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# LEADERS & LEARNERS

THE VOICE OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS/L'ASSOCIATION  
CANADIENNE DES ADMINISTRATEURS ET DES  
ADMINISTRATRICES SCOLAIRES

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## The 2008 CASA Annual Conference: A Sunny Seaside Adventure In Nova Scotia



**T**he 2008 Summer Leadership Conference took place this past July in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

It was a chance to explore this region's traditions and history. To meet its friendly people and look at beautiful art, crafts and antiques. To taste delicious seafood and sweet maple syrup. To watch beautiful sunsets and enjoy hand-clapping, foot-stomping music. To meet old friends and make new ones, and, of course, to have a wonderful time.



Nova Scotia is a land of friendly people who are closely connected to the sea.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



## Pre-conference Activities: Central Nova Scotia Sightseeing Adventures



Above: Sugar Moon Farm in Earltown is the place to be if you love maple syrup.

Right: **Dean** and **Edith Lindquist** wonder just how “icy” the sugar maple trail is in July.



Left: Breakfast time! **Gary Kerton, Ann Blake** and **Jon Hutt** wait for the delicious pancakes to arrive.

Right: **Quita Gray** explains the role of the wood-burning stove during maple syrup-making time.



Left: **Dean Lindquist's** encounter with sections of the Berlin Wall in downtown Truro.

Below: **Gary Kerton's** encounter with the Stanfield's wall.  
*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things.  
—Henry Miller

## Pre-conference Activities: South Shore Arts, Crafts and Antiques



Left: The Lindquist family (**Edith, Dean** and daughter **Shelby**) poses in front of one of Lunenburg's many painted mermaids outside the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic.

Right, top: The entire tour group takes a refreshing break at Queensland Beach in between stops at antique and craft shops.

Right, bottom: Could this refurbished old bicycle be a new method for delivering flowers?



Left: **Jon Hutt** prepares to enter an old-fashioned candy shop in downtown Mahone Bay. So many delicious temptations, so little time.

Below, left: **Noreen Lucente** finds her version of seventh heaven at one of the many antique shops the tour group visited along Nova Scotia's south shore.



Below, right: Lunenburg architecture.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



**Travel is fatal to  
prejudice, bigotry  
and narrow-  
mindedness.**  
—Mark Twain

## South Shore Arts, Crafts And Antiques, continued



Above: An antique teddy bear and his ride.

Left: **Lee Lucente** wanders through an attic full of great old finds.



Left, top: **Randi Stangeland** peruses some of the hundreds of quilts for sale at the Teddy Bear Quilt Shop in Tantallon.

Left, middle: These gentlemen—**Jim Gibbons, Lee Lucente, Jon Hutt, Barry Stangeland** and **Dean Lindquist**—know how to have fun in quilt shop country: Find the local pub and hoist a few cold ones.

Left, bottom: **Barrie Gillespie** wonders if maybe he should have joined the other fellows at the pub too.



Left: **Noreen Lucente** proves her skills as a first-class bargain hunter.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



All journeys have  
secret destinations  
of which the traveler  
is unaware.

—Martin Buber

## Pre-conference Activities: The History And The High Tides Of The Annapolis Valley



Above: The spectacular and colourful coast-line near Wolfville.



Right: Statues commemorating the expulsion of the Acadians in Grand Pré.



Left: CASA PD director **Ed Wittchen** captures the view from atop the famous lookout near Canning.



Right: **Marion Holmes** of PD Pros looks out into the fog at Hall's Harbour just prior to a big seafood lunch.



Left: CASA tourists pose near the statue of Evangeline.

Below: **Kath Rhyason** marvels at evidence of the world's highest tides in Hall's Harbour.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



**Tourists don't know  
where they've been,  
travelers don't know  
where they're going.**

**—Paul Theroux**



Left to right: EXL Award nominees **Norman Dray**, **Kath Rhyason**, **Larry Langan**, **Lorna Varden** and **Geoff Williams**.

## Recognizing Excellence: The 2008 Xerox EXL Awards

On Thursday, July 10, conference delegates came together during the opening ceremonies to honour CASA colleagues nominated for the EXL Award. At the same time, the CASA Honorary Life Membership awards were presented, this year to two winners.

