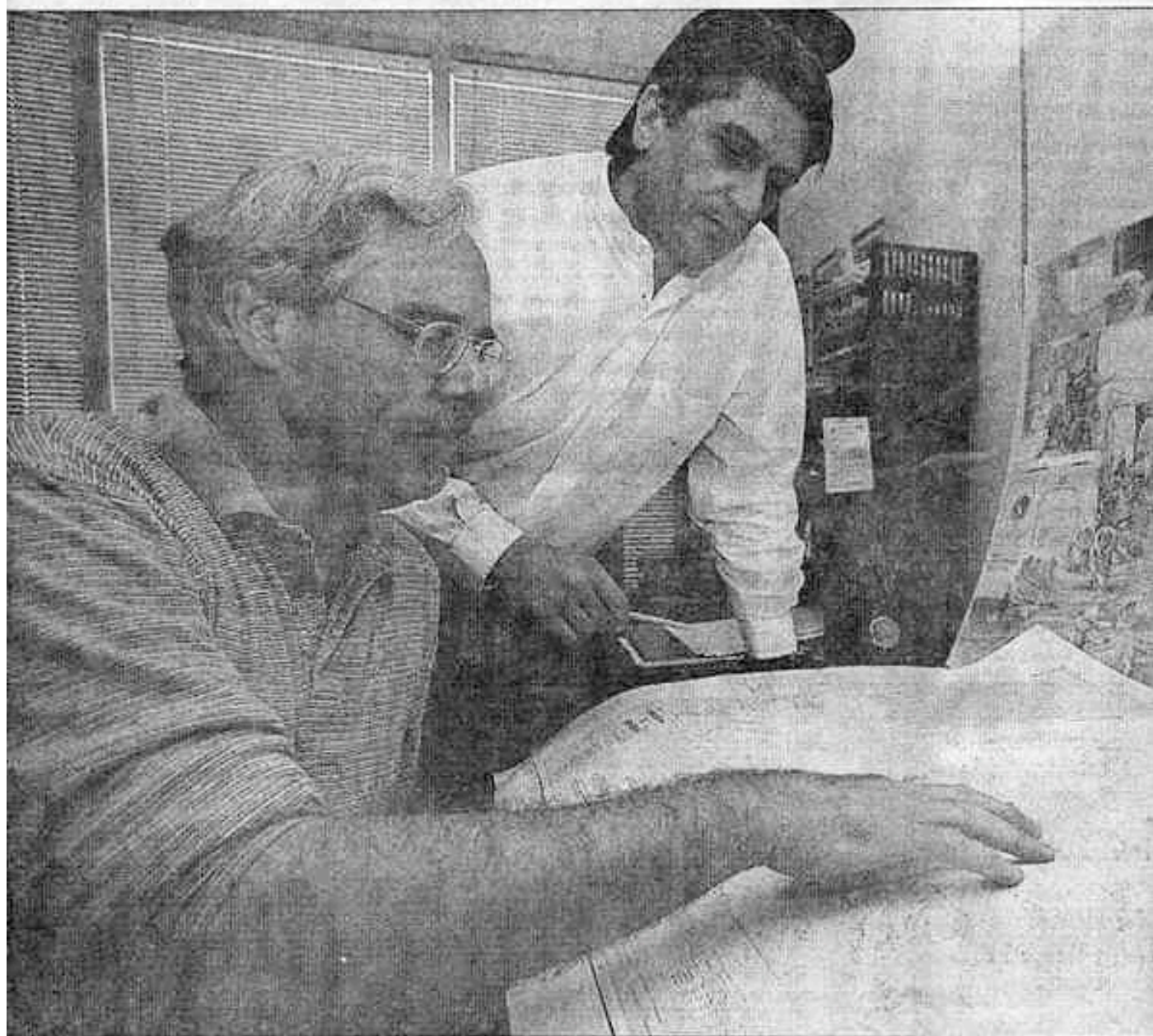


**Artistic impression**  
Halifax painter Mark  
Lanham shows his  
work at Studio 21. / B2

# NOVASCOT



# Reaching

Westward from the Davis Strait, 'tis there  
 'twas said to lie  
 The sea-route to the Orient for which so  
 many died  
 Seeking gold and glory, leaving weathered  
 broken bones  
 And a long-forgotten lonely cairn of stones  
 — Northwest Passage, Stan Rogers

By RICK CONRAD  
 Staff Reporter

**A** GROUP OF Nova Scotians hope to find the hand of Franklin reaching for the Beaufort Sea.

But they'll settle for his ships. "This is the highlight of my career, just looking for (them)," says Rick Haupt of Eco-Nova Corporation in Halifax.

