



# Immigrant Entrepreneurs on Prince Edward Island





**Dr Kevin J. Arsenault**

Executive Director, Prince Edward Island Association for Newcomers to Canada

The PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada welcomed 951 new clients in 2007 from over 50 countries, and another 460 people as of June 24, 2008. These immigrants are fast changing the face of PEI, and are making an enormous contribution to Island society. They deepen our understanding and appreciation of the marvelous diversity the world's many cultures offer; they evoke within us a more generous response to others who are different; they enrich our lives with new ideas and innovative ways of doing things; and they make a significant, positive contribution to our Island.

A number of immigrants profiled in this manual were once welcomed at the airport by staff of the PEIANC, some as refugees arriving with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. To witness how their early struggles, dedication and hard work have paid off so richly is rewarding indeed. These stories are representative of a growing community of recent newcomers to PEI now overcoming hurdles to establish and support themselves. Hopefully, the life stories in this book will offer encouragement to other immigrant settlers to persevere in their endeavours.

**Dr Roberta MacDonald**

Dean, School of Business, University of Prince Edward Island

Congratulations to these entrepreneurs who add value to our community. At the UPEI School of Business, we also believe that entrepreneurial ventures and innovative thinking will help build and sustain the future of Prince Edward Island.

Our UPEI School of Business offers Certificate and Specialization options for business and non-business students. In one course, for example, student groups are tasked to create a business idea and then run it for a day, with any proceeds given to non-profit initiatives. The School reaches out to its community in various ways, such as the Adopt a Son or Daughter business succession initiative which promotes entrepreneurial opportunities for young people within established businesses. And our new executive-style MBA Program offers specialized streams of study in both Biotechnology and Innovative Management. These streams suit the learning and development needs of potential entrepreneurs, as well as those who wish to generate new initiatives under an organizational umbrella.

With this emphasis on entrepreneurship, the UPEI School of Business is helping to develop the leaders for today and the future.



**The Hon. Richard Brown**

Minister for Innovation and Advanced Learning, Government of Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island prides itself as a place from where one can do business. Prince Edward Island is also renowned for being a welcoming community. Both these fine attributes are displayed in this unique collection of no less than 60 immigrant entrepreneurs drawn from some 25 countries, currently 'doing business' on PEI.

The PEI Provincial Government recognizes the pivotal role that newcomers bring to *our* Island; *their* Island. By investing in innovation and strategic infrastructure, we believe that this small jurisdiction can carve for itself a secure, prosperous and sustainable tomorrow. And for any such investment to materialize, we affirm our strong commitment to the people who make this place their home, by birth or by design. We are providing them with top quality learning and training opportunities at all levels, facilitating access to vocational and higher education, upgrading skills and encouraging private enterprise, while respectful of the 'quality of island life' that makes living here on Prince Edward Island such a rewarding experience. The diversity of people and products showcased in this manual reveal a rich testimony of talent and diversity, as well as opportunities for further growth. Our 'intelligent island' beckons, as we carve out a future built on our strengths.

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## Immigrant Entrepreneurs on Prince Edward Island

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## Profiling Immigrant Entrepreneurs on 'the Island': A Study in Diversity

This manual records, profiles and celebrates the diverse collection of entrepreneurs who have moved to - and so far stayed on - Prince Edward Island, and are currently operating their own businesses on 'The Island'. Their testimony, captured here in print, is meant to encourage others to come over to the Island Province of Canada and follow their example, but also to develop a wider appreciation of what Prince Edward Island really is like in the 21st century.

Affectionately known as PEI, Prince Edward Island is easily recognized as the smallest province of Canada, and the only one to be completely set on an island environment. Apart from these considerations of size and geography, 'The Island' is also firmly associated with a number of vignettes that reinforce its status as an idyllic, pastoral location, with an economy and society driven by its land: 'spud isle' (or, the potato island); 'the gentle island' (reminiscent of its rolling vistas and viewscapes, as well as of robust and caring communities); and the site and inspiration for the rural adventures of Anne of Green Gables (celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2008) penned by who is presumably the most famous Prince Edward Island entrepreneur of all time: Lucy Maud Montgomery. The island province has a population of some 140,000, many of whom are descendants of Scottish and Irish settlers; along with those with an older pedigree, having First Nation Mi'kmaq and Acadian roots.

These impressions need to be tweaked with an appreciation of the wider diversity that is PEI today. The contemporary economy has expanded in various other manufacturing and service niches. And the island society is also much more multi-cultural: the 19th century arrival of Lebanese traders, and the 20th century arrival of Dutch farmers, has been followed by an impressive collection of so many other immigrants, many of whom have opened up their own business operations. And so, immigrant entrepreneurs on PEI today in part solidify the island's natural heritage and representation as 'the million acre farm'; but they have also embarked on many other new areas of trade, service and production. Businesses set up, and often operated, by

entrepreneurs 'from away' can today be found in all corners of the Island, in all sectors of the economy, and by immigrant men and women who have come to PEI from an impressive list of foreign countries.

This recognition is important for a slate of reasons. Immigrant entrepreneurs help to grow the Island's population, while creating exciting new businesses opportunities that provide employment to the local labour force and enhance the production of local value added. Entrepreneurs from off island can also contribute quite significantly to the island's economic and cultural development. As in other small island jurisdictions, it is typically those entrepreneurs who have spent time elsewhere who bring back to their new island home a package of new contacts, knowledge, networks and potential markets. All these are vital ingredients to make an eventual business product or service - and typically involving sales to 'off island' customers - a commercial success. This makes for a fulfilling experience to the business' founders, profits to their investors, jobs to their workers, and a more diverse market also to tourists and island based customers.

The end result also contours our understanding of PEI in the 21st Century as both an 'intelligent island', and a gentle one. The businesses set up and run by immigrant entrepreneurs on PEI provide an interesting commentary on the nature of the Island economy as a whole. And so, immigrant entrepreneurs partake in a persisting love affair with the land and its resources: mainly by branching out into wholesome, gourmet foods and drinks. There is investment in the tourism sector, and the vibrant hospitality and craft sectors that latch onto this, providing premier accommodation and dining experiences, plus novelty local souvenirs. Then, there is also a significant critical mass of innovative investment based on new information, communication, entertainment and energy related technologies. All complemented with a sprinkling of other small scale, professional and service activities that have identified knowledge gaps in the local market. These niches are not mutually exclusive: those running cafés source local foods; those

producing fine foods target tourists as customers; and developers have been busy creating a web presence for some of the accommodations.

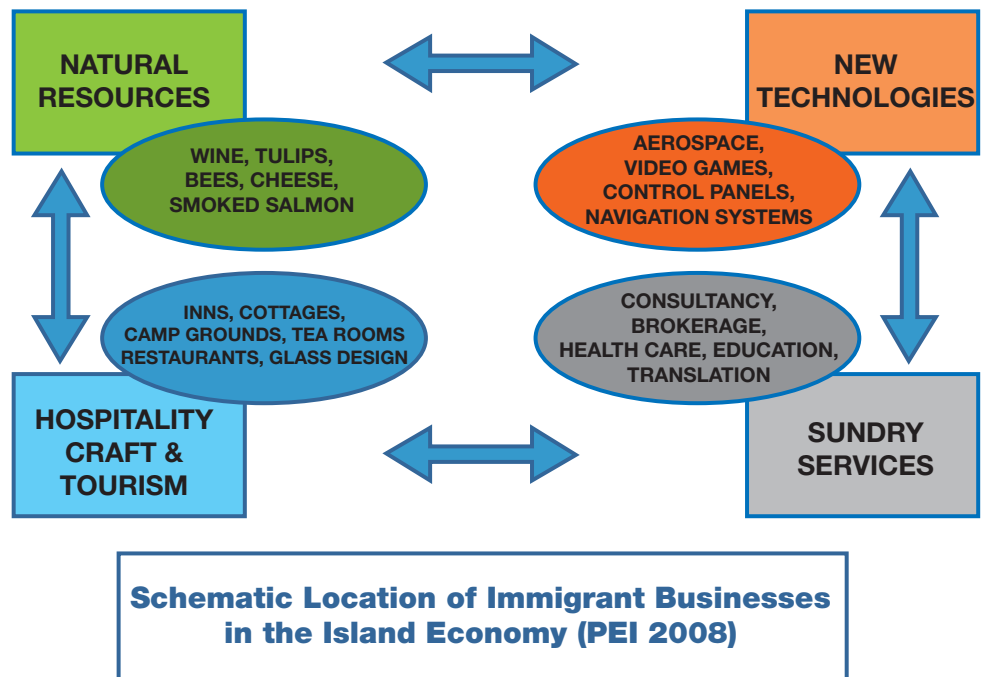
What are the secrets of PEI’s success in drawing, and keeping, these immigrant entrepreneurs? Of course, there is no simple answer. Every business has its own story. But patterns do emerge from the assortment of experiences. Practically all immigrant entrepreneurs are from the outset, or else become with time, so very appreciative of the ‘quality of island life’: whether in terms of safety and security, warm and welcoming communities, the humane tempo of activity, or an overall accessibility. Given the small labour market, staff turnover is at a minimum, and workers’ loyalty to their employer is strong. The island’s two key post-secondary education institutions – Holland College and the University of Prince Edward Island – do not simply produce smart, well-educated graduates, but respond quickly and proactively to industry needs in their curricular development. Provincial Government does its own fair share, developing appropriate fiscal incentives to attract business start-ups and their associated highly-skilled personnel. And the relative affordability of real estate is a definitive draw: PEI remains the province with the cheapest property per unit area in Canada.

This is all well and good. And yet, such a grand review of immigrant entrepreneurship fails to engage with the people who have made all this happen ‘on the ground’. Especially in a region like Atlantic Canada, which has proportionately not managed to attract and retain as many immigrants as other parts of the country, there is much to be celebrated by the stories of non-Canadians who have not just become “Islanders by Choice” but – armed with a dogged determination to succeed – have developed successful business ventures in so many diverse fields. Such a focus allows a display of insights into the specific, and often remarkable, adventures of those coming to, and staying on, Prince Edward Island. These include typical comments about what is so special about this place that they consciously decided

– after carefully weighing all the options - to make their home.

This was the backdrop to the study that provided the basic information now contained in this booklet.

With help from the PEI Association of Sector Councils, the PEI Population Network, the Federation of PEI Municipalities, PEI Population Secretariat, PEI Provincial Nominee Program, PEI Business Development, the PEI Government’s Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning, PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada, various individuals (including politicians), plus that very powerful source of island information – ‘word of mouth’, 60 firms, in business at the time of this study (March – June 2008) have been identified as belonging to immigrant entrepreneurs on Prince Edward Island. Note that only actual individual immigrant entrepreneurs with incorporated businesses were targeted for this project: and so, immigrant investors, the children or other relatives of immigrant entrepreneurs, immigrants who invested and became members of cooperatives, immigrants with unincorporated businesses, and other entrepreneurs who moved to PEI but were born in Canada, were all excluded by the deliberately restrictive terms of this study. A couple of immigrants who are now franchise holders were also included, for good measure. Moreover, the manageable size of ‘the Island’ allows such a research exercise to be fairly comprehensive. Admittedly, it is practically



impossible to profile all immigrant entrepreneurs operating on PEI at any point in time: indeed, more firms were being identified as this text was going to print (These include pizza owner Rami Al-Shahabi, England-born Emma Fugate [who runs *E-Accounting*], and South Africa-born Alet Pieterse [who runs *Web Site Advantage*]). Yet, with our final trawl of 60 firms, we think that we are 'pretty close'.

All but 13 of these 60 businesses are located in Queens County: this pattern reflects both the general population distribution and demographic trends in the province. (*See locator map on centre pages.*) Their owners hail from 25 different countries.

The identified businesses fall neatly within the four 'activity clusters' identified above. Amongst them, those in the largest sub-category [21 firms] are involved in **catering**: here we come across food outlets and various themed and ethnic restaurants, representing the culinary traditions of over a dozen different countries. The next largest category [13 firms] involves those who have invested in **accommodation** and related services: from beach cabins, quaint B&Bs and cottages, and right up to full-scale inns, campgrounds and hotels. There is then a motley range of providers of **craft, professional, consulting and other services**: from architectural design to carpentry, from translation services to health care, from private tuition to glass and ceramic crafts [12 firms]. Next come the farmers, vintners, flower growers, cheese makers, salmon and eel smokers who have developed premier **farm, food, beverage and natural products** – sourced mainly from local raw material - for discerning clients [9 firms]. Finally, the latest generation of **new technology driven ventures** is led by young, educated, and more technologically savvy entrepreneurs: their interests are in such areas as computer gaming, automation, aerospace and navigation instruments [5 firms].

Most of the identified businesses were individually contacted, informed about the aims of the study, and invited to cooperate. For these firms, this was an opportunity to showcase their firm and its products or services. (In three other cases, the invitation was declined: this reaction was respected.) Interviews with the immigrant entrepreneur(s) were then arranged. These conversations, held in a convenient location – often their place of business or retail outlet - would include an exploration of the following details:

- The background of the entrepreneur and spouse, if any: country of origin, schooling, work experience, reasons for moving to PEI.
- Reasons for developing his/her product or service and any "goodness of fit" with the PEI economy, society and culture.
- Details about the business and its products or services, including location, target clients and markets.
- Comments about the suitability of PEI as a place where to establish and grow one's business and one's family.

Interviews were digitally recorded, with the respondents' permission, in order to permit the option of indulging in actual quotations. Suitable visual material – such as brochures or labels – was also collected. Arrangements were made for 'ready-for-print' portraits to be taken by a professional photographer after each interview.

This text groups the 21 immigrant owned and run businesses in the restaurant and allied catering sector together, since they are a significant number and share similar challenges in terms of business set-up. The same applies to the 13 accommodation facilities run by immigrants. The remaining 26 entrepreneurs are profiled separately, in no particular order, but certainly in greater detail, allowing more of their personal stories to be told.

Of course, we are reporting on a very dynamic sector: businesses will continue to open and close, just as people will continue to come and go. This document will soon become historical. Yet, hopefully, this compilation allows readers to connect with the real people behind these immigrant owned and operated businesses. It profiles their products or services, shares the compelling reasons that have brought them to - and have so far kept them on - Prince Edward Island. It outlines their 'business case'. And it engages with some of the key challenges they have faced in their settlement experiences.

In short: 60 gripping, no nonsense answers to the question: *Why PEI?*

## I: Immigrants running Catering Units and offering Ethnic Food

A metropolis is often defined by the variety and quality of its restaurants. Prince Edward Island may not be a metropolis, but it will surprise any visitor with its diversity of themed and ethnic food outlets. The province has an exceptionally varied food scene, thanks also to a broad range of immigrants who have transformed their panache for their local recipes into a business proposition that has engaged local palates. Most of these establishments are understandably located next to the main population centres on the island.

Makena Ambassa is from Kenya and moved to PEI with her family in 2003. She operated her **Out of Africa** restaurant right on Charlottetown's main street, before moving into a stall at the ever-so-popular Farmers' Market. "I feel so much accepted here. This is home for me", admits Makena. Her fare - also available as outside catering - includes traditional, tasty East African specialities. With her husband Jean (who moved to Canada from Cameroon in 1993), Makena set up a foundation to support children and families in their home villages in both West and East Africa: they help to provide clothes, clean water, food, as well as training for local groups, associations and cooperatives. They have been overwhelmed by the generosity of Prince Edward Islanders to this cause. "I now feel I am in the place I was supposed to be. I couldn't ask for more", reports Makena. She cherishes the special connection that Islanders have cultivated with people in Africa. Her goal now is to transform that connection, changing it from one of a people giving and another receiving, to one of friendship on equal terms.

It is a completely different story which led to the 2005 opening of **Dayboat**, a high-end locale located in the scenic surrounds of Oyster Bed Bridge. This time, the entrepreneurship is mainly American. Robert (Bobby) and Laura Shapiro of New York teamed with Bill and Michelle Brownstein of New Jersey and with local chef Gordon Bailey and his wife Traci to develop this experience in high class dining. "My wife and I were coming up here for vacations, and we were constantly struck with the abundance of amazing fresh ingredients, from the fish that comes directly to the docks, to the island raised beef, pork, poultry and wide array of locally grown produce",

admits Bobby. Air Canada's inflight magazine, *Enroute*, placed Dayboat third on Canada's top new restaurants list in 2006: reviewers claimed that it "serves some of Canada's most exciting food". The restaurant is supporting a 'slow food' drive, encouraging the sourcing and eating of local produce.

Meanwhile, Liam and Kim Dolan moved to PEI from Ireland and set about deploying their entrepreneurial flair in more ways than one. On Charlottetown's Sydney Street, one finds that the **Olde Dublin Pub**, with live music on summer nights, has a warm, welcoming environment and a large selection of draught beers. And right downstairs from the pub is the sedate and elegant **Claddagh Oyster House**, a restaurant which features such delicious items as Colville Bay oysters and succulent lamb. Here, Liam Dolan teamed up with John Bil (a former Canadian oyster shucking champion) to create PEI's first, year-round oyster bar. The international shellfish festival, now a regular island event, is also Liam's brainchild.

From Irish beer and Island oysters to dumplings, noodles, spring rolls and vegetarian sushi. Kenny Wang and Wenny Kuo renovated an old Charlottetown property into **Tai Chi Gardens**, a restaurant they opened in 2007 and which features traditional Taiwanese flavours. The ambiance of this place is due in part to the request for guests to replace their shoes with slippers upon entering. "If customers are willing to take their shoes off, then they respect the place. If they respect the place, then they also respect other customers. And so, when they leave, they perhaps can respect their families, co-workers and society. My little place is the first step to begin that", advises Wenny.

Kenny and Wenny moved from Taiwan to Toronto in 1995 before relocating with their son to Prince Edward Island in 2002. Their restaurant's name is a reflection of Kenny's practice of Tai Chi, a system of physical exercises designed for self-defence and meditation. His desire to give and not just take is evidenced by the classes that he teaches for free at the local community hall.



Besides being entrepreneurs controlling their own schedules and standard of business, Kenny and Wenny appreciate the interaction they have with customers. They are eagerly learning English, and having a small business affords them that opportunity.

