

JULY 2023

the Hum

free

Arts,
Entertainment
& Ideas

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Mysteries of the Keyhole House



The Taste of Summer

After the fireworks on Canada Day, there's still a lot of celebrating going on this month — this area abounds with popular festivals! And if you want to reserve a perfect parking spot by buying the house it comes with, just give me a call!

Pat's Picks 5 Wednesdays in July • in Almonte's Augusta Street Park
for July: Almonte Celtfest • July 7-9 <almonteceltfest.com>

Perth's Stewart Park Festival • July 14-16 <stewartparkfestival.com>

Perth Garlic Festival • August 12 & 13 <perthgarlicfestival.ca>

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Everyone is welcome to come hear free live music every Wednesday evening in Almonte's Augusta Street Park!

Fun in Augusta Street Park!

5 Wednesdays & Augustafest

By Violet Bova and Jeff Mills

Friends of Augusta Street Park community volunteers have come together to organize a great lineup for this year's 5 Wednesdays in July concert series. Plans are also in place for the second annual Augustafest. Dates to mark in your calendar are July 5, 12, 19 and 26 for the 5 Wednesdays series (yeah, we know, only 4 this year, but see our ad in this month's issue for the great line-up!) and August 26 from noon to 6PM for Augustafest.

5 Wednesdays in July and Augustafest are free, family-friendly, inclusive music in the park events geared to bringing community together, breaking up the work week with friends and neighbours, and enjoying live music. We pride ourselves on offering a free, welcoming and safe inclusive space. We also pass the hat to fundraise to complete the citizen-led park plan that includes a memorial water feature to recognize the Cole family, who lost children in a horrible neighbourhood fire in 1965. To date we have raised over \$35,000 and are working closely with municipal staff and council to realize this important memorial.

Opening the first evening on July 5 will be the Almonte Legion Pipe Band (they start at 5:45PM, so plan to arrive early), followed by Dr. Brown's Uptown Travelling Medicine Show, which will consist of seven acts! The Civitan Club will be on-site providing food for purchase including burgers, veggie burgers, hot dogs and drinks. They will then return on the third Wednesday. The second and fourth Wednesdays are community potluck nights, so remember to bring your plate, cup and cutlery, as well as a favourite dish to share.

We are proud to offer a stellar line-up of music with something for everyone from folk to country, rock to African beats. And we are very grateful to our sponsors: CorCann, the Almonte Civitan Club, Carebridge Community Support and The Hub/Rebound.

This year we are celebrating community — the arts, environment, and social enterprises — and so far have Just Good Compost and Shelter Movers setting up displays that illustrate their services. Want to promote your arts, environmental group, or social enterprise? Are you building community in some way with others and want to share what you are doing? We can offer you a table and an audience. Contact us at <augustafest@gmail.com>.

We run on a shoestring with community volunteers. Let us know how you want to help! See you in Augusta Park!



Who's Reading theHumm

Gary Waterfield of Perth is seen wearing his Stewart Park Festival T-shirt and proudly displaying theHumm in Independence Square, Bridgetown, Barbados in March 2022!

To read about this year's fabulous Stewart Park Festival line-up, just turn the page!

Be an Ally During Pride 2023

By Matthew Ayling

This year, more than many in recent memory, is a particularly important one for straight allies of the Two Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and + (2SLGBTQ+) community to be vocal in their support. At a time where rising homophobia and transphobia around the world is also manifesting in our own country, it is crucial for those who have avoided engaging with these issues to educate themselves, make connections, and get involved in defending and supporting vulnerable people.

Readers Write

In Blakeney, my community, Pride flags that were attached to a private residence's fence at the intersection of Martin and Blakeney were torn down within days of being put up. The OPP and Crime Stoppers put out a call for any information the public might have, but in the meantime the community, with support from our Mayor, Ward Councilor and municipal staff, have replaced the stolen flags (and then some). We even held a small but mighty Pride parade to celebrate their replacement, and the flags have remained there since — a testament to the veracity of one of the mottos painted on our homemade banner — "Love Wins."

