

## A charismatic dynamo

Pursuing her many and varied interests with passion and a bottomless well of energy, Halifax Global's Chris Hornberger has become a vital part of the local community

By MARK BOLTON Special

'AND THE WINNER of the 16th Annual Bowling for Critters Bowling Tournament is Cujo! Could Cujo please come forward and collect his award!' an excited Chris Hornberger shouts over the very loud speakers at Fairlanes Bowling Centre.

The bowlers sitting close to the speakers rub their ears and hope Cujo appears before the announcement is repeated.

A black and white Staffordshire terrier makes its way to Ms. Hornberger, who stands with loaded microphone in hand. The audience brace themselves as Ms. Hornberger unleashes a torrent of praise in the direction of the oblivious canine.

Those who don't know Ms. Hornberger might be forgiven for assuming she is just another crazed animal fanatic who has somehow gained control of the microphone. The rest of the people at the event know Ms. Hornberger to be a strong advocate of animal welfare, a hardworking president of the Bide Awhile Animal Shelter and a partner at Halifax Global Inc., a successful local management consulting firm she runs with her husband, Peter Milley, and colleague Andy Cutten.

When away from animals and microphones, it is pleasant to speak with Ms. Hornberger. She's well-spoken and has a subtle charisma that serves her well in the competitive world of management consulting where she has worked on projects ranging from the Halifax Region Immigration Strategy to developing a business plan and financial model for NSCAD University's planned Innovation Centre and an asset mapping project for Nova Scotia's life sciences industry.

The work is rewarding, she says, but so are her volunteer efforts with groups like the Bide Awhile Animal Shelter, the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Halifax's NovaKnowledge, the Speakers Club of Toronto and the U.S. Literacy Society.

"I learned more as a volunteer I think than I ever did on a job. . . . You learn a lot about managing people, about buying product, about communication and about what motivates people to volunteer. I learned all kinds of great stuff as a volunteer that I would never have learned as an employee."

The groups Ms. Hornberger has assisted are diverse. Yet with each one she seems to have thrown herself in so completely that she often ends up running the show. A perfect

example is her involvement with NovaKnowledge, a Halifax think-tank pushing a knowledge-driven agenda for the province.

"(Ms. Hornberger) has done everything. She's been on the council, she's sold membership, the last task was helping with the five-year strategic plan and she was outstanding," said Tim Outhit, the group's chief executive officer.

Ms. Hornberger and husband Peter also managed NovaKnowledge's Call to Action project that brought issues such as immigration and lifelong learning to the attention of the community.

Community service has been a big focus of her life since the early 1980s when she was working as a manager in an Ontario government agency.

The first charity she became involved with was the Toronto chapter of the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Asked to join the group by a friend who had a suffering parent, she took the bull by the horns and before she knew it she was managing 2,000 people in one of the group's major projects. In her first year at the helm of the Carnation Campaign they raised \$29,000. Two years later, under her leadership, profits for the same campaign rose to \$250,000.

It was when volunteering with the MS Society that Ms. Hornberger had her first taste of working with Peter.

"When I was on the board, I actually recruited Peter and I swore I would never work with him again, and here we are," she says.

Ms. Hornberger joined forces with her husband and Mr. Cutten in 2003 to form Halifax Global. They were driven by a desire to grow a business and combine complementary skills. "Andy (Cutten) comes from a financial background, Peter is a strategist and market researcher and my background is in operations. So we have a broad range of experience we can bring to any client. That's really what makes the partnership work."

On a personal level, Ms. Hornberger enjoys working closely with her husband but admits it is not without challenges.

"Until we started seriously working together, it was pretty easy to have our own lives. Now we work together on projects occasionally, we also have to run a business together, it's more difficult. . . . We've tried to make rules — we're not talking about the business after 8 o'clock at night. It never really works.

"The plus side is you really do have a lot of common understanding and appreciation for what the other person is going through. There are times when one of us will have to work through the weekend. You just appreciate that's what's going on. You understand it's not a big deal because you know that's what you need to do."

As well as her responsibilities as president of Bide Awhile and running Halifax Global, Ms. Hornberger is completing accreditation as a Certified Management Consultant. In a handwritten note from the president and CEO of CMC-Canada, Ms. Hornberger was recently informed she will receive the TD Meloche Monnex Gold Medal Award for scoring the highest mark in Canada on her certification paper.

Ms. Hornberger seems to be a testament to giving and receiving. All the effort she puts into the local community continues to be repaid in kind. And Halifax has fully embraced this woman from Ontario.

"Once you're part of the (Halifax) business community it's like you have a home and it feels like it is home. But like home, if you do anything wrong everyone is going to know about it. So I don't know what to do about that besides not doing anything wrong."

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