

*Congratulations Graduates!*



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*IMPORTANT DATE:*  
Dal Surgery Research Day  
*Friday, April 4, 2014*  
Westin Nova Scotian

# Message from the Head, Dr. David Kirkpatrick



Members of the Department of Surgery held Strategic Planning sessions in 2012 and early this year, and a final report should be completed this summer. These sessions have indicated that our values and strategic aspirations align very well with those of the Faculty of Medicine, CDHA, and the Department of Medicine.

A number of our department members have stepped up to take on important roles: Dr. Lianne Johnson succeeds Dr. Steven Morris as Chair of the Department of Surgery Promotions Committee. Dr. Marius Hoogerboord is the Medical Director of the newly created Department of Surgery Global Health Office. Dr. David Tang succeeds Dr. Guy Brisseau as the Director of the Surgical Foundations Program for the Department of Surgery.

Dr Mark Glazebrook has agreed to Chair a newly created Department of Surgery Fellowship Training Committee. Approximately 14 Fellows are recruited each year and there is growing consensus within the department that oversight of the credentialing process is desirable. Overseeing the promotion of quality programs, attracting candidates of high caliber, and ensuring their impact on residency trainees will be charged to Dr.

Glazebrook. We wish him much success. Dr. Greg Hirsch, will Chair the recently struck Appointments Committee, which will strive to embrace a department consistent hiring practice, finding future faculty with exceptional surgical skill, research mandate and educational expertise.

An Internal review was completed for the Division of Otolaryngology and as a result Dr. Manohar Bance was named Head of the Division of Otolaryngology for a five year term.

On the simulation front, Dr. Brock Vair is the first Beardsley Bethune Chair in Surgical Education and is serving as the first Medical Director of the combined Dalhousie, IWK, QEII Skills and Simulation Center. A governance agreement has been developed that clarifies the responsibilities of the various groups involved in this interdisciplinary venture and the QE11 Foundation has agreed to help raise the necessary funds.

With our encouragement, DMAC at Saint John Regional Hospital has approved a plan that will see multiple single specialty surgical departments become one unified Department of Surgery to facilitate co-management as well as to align with the Halifax campus organizational structure. This change will facilitate clinical, educational and research program development across provincial boundaries.

For the upcoming year, many of you will have a role in forging the Clinical Service Plans for CDHA and the province. The CDHA Facilities Plan, the Physician Resource Plan and the new AFP will together define the future for surgery at Hants, DGH and QEII sites. It is anticipated that in the future, the various sites will be designed, equipped and staffed to meet the requirements for a specific patient acuity population. The ASA Physical Classification of a patient may have a greater influence on where surgical care is delivered than the historical prime base of a specific surgeon.

I know we are up to the task.

This is a publication  
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## *On the Cover* **GRADUATING RESIDENTS**

**Back Row L-R:** Chris Kennedy, Alistair Demcoe, Mike Loewen, Jon Cavanagh, Paul Yaffe, Patrick McCrea, Sirajeddin Belkhair, Jon Enright, Keith Pawluk.

**Middle Row L-R:** Devon Richardson, Laura Donahoe, James Laughren, Muthana Sartawi, Michael McNeil.

**Front Row L-R:** Christine Herman, Renelle Daigle, Alex Soroceanu, Maria Brake, Reza Ahmadzadeh

## *Director of Education, Dr. Brock Vair*



The Department of Surgery has established a Fellowship Training Committee including representatives from all divisions involved in the training of clinical and research fellows. A primary goal of this committee is to generate a document from each fellowship training program outlining acceptance criteria, sources of funding, academic, surgical and research curricula and a clear definition of the responsibilities of each fellow in relation to the responsibilities of the resident trainees. A parallel committee has been established by Capital Health with similar objectives under the title of the Fellowship Education Advisory Committee (FEAC). The Department of Surgery Fellowship Committee will work closely with the Capital Health Committee with the view to ultimately achieving Royal College accreditation for each of our fellowship training programs within the Department of Surgery.