2SLGBTQ+ people, and in particular the trans community, face serious and frightening challenges. From 2020 to 2021, there was a 64% increase in hate-motivated violence targeting queer communities. In 2018, lesbian, gay, bisexual and other sexual minority people in Canada were twice as likely as heterosexual people to report experiencing unwanted sexual behaviours in public or at work, as well as online harassment.

It's tempting, I think, for cis-gender and straight people to avoid taking sides on this issue. These topics might be new to us, or difficult to parse or understand intuitively, because we lack the relevant lived experience or exposure to people unlike ourselves. It's also easy to say to yourself, "These aren't my struggles, and I'm not qualified to interject or speak out because I'm not part of this community." While straight and cis-gender people should recognize when to stop talking and to listen, particularly when we are in queer spaces, our allyship should be loud and unequivocal. We can and must speak up when we hear harmful homophobic and transphobic rhetoric, even (and perhaps especially) when it is coming from people we otherwise love and respect.

It has been said that the measure of our progress as a people is how we treat our most vulnerable. I encourage readers of this letter to reach out to local 2SLGBTQ+ organizations (e.g., Pride in Mississippi Mills) to find out how they can educate themselves on issues that may be new to them, to make connections and to get involved, and to find new and visible ways to show their support and defense of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Find the full version of this letter at <thehummm.com>



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theHummm is a monthly arts, entertainment and ideas newspaper delivered free to businesses and visitor attractions in Almonte, Perth, Carleton Place, Westport, Pakenham, Carp, Arnprior, Smiths Falls, Burnstown, White Lake, Balderson, and Ottawa. Our mandate is to connect and promote people and events in the small towns and rural communities of the Ottawa Valley — where the arts flourish and entertaining characters run amok!

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By email or on disk.

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Subscribe to Hummail — it's Free!

Do you know about our weekly e-newsletter called "Hummail"? We use it to further promote independent local performers, creators, businesses and community initiatives. It's also a great reminder of what's coming up on the weekend, in case someone has stolen your copy of theHummm...

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Perth
July 14



Disney's Newsies Jr.
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Perth
July 7



Summer in Italy
5-course dinner
at Stonefields Estate
July 27



The Texas Horns
with Matt Chaffey
Almonte Old Town Hall
July 7



Little Black Dress Event
Canadian Golf & Country Club
Carleton Place
August 26

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Tamara H. Campbell – Escape Artist

Some artists describe it as “being in the flow.” It’s that “mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity” (Wikipedia). On the back of her Artist Trading Card on the next page, Tamara tells us WHY she paints: “I paint to feel good, to process my life, my emotions; some people meditate – I paint.”

by Sally Hansen

We are the fortunate recipients of Campbell’s creative solution to escape from whatever trials and tribulations life throws at her. Her paintings both energize and mesmerize. She achieves her goal of “creating a visual escape, a place to get lost in the details, colours and textures.” Her brilliant abstract paintings lure you into a fascinating new world of colour, shape, juxtaposition and imagination. It’s helpful to remember that Tamara’s idea of flow is probably coloured by her fondness of whitewater canoeing... She is an adventurous woman.

Her latest series of abstract acrylic strip paintings illustrates just how adventurous and energetic she is. Titled *The Purpose of Paper*, she creates an additional level of abstraction by cutting selected paintings into strips of various widths and arranging them into new compositions. These intriguing anomalies provide limitless opportunities for viewers’ imaginations and entertainment. They also are an extremely time-consuming labour of love by Tamara.

I was fascinated to learn that in her previous exploits as a photographer (read on) she also experimented with cutting and pasting to create striking photographic collages, and this was before digital photography.

