



Angela Chisholm: "I was getting paid to do something I loved to do."

Touring off the beaten path

Scott Walking Adventures (www.scottwalking.com), an eco-friendly travel company in Hubbards, taps into its owner's childhood love of adventure for inspiration. "As a kid, my backpack would be loaded up with snacks and water, then I explored all day long," says Angela Chisholm. "Walking is low impact. There is no equipment or technical skills required."

A typical trip is a week-long vacation package booked months in advance on the Internet or telephone. Guests are picked up at a departure point and, after an orientation and meet and greet, share a picnic lunch. Then they hit the trail, walking through some of the most scenic areas of the locale and staying at historic inns in small communities. Guides encourage guests to interact with the local culture by chatting with

residents or going to kitchen parties; they also interpret the natural history of the area while at the same time creating environmental awareness. "Our guides know the secret spots off the beaten path," she says.

Originally from the Annapolis Valley, Chisholm studied business at Cape Breton University. After working for a few years in the corporate world, she realized she wanted to return to her roots. "It came to a point where we were living in the city and I was working too much," she says. "I decided it was time for a change of pace and some soul searching."

Settling in picturesque Hubbards in 1997, Chisholm had an epiphany while guiding bicycle and kayak tours. "I remember biking along the coast one day with 10 or 12 people, laughing and having a great

time, and I realized that I felt like a kid again. I was getting paid to do something I loved to do." Most of Chisholm's guests are over 50, and they are looking for an engaging experience. "They don't want to sit on a tour bus," she says. "They want to get out and immerse themselves in the culture and in nature."

In 2003 Chisholm purchased Scott Walking Adventures from its founder, Wendy Scott, after working as its operations manager. The company has evolved from offering solely Nova Scotian packages to walking adventures in 19 destinations, including Quebec, Newfoundland, Bermuda, Iceland, and Ireland. It plans to offer trips to the West Coast and Portugal in the near future, and possibly to the Azores and Greenland, but Chisholm's heart is firmly entrenched in Nova Scotia. "I was born and raised here and I love sharing it with people," she says. "This is my path." — **JOE FITZGERALD**