The Surgical Postgraduate Education Committee met in mid December with an agenda that included an increased emphasis on career counseling within our Residency Training Programs in view of a decline in career availability within many surgical specialties. Guidelines for a unified patient handover policy have been developed by the Dalhousie Postgraduate Education Committee. Each of our training programs within the Department of Surgery will be required to develop an accurate and efficient handover policy among residents and between residents and staff in order to minimize handover error and adverse patient outcomes.

The concept of a coordinated program in simulation based learning within postgraduate training as well as in undergraduate education is being developed under the guidance of the medical school, Capital Health and the IWK Grace. A simulation based learning committee with representation from all surgical divisions will be developed in the future in order to establish undergraduate and postgraduate curricula and evaluation. Simulation based learning will be a major component of resident training within a boot camp during the first month of PGY1 in preparing surgical residents for their clinical and technical responsibilities.

A series of academic retreats was organized by the medical school over the past several months in order to finalize revisions to the fourth year curriculum. Each student will be expected to complete a research project before graduation and increased emphasis will be placed on direct observation of clinical skills and pharmacology and therapeutics.

The surgical interest group made up of members of the first and second year medical school classes who have an interest in a surgical career were provided a basic session in suturing skills in the Surgical Skills Lab under the supervision of surgical faculty and residents. This group also scheduled a career night with questions related to training in surgery, applications to surgical residency and lifestyle within a surgical career answered by Dr. Reardon from Orthopedics, Dr. Brown from ENT and Dr. Vair from General Surgery. The various training programs within the Department of Surgery were well represented at the career night organized by the Faculty of Medicine at the Tupper Building.

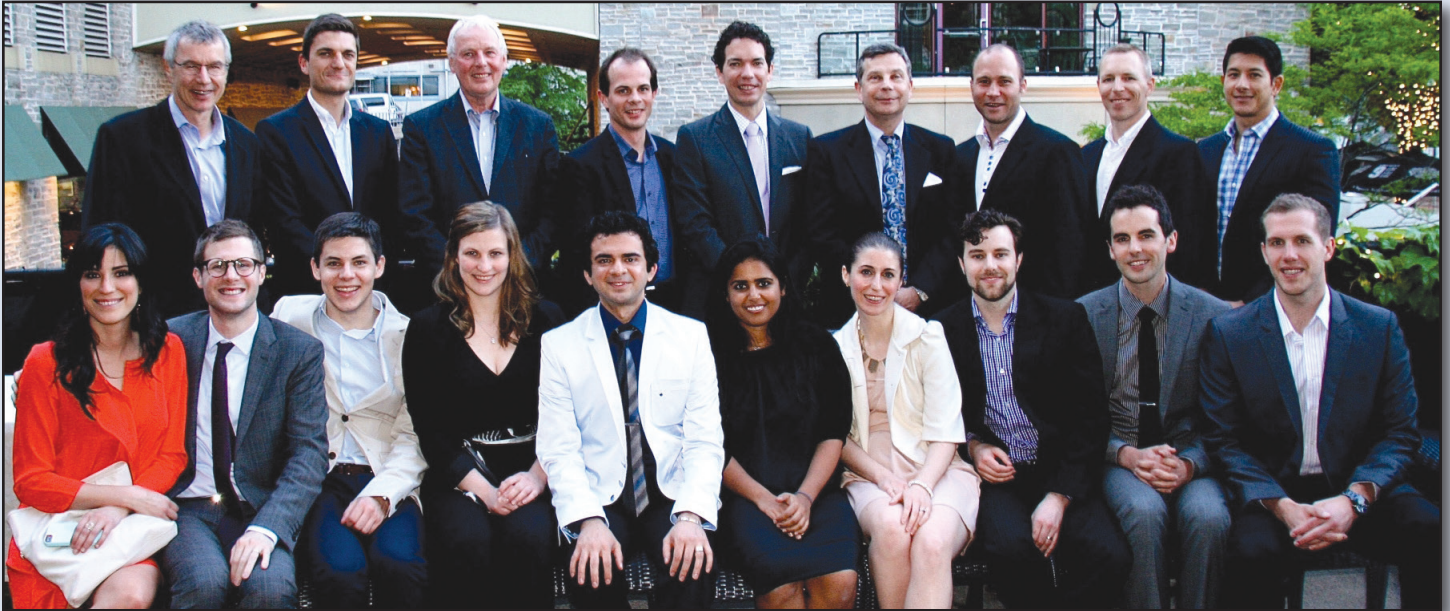
Congratulations again go out to Dr. Jon Bailey from General Surgery who was awarded the honor of top gun following a competition in laparoscopic surgical skills held at the American College of Surgery Meeting in Chicago in October.