The Taiwan connection takes us to the **Formosa Tea House**. [Formosa, which means beautiful, was the name given by the Portuguese to the island of Taiwan.] In the year 2000, Chien Ming and Kuo Yeh moved to PEI after 5 years in Ontario. They were out of work, with just \$10,000 in the bank. "And so, we decided to open a shop; but, what kind of shop? Then I remembered that all my family members work in the tea house business, so I decide to open a tea house", Chien muses matter-of-factly. It was a gamble, but it paid off in due course. Chien started in 2001 with a small leased outlet that would only fit 10 seats. Revenue improved when some traditional Taiwanese dishes were added to the teas, and all juices and coffees removed. Later, Chien's parents agreed to lend \$75,000 and migrate to PEI in order to help run a larger locale, which was duly inaugurated in 2004.

When Chien-Ming first traveled to PEI with friends in 1999, he conveyed to his wife that the Island is similar to how Taiwan looked in years gone by. Kuo remembers Chien-Ming describing Prince Edward Island as "friendly, peaceful, and good for living." With one daughter growing up on the Island, Kuo is thankful that "PEI is very friendly and very peaceful... and I like it here," she says. "It's a small place, but you can find everything. It's very convenient."

Still on the Taiwan theme, Charlottetown also hosts the **Interlude Café**, owned and run by Ally Cheng Fen Kuo. Ally immigrated to Canada as a skilled worker, accompanied by her 5-year-old daughter, in 2000. She first lived in Vancouver and then in Toronto before settling down on PEI in 2003. The Island now feels like home: "The last time I went back to visit family and friends in Taiwan, I just felt I wanted to come back". Kuo thinks that PEI is the ideal place to raise her daughter: "She is so happy. When I look at her, I know that this is the right place." Kuo's story is a welcome reversal of an all too common pattern, where immigrants move to the Island from their home countries, only to relocate soon after to the larger Canadian cities.

Meanwhile, just outside Kensington, in rural Long River, Geoffrey and Deborah Crowther live and work in a lovingly restored, 1832 two-room

schoolhouse, known as the **Kitchen Witch Tea Room and Country Crafts**. When the Crowthers purchased the property, they were pleasantly surprised to discover some old cookbooks and handwritten recipes from the original owners who apparently had a "tremendously loyal clientele of repeat customers, comprising both summer visitors and local residents," suggests Deborah. The Crowthers have now restored much of the charm and good reputation that belonged to this stately property. The building has been lovingly returned to its former 19th Century décor. Original recipes have found their way back on the menu, including a much prized spaghetti sauce.

Furthermore, Geoff bakes bread daily in their regular-sized oven; he has branched out and created his own recipes, such as chili cheese bread and curry bread.



The Crowthers have also revived the adjacent craft shop, which predominantly features such Island products as preserves, maple syrup and various crafts. Deborah and her daughter work diligently through the winter to make crafts and design new ones that promote the Norwegian legend of the kitchen witch - a kind witch who helps prevent mishaps in the kitchen so that it can remain a place of refuge, warmth and happiness - and from which the business derives its original name.

Family members help out in the business, and are joined by two additional hired staff during the busy summer months. Deborah is clearly pleased with her team: "They are such hard workers. That's another thing that really impresses me about Prince Edward Island: people here work so hard and have such a great work ethic".

The Crowthers are pleased to call themselves "Islanders by Choice". They first came to Prince Edward Island on a family holiday from the United States in 1997. At that time, they were struck "not only by the beauty but the quieter, simpler, laid back lifestyle". They recognized that, if they were going to retire in Canada, away from the bustling city life, PEI was it. "This was definitely the place for us," admits Deborah. "Moving here was kind of like coming home".



Meanwhile, Summerside itself has its own raft of catering establishments owned by immigrant entrepreneurs. They include **A1 Pizza Donair & Sub**, owned by Bejtulla Sadika, who hails from Kosovo.

Just outside this city, and back in Kensington, we come across the **Lotus Garden Restaurant**. Its owner, chef and entrepreneur is Wing Chun Yip, originally from China. He lived in Hong Kong for seven years, and then worked as a chef in Toronto and Halifax before moving to PEI in 1994. He worked for six years employed as a chef before purchasing Lotus Garden in 2000.

The Chinese restaurant has enjoyed a steady clientele and a good reputation. It was the sauces, however, which proved particularly enticing. After a heart-warming incident involving a young girl who simply adored his plum sauce, Chef Wing was requested by a customer to take some of the plum sauce home. This episode proved to be the inspiration behind making his sauces available for sale in stores. With technical assistance from PEI Food Technology Centre and some financial support from PEI Business Development Inc., Chef Wing's sweet and sour, plum, lemon, orange and pineapple sauces are now available at his restaurant and other locations on PEI. Chef Wing is planning to develop Szechwan, hot spicy, barbecue, chicken wing and curry sauces.

Out in St Catherines, we find the **Firedance Country Inn**, a member of the 'Inns of Distinction'. Its owners, Jon and Hui Kirchansky, moved to PEI from the USA. In their own words: "We fell in love with Prince Edward Island when we came out on vacation. With its relaxing pace, clean air, breathtaking waterfront views and hospitable culture, we believe that you will fall in love with Prince Edward Island as well".

Back to Charlottetown, where a singular kind of exciting food greets visitors to **Royal Tandoor**. Since 2006, owner-entrepreneur Satish Kumar Sharma – who spends most of his time in Ontario – takes pride in bringing to 'the Island' the inherited tradition of a unique culinary art that creates the exotic, world-famous tastes in Indian cuisine. (A tandoor is a traditional clay oven where meats, poultry, fish and kebabs are stuck on a long skewer and grilled or barbecued, while never actually touching the coal.)



**Café Diem** is found on stylish Victoria Row, right in the heart of town. It is owned by Mamdouh Elgharib, who hails from Egypt, but was studying in Portugal when he met a fellow student who became his wife. Since she was a PEI native, he moved to 'the Island'. Mamdouh has owned businesses on PEI since 1987. "The Island is a nice place to start a life, people are friendly and the place is lovely", he explains. "But becoming an entrepreneur has its challenges: one needs to build contacts, find out what services are available, and be assertive about your goals".

The city has many more immigrant entrepreneurs running catering establishments. The Lebanese immigrant community on the Island boasts a number of locales, with **Cedar's Eatery** (and incorporating **Baba's Lounge**) – owned by Maroun and Nawal Abdallah – probably one of the oldest in town, having been open since 1981. Joseph Sammoun & Fadia Haddad – who own **Shaddy's Restaurant**; and Sameah (Sam) & Chooa Rashed – who own **Sam's Family Restaurant**, are also born in Lebanon. We also cannot fail to mention **Downtown Deli**, owned by Fouad Haddad (originally from Syria); **Pin Yuan Grocery Store**, owned by Feng Liu (China); the **Golden Wok Restaurant**, owned by Sherry Wong (China); **Linda's Coffee Shop**, owned by Firouz Agdasi (Iran); and **Monsoon Tea Room**, owned by Aung and Ging Lawt (Burma). For the size of the city, the diversity just boggles the mind.

Mehrnoosh Aghdassi emigrated to Prince Edward Island with his family from Iran in 1983. He headed west after graduation, working in restaurants in British Columbia and Alberta. He and his wife, Gina, have now moved from their most recent location in Fort McMurray back to PEI to raise their two children, and to run **Casa Mia**, the latest Italian restaurant in town. Gina has a flair for giftware, and the locale has displays ranging from home décor objects to jewelry.

Finally, still in Charlottetown, and still on the Italian theme. We find **Sirenella Ristorante**, opened by Italo Marzari in 1992. Italo migrated to Canada from his home in northern Italy in 1967. He spoke little English or French; though trained as an engineering technician, he took work as a restaurant busboy. His career path changed forever. As his language skills improved, Italo progressed to waiter and eventually he became maitre d' of the prestigious Royal York in Toronto.

By the early 1980's, Italo was managing a successful restaurant in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and just a few years later, he opened his own restaurant in Saint John, New Brunswick. Seeking yet another challenge, Italo moved to Prince Edward Island to become an instructor at the respected culinary institute in Charlottetown. When a downturn in the economy occurred, Italo was faced with two options: move off the Island or create his own employment. The outcome of this decision is as authentic an Italian restaurant as you can get.



Eating out on Prince Edward Island today allows guests to experience culinary delights of many different types, whether they are into pasta, pizza, steak, barbecue, sushi or seafood. The options run the full range, from affordable fast food to fine dining. Immigrant entrepreneurs have dramatically enlivened the ethnic restaurant scene on the Island, while also locating themselves in other culinary niches.

## II: Immigrants running Inns, Cottages and other Accommodations

With some 1.6 million visitations during 2006, it is no small wonder that Prince Edward Island is equipped with a variety of accommodation facilities that straddle the Island from tip to tip, and which suit all ages, tastes and pockets. A number of these businesses have been developed, and are operated, by immigrant entrepreneurs. Many occupy converted historic buildings; others enjoy impressive views.

Starting in the community of Alberton, close to the north-western tip of the Island, we find **La Petite France**, a bed and breakfast operated by Hubert and Michele Lihrmann. Immigrating from Alsace, France, the trilingual Lihrmanns now offer French hospitality from a converted Victorian house – complete with garden - located in the centre of town, next to its historic museum. Fine dining is provided on demand, and bike rentals are available. “We came as tourists to hockey summer camps for our children in Summerside four times, and decided to change our lives. We fell in love with the Island and decided to move”, explains Michele.

Almost at the extreme eastern end of the Island, between Georgetown and Cardigan, **The Romany Rest** is a small 4-star, country farmhouse operating as an en-suite B&B, complete with outdoor swimming pool, since 2006. It positions itself as an environmentally-friendly ‘Green Hotel’, based on perma-culture principles, and lies on five acres of land with unspoilt views of the Cardigan River.



“We were quite nervous about starting a B&B for the first time, wondering how we would get along and whether the guests would enjoy their stay”, report Sandra and Fred Storr, the owners. Before coming to PEI, they lived in a “tiny Welsh village in the mountains”, raising sheep and operating a small shop and café that promoted local produce; some of which they grew themselves.

“We ended up really surprised by how much we enjoyed meeting our guests and having them stay here with us, by the fun we’ve had together and by the way most have kept in touch with us long after they left. We give visitors our individual attention to help them get the most out of their stay here”, says Fred. “We’re used to living in a very rural environment; depending on all kinds of external factors, which can cause hardship”, adds Sandra.

“It has been a fantastic experience and it has given us the opportunity to do what we’ve always wanted to do, like making teas and keeping sheep and having ducks and growing more food than we used to be able to grow before. All the things that we have hoped for have come to fruition. Everybody’s been very helpful and very supportive.” Sandra and Fred have a business built on a philosophy of “home-grown, home-made, or local.” If they can’t grow it or make it, than they certainly intend to buy it locally. They stand firm on their plans to have an

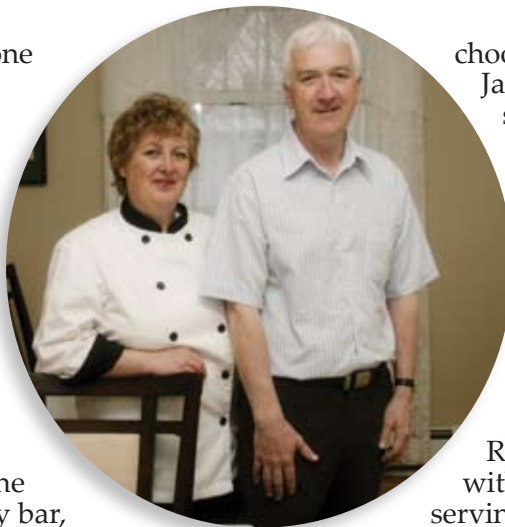
eco-friendly property that will one day go “off grid” as completely self-sustained.

Hennie and Harmen Hoekstra own and operate the **Marco Polo Land Resort**, a premier vacation centre for family and friends with over 100 acres of camping, trailing and RV sites. Located within minutes of Cavendish Beach, Marco Polo boasts camp sites, many of which are serviced with water, electrical and sewer hookups. The Resort included a take-out, dairy bar, store, restaurant, themed entertainment, pools and large play areas, including an amazing corn maze. The establishment hires some 80 workers annually. “We hire a lot of students, and we welcome older workers too,” says Hennie. “Some 40% of the workers are new each year. I believe that, if you pay a fair wage, you will get people to stay. At the moment, we are open only eight short weeks, but we are trying to extend the season to offer Christmas parties and other events. The fall season is attracting more tourists, and Cavendish needs to be open longer in the fall to serve these visitors”.

Not too far away, and still on the Island’s North Shore, we find the **Brackley Beach Campground**, with its cabins and tenting facilities, run by Emma Jane and David Zamber.

Henderikus and Genette Stutvoet are yet another Dutch couple who migrated to PEI, but with no plans to farm. They are the owners of the (aptly named) **Dutch Inn**, just outside Charlottetown, which is part of the internationally known Howard Johnson franchise.

Robert and Jane Manning came to Prince Edward Island straight from the Queen’s table and they have a photo to prove it. After serving such honoured guests as the Queen of England, Princess Anne, and former British Prime Minister John Major, in the 1980s and 1990s, this couple chose to move from the United Kingdom to Canada for a slower pace of life. They owned and operated a hotel in England; but the constant demands of their work were much more than they desired. Once their three sons were old enough to



choose their own futures, Robert and Jane flew across the Atlantic in 2003 to settle on Prince Edward Island. They were accompanied by one son and plenty of ambition to make their new business in Kensington a success. **The Victoria Inn B&B** is a Canada Select, four star, year-round accommodation with four house-keeping units and three rooms. Moreover, a lovely dining experience awaits patrons.

Robert trained as a catering manager with the British Royal Air Force, serving for 23 years, during which time he met Jane. “We’ve always been interested in the hospitality trade,” says Jane, the Inn’s chef and co-hostess.

In an attempt to escape the fast pace and demands of big cities, PEI became an attractive destination with its “beauty and open spaces”, indicate the Mannings. Robert offers one aspect of island life they appreciate: “The crime rate is not zero, but it’s very, very low”. Their list of benefits for moving to PEI continues: no language barriers, a strong economy, little exploitation, and, by far the most significant asset which they adamantly agree upon, is that it offers opportunities for a healthier lifestyle. In Prince Edward Island, their diets have changed for the better and more of their time is now spent together in a manner that is less demanding.

Judy and Trevor Pye moved to PEI from Berkshire, England. They own and operate the 5-star **Shipwright Inn B&B**, in downtown Charlottetown. The Inn has been rated as the “Best B&B on PEI”, one of the “Top ten B&Bs” in Canada by Frommer’s Travel Guides. Warm island hospitality is guaranteed. “In 2002, our daughter started training as a veterinary surgeon at the University of Prince Edward Island. We fell in love with the people and the place and decided we needed to do something about it”, explains Judy nonchalantly. “We are running a successful business in Charlottetown and believe there is huge potential to continue. Our quality of life is good and we are very happy on the Island”.

As their guests have pointed out, and as Judy and Trevor well appreciate, Prince Edward Island has some valuable characteristics. “It seems to be buffered from the extremes of the rest of the world. There is a great

community spirit here. It is a safe environment; one where people take care and pride. It doesn't matter whether someone has a mansion or a very standard house: people mow their lawns. That sounds like a very stupid thing to say, but it is a pride in what you have; even if it may only be a little."

James Kimmet and Dianna Linder, a couple from Montana, USA, purchased a stately island home built in the 1860s called Maplethorpe in Bedeque and undertook an extensive restoration process. **Historic Maplethorpe** is a B&B that opened its doors in 2002, offering four rooms. A separate apartment above the garage is available for weekly rentals, and a small adjacent restaurant is open all year round. As Maritime Certified Organic Growers and members of the PEI Certified Organic Co-Op, James and Dianna network to strengthen the production and distribution of great-tasting, locally grown organic produce. "A lot of people come to visit because they know that the food they get here is produced here, and of good quality" declares Dianna.

With an emphasis on local and organic food, the time management is admittedly more demanding; but the education and experience they garnered while living in the United States aids in operating their Canadian business. James grew up on a grain farm. Eventually, both James and Dianna attended a local college to learn how to raise sheep and hogs, chicken and turkeys. When they came to PEI, they were well equipped to be recognized as organic growers.

After purchasing Maplethorpe, James and Dianna very practically assessed their skills, which led to Dianna's enrollment at the Culinary Institute in Charlottetown. She explains: "I could always cook, but it was the presentation part that was really of some concern". The meals at Historic Maplethorpe B&B are now well prepared with the couple's garnered culinary expertise.

James was facing retirement as an educator in the USA when a trip to the Atlantic Provinces led to serious considerations about moving here. Initially, Newfoundland and Labrador was their target, because it seemed like a "really exciting place"; but they eventually concluded that it was "a little too rugged for our age". After further deliberations, they acknowledged that Prince Edward Island had some of the same attributes as 'the rock'. "People were very friendly, it had the

ocean, it was small, but it also had access to lots of services", explains Dianna. PEI became their destination of choice, in part because the price was right and labourers were reasonable to hire. Furthermore, the location seemed to fit so well because, "We know farming and this Island sees itself as a farming community," declares James.

James and Dianna identify Prince Edward Island as a safe, small, family-oriented place. They do admit, however, that the seasonal economy is difficult and they are not naively relying on the B&B income as their sole source of revenue. They suggest that, although it is easy to be captivated by PEI, potential immigrant entrepreneurs need to carefully examine what can be done to generate income throughout the year, and whether the net revenue is enough to sustain a family.

Another couple; another story. Gillian and Stuart Robinson came to PEI from England, sparked by a relative's challenge: "You'll never get into Canada. You don't have a degree," said Gillian's brother who was already settled in British Columbia. While Stuart didn't have a formal education, he had successfully worked in sales and marketing for 16 years. This experience ought to count, they thought.

After due research, the couple felt that both Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island were key contenders for their destination of choice, because of their provincial immigration requirements.

However, Gillian shivers as she recalls that they promptly declined Saskatchewan due to its cold prairie winters. In contrast, Prince Edward Island was identified as having similarities to England's popular south west holiday resort area; the type of place they could envisage themselves in. Early in 2003, their immigration application was submitted through the Provincial Nominee Program; by March, they were flying to Canada for an interview.

By June, a nomination certificate was sent to the federal government for approval and, in January 2004, the Robinsons were acquainting themselves with life on PEI. That all seemed easy enough, until the stories emerge of a burning chimney, a flooding basement, a contaminated well, mischievous raccoons, stinky skunks and more.

