

ART, MATH TAUGHT THROUGH STARS

Eskasoni creator makes dream come true

ROSEMARY GODIN

He calls himself a “math specialist.” But these days, Stephen Francis of Eskasoni has become so much more than a brilliant math tutor for young people. His art – based on angles and precise measurement – is finding a home on everyone’s radar and then their walls. Francis is the creator behind brightly painted wooden stars seen all around Cape Breton and is having a worldwide audience now that his large floor design is welcoming visitors coming through the international arrivals area at Halifax Stanfield International Airport. On Jan. 16, the airport officially opened its new international arrivals depot featuring the works of Francis and Mi’kmaq artist Alan Syliboy of the Alan Syliboy Art Studio in Millbrook First Nation. Syliboy’s work at the airport adorns six pillars in the international arrivals area and 14 pieces from his Daily Drum collection are featured along an upper wall area. Elsewhere in the airport, visitors have been able to see Mi’kmaq artist Loretta Gould’s work. Francis designed a star that centres itself around the colours of the Mi’kmaq four directions – red, yellow, black and white. “When people first depart from international flights, they will see my 26-foot star. It will be like my ancestors telling them ‘Welcome to the land of the Mi’kmaq,’” Francis said. “My star represents 48 of my ancestors that have made me who I am.” He dedicated the star to Renée Nicole Good, the 37-year-old



Eskasoni artist Stephen Francis advises as Jemma Lewis, 13, a Whycocomagh student, works on an eight-pointed wooden star at a workshop held at the Elder Centre. Jemma’s grandmother, Duky Paul, looks on. ROSEMARY GODIN

mother of three shot and killed by ICE agents in Minnesota on Jan. 7. For Francis, social justice, generosity and community are intertwined with his work and his thoughts. **TUTORING CONNECTION** He can’t stop thinking and talking about math and tries to engage everyone he meets with a lively conversation about how to multiply, subtract or divide – and in an easier way than they were ever taught at school. Fractions are his passion. He says he tutors young people because you never know when the person you helped will end up be-

ing a doctor or any other profession needing and using math. When you first meet Francis, you think you’re meeting an artist, but it quickly becomes clear you’re meeting a precise and logical artist who sees numbers in everything and everywhere. The stars are fashioned from diamond-cut pieces that connect together. They have to be exactly the same size to fit together in a way that Francis came up with about 20 years ago. In 2007, Francis was working in Eskasoni making wooden garbage boxes and had a dream one night about stars. The next day, he told his partner he was going to try to make something he saw in his



Shubenacadie’s Charlotte Bernard stands in the middle of a star designed by her cousin, Eskasoni’s Stephen Francis, that graces the arrival lobby for international flights at Halifax Stanfield International Airport. SUPPLIED BY HELEN BERNARD

dream and came up with his eight-point star. “I got everything figured out,” he said of the meticulous method that goes into making them.

MATH AND ART It’s not an unusual pairing for mathematics and art to exist hand in hand. Some artists may not be aware that they use math in every piece they create, yet artists use geometry and algebra all the time. Francis is aware of the strong connection and the science in his wooden stars as he works with angles and fractions. He precuts every piece he uses himself or takes to one of the many workshops he is asked to lead.

It’s not unusual for one of his larger stars to take him 100 hours or more to make. At his daylong workshops, however, it takes about eight hours for participants to paint the pre-cut diamond shapes, place them as they prefer, and glue them to a backing. “Every star that a person makes is unique,” Francis said. He teaches that each of the pieces represents a person who influenced the star maker in some way – good or bad. The pieces of his stars symbolize his great grandparents, his relatives, friends and others who influenced his life. He can look at a piece and give

it the name of someone who had something to do with who he is today. His stars include diamond cuts representing a great-great-grandparent born in 1842, and he can name the person when he looks at it. Another star is for a relative born in 1890. “This star is always alive,” he says. “These are the people who influenced my character.” Francis loves meeting people and seeing what they can create. “Everybody is a math genius and everyone is an artist,” Francis says. “My job is to get it out of each person. They choose their own colours and they have their own people who influenced them in life.”

