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Helijet

IN-FLIGHT REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Above: Aquatica Submarine's Stingray 500 begins its descent into the deep waters of Howe Sound. The company, in partnership with Head-Line Mountain Holidays, began offering private submarine tours in January 2017. Garth Eichel photo

Above: Nearly a third of Helijet's workforce are women, working in every department, and at all levels. Heath Moffatt photo

Cover: Helijet employs several female pilots, as well as an aircraft maintenance engineer (AME) apprentice. From left to right are: Capt. Bree Stotts; Capt. Adele Dobler; Capt. Erin Johnstone; Capt. Elizabeth Taitt; Capt. Angela Kovats; and AME apprentice Elaine St. Laurent. Heath Moffatt photo

For Good, Better&Best

THE GOAL OF NORMALCY FOR WOMEN IN AVIATION



Heather Bell, Board Chair of the BC Aviation Council, is a private consultant in Aviation, Airports and Aerospace and sits on the Board of the Aviation Leadership Foundation. She recently retired from NavCanada after 33 years in Air Navigation Services.

AS A YOUNG GIRL, I was encouraged to be the best I could be. Focused effort showed me I could make a *good outcome better*, and *best* was not beyond my reach; all that was required was determination and persistence. That maxim served me well over three decades working in Air Navigation Services as an air traffic controller, supervisor and senior manager.

How is this relevant to other women in aviation? That is a question worth asking as Women of Aviation Worldwide Week is observed this year, March 6 to 12.

When I became an air traffic controller in 1983 aviation was a predominantly male industry. I knew that to succeed I would have to be the best I could be, both personally and professionally.

As one should expect, aviation is an industry that rewards competence and professionalism. A busy air traffic control unit is no place for identity politics. For that reason, today, most promotions are merit-based, which helps mitigate any perception of gender bias.

The same applies to women working in other aviation roles, such as pilots and aircraft maintenance engineers. Women in these jobs can't succeed through special treatment; they have to earn the professional respect of their peers on the job, every day.

I am often asked "Is air traffic control [ATC] a good job for women and are conditions better now than 30 years ago?"

The answer is absolutely yes. In terms of numbers, there are many more female controllers, supervisors, managers and senior executives in ATC today than there were 30 years ago. Career path opportunities have improved, too: in my 33-year career I worked as a controller, a supervisor, a manager, and a senior executive — responsible for Air Navigation Services in B.C. Pretty good, perhaps, and *better* than I might have imagined.

Is my experience the norm, or indicative of significant change? Hard to say, but I know the working environment for all air traffic controllers has always been exceptional, and continues to improve. As a result of thoughtful contract negotiations and an ever-more progressive senior management team, NavCanada employees enjoy many best-in-class benefits including maternity, paternity and family leave programs — all things cited as favourable to attracting and retaining employees, not just women.

Like NavCanada, Helijet is a progressive company that has long been at the forefront of the industry in terms of gender diversity and inclusion. Both organizations see the value of attracting, encouraging and retaining female professionals. Such efforts are producing positive change in the industry, but the best outcome, in my opinion, will be when gender is no longer an issue. With determination and persistence this goal is not beyond our reach. **H**

Helijet

VANCOUVER ISLAND

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- 2 Stanley Park
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- 8 Gabriola Island
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CHERRY TREES IN BLOOM

Inspired by the traditional Sakura festivals of Japan, Vancouver celebrates the budding of its 36,000 Japanese ornamental cherry trees each spring during the annual **Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival**, March 30 to April 23. Enjoy free concerts and poetry contests, as well as cherry tree viewing trolley tours, and more.



INDO-CANADIAN COLOURS ON PARADE

The **Vancouver Vaisakhi Parade** on April 15 marks the celebration of harvest in the Southern Hemisphere, and the beginning of the solar year. Considered to be one of the most significant holidays in the Sikh calendar, as many as 300,000 people are expected to turn out for this year's parade, making it Vancouver's largest single-day festival of any kind.



RUN MOM, RUN

Moms of all ages and abilities are invited to participate in the **Fairmont Mother's Day Run** on May 14. Presented by Blue-Shore Financial, the race consists of a 3k, 5k and 10k run (or walk) that starts in Stanley Park and finishes at the Olympic Cauldron at Jack Poole Plaza.

Gifts and goodies await at the Finish Line Festival where there will be kid's activities, Champagne giveaways, and options for a decadent Mother's Day Brunch at Fairmont Pacific Rim and special weekend room rates for participants at Fairmont Hotels in Vancouver. Fathers, brothers and sons are welcome to run, too!

What is more, moms flying to the event on Helijet from Victoria and Nanaimo can use the code **Momsrun2017** for a 15% off coupon when travelling with Helijet on Event Week.



CARS & DRIVERS

The latest vehicles take centre stage at the 97th **Vancouver International Auto Show** at the Vancouver Convention Centre, March 28 to April 2. This year's event promises to be the best-attended auto show in Western Canada, with more than 450 new and custom vehicles from all over the world.

JUST FOR KIDS

The young and young at heart can cut loose at the **Vancouver International Children's Festival** on Granville Island from May 29 to June 4. A range of great kids' entertainment will be taking place, from music and theatre, to dance, storytelling, puppetry, circus arts and more.



TED2017

WORLD TED CONFERENCE

Speakers from all over the world will descend on Vancouver to share big thoughts at the annual **World TED Conference**, April 24-28. Tickets are pricey and hard to come by, but inexpensive and even free live video streaming is available at various locations throughout the city. Keep an eye out also for TEDxStanleyPark. This one-day TED conference-like event in Vancouver on March 4 features over a dozen high-profile and inspirational local speakers. This year's speakers include Green Party leader Elizabeth May and local restaurateur and TV celebrity Vikram Vij, among others.

TAKE TO THE STREETS

The **Vancouver Sun Run** is the largest 10K event in Canada, attracting over 50,000 participants every year. This year's event takes place on Sunday, April 23, beginning in Vancouver's downtown core at Burrard Street and Georgia Street, proceeding to Stanley Park, then along English Bay, through the city, and towards the finish line at BC Place Stadium. Fast on the heels of this event is the **BMO Vancouver International Marathon** on May 7. As one of the top marathon events in Canada, it attracts competitive runners from over 50 countries.



SEVEN'S SERIES

For a second year in a row, Vancouver will be hosting the **Canada World Rugby Seven's Series**, March 11 and 12, at BC Place Stadium. Helijet will be participating as a major sponsor of this year's two-day tournament, which hosts 16 of the world's top men's rugby sevens teams competing for World Series points in each round.

Sevens rugby is a fast-paced and shorter version of traditional rugby with only seven players per side. Attracting huge audiences around the world, sevens rugby debuted as an Olympic sport for the first time at the 2016 games in Rio de Janeiro.



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WOMEN'S SEVENS

The 2017 HSBC Canada Women's Sevens rugby tournament returns to Langford, B.C., on May 27 and 28. This year's tournament will feature a multitude of Olympic teams, including Canada's own Women's Sevens team, winners of the bronze medal at the sport's debut at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. The gold medalists from Australia and silver medalists from New Zealand will also be there, competing in pursuit of more hardware.

Every four years the HSBC Series doubles as an Olympic qualifier, with the top four-ranked teams booking their ticket to the Olympic Games.

SCOTS ABROAD

Revel among the clans at the 154th Victoria Highland Games & Celtic Festival, where Scottish culture, art and sport take centre stage at Topaz Park on May 20 to 22. This is the largest Scottish cultural event in Western Canada, and this year's event is expected to be the largest yet, with over 25,000 expected to attend.



IMAGINATION OF CROWDS

Canada's largest social media conference, **Social Media Camp**, celebrates its eighth annual event, May 3 and 4, at the Victoria Conference Centre. Helijet is again participating as a Platinum Sponsor at this year's conference, where the theme will be Social and the Imagination Economy. Join dozens of speakers from across Canada to address how businesses can we become what consumers are interested in, rather than interrupting what they are interested in.

NEW CHEF IN TOWN

The Westin Bear Mountain Golf Resort & Spa recently announced its new **Executive Chef Mahesh Bhambure** will be presiding over the Resort's culinary program, bringing a wealth of education and experience to his new role.

A native of India, Chef Mahesh takes pride in fusing Canadian cuisine with the culinary traditions of South Asia, creating eclectic and memorable dishes that span multiple cultures and nationalities.

Chef Mahesh spent 10 years developing and honing his impressive repertoire and distinctive style alongside several Michelin two- and three-starred chefs in the kitchens of some of North America's finest four and five star dining establishments, including Toca at the Ritz-Carlton, Toronto, and Market by Jean-Georges at the Shangri-La, Vancouver.