The early weeks were dominated by doubt, "It's hard to know at that point if you've done the right thing," says Gillian. "It's a surreal time. You've left



your family and friends behind, you're sitting in a tiny little two bed cottage [while they waited to move to their own property], wondering what the hell you're doing here, relying on so many people because you have no clue, trusting everybody and hoping for the best". And yet, despite the enormous difficulties, Stuart and Gillian, later followed by their two daughters, now own and operate two successful businesses in the Brackley Beach area. The seven **Almost Home Cottages**, located across three acres of land, are available between May and October; the three limos of **Prestige Limousine Services** are also available for lease, with Stuart as the primary driver.

Key to the Robinsons' successful settlement has been their connection with Rotary International and local community groups. They have also benefitted by meeting and befriending well-connected, well-intentioned Islanders. The latter, like their friend Paula, are described as "the mentors who have been the most practical". Stuart and Gillian have found PEI captivating: "this little island just seems to weave its web".

Julie Shore was a trained dental hygienist; Arla Johnson a psychotherapist. But now they together own and operate **Johnson Shore Inn**. The Inn has 12 guest rooms, each having an ocean view, and is situated on a rocky red cliff on PEI's rugged north-east shore. Arla and Julie grew up in Florida, USA, and they opted for Prince Edward Island as their destination of choice. "Arla's dream, ever since she was a little girl, was to have a place on the water," tells Julie. With this in mind, and inspired by a print of the Island that she had bought three years earlier, Arla "set off on a mission, heading up the east coast to find a little place on the water. When she came over the Confederation Bridge, she was just in awe with the colours: the red soil, the water, the crop land".

During their first winters, both women returned to the USA to work and off-set expenditures. "It was always such a shell shock: to leave here was always so sad and then to get down there it was just like being in the midst of a rat race. It's just a crazy way of life and here it's just like the best way of life." Julie sums it up by saying, "We absolutely love Prince Edward Island."

Disappointed with the short term tourist season, and very much aware of how their neighbours had various jobs "just to sustain themselves,"



Julie and Arla decided to expand their own activities by opening Prince Edward Distillery in 2008. With a self proclaimed fascination for distilling and some family expertise, and with so many potatoes around, it seemed appropriate to develop a product that would add value to such a local resource. Hence: potato vodka, the first ever in Canada. Meanwhile, Julie and Arla are also exploring distilling possibilities for blueberries, cranberries, strawberries and apples.

Ken and Zhiming (Cindy) Yu came to PEI after exploring it during a vacation in 2003. They came to the Island via the Provincial Nominee Program, and they opened their all-year-round **Grass Room B&B**, with its two units, in Stratford in 2006. Their life on PEI is in sharp contrast to their former lifestyle in Singapore, where there is an expectation for men to mingle at bars every night. Cindy notes: "My husband is not like that. He likes to stay at home and play with his kids." There was a similar change for Cindy, who was expected to purchase expensive clothing and accessories just to be socially accepted. "Now I can wear whatever I want. Here nobody laughs at you if you are not wearing expensive designer clothing." No wonder Cindy describes PEI as having a "very, very different lifestyle".

**Tir na nOg Inn** [pronounced *Teer Na Nogue*, and which in Irish means 'Land of Eternal Youth'] is the brainchild of Will Seibert and Dottie Daly. This B&B facility with 3 rooms is situated in an 1870 Provincial Heritage Home, and located in the village of St. Peter's Bay, close to the PEI National Park at Greenwich, with its Interpretation Centre and 900 acres of sandy beaches, dunes, and hiking trails. In 2005, Dottie, Will and family made an exploratory trip to Canada's East Coast. Then they lived in Maryland, USA, and were suffering from "reverse culture shock" – recoiling from a security-obsessed, post 9/11 world. They were stunned by the beauty of the Island; they couldn't take enough photos. They were especially impressed with the green: "We just thought that this is probably the closest you can find to Ireland, this side of the pond". For Will and Dottie, a dream come true: owning and operating an inn in a historic home by the water.

Property on Prince Edward Island remains relatively within reach of many pockets. This may explain the considerable number of newcomers who invest in property here, not just as a place of residence but also as a business. Coupled with the tourism industry, visitor accommodation and related services is one vibrant industry on PEI.



Name: **Martina ter Beek** (a.k.a. the Gouda Cheese Lady)  
Country of Origin: **The Netherlands**  
Moved to Prince Edward Island: **1985**  
Business: **Island Farmhouse Gouda**  
Main Product(s): **Cheese**  
Location: **Route 223, Winsloe North**  
Web-site: **none yet**  
E-mail: **martinaterbeek@rogers.com**  
Phone: **(902) 628-6691**

**Martina ter Beek** is affectionately known on Prince Edward Island as “the Cheese Lady.” Martina grew up in Volendam, Holland, before moving with her husband, Ryk, and four children to Prince Edward Island in 1985. They settled on a 200 acre farm and began their new life with 66 head of Holstein cattle. During that first year they also opened their home as a bed & breakfast; but, when cheese production began, the hosting ceased.

Martina has a heritage of cheese-making through her grandparents, although it “skipped her parents” as she would say, despite the many cheese related chores they nevertheless had to endure. Martina learned how to make cheese from her sister. Her story is one of humble beginnings: Gouda cheese production began in her kitchen with homemade, rather primitive tools constructed of whatever utensils were available. In time, she was able to import stainless steel equipment from Holland. With some milk from her own cows, a few homemade tools, and a lot of determination, in 1988, Martina began to make fine Gouda cheese.

**Gouda Island Farmhouse** is named for the city of Gouda in the province of Zuid-Holland. It is identifiable by its traditional, characteristic shape due to the moulds that are used once the curds are separated from the watery whey of the pasteurized cow’s milk. Martina produces 12 varieties of Gouda cheeses, including herb, onion, peppercorn, and garlic. During the high summer season, Martina makes cheese twice a week. She stops in November, with plenty of cheese prepared for the winter months.

Martina maintains a shop year round located in Winsloe, on Route 223 outside of Charlottetown, and she participates in two fairs annually in Charlottetown and Summerside. At her shop, all guests are welcome to view the aging cheeses through windows and watch a brief video of the production process. Moreover, samples of the uniquely flavoured Gouda cheeses are available. Outside, the farm is endowed with cows, sheep and llamas. A miniature windmill on the front lawn is clear evidence of the Dutch connection.

As a successful business hiring up to three employees during high season, and exporting on request, it seems wise to ask why Martina does not have a web-site? Her

response is an indication of the priority she places on family and quality of living over expansion and profits: “We did what we wanted to do.” Clearly, she wanted time with her children when they were not in school and something more than housework to do when they were. When comparing life in Prince Edward Island to Holland, she matter-of-factly states: “Here you live, but there, the people are living [on] you.” Admittedly, Holland is a very densely populated country and the restrictions for business development are vast. Martina recalls her first visit to the Maritimes fondly because, unlike the strict invitations needed in Holland, she was swept into strangers’ homes with open hospitality.

As indicated earlier, much thought was given, as she recommends to all immigrants, as to where they should move to. After considering purchase costs (too high in Ontario); farmland potential (soil is too rocky in other provinces); and language barriers in Quebec; the ter Beeks settled on a farm in Prince Edward Island that evinced the qualities they wanted most: a reasonably priced farm, safe for their children - uninterrupted by busy highways, with potential for successful dairy farming because of its “soft, red soil.” The home they wanted, with “fields all around the farm” was to be a business potential for their sons; a high priority for a family willing to relocate across the Atlantic Ocean.

“I love Prince Edward Island, the beauty, friendliness and caring of the people”, admits Martina. “Here, people are polite and have time for you. Charlottetown is only 15 minutes away for those times when we need to be there. All my four children are now married, and three of them live on the island. Life is quite perfect. Canada has so many opportunities for those not afraid of working and giving their best.” Martina was able to turn her hobby into a successful business that will take her right up to her retirement.

Martina ter Beek is a woman with passion and a strong work ethic; she is ambitious, but not for money. Gouda cheese is a family tradition that she brought from Holland as more of a hobby or preoccupation than anything else. She confesses that making cheese has brought her much joy as she meets so many people on what her brochures call “the little paradise of Prince Edward Island.”

Name: Sergio and Marcela Golod  
 Country of Origin: Argentina  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: 2003  
 Business: Royal Glass Design  
 Main Product(s): Glass Designs  
 Location: 36 Hopeton Road, Stratford  
 Web-site: [www.royalglasdesign.ca](http://www.royalglasdesign.ca)  
 E-mail: [info@royalglasdesign.com](mailto:info@royalglasdesign.com)  
 Phone: (902) 892-6500; Fax: (902) 892-6566



Even when still in Argentina, Sergio and Marcela Golod were familiar with the positive attributes of Canada via relatives in Toronto as well as from Sergio's parents who traveled often to Canada. "Every time they went back to Argentina, my parents were saying beautiful things about Canada", admits Sergio. So it was not difficult for the Golods to imagine emigrating from Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, to another big city in Canada.

Those plans changed, however, with an economic recession in Argentina that left the Golods with a shortage of funds. Regardless, when they were told of a smaller province that was a "very quiet and beautiful place", they began to investigate what Prince Edward Island had to offer. Sergio admits that their first intentions were to come to the Island, stay long enough to fulfill the provincial requirements of the Nominee Program, and then move elsewhere. But, something happened: "We liked it very much. I still like it. Actually, every day, I like the PEI lifestyle a little more".

Although Prince Edward Island is "absolutely different" from the city life where he imagined he would be living, "this is exactly what I was looking for in Canada: to live in peace", explains Sergio. With deep conviction and obvious contentment, Sergio declares, "I'm in love with the Island." Sergio also believes that the "most important thing" is to be surrounded by "warm people."

When visitors to their glass studio ask how he found Prince Edward Island and his thoughts about Canada's smallest province, Sergio answers: "The first 15 minutes were really hard. After that I didn't have any difficulty to adapt and feel welcome." Sergio and Marcela arrived in Prince Edward Island late in 2003, and opened Royal Glass Design in Charlottetown's industrial park. By 2005, they moved the business to its present location in Stratford, in order to qualify as a cottage industry. With a background in glass design and manufacturing, the demands of the business were not unfamiliar to Sergio. The whole family shares in the effort: Marcela, an artist and painter by profession; their daughter, who is training as a graphic designer and helps with brochures; and their son, trained at the local Holland College, who assists with the web-site needs of the company.

Royal Glass Design is not limited to one style of glass production. With experience in techniques such as cold glass, hot glass, blowing glass and fused glass, a wide variety of products are created. Among the list of items are: architectural glass, corporate gift items, maritime souvenirs, and functional pieces such as platters, trays, coasters, centrepieces, dishes, bowls, vases, candle holders and clocks.

One of their specialty collections deals in Jewish religious display items. As members of the Jewish community, the Golods have a particular appreciation for these pieces because that work reflects their dedication to their faith. Sergio confesses that his family was concerned about moving to a place with such a small Jewish community; but he has surprisingly found that they gather together with other Jews more frequently now than in Argentina to share religious celebrations. By integrating with the "little Jewish family within the Island family", the Golods have experienced a stronger devotion to Judaism, which can't help but find expression in their glass designs. One of their Judaica pieces was nominated for an award in one of the largest and most significant shows held in Philadelphia, USA.

The Golods had plenty of time to research their prospective home and to prepare for their new business. During that time, "we realized that living here could be great. But, we had to understand that our market is more out of the island than on the island. While the Island's business season is great, the summers are short," notes Sergio. With that in mind, Sergio and Marcela have participated in trade shows to seek new clients and establish new markets.

Sergio comments: "If you asked me: 'Is this the right place for your business?' I would say, 'Mmmm... Probably not.' But: not everything in life is about business. There are more important things in life than just making money." For example, the Golods value the safety that Prince Edward Island has to offer. He also observes that PEI is becoming increasingly multi-cultural. "I received more from Canada in four years than I received from Argentina in my whole life", concludes Sergio.



Name: Xuan Zhou (also known as Frank Zhou)  
Country of Origin: China  
Moved to Prince Edward Island: 2004  
Businesses: Canadian International Opportunities & Sunrise Innovative Enterprises  
Main Product(s): Consulting, Translation and Allied Services, Software Development, Trade Mission Development  
Location: 139 Queen Street, P.O. Box 2679, Charlottetown  
Web-site: [www.cioi.ca](http://www.cioi.ca) & [www.sunriseld.ca](http://www.sunriseld.ca)  
E-mail: [info@cioi.ca](mailto:info@cioi.ca)  
Phone: (902) 629-1442; Fax: (902) 566-5633

When **Xuan (Frank) Zhou** moved to Prince Edward Island in 2004, he had no thoughts of starting a new business, but just to follow the young lady who was to become his wife: Shuo Huang, or Sherry. Frank worked for some time with an IT company in Charlottetown. But, propelled by unwavering ambitions, Frank devoted himself to Canadian International Opportunities Inc. in 2005. Later, Frank set up a company with a different focus, called Sunrise Innovative Enterprises, with a branch in PEI and two in China.

**Canadian International Opportunities** is a four-person partnership to provide international business consulting services, translation and communication services, trade mission services, and international student/skilled worker settlement services for individuals and Atlantic Canadian corporations operating internationally. **Sunrise Innovative Enterprises**, on the other hand, is grounded in technology: particularly in software development, website design, and corporate identity branding. The employee base hovers at around 25 employees, depending on the projects. The company has been involved in cell phone software in conjunction with some significant players in China.

While a young man not yet thirty, Frank's experiences, connections, education, and personal drive have aided him in operating these two companies. Frank was born and raised in Nanjing, China, followed by seven years in Vancouver where he obtained a Bachelor of Science degree, and finally a trip to PEI to settle down – at least for now. Frank has extensive management experience in sales, marketing, and production development. He is also well versed in information technology and media production. He attributes his success as an immigrant entrepreneur, in part, to his ability to “switch from Canadian culture to Chinese culture, or the other way round, within a second.”

Frank's ability to speak fluently in English and Mandarin is essential in his line of work; but, he recognizes that success is not just about language. He proclaims that his advantage is his “ability to go between the countries” in areas of law, business, politics, food, thought processes, and so on. He counts himself as a “transnational” or a “boundary person” who can cross from China to Canada and back easily in these and similar cultural areas. One Chinese politician referred to Frank as the man who set up the marriage

between Prince Edward Island and China: a significant role to play. To which Frank says, “I want to be that man: to link Canada to China.”

The determination to succeed in business and to effectively link China to Prince Edward Island first, and then to the rest of Canada, resonates with Frank: “I want the people of China to realize that there is a province on the east coast of Canada - PEI- where there are lots of business opportunities.” Clearly, Frank believes that China is a remarkable country that one must visit in order to really learn about it and that is his objective for Island companies. He says, “I read that a lot of people are interested in China and they want to do business with China, but they don't know how so we are a great candidate to be on the list to help companies from Canada – especially companies from Atlantic Canada, and PEI – to do business in that country.”

Frank wants to proceed cautiously with his business affairs to ensure that he develops and maintains an excellent reputation. In line with an old adage, he doesn't want to take two steps forward and one step back by forging ahead too quickly.

Frank was initially “really frustrated” by a lack of friendships on PEI, instead spending his free time with a television set and his German Shepherd dog. In time, however, he connected with Islanders very well. “The people in PEI are extremely friendly”. Frank amusingly contrasts his experience on the West Coast, where he never got to know his neighbours, to his life now where he seems to meet everyone within a week.

What does Frank think of Prince Edward Island? “You cannot find a better place in Canada to learn English language and other aspects of Western culture that quickly and that well.” At first this seems an odd comment, but Frank knows what he is saying. “Recent research suggests that over half the population in Vancouver doesn't speak English as its first language.” He claims the same in many other cities in Canada, but not so in the Maritimes. All in all, he has determined that Prince Edward Island is “a good spot to learn languages”. This condition has assisted him in an important goal: “I wanted a place where I could learn Western culture faster, and quicker.” From his PEI base, Frank remains optimistic of the prospects for increased commerce between China and the Maritimes.



Name: Peter and Jetty VanNieuwenhuyzen  
 Country of Origin: The Netherlands  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: 1982  
 Business: Vanco Farms  
 Main Product(s): Potatoes and Tulips  
 Location: 9311 Trans Canada Highway, Mount Albion  
 Web-site: [www.vancofarms.com](http://www.vancofarms.com)  
 E-mail: [peter@vancofarms.com](mailto:peter@vancofarms.com)  
 Phone: (902) 621-0072; Fax: (902) 621-0071



**Peter and Jetty VanNieuwenhuyzen** and their three young children moved from the Netherlands to Prince Edward Island in 1982 to start a potato farm. The inspiration for resettling came through a magazine: “It had a feature article about Prince Edward Island and growing potatoes. I remember my husband reading it and saying: ‘Hey! Read this! What do you think of that?’”, muses Jetty.

Peter made three fact-finding visits to Canada, scouting out land, learning the ways of Island farmers during harvesting, and familiarizing himself with the appropriate farm machinery. He also brought Jetty over to PEI in the summer. “I really liked it right away,” she confesses. Jetty is particularly fond of the ocean, a pleasant reminder of her birthplace. There is no doubt in her mind, however, why Prince Edward Island became their new home. It was...“because of the potatoes”, she states matter-of-factly. As Jetty recalls their initial investigative months, she speaks with hope and optimism of life on the Island, because it offered what they needed. “We didn’t have much money and here we would be able to buy some land; in other places, it was way too expensive”. In addition, Jetty listed other qualities that made Prince Edward Island attractive: “good soil to grow potatoes; the people were very friendly and helpful; and we found it very, very pretty here”.

The family started their life in Canada on a 150-acre farm in Oyster Bed Bridge, grew seed and table potatoes, and dabbled in onion production. A larger farm, Pownal Farms, was purchased in 1990. (**Vanco Farms** is the company that covers both farm units.) Peter’s son Willem rejoined his parents in 2001 after gaining experience in flower production in British Columbia. In 2003, the other son Rit came back as well, after working in flower sales in Ontario. This combination of production and sales experience thus garnered by their sons propelled the VanNieuwenhuyzens to introduce flower production to PEI. In fact, Vanco Farms introduced tulip production to Prince Edward Island in 2003. Tulip production continues, with a substantial greenhouse expansion in 2006. The organic potato production unit was added in 2004.