The Odyssey

Campbell’s art is as adventurous as her peregrinations. During her idyllic Canadian childhood, born in Hamilton and growing up on a family farm near Guelph with an artistic grandmother and a mother who worked in an art gallery, she loved art. She remembers convalescing from chicken pox at the age of seven by setting up her easel in the back yard and “painting en pleine air.” Unfortunately a “horrible

elementary school art teacher” publicly ridiculed her and it took years for her to recover her zest for imaginative creativity. After high school she cycled around Europe for six months, decided she wanted to become a veterinarian, and enrolled at the University of Guelph. Her studies came to an abrupt end when she realized she simply could not cut into a living creature. She worked on a horse farm for a year and then studied photography at the Ryerson Polytechnic Institute in Toronto for two years.



Next a trip out west with a girlfriend landed her in Vancouver, where she saw an ad for an “Arctic Experience.” The fact that it was in Inuvik, only 3,619 km north, did not deter her. She got a job as a bartender and met the man who became the father of her three children. He was in the Canadian military, and she remembers ruefully that she became part of his D, F and E (Dependents, Furniture and Effects). Several moves later when her youngest child started school, Tamara became a picture framer in Orillia. Somehow she never made it back to Ryerson.

When her relationship ended and she became a single mom, she enrolled at Georgian College in Barrie and earned top honours as a computer programmer/analyst. She attributes her top marks to the fact that “It was the only thing I had control over.” She moved to Ottawa in 2002, and until Covid struck in 2020, she ran her own small business computer

support company. She was good at it, but her passion lay elsewhere.

By 2007 Tamara entered her first art show at the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa Art Space Group Show. By 2009 she was invited to present a solo show at the heARTwood Gallery and then at the Stepping Stones Gallery in Ottawa. She showed linocut printings in both the U.K. and Japan in 2017. A very linear thinker as a computer technician, she is gloriously creative in her artistic pur-



suits and communication. When she became a grandma, she converted her studio into a nursery. As the grandchildren grew, she turned them into exuberant, budding artists. Her unorthodox but effective approach included letting her young grandkids paint in the nude — with their bodies. Acrylic paint is easy to wash off.

Maybe it’s her non-linear personality. Maybe it’s fate. But life keeps happening to her and she keeps embracing it. As her sixth decade loomed, she announced, “I finally decided what I want to be when I grow up. I want to be an artist.” She is married to a wonderful guy named Carlos Vidosa who fully supports her recent career decision. They now live in an ideal multi-generational family home in the country near Burnstown, where she communes with nature when she is not working in her studio. Her captivating acrylic abstracts are a testament to her profound appreciation of the details and colours and shapes and textures that surround her home. She is particularly grateful for her mother’s generosity and the entire family’s practiced ability to coexist supportively through life’s ups and downs.



Kindness is Everything

Driving her grandchildren to their home in Renfrew after school, she began dropping in at The Art Factory to obtain her art supplies and “wonderful treasures from the Heart in Hand shop”, and became acquainted with the indomitable (thank goodness) Patrick John Mills. His motto is Live-Love-Art. That resonates with Campbell, and they clicked. Her work is currently on display in a group show until July 22 at Art Factory entitled *Kindness is Everything*. This show features works by Tamara, Patrick, and 11 other area artists, and honours the Bernadette McCann House, which “works for change that will end abuse by providing safety, support and education to all those who experience abuse.” The art show is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10AM to 5PM, and admission is free. Tamara’s work will be featured again on July 29 during the Art Fair at the same venue. Find more details at <liveloveartfactory.com>.

Abstract art can be intimidating. Tamara H. Campbell’s (she signs her artworks ‘THC’) abstracts are intriguing and accessible. Just go with the flow.