HALIFAX STAR Francis led a workshop recently in Whycocomagh at the Elder Centre situated beside the community’s school. On that day, elders sat beside students in Grade 8 and they were all talking and making art together. The star inlaid on the Halifax airport floor is a reproduction of a photo of a star he made in his Eskasoni workshop. The airport commissioned it to be created out of shiny glass mosaic tiles. It was installed in the floor at the newly renovated arrivals space that centres on Mi’kmaq art and culture. *Cape Breton Post*



Whycocomagh math teacher Holly Hudson, along with her Grade 8 class, builds a star at the Eskasoni Elder Centre for a workshop led by artist, woodworker and mathematician Stephen Francis. ROSEMARY GODIN

NOTICE

IN THE MATTER OF the *Companies Act*, Chapter 81, R.S.N.S., 1989

- and -

IN THE MATTER OF an application of **MEGALINE HOLDINGS INC.** (the “Company”) for leave to surrender its Certificate of Incorporation

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that **MEGALINE HOLDINGS INC.** intends to make application to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies for leave to surrender its Certificate of Incorporation pursuant to Section 137 of the *Companies Act* of Nova Scotia.

DATED at Bedford, Nova Scotia this 28th day of January, 2026.

Martha L. Beyea
Blackburn Law Inc.
231-1595 Bedford Hwy.
Bedford, NS B4A 3Y4
Solicitor for the Company



NOVA SCOTIA ENERGY BOARD
NOTICE OF PAPER HEARING

The Nova Scotia Independent Energy System Operator (IESO Nova Scotia) applied to the Nova Scotia Energy Board on January 21, 2025, under s. 29 of the *More Access to Energy Act*, for approval of its proposed expenditure and revenue requirement of \$14.85 million for the fiscal year 2026-2027.

The application requests approval of the following:

- A total revenue requirement of \$14.85M for the 2026-2027 fiscal year reflecting both its ongoing Operating, Maintenance and Administration (OM&A) costs and transitional costs; and
- Continuing the Net Revenue Requirement Deferral and Variance Mechanism (previously referred to as the Net OM&A Deferral and Variance Account) to track IESO Nova Scotia’s actual costs compared to its Board-approved revenue requirement budget on an ongoing basis.

The application also requests an Order from the Board for temporary financial relief no later than February 27, 2026:

1. Directing NS Power to begin paying by April 1, 2026, monthly payments to IESO Nova Scotia, of \$950,000, exclusive of applicable taxes, with such payments being made effective February 1, 2026 (Monthly Assessment);
2. Confirming that such Monthly Assessment shall continue until the earlier of:
 - a) March 31, 2027, or
 - b) the effective date of a Board-approved permanent fee recovery mechanism; and
3. Authorizing NS Power to record, defer and recover such Monthly Assessment through its Fuel Adjustment Mechanism (FAM), with the Monthly Assessment being approved as a prudent cost of NS Power.

The Board will consider this matter in a paper hearing process.

This is a public process, and you may participate as follows:

- You may make written comments by sending a letter to the Clerk of the Board at P.O. Box 1692, Unit “M”, Halifax, NS B3J 3S3, or secure file transfer service by visiting <https://board.titanfile.com/NSEB/> or by fax at (902) 424-3919 by **Thursday, April 23, 2026**.
- You may request formal standing as an Intervenor, subject to Board approval. This will allow you to file evidence. Your request must be received by the Board by **Tuesday, February 10, 2026**, and a copy of your evidence by **Tuesday, March 31, 2026**.

Full details of the review and any timetable for this matter can be found on the Board’s website <https://nserbt.ca/nseb>, by clicking on “Matters & Evidence”, select “Search Records”, and in the “Go Directly to Matter” search box, enter Matter No. M12663.