Vanco Farms grows seed potatoes, processing potatoes and table potatoes at two different locations on Prince Edward Island. It produces and packages organic potatoes under the brand name Pure Organics Prince Edward Island. Together with father Peter VanNieuwenhuyzen, sons Willem and Rit recognize the need to develop a more sustainable form of agriculture: this means minimizing the environmental damage caused by traditional methods of farming, while increasing the quality of the soil with natural nutrients (such as various composts, seafood by-products and green crop plough downs), and managing pests by natural means. The Farms now export across Canada and the eastern United States.

Being a good environmental steward has always been a priority at Vanco Farms. Peter has steadily maintained a 3-year minimum crop rotation, giving the soil a rest between crops of potatoes. Vanco Farms was one of the first farms on PEI to complete the PEI Environmental Farm Plan, as well as its enhanced version. This plan rewards the reduction of damage by water erosion to fields and local watersheds. The farm has also been awarded the Good Farming Practices Certificate by AgroPoint (a University of Guelph affiliate).

The success of this family on Prince Edward Island is further enhanced by the contribution of Jetty’s father, a tulip grower himself, who also immigrated to the Island along with his wife, and his four other daughters.

Over the years, Vanco Farms have been a leader in using natural ways to increase the quality of the soil. Various organic techniques are replacing the use of pesticides. These include using such crops such as buckwheat to eradicate reduce pest populations, using oil seed radish as a natural fumigant to reduce fungi levels in the soil, and use of fall planted cereal crops to reduce herbicide requirements.

“I believe that our generation has been blessed to work, sustain and deliver the land to the next generation in the same or better condition than we have received it in,” argues Peter.



Name: Roman Makarski  
Country of Origin: Poland  
Moved to Prince Edward Island: 1998  
Business: BCD Automation  
Main Product(s): Custom Control System Panels  
Location: 2942 Route 19, Rocky Point  
Web-site: [www.bcd.ca](http://www.bcd.ca)  
E-mail: [bcd@bcd.ca](mailto:bcd@bcd.ca)  
Phone: (902) 675-4416; Fax: (902) 675-4417

**Roman Makarski** was born and raised in Wroclaw, Poland. When Roman sensed that his country's communist regime would collapse, he decided that he didn't want to put his family "through that process." He didn't want "half of our life to be a hard life." Amusedly, but in a brutally honest manner, Roman adds, "... which makes no difference because, when I come to Canada, the first years here weren't easy." After spending seven months in a refugee camp in Italy, Roman was able to relocate to Montreal and, in 1998, move to Prince Edward Island.

Roman first set up **BCD Automation** in Montreal as a designer and manufacturer of state-of-the-art custom control system panels. Roman remains heavily involved in the production process of his firm, supporting his employees and not just acting as their manager.

The quality standards, certification, and the claims of service guarantees are an inherent component of BCD Automation to provide systems that are expertly designed and made to suit every client's specific needs. "To us, service means one thing: doing whatever it takes to make sure our clients are satisfied that we deliver and perform as expected." This company, adds Roman, is now "very strong in the car washing industry".

Equipment manufactured at this Prince Edward Island based company is shipped to New Zealand, Europe, the USA and, of course, within Canada; although, "we hardly make any business in the Province or in the Maritimes," admits Roman, due in part to the low population levels. Located at Rocky Point, the premises include a "mechanical room" for constructing the larger components, a 'fine assembly room' for the detailed electrical work, and the office space necessary for drawing custom designs and the inevitable book-keeping.

As for his business practices, Roman holds a common philosophy that "it's not what you know, it's who you know." Fortunately, he was able to establish good relations with the manufacturer of the components as well as with their supplier up front. And so, when he moved to Prince Edward Island, he was already well known and as well connected. Roman declares: "These good relations are probably key to our success."

Moreover, with eight years of electrical training and countless more years of experience, Roman operates BCD Automation on the belief that he isn't willing to compromise the end product just to make a greater profit. "When I do custom design, I design products so that the best, and with the best component available for that specific project." Consequently, clients can trust his guarantee to provide high quality and added value, which has been proven by the company's performance.

Despite the decline in his salary, and fewer qualified support staff, Roman's reasons for leaving Montreal are clear: "My daughter decided to raise a child and she wanted a safe environment. She decided that PEI is the best place in the world to raise a kid, and to start a family." Roman smilingly recounts his wife's reaction to their daughter's pending move: "She can't live without my daughter. Besides, tickets for a flight would cost a fortune!" Roman and his wife's desire to once again place their family first, led them to Prince Edward Island. Moreover, his son-in-law, **Andrew Mieszkalski**, is now co-owner and Vice-President of BCD Automation.

Roman admits it took the better of two years to adapt to his new home, because he missed the big cities. However, he now concludes "I have a better life." After returning recently to Montreal for a visit, Roman vividly recollects: "Within five minutes I had already had enough. So many people, such a hectic tempo!" In contrast, "Right now I enjoy a peaceful environment" says Roman, referring to his life on PEI.

Roman's contentment extends to his admiration for the personal touch afforded by the Island's population size, particularly in the school system: "I'm so glad we moved here because of our grandchildren; they are the biggest beneficiaries. Elsewhere, you may be a number; here, you are a person. This is a key difference I discovered."

As Roman reminds visitors to his web-site, Charlottetown was recently assessed by KPMG as the lowest cost capital city in Canada in which to do business. These lower costs are appropriately reflected in BCD's product pricing. Instead of the big city life, he has chosen to move to Prince Edward Island. His advice: "I recommend the same to everyone".

Name: **Kim Dormaar**  
 Country of Origin: **The Netherlands**  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: **1974**  
 Business: **Medallion Smoked Salmon**  
 Main Product(s): **Smoked Salmon and Smoked Eels**  
 Location: **RR#10, Winsloe**  
 Web-site: **www.smokedsalmon.isn.net**  
 E-mail: **inquiries@smokedsalmongifts.com**  
 Phone: **(1-800) 668-3001; Fax: (902) 964-3058**



**Kim Dormaar** developed a keen interest in veterinary medicine, marine biology and oceanography, followed by a Master's Degree in Marine Physiology. Before that, however, when still a high school and college student in Amsterdam, he worked at the famous KOK smoke-house: exclusive purveyors of smoked salmon and smoked eel for the Dutch Royal Family. The knowledge Kim gained while working there has served him well; particularly in establishing **Medallion Smoked Salmon** on PEI: an award-winning company.

After graduating in agricultural engineering from Holland, and spending some time working in the Middle East, Kim was privy to international opportunities through many of his friends who were relocating abroad. Consequently, Kim "primarily came to Canada to study at the University of Guelph". In time, Kim was hired by the Prince Edward Island Department of Fisheries to prepare a 15 year Economic Development Plan. "So, I came to Prince Edward Island and I liked that because we're near the sea, whereas in Ontario I was away from the sea. In Holland, we grew up in a saltwater environment. In Ontario, it's all inland and too far from the ocean".

While on Prince Edward Island, Kim had a revelation, a 'eureka moment': "I discovered that there were lots of eels here and nobody was doing anything with them. So, I smoked some eels as a hobby for myself: for my own consumption and for friends". Kim openly declares: "I always loved eating smoked eels in Holland, but it was very expensive and limited to those rare occasions".

There came an opportune time in Kim's life when he was becoming somewhat dissatisfied with his job as fisheries consultant. At that point, an accountant suggested to him that the time may be right to become an entrepreneur. And so, what began as a hobby and a passion for the taste of eels, became a full-time career. The original business plan was based on a proven culinary taste: "Eel was considered to be the ultimate delicacy of all seafood in Europe, and it also fetches the highest prices, not just in Holland, but in Germany, Scandinavia, France and Switzerland". Kim's former boss in Holland was consulted and he drew the necessary plans for building an old-fashioned smoker unit. Kim was prepared to smoke eels and ship them to Europe. Unfortunately, "the

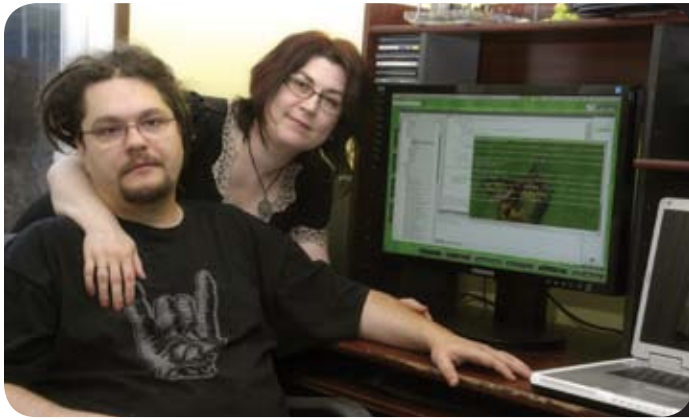
eel population here dropped rapidly for some unknown reason so I couldn't base my operation entirely on eels". As a result, Kim quickly moved into smoking salmon; something he had hoped to do later on anyway.

By remaining faithful to the traditional methods of curing and smoking, and in the absence of computer programmed systems, Kim admits that he is not a volume producer: "I am a quality producer of limited quantity so I tend to look for markets that are small and that are looking for the higher quality: the better tasting quality". New York delicatessen stores are recipients of Kim's Medallion Smoked Salmon seafood from PEI. Mail orders are also a lucrative market and these private retail sales have proven to be a reliable source of revenue from the start of Kim's operations. In addition to these, Kim appears regularly at the Charlottetown Farmers' Market. His business became more profitable once Medallion Smoked Salmon received rave reviews in the ever-popular Reader's Digest. The company web-site now bears testimony to various local and international endorsements, including Shunji Fujimura, TV chef personality and owner of a fine restaurant in Minato-Ku, Tokyo, Japan.

Kim recognizes the value of being part of a community that offers support and loyalty, and the Island's salt-water environment. He remains eager to address any other challenges that may hinder his business. For example, Kim complains about the costs of energy, communication, transportation and supplies such as packaging material; all these are additional reasons why a niche quality market orientation is essential for profitability.

Kim describes Holland, his former home, as a "pressure cooker", with its very high population density. "We are just the opposite here", Kim admits. "You can drive here at a leisurely romp. No traffic. It's a very easygoing, social environment. People can stop their cars in the middle of the road, and start talking to one another. Where in the world can you do that?"

Prince Edward Island is "a unique and pleasant place", concludes Kim. It is a province tasked to use its resources and location wisely, extending the meaning and scope of its "vibrant society".



**Name:** Sasha and Beti Andrić  
**Country of Origin:** Croatia  
**Moved to Prince Edward Island:** 1996  
**Business:** GoldNET Smart Technologies (formerly 3V World)  
**Main Product(s):** Custom Programming and Web Development Services  
**Location:** 50 Douglas Street, Charlottetown  
**Web-site:** <http://www.goldnet.ca>  
**E-mail:** [beti@goldnet.ca](mailto:beti@goldnet.ca)  
**Phone:** (902) 368-7260; **Fax:** (206) 339-8026

**Sasha and Beti Andrić** began their business as a hobby that developed into two full-time positions, two computers side-by-side, and two people complementing each other's talents to make a successful company. **GoldNET Smart Technologies** is a custom programming firm which also provides website development and webhosting services.

This young couple is full of ambition and strives to provide a quality service to their diverse clientele, whether on Prince Edward Island (where it all began with one wedding company), or in the United States and Europe. The boundlessness of the internet and of the world wide web today relieves computers from the tyranny of their location. And so, Sasha and Beti are able to serve clients who are based far away from PEI, as long as the computer works don't mind working odd hours to accommodate clients in different time zones; which they are willing to do.

Sasha was born in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Escaping the civil war that ravaged his country, he first moved to neighbouring Croatia and then applied to immigrate to Canada. In the meantime, he met Beti and, with very little notice, they found themselves being sent to settle in Prince Edward Island. Though they started off knowing very little about PEI, they are now quite content with life here. "This is the perfect place to start a family," says Beti.

Sasha and Beti have persevered and they remain committed to a business ethic of excellence. After working for a doughnut shop and a local hotel, Sasha opted to go for a skills upgrade at the local CompuCollege, where he benefited greatly from on-the-job training. GoldNET Smart Technologies emerged after this experience in 1998, carrying first Sasha, and later Beti, into the world of entrepreneurship.

Fortunately, Sasha and Beti did not struggle with the English language when they arrived in 1996; nor did Beti have any trouble updating her computer knowledge after being a student with two specialized years of high school dedicated to mathematics and computer programming back in Croatia.

GoldNET Smart Technologies is a home-based family business that simply "grew on its own, by itself, with no advertising", admits Beti. It started as a hobby, became a night job, and eventually a full time job for both Sasha and Beti, with other people occasionally recruited to the team. The business was first registered as 3V World, but the couple soon realized that name was quite a tongue-twister, even for those whose first language was English. The greatest challenge that the Andrić couple is now facing is that of finding appropriately qualified personnel that they can engage in order to keep up with demand.

Although Sasha and Beti miss some of the pleasures of the city life in Zagreb, amongst one million Croatians, they also appreciate the quality of life that their young son, Sebastian, now enjoys on the Island. Beti testifies to the pleasure of working alongside her husband; complementing each other's skills for the benefit of their business.

Name: Allen and Marilyn Stoolmiller  
 Country of Origin: United States of America  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: 2001  
 Businesses: Stoolmiller Research Consulting & Right Nowe  
 Concrete Waterproofing Services  
 Main Product(s): General Business Consulting and  
 Technology Applications to Buildings  
 Location: 19 Parsons Creek Drive, York  
 Web-site: none yet  
 E-mail: a.stoolmiller@islandtelecom.com  
 Phone: (902) 672-1462



**Allen and Marilyn Stoolmiller** moved to Prince Edward Island in 2001, essentially to retire; but he became an entrepreneur instead. In 2002, **Stoolmiller Research Consulting** was incorporated and Allen admits that this set-up was his “learning vehicle” to obtain knowledge of corporate formation, administration, and taxation in the province; all of which were wondrously useful in creating a second company with Roger Nowe called Right Nowe Concrete Waterproofing Services.

Allen has an impressive academic portfolio, including a doctorate in biological chemistry from the University of Michigan. His lengthy career in the United States involves publishing, lecturing at the University of Chicago and Boston area institutions, over twenty years with the federal government at the National Institutes of Health, countless service awards, as well as a call from retirement to manage grant-review meetings for bio-defence research initiatives issued in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

While Allen was born in Michigan and raised in the United States, he married a Prince Edward Islander to which he attributes his primary reason for settling on ‘the Island’: “When you marry an Islander, this is where you’re brought to die”. These words were not spoken with any hint of animosity, but rather in jest at his good fortune to end up on an island so grand, and with no regrets.

Shortly after settling on Prince Edward Island, Allen was asked to share his expertise. His willingness to do so was pre-empted by a thought which led to the creation of his first company: “Having lived and worked in the United States for many years, where the culture is more litigious, Marilyn suggested, and I agreed, that we should separate our personal assets from our business”. However, Allen made a startling discovery: “I found myself working in an atmosphere that was so different.”

Some characteristics just set Prince Edward Islanders apart. Allen admiringly notes that the Islanders “are far more oriented towards volunteerism”. In the small population of PEI, “there is a much greater empathy for one’s fellow human beings. There is a far greater awareness of the importance of literally taking care of one

another as a small community”. Allen adds: “In the U.S. I always had the feeling that there were few people around who really felt that, by the time of their death, they should have made the world and their society a better place to live in. That there was a much greater feeling that I should get out of it what I can and that others should fend for themselves.”

Following a “serendipitous” encounter with Roger Nowe, a second business emerged in 2005, called Right Nowe Concrete Waterproofing Services, located at Mount Stewart. While Roger is equipped with the hands-on expertise and the ability to connect with clients as some might say only a Maritimer can, Allen serves predominantly as the investor and administrator. Allen admits that he is sometimes baffled by the “casualness with which Roger submits an estimate for work” or Roger’s “uncanny ability” to communicate with Islanders. Allen is the first to recognize and admit that Roger’s involvement has done much to facilitate his own business success on Prince Edward Island.

Allen wisely advises other immigrant entrepreneurs: “When they arrive here they had better figure out how to speak with and do business with Islanders, which, on the one hand, is very simple and straightforward. An awful lot is done with a handshake and a word and a nod, as opposed to written contracts.”

Right Nowe Concrete Waterproofing Services has already expanded from its original provision of inspection and waterproofing of foundations. It now also employs epoxy-resin technology applications to exterior granite, resurfacing and repair of concrete surfaces, and the design of interior open-plan bathing areas; the latter are particularly useful to the elderly who wish to remain in their homes. Not unlike other immigrant entrepreneurs, Allen determined early on that “every client initially would have to be fully satisfied, or we would never get this business off the ground”. Although it is “difficult to attract Islanders to a new concept,” with Roger in the field and Allen in the office, this partnership is experiencing success. As a semi-retired entrepreneur, Allen certainly seems to be enjoying his latest adventure in the business world of Prince Edward Island.