"My food is simple," says Chef Mahesh. "It's a combination of clean flavours, local product and creativity."



CLOSE TO THE WIND

The Royal Victoria Yacht Club presents the 74th running of **Swiftsure Race Week**, May 25 to 29, with six different courses providing plenty of challenge for mono- and multi-hull vessels at the Pacific Northwest's leading sailboat race. Landlubbers are always welcome to admire the boats and enjoy the party atmosphere on Victoria's Inner Harbour.



PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL

The **Greater Victoria Performing Arts Festival** is one of the oldest festivals in B.C., and 2017 will see the Festival celebrate its 90th anniversary. Between April 3 and May 13 over 9,000 Victoria-area students of music, dance and dramatic arts will perform on stages throughout the city, receiving adjudications from renowned experts in the arts.

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HARBOUR CITY HUBBUB

The third annual **Festival Nanaimo**, March 1 to 31, continues to grow each year with more events and activities being offered by more organizations and businesses throughout the month of March. This year's Festival includes eight signature events at various venues around the city, with one of the most popular being **PirateFest**. This family fun event includes five days of swashbuckling fun for buccaneers of all ages.



SUDS GALORE

Brewmasters from a range of Vancouver Island breweries will be on hand to provide tastings of their products at the **Nanaimo Kinsmen Beer Festival**, April 7 — the Mid-Island's largest celebration of craft brews. This year's Festival takes place at the Beban Park Social Centre, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., with a variety of local, imported and micro-brews flowing to raise money for charity.



The Nanaimo Bastion is an historic fortification built in 1855.



ON A DOCK BY THE BAY

The Waterfront Suites and Marina in Nanaimo plays host to the third annual **Nanaimo Boat Show**, March 30 to April 2, where a wide range of pleasure craft and marine products will be showcased, exposing wanna-be sailors and old salts to a multitude of maritime opportunities and activities.

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HISTORIC HUB CITY

Nanaimo has a rich and lively history dating back to the mid-19th century when it first began as a Hudson's Bay Company trading post. **Nanaimo Heritage Days** celebrates that history each year on Victoria Day, with performances and a parade on Commercial Street on May 22.



ALL THAT JAZZ

The Harbour City Jazz Society presents **JAZZFEST 2017** at the Port Theatre, March 10, featuring talented jazz students from several local schools, along with a highly-renowned guest artist — New York-based trumpeter Ingrid Jensen. Jensen grew up in Nanaimo and has gone on to perform all over the world. A notable educator and supporter of jazz education, he is widely regarded as one of today's top modern jazz trumpeters.

A portrait of a young male student with blonde hair, wearing a dark blazer, white shirt, and red tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, there's a blurred view of what appears to be a school hallway or entrance. The Aspengrove School crest is visible in the top left corner of the image frame.

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Safety at All Levels

SONYA TIETJEN, MANAGER SAFETY SYSTEMS, HELIJET



Sonya Tietjen is implementing a new Safety Management System that will save money, improve reliability and mitigate risk. Heath Moffatt photo

IN 30 YEARS OF FLIGHT OPERATIONS Helijet has never had an aircraft crash resulting in injury. That is a claim not all air carriers can make after three decades in service. Still, Helijet has no intention of resting on its laurels. Notwithstanding the company's admirable record, safety is one area where there is always room to do better.

In 2016 Helijet's senior management team decided the best way to enhance safety throughout the organization was to introduce a new company-wide Safety Management System (SMS).

SMS is a relatively young, but highly effective, concept in the aviation industry whereby companies strive to reduce incidents and accidents through a formal and systematic approach to managing safety involving new organizational structures, accountabilities, policies and procedures.

Transport Canada began making SMS mandatory for large passenger airlines in Canada in 2005. Some carriers adapted to the onerous task of implementing SMS better than others, but in the years since it became mandatory there has been a marked improvement in aviation safety among large airlines.

Helijet is not a large air carrier, so the company was exempt from Transport Canada's SMS requirement, but senior management recognized the value of implementing it nonetheless.

To that end, Helijet looked outside the company for expertise, finding it in Sonya Tietjen.

Tietjen first came to the world of safety while working for Richmond-based CHC Helicopter between 2002 and 2009. Starting in administration, she was eventually drawn into safety management, which involved travelling all over the world to various CHC Helicopter bases of operations.

After CHC Helicopter was acquired by a U.S. private equity company in 2008, Tietjen decided to hang out her shingle as an independent SMS consultant. She travelled to Scotland from where she provided training to a variety of air carriers in Europe, Africa, South America and Russia. At the same time, she completed an MSc degree in Aviation Safety Management Systems from City, University London.

Helijet**HELIJET FLEET**

“Organizational change is one of the hardest things for a company to do, but Helijet is doing it.”

After stints at Lufthansa and Bristow Helicopters, Tietjen returned to Canada to work for Cougar Helicopters in St. John's, Newfoundland. But the opportunity to return to the West Coast worked to Helijet's favour, and in October 2016 she moved into her new office and set about implementing a new company-wide Safety Management System.

“SMS is about understanding risk, not just following safety procedures,” says Tietjen. “That requires individuals to shift how they think about safety, not only from a personal perspective, but also from an organizational one, instilling a culture of safety at all levels within the company.” She adds, “Organizational change is one of the hardest things for a company to do, but Helijet is doing it. They continually amaze me the way they do things. Most companies I've worked with are set in their ways, stuck in a culture of ‘this is the way we've always done it’. Helijet is different. They are very open to new ideas, and I've come to admire their ability to do things better. They've really embraced SMS, and we've already accomplished so much in such a short time.”

Of course, Rome wasn't built in a day. Tietjen says work remains to be done in terms of implementing SMS, but the undertaking is already starting to bear fruit: unified by the common goal of improving safety, teamwork is improving among departments as they work better together, sharing information through engagement. The result is that safety is continually improving at all levels and costs are being reduced.

“It's early days, but the things we've put into place so far are already saving money, improving reliability and reducing risk.” With a knowing smile, she adds, “In just the first few months we realized enough savings to pay my annual salary.” **H**

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Farewell to Friends

In December 2016 Helijet bid farewell to two good friends and colleagues, Edwin (Ted) Houston and Matthew (Matt) Cochlin. Both passed away just days apart after their respective battles with cancer.



Edwin Houston



Matthew Cochlin

Over the course of Ted Houston's colourful 44-year flying career he flew a variety of aircraft all over Canada, logging upwards of 18,000 hours flight time. He joined Helijet in December 2006 and over the next 10 years he functioned as both a manager and a line pilot flying the company's Learjet 31. In 2014 he was promoted to the position of Director, Flight Operations, making him responsible for all aspects of the company's helicopter and turbojet operations, as well as managing facilities at all Helijet bases throughout B.C.

Those privileged to work with Ted know how proud he was of Helijet, especially the flight crew he mentored and oversaw.

Matt Cochlin was co-founder of Executive Air Ambulance, Helijet's fixed-wing air medical joint venture partnership, currently operating the Hawker 800 and Learjet 31. Matt spent his early career working as a paramedic with the BC Ambulance

Service (BCAS). He went on to become an elite member of the Infant Transport Team at BC Women's and Children's Hospital. After retiring from BCAS, he went into private industry and started Executive Air Ambulance with his friend and partner, Dr. Neil Mclean. Together they grew the full-service bed-to-bed private air ambulance company, managing thousands of safe and successful transports to and from every corner of the globe.

In November 2015 Executive Air Ambulance and Helijet formed a strategic business alliance with both companies providing dedicated, medically-equipped jet aircraft on a 24-7 worldwide basis.

Matt's professional accomplishments as a paramedic and entrepreneur were surpassed only by his dedication and commitment to family, particularly his wife, Tania, and their four children.

Both men were true professionals whose energy and companionship will be deeply missed.



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Bank of Mom & Dad

FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE FOR FAMILIES



ACCORDING TO A 2013 STUDY by Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, 62 per cent of people aged 50 and above are providing financial support to family members, often without considering how this will impact their own retirement. Some of the 50-plus set are supporting elderly parents, but many more are helping their adult children. This is particularly true of baby boomers who see their grown-up kids priced out of housing markets and facing uncertain career prospects in a shaky economy.

Parents who can help usually do, but the Bank of Mom & Dad doesn't have limitless reserves. If parents loan or gift too readily they may not be able to retire comfortably, or worse, they risk becoming dependent on their children.

To avoid a Bank of Mom & Dad failure, parents need to carefully manage how they transfer money and assets to their adult children. But that's easier

said than done: families are not like real banks; they are complicated and full of emotion, which can cloud financial decision-making. Nevertheless, with proper planning, parents can give their adult children a financial head-start in life, without risking financial and emotional liability.

