

BUSINESS IN ACTION

MEGSON FITZPATRICK INC. (MFI) of Victoria, one of the Island's largest independent insurance brokers, has acquired the Property and Casualty (P&C) book of business from Cumberbirch Insurance Agency. MFI will merge the Cumberbirch P&C business into its operations under the MFI brand.

DOCKSIDE REALTY, a family-run Gulf Island real estate brokerage owned by Sherrie Boyte and her son Sam Boyte has opened a third office with realtor Suzi Jack heading it. The new Sidney office also functions as an art gallery featuring works by Gulf Island and Vancouver Island artists.

LLAMAZOO has been recognized as one of the world's premier early-stage EdTech startups. The Victoria-based company has been selected as one of 10 finalists (the only Canadian company) for the SXSWedu Launch competition. The company makes it pitch its Austin this March.

SENDTONEWS VIDEO capped off the year by securing digital distribution rights for the 2016-2017 National Hockey League (NHL) short-form digital video content for the new season. The company's network of U.S. news partners will now have access to NHL game highlights, interviews, top plays and other video content to publish and monetize through their online news properties.

REAL INSURANCE SOLUTIONS, a multi-location Island company, is the first broker to offer the Verified® for Insurance mobile app and web portal from Verified Networks Ltd. of Nanaimo. This white-label app and web portal means customers can create a cloud-based inventory of insured assets for safe and secure storage.

SPINCO, a Canadian-based indoor spin studio, has been opened by Hayley Gustavson and Victoria Courtall in Victoria. The boutique studio offers spin classes led by motivational instructors, a team approach and with curated musical playlists.

TOURISM VICTORIA has teamed with the **GREATER VICTORIA HARBOUR AUTHORITY (GVHA)** in support of the GVHA's efforts to make Victoria a homeport for Alaskan cruise lines by 2020. In March, Tourism Victoria and the GVHA will have people representing Victoria at the Seatrade Cruise Global industry tradeshow, from March 13 to 16 in Florida.

FIVE MINUTES WITH ROBYN QUINN

THE CHAIR OF ISLAND WOMEN IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (IWIST) MAKES THE CASE FOR SOLVING THE SCIENCE AND TECH GENDER GAP

BY KERRY SLAVENS

ROBYN QUINN may have majored in business and English, but she switched orbits to a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) career when she joined the army reserves and became a communications electronics engineering (CELE) officer. Later, as senior comms officer with Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, she managed portfolios for life sciences, aerospace and technology.

Today, the principal of Big Bang Communications is passionate about PR for tech- and science-based start-ups. And as chair of the fast-growing not-for profit iWIST, she's also passionate about empowering women in STEM professions to feel connected and find the champions and resources they need to grow their careers. This year, iWIST's agenda includes a STEM Entrepreneur Pitch Camp at Royal Roads University (Mar. 4), a STEM Crawl (Apr. 20) and the 2nd Leading the Way Conference this fall.

You obviously saw a need for a STEM organization focused on women — why?

We need diversity if we really want to grow STEM jobs and the sector (I don't restrict that diversity to women; we want the doors open!). Things are changing, but there's a definite male-centric focus ... It's not a new phenomenon and its been recognized and documented over and over ... Women have been sidelined out of tech, though it was women who actually worked in computer jobs at the beginning. Watch the video *CODE: Debugging the Gender Gap* or the movie *Hidden Figures*, about the Black women at NASA who were the brains behind launching astronaut John Glenn into orbit.

What's the local landscape like now for women in STEM?

It's a very promising, active sector with a lot of opportunity for women, especially in software development and working with code. We have several female-led tech companies. It's one of the best ways to change mindsets: by demonstrating that not only do women belong here, they're potential leaders. We need more role models — men and women.

What are some common problems women encounter?

Isolation: at work, where there is pressure to fit in. Being left out of male-oriented after-work activities, which creates even more isolation. Feeling worthless: condescending or inappropriate behavior in the workplace. This can range from sexual comments, which go unchecked ("Can't you take a joke?") to dismissing ideas and achievements. No hope: Lack of management chances — or being passed over because the male way of managing is preferred. Many senior women in STEM remark how often they feel invisible in meetings ...

How do we change this?

By doing two things: creating support systems for women through organizations like iWIST, and encouraging the sector to admit the problem exists and tackling it with operational and cultural strategies.

What's the business case for creating this change?

As our friends at VIATeC have pointed out, technology drives business here and creates well-paying jobs so the future looks bright ...The sector is

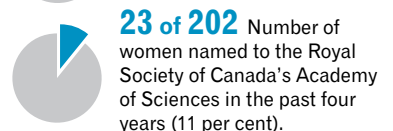
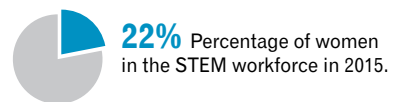
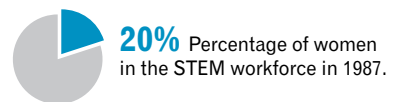
JEFFREY BOSDET/DOUGLAS MAGAZINE



growing. Places like Silicon Valley have become so expensive that tech companies are looking to expand to locations that appeal to their employees, upping their chances of keeping them as long as possible. Victoria and the Island offer a lot of value in that regard. The more tech talent we can offer — men and women — the more competitive we will be.

180,000 Number of unfilled jobs anticipated in Canada's Information Communication Technology (ICT) sector by 2019.

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA



SOURCE: MACLEANS MAGAZINE, "WHY THERE ARE STILL FAR TOO FEW WOMEN IN STEM," 2016