The event was hosted by last year's EXL winner **Carol Gray**. Xerox representatives **Lou Gagnon** and **Randy Brydges** were on hand to present the EXL Award to **Geoff Williams**, this year's winner. Geoff is the director of education for the Avon Maitland District School Board in southwestern Ontario.

Affiliate nominees for 2008 included **Kath Rhyason** (Fort McMurray Public School District, CASS), **Larry Langan** (Huron Perth Catholic District School Board, OCSOA), **Lorna Varden** (Lester B. Pearson School Board, AAESQ), **Norman Dray** (Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, ANSEA), and **Geoff Williams**.

The EXL award recognizes CASA members who show exemplary leadership ability and who enhance school administration.

The 2008 CASA Honorary Life Membership Award was presented to both **Lee Lucente**, CASS executive director, and **Joe Rapai**, former CASA president.



Above: CASA executive director **Frank Kelly** (left) and outgoing president **Jim Gibbons** (right) present **Joe Rapai** and **Lee Lucente** with their special awards.

Left: **Geoff Williams** holds his EXL National Award.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



A traveler without  
observation is a bird  
without wings.

—Moslih Eddin  
Saadi

## Light Up The World: Outgoing CASA President Jim Gibbons' Keynote Address

Following the presentation of the Xerox EXL Awards on Thursday, July 12, Chinook's Edge School Division superintendent and outgoing CASA president **Jim Gibbons** delivered the conference's keynote address. He focused his talk on sharing news about the Light Up The World project and how it relates to child and family literacy.

As mentioned in *Leaders & Learners*, Volume 3, Issue 21, Jim first became involved with Light Up The World in 2006 when a student from his division was presented with an award for her essay on how technology can change the world. That same year, he met Light Up The World founder **Dr. David Irvine-Halliday**, a University of Calgary professor, through Jim's role with the university senate.

Jim presented a slideshow and a video about the project during his address. Despite technical difficulties with the audio, the message came through to conference delegates loud and clear: This project is making a real difference to children and families living in poverty near the equator.

Light Up The World is an international humanitarian organization dedicated to providing funding and facilitation for developing renewable energy and illumination for the

world's poor and underserved.

Its five main objectives are to provide attainable and affordable lighting, to provide a lighting alternative that is safe to use, to provide a lighting alternative that is healthy for its users, provide a lighting system that is maximally efficient and to ensure that lighting systems are environmentally responsible.

Jim says he chose to share the message of Light Up The World at this year's conference because of how it ties into the conference's theme of literacy. The children and families who can benefit the most from the Light Up The World project's LED-technology lighting generally live in poor countries near the equator, where the sun sets around 6pm and where electricity is either unaffordable or unreliable. This leaves them to rely on the light of their fire or kerosene lamps. This is a major deterrent to literacy efforts, as the light from those sources is not conducive to reading.

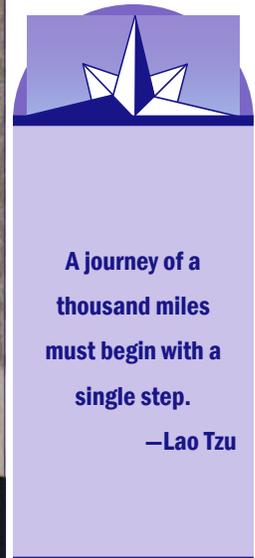
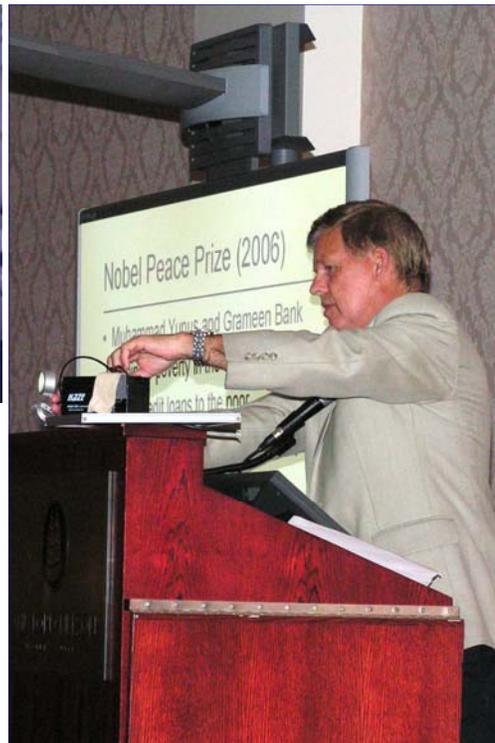
CASA members can learn more by visiting the Light Up The World website at [www.lutw.org](http://www.lutw.org). They may also want to share news of this project with school leaders to consider as potential fundraising or field trip opportunities, or to establish their own LUTW Foundation Chapter.