PLAN FOR INDEPENDENCE

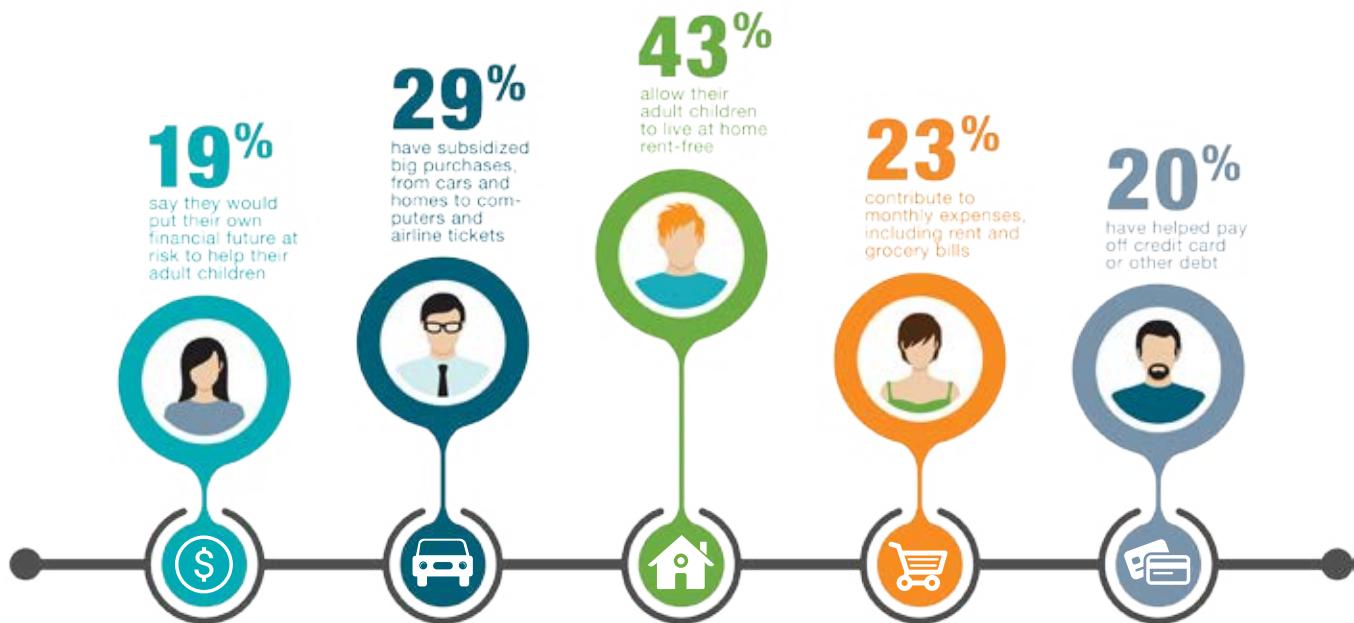
"Helping your kids is important, but there are ramifications," says Darren Millard, owner of Langley-based Facet Advisors. "There's always the challenge of emotions and expectations on both sides."

Millard has worked as a chartered professional accountant (CPA) and tax specialist since 1993. In the 24 years he has been providing multi-generational wealth management advice to clients he has seen his share of family success stories, and heartbreak. What makes all the difference, he says, is managing expectations through transparent communication and thoughtful estate planning that results in financial independence for parents and children alike.

But few families are equipped to develop solutions and strategies on their own: "Every family situation is different," says Millard. "A solution for one family can't necessarily be applied to another. Solutions that work for every member of a family only come after a thorough, thoughtful discussion."

In Millard's experience, most parents want to help set their children up for success and financial independence, but with no plan for wealth transfer in place many simply dip into their savings on an as-needed basis. The result is that parents steadily erode their savings while their adult children become accustomed to handouts.

"We see a lot of situations where parents haven't done proper planning around helping their children," says Millard. "It sneaks up on them, and so they end up working longer, scaling back their own standard of living and plans for retirement." He adds, "Any parent embarking on a financial plan for their children needs to first do a sound financial plan for themselves. After all, how can you give money away until you know what you need?"



Above: A recent poll conducted by TD Canada Trust suggests many Canadian parents are supporting their children well into adulthood.

Another important consideration in developing a financial plan for multi-generational wealth transfer involves teaching financial literacy and responsibility to children. There is plenty of evidence showing kids who are given too much early in life never learn to become financially independent as adults, and many end up ruining their lives through mismanagement and excess.

PERCEPTIONS & PRECONCEPTIONS

Bashing the entitlement culture of millennials may be great sport for some, but there is no question today's young adults face challenges their parents likely never knew. Forty years ago, just about anyone with a post-secondary education could reasonably expect to land a good-paying job for life, complete with pension and benefits. Moreover, a single-income family could afford to own their house, a car, and maybe even take an annual vacation.

Good luck to anyone under 35 hoping for something similar nowadays.

Perhaps that is why many parents may feel an obligation to help their adult kids get established after high school, assisting as able with college and university tuition, vehicle purchases, weddings and

first homes, among other things. The parental urge to help also arises when adult children face adversity, such as divorce or health problems. Some parents go so far as paying their kids credit card debt, cellphone bills, holidays and living expenses.

On the other side of the equation, many young adults believe their parents have an obligation to help. For example, a recent survey by Bank of Montreal found that 44 per cent of all millennials expect a gift or loan from family for some, or all, of their first home purchase.

That may seem presumptuous, but such entitlement is largely rooted in misunderstanding. First and foremost, adult children need to understand that their parents are under no obligation to finance their hopes and dreams. That said, parents do have a choice when it comes to helping, and many do.

Second, many adult children are overly optimistic about what to expect.

"There is often a perception problem with kids thinking their parents have more money than they do," says Millard. "Kids assume they have money coming to them, but they usually don't know how much. The disconnect is when children think there's more than there is."

Millard explains that many young adults equate assets with cash on hand. They might look at their parents million-dollar home — purchased decades ago for a fraction of its current value — and think their parents are loaded. Such a home certainly forms part of their parents' net wealth, but it is of little value until they cash out.

"Children need to understand the financial situation of their parents," says Millard. "Kids don't always think about what their aging parents need to live comfortably." He adds, "The challenge of emotions and expectations is often a situational problem, but it can be a generational problem, too."

The problem is not just one-sided. Millard says many high net-worth parents he works with want to help their kids, but many have preconceived notions about the transfer of wealth and estate planning — much of it born out of their own personal experience.

"Our preconceptions are driven by personal experience," observes Millard. "There is usually tonnes of emotion involved, triggered by underlying beliefs formed by their past, or an experience. Understanding what people's beliefs and hot points are around family finances helps with that. You don't get to some of the core issues until people are prepared to dig deep and think about why they feel the way they do about wealth."

For example, someone who grew up knowing only affluence and privilege will likely have a different perspective from someone who grew up with

You don't get to some of the core issues until people are prepared to dig deep and think about why they feel the way they do about wealth."

little means. Likewise, a person who inherited, or married into, wealth, will have different preconceptions than a self-made business owner who amassed a fortune through his or her own efforts.

Whatever the case, parents invariably draw on their own experiences and emotions when it comes to financial planning for their children.

That can sometimes cause friction between married couples, and their adult children. One parent may believe it is in a child's best interest to make their own way in life, while another may feel strongly that it's important to support family. Millard says it is not unusual for parents to disagree among themselves behind closed doors, but fundamental problems manifest when one parent is flipping money to the kids without the knowledge and consent of the other parent.

There is also the problem of what to do about adult children who are unable to manage money. Propping up an incorrigible child only rewards bad behaviour, making their inevitable insolvency all that much worse. Moreover, backstopping a financially disabled son or daughter can generate resentment among siblings who are financially responsible.

Parents generally want to be fair when it comes to transferring wealth among two or more children. But *fair* does not always mean *equal*. If one child receives more than another while the parents are alive that should perhaps be factored into any future inheritance. Similarly, if one child helps run the family business while the other(s) do not, it stands to reason they should likely receive more than an equal share of the company.

The potential for conflict over what's "fair" is limitless.

"If you want to see bad behavior, just wait till mom and dad pass away," says Millard. "We see so many horror shows where siblings argue over what's fair."



Communication and financial transparency among family members minimizes potential for misunderstanding.

PROFESSIONAL PLANNING

Notwithstanding best intentions, multi-generational wealth transfer is rife with potential for misunderstanding, conflict, and litigation. Families can largely avoid this with the help of a good lawyer and a sharp accountant working in collaboration. As professionals in their respective fields, they have the necessary expertise and detachment to help parents plan for their retirement, while still giving their adult children a leg up in the world.

The first thing parents need to do is figure out what they want, and then convey that to their accountant and lawyer.