Dr. Carman Giacomantonio was recognized and awarded as a Knight of the Italian Republic at a black tie dinner held at the Italian consulate in May. Prime Minister Steven Harper was among those who sent congratulations to Dr. Giacomantonio for his leadership and dedication to the care of patients with cancer.

Dr. Brock Vair was presented with the Silver Shovel by the graduating class of 2013 at the graduation gala in May. This is the third time that Dr. Vair has received this award, which is given to the faculty member who has shown teaching excellence throughout all four years of medical school.

# *Division Profile - The Division of Plastic Surgery*

submitted by Dr. Jason Williams



*Picture: Top L-R: Steve Morris, Mike Bezubly, Ken Wilson, John Stein, Jason Williams, Justin Paletz, Marty LeBlanc, Geoff Cook, David Tang Bottom L- R: Amanda Murphy, Simon Frank, PJ Rasmussen, Sarah Appleton, Reza Ahmadzadeh, Sarah Al Youba, Emily Krauss, Peter Davison, Andy Simpson and Josh Gillis. Missing: Rick Bendor-Samuel*

In 2008 there were just 3 full-time plastic surgeons at the Halifax Infirmary and 1 at the IWK. This followed the departure of 2 members and the well-deserved retirement of Dr. Winston Parkhill after 35 years. For the next 2 years it was all we could do to keep up with traumas and cancers. Waiting lists for important, but more elective procedures such as delayed breast reconstruction, breast reduction, and carpal tunnel releases increased. Creativity and extra effort ensured that resident education continued at our normal standards during this time.

Things have dramatically changed in 5 years! Beginning with the recruitment of Dr. John Stein (craniofacial surgery), then Dr. Martin LeBlanc (reconstructive surgery), Dr. Mike Bezubly (pediatric craniofacial, brachial plexus, cleft lip/palate), and Dr. David Tang (Peripheral nerve surgery), we now have a Division that is the envy of others across the country.

Rounding out the Halifax Group are Dr. Justin Paletz (Division Chief), Dr. Steve Morris (senior academic surgeon), Dr. Ken Wilson (Pediatric surgery), Dr. Rick Bendor-Samuel (aesthetic surgery), and Dr. Jason Williams (Program Director). We now have 8.4 FTE surgeons between the QE 2 and IWK. The Saint John campus has 4 full time surgeons, Dr. Don Lalonde, Dr. Jim O'Brien, Dr. Hazem Aly and Dr. Geoff Cook.

There is a buzz of excitement within the Division of Plastic Surgery. We are working together in the operating room and collaborating on research. We are reducing waitlists! No longer do women have to face a 5 year wait for delayed breast reconstruction. We are more available to collaborate reconstructively with our surgical colleagues in orthopedics, general surgery, neurosurgery and others. We can take on greater leadership roles within the department and medical school (Dr. Tang has succeeded Dr. Guy Brisseau as Director of the Surgical Foundations program). We can provide an unparalleled education program, with every subspecialty within plastic surgery represented in our group.