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Marou & Nawal Abdallah  
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Daniel Schulman  
Charlottetown  
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& Shapiro  
Oyster Bed Bridge  
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Fouad Haddad  
Charlottetown  
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**14**  
Firedance Country Inn  
Jon & Hui Kirchanski  
St. Catherines  
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**15**  
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Chien Ming & Kuo Yeh  
Charlottetown  
(902) 566-4991

**16**  
Golden Wok Restaurant  
Sherry Wong  
Charlottetown  
(902) 892-0609

**17**  
GoldNET Smart Technologies  
Sasha & Beti Andric  
Charlottetown  
(902) 368-7260

**18**  
Grass Room  
Ken & Zhiming (Cindy) Yu  
Stratford  
(902) 569-7996

**19**  
Green Meadow Farms  
Anneke & Reitze Polstra  
Morell  
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**20**  
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Hans & Kathy Lanz  
Hampton  
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Beatrice & Daniel Ficza  
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**35** MarineNav  
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(902) 838-7011

**36** Medallion Smoked Salmon  
Kim Dormaar  
Winsloe North  
(800) 668-3301

**37** Monsoon Tea Room  
Aung & Ging (Ruth) Lawt  
Charlottetown  
(902) 367-9315

**38** Mugisha Enterprises and Trapeze Animation Studio  
Brian Sharp  
Charlottetown  
(902) 370-3007

**39** Nature's Creation,  
Victoria's Glass Studio and Abigales of PEI  
Sabine Nuesch  
Victoria-by-the-Sea  
(902) 658-2038

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Clair & John Green  
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(902) 886-2208

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Kim & Liam Dolan  
Charlottetown  
(902) 892-6992

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Makena & Jean Ambassa  
Charlottetown  
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Feng Liu  
Charlottetown  
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Jim & Judy Bertling  
O'Leary  
(902) 859-2228

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Sandra & Fred Alich Storr  
Georgetown  
(902) 652-2131

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Marcela & Sergio Golod  
Stratford  
(902) 892-6500

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Satish Kumar Sharma  
Charlottetown  
(902) 892-2662

**48** Sam's Family Restaurant  
Sameah & Chooa Rashed  
Charlottetown  
(902) 628-6565

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**52** Sirenella Ristorante  
Italo Marzari  
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(902) 628-2271

**53** Stoolmiller Research Consulting and Right Nowe Products  
Allen & Marilyn Stoolmiller  
York  
(902) 672-1522

**54** Sunrays Holisticare  
Marilyn Yap Yu & Raymond Yu  
Charlottetown  
(902) 628-1501

**55** Sylvan Learning Centre  
Alan & Vicky Shipman  
Charlottetown  
(902) 367-3678

**56** Tai Chi Gardens  
Kenny Wang & Wenny Kuo  
Charlottetown  
(902) 367-2229

**57** Testori Americas Corporation  
Lindo Lapegna  
Summerside  
(902) 888-3200

**58** Tir na nOg Inn  
Dottie Daly & Will Siebert  
St Peter's Bay  
(866) 961-3004

**59** Vanco Farms  
Jetty & Peter Van Nieuwenhuyzen  
Mount Albion  
(902) 651-2970

**60** Victoria Inn  
Jane & Robert Manning  
Kensington  
(800) 439-6769



Name: Daniel and Beatrice Ficza  
Country of Origin: Switzerland  
Moved to Prince Edward Island: 2000  
Business: Honeydew Apiary  
Main Product(s): Beekeeping and Honey Wine (mead)  
Location: 6718 Route 19, Canoe Cove  
Web-site: none yet  
E-mail: honeydew@pei.sympatico.ca  
Phone: (902) 675-3690; Fax: (902) 675-3690

**Daniel and Beatrice Ficza** did not take a direct route from Switzerland to Prince Edward Island, nor was it any easy one. Still, their plans for establishing a successful bee-keeping operation have come to fruition. **Honeydew Apiary** is located at Canoe Cove, overlooking the Northumberland Strait. A honey sign and self-serve stand are clear indicators of their eight-acre bee farm that caters to tourists and local residents during the summer months. The remaining portion of their honey is sold to larger packers, mainly in Ontario and Quebec, but also occasionally to the USA: sold, according to Beatrice, to “whoever pays the best price”.

While Daniel and Beatrice are pleased with the space they now have, they quickly correct what may prove to be a false impression: “We are not farming the land; and our bees are mostly busy on other farmers’ land”. This is because around half their income is derived from renting hives for pollination of various crops such as blueberry, canola, apple and pumpkin. With 500 hives, Daniel and Beatrice, along with their three children, have developed liquid and creamed wildflower and blueberry honey, hand-dipped beeswax candles, skin creams and lip balms. In 2008, the Ficzas received a licence to produce mead (honey wine) commercially. In addition to family labour, Honeydew Apiary hires two additional staff to help with field work and honey extraction whenever they are needed.

As a former craftsman in Switzerland who created such items of woodwork as staircases, table legs, plates and vases, Daniel diverted from his original trade to follow his curiosity in bees. In 1984, Daniel came to Alberta, Canada, to earn a college diploma in bee-keeping. A year later, he returned to Switzerland, but not for long. In the Spring of 1986, the Ficzas migrated to Alberta to work for a professional bee-keeper.

They understood that the best options available to them to enter Canada were through “education, money, or a needed profession”. Rather than relying on any one of these three avenues in particular, they did the unexpected: they bought a shoe store, joined the local Chamber of Commerce, and sprouted roots as quickly as possible.

The Ficzas’ road to Prince Edward Island was not a straight one. It involved time in Alberta, British Columbia and Nova Scotia before finally discovering the value of ‘the Island’. While they admit that they enjoyed Nova Scotia, Daniel notes that he couldn’t expand there. The Ficzas concluded that there was a better business opportunity on Prince Edward Island because “there were fewer bee-keepers here”, meaning that there was “less competition from existing hives”. By locating an exclusive area for their bees, and not infringing on other bee hives, Honeydew Apiary has thrived. The Ficzas are pleased to announce that they have “bigger honey crops than Nova Scotia”. Daniel has been President of the PEI Beekeepers Cooperative; a distributor for oxalic acid vaporizers, which help to maintain the bees free from mites; and ever on the look-out for strains of bees that can handle and survive the Canadian winter.

While Prince Edward Island is often praised for its family friendly ways, this family was challenged by their lack of nearby relatives on whom they could depend or turn to in times of need. Nonetheless, they praise Prince Edward Island as a great location that is both “small enough and big enough”. Their one dismay is the seasonality of their work: a situation they have now learnt to work and live with. Beatrice suggests, half seriously, that an earlier spring would be appreciated so that they can “get the bees going”.



Name: Reitze and Anneke (Anne) Polstra  
 Country of Origin: The Netherlands  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: 1993  
 Business: Green Meadow Farms  
 Main Product(s): Potatoes and Grains  
 Location: #1217, Green Meadows Road, Morell  
 Web-site: none yet  
 E-mail: gmf@allstream.net  
 Phone: (902) 676-3248; Fax: (902) 961-2719



**Anneke and Reitze Polstra** chose to call Prince Edward Island home in 1993 when they established **Green Meadow Farms** in the north shore community of Morell. As farmers from the Dutch province of Friesland, working a farm was a ‘natural’ choice. However, working a farm in another country, with its own regulatory framework, was certainly not.

Before considering a move to Prince Edward Island, the Polstra family was increasingly discontent with farming. “I was sick of farming. You had to work day and night. Seven days a week. The boys always had to help us to make a decent living and I didn’t like that anymore,” admits Reitze. Clearly, farming was losing its lustre for the family. Meanwhile, however, some of their friends who moved from Holland to Canada eight years earlier and settled on Prince Edward Island, invited the Polstras to do the same. Anneke and Reitze visited and liked what they saw: they concluded that a similar move would be beneficial. With the help of a dedicated real estate agent, Arnold McRae, who actually visited the Canadian embassy in Holland on their behalf, the Polstras came to, and settled on, PEI.

Reitze and Anneke, assisted by two of their three sons, now cultivate around 500 acres of potatoes and 1100 acres of grain. All their produce is sold off-island, mostly in Ontario: a province they confess that they had considered moving to. Yet, they profess a sense of satisfaction that Prince Edward Island is the place they have chosen to make their home. Reitze and Anneke both have a heritage in farming, but Anneke’s former occupation was that of a medical lab technician.

Not unlike other immigrants, Reitze and Anneke struggled with the English language at first: “We didn’t know the language that well. I mean, we could speak it a

little bit – but only a little bit,” admits Reitze. Despite this challenge, during their first year, a mandatory chemical exam was necessary in order to enable them to buy the chemicals needed for their farm. So Anneke studied and passed that test. Now, Anneke laughs as she speaks about it, but then it was undoubtedly a stressful task. Just as it was difficult to purchase specific machinery equipment for the farm: this responsibility was also delegated to Anneke. Another additional hurdle that the couple reminisce about is book-keeping; a task exacerbated by Canada’s exacting tax reporting requirements.

Nonetheless, the adventurous, persevering spirit of this couple has enabled them to tackle these and other difficulties. They have developed an appreciation of the opportunities associated with farming in Canada: they are, for example, the beneficiaries of loans and grants from the Canadian Government for the construction of a potato grading room.

As they have been assisted by their friends, they have assisted others in turn because they passionately agree that help makes a significant difference to those keen to settle successfully in a new country. One incoming immigrant family, whom they helped, was innocently throwing valid cheques out with the garbage! Evidently, a cross-cultural entrepreneurial experience has many daunting obstacles beyond the inconveniences one might expect; these may include the absence of favorite foods and cooking ingredients.

Anneke and Reitze speak fondly of PEI as a beautiful locale, a place they now call home. Although they visit Holland on a regular basis, they also acknowledge that “we do not fit in there anymore” and that they are much more comfortable on PEI: “a place where you don’t feel judged, and where you can really be yourself.”



**Name:** Gezinus and Akkelien Vos  
**Country of Origin:** The Netherlands  
**Moved to Prince Edward Island:** 1980  
**Businesses:** Second Wind Llama Ranch & Cavendish Lodge and Cottages  
**Main Product(s):** Dairy and Animal Farm, Strawberry U-pick and Cottages for Rent  
**Location:** 16974, Malpeque Road, Milton  
**Web-site:** [www.cavendishlodge.com](http://www.cavendishlodge.com)  
**E-mail:** none yet  
**Phone:** (902) 892-2361; **Fax:** (902) 892-0318

**Gezinus and Akkelien Vos** lived in the province of Overijssel, Holland on a family farm that they hoped to expand, but couldn't. While searching for another property within Holland, Gezinus remembers the real estate agent suggesting: "You guys are people for Canada". Within a week of reading a farm magazine highlighting properties in Canada, they were on a plane to examine more closely the possibility of relocating. On the return flight in January 1979, they decided they wanted to move to Canada permanently. According to Akkelien, they agreed that if one of them was reluctant, than they wouldn't do it. After carefully considering the attitudes of Canadians, an important assessment because "the first thing is to see if we can live with the people," says Akkelien, their conclusions were favourable.

Despite, or because of, their young ages, while they marched through the immigration process, they came across another farm magazine about the Maritimes that prompted a call to the Canadian author for advice. The latter recommended a closer look at Prince Edward Island. "After all, we were told that it's real farm country", Gezinus laughingly recounts. "So, we bought tickets right away again".

Although Gezinus and Akkelien toured all over the Maritimes, they returned to Prince Edward Island to reconsider the first farm that they were shown by the real estate agent. It was this 'Just Another Farm' in Hunter River that they finally decided to purchase. The Vos were dairy farmers in Holland and it has remained their passion in Canada. The farm was purchased in November 1979 and they settled on the property in the following May.

With four children ages nine, eight, and six-year-old twins, the Vos family had a daunting task of transforming a horse ranch into a dairy farm, selling the animals and farm in Holland and beginning anew in a strange land; a land that spoke English. "It was quite a year, I tell you", remarks Gezinus who admits, "I couldn't talk any English". Since Akkelien was the only one to speak some English, if the phone rang, she was expected to answer it. Clearly, it was a challenging time, but their recollections are filled with positive thoughts towards the school teachers who helped so willingly, a home that was comfortable, and their overall feelings of good health.

Just Another Farm was home to some 75 Holstein milking cows for the 19 years that the Vos family worked it. Amidst the responsibilities of raising four children, the couple also housed tourists for 15 years. With the onset of their retirement, Just Another Farm became the property of one son, while the second son set up just down the road, at The Udder Farm.

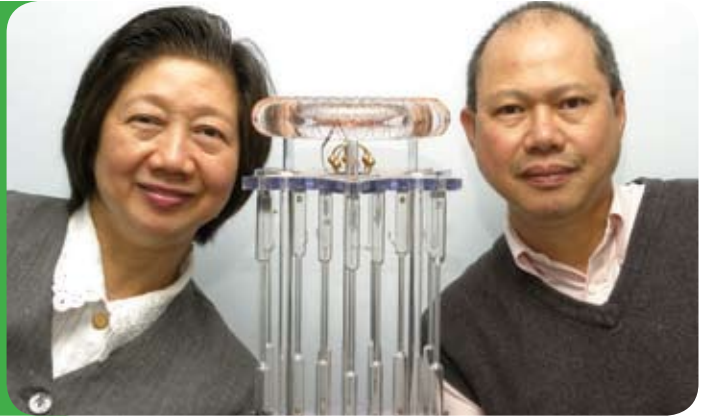
Meanwhile, the property that now hosts **Second Wind Llama Ranch** was purchased in 1996. Five acres of land were ploughed and planted with strawberries even though Gezinus openly admits, "I didn't know anything about it." This no-holds-barred attitude of risk taking is reflected in an unusual trip to Alberta, which resulted in a credit card purchase of five llamas. Akkelien aptly explains Gezinus' role in naming the Second Wind Llama Ranch: "If you run, run, run, you get out of breath and then you catch your second wind. Dairy farming has always been our business. But now we are in our second wind and we have llamas, a couple of horses, sheep and strawberries". As the years passed, the strawberries became a full-time U-Pick operation.

Full-time can be a misleading term, because, for this ambitious couple, it was not the only business they were willing to run. In June 2004, **Cavendish Lodge and Cottages** became their latest business venture: with 15 cottages and a lodge to rent. Once again, they claim "We didn't know anything about it".

Settling on Prince Edward Island was as much influenced by timely farm magazines as it was by the affordable price of suitable Island property. Of course there were challenges: such as learning English; particularly for the Vos children who entered school: "They couldn't even ask where the washroom was!" exclaims Akkelien.

Together, Gezinus and Akkelien make an adventurous couple who enjoy mingling with their cottage guests and strawberry pickers. They now have 10 grandchildren, who compete with their businesses for attention. They value their family and have three core beliefs when it comes to business: "if you run a business and you're not there, than it won't work; you can do anything if you put your mind to it; and if you don't like what you're doing, than you had better quit and find something you like to do".

Name: Marilyn Yap Yu & Raymundo Yu  
 Country of Origin: The Philippines  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: 1989  
 Business: Sunrays Holisticare  
 Main Product(s): Complementary Medicine  
 Location: 500 B Queen Street, Charlottetown  
 Web-site: none yet  
 E-mail: sunraysholisticare@yahoo.ca  
 Phone: (902) 628-1501; Fax: (902) 628-1121



**Marilyn Yap Yu** is a dedicated health care entrepreneur who can assert: “Healing is my passion.” Born in the Philippines, she earned a medical degree in the capital, Manila, specializing in Internal Medicine. While in residency in the Philippines, Marilyn learnt acupuncture primarily for the sake of her mother who was suffering from a diabetic problem and a “non-healing wound” that she was told could result in amputation if the condition did not change. Studying acupuncture was the beginning of Marilyn’s appreciation for complimentary medicine.

After moving to Canada in 1982, Marilyn pursued an MD license in Ontario by taking and passing the first medical exam. Meanwhile, Marilyn accepted a position in clinical research, which wasn’t particularly satisfying especially when she witnessed so many health professionals consuming only coffee and doughnuts for breakfast; clearly, this was not a behaviour conducive to their bodily care. Such observations, combined with her own family’s ill health, led her to ‘abandon’ the internship. “This is a medical opportunity I have given up”, she says, “because, with three pre-school children, understanding how nutrition affects health became my priority”. Marilyn entered the Ontario College of Naturopathic Medicine and obtained a degree in Naturopathic Medicine in 1989.

In the same year, **Sunrays Holisticare** began as a home-based company, but expanded to its present location now recognized as the Sunrays Holisticare Migun Centre. This is the company through which Marilyn now practises integrative medicine, emphasizing nutrition, acupuncture, the principles of traditional Chinese medicine, homeopathy, and other services and products that naturopaths, like Marilyn, use to “restore the normal functions of the body’s own healing power without harmful side effects.” At Sunrays Holisticare, one room is host to numerous thermal relaxation beds that are promoted as a combination of Western technology and Eastern medical principles.

After completing her Canadian degree, Marilyn and her husband **Raymundo** contemplated where to raise the four children they had at the time. Prince Edward Island became the province of choice. Marilyn says: “Our main purpose was to raise our children in a smaller place.” She wanted her children to have “a different environment.” Her conclusion after raising six children here? “Honestly, after 18 years, I find P.E.I. is the best place to raise children.”

Marilyn appreciates the slow pace of Prince Edward Island, the scenery and the sense of security, but she also has some reservations about the “medical side” of the island including issues such as attention deficit disorder and asthma. Not to mention the challenges she encountered trying to set up a business here: she might very well have been the first naturopath on the island. Marilyn still devotes a great deal of her time educating the public about complimentary medicine. This can be exasperating: “I find there are a lot of people here that are scared to go the natural way”. Moreover, being a business owner ‘from away’, Marilyn also appreciates the importance of personal contacts and the cultivation of face-to-face relationships to grow a client base.

Marilyn operates Sunrays Holisticare with this underlying dedication: “With six children as a priority, my time is limited and, as I said, I want to have a good quality of practice so I will have only a certain amount of patients. When I graduate a certain amount of patients, then I can accept some more.”

Like other entrepreneurs, Marilyn looks to the future for additional opportunities. One possibility is a health care facility for seniors dedicated to natural medicine. More ambitious is a vision of Prince Edward Island - the island she notes as the Birthplace of Confederation – as the place “where we can start collaborative health care”.



Name: Patricia Díaz  
Country of Origin: Mexico  
Moved to Prince Edward Island: 1983  
Business: Latin Access  
Main Product(s): Certified Multilingual Services  
Location: 535 North River Road, Suite 1, Charlottetown  
Web-site: [www.latinaccess.ca](http://www.latinaccess.ca)  
E-mail: [info@latinaccess.ca](mailto:info@latinaccess.ca)  
Phone: (902) 892-7676; Fax: (902) 892-7606

**Patricia Díaz** is a passionate businesswoman with the experience and education to back it up. The entrepreneurial cloak was already on her shoulders while she was still in her native homeland of Mexico City. Her explanation for settling on Prince Edward Island was not the pursuit of business. Patricia met an Island man at a private university in Mexico City, her alma mater, where they both taught English, and came to PEI to marry him. They settled amongst the rural hills with only a wood stove to cook on. For a woman who came from a “fairly affluent family”, equipped with a full-time cook and maids, immigrating to Canada – and learning how to cook - required quite an adjustment.

After arriving on Prince Edward Island in 1983, with a lengthy list of credentials on her resume, Patricia started off as a hostess at the Prince Edward Convention Centre (now known as The Delta). Patricia also worked for a local boutique before entering the academic world as an English-as-a-Second Language Instructor at Holland College.

Meanwhile, her entrepreneurial spirit was stirring: with the pending World Potato Congress scheduled for 1993 in Charlottetown, **Latin Access** was launched. Simultaneous and consecutive interpretation services in Spanish, French and Italian were delivered for various international delegates attending the event. In addition, Latin Access provided multilingual translation, international social etiquette, business protocol and hostess services to the organizers, exhibitors and participants in this congress.