"Start the conversation with as much information as possible, both personally and financially," says Millard. "Whenever a new client comes to see me for the first time I ask them to come prepared with details of their net worth and an explanation of their family situation." He adds, "Sometimes people don't even know what they want. Proper analysis of a family's situation sometimes requires thoughtful poking and prodding to discover the answer."

"This can be difficult for many parents. Older generations are much more secretive about what they own, and they don't want to talk about death or debt. Many have never engaged professional help, and the process can be emotionally draining on clients, especially for people without a lot of financial acumen."

Nevertheless, financial transparency minimizes the potential for misunderstanding among all parties. Parents can clearly explain their intention to their children, and on the flipside, kids will better understand the nature of what they are, or are not, receiving. In the process, expectations of parents and children are addressed, with questions asked and answered on both sides.

Such conversations can, at times, be filled with difficult emotions, including guilt, disappointment, and even resentment, to name a few. At times like these an accountant or lawyer can play a valuable role: "I've seen lots of parents draw in the adviser as the 'bad cop,'" says Millard. "It takes the heat off them, but there is only so much we can do to assist. We're not therapists."

Another important part of any family financial conversation involves distinguishing what is a gift and what is a loan, and how either may factor into any future inheritance.



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The specialized knowledge of accountants and lawyers can help families navigate changes to tax and inheritance laws.

"Parents should clearly define between gifts and loans," says Millard. "If you're unsure, go with a loan as you can always address that in a will." He adds a word of caution, though: "Parents shouldn't try to use wealth as leverage with their children. It's not a healthy family dynamic. A gift is a gift; it shouldn't come with strings attached. A loan, however, comes with strings attached in the form of limits and expectations of repayment that all parties are clear on. And you need to put it in writing; the most successful loans are documented."

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAIL

Parents often manage gifts and loans to children without the professional assistance of an accountant or lawyer, but things get complicated when it comes to tax issues and estate planning.

Of particular concern are tax implications associated with intergenerational transfer of wealth. Likewise, changes to the Wills, Estates and Successions Act (WESA) introduced on March 31, 2014, fundamentally altered an archaic area of private law in B.C.

"It's what you don't know that is the problem," says Millard. "Tax and estate laws change all the time. Our job is to tell people what they don't know, and how it can affect them." He adds, "In B.C. it's easy to tie up estates in litigation."

Because laws change, as do family situations, Millard encourages clients to review their financial plan on an annual basis, or anytime there is a

significant change in a family's circumstance, such as a birth, death, marriage or divorce. He also encourages families to get their legal and financial advisers working collaboratively: "Lawyers and accountants need to be talking to each other, not working in silos. Effective communication between both is important for realizing goals, and it is more cost effective, too."

A good accountant and lawyer can also provide valuable services in other important areas. Many people think it's an honour to be named executor of a person's estate, but this can be a thankless task, especially for someone with little financial acumen. An accountant or lawyer, however, has the expertise and detachment to act as an executor and fend off grasping children, among others.

A lawyer-accountant tag-team can also build in safeguards to protect intergenerational wealth transfer from such things as divorce and irresponsible children. They can also do much to assist in business succession planning where the livelihood of others is at stake.

"When you pass along a business to your children you're passing along the lives of your employees," says Millard. "If those businesses fail there are a lot of people who are going to end up being collateral damage."

Some parents also feel strongly about charitable giving. If so, it's important to explain this to children and involve them in decision making.

For all its challenges and emotion, the Bank of Mom & Dad is still a pretty awesome bank. Few parents are likely to run credit checks, impose high interest rates, or call in a loan on their kid after a missed payment. For their part, adult children should respect their parents' choices, and honour their duty to repay loans in a timely manner.

Through communication, transparency and professional advice, it is possible to minimize, if not eliminate, many of the emotions, assumptions and preconceptions that swirl around the transfer of wealth in families. And if done right, the Bank of Mom & Dad can give parents and children one of the most important things of all — the gift of financial independence. ☺

The information provided in this article is not legal or financial advice, and should not be relied upon for making decisions. For more information, speak with an accountant and a lawyer.



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Captain Angela (Angie) Kovats is one of seven female pilots employed by Helijet. By day she is full-time mom to three kids; by night she flies the S76C+ air ambulance.



Women of Helijet

Story by Ida Claire

Photos by Heath Moffatt

Helijet's female professionals are central to the company's success

Women have long played an important role in the aviation industry. In 1909 the Baroness Raymonde de Laroche of France was the first woman to ever fly solo in an aircraft, and the following year she was the first to earn her pilot's licence. Since then, numerous female aviators have made their mark in commercial, military and sport aviation. Some set distance and altitude records, while others served as ferry and combat pilots in wartime. Then there are those who pushed the envelope as test pilots and astronauts. The list goes on in the air, but also on the ground. During World War II "Rosie the Riveter" was a cultural icon, representing the thousands of women who played a vital role manufacturing military aircraft.





Erin Johnstone is an avid snowboarder, horseback rider and motorcyclist who joined Helijet in May 2008 because the company offered one of the few flying jobs in Canada that provided career prospects and a West Coast lifestyle. Garth Eichel photo

Despite countless accomplishments by women in aviation over the last hundred years, the industry has, until recently, largely been regarded as the domain of men. That perception still lingers to some extent in popular imagination, but inside the aviation industry attitudes towards women have significantly shifted in recent decades.

Notwithstanding such progress, the majority of aviation jobs are still filled by men, which may lead some to wonder if a “glass ceiling” persists.

That is a sticky question, and answers vary. Some women say the industry still has a long way to go, while others see gender as a non-issue. The reality depends on the personal experience of every woman.

For its part, Helijet has always prided itself on its female professionals. In fact, nearly a third of all employees are women, and they function in a variety of roles at all levels.

FULL-TIME MOM, PART-TIME PILOT

Captain Angela (Angie) Kovats is one of seven female pilots at Helijet. Hired as a First Officer on the Sikorsky S76A in March of 2000, she rose to Captain on the S76C+ air ambulance.

“Being a woman has never been an issue for me as a pilot,” says Kovats. “I don’t even think of my colleagues in terms of gender. What matters is how you conduct yourself as a professional. We all have the same expectations of each other, and we’re all required to meet the same standard on check-rides.”

Helicopter pilots are nomadic by nature, frequently moving from one company to the next in pursuit of their career goals, but Kovats has so far opted to remain at Helijet. The reason has as much to do with quality of life as quality of profession.

Raised in Vancouver, Kovats attended Simon Fraser University where she studied economics.

She had no interest in leaving her hometown, especially after marrying her husband, Andrew, and having three children.

"I wanted to stay in Vancouver, be close to my family, and finish my degree," said Kovats. "Helijet is one of the few companies in the industry willing to accommodate the personal lives of employees, and flying air ambulance provides me with a great work-life balance: I can put my kids to bed at 8:00 p.m., go to work all night, and be home in the morning in time to take them to school."

Kovats says being a mom is her full-time job, but her part-time flying job provides both personal and professional satisfaction. Moreover, she enjoys mentoring Helijet's First Officers, helping to prepare them for their future roles as Captains.

"Women getting into aviation today are really fortunate," says Kovats. "They can choose a career they are passionate about, and find fulfillment." She adds, "There is no glass ceiling, but you do have to work hard."

WRENCH BENDER

One young woman who concurs with that is 22-year-old Elaine St. Laurent, who joined Helijet as an AME apprentice in January 2016 after completing two years of study at BCIT.

Aircraft maintenance is arguably the most male-dominated profession in the aviation industry, and AMEs have a reputation for being gruff, no-nonsense types who don't suffer fools. Nor should they: there is little room for mistakes when it comes to keeping aircraft airworthy.

"I heard a lot of horror stories from my teachers at BCIT about how mean some AMEs can be, but that's not the case at Helijet," says St. Laurent, "All the guys are amazing. It doesn't matter that I'm a woman; I get treated the same as everyone else, and they don't step around me because they think I might cry." Still she adds, "Having thick skin is an asset in this job, for guys, too."

It also helps to have a petite frame. St. Laurent says her male colleagues appreciate how her slight build and small hands make it possible for her to work in cramped confines, reaching components inaccessible to most men.

"I can't lift heavy objects, but I can fit in places most guys can't," says St. Laurent.



Elaine St. Laurent works as an aircraft maintenance engineer (AME) apprentice at Helijet where, at age 22, she is the only female mechanic. Heath Moffatt photo

Regardless of size or strength, St. Laurent says she doesn't mind being the only woman working in Helijet's maintenance department: "You are judged by your work ethic, and how well you do your job. That's the way it should be." She adds, "Not all companies are like Helijet, but the industry is becoming more progressive all the time. Even the crusty old guys aren't so crusty anymore."