Above: The small yet powerful light developed for the Light Up The World project. It is powered by a special battery pack that lasts for four years and is recharged by either an 8 x 11-inch solar panel or a pedal charger. The unit costs just \$200 and is already in over 16,000 homes around the world.

Left: **Jim Gibbons** demonstrates the light during his keynote address.

Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen



A journey of a  
thousand miles  
must begin with a  
single step.

—Lao Tzu

## Mr. J: Magic, Laughter And Balloon Hats



Above, left: "Does this balloon hat go with my dress?"

Above, right: *Leaders & Learners* editor **Tara Lee Wittchen** takes part in one of the illusions.

*Photo by Roger Nippard*

Right: **Paulette Hanna**, Red Deer Catholic Regional Division superintendent, tries out a new look.



Left: Two balloon heads are better than one!

Below, left: **Chris Gonnet** enjoying the show.

Below, right: Magician **Mr. J** (aka **David Johnston**) and his special winged assistant Rosie with three very good sports.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen except where indicated*



**Travel is more than  
the seeing of sights;  
it is a change that  
goes on, deep and  
permanent, in the  
ideas of living.**  
—Miriam Beard

## Special Guest John McLaughlin: Helping Students Cope With Tragedy In Bathurst, NB

Friday morning began with a moving, heart-felt presentation from **John McLaughlin**, the superintendent of School District 15 in New Brunswick. John recounted the terrible tragedy that occurred this January when seven Bathurst High School students—**Nathan Cleland, Justin Cormier, Daniel Hains, Javier Acevedo, Codey Brach, Nick Quinn** and **Nicholas Kelly**—and beloved teacher **Beth Lord** were killed in a horrific highway crash on their way home from a basketball game in Moncton.

The small town of Bathurst, New Brunswick, and the tight-knit school community struggled through their grief to come together and support each other as they mourned this tremendous loss of life.

“The professional in you kicks in,” McLaughlin recalled of his earliest reactions as an administrator. “The easy part was the job. The hard part is that I am a father of four, with one in the same high school who lost friends and a teacher.”

McLaughlin is also a BHS graduate, and he reflected on how in the week following the accident, the school alumni “got together in ways that were amazing. They wore black and red on the day of the funeral, they wore their grad rings.”

He then made a gentle joke, commenting that “Mine is defective—it shrunk,” providing much needed laughter at this point in his extremely emotional address.

He continued, explaining that when he first went to the hospital following the accident, he became part of the story.

“It might seem like micro-managing, but being very, very involved seemed like the right thing to do. Being there at that time was really tough, but it set the tone for the future,” he said, still very vividly affected. “I’m still not comfortable talking about what happened.”

“I hope you all have crisis response plans in your district,” he noted. “We needed people who knew exactly what to do.”



Listening to **John McLaughlin** share how one school, one district and one community came together in grief.

By three that first morning, he said, the kids started showing up at the school. By four, Bathurst High School was open as a grief centre.

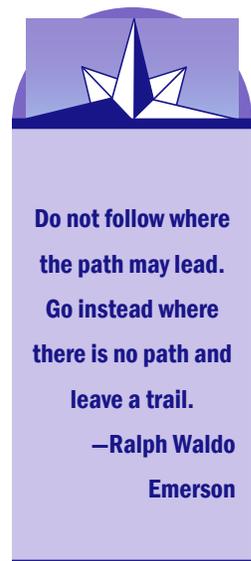
“It became a place for the community,” McLaughlin said, noting how proud he was of the leadership demonstrated by staff. “It’s amazing how people can put the grief aside and do what they need to do. We just trusted each other and did what we needed to do.”

McLaughlin played a key role in protecting the friends and families of those who experienced the greatest losses by making sure he was available to speak to the media on behalf of the school and for the district.