While we have always provided high standards of clinical care, there were some gaps in what we could offer. Patients with brachial plexus injuries, complex peripheral nerve problems, and pediatric craniofacial deformities had to travel to Toronto or Montreal for treatment. Along with Drs. Paul Hong, Daniel McNeely and Simon Walling, Dr. Bezubly has established a multidisciplinary pediatric craniofacial group at the IWK

Health Centre. Featured in the inaugural issue of Izaak magazine, their group performed the first Lefort III distraction osteogenesis procedure in the Maritimes. Dr. Bezuhly has also taken over from Dr. Wilson as the primary cleft lip/palate surgeon at the IWK. He has helped develop the IWK's first multidisciplinary team for the management of obstetrical brachial plexus palsy. Along with Dr. Bezuhly, the team is composed of OT, PT, neurology, neuroradiology, pathology and orthopaedics. Families and patients no longer have to leave to receive care. In the field of peripheral nerve surgery the technique of nerve transfer has changed how patients are managed. Nerve transfers offer the chance of a better functional recovery, particularly in the upper limb, following nerve injury. Dr. David Tang completed his fellowship with Dr. Susan MacKinnon, a world leader in nerve surgery. He now offers a full spectrum of options for nerve repair and reconstruction. Several nerve transfer surgeries- the first ever performed in the Maritimes- have already been successfully carried out.

Research activity has increased within our Division. Dr. Khalid Al-Mutairi (2012 graduate) completed the CIP and his MSc under Dr. Morris's supervision. Dr. Amanda Murphy, currently a PGY 4 resident, has begun the CIP under Dr. Bezuhly's supervision. Along with Drs. Jean Marshall, Brent Johnston and Robert Liwski, Dr. Bezuhly is part of a joint laboratory on the 15th floor of the Tupper Building where research is focused on repurposing old drugs for new applications such as improving wound healing, preventing metastasis, and optimizing post-oncologic reconstructive methods. Dr. Morris's lab continues to be a world leader in anatomic research. He recently published the second edition of Perforator Flaps, Anatomy, Technique, and Clinical Applications, and is a sought-after speaker on this subject nationally and internationally. Dr. Williams completed a Masters in Medical Education in 2012 with research on providing CME using e-learning modules. Typically underrepresented, medical education research is receiving increased attention.

Dr. Wilson was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in a ceremony at Rideau Hall in Ottawa in February for recognition of his international humanitarianism, and a dedicated career of providing care for children both at home and abroad. Dr. Wilson has completed over 35 missions with Operation Smile. This organization focuses on repairing cleft lips and palates in developing countries, and educating local surgeons so that care can continue after the mission. He and Dr. Bezuhly traveled together on a mission to Guatemala last fall, and recently to China.

It is not surprising that we are excited to move forward with an enthusiastic and committed surgical staff, motivated residents who share their newly acquired expertise with younger eager-to-learn medical students and an ambitious research agenda. Ours is an atmosphere that is truly ready to embrace the challenges of balancing innovative research, teaching our students and delivering optimal care to our patients. The future is bright in Plastic Surgery!



*Dr. Wilson receiving the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal from Governor General, Mr. David Johnston*



**DR. PATRICK MCGRATH** is a Clinical Psychologist, Canada Research Chair and Professor of Psychology, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry at Dalhousie University. He is the newly named Integrated Vice President, Research and Innovation for CDHA and The IWK Health Centre. Dr. McGrath is excited to be working with all Dal Surgery Faculty. Welcome Dr. McGrath!



## *New Faculty ~ Dr. Ansar Hassan*

**DR. ANSAR HASSAN** obtained his medical school degree from McGill University in 1998 and his residency training in Cardiac Surgery at Dalhousie University. During his residency training, he acquired a PhD in social and clinical epidemiology. In 2007, he travelled to Greenville, North Carolina for a Fellowship under the tutelage of Dr. Randolph Chitwood. He concentrated in the art of robotically- and videoscopically-assisted mitral valve repair and coronary artery bypass grafting surgery performed through keyhole incisions.

Dr. Ansar Hassan joins the Department of Cardiac Surgery at the New Brunswick Heart Center. In addition to performing standard adult cardiac surgical procedures, he has been instrumental in developing the minimally invasive cardiac surgery program at the NBHC. From an academic standpoint, Dr. Hassan has used the solid research foundation that he acquired during his training to establish the clinical cardiovascular outcomes research program. Together with his interventional cardiology colleague, Dr. Sohrab Lutchmedial, they have founded Cardiovascular Research in New Brunswick (CVRNB) and are actively involved with trial-based and database-driven research aimed at improving the cardiovascular outcomes of New Brunswickers. Welcome Dr. Hassan!