FRONT-LINE SERVICE

Every department in Helijet relies on its female professionals, but nowhere more so than in front-line passenger service positions.

Leanne Lewis is a Passenger Services Agent (PSA) at Helijet's terminal in Nanaimo. Since joining the company in January 2015, she has come to appreciate the company's collegial atmosphere and collective commitment to teamwork.

Lewis had no experience in aviation prior to being hired, but what worried her most in the job interview was if she could balance work with being a single mother to two young girls.

"In my former career I was on the road a lot," says Lewis. "I gave that up to be a stay-at-home mom, and my kids are my priority. I needed a job with a schedule that would allow me to be there for my girls. I was nervous about that in the interview, but it was never an issue. The company, and my co-workers, are very accommodating, letting me work shifts that fit with my commitments as a parent." She adds, "Helijet's concern for my well-being is really unique. It made me feel part of the company right away."



Carla Kovacs, Director, Client Relations, has hired hundreds of employees in her 28 years with Helijet. She says, "I hire the same for women as I do for men — they have to be team players." Heath Moffatt photo

HOLDING HER OWN

The woman who hired Lewis can certainly relate. Carla Kovacs, Helijet's Director of Client Relations, is an avid hockey mom to two athletic boys.

Kovacs also started as a PSA in 1989, and in the 28 years since she has worn a variety of hats that cumulated into a senior management position.

"Management was definitely a man's world when I joined, but I embraced it," says Kovacs. "There

were never any obstacles to me as a woman in management, but there was also no playing the woman card. I had to hold my own."

When Kovacs took time off to have her two sons she did so knowing it wouldn't affect her career. Her job was waiting for her when she came back, and she has managed to juggle her personal and professional commitments ever since.

"I don't think anybody is ever going to figure out the perfect work-life balance, but companies that try to embrace it are going in the right direction," says Kovacs. "It makes it easier to recruit and retain good people."

TONE AT THE TOP

Those women who have spent their careers at Helijet generally don't see gender as an issue, or a barrier to career goals. But outside the company it can be a different story.

Sonya Tietjen, Manager Safety Systems, recently joined Helijet in October 2016, and she says Helijet is not necessarily the norm. Over the course of her 17-year aviation career, she has experienced some unfortunate encounters that suggest some



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companies still have a way to go yet.

"Gender discrimination still exists in the aviation industry," says Tietjen. "There are plenty of companies still stuck in a 1970s culture. Sometimes it starts with a sexist joke, swearing, or a nude poster in an office, but left unchecked it can progress to bullying and harassment."

Tietjen believes the antidote to boorish behaviour and bullying comes from senior leadership.

"The tone is set at the top," notes Tietjen. "There will always be bullies in the workplace, but if an organization turns a blind eye it will only get worse."

Tietjen says gender is not an issue at Helijet largely because of the number of women in senior management positions, and the message coming from President and CEO Danny Sitnam.

"I've experienced discrimination, and there's no need for that sort of thing," says Sitnam. "Bullying of any sort is not tolerated at Helijet. If we see it, we nip it in the bud."

Equality is a core value for the company, but Sitnam says it also makes good business sense:

"Women bring tremendous value to our organization at every level. Their perspective, and the way



Captain Adele Dobler undergoes recurrent simulator training with Chief Pilot Brendan McCormick. Heath Moffatt photo

they solve problems, provides great balance to how the men think. It's extremely healthy for the company." What's more, he adds, "half of our passengers are women. It just makes sense that should be reflected in our employees."

Proportional representation doesn't translate into preferential treatment, though.

"There are no silver platters for women in the company, but I do admire those who come to us," says Sitnam. "Aviation is still predominantly male, so women have to work that much harder to penetrate the industry and earn the respect of their colleagues. Those who do are good. Very good." **H**

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THE LIFE AQUATICA

Diane Reid photo

Submarine tourism comes to B.C.

ASK AN EXPERIENCED diver where some of the best diving in the world is and you are likely to hear of familiar places like Indonesia, Palau, Micronesia, the Great Barrier Reef, Belize, the Red Sea, and British Columbia.

That's right, B.C. is home to some of the most brilliant and diverse marine ecosystems in the world. Indeed, the famous ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau regarded the Pacific Northwest as one of his favourite dive locations in the world.

Unfortunately, the average water temperature on the West Coast generally hovers around 7 degrees Celsius all year round, meaning this fantastic undersea world is largely the private domain of those willing to spend the time, energy and money to become proficient cold water divers.

That all changed early this year when Aquatica Submarines, in partnership with Head-Line

Mountain Holidays, began offering private submarine tours along the West Coast using a manned three-person submersible, the Stingray 500, which is rated to a maximum depth of 500 feet for up to eight hours, with 96 hours life support.

"The Stingray 500 can go deeper — and stay down longer — than any diver can," says Harvey Flemming, President, Aquatica Submarines. "That allows us to explore depths where extraordinary and uncommon things like glass sponge reefs are found." Best of all, he adds, "a submarine is a much warmer underwater experience than scuba diving."

I've been diving on the West Coast for many years now, and, as much as I enjoy the magnificent beauty of this undersea world, getting chilled to the bone is the price one pays. So when Doug Washer, President and CEO of Head-Line Mountain Holidays, invited me to join him on a submarine

Story by Garth Eichel



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Aquatica Submarine's Stingray 500 is a three-person submersible vehicle rated to a depth of 500 feet for up to eight hours, with an additional 96 hours of life support.
Garth Eichel photo

excursion aboard the Stingray 500 I welcomed the chance to dive again, this time without getting miserably cold and wet.

It's a cool, grey spring morning when I meet up with Washer at Aquatica Submarine's head office at Eagle Harbour in West Vancouver. Down at the dock, the sub's crew is busy lowering the submersible into the harbour with the aid of a mechanical hoist. The air is damp and chill, so I pull my wool cap down tight and shrug my ears between my shoulders. I try to keep warm, swinging my arms and stamping my feet, while the crew unhooks the hoist and secures the sub to the dock. I'm impatient to get inside the sub if only to warm up.

My wish is soon answered and our sub pilot, Erika Bergman, signals for us to board the submersible and take our seats inside the bubble-shaped cockpit. Before crawling inside the cozy Stingray 500 we take off our outer jackets and shoes and don slippers, which is all we'll need to be comfortable for the next hour or so.

Bergman is last down through the hatch, squeezing into the driver seat between Washer and me.



Basket stars and soft corals abound in the oxygen-rich waters of the Pacific Northwest. Garth Eichel photo

Once inside she reaches up and dogs the hatch, sealing us inside. She then turns on the life-support system, activating a scrubber fan that removes carbon dioxide from inside the sub. At the same time, she introduces high pressure oxygen into the compartment, regulating the flow of air to achieve a perfect atmosphere inside the submersible.

Bergman goes through a series of checklist procedures and we're soon ready to go. She does a quick radio check, then signals for the crew on shore to cast off lines. Untethered, the Stingray 500 backs out of its slip with the help of a 240-volt electric motor that powers three external thrusters — two for controlling horizontal direction, and one for vertical. Bergman deftly manipulates the horizontal thrusters with the aid of a hand-held control device, and we swivel 90 degrees to starboard, and proceed out of the harbour.

A few minutes later we are clear of the harbour entrance and Bergman asks if I'd like to drive the sub. I gladly accept the hand-held controller, but in seconds I am zig-zagging back and forth, doing everything except going in a straight line.

SUBSEA WONDERS



Above: A motionless Red Irish Lord peers at undersea interlopers. Garth Eichel photo

Left: Guests aboard the Stingray 500 get close to the wreck of HMCS Annapolis, an artificial reef submerged in Halkett Bay. Diane Reid photo

"It's a bit sensitive," says Bergman. "Each thruster can vector 350 to 400 pounds of force. This makes the sub very maneuverable underwater, allowing for precise movement."

I hand the controls to Washer and he has better success driving us in a straight line. We continue bobbing through a bit of light chop that sends green seawater cascading over the sub's bubble. Ten minutes later we arrive at our first dive site, shepherded by our chase boat, *Topside*. The crew onboard radios Bergman, and both vessels go through a series of pre-dive checks. When the all clear is given, Bergman radios, "Life support systems on; hatches closed; ready to dive, dive, dive." With that iconic last phrase, she cracks a valve that releases air from the sub's ballast tanks, allowing seawater to flow in.

The Stingray 500 rocks slightly as the air in the dive tanks vents, churning the surrounding water into foam. The sub begins settling, and in a few seconds we are slipping beneath the surface.

There is an eerie fascination to being enveloped by the sea. As we descend deeper into the abyss

the turquoise water at the surface darkens to olive green, then eventually all is black outside. Bergman flicks on the sub's external lights and we find ourselves surrounded by marine snow — biological debris falling from upper water columns. Bergman points to something small in front of me. As it gets closer I realize it is some sort of free-swimming zooplankton, perhaps drawn to the submarine's lights.