From that point forward, Patricia saw countless opportunities arise for educating and equipping people to negotiate cross-culturally in an effective manner: a skill that she herself has been assiduously cultivating for numerous years. The North American Free Trade Agreement, which came into force in 1994, provided additional inter-cultural and linguistic communication challenges to Canadians, Mexicans and Americans.

Patricia’s educational background ranges from training as a teacher of English-as-a-Foreign Language (EFL), an English-Spanish-English translator and interpreter in Oxford, England, to German language studies at the Goethe Institut in Mexico City and French language

studies at Laval University in Quebec. Patricia also holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration specializing in Hospitality Industries, obtained from the Universidad del Valle de Mexico.

The language and cultural services offered through Latin Access are a reflection of Patricia’s professional experience and her own repertoire of communication skills in multiple languages. With a grandfather as an ambassador, and a father as a multilingual lawyer, Patricia can’t help but call herself “self-confident.” She is an aggressive, future thinking woman who wasn’t willing to let her obscurity ruin her pathway to success. “I was a nobody here. Yes, I was married to so and so, but I didn’t want to use his name”, says Patricia.

Consequently, she took up the challenge of making herself known and breaking the barrier of credibility by personally calling those in positions of power to introduce herself. In time, Patricia established herself steadily as a formidable entrepreneur, even to the point of obtaining a high level of security clearance due to her work with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island.

Patricia has delivered various seminars, taught at the University of Prince Edward Island, and written *A Guide of Mexican Customs and Manners*. Furthermore, she has been recognized as a successful ‘real-world’ intercultural communicator, in the 2002 Canadian edition of Excellence in Business Communication, published by Prentice Hall and Ryerson University in Toronto. As always, Patricia has her eyes on the future and how she can further expand her company.

With her business motto, “language is the reflection of the attitudes, values and customs of a culture”, Patricia should propel Latin Access to further success while providing services in more than 50 languages, contracting staff as necessary. Globalization has transformed the way companies operate and, although Patricia travels extensively, her base of operations is right here on Prince Edward Island because this is her “peaceful” place, a “good environment” and “a great place for creativity”. On Prince Edward Island, she is able to think gingerly about the future of her company and how best to serve her clients.

Name: Daniel Schulman  
 Country of Origin: United States of America  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: 1988  
 Business: Classical Acupuncture  
 Main Product(s): Holistic Health Care Services  
 Location: 44 Grafton Street, Charlottetown  
 Web-site: <http://web.mac.com/daniel.schulman>  
 E-mail: [schulman81@gmail.com](mailto:schulman81@gmail.com)  
 Phone: (902) 628-1478



**Daniel** is quick to declare his credentials: “Whenever I am asked that question: ‘Are you an Islander?’, I look the questioner square in the face and say: ‘I was born on an island – Manhattan; raised on an island – Montreal; schooled on an island – England; and now I live on an island – PEI’. So: that makes me an islander through and through”.

Daniel Schulman was born in the USA but immigrated with his parents to Canada when he was still nine years old (in 1969). For his first 20 years, he was occupied in various fields of environmental science, both professionally and as an activist. He moved to Prince Edward Island in 1988. He was an employee of Holland College for his first eight years on the Island before deciding to become an entrepreneur. That is when he made a mid-life transition into the field of Oriental Medicine.

Today, Daniel is fully certified with the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in the USA. He is a graduate of the 3-year full-time postgraduate acupuncture program at the New England School of Acupuncture in Boston: the oldest accredited North American school of acupuncture.

In his Charlottetown clinic, Daniel draws mainly from a number of Japanese styles of acupuncture, while also using traditional Chinese acupuncture, auriculotherapy as well as Korean hand and foot acupuncture.

What led Daniel to PEI? “Serendipity. While I was here on vacation in 1988, someone alerted me to a vacancy at Holland College for which I was qualified. At the time, I had been living in Ontario for six years and was just desperate to move back to somewhere where water was close by and in all directions. I applied, got the job, and moved here. We can plan and plan and plan, but the unforeseeable has a critical role to play in our lives as well”.

“In many ways, PEI has suited me very well”, explains Daniel, as he figures out why he remains on the Island. “It has just the right blend - of bigness and smallness, open landscape and built townscape - for me to balance the kinds of work and play that fit my style. And ... to satisfy my occasional need for a big city hit: Montreal, Boston or Halifax are all a day away”.

Daniel has two sets of informed opinions about how welcoming and attractive he finds PEI: one set as an immigrant, the other as an entrepreneur: “Clinically speaking, to really develop as a Chinese Medicine practitioner, it’s very important to see many patients with continuity. PEI has been a blessing for me in that regard. I have been able to follow many of my patients and their families over the years in a way that would have been much less likely in a big city. My skill development as a clinician has been tremendous as a result. And getting to know patient families through births and deaths and everything in between has enriched my practice tremendously. I have missed having colleagues nearby for consultation over the years. But, with internet, I have overcome most of that problem with ease”.

“As a business person, and particularly with the services I offer, I have not had to advertise much. Word-of-mouth has more power in PEI than in most places. If I do a good job with integrity, my work speaks for itself loudly on PEI”.

Daniel is a supporting member of the North American Journal of Oriental Medicine, the only English language journal dedicated to Japanese styles of acupuncture, and in which he has published a number of scholarly articles. He is committed to advancing the profession of **Classical Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine**. His work in establishing the Association of Registered Acupuncturists of Prince Edward Island reflects that commitment.



Name: Sabine Nuesch  
Country of Origin: Switzerland  
Moved to Prince Edward Island: 1984  
Businesses: Nature's Creation, Victoria's Glass Studio, Abigale's of PEI  
Main Product(s): Ceramic Glass  
Location: 24 Bardin Street, Victoria by the Sea  
Web-site: [www.natures-creation.ca](http://www.natures-creation.ca)  
E-mail: [info@natures-creation.ca](mailto:info@natures-creation.ca)  
Phone: (902) 658-2038; Fax: (902) 658-2366

**Sabine Nuesch** arrived on Prince Edward Island in 1984 with a five-week old baby, her husband and very little English language competence. At that time, she was a young 23 year old helping her husband run a 160 acre dairy farm in South Granville. It was an adventure that proved challenging. Sabine admits, however, that while they were getting to know the land and its intricacies, they had wonderful neighbours whose kindness was not lost on the Nuesch family. Besides the natural beauty of her area, Sabine says: "Another thing that I treasured about the Island was that you knew there was help out there; that people would be there for you, especially in the farming community."

As a child who loved the outdoors of Zurich, Switzerland, Sabine "fell in love" with the open spaces and beauty of Prince Edward Island. Before coming to Canada, she had watched a documentary primarily about British Columbia. She was quite surprised by the contrastingly rural nature of Prince Edward Island and, with much admiration and appreciation, she claims: "I did a lot of photography during that time and in the fall the light and the colours here are just amazing. I couldn't believe the soil and the grass and the water ... it was just unbelievable."

Sabine, who studied art in Switzerland, is anything but predictable. It seems she has a knack for self-education, a passion to try new things, and a growing list of skills. She began working as an entrepreneur creating products with metal and then she diverted her attention to wood; until she became allergic to her materials. During this time, Sabine was mostly creating products for craft shows in her little studio under the company name of **Nature's Creation**. It was a broad enough name meant to encompass her vast array of interests.

Following some difficult personal and business related troubles, Sabine participated in a course at the Lefurgy Cultural Centre in Summerside for the purpose of determining "if I really am an entrepreneur or not". The course encouraged her to create a business plan, develop marketing skills and persevere in self-employment. The experience led to yet another development in her life which was the pleasure of creating with a new medium: glass. Although Sabine also worked as a baker and in other jobs, she confirmed that she really had an entrepreneurial disposition: "I'm always creating and working. I love running my own business."

And with that passion, Sabine moved to Victoria-by-the-Sea in 2001. Although her glass outfit, called **Victoria's Glass Studio**, is now in a much larger building, she still retains **Abigale's of PEI**, which was the first business that she operated in the area. Despite her concerns with the local seasonal climate, Sabine's contentment with Prince Edward Island becomes apparent when she describes the differences between here and her home country. According to Sabine, Switzerland is competitive, restrictive, crowded, and regulated because the size of the population demands it. On the other hand, Prince Edward Island offers "more freedom to experiment and to follow your ideas," clarifies Sabine. For her home country, which is experiencing higher levels of unemployment than when she was young, she believes that the people are "scared and vulnerable"; but here there is almost a requirement in the human constitution to forge ahead, find solutions, and create opportunities.

Sabine is a firm believer in the notion that you can't put all your eggs in one basket: she needed to find ways to create revenue during the slow months. As a result, in addition to selling her own creations, Sabine also rents office space, runs the post-office which is located on one side of her building, operates an ice cream shop in the summer, conducts art workshops, and sells supplies. Of course, she doesn't do it all on her own. She has the help of her daughter Sarah and fluctuating seasonal personnel of approximately six others.

Living on an island with a small population base requires Sabine to travel for outside inspirations and to network with suppliers. She is accustomed to traveling to Halifax, for example, to participate in trade shows. Sabine, not unlike other business owners, has created an online computer presence in order to export her products, which are ever increasing in style and volume.

Meanwhile, Sabine is seeking opportunities to network with non-profit organizations to create specialty products. Sabine also believes that there is a market for tourist travel packages that combine local accommodations with her art workshops. As a mother of five, an artist abounding with talent, including make-up art, Sabine is an immigrant entrepreneur on Prince Edward Island because, "I love it here and I thoroughly enjoy what I'm doing."

Name: Kevan Merson  
 Country of Origin: Scotland  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: 2005  
 Business: MarineNav  
 Main Product(s): Vessel Management Computer Systems  
 Location: Panmure Wharf, Panmure Island, Montague  
 Web-site: [www.marinenav.ca](http://www.marinenav.ca)  
 E-mail: [kevan@merson.ca](mailto:kevan@merson.ca)  
 Phone: (902) 838-7011; Fax: (902) 838-2833



**Kevan Merson** is a Scottish-born design engineer and entrepreneur from Aberdeen: the capital of the European oil industry. He established his business, called Powerhouse, in his homeland before Prince Edward Island caught his attention. Kevan and his family vacationed on Prince Edward Island in 1998; an experience that led him back every year after. In time, a home on Panmure Island, on PEI's east coast, was constructed because, simply: "We fell in love with PEI," explains Kevan matter of factly.

**MarineNav** was established on Panmure Island in November 2005, as part of the Powerhouse Group. It is a research and development company that manufactures and markets its own highly sophisticated on-board computer systems used for vessel management, monitoring, and navigation. The MarineNav PC units are designed to operate a complete range of PC capabilities, and not just navigational needs. In addition, these PCs are fully marinized and the staff of MarineNav is in the process of developing fully waterproof screens.

As the only manufacturer of marine PCs in Canada, these high-quality systems are exported throughout the world. Kevan estimates that 95% of the product is exported outside of Canada; particularly to the United States, and, to a lesser extent, Europe and Israel. While these systems are useful for boat owners with boats ranging in size between 50 and 180 feet, all of these products are sold commercially and not to individual users.

According to Kevan, choosing to settle in a rather remote forested area on an island off the coast of Prince Edward Island was inspirational: "I purposely didn't build in an industrial park. I wanted staff to work in a tranquil atmosphere and be surrounded by nature". Moreover, the wharf on Panmure Island, which was restored into pristine condition because of MarineNav, is one of Kevan's main reasons for his site choice. "As soon as the ice goes away, the vessels are in the water" so that staff can not only research, develop, and manufacture these navigational systems, but also test the equipment while other members of the team monitor the newest products during sea trials.

Kevan recognizes that some 80% of the company focuses on research and development, while only 20% is

dedicated to manufacturing. In due time, however, Kevan envisions growth that will require a 20,000 square foot manufacturing plant and some 30 new jobs. MarineNav is the first company to establish itself on Panmure Island since 1911 and it is certainly making a splash in the coastal waters.

Besides the pleasing climate and the suitable surrounding water of Prince Edward Island, the reasonable cost of labour combined with the quality of labour also attracted Kevan to the notion of launching MarineNav, which presently has six employees. While it might be helpful to have an engineering degree to get hired at MarineNav, Kevan clearly values other assets, which can be enhanced by appropriate training.

As a resident and businessman of Prince Edward Island, Kevan has found that Islanders are "very friendly" and "willing to work". He affirms the need for quality employees: "I am interested in hiring people who are willing to learn, be part of a team, are able to meet deadlines, and are willing to travel to other parts of the world. People who have pertinent life experiences but no post secondary education can be good potential employees. They are often willing to learn new skills and work towards a higher wage. I have discovered that Islanders generally have very strong work ethics and are loyal to their employers."

Kevan's satisfaction in the employees that he has hired locally is apparent. He calls them "diligent", "loyal" and, after proudly proclaiming his business' flawless production record for the former year, he praises his Island staff for "going the extra mile" and making sure that the product "goes out perfect." All in all, the business case for a PEI location is strong: this makes MarineNav "a North American company that actually manufactures equipment in North America".

Kevan is critical about some issues on Prince Edward Island when compared to Scotland: he singles out health care and the cost of higher education. He does however approve of the low crime rate on 'the Island', while its people are just "wonderful". Kevan concludes: "PEI is one of the nicest places on the planet. I have worked all over Europe and North America and PEI is a unique island that is just a little piece of heaven".



Name: **Ayelet Stewart**  
Country of Origin: **Israel**  
Moved to Prince Edward Island: **2000**  
Business: **AY Designs**  
Main Product(s): **Jewelry Design and Manufacture**  
Location: **31 Glencove Drive, Stratford**  
Web-site: **www.ay-designs.com**  
E-mail: **ayelet9@yahoo.com**  
Phone: **(902) 569-4477**; Fax: **(902) 569-4477**

**Ayelet Stewart** grew up in Israel. She graduated from Bezalel Academy of Art and design in Jerusalem in 1992, with a specialization in jewelry making. Upon completing her degree, she established an independent studio in Tel-Aviv where she designed and created her own hand-made jewelry for four years. She worked with copper, brass, silver and precious stones at her studio and experimented with enamels. Ayelet wanted to expand her knowledge and develop new design skills. Also, finding herself working daily amongst street vendors and haggling with customers was not to her pleasure: "I didn't feel I was good at it. I thought I would be better at teaching, running shows and classes". Which is why she then decided that she needed to continue her studies overseas. Ayelet was able to obtain a scholarship to study and complete a Master degree in fine arts and jewelry design in Kanazawa, Japan. There, she learnt new and exciting techniques in goldsmithing, such as Mokume-gane, engraving, inlay and other raising techniques... apart from meeting her future husband, who would bring her to his Prince Edward Island.

Ayelet has won awards and scholarships and showed her work in juried shows. She has many years of design and production experience. Since moving to Canada, she has run workshops on Japanese goldsmith techniques and taught courses in enameling at the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design, in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Ayelet now resides in Prince Edward Island where she is inspired by the beauty of the landscape and the ocean that surrounds her. She has opened **AY Designs** in Charlottetown, where she uses a large variety of techniques to give texture and add colour to her pieces, such as Japanese techniques, dyes, stamps and etching. Ayelet is very interested in sharing her unique style and skills with others, so that they too can enjoy jewelry making.

Prince Edward Island is in stark contrast to the location of her first shop in the bustling capital of Tel-Aviv. "PEI is very small and so there's a limited market and that's a problem. In Israel, there were five or six million people there and so you had a lot more options." Consequently, Ayelet has adjusted her business methods by considering optimal ways to market her products, such as developing a greater internet presence and attending more trade shows out-of-province.

Ayelet's husband, Larry is also an entrepreneur. He owned a construction company on Prince Edward Island before relocating to Japan where he met his future wife. Upon returning to his home province, Larry revived his construction business while Ayelet spent more time with their two daughters. When the girls started school, Ayelet had more time to devote to her business, which had been predominantly wholesale through trade shows organized by the provincial government. Knowing that wholesale prices are significantly less than what she feels her items are worth, Ayelet hopes to open at least a summer shop if she is able to produce enough jewelry.

Ayelet already has a "very well equipped studio" in Charlottetown where she teaches jewelry design classes. She also fully recognizes some of the limitations that go with living in big cities. "We live in a private house on Prince Edward Island, which is something I never had before because Israel is all apartments and houses are very expensive there. So, I do enjoy very much having my own house and my own little garden. I love seeing nature grow here. The beaches, the sea ... it's all very beautiful and it gives me a lot of inspiration. And it's very quiet and life is pretty relaxed."



Name: **Lindo Lapegna**  
 Country of Origin: **Italy**  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: **1993**  
 Business: **Testori Americas Corporation**  
 Main Product(s): **Design, Engineering and Production of Interior Airplane Components**  
 Location: **45 Cannon Drive, Slemon Park, Summerside**  
 Web-site: **www.testori.pe.ca**  
 E-mail: **lapegna@testori.pe.ca**  
 Phone: **(902) 888-3200**; Fax: **(902) 436-4456**



**Lindo Lapegna** came to Prince Edward Island with a mission to fulfil part of a major business contract negotiated between Canada and Italy in the early 1990's. The agreement was worth several billions of dollars, and included the sale of numerous helicopters. There was a commitment by Italy to "give back a lot of work to Canada", says Lindo, adding: "in that framework, we set up a company here to manufacture the interior for those helicopters. I was supposed to set up the company and then return to Europe."

However, with the growing success of the company, Lindo chose to stay on PEI. He plainly states the reasoning behind their decision: "the business started to do really well and my family liked it here".

At the age of 18, Lindo had joined the Italian Navy, and then worked with a space exploration company before gaining employment with Testori. As a textile company, with over 140 years of history, argued Lindo, Testori had a division that suited his expertise. In 1993, with just three years dedicated to the company, Lindo relocated to Prince Edward Island to lead **Testori Americas**. By 1998, he was the largest shareholder in the company as it grew in scope to span four locations in three countries. Testori Americas now has two facilities on PEI - in Summerside and Bloomfield - with a combined total of 250 employees working in a total of 85,000 square feet. In addition to these locations, a subsidiary, Testori Interiors Inc., is located in a 30,000 square feet facility in Hornell, New York and there is an equally large facility in Latina, outside Rome, Italy. Wiebel Aerospace Inc. (1995) is another subsidiary located in Summerside. This boasts its own 62 employees, and 15,000 square feet of working space. Wiebel Aerospace is the Island's premier manufacturer of custom precision machined parts, specialty components and assemblies to the aerospace and related industries.