## *New Faculty ~ Ivan H. Wong*

**DR. WONG** specializes in hip and shoulder arthroscopy, including new arthroscopic reconstructions of large rotator cuff tears. He grew up in Prince Edward Island and graduated from Acadia University. He went on to earn his medical degree from Dalhousie University and completed his Orthopaedic Surgery residency at McMaster University. Dr. Wong completed a fellowship in Sports Medicine and Trauma at the Southern California Orthopedic Institute in Los Angeles. He is a current staff member of the Orthopaedic Surgery Team of Capital District Health Authority and serves as an Assistant Professor with Dalhousie University. Dr. Wong is completing his Masters of Academic Medicine at the University of Southern California. His current endeavors include the development of a surgical education lab where medical students,

residents, and surgeons can learn advanced arthroscopic skills. He actively teaches residents and practicing physicians through seminars and cadaver courses. Welcome Dr. Wong!



## *New Faculty ~ Dr. Rodrigo Romao*

After completing medical school and residency training in General Surgery and Pediatric Surgery at the University of Sao Paulo in 2006 **DR. RODRIGO ROMAO** practiced as a Pediatric Surgeon in Brazil until 2009, when he moved to Toronto and completed a Neonatal Surgical Fellowship (2009-10) and a Pediatric Urology Fellowship (2010-12) at the Hospital for Sick Children.

Dr. Rodrigo began his clinical practice at the IWK on September 5, 2012 joining both the Divisions of General Surgery and Urology. As a clinician- scientist, he pursues the investigation of the treatment and outcomes of surgical and urological congenital malformations, pediatric surgical oncology (specifically a kidney tumor called Wilms' Tumor) and disorders of sex development. Welcome Dr. Romao!



## *New Faculty ~ Dr. Madelaine Plourde*

**DR. PLOURDE** obtained her medical degree at the University of Ottawa and graduated Magna Cum Laude. During that time she volunteered at the CHEO oncology unit.

Dr. Plourde graduated from the General Surgery Resident Training Program at Dalhousie University in 2009. She continued her studies in London, Ontario, completing her fellowship in Thoracic Surgery at the University of Western Ontario. In 2011, Dr. Plourde continued a clinical practice as a locum with the London Health Science Centre with Thoracic Surgery and the Trauma Service. During this time, she completed her Masters in Clinical Epidemiology in the Health Research Methodology

program at McMaster University.

Dr. Plourde's clinical interests are in minimally invasive surgery, focusing on thoracic oncology and benign esophageal diseases. Her research interest include, the effectiveness of clinical therapies in thoracic oncology and translational research in Surgeon-directed quality initiatives. Welcome Dr. Plourde.

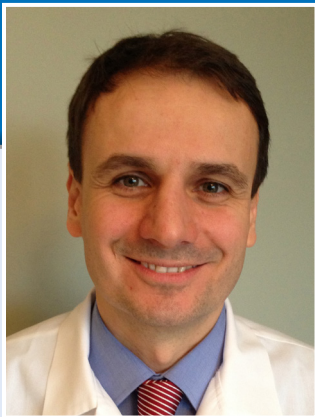


## *New Faculty ~ Dr. David Tang*

After completing his undergraduate and medical degrees at UBC in Vancouver, **DR. TANG** entered the Plastic Surgery residency training program at Dalhousie. Following this he pursued a fellowship in Hand & Peripheral Nerve Surgery in St. Louis. Dr. Tang has gained expertise in brachial plexus reconstruction, peripheral nerve transfer surgery, peripheral nerve tumor extirpation, and management of complex nerve entrapment syndromes.