"Marine snow is a beautiful haven for little creatures like juvenile squid, ctenophores, and silverfish," says Bergam. "I could look at it all day."

We continue descending deeper, watching the display on the depth gauge pass through 100 feet, then 110, 120, 130....

Bergman adjusts our rate of descent with the vertical thruster and air in the dive tanks. Passing through 160 feet she slowly arrests our descent until the sub achieves neutral buoyancy. A moment later the silty ocean floor comes into view. The depth gauge reads 167 feet.

Bergman tweaks the hand-held control column and we begin moving forward, crawling along just above the bottom. After a few minutes we spot a



The *Stingray 500* offers non-divers a unique opportunity to explore the little-known treasures of the Pacific Northwest. Diane Reid photo

large Dungeness crab, which quickly scuttles off sideways into the murk. Moments later we see a few rockfish dart through the sub's headlights.

There is not a whole lot to see on the flat bottom, but after a few minutes an underwater pinnacle appears, rising up from the sea floor. The tower of rock is festooned with pale white plumose anemones, yellow cloud sponges, and bright red feather stars waving in the current. Dotted among the rocks are all sorts of bizarre creatures I recognize from scuba diving: giant nudibranchs, sunflower stars, chitons, red and purple urchins, squat lob-

sters and sea cucumbers. A variety of fish also call this rocky pinnacle home, including rockfish, ling cod, perch, and if your eyes are good, you might see a cabezon or red Irish lord camouflaged among the soft corals.

Something I have never seen before, however, are the renowned glass sponge reefs found in Hecate Strait and the Southern Strait of Georgia. Previously thought to have been extinct for millions of years, the scientific community was stunned when nine prehistoric glass sponge reefs were discovered off the Sunshine Coast, West Vancouver and Galiano Island in the 1980s. These rare and precious reefs are located too deep for most divers to safely reach, but the *Stingray 500* has no problem getting down to them, offering everyone onboard a window into an undersea Jurassic Park.

"The glass sponge reefs are definitely a big-ticket item on a dive," says Bergman.

Another big draw for submarine tourists is exploring the wreck of *HMCS Annapolis*, a decommissioned Canadian navy destroyer that was deliberately sunk in Howe Sound in April 2015.

Resting in 100 feet of water at the bottom of Halkett Bay, the wreck is one of several artificial



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reefs submerged along the B.C. coast, and it is already showing signs of life after just two years underwater.

"The *Annapolis* wreck always surprises non-divers who see it for the first time," says Bergman. "Visibility in the bay is such that you don't see the ship until you are almost on top of it. The entire vessel just suddenly appears out of nowhere; the visual effect of seeing a huge man-made structure in the middle of the ocean is stunning for many."

After an hour-and-a-half exploring the under-water sights of Howe Sound it's time to head for the surface. Bergman spills a measure of air into the dive tanks to expel sea water and make the sub positively buoyant. The sub rises and the sea floor begins fading from view as we ascend up through open water towards the surface. Light from above starts permeating the water column about 30 feet below the surface where Bergman conducts a safety stop to ensure the area above is clear prior to surfacing.

Topside's crew also scans for other vessels and then gives the all-clear for us to surface.

Surrounded by bubbles, we continue our ascent and break the surface where sunlight floods into the sub's cockpit. *Topside* is about 100 yards away,

motoring towards us accompanied by another boat crewed by staff from Head-Line Mountain Holidays who have a gourmet lunch laid out.

I thought the day couldn't get much better when Washer flashes a smile and asks if we're in the mood for a cold beer and a spread of barbecued lamb, grilled prawns and steamed Dungeness crab caught that morning while we were diving.

Back aboard the lunch boat, I ask Bergman why she became a submersible pilot, and what she enjoys most about taking guests on undersea tours:

"Diving in a sub takes you to an inner space where you see things your fellow humans will never see," she says. "Seventy-five per cent of the earth is covered by ocean, and we've only explored about five per cent of it. By contrast, we've mapped the entire surface of Mars.

"The ocean is not an opaque flat surface. It's a huge underwater world with mountains, canyons, and whole villages of creatures. Anyone can look up at the stars, but only a few ever get to look down and see what is under the ocean." **H**

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PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR CORPORATE RETREATS



Corporate retreats help employees connect and create outside the workplace.

CORPORATE RETREAT can mean different things to people within an organization. For some, it evokes tedious trust exercises and Kumbaya campfire sing-alongs, while others might regard it as hedonism on the company dime. But done right, a corporate retreat can provide real value on many levels.

Engaging staff in activities outside the normal work environment serves a variety of purposes. Mainly, it allows members of a team to connect outside the workplace and develop personal relationships through shared experiences. At the same time, a retreat provides a unique opportunity to reflect on past successes and strategize for the future.

“Corporate retreats tend to have two objectives,” says Christine Willow, Partner at Victoria-based Chemistry Consulting Group. “One is to create an environment away from the day-to-day at the office

that allows for planning and strategic direction. The other objective focusses on team building, celebrating past successes while learning to work together in a more effective way.”

BONDING OUTSIDE THE BOARDROOM

Humans are social animals and a shared experience draws individuals together in ways few other things can. And when people come together on a personal level they generally work better as part of a professional team — collaborating, brainstorming and innovating in ways they might not in a corporate environment.

Indeed, a special sort of magic occurs when employees bond outside the boardroom, be it on a corporate fishing trip, an outdoor adventure, or at a seaside resort. That’s because spending time with colleagues outside the office generates a well of understanding and goodwill to draw on when they return to the impersonal world of cubicles and electronic communication.

Personal connections outside the office also promotes creative thinking. Too many people talk about “thinking outside the box” without ever actually leaving “the box”, preferring instead to do the same things over and over while hoping for a different result. But a company retreat serves to physically remove employees from “the box”, shaking up the status quo and allowing creative juices to flow in a dynamic environment.

The benefits of a retreat are not automatic, though. Teambuilding and strategy goals are realized only through careful planning and execution that takes place well in advance of any corporate getaway. To that end, the following are worthy of consideration when planning any company retreat.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The first thing to do when planning a retreat is to identify, exactly, what the organization is trying to accomplish by leaving the office. Having a clear objective will determine the best format and agenda, and ensure everyone gets maximum benefit. For example, consider whether the aim of the retreat is

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to motivate and foster morale through fun team-building exercises, or if it is more about developing practical skills and successful strategies.

DECIDE WHO GOES

Who attends a corporate retreat should be determined based on the overall objective of the retreat.

"Depending on the objective of the retreat, who attends — executive only, full company, section, or department — will vary," says Willow. "It may be that a retreat is broken down into groups or departments, each having their own goals. For example, if strategic planning is the objective it may be more suitable to send executive level employees, while motivation and teambuilding objectives may involve a broader group of people."

LOCATION & LOGISTICS

Deciding what kind of retreat to conduct will help determine location, choice of activities and budget.

"There are many shapes and formats a retreat can take," says Willow. "It can be several days at a resort, or a single day event in the home town that does not require accommodations or transportation — the two main costs of any retreat." She adds, "Besides the obvious cost and budgetary restrictions, the location should be easily accessible for all coming to the event. Also, factor in such things as transportation, facilities, meeting space, room types available, and extracurricular activities, as well as the reputation and track record of the venue for hosting similar type and size retreats."

CAPACITY & CAPABILITY

Organizations based in Vancouver, Victoria or Nanaimo have a variety of corporate getaway destinations to choose from, but some resorts are better equipped than others to accommodate business groups, large or small.

Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort & Conference Centre in Parksville on Vancouver Island is a case in point.

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working retreats and special events to suit the needs of small and large groups says,” Suzanne Hedges, Corporate Sales Manager at Tigh-Na-Mara Resort. “Located just a short drive north of Nanaimo, the Resort is unique in that it offers clients 12 conference rooms with natural light and 10,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, surrounded by 22 forested acres alongside the ocean.”

Hedges says the Resort’s ability to accommodate up to 250 guests in one meeting space is appealing to anyone planning a corporate retreat, but so too is its natural location and amenities: “We encourage clients to reconnect in our stunning natural setting with meetings that inspire. The large footprint of the resort enables clients to really think outside the box.” What is more, she adds, “The Grotto Spa at Tigh-Na-Mara offers clients the opportunity to relax, refresh and rejuvenate before or after meetings.”

DISCONNECT & REFRESH

Eco-adventures and fishing trips are another choice for corporate retreats.