Testori Americas offers complete interior services for aircraft and mass transit industries. The company's capabilities include design, engineering and production of interior kits and related components such as partitions, doors, and cabin linings. Since Testori Americas usually manufactures the interiors it designs, particular attention is given not only to the appearance, but also to material selection, budget constraints, and product maintainability. Testori Americas has its own employee training program and a customer-first attitude in order to guarantee quality workmanship and service, from order through to delivery and after-sales support. The company won the prestigious Exporter of the Year Award for Prince Edward Island for the year 2002.

When asked about his target clientele, Lindo remarks: "We don't sell anything in Canada. I would say 90% of our market lies in the United States. The rest we sell worldwide; either to Europe or Asia." Lindo sadly admits that the strength of the Canadian dollar has hurt his company: "Until two years ago, it used to be a very competitive environment, most suitable for the kind of business I was involved in". In the past, the dollar's exchange rate gave Testori Americas an advantage because it "would make up the difference for the transportation costs that my customer has to pay to receive my goods from here. And it was making a difference also in the labour costs. Now, our price advantage has not been lost but it has been seriously eroded: in the past two years, we have lost a substantial amount of competitiveness compared to similar firms located in the United States", explains Lindo.

But Lindo perseveres. Prince Edward Island is now home to his wife and two children. He may have come explicitly to work and do business, but Lindo now admits that he has an affection for this small island province. "Even when I retire, and may then return to Italy, I will still keep a home in PEI for the summer".



**Name:** Hans and Catherine Lanz  
**Country of Origin:** Switzerland  
**Moved to Prince Edward Island:** 1999  
**Business:** Hampton Service Station  
**Main Product(s):** Gas Pumping Services and Mechanical Vehicle Repair  
**Location:** Hampton RR#1, Trans Canada Highway  
**Web-site:** none yet  
**E-mail:** hclanz@isn.net  
**Phone:** (902) 658-2253

**Hans and Catherine Lanz** came from Switzerland in May 1999, to settle in Prince Edward Island with the hope of securing for themselves a lifestyle that would allow them to be fairly self-sufficient; and that is exactly what they have achieved. **Hampton Service Station** is located a stone's throw from the Trans-Canada Highway and serves tourists and locals alike. Together, Hans and Catherine run every aspect of the business, with her efforts focused mostly on gas pumping and his on mechanical repairs. Their son, Philip, is typically close at hand. Perhaps, one day, he too will pump gasoline alongside a retired neighbour who helps out with the chores, or the teenagers who work during the busier summer months.

Hans was the first one of the family to set foot on Prince Edward Island in 1991, when he came to visit his cousin who was running a farm in the Bonshaw hills. According to Catherine: "He really, really liked it". And so, Hans was naturally eager to show her this wonderful island he had discovered. As they toured the island in 1997, they considered opening a garage because, after all: "if the mechanic side didn't work out, they would still have the gas to sell", they reasoned.

In Switzerland, Catherine worked as an accountant; while Hans dealt in farm equipment and car wash machinery. He wasn't specifically trained as a car mechanic. In fact, when their PEI business opened, Hans expected to be fixing farm equipment. "But then, people started bringing in their cars", Catherine reminisces with the same incredulous feeling they both must have felt back then. Her admiration for her husband is apparent as she explains how he has learned so much on his own. Catherine describes Hans as a "handy guy" who is able to learn with ease. She explains, "Once you know how an engine is working, you fix anything. And that's what happened to him."

Hampton Service Station has become well known in the area because of Hans' mechanical skills and the high quality customer service that is offered. After signing an agreement with the former owner, and waiting for two

years to get their immigration papers, Hans and Cathy arrived to a welcoming community in Hampton that was obviously expecting them. "When we came to the Island, everybody seemed to know that we were coming", says Cathy, who was profoundly surprised: "You can't get that back home in Switzerland. If you are a foreigner and you open up a store in Switzerland, it's hard to get business."

While it still took Cathy "two years to hang up a picture in my apartment to feel like home", she loved the countryside and was "overwhelmed" in the best possible way by Prince Edward Island with its "calmer" ways. Not surprisingly, there were cultural adjustments as Hans and Cathy identified some of the differences between their home country and Prince Edward Island. For example, although the island is now quite adept at recycling, it certainly wasn't the case when the Lanz's first arrived and that was wholly a part of their lives back in Switzerland. Being very mindful of environmental issues, Cathy found it frustrating "when customers would run their cars in the summer to get them cool and they let their car run in the winter to keep them warm." She adds, "For me, it was unbelievable. Really. And I had to get used to that."

Fortunately for Hans, because of his travel adventures, he was able to speak English when they settled in Prince Edward Island. Whereas to Cathy, who could speak French, German, and Italian, English was problematic enough that she wasn't confident enough to answer the telephone. In time, however, Cathy has mastered her fourth language.

As owners of a business and home combined, Cathy and Hans have recently expanded their three-storey building, which affords them spectacular views of Prince Edward Island's southern shoreline as well as of the Confederation Bridge. Ironically, the renovations provided yet another opportunity for cultural learning, because the Lanz couple was concerned as to how the renovations would be received by the community. Fortunately their Hampton neighbours seem genuinely pleased with their accomplishments.

Name: Kevin and Kathleen Cook  
 Country of Origin: United States of America  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: 1997  
 Business: Malpeque Bay Vineyards and Winery  
 Main Product(s): Wine  
 Location: Royalty Point, Malpeque Bay, Kensington  
 Web-site: none yet  
 E-mail: none yet  
 Phone: (902) 836-4803



**Kevin and Kathy Cook** set up **Malpeque Bay Vineyards and Winery** in 2003; a company that can be easily identified by its five acre vineyard and a summer cottage down the road. The vision for the business began as a personal interest in wine making, which grew through ambition into a business proposition. Kevin muses: “I started producing some wine and it pretty much got to a point when I was interested in doing something somewhere.”

Choosing Prince Edward Island as the location for the business really started when Kevin vacationed here as a child. His fond memories of the province spurred another vacation; this time with his wife, Kathy: “We had a wonderful time. The island is beautiful. So we really had a nice vacation and a few years later I had a friend that mentioned that he saw some land for sale in Prince Edward Island”. Inspired by the advert, Kevin eventually found suitable land, but not before going through the following ordeal: “I went out to see this site. I had to walk two or three miles on a road that didn’t have power and the cliff was 40 feet high and I couldn’t see how they were ever going to get the power down to the end there. It was just too much of a stretch for me to imagine being able to even live out there.”

Kevin purchased land in 1997, along Malpeque Bay. “We just love it. I go out there in the summers and it’s my peace of mind after teaching.” Kevin is an art teacher, and Kathy was a special education teacher, both in Connecticut. Fortunately, they enjoy vacations at the same time, which meant that they could develop the vineyard throughout the summer months and return to their “real” careers in the winter. That is, for now.

According to Kevin: “This first planting was more of a testing to find out what will work, what won’t work.” It’s all part of the research phase: “You have to put them in the ground and then you have to wait five to seven years before you know what you really have.” Since the land for the vineyard was purchased six years after the cottage, the business plan unfolded much later. Meanwhile, Kevin explains that a base crop is needed: “The vine has to grow well in the area and then you can add on other varieties that may not produce as much; but these additional vines may have some very nice qualities so that you can blend them together to create a great wine.”

Kevin clearly believes that being on PEI, on a peninsula called Royalty Point in Malpeque Bay, is “definitely beneficial” because “your moderating temperatures are not as severe. For example, in New Brunswick, you have mainland weather where you can drop 40 to 50 degrees in a flash and they have earlier frosts. So I think the water definitely moderates the temperatures.” Kevin also believes, although he admits that he has no scientific knowledge, that “because of the surrounding water, our light index is a little higher.”

Besides the beauty of Prince Edward Island, “it’s good value for us,” informs Kevin. “In the Eastern United States, where we came from, property that is even looking at water is beyond anything I could even afford; probably not even the taxes,” he says laughing. Furthermore, “The agri-tourism business of the future I believe is going to be an eco-friendly business, which mine will be. I think that is going to be a nice draw for tourists to come to the island.” Kevin believes that the value of the land will be appreciated not just by American tourists, “but by Canadian tourists who I think are coming out from west to east.”

As an artist trained in Florida and Italy, and as a goldsmith trained by his uncle, Kevin hopes to construct a building for manufacturing the wine combined with an art gallery that can display his own art and custom jewelry, as well as that of others such as his mother who paints watercolours. For Kevin, “life experiences are coming full circle” as he envisions the island as “a real mecca for the arts.”

There is a cautionary tone in Kevin’s voice, however, as he identifies “the hurdle that the island has to get over,” which is the dedication to summer business. Kevin explains: “Products like ours, which can be produced on the Island and can be shipped off island, have a unique aspect because they are not made in just any place. As long as one makes a good product, I think that this is the way for Prince Edward Island to develop into niche markets: by having a number of businesses in different areas that produce secondary products from the wholesome raw materials that the Island grows”.



Name: Mark and Katie Fulford

Country of Origin: England

Moved to Prince Edward Island: 2007

Business: M & K Carpentry

Main Product(s): Carpentry Products

Location: 1107 Bedford Road, Route #6, Mill Cove

Web-site: none yet

E-mail: [katiefulford@pei.sympatico.ca](mailto:katiefulford@pei.sympatico.ca)

Phone: (902) 672-2447

**Mark and Katie Fulford** moved from England to settle in rural Prince Edward Island as winter approached in 2007. Having visited the island twice, but never in the summer, this family with two young boys has recently purchased a home with a double garage suitable as a workshop and base for **M&K Carpentry**.

After obtaining his high school degree, Mark studied furniture making and wood working in college for two years. From the age of 18, Mark began working for various firms until the entrepreneurial drive led him to create Fulford Joinery. While Mark's skills will be employed in the same way as in England, fitting kitchen cabinets, constructing solid wood flooring and preparing laminate flooring, M&K Carpentry seemed a more appropriate name for Canadians who are a little less familiar with the term "joinery".

While Nova Scotia and western Canada were considered as alternative destinations, Prince Edward Island became the final choice for several reasons. Clearly, the landscape and heritage housing captivated them: "This is where we immediately found an attraction", pronounces Mark. The Fulfords also believed that Prince Edward Island "would be a good place to bring up our children." Moreover, the "smallness of the island appealed as well", says Mark, who clarifies his appreciation for his new home: "It's fairly rural, but it's still only a 20 minute drive from Charlottetown. I like the idea that you can go out and you don't have to necessarily worry about whether you've remembered to lock the back door ... things like that. People are just generally more laid back. People are very welcoming."

Recognizing the need for skilled tradespersons in the western provinces of Canada, where higher wages can be earned, Mark admits that he was not so easily enticed to this part of the country: "The lifestyle here appealed more than the end desire to earn more money by going to a different part of Canada".

During a holiday trip in 2006 with their boys, Mark and Katie "had in our minds that we wanted to move over", so they came to see whether the island "suited" them. Once they determined that they could fulfill the criteria for the Provincial Nominee Program, they began the immigration process.

Launching M&K Carpentry was not such a daunting task for Mark. He believes that Prince Edward Island is not only similar with regards to the landscape to the coastal area of England they came from, but the business climate is similar too. For example, Mark says: "The work that I did in the past in the U.K. relied largely on word of mouth so one job would lead on to another and another and the same sort of theory applies on Prince Edward Island. So that, after doing a job for one person, and then because people tend to know each other, news gets passed on and recommendations come that way." Mark succinctly sums it up by saying: "Your work speaks." All in all, Mark expects that his high quality of work will speak on his behalf, therefore earning him additional employment opportunities.

Apart from his regular carpentry work, Mark hopes to build furniture which he would then either sell privately or through local retail outlets. Again, Mark argues that the size of Prince Edward Island is advantageous in this respect as well: since the Island has its own independent stores, he may have an opportunity to sell furniture here. Moreover, since that furniture would be locally produced, it could connect with a widespread and growing sentiment in the local population for buying local.

For an English couple who "fancied a change", Mark and Katie admit that they were a little daunted by the reality of having to start all over again at this stage in their adult life. They did ship some furniture items from England to their new Canadian home; however, they had to buy most of their basic items locally; a situation which, Mark amusingly admits, pleased his wife who enjoyed the shopping trips.

For the Fulfords, being entrepreneurial means having the power to set their own working hours within reason. In this way, they can also carve out and enjoy more time together and with their young children. But Mark doesn't hold to the philosophy that he is his own boss. His humility and pragmatic business outlook is apparent when he candidly admits: "In reality, each and every one of our customers becomes our boss to a certain extent".

Name: Ole Hammarlund  
 Country of Origin: Denmark  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: 1977  
 Business: Bergmark Guimond Hammarlund Jones Architects  
 Main Product(s): Architectural Design and Consulting  
 Location: 233 Queen St., Charlottetown  
 Web-site: www.bghj.com  
 E-mail: ole@bghj.com  
 Phone: (902); 566-4449; Fax: (902) 566-1235



**Ole Hammarlund** has now become a prominent architect on Prince Edward Island. He is originally from Denmark, but was working in the USA in the mid-1970s when he and his business partner began construction on the Ark Bioshelter Project on Prince Edward Island. The 'Ark Project' was a bold experiment in sustainable living, with living quarters supported by wind-based electricity, passive solar heat and self-contained production of fish and vegetables.

Ole's firm was then based in Boston, and this required a lot of travel time between the two locations. Ole's participation in the Ark gave him an opportunity to foster an increasing fondness for the Island. Nearing the completion of the project, a decision was made to establish an office on Prince Edward Island, because: "I decided that this is where I wanted to be". Ole was spurred on by work and a budding romance with his second wife, Karen Lips (a heritage consultant).

There was no Provincial Nominee Program back then, and so Ole applied to migrate to Canada and PEI through the federal government. Still, he recalls the process as not being "particularly long" or "difficult"; a process perhaps aided by the fact that he had been coming here frequently on short-term permits. By 1977, Ole and Karen were resettled on PEI. The company flourished, at first under the legacy of their first major project in the province because "it got an incredible amount of publicity," says Ole. He admits: "we rode a little bit on it for a while, but then we kind of came down to the ground and got into a more regular diet of senior citizen homes and schools and stuff like that".

The transition from the United States to Prince Edward Island was a welcome one for Ole, who likes the "small scale" of the Island, because, although he grew up near Copenhagen, the capital city of Denmark, "my immediate society was a small one". The village Ole lived in was a stark contrast to Boston where he "never really felt at home". Ole adds: "It wasn't that I disliked it. Boston is a beautiful city, but I never felt connected there quite the same way that I feel here". Besides, Ole admires the physical attributes of Prince Edward Island because they "happen to be very much like Denmark. It's a very homey place for me". He clearly enjoys the familiarity of the rolling hills and water views.

With regard to his business, Ole reports: "Once we moved up here, although it took some work, we did find that we could integrate into the island scene; political and otherwise." **Bergmark Guimond Hammarlund Jones Architects**, established in 1999, now no longer focuses on the local market. With an office operating in Fredericton, New Brunswick, over half of their work comes from outside the province. While Ole recognizes the importance of being connected locally, he also identifies the need to "partner-up with bigger, international firms, which we have been doing."

When asked about his present business interests, Ole responded: "In the past year and a half I've seen another change in my career. Almost two years ago I sold my partnership share in the firm to concentrate on developing: becoming more of a designer/developer." In fact, Ole has dedicated much of his time to renovating the former YMCA building in downtown Charlottetown into condominiums.

Ole began his architectural studies in Denmark and then transferred to the United States to complete his degree. For architects in general, the relationship between Canada and its neighbour to the south is reciprocal: Canada administers the same professional examinations for architects as the United States, making it especially easy for qualified architects to work in both countries. Even with a new Canadian exam being developed, Ole expects that the same level of ease will persist. As for other countries, Ole says: "Anybody can come in and work here at our office as long as they have a permit to work. Unlike health professionals, they don't need a special license to work here."

With relatives in Denmark, and five children and many grandchildren in the United States, Ole is a frequent flyer. But, to him: "This is home now". Karen, and their son who is studying in Montreal, are "blessed", says Ole, with an 85 acre property in Launching. Pleased to be here, Ole concludes by saying: "I still feel it's a very special place. Lots of stuff to be done here: in terms of the environment and all that. But still, a good place to be".



Name: John & Clair Green  
Country of Origin: England  
Moved to Prince Edward Island: 1998  
Business: New Green Farms Ltd.  
Main Product(s): Dairy Produce  
Location: 22498 Highway 2, Springfield  
Web-site: none yet  
E-mail: [newgreenfarm@pei.sympatico.ca](mailto:newgreenfarm@pei.sympatico.ca)  
Phone: (902) 886-2208

**John and Clair Green** became the proud owners of New Green Farms in May 1998. The Greens were fortunate to purchase the farm with everything included: machinery, land, cows and quota. In fact: "It was one of the last farms that sold as a package," remembers Clair. With a passion for a productive farm of their own and the energy of youth to help them achieve it, the couple began the grueling hours of renewal required to rejuvenate the property; a task many doubted whether it could be done.

Despite the sweat, and sometimes tears, they were determined to "bring it up from the ashes" because: "you don't respect what you have until you've brought it forward and brought it out of the dust," says Clair, who was spurred on by John's dedication, determination and reassuring attitude.

John was well acquainted with farming when he entered Askham Bryan College to earn a National Certificate in Agriculture: he grew up on a farm in Halifax, England, that began in dairy production before switching over to beef and later served as a livery stable. After completing his studies, John was hired at the college as a full-time assistant herdsman. A year later, Clair Newman, a farm girl in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, travels across the ocean to earn a diploma in agriculture from the same college in England. After marrying in the summer of 1997, with countless hours of education and practical experience between them, John and Clair began to look for a farm of their own.

This story has an ironic twist: Clair wasn't the only one who made a journey across the Atlantic. Her British parents, Carol and John, actually settled in Nova Scotia many years before, inspired by a newspaper advert and a sponsorship program. "We lived like immigrants lived," now laughs Carol, who then had to cook on an old wood stove she had never seen the likes of before and use an old-style ringer washer.

