look-at-close-prehistoric-relationship-between-human-and-dog/17065/>

### MASSIVE SINKHOLE SWALLOWS 25 TONNES OF FISH OVERNIGHT

Caroline Floyd, *The Weather Network*, 2016 April 01

Sinkholes are not uncommon in some parts of the world, depending on the geology of the region, particularly when the underlying strata are limestone or other water-soluble rock. Certain parts of Florida are subject to them, and they can be big enough to swallow a car or even a whole building. The one in this incident occurred in China, draining a farmer's fish pond overnight, including 25,000 tonnes of fish, worth about C\$100,00.



<http://www.theweathernetwork.com/news/articles/massive-sinkhole-swallows-25-tonnes-of-fish-overnight/65797/>

### **ROUTE 450**

Anyone using Route 450, especially the section between Copper Mine Brook and Blow-Me-Down Brook bridge, has to be aware of the poor condition of the road. A recent call to Mr Joyce's office in Corner Brook yielded the following information:

*Mr Joyce is fully aware of the state of the pavement. As soon as weather conditions allow, temporary repairs will be done to the section Coppermine Brook to Blow-Me-Down Brook bridge. Then, later in the season, new pavement is scheduled to be laid for parts of that section of the highway. This work had been scheduled for last summer, but funds were diverted elsewhere.*

Regarding the damaged sections on Littleport Road (near the Rectory and at Sheppards' Clover Farm Store in Lark Harbour) no plans as yet exist to deal with these sections, although they are also the responsibility of the Provincial Dept of Public Works. Hopefully these will be repaired also this summer. — SLH

**RABBI JONATHAN SACKS**  
**CHIEF RABBI OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**  
**A brief review of some of his ideas**  
**relevant to the violence we are seeing**  
**in the world today**

*This article is in part the ideas of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, but some of it is my response to his ideas. Readers who are interested should read some of the Rabbi's many writings to understand his point of view.*

Recently I listened to an interview on CBC Radio's *Tapestry* by Mary Hynes with the Chief Rabbi of the UK, Jonathan Sacks. The main theme of the interview was violence in human society, prompted by the current issues with organisations like ISIL.

Being the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish religious community in the UK, Rabbi Sacks commands considerable authority, but that is not his sole qualification to be heeded. Approaching the age of 70, he is an extremely learned man who has taught at and holds honorary degrees from a number of prestigious universities, including both Oxford and Cambridge. He has also debated with many of the great minds of the day, has published a number of books on philosophical and religious topics, and has applied his personal beliefs to events in today's international scene. Whether we are Jewish or not, or Christian, Moslem, or whatever faith we may embrace, or even none at all, Rabbi Sacks has ideas which all of us would do well to consider.

Many people today deny all religion on the grounds that (1) it is not based on observable scientific fact and has nothing to say to persons of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This is the main argument of atheists, and in part also of agnostics. And (2) many also blame religion as the cause of the violence we are experiencing in the world today.

Rabbi Sacks is fully conversant with these opinions, but refutes both.

In response to (1) Sacks emphasises the point that the *essential* difference between religion and science is precisely that they arise from completely different premises. As modern mathematicians might say, they are two different sets which do not intersect at all. However this is not the point of the present discussion.

More important to Sacks is (2) the blaming of religion as the cause of the violence in the world today. He reminds us that *religious passion can be like fire, and fire warms, but it also burns, and we are the guardians of the flame*. He also poses these questions: "*Will religion harm or heal? Will it build, or will it destroy?*" And he states very clearly that "*The cause of violence is not religion. The cause of violence is the human heart. . . . The biggest Weapon of Mass Destruction is the human heart.*"

These questions and answers remind us of the statement the National Rifle Association uses to justify the carrying of guns: "*It is not the guns that kill people; it is people who kill people.*" And these statements are irrefutable. What is true of guns therefore is also true of religion.

The Rabbi justifies his remarks by reviewing the role religion has played throughout human history. As far back as the Greeks and Romans one group of humans was killing another and the reasons were many and various, although greed for land, wealth, and power was always foremost on the list. Nothing today has changed, except

that perhaps, according to the Rabbi, we are more ready to reject certain accompanying concepts that are fundamental to the existence of most religions: Marriage; Community; and Moral Sense.

There is no need to elaborate on how those three concepts have been devalued, particularly since World War Two; and in some ways that devaluation was even needed to facilitate a closer examination of what is in fact happening but is not fully and correctly achieved.

Many of the freedoms that we now take for granted, such as universal suffrage, universal medical care, and even the opportunity for women to work at all outside the home, have all affected our attitudes to the family. At the same time, marriage patterns have changed, and this has indirectly changed attitudes to marriage which have in turn affected our sense of community. These changes and others of lesser significance have mostly occurred since the 1950s, along with the demise of the extended family, and all the changes in family structure have had enormous effects on communities, as has rural depopulation and the growth of megacities. The outcome of this so far is that society's long-standing moral sense has been severely challenged and even forced to accommodate family and community changes. But the process still has far to go.

In conclusion, Rabbi Sacks remains optimistic about the plight of society, but he insists that religion is not the problem. Instead, he believes that it is man's interpretation of those religions that is at fault. However it will not be easy to correct or reform what is going on in the world, and sincere and good religious believers of all faiths will have to examine sincerely and thoroughly their interpretations of their specific religions, since none of them, in Sacks's opinion, support the use of violence in furthering their aims.