“Fishing trips are a popular activity with business clients,” says Dana Schoahs, Marketing Manager at West Coast Resorts, which operates two lodges on Haida Gwaii. “We cater to lots of different groups who are wowed by the location and natural beauty. In a place like Haida Gwaii it’s easy for people to get away from it all, relax and unwind.”

Remote locations have other advantages, too. Chief among these is the ability for employees to disconnect from the outside world and reconnect with each other, and with nature.

“We don’t have mobile phone service up here, and we often get requests from business clients to remove landline telephones from our guest rooms as well,” says Duane Foerter, Marketing Manager at the Queen Charlotte Lodge on Haida Gwaii.

Foerter says removing the distractions of the outside world allows their business guests to focus on their colleagues and business at hand, as well as world-class salmon fishing.

“We have facilities for workshops, presentations and break-out groups, and can build custom programs for groups of up to 100 people for a fishing day, either before or after, a day of highly focused meetings.”



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WORK & PLAY

Getting as much work accomplished in the time available is a primary consideration, but it is just as important to schedule unstructured free time for staff. Spending several high-energy days with colleagues can be draining, so providing a variety of options for how people can spend their down time will improve the experience. Just be clear on which activities are mandatory and which are not. It's also important to allow people their privacy. Don't ask individuals to share rooms with their colleagues.

"Each retreat should offer a balance of work, personal downtime, and opportunity for team activities," says Willow. "Personal time is often not taken into consideration when planning a retreat, which can end up being exhausting for participants, rather than refreshing. Giving participants time to recharge in their own way — read, go for a walk, connect with family — will ensure that tiredness does not impede creativity during planned activities."

RECRUITING A FACILITATOR

Another important decision is whether to invest in a facilitator. Some companies opt to have one of their own fill this role, but a strong, independent

facilitator can provide an objective voice, and help a team think in new ways. They will likely bring specialized knowledge and skills about how to ask questions and encourage creative thought and discussion. A neutral third party is also invaluable in helping resolve disputes or tensions.

"For groups over 10 it is best-advised to hire a facilitator," says Willow. "If it's someone from within the company they cannot fully participate in the discussions, and may bring biases with them that could influence the outcome, or lead the discussion."

If hiring an outside facilitator, it's a good idea to meet with them before the retreat to ensure a mutual understanding of desired outcomes.

PRESENTATION

Be smart about presentation styles if doing heavy business planning. Instead of projecting your PowerPoint and having people take furious notes, use tools like Airdrop or SlideShare to distribute your presentation so people can follow along on their own devices. It costs nothing and prevents the distraction of having to go back a slide because someone isn't finished taking notes.

If possible, do a test run of the facility beforehand to ensure the facility has everything you

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business group requires. A good host will provide you a liaison to answer all these questions if you can't visit in person.

TIMING

The duration of any corporate retreat depends on the number and types of goals set. As such, a retreat can range anywhere from a single day to a full week. However long it ends up being, it should allow sufficient time for work, play and socializing.

Generally speaking, it is good practice to conduct a retreat on an annual basis to consider the strategic direction of the organization, to prioritize the issues it faces, and to set goals and objectives for the year. Generally, time is set aside to review progress on the past year's goals and achievements as well.

It is also worth conducting a company retreat whenever new individuals join the team. Retreats are an excellent way to orient new members to issues, and to lay the groundwork for effective teamwork and communications.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

It's important to manage expectations before setting out on any corporate retreat. Explain to those

attending in advance what the organization's objective is, and what needs to be accomplished.

To that end, attendees should be encouraged to come prepared with questions, problems, or ideas to discuss at the retreat. Providing an agenda in advance will also allow people to think about how best they can contribute. Ask them to bring ideas for more cross-team interaction as well as allowing for spontaneous deep-dive talks in more casual settings. Scheduling team-meeting time is also great for big-picture visioning and strategizing, which energizes and encourages everyone to return to their various offices with refreshed attitudes and goals to execute.

Once the retreat is over it's a good idea to solicit feedback from team members on ways to improve the next retreat. Listen carefully to comments and criticism, and don't take it personally if people don't love every part; differentiated retreat planning requires being at peace with the fact that individuals will enjoy things differently.

To be sure, it's hard to please everyone all the time, but done well a company retreat can create lasting benefits that leave team members feeling connected, creative, and ready for new challenges. ☐

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Tennis Anyone

APPRECIATING THE APPEAL OF TENNIS



Tennis is rapidly growing in popularity and participation, particularly among women who account for 54 per cent of players.

EVERY FEW YEARS a trendy new sport comes along generating widespread excitement and participation. In the 1980s it was aerobics; the 1990s followed with roller-blading; in the 2000s it was ultimate frisbee; and in recent years stand-up paddle-boarding has been all the rage, leaving many wondering what will be the next in thing?

Would you believe tennis?

According to a 2014 Tennis Canada study, the traditional sport of tennis is surging in popularity and participation. It's estimated an average of 6.5 million Canadians play the game each year. That's a 32 per cent increase from 2012. The latest statistics also reveal that 54 per cent of tennis players are women, and double-digit growth is strongest among youth with some 600,000 kids picking up a racquet each year. What is more, 51 per cent of Canadians say they are somewhat or very interested

in taking up tennis, suggesting considerable latent demand that hasn't even been tapped yet.

Most everyone has tried their hand at tennis at some point, so why the sudden rise in popularity?

Recent excitement for the sport can partly be explained by star power. Top-ranked Canadian tennis players Eugenie Bouchard and Milos Raonic have put Canada on the map, attracting huge television audiences at home and abroad. As interest grows so does participation.

But high-profile players doesn't explain the whole story. Some say the game's success has more to do with the accessibility, health benefits, and social dynamic of the sport.

"Tennis is increasingly becoming a sport of a lifetime for those who take it up," says Russ Hartley, Tennis Director at the Westin Bear Mountain Golf Resort & Spa in Victoria. "You can start at any age. At Bear Mountain, we see kids as young as five playing, right up to those well into their eighties."

Hartley says part of the appeal of tennis is the relative simplicity of the game, which makes it easy for youth and novice adults to quickly understand and learn. And with the introduction of progressive equipment and improved coaching techniques in recent years new players can develop and realize success quicker than ever.

"it's not complicated," says Hartley. "Like golf, people can progress quickly, and they soon get hooked on the challenge, developing and improving their game over many years."

Tennis is also an affordable sport with little need for equipment beyond a racquet, balls, and court shoes. Prices vary, but a quality racquet can be purchased for under \$200; good court shoes can be had for between \$120 and \$200 dollars; and a tin of balls costs around \$5. As to instruction, group lessons run about \$15 to \$20 an hour, while private lessons cost about \$60 to \$75 dollars an hour. And while tennis clubs charge membership fees for court access and facilities, there are plenty of free public courts in every city.

Tennis travels well, too. A racquet can easily fit into most carry-on luggage, and the game is played just about everywhere.

Another reason tennis is trending these days has to do with the game's considerable health benefits. Besides improving hand-eye coordination and mental acuity, it is a great aerobic workout. In fact, an hour of singles tennis can match, or exceed, the caloric burn of other sports such as basketball, running, and swimming. And playing on red clay courts is not hard on the body like many high-impact sports.

"Red clay is much easier on the joints and the body," says Hartley. "The granular surface is less jarring, resulting in fewer injuries." He adds, "It's a great surface to develop your game on, especially for junior players. It slows down the ball, resulting in more extended rallies."

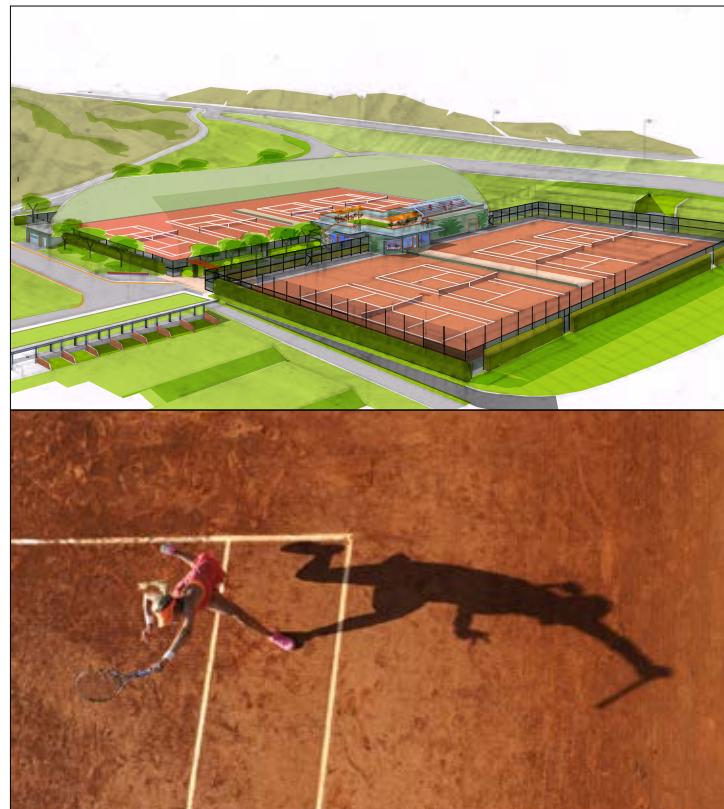
Hartley says Bear Mountain is currently developing eight red clay courts at the Resort's new tennis facility, opening later this spring. The facility will be open for play year-round, with all eight courts bubbled during inclement winter months.