Ambitious for their own farm, a generous neighbour offered John and Carol the funds for a down payment. When they were turned down twice by the Farm Loan Board, they pursued their dream the Maritime way: "In

the end, my husband went to one of the politicians and told him that he wanted this farm, and was willing to work for it. By 1971, they were running their own farm and it was in that same spirit that they scouted Eastern Canada for their daughter and son-in-law so that they too could have a farm of their own.

Exactly 30 years later, John Green and his father-in-law came to Prince Edward Island to inspect the farm that became **New Green Farms**: their dream come true. Knowing that they could not make a living off a small farm in England, or acquire the financing to make it happen, John and Clair chose this island because of the price, the potential, the good soil condition compared to other provinces, and the convenience of their farm location on the main highway and between the two largest urban centres on the Island (Charlottetown and Summerside). According to Clair's parents, who provided the down payment and contributed their own knowledge as immigrants and farmers, "If we'd known about PEI all those years ago, we would have been here." And now they are. John and Clair recognize her parents not only as immediate neighbours, but as extra help in the fields or with the children.

In addition to raising two young daughters, John and Clair operate the 260 acre property that maintains purebred Holsteins and other young stock. In light of all the hardships that John and Clair endured as they revived an old island farm, it was no doubt rewarding for them to be recognized as the Atlantic Region Outstanding Young Farmers in 2007, and featured in *Island Living* magazine for spring 2008. In addition to their regular work, the Greens are active on many Holstein and industry organizations and they welcomed visitors on PEI Open Farm Day as one of just seven host farms. Their hospitality does not stop there, however, and nor do the twists. A student from Holland participating in an agricultural sponsorship program enters the interviewing room (the kitchen). Thirty years ago, her father had been hosted by Clair's parents in Nova Scotia. John and Clair Green are immigrant entrepreneurs in whom others have invested and who are now willing to make themselves available to others in the same generous way.

Name: Brian Sharp  
 Country of Origin: Uganda  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: 2004  
 Business: Trapeze Animation Studio & Mugisha Enterprises  
 Main Product(s): Flash Animation Production  
 Location: 118 Sydney Street, Charlottetown  
 Web-site: <http://animation.trapeze.com>  
 E-mail: [brian@trapeze.com](mailto:brian@trapeze.com)  
 Phone: (902) 370-3007; Fax: (902) 620-4920



**Trapeze Animation Studio** builds upon the increasing popularity of flash animation. It is a children's animation production unit where quality of work always comes first. The separate company **Mugisha Enterprises** is a story-based brand development company with more of a focus on new media activities. The open concept space of these two firms makes it easy for their working teams to share, conceptualize and create, in a continuing effort to help one another grow as artists and animators. The result: the production of some of the highest quality, most innovative animation imaginable.

**Brian Sharp** was born in Uganda: his parents were in the peace corps. He lived in Toronto for 15 years before coming to PEI in 2004 to run Trapeze Animation Studio. The company located here initially for tax credit reasons and government support. Since then, however, Brian has fallen in love with the Island.

"I continue to find PEI a great place to live, work and play", explains Brian. "I've never had more opportunity as an entrepreneur than in PEI. The Island is a small remote location, yet very connected to the rest of the world. The advantage of being small is the ability to move fast, every resource is more accessible and the impact of one's efforts is more easily seen and measured. Being small also means being frugal and forcing innovation through challenges. Being on PEI makes these challenges easier because everyone understands the situation well and is very supportive. Plus the relatively lower operating costs, wages and subsidies make being here an advantage".

Brian admits that support from the PEI provincial government has been simply "outstanding". There is an understanding of the challenges of running any kind of business here. The province has a clear vision for the future and how to best plan this future with industry's partnership, advice and encouragement.

The 'laid back' island lifestyle and pace is part of what makes PEI a great place from where to operate a business. Sustainability is the key to success and there is a great lesson in island life that teaches conservation, recycling and waste reduction. The premium resource on the Island is an often intangible, often hard-to-define 'quality of life'. "My quality of life has never been better", explains Brian. "As a result, I am more productive and better able to focus on the success of my business".

Continues Brian: "Everything I enjoy on PEI is 5 minutes away and often free to use. I equally enjoy 'the big city' and take many trips a year to Toronto, New York, or Cannes in France for work and pleasure. Whether I lived in PEI or not, these trips would still be essential to run my business and enjoy my life".

Brian advises about the kinds of employees one would need to attract to, and retain in, a business being located on PEI: crucial considerations for firms like his that depend on specialist labour. "An average person in Toronto with a partially paid home mortgage would be able to relocate to PEI, buy a larger home within walking distance of work, and still have money to spare for a retirement investment", argues Brian. "These same people are often highly skilled 30-50 year-old individuals who are just settling down into a comfortable life building a family and security. If this is one's ideal hire, then setting up business on PEI is a huge advantage."

Thinking of moving your business to PEI? For one thing, one needs to be an export business since the local market is simply too small to afford a sustainable operation. With the internet and availability of shipping routes, it is however possible for almost any business today to benefit from a location that is remote, where the cost of living and wages are lower, and where the quality of life is steady and sustainable. "PEI offers this better than most remote locations in Canada. It is a complete econo-system with at least one of every amenity expected in modern life all of which are very easy to enjoy", gushes Brian.

As PEI's capital and largest city, Charlottetown has quickly established itself as the primary business hub for the Island, attracting new companies, enticing the settlement of skilled newcomers, and making way for a vast array of business opportunities. There is a growing presence of young energetic creative people who are now living and doing their thing on PEI, connecting nicely with the vibrant local arts community. Brian concludes emphatically: "The place may soon be considered a birthplace of a revitalized renaissance period in Canada. Be here or be square".



**Name: Judy and Jim Bertling**

**Country of Origin: Hong Kong / United Kingdom**

**Moved to Prince Edward Island: 2002**

**Business: Pioneer Farms**

**Main Product(s): Animal Petting and Sustainable Living Experiences**

**Location: 1835 MacDonald Road (Route 176), O'Leary**

**Web-site: [www.pioneerfarm.ca](http://www.pioneerfarm.ca)**

**E-mail: [pioneerfarm@pei.sympatico.ca](mailto:pioneerfarm@pei.sympatico.ca)**

For an immigrant entrepreneur, the island credentials of **Judy Bertling** are hard to beat. She was raised by British parents who were also world travelers, and so introduced her to many countries. She was born on (largely insular) Hong Kong, met her husband, **Jim** (then a United Nations peace keeper), on the island of Cyprus, got married on Hornby Island (on Canada's west coast), and now resides on Prince Edward Island.

The Bertlings often moved house, mainly owing to Jim's service in the military and later on as a civilian worker. Eventually, though, they asked themselves: "Why are we doing this? We just felt like ants on an ant hill: blindly going about business and not really enjoying our life. There was hardly any purpose to my life at that time." It was during that soul searching period that the United States went through the September 11 attacks. Judy describes these as a "catalyst for us." From then on, they decided: "Let's do what we think is meaningful and fulfilling."

These are the circumstances that prompted this couple to move with a view to settle down. With Jim's military pension, they looked at eastern Canada where they hoped their money would go farther in purchasing a property by the sea; a significant criterion for Judy who "always wanted to live by the ocean." She also wanted a small farm where she could have her own horses. Pioneer Farms on PEI is the current embodiment of these desires. It is now home to horses, donkeys, dogs, cats, rabbits, ornamental chickens, laying hens, llamas, goats, sheep, peacocks, pigs, emus, and (in the summer months) turkeys, ducks and meat chickens.

**Pioneer Farms** began as an attempt to "simplify life," summarizes Judy. Her endeavour was to "look at the elementals of life. I wanted to learn how to grow my own food. I wanted to learn how to be able to be still. I wanted to live without noise. I wanted to be more self-sufficient. I wanted to build my own home. And I wanted to be grateful." For her, this is "a real, personal, life changing mission."

Moreover, Pioneer Farms has become an opportunity to share their knowledge and experience with others, who may also be "yearning for a reconnection to nature" that, Judy believes, has been lost in our consumer driven world. Pioneer Farm provides experiential holidays where

guests can rent a wind and solar powered cottage. The homestead was painstakingly constructed with trees from the 150 acre property, hauled by their own horses, and assembled with Bertling brain and brawn.

For those not interested in spending a week to help with the chores, guests are still welcome to drop in for an alternative energy orientation tour, or go for a picnic with an emu, celebrate birthdays with the animals, or enjoy a sleigh ride during the winter season. These are some of the many activities available to the public.

The Bertlings purchased the land, sight unseen, through information on the internet. "We made sure it wasn't a toxic waste site and then we bought it," explains Judy, who figured that "on 150 acres there's got to be somewhere that we could build something." That turned out to be the case: since arriving in August 2002, they have built a home, a cottage and an animal shelter. Other projects will see the construction of an earth oven for outside baking and a smoke house.

When considering what they've accomplished, Judy says: "I absolutely adore what I am doing. I love where I live. It's the most satisfying experience". While some people might cringe at so many chores, particularly in dealing with the manure, Judy takes it in her stride. She acknowledges that it is a full commitment, but she doesn't seem to mind because she loves the animals and enjoys the outdoors.

Judy has lived on various islands, including her homeland, England. But she believes: "there is something unique about this place. I couldn't imagine doing what we're doing in another place and have it work as it has done for us". By learning from various Islanders about how things used to be done, the Bertlings have come up with a working combination of tradition and technology that makes for a relatively self-sufficient, energy efficient lifestyle.

Pioneer implies "paving the way to the future." It is this definition that has inspired the name Pioneer Farm. It isn't so much for the settlers of old as it is for the generations to come, including their two daughters. Judy concludes: "We're working towards a new future by incorporating some of the simpler times, which were gentler on the Earth."



Name: Alan and Vicky Shipman  
 Country of Origin: England  
 Moved to Prince Edward Island: 2005  
 Business: Sylvan Learning Centre  
 Main Product(s): Private Learning and Tuition  
 Location: 18A Superior Cres, Mt. Edward Road, Charlottetown  
 Web-site: <http://tutoring.sylvanlearning.com/centers/Charlottetown/>  
 E-mail: [info@peilearning.ca](mailto:info@peilearning.ca)  
 Phone: (902) 367-3678; Fax: (902) 367-3688



**Alan and Vicky Shipman** were born and raised in England with a passion for traveling to other countries. After visiting western and central Canada in 2003, the Shipmans ventured to Prince Edward Island: a place they “really fell in love with”. Not long after, an immigration application was sent to the Canadian federal government. Their preferred destination was listed as Charlottetown. Meanwhile, in their eagerness to resettle, they stumbled upon the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), which they promptly investigated. Much to their delight, their application was accepted.

By the summer of 2005, Alan and Vicky were planning a new home in rural Prince Edward Island and had submitted two business plans in accordance with PNP requirements. For the Shipmans of English descent, this island became their land of opportunity with its abundance of space, a similar heritage due in large part to its early British settlement history, and the English language itself. As Alan admits, “it would be really difficult to set up a business and be successful in a country where we’ve got to learn another language as well.”

Alan describes their greatest joy in immigrating as: “The opportunity to start our own business, which financially we couldn’t have done, or it would have been very difficult to do in the UK. The opportunity to build our own house! That was something we always wanted to do and we just could not do it back there. You cannot get land so easily in the UK, let alone finance it. So there was a whole series of factors that built up. For us, it was a life change.”

The Shipmans had considered Australia and the United States as possible sites for their resettlement. But they opted for Canada and PEI because it was relatively close to England, did not feel “too American” and with hardly any city traffic and congestion. After having worked in London, England, Alan explains “that’s what we were trying to get away from.”

What do the Shipmans appreciate most about Prince Edward Island? Alan begins: “Well, the whole concept of being an island ...”. Vicky gently interjects with: “It

is sort of exclusive, isn’t it?” Alan continues: “there is a slight quaintness about PEI”. He hesitates to say it as if his words might offend and clarifies by adding: “It’s still a real, living community. ...The whole place isn’t just the front of a chocolate box or anything like that, but there is an element that does feel like that.”

Until recently, Canada’s smallest province sold its beverages in glass bottles instead of aluminum cans, which reflected this “quaintness” that the Shipmans were captivated by. “We quite liked the can ban,” reveals Vicky, who was disappointed when the law changed. Even though the Shipmans are pleased by the charm of Prince Edward Island, there are times when “some of the quaintness frustrates us,” says Alan, who wishes for a bit of modernity.

On the business side, Vicky had been a math teacher for 18 years, and Alan was a trained engineer with business and human resource experience. In considering what business to spin off on Prince Edward Island, they contemplated opening a scrapbooking store or an inn. After evaluating what they wanted to do and what skills they had to offer, they chose instead to invest in a franchise that originated in the USA: Sylvan Learning Centre. Vicky expounds their thinking: “We felt like we were bringing something to the Island. We weren’t just trying to grab part of the tourism business.” After a rigorous assessment, they secured the franchise in 2005 and the first tutorial centre opened in March 2006. **Sylvan Learning Centre Charlottetown** is a supplementary education business that is staffed by 4 full-time and 14 part-time employees, mostly teachers. Meanwhile, the business continues to grow and, with students traveling from all over the island, there are plans to establish a second office in the Summerside area.

As independent, confident people, full of dreams, Alan and Vicky agree: “We’ve had opportunities that we wouldn’t have had in England”. With Vicky’s parents now living nearby (recent immigrants through the Family Category), a young daughter from China soon to be brought home, and a jointly run successful business, it’s no wonder Vicky admits that she is “happy here.”

## Contributors



**Godfrey Baldacchino** is the lead author of this report. An academic entrepreneur, Godfrey is the Canada Research Chair (Island Studies) at the University of Prince Edward Island. He moved to Canada from Malta in 2003 and lives in Charlottetown with his wife Anna and son Luke. An academic entrepreneur, he has a special research interest in successful small business from small islands, as well as in the challenges of immigrants as they seek to settle in host (and particularly enisled) communities.

**Crystal McAndrew Fall** is co-author of this report and the interviewer for the profiled entrepreneurs. Crystal graduated in 1997 from the University of Prince Edward Island with a BA as a Dean's List graduate, majoring in History and English. She then spent almost eight years in Japan gaining an international perspective on life and raising her two children, Emma and Joshua. Upon returning to Prince Edward Island, Crystal entered the Master of Arts Program in Island Studies at UPEI in 2006. She has since been pursuing research in immigrant integration and discrimination in Atlantic Canada.



**Alanna Jankov** is responsible for all the photographs in this report. Alanna grew up in Caribou Island, Nova Scotia. She received her first camera at the age of eight and has been taking photographs ever since. She relocated to Prince Edward Island in 1986 to study photography. After her studies, she apprenticed with photography labs and studios and has been working on her own since 1992. Her passion is meeting and photographing people.

## Credits and Acknowledgements



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Agroalimentaire Canada



School of Business



Prince Edward Island Association  
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# Some Useful Resources for Immigrant Businesses on Prince Edward Island

## Province of Prince Edward Island

Offers four progressive tax rebates for qualified businesses: to promote the development of intellectual property and the production of innovative products and services for world export; to assist firms to increase competitiveness and productivity; to encourage Islanders to invest in Island companies; and to help attract new expertise to accelerate the Island's participation in emerging, global opportunities.

Web-site: [www.gov.pe.ca/development/ptrp/index.php3](http://www.gov.pe.ca/development/ptrp/index.php3)



## PEI Business Development Inc.

94, Euston Street  
Charlottetown PE C1A 1W4  
Tel: (902) 368-6300;  
Toll Free: 1-800-563-3734  
Fax: (902) 368-6301  
E-mail: [business@gov.pe.ca](mailto:business@gov.pe.ca)



Mandate: to work with businesses in Prince Edward Island to strengthen and expand the provincial economy through business development; to offer a diverse range of programs and services to Island-based businesses, thus adding value and generating wealth.

Web-site: [www.peibusinessdevelopment.com/](http://www.peibusinessdevelopment.com/)

## PEI Population Secretariat

Suite 228  
90 University Avenue  
Charlottetown, PE C1A 4K9  
Telephone: (902) 620-3656  
Toll Free: 1-800-563-3734  
E-mail: [populationsecretariat@gov.pe.ca](mailto:populationsecretariat@gov.pe.ca)

Mandate: to promote Prince Edward Island as a safe and welcoming area to live, work, play and study; to retain youth, repatriate former islanders, and attract and retain immigrants.

Web-site: [www.gov.pe.ca/immigration](http://www.gov.pe.ca/immigration)



## Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Royal Bank Building – 3rd Floor  
100, Sydney Street, PO Box 40  
Charlottetown PE C1A 7K2  
Tel: (902) 566-7942;  
Toll Free: 1-800-871-2596  
Fax: (902) 566-7098  
E-mail: [pei@canadabusiness.ca](mailto:pei@canadabusiness.ca)



Mandate: to improve the economy of Atlantic Canadian communities through the successful development of business and job opportunities. (Federal Government Agency)

Web-site: [www.acoa.gc.ca](http://www.acoa.gc.ca)

## PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada

25 University Avenue  
Suite 400, Holman Building (4th floor)  
Confederation Court Mall, PO Box 2846  
Charlottetown, PE C1A 8C4  
Tel: (902) 628-6009  
Fax: (902) 894-4928  
E-mail: [info@peianc.com](mailto:info@peianc.com)



Mandate: to provide a variety of short-term settlement services and long-term social inclusion and community integration programs for immigrants; to involve itself in cross-cultural awareness and public education programs.

Web-site: [www.peianc.com](http://www.peianc.com)

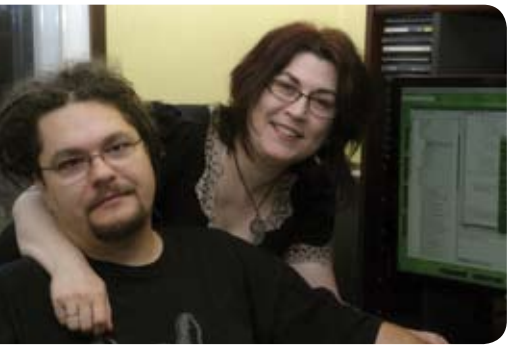
## University of Prince Edward Island – School of Business

550, University Avenue  
Charlottetown, PE C1A 4P3  
Tel: (902) 566-0626 or (902) 566-0564  
Fax (902) 628-4302  
E-mail: [business@upei.ca](mailto:business@upei.ca)



Mandate: to create a personalized learning environment that will enhance educational experiences and provides the skills to succeed in today's global community.

Web-site: [www.upei.ca/business/](http://www.upei.ca/business/)



Population Secretariat

