

# Where the magic happens at Spartan TV

By Robert Fisher

ST. STEPHEN – Behind every great on-camera host is an even better editor.

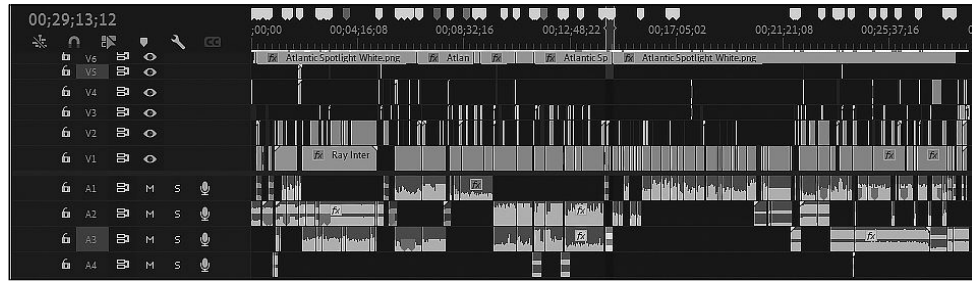
The polished finished product you see on your screens is the result of many hours of, often tedious, work behind the scenes by talented editors working with highly specialized software.

At Spartan TV, those editors are Devon Strong and Zoe Weeks.

Both have been with the program at St. Stephen High School for about a year. Until recently, Devon had been the lone editor working on the group's larger productions like *Atlantic Spotlight*, while Zoe worked on the monthly in-house school productions. In the last couple months, Zoe has started working with Devon on the bigger productions, too.

Both students are in Grade 11 and both had an interest in video and editing before becoming part of Spartan TV. Devon is a gamer and, like so many gamers do, when he was younger he would do screen capture videos of his games, edit and post online. Zoe made fun videos, edited them in iMovie and posted to YouTube.

"I always found editing really fun



Submitted photo

Sample editing timeline of an *Atlantic Spotlight* episode with Spartan TV. All the coloured bars are snippets of video and sound that have to be clipped and sequenced as part of the editing process. Some may only be a few seconds or less.

to do and thought that at school it would give me more opportunities," she said.

She never used a full-featured editing software package like she does now and she has enjoyed learning about some of the features and capabilities of a professional editing platform.

"It makes the videos look way better," than what she used to do in the past, she said.

Devon spoke in a previous interview about how working with Zoe has allowed him to work on his teaching skills. He expanded on that to say, "Others do a lot for me and it's nice to give back even if it's just in a small way."

Zoe doesn't plan to make media or editing her career. Instead, she's thinking it may be a sideline and her interests currently are in business or law.

Besides technical skills, Zoe credits her experience with the Spartan TV program for helping bring her out of her shell and allowing her to be more comfortable speaking with people.

All of the students interviewed for this series have emphasized the soft skills they have acquired that they know will help them as they move on in their academic and professional careers.

Editing video and film footage takes a special skill set and a keen attention

to detail. It also takes incredible patience. Editors will watch a production tens, sometimes hundreds, of times between when they start working and when the finished film is produced.

When a project is finished, "it's basically burned into your brain," said Devon, from having to watch it so many times.

Zoe said by the time she is done a project she can "pretty much remember what each person is going to say," as she is working through the video. Neither really has an interest in seeing the finished production again after they are finished with it.

Asked directly if, when they are done, they ever want to see that project again, they looked at each other, started to laugh and Devon said, "Not really."

They do take pride in seeing their work go from raw video and audio clips to a well-produced finished production. Devon compared it to raising a child, seeing it grow and then be a fully formed adult.

Zoe likes the cycle of taking the individual and disparate pieces and seeing those formed into a coherent story.

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## Healing through writing

Sophia Recovery Centre introduces writer's circle to programming

By Robert Fisher

ST. STEPHEN – Sophia Recovery Centre is hosting its first writer's circle as a new part of its program helping women in recovery from addiction and substance abuse.

The first session of the six-week program was held on Nov. 9 and is taking place simultaneously in Saint John and at Sunbury Shores Arts & Nature Centre in Saint Andrews.

Recovery counsellor Margot Stafford explained that the program "is designed to introduce women to different kinds of writing activities" that can be creative and therapeutic.

The circle isn't focused on produc-

ing specific types of writing or output. Instead the focus, for now, is on the process of writing and the participants getting exposure to a variety of writing techniques.

At the first session, the groups were introduced to free writing. Free writing is an exercise where a group has a prompt and a specific amount of time to write. There's no talk or discussion allowed during the writing time.

Stafford explained that free writing can be helpful for getting people to process emotions, express frustrations, set down thoughts on what is happening in life or getting out anger.

She stressed that the exercise was intended to be playful and light and not just be maudlin or negative, to

help the women in the program understand they have a voice and that they can be empowered to use that voice.

"When they're feeling upset, they know that something they can do is put on some music, pour a cup of coffee and sit down with a journal," and know that can be an outlet for them, explained Stafford.

Stafford and her colleague Louise Chase, who is leading the program in Charlotte County, are using this first six-week session as a learning experience to see what works and what they might do differently in future sessions. They want to go at the pace the participants are comfortable with.

Looking to the future, there may be opportunities to get into specific out-

put like poetry or fiction. Depending on the confidence and comfort of the circle participants, they might consider doing public readings or look to produce chapbook collections of writings.

There are no set objectives for the participants in the circle. Each will take out of it what works for them and helps them in their process of recovery.

Stafford also expressed that this new program may be attractive to some women who had not thought about going to Sophia before and that if it can help more women seek help and move from "surviving to thriving" it will have been successful.

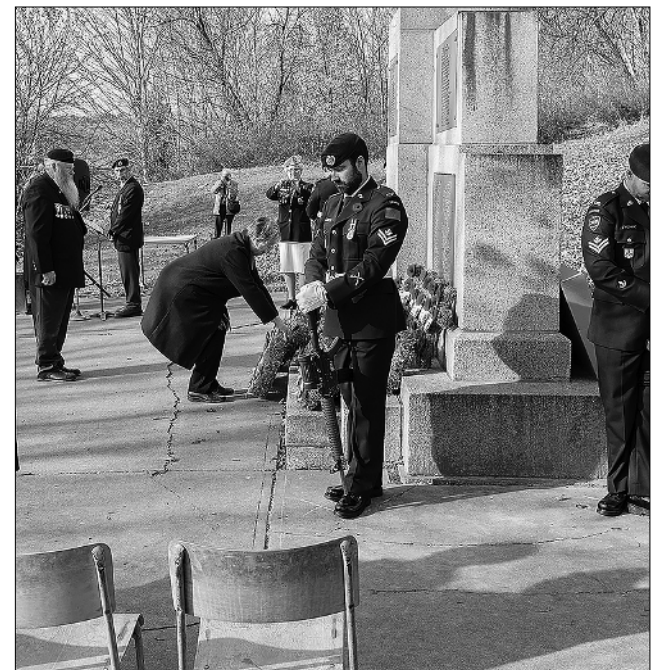
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Robert Fisher photos

Veterans stand ready in the staging area in advance of the procession from the waterfront to the cenotaph for the Remembrance Day ceremony in St. Stephen.

Some of the several hundreds who lined Milltown Boulevard behind the veterans' procession at the 2022 Remembrance Day ceremony in St. Stephen.



St. Croix MLA Kathy Bockus places a wreath representing New Brunswick at the 2022 Remembrance Day ceremony in St. Stephen.