The key to it is, he suggests, that adherents of all religions must approach this task in a positive manner, which, he maintains, was the original intent of the founders of those religions. If this is so, then we cannot use our religions to justify the kind of violence that has been used by some throughout history, and those who hope for more humane and positive results must work hard to achieve it.

— SLH

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HERE ARE SOME REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READING

**[ABOUT RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS](#)**

<http://www.rabbisacks.org/about-us/>

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**[RABBI SACKS'S OWN WEBSITE](#)**

<http://www.rabbisacks.org/>

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**[RELIGION IS NOT A THREAT](#)**

Rabbi Sacks in Conversation with Father Raymond de Souza

<http://www.rabbisacks.org/religion-is-not-a-threat-rabbi-sacks-in-conversation-with-father-raymond-de-souza-at-cardus/>

**IN RECOGNITION OF  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY,  
2016 March 08  
with apologies to the Ladies for being a month late**

Anyone who has read much history will know very well that through out western history relatively few women have played a significant role compared with men. Exceptions have been from royal houses, two of the best-known examples in British history being perhaps [Queen Elizabeth I](#), daughter and heir of King Henry VIII, [Queen Victoria](#), the great-grandmother of the present Queen, and of course Queen Elizabeth II herself. There have been others, such as [Boudica](#), the early British woman who fought the Roman occupation around AD 60, and [Catherine de Medici](#) who achieved a level of notoriety when she ruled France as regent while her son was a child. Female writers dapple western history, with [Jane Austen](#) the novelist, and [Elizabeth Barrett Browning](#) the poet. But generally it is true to say that women were, for legal purposes, usually the *property* of their husbands, who kept them “barefoot and pregnant” for most of their often quite brief lives.

[HILDEGARDE OF BINGEN 1098 – 1179](#)

Female musicians whose work has stood the test of time are few and far between until the present century. Today it seems like every other singer/songwriter is an attractive young female, but this is a very recent development. No doubt throughout history there were female singers in churches, but few, if any, are known today. One lady, however, who stands out because of her musical talent is Hildegard of Bingen. A daughter of a large family of the minor nobility, she founded monasteries, wrote learned texts, composed sacred music, and is still remembered today as an important musician more than 800 years after her death. She is also recognised as a saint by some authorities of the Roman Catholic Church. Recordings of some of her music is available.

[CLARA SCHUMANN 1819 1896](#)

Another fine female composer and performer in earlier times was Clara Wieck Schumann, who became the wife of Robert Schumann in 1837. From a very young age Clara learned to play the piano and the violin, and quite probably other instruments too, giving numerous performances and composing a large number of pieces, especially for the piano where she was very skilled. Overshadowed by her more famous husband, she is however recognised as a notable composer in her own right, and during her long life she composed a large number of short pieces for both piano and violin.

The fact is, however, that there are still relatively few women in certain professions, so it seemed appropriate on this day to make note of a few women in less-than-common trades or professions. One such profession which provides a living for only very few women is that of orchestral conductors. Yes, truly, there are female choir directors and women who as music teachers may at times direct an orchestra, but very few have reached the exalted level of the international orchestral music scene, invited to conduct world class symphony orchestras in the major cities of the world. One such, however, is Marin Alsop.

[MARIN ALSOP born 1956](#)

As a small child born in 1956 and raised in New York City by parents who were both musicians, at quite an early age Marin Alsop decided she wanted to be a conductor of orchestras. On entering music college she was asked what kind of a career in music she wanted. When she answered that she wanted to be an orchestral conductor, she was told in very definite terms that “women don’t do that”. But she persevered and now she is sought after as a conductor by many of the world’s great classical orchestras. In 2013 and again in 2015, she was selected as the first woman to conduct the orchestra at the [Last Night of the Proms](#). That event, produced annually since 1895 and in the Royal Albert Hall, London, since 1941, is perhaps the most coveted and prestigious assignment for any orchestral musician, as it marks the end of London’s summer music season each year and is broadcast around the world.

[JEAN COULTHARD 1908-2000](#)

Although there have always been plenty of female performers of classical orchestral music, Jean Coulthard, born in Vancouver, Canada, became one of Canada’s leading composers and has left her mark among her more numerous male contemporaries. She composed quite a wide variety of fine music, one of her best-known works being *Music to St Cecilia for Organ and Strings* (1969). This work has been recorded by CBC Recordings in a performance on the magnificent pipe organ ([Opus 3623](#)) designed and built by [Casavant Frères](#) of Ste Hyacinthe, Québec, and inaugurated in 1987 in the Jack Singer Concert Hall in Calgary, Alberta, at a cost of more than \$750,000.

The late Ms Coulthard is certainly one of Canada’s leading composers of orchestral music.

**A FINAL COMMENT**

Women as composers in the world of orchestral music are still very much a minority compared with men. But the times, they are a-changing. It seems that women still have more difficulty becoming acknowledged and recognised today, but with composers like the late Jean Coulthard, they are gradually assuming their rightful place in this male dominated world. A glance at the long [List of Female Composers by Birth Year](#) will demonstrate that women are making themselves noticed. I have mentioned just a handful of better known women. A similar list of male composers would however contain many more names, and consequently many more who are better known.

Meanwhile, there seems to be no shortage of women, mostly young, of course, and usually quite attractive, contributing in the area of popular music, and known as “singer-songwriters”. I know little about these ladies, but I hear them quite often on CBC radio, where their songs are played almost daily.

I wish them luck.

But the world of classical music does not have the constant support of popular radio, and the ladies listed in my article invariably had to wait patiently, sometimes unsuccessfully, for any recognition. Hopefully things are better nowadays.

— SLH