To assist the Board in using correct forms of address and pronouns in our hearings and decisions, we invite all parties, lawyers, and all other participants to share their pronouns and titles with the Board and each other if they are comfortable doing so. There is no requirement to provide this information.

Canada's warships

SHIPYARD FROM **A2**

The shipyard has a 6.75 per cent attrition rate in the trades, less than half the industry average. As production ramps up on the River class, which will ultimately see six of the ships under construction simultaneously, Irving is seeking another 400 skilled trades over the coming years. The workers and the yard have come in for praise from Admiral Daryl Caudle, the United States' chief of naval operations, and Topshee.

"This is a genuine sovereign capability for Canada and no doubt the best shipyard in North America," said Topshee at an event launching construction of the River class last fall. "So if there is any shipyard in the world that can deliver the ship the Royal Canadian Navy needs, it is this one."

But will Irving also get to build the continental defence corvette? It's the only shipyard approved for combat vessels under the National Shipbuilding Strategy, but shipyards in Quebec and Vancouver, currently building for the coast guard, want in on it. And there's a shipyard in Ontario pressing hard. Whichever yard and city gets the corvettes will be in for billions more in work and all the economic spinoffs that go with it.

Noble and feisty as the HMCS Sackville was, the new corvettes are not really the same class as the famed Second World War sub hunter that now serves as a floating museum on Halifax's waterfront. And they're a far cry from the Kingston-class coastal defence vessels they're replacing. The Kingston class was lightly armed and relatively small. It ended up being used for missions far beyond the intentions of its designers, including repeated Atlantic crossings and Caribbean drug interdiction.

The continental defence corvette is for a new world order where the navy expects its patrol vessels will need to be able to watch and potentially engage targets ranging from submarines and surface vessels to airplanes. "They'll have the fight of the Halifax class," said Topshee. "We want the continental defence corvette to be Canadian from the core, as a hedge. "If that relationship (with America) severs completely, what do we have that we can use and build from that provides what Canada needs?"

What will make the vessel unique in the West is that all that combat power will be packed into a ship with a Polar Class 6 rating and 7,000 nautical miles of range so it can patrol the Northwest Passage.

RAPID DELIVERY EXPECTED

With the Kingston class already in the process of being retired, Topshee wants it fast. "My heart tells me I need it in five years." That's for a first vessel. And in navy shipbuilding that would be very fast, especially considering no design has been settled on yet. "I would like to see progress on it this year, an actual procurement step taken," said Topshee. "More than a (request for information), we want a (request for proposals), an invitation to qualify for shipyards, a design decision. All of those things."

Ontario Shipyards is pushing hard to be brought into the approved yards of the National Shipbuilding Strategy so it can build the new corvettes. It's teamed up with Canadian military contrac-

tors, Algoma Steel and the Ontario provincial government (which announced a \$200-million grant to improve the Hamilton yard) to pitch a 100-metre vessel. But Ontario Shipyards doesn't come with the institutional knowledge of having built any large vessels for either the coast guard or navy. But the point of the National Shipbuilding Strategy was to concentrate work in two yards, combat ships in Halifax and non-combat ships at Seaspan's Vancouver Shipyard, to maintain a capability by having consistent work. The federal government raised eyebrows when it added a third shipyard, Chantier Davie Canada in Levis, Que., in 2023.

"Politics and necessity being what they are, we may expand beyond the three shipyards," said Lajeunesse. "But there's a danger to that. The point of the National Shipbuilding Strategy is to concentrate on a small number of yards to build out large workforces and economies of scale. I think the government will be reluctant to move beyond the core shipbuilders."

The other two shipyards approved for large vessel construction under the National Shipbuilding Strategy, and also vying to get in on the corvettes, haven't garnered the same effusive praise as Halifax from the admiral. Seaspan's Vancouver Shipyard has run into long delays and cost overruns building the non-combat joint support ships that will replace the former HMCS Protector in the role of refuelling and resupplying warships at sea and responding to humanitarian crises.