"To look for those two ships, just to look for them, that is the biggest thing which will happen to me in my life."

Haupt, his business partner, John Davis, and 12 other camera operators, divers and researchers from the video production company leave for the Canadian Arctic on Tuesday to retrace the doomed expedition of British explorer Sir John Franklin.

On May 19, 1845, Franklin set out from England for the fabled Northwest Passage to Asia.

Haupt and Davis are producing two hour-long documentaries called Franklin's Last Mystery as part of their 13-part Discovery Channel series called Oceans of Mystery.

The company's also sold shows to some French channels and hooked up with an international distributor.

For Eco-Nova, the Franklin documentaries represent a year of planning and about \$1.5 million.

"What we want to see is the Canadian flag up there doing something, producing shows to show a Canadian presence to a worldwide audience," Haupt says.

"And also demonstrate to the world that not just the Americans can always do these big documentaries. I think we can do some, too."

Set to air in the spring of 1998, Franklin's Last Mystery will chronicle Franklin's famous trek and commemorate the

# FOR THE Beaufort

150 years since his last crew member perished on the Arctic ice in April 1848.

With any luck, the documentary will feature underwater footage of Franklin's ships, Erebus and Terror. Caught in the Arctic ice, the ships sank, taking with them any accounts of the journey.

"We do not assume to find it in the first shot," Haupt says with a slight German accent.

"That would be pretty hard. They didn't find the Titanic on the first try. It could very well be we do a second one next year. That's fine with us. It might even be another show."

Since Franklin and the last of his 129 officers and crew died in their pursuit of what Pierre Berton calls the Arctic Grail, Canadians and Britons have been fascinated by the story.

Franklin wasn't the first to fail at finding the passage, but for many, the story of his expedition has been the most compelling.

His ships were two of Britain's best, equipped with enough food and provisions for three years and staffed with the best sailors from the Royal Navy and the British merchant navy.

But the harsh and unpredictable Canadian Arctic overwhelmed them.

The ships lost contact with Europe in August 1845, soon after they entered Baffin Bay en route to Lancaster Sound.

By September 1846, the expedition was trapped in ice off the northwest coast of King William Island.

The crew stayed with the ships for two years. During that time, Franklin and 24 crew members died, then the remaining men deserted the ships in April 1848 and headed for Fort Reliance on Great Slave Lake, 1,500 kilometres southwest of King William Island.

The 105 men who tried to walk out of the Arctic eventually succumbed, suffering from starvation, scurvy, and cannibalism by their mates.

Haupt hopes help from the Canadian Coast Guard, Department of National Defence, Canadian Hydrographic Service, Geological Survey of Canada, and Parks Canada will make finding the ships a little easier.

The Eco-Nova expedition needs two licences — an archeological permit from Parks Canada and a permit from the Inuit government in Yellowknife.

"The government is not giving its services for free," Haupt says. "It can't and we understand that. But they have gone out of their way to see this happen."

DND is lending the expedition its magnetometer, which senses magnetic

A Nova Scotian attempt to solve the mystery of John Franklin's expedition may truly be a voyage of discovery.



Sir John Franklin photo courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, London, England



fields. Eco-Nova also has two side-sonars, which pick up everything that throws a shadow on the ocean floor.

The magnetometer might be able to find the ships' 15-ton steam engines and lead the crew to the wrecks.

"From all the expeditions that we've done, it looks like this is the biggest expedition ever with this kind of technology on board which looked for the Erebus and the Terror," says Haupt, a diver for 25 years.

The pack ice in Victoria Strait is believed to have smashed the Erebus's masts, while the Terror might have little farther south relatively intact.

Inuit oral accounts say the Terror's masts were sticking out of the ice

