

Remembering Sylvia Mangalam



Sylvia (in the green hat) singing with the Raging Grannies.

by **MARLA MACLEOD** /// EAC Staff

On Jan. 24, 2025, we lost Sylvia Mangalam, long time member of the Ecology Action Centre community and fiery spirit, days before her 91st birthday.

She lived a full and varied life. Born in upstate New York, she spent her early years living on a farm. She attended Cornell University and graduated with a masters degree in social anthropology and nutrition. With her husband, she moved from Ithaca, where they were married, to Lahore, Pakistan; then Kentucky; then Ontario; then finally Nova Scotia. She was many things – sheep farmer, poet, cookbook author, activist, mother, grandmother and so much more.

Sylvia was instrumental in the fight against uranium mining in the 1980s. When a uranium company threatened the headwaters of the Avon River, she joined with two other women to found Citizen Action to Protect the Environment. They produced reports and fact sheets about the dangers of uranium exploration, held many public meetings around Nova Scotia, seeded other grassroots organizations and did a tremendous amount of mobilization work. The resulting public outcry from around the province led to the uranium moratorium in 1981.

In the early 2000s, Sylvia was one of the founding members of the EAC's Food Action Committee. She was a staunch supporter of local, sustainable agriculture. She helped support our harvest fests, rallied the Raging Grannies, wrote letters, attended conferences, taught cooking and preserving workshops, opened her home to root cellar tours and more. She greeted every success with enthusiastic



cheers, and every disappointing government announcement with her trademark “harumph”. She lived her values and shared her knowledge broadly. Her backyard was and still is an abundant garden in the heart of Bedford, filled with vegetables, flowers and pear trees, from which she generously shared the harvest.

We carry her spirit with us as we continue to fight the good fight and build the world we want to live in.

Marla (she/her) is the EAC's director of operations. She loves helping people untangle complex problems, and when not at the office, she can be found mucking around in her garden, canoeing and exploring Kijipuktuk/Halifax by bike.