William Liao, "Morning Light", 2023

WILLIAM LIAO

City Limits

June 30 - August 4, 2023

Artist Reception: Saturday July 15, 2pm-4pm



34 Mill St, Almonte ON
info@sivarulrasa.com
sivarulrasa.com
613.256.8033



William Liao, "Quiet Morning", 2023

WHO Tamara H. Campbell
WHAT Abstract Mixed Media Art
WHERE Home Studio near Burnstown, by appointment, <tamarahcampbell@gmail.com>, 407-7145; Facebook & Instagram; <artscarletonplace.com/tamara-campbell>; Bittersweet Fine Craft & Art Gallery, Burnstown
WHEN Until July 22: *Kindness is Everything Show*, Art Factory, Renfrew; July 29 Art Factory Art Fair; Oct. 7, 8 Perth Autumn Studio Tour; Nov. 2-5 Wall Candy NOIR, Lansdowne Park, Ottawa
WHY "I paint to feel good, to process my life, my emotions; some people meditate — I paint."

• ARTIST TRADING CARD •

Stewart Park Festival 2023

Matt Andersen, Stephen Fearing, Southern Avenue and Much More...

The Downtown Heritage Perth BIA and TD Canada Trust present the 31st Stewart Park Festival, taking place from July 14 to 16.

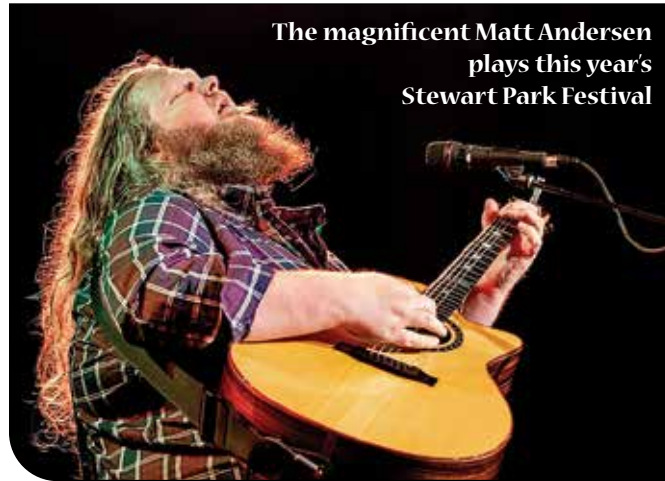
Celebrating over 30 years of community, the festival is a weekend of awesome music, great food and amazing vendors right in the heart of Perth. Only a 45-minute drive from Ottawa and an hour from Kingston, Perth is a small town with big charm, fantastic restaurants and downtown shops, and is a Designated Heritage site with plenty of aesthetic appeal.

Stewart Park Festival is a three-day, by donation (free!) music festival that showcases international and Canadian artists. With ticketed After-Hours events in the evenings, you can also get up close and personal with your favourite musicians. The festival features children's activities and programs to keep the whole family entertained.

This year's lineup includes Matt Andersen, Stephen Fearing, Southern Avenue, Kobo Town, Mia Kelly, Mimi O'Bonsawin, The Pairs, AySay, FRÄNDER, Ken Yates, Jason Lang, Kate Weekes, Wade Foster, Young Petty Stones, Jennifer Noxon, Christine Graves, The River Thieves, Academy for Musical Theatre, Magoo and Capital Mermaids.

The Stewart Park Music Festival is a proud committee of the Downtown Heritage Perth BIA and is funded by the Province of Ontario. The festival is brought to you by the amazing Official Sponsors TD Bank Group, Perth Canadian Tire, Hinton Auto Group, and David R. Bangs Fuels Ltd.

Find details at <stewartparkfestival.com> and stay up-to-date on festival announcements by following them on social media or signing up for their newsletter.



The magnificent Matt Andersen plays this year's Stewart Park Festival

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Summer Exhibits at the Textile Museum

The Mississippi Valley Textile Museum (MVTM) has a full slate of exciting exhibits this summer! Did you know that the forest floor communicates via tree roots and fungi? Learn more while you explore Lorraine Roy's wall hangings in *Woven Woods: A Journey Through the Forest Floor*, on display until July 22. This exhibition is accompanied by Greta Grip and Lee Jones' *Knit Markers: Collaborating with Machines*; an interactive exhibit that explores the traces we leave behind, and how data is gathered. Leave your mark on their participatory artworks and watch as machines knit and unravel in response to your movements.