Aside from his clinical interest in hand and peripheral nerve surgery, Dr. Tang has a real passion for medical education. Having received several teaching awards during his residency, he will look to continue his efforts as the director of the division's medical undergraduate program. He has also taken on the role of Director of the Surgical Foundations Program for the Department of Surgery.

Welcome to the Department Dr. Tang!



## *New Faculty ~ Dr. Michael Vician*

**DR. MICHAEL VICIAN** obtained his MD from Justus Liebig University in 1997. Dr. Vician entered a residency training program in Internal Medicine at the University Hospital in Giessen Germany, completing his specialty in intensive critical care and also his dissertation "Magna Cum Laude" at Justus Liebig University.

Dr. Vician is Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine and Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM). He obtained his European Diploma in Intensive Care Medicine (E.D.I.C.) in 2010.

Dr. Vician previously was a staff intensivist on CIVCU in the Department of Cardiovascular Surgery at the University Hospital Giessen. He is currently an Assistant Professor, in the Department of Surgery, and Director of the Cardiovascular Intensive Care unit in the Division of Cardiac Surgery. Welcome Dr. Vician!

# Director of Research, Dr. Greg Hirsch



Firstly I want to acknowledge Ian Always's stepping up to take on the Research Director role during my recent medical leave. It was reassuring to know the research interests of our department were in capable hands. Welcome to our new faculty. As a department we continue to recruit excellent faculty who have big potential and solid track records in education and research in addition to their clinical strengths.

Kudos to Elaine Marsh for putting together another excellent Dal Surgery Research Day. Shawn St. Peter from the University of Missouri, Kansas City gave a stimulating talk on clinical trials in the challenging arena of pediatric surgery. He was very impressed with the quality of the research presented. Congratulations to all the presenters and their mentors along with the whole faculty who continue to support the research mission of our department.

We are moving forward with the goals set out in our recent Departmental Strategic Retreat. Our new mission statement reflects the critical role research plays in our Department. In addition, standardization of our recruitment/appointment process is underway with the creation of a Departmental Appointments Advisory Committee. The committee will work to assure the identification of the best possible candidates for open positions in our department and to develop clear deliverables for new faculty in their first three year term. This is an exciting development that stems from our very productive retreat.

As a department we are in a time of significant challenges and opportunities. It is critical that we lobby for the role of research as a new Clinical Services Plan is being developed at the executive level of CDHA. Additionally a new, multi-departmental AFP is being developed. We need all of your voices to support a central role for the support and growth of research activities as these processes go forward.



**DR. SHAWN ST. PETER** was this year's Dr. Gordon Bethune Visiting Professor. Dr. St. Peter's noon time lecture "Prospective Trials in Pediatric Surgery" was greatly received. Dr. St. Peter is an Associate Professor of Surgery at the University of Missouri-Kansas, and the Program Director of the Pediatric Surgery Fellowship Program, The Surgical Scholars Program, and The Centre for Prospective Trials.

## Research Day Winners

**First Place Resident:** Winner of the Robert Stone Traveling Fellowship: **Dr. Fawaz Makki**, ENT PGY 3: "*CO2 Laser vs Gold Steel Margin Analysis Following Endoscopic Excision of Glottic Cancer*"

**Second Place Resident:** **Dr. Christine Herman**, Cardiac Surgery PGY6 "*Identifying High-Risk Ascending Aortic Diameters in the General Populations*"

**Third Place Resident:** **Dr. Matthew Brace**, ENT PGY 3 "*Differential Expression of TGF-B in Benign vs Papillary Thyroid Cancer Nodules; A Potential Diagnostic Tool?*"

**First Place Student:** **Alison Gareau** "*Memory B Cells in Adventitial Lymphoid Clusters Contribute to Cardiac Allograft Vasculopathy*"

**Second Place Student:** **Alec Falkenham** "*Clodronate Liposomes Prevent the Development of Angii-Mediated Myocardial Fibrosis*"

**Third Place Student:** **Arun Govindapillai** "*Protecting the Aged Heart during Cardiac Surgery: Use of del Nido Cardioplegia Provides Superior Functional Recovery in Isolated Hearts*"