John’s address was extremely heart-felt and emotional.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



## Special Guest John McLaughlin, continued

*(Continued from page 9)*

“I would recommend you have a media contact put in place before a tragedy takes place,” he advised. “You need to really control the message that goes out there. You need to tell the truth and the story needs to be told. You want to share good information and also set some parameters. I needed to make sure **Colleen Ramsay** [the BHS principal] and her staff would be protected from the media.”

It was also important to make sure the kids and staff had the opportunity to return to school on Monday and have some form of routine available, he explained. When that first school bell rang, there was an hour of silence throughout the school. At last, though, some of the kids put YouTube videos of the boys playing basketball on classroom SMART Boards. A few kids began to smile and then slowly, McLaughlin recalls, they gave themselves permission to laugh. It was an important first step in bringing the kids through this horrific experience.

As it was almost the end of the semester, exams were cancelled and new semester classes started early. Teachers tried their best to give the kids routines. They told their students they were still expected to do their assignments but, he noted, the staff was also extremely patient and understanding with them.

The kids also needed to be told they all had the right to grieve, whether they knew the victims really well or not. Counsellors were on hand to help the students and staff, and clear lines of communications with parents were developed.

“We also really needed to care for our staff,” McLaughlin said. “They showed courage and strength but there is still an



Some of the photos John shared during his presentation: hugs, hugs and more hugs through the tears.

emotional cost. Communicating with staff was very important.”

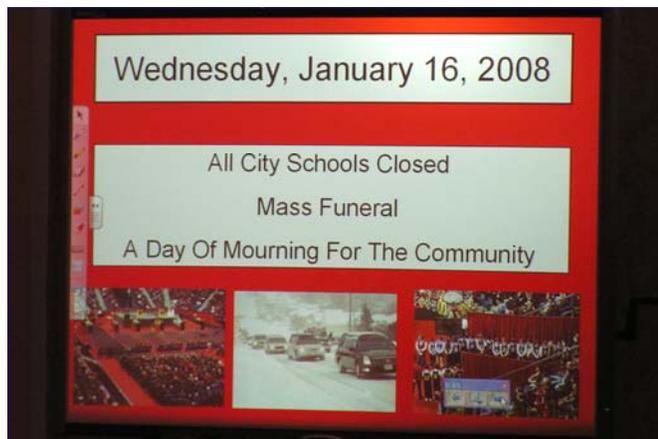
As time went on, he said, it also became important to help the students allow themselves to have fun again, to just be teenagers. The highly entertaining Harlem Ambassadors basketball team came out in May to play for the school, for example, and there were other fun events for them.

The biggest challenge of all was how to deal with graduation in the absence of their classmates and teacher, McLaughlin said. The solution that seemed to work best was to hold a celebration of spirit on a Sunday and then to follow that with a regular graduation the next Friday.

“Graduation really needed to be about the kids—the hair, the dresses, the prom. This year, the kids weren’t going to give themselves permission to do that, and I thought that was so sad, not just as a father but as a superintendent.”

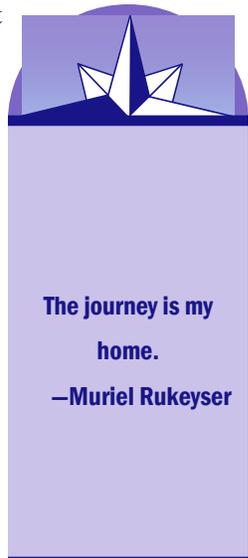
McLaughlin then shared a video of the BHS students gathering on their graduation ceremony stage, spontaneously dancing and jumping around as the school band played Van Halen’s exuberant rock anthem “Jump.”

“I know it’s not over for them, but I believe we ended graduation on a positive note.”



Photos retelling the stories of the day of the service.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



## Friday Sessions: Sudbury Catholic, Niagara Catholic And Peel Districts



Above: **Jean McHarg**, academic superintendent for Sudbury Catholic, presents information on a one-to-one laptop program.

Right: Reviewing notes during a session.



Left: **Catherine McCullough**, director of education for Sudbury Catholic.

Right: **Terry Antoniou**, a principal with the Niagara Catholic District School Board, uses a SMART Board during her talk.



Left: **Judith Nyman**, associate director of the Peel District School Board.

Below: NCDSB superintendent **Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells**.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



There is no moment of delight in any pilgrimage like the beginning of it.