Chantier Davie Canada, a Quebec shipyard owned by a company based in Monaco, has been well overdue and overbudget on several repair and refurbishment contracts for the navy and coast guard. They're both also building Polar-class icebreakers for the Canadian Coast Guard. "Halifax would be the best place to build (the continental defence corvettes), they have the best workforce and the most experience building warships," said Lajeunesse.

"The problem is yard space." Asked about building the continental defence corvette in Halifax, Topshee told The Chronicle Herald, "If Irving has that capacity, I would ask them to build the River class faster." Dirk Lesko says he has the yard space. Last Thursday, the president of Irving Shipbuilding pointed out the boardroom window to a barge building out from the yard into Halifax Harbour beside a nearly complete patrol ship.

"It won't be our capacity that is the pacing function for the River-class program," said Lesko. "There is supply chain and design. So today we have more capacity than we're using."

If he had a design and contract in hand, Lesko said, Irving could be building the continental defence corvette now — on top of the River class and the last two AOPS. It won't be up to the admiral or Lesko who builds the continental defence corvette. That will fall to the politicians. And there are lots of seats in Ontario and Quebec, along with both political and economic pressure.

It remains to be seen whether capacity, capability and cost drive the minority Liberal government's decision.

SUBMARINES

Among its other abilities, a diesel electric submarine can hide, move, listen and wait in silence. Then, at the appropriate time, it can kill. Through the past two decades of NATO war games, individual allied submarines have repeatedly penetrated the layered defences



The first hull component of a River-class destroyer is lifted at Irving Shipyard in Halifax.

SUPPLIED BY IRVING SHIPBUILDING

of aircraft carrier battle groups to score "kills."

"The reason we're pursuing a fleet of 12 submarines is to defend our waters, to have that final say," said Topshee.

"To make sure no one is here without our permission, including the Americans, if necessary."

That latter point the admiral bookended with caveats that he can't foresee a future where Canadian and American sailors, who right now work side by side on continental defence, would ever be adversaries.

But Russia and China are expanding into the Arctic. Submarines, to Topshee, mean sovereignty.

They mean an adversary in Canadian waters would never know when they're being watched and, in the event of war, when they're going to die.

Their complexity means that for every submarine at sea at any given time, there are three at the wharf in various stages of preparedness. Twelve would give Canada the

ability to keep one submarine operational on each of its three coastlines at all times.

Carney has promised a decision by June on whether Canada buys a fleet of up to 12 new submarines from South Korea (Hanwha Ocean's KSS-III Batch-II) or a combined German-Norwegian bid (ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems' Type 212 CD).

Though both are diesel electric, they are very different submarines.

The German-Norwegian Type 212 CD is smaller, with a diamond-shaped hull and sensor systems that will make it harder to find, better at navigating obstruction-rich shallow water and at waiting in geographic choke points to watch and strike.

Its present configuration is only equipped with torpedo tubes for armament.

From these it can launch torpedoes, unmanned underwater vehicles and release mines and potentially purpose-built missiles.

The KSS-III is larger, more comfortable for the longer voyages re-

quired in the Pacific and is armed with both torpedo tubes and vertical-launch cells, allowing it to also strike land targets with missiles.

Both can stay submerged for at least three weeks without coming up for air.

The Korean bid claims to be able to provide the first sub by about 2032 and four by 2035. The German-Norwegian bid is offering a first sub by 2035.

Both countries are proposing significant investment in Canadian manufacturing and energy industries in exchange for buying their submarines. German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius told media last summer that if desired, parts of or entire submarines could also be built in Canada.

The reciprocal industrial benefits for either bid will be spread across the country and economy (along with the cost).

Either way, Halifax will benefit as the planned home of a large maintenance and support facility where the submarines can be lifted out of the water to be worked on.



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An Arctic and offshore patrol ship built for the Canadian Coast Guard nears completion at the Irving Shipyard in Halifax.

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