Hartley says the growth of tennis is why the Resort decided to make a significant investment in its new program and facilities: "The owner's vision is for Bear Mountain Resort to become Western Canada's largest year round red clay tennis facility. It will be a development centre for players — both recreational and competitive — and host a variety of tournaments and social events."

The latter will be welcome news to those who enjoy the social side of the game. Like golf, tennis is a game often played with friends and family, which perhaps explain the growing popularity of doubles, especially among women and married couples.

"The popularity of tennis among women is huge," notes Hartley. "Women golfers account for about 20 per cent of players, but in tennis women account for more than 50 per cent."

And therein lies the beauty of tennis: it is a sport of a lifetime that appeals equally to all. **H**



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Reinventing the Classics

PRESTONS RESTAURANT & LOUNGE PUTS A CURIOUS TWIST ON FAMILIAR FOODS

I'VE ALWAYS CONSIDERED myself something of a foodie, forever ready for new and exotic dining experiences. Except when I'm not. Sometimes I just want familiar fare, especially at the end of a long business day.

Problem is, standard menu items are often uninspired, more or less the same no matter where you order them. Chances are you already know what the breaded calamari, buffalo wings, burger, steak, pasta, grilled salmon, and caesar salad are going to taste like before you order.

Not so at Prestons Restaurant & Lounge in Vancouver's Coal Harbour district. Guided by

Executive Chef Justin Paakkunainen, Prestons has reinvented a range of classic menu items, elevating the ordinary to extraordinary.

I regularly travel to Vancouver on Helijet, and over the past 10 years I have latched onto a number of familiar restaurants and lounges close to the Downton Harbour Heliport. In all this time, I had never heard of Prestons until a colleague tipped me off that it was a hidden gem buried near the city's financial district. As such, I decided to take my wife, Heather, for dinner there on a recent weekend getaway to Vancouver.

Located in the Coast Coal Harbour Hotel on West Pender Street, Prestons first presents as a fairly typical upscale hotel restaurant with casual contemporary décor in an intimate setting. Settling into a cozy corner booth, Heather and I begin poring over the menu and at first glance the choices seem underwhelming: wings; calamari; clam chowder; spinach & kale caesar; carbonara; beef tenderloin; chicken parmesan...Ho hum.

Then we read the exotic descriptions beneath each tried-and-true staple. Heather and I often order calamari to start, but this reads like nothing we've had before: "crispy fried thin-sliced

Humboldt squid petals with mustard green pesto, crispy sea asparagus, and hot mustard aioli.” Likewise, the grilled salmon: “seasoned with pink Himalayan salt and pink peppercorns and served with a sweet potato puree, charred leeks, and strawberry relish.” The pattern continues with vegetarian dishes, such as the zucchini noodles, “tossed with almond pesto, coconut cream, marinated white balsamic tomatoes, and braised mushrooms, finished with garlic basil oil, and crispy basil.”

Deciding what to order takes longer than anticipated so we order a cocktail and a couple appetizers to start. Heather eyeballs the fluffy, deep-fried avocado fritters with bacon remoulade, but ultimately opts for the seared scallops. I characteristically lean towards my beloved calamari, but in the end I can’t resist the siren song of Dijon-maple-caramel chicken wings.

Heather orders a delightful sparkling rosé to go with her scallops, but I decide on something sweet and sour to match my wings. I ask our server, Jillian Bennett, to have the bartender surprise me with a suitable cocktail pairing, and she soon returns with a Bourbon Sour developed in-house by Prestons’ affable bartender, Ian Leila.

The tart-sweet libation is the ideal complement to all four sticky wings. That’s right, four wings. That might sound a bit light for a pound of wings, but these are not your typical wings. Large and plump, each full wing is brined for three hours before a 23-ingredient spice rub is applied. The wings are slow roasted until just done, then flash fried for a crispy outside skin. At that point any number of sauces are coated on, including the Dijon-maple-caramel option.

First bites surpass expectations. The crispy, caramelized skin is a *mélange* of sweet, spicy and tangy flavours that linger on the palate as I devour the moist meat. Heather asks if she can try one, and I reluctantly agree on condition I can have one of her seared scallops.

It seems a shame to mess with the presentation of her beautiful bivalves. Embedded in a luminescent-orange smoked carrot puree are four juicy scallops seared golden-white in duck fat, adorned with pickled kombu, crispy wild rice puffs and a white balsamic reduction. I quickly get over my qualms about desecrating the artful arrangement and jab a fork into one of the scallops before Heather can reconsider. The crispy outside of the



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scallop extends about a millimeter into the sweet, delicate flesh of the mollusk, cooked just barely this side of rare. The first bite is exquisite, but the second — swirled in smokey, savoury carrot purée — is even better.

"Oh, that's goooooood," sighs Heather. "And I don't even like carrots!"

The appetizers have set the bar high, leaving us hungry and hopeful as we order our main courses — pasta carbonara for Heather; beef tenderloin for me.

The presentation of both dishes is impressive and appealing. The beef is a tenderloin tower constructed with a seven-ounce thyme-and-bay leaf-rubbed filet mounted atop a foundation of house cut fries. Atop the tenderloin is a pat of bourbon crème fraîche, and crispy-fried sour onion, all surrounded by a scattering of freshly pickled chanterelle mushrooms, black garlic crisps, and fire-blistered vine-ripened tomatoes.

I momentarily ponder how best to cut into this work of art before hunger drives me to carve through the middle of it with my serrated steak knife, revealing a beautiful dark-pink centre. The delightful combination of sweet crème fraîche and savoury herb-infused meat is exquisite, improved only by a glass of full-bodied 2012 Wynns Coonawarra Estate Cabernet Sauvignon. This is perhaps the most delightful steak I've enjoyed in the



Prestons Beef Tenderloin is a seven-ounce thyme- and bay leaf-rubbed filet topped with bourbon crème fraîche, sour onion, and black garlic crisps. Served with pickled chanterelle mushrooms, fire blistered vine ripened tomatoes, and house cut fries

past decade, but the grand prize for presentation and flavour tonight has to go to the pasta carbonara Heather opted for. Comprised of three different types of spaghetti — whole wheat, sour cream and squid ink — the tri-colour noodles are cooked to perfection then arranged like a bird's nest on the plate with a soft-cooked egg positioned at centre, sprinkled with shavings of Pecorino Romano cheese. Our server explains it's best to toss the cheese, egg and pasta together, and as Heather complies the swirl of noodles reveals embedded slivers of maitaki mushroom, green swiss chard and chunks of house-made bacon.

The combination of these ingredients is greater than the sum of its parts: the nuanced flavours of the spaghetti noodles, coated in glistening egg, melds with smoked bacon chunks and salty cheese, all underscored by umami hints of chewy mushroom. Heather asks me what might pair best with this and, knowing she loves her bubbles, I steer her towards a glass of Casti prosecco.

"This is not like any carbonara I've had before," she exclaims. "Usually it's just a fancy spaghetti dish with bacon, eggs and cheese. I never expected anything quite this beautiful, or delicious."

There is not much left on our respective plates when Jillian arrives with the dessert menu. As always, Heather passes on dessert, knowing full well she can steal from me. As such, I order Preston's signature Japanese Cheesecake, which it turns out was developed as a subtle nod to the Japanese owners of Prestons and Coast Hotels.

Unlike your typical dense cheesecake, this variation is made with goat cheese, giving it a light, spongey texture, neatly complimented by a dollop of cremeux. The dessert's creaminess contrasts wonderfully with toppings of chewy candied-lemon slices and crunchy, candy-gingered pralines and pistachios, all dusted with a fine coconut citrus powder. Each bite is a sublime concoction of flavour and texture. I order a dram of Coopers Choice Scotch, matured in sherry cask, to go with our dessert and Heather helps herself to that, too. The silky, smooth whisky doesn't overpower the delicate flavours of the cheesecake, but we are perhaps guilty of gilding the lily.

Nevertheless, it is the ideal ending to an exceptional dining experience — one that we can look forward to enjoying again on our next trip to Vancouver. 

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