—Charles Dudley Warner

## Friday Sessions: Presentations, Teamwork And Networking



*Left:* Breakout sessions are an ideal time for learning about new models and strategies in education. They are also a time for meeting new colleagues and sharing ideas.

*Right:* Peel District School Board director **Jim Grieve** and associate director **Judith Nyman** present information on their district's five-stage process to create alignment of purpose and consolidation of effort for improved student achievement.



*Centre, left:* The Halifax Public Gardens offered conference delegates a lush inter-session oasis.

*Centre, right:* Leaders from across the country attending the "School Success Planning Process and Website" breakout session work together on team exercises.



*Bottom, left:* **Cathy Standing**, a principal in the Peel District School Board, talks about the school success planning process and website.



*Bottom, right:* **Marion Holmes** at work.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



**You lose sight of things...and when you travel, everything balances out.**  
—Daranna Gidel

## Friday Night: Lobster Dinner—Seating For 130 Or So Hungry Delegates



Above: **Bob Mills** chooses his lobster.

*Right:* “Are you sure that one’s dead?” The march of the lobsters was followed quickly by the eating of the lobsters.



*Left:* Supper time! Hot lobster, corn on the cob, potato salad, cole slaw, rolls and, of course, hot butter for dipping.

*Right:* What makes this group from Montreal so happy? It’s lobster time!



*Left:* **Noreen Lucente** helps husband **Lee** with his bib. Don’t want to get any butter on those whites!

*Below:* The banquet facilities at the Lord Nelson Hotel.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



Experience, travel—  
these are as  
education in  
themselves.  
—Euripides

## Friday Night: Halifax Ghost Walk And Pub Crawl



Above: Lining up before the Pub Walk. Too bad we can't publish the "after" photograph.

Left: Traditional Celtic musicians.



Left, top: **Glenn Coolen**, a multi-talented gentleman indeed. Earlier in the evening during the lobster dinner, he and his musical friends played Celtic music. After dessert, he led a group of brave souls up Citadel Hill for the start of his infamous Halifax Ghost Walk.

Left, middle: Glenn gets into the "spirit" of things.

Left, bottom: As darkness fell upon the city, the level of spookiness in Glenn's tales rose.



Left: A few of the brave folks listening to Glenn's stories as the sun begins to set.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



I never travel  
without my diary.  
One should always  
have something  
sensational to read  
in the train.

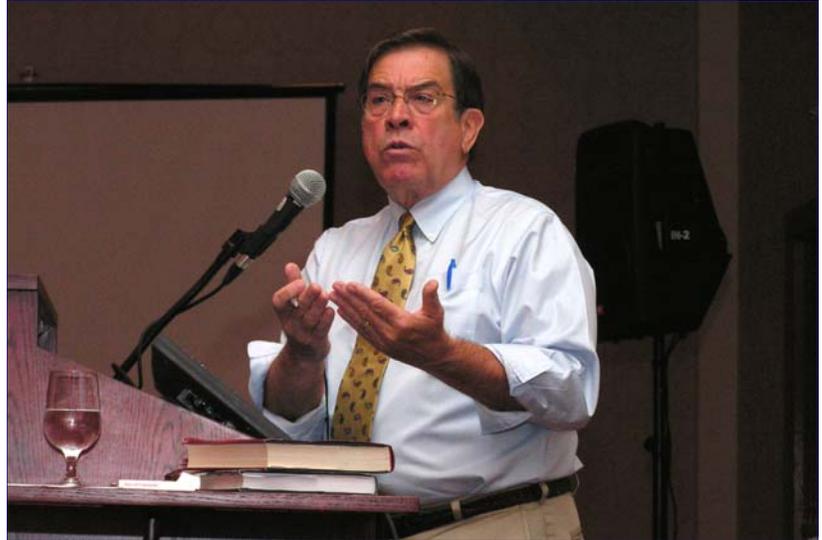
—Oscar Wilde

## Saturday Sessions: AASA President, Pan-Canadian Panel And...Cowboy Hats?



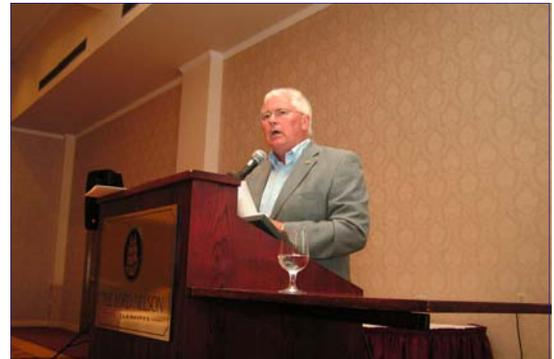
Above: AASA president elect **Randall Collins** delivers an address on the state of the superintendency study.

Right: **Randall Collins** emphasizes a point.



Left: Outgoing CASA president **Jim Gibbons** passes the hat to incoming president **Jim Grieve**. See you in Calgary in 2009!

Right: Former Alberta Education ADM and current CASS consultant **Rick Morrow**.



Left: **Carol Gray** contributes to a panel discussion on literacy initiatives across Canada.

Below: The final session of the conference.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



I travel a lot. I hate having my life disrupted by routine.  
—Caskie Stinnet

## Saturday Sessions: A Reading From Children's Author Budge Wilson



Left: Beloved Nova Scotia children's author **Budge Wilson** takes time to visit with **Marion Holmes**.



Right, top: Budge reads from *Before Green Gables*, her newly published prequel to the famous *Anne of Green Gables* series. This is the first new *Anne* book in many generations.



Right: Budge signs a copy of her book for CASA president **Jim Grieve**.



Above: Muffins make a sweet morning treat. They come in handy too when you need extra energy for waiting in line at a book signing.

Right: Fans of all ages line up to wait for Budge to sign their new copies of *Before Green Gables*.

Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen



Travel, in the younger sort, is part of education; in the elder, a part of experience.  
—Francis Bacon, Sr.

## Saturday Night: Spectacular Sunset At Peggy's Cove



Left: **Marcelle Auger** and **Sophie Bousquet** are all smiles as they take in the beautiful scenery surrounding the famous lighthouse at Peggy's Cove.

Right, above: One busload of CASA conference attendees packed and ready to go see the sunset at Peggy's Cove.

Right, below: Doesn't it look like **Carol Gray** would make a great field trip supervisor? Better watch your step, **Frank Kelly**!



Left: The rocky shore of the village of Peggy's Cove. Just imagine what it must look like during those wild Atlantic storms.

Below, left: CASA's executive director **Frank Kelly** shares a laugh with his wife **Ann** while they wait for the spectacular sunset at Peggy's Cove.



Below, right: Driving to Peggy's Cove.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



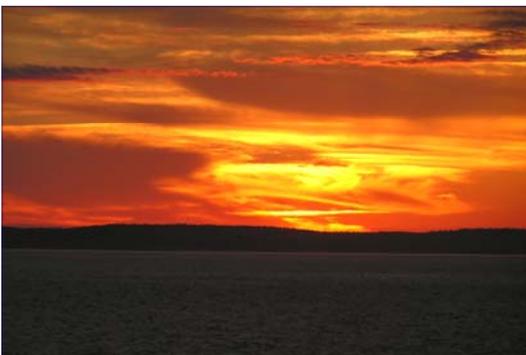
A journey is best  
measured in friends,  
rather than miles.  
—Tim Cahill

## Saturday Night: Spectacular Sunset At Peggy's Cove, continued



Above: The weather cooperated and there was ample opportunity to snap gorgeous photographs.

Right: Rosy pinks of the sunset.



Left: Brilliant oranges and fiery reds of the sunset at Peggy's Cove.

Right: Time to load everyone on the buses again to take the very twisty highway back to Halifax before it gets dark.



Left: **Johanne Messner** at the base of the lighthouse.

Below: It's not hard to forget Peggy's Cove's historical roots as a fishing village.

*Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen*



**Make voyages!  
Attempt  
them...there's  
nothing else.  
—Tennessee  
Williams**

# CASA PEOPLE: Family, Friends, Food And Fun



Left: The **Wowk** and **Lindquist** families.

Right, top: This group of former strangers became fast friends on their pre-conference trip.

Right, bottom: New friends became old friends by the week's end.



Photos by Tara Lee Wittchen



From left, **Johanne Messner** and **Sharon** and **Jim Grieve** relax on the rocks at Peggy's Cove.



**Lorna Varden** and **Carol Gray** prepare for a tasty lobster dinner. Cheers!

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