On August 5, the MVTM will welcome a new exhibit, *Among the Garbage and the Flowers*, which will be on display until October 7 of this year. Curated by Susan Avishai, this exhibit is a collection of new works by 10 Canadian textile artists. Susan Avishai, Carole Baillargeon, Sonia Bukata, Judy Martin, Amy Meissner, Liz Pead, Leisa Rich, Melanie Siegel, Judith Tinkl and Alice Vander-Vennen are women who are refining and redefining fibre techniques using cast-off and reclaimed materials, creating art that combines ingenuity and new purpose with a truly contemporary voice. The vernissage will take place on Saturday, August 5 from 2-4PM. Find more details at <mvtm.ca>.

Joanne Beaton



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Welcome to Unit 102 in Almonte's only condo building with underground parking! This 2 bed & 2 bath condo, located on the main level with access to the patio, overlooks a beautiful garden. The kitchen features stainless steel appliances & extended peninsula, providing plenty of countertop and storage. Conveniently located laundry off kitchen with stackable washer/dryer. The open concept dining & living room with a beautiful feature wall of colour provides a calming influence. The spacious primary bedroom with patio doors to the outdoors has a walk-thru closet to the ensuite. Use the second bedroom for guests, or as an office or tv room. The 2nd bath has a walk-in shower.

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Mysteries of the Keyhole House

This summer, Canada's Grand Masters of Illusion, The Outerbridges, will premiere their new show *Mysteries of the Keyhole House* — a magical experience inspired by the heritage home they now inhabit in Smiths Falls. Well known in this area for their performances of *Clockwork Mysteries* at The Station Theatre, TikTok sensations Ted and Marion Outerbridge have also headlined at Hollywood's Magic Castle, and garnered both the Award of Excellence from Ontario Contact and the Touring Artist of the Year award from the BC Touring Council. theHumm contacted Ted to find out more about the new show.

by Kris Riendeau

theHumm: You could probably write a novel about your home (the "Keyhole House"), but can you give our readers a quick glimpse at what you found when you started researching its history?

Ted Outerbridge: Definitely, and while my book is not quite ready, I can tell you that our Keyhole House restoration efforts have led to the discovery of some incredible and mysterious artifacts. We found old skeleton keys dating back to 1892 which lock and unlock doors in our house. We also found old photos of previous inhabitants and even a note from the carpenters who built the house all those years ago. I enjoy connecting these items to the people they belonged to and then researching their stories.

We found a photo of a WWI veteran that had fallen behind the fireplace mantle. His cap patch and missing tooth helped us to identify him as Sergeant John Briggs. He died from a heart attack at the Keyhole House and he is buried in an unmarked grave. It's as if he gave us the photo so that we could tell his story. We felt compelled to give back and honour his life and service, so we applied to the Federal Government's Last Post Fund. He is now going to receive a military headstone.

While restoring the dining room, I discovered a hidden opening in the wall. I reached inside and found a golf ball from 1918 that was manufactured in England. A man named Reginald Burroughs lived here from 1907 to 1923, and we think that he brought it back with him when he came home from England after WWI. What is really amazing about the golf ball connection is that the Keyhole House was also home to Clem and Beverly Henderson, who lived here for over 50 years. They happen to be the grandparents of Brooke and Brittany Henderson, and as folks likely know, Brooke is a 13-time winner on the LPGA tour.

What made you decide to create a magical illusion show featuring the house?

I have been sharing my discoveries on social media and have developed quite a following. @thekeyholehouse just reached 100K followers on Facebook and I created videos which have gone viral on TikTok with over one million views. The incredible social media and community support inspired us to further share our stories about the history and mysteries of the Keyhole House live, on-stage. My on-stage partner (and wife) Marion and I have combined our passion for celebrating the history of the house with our love of the art of magic. We can't think of a better way to tell these stories and celebrate the people who came before us.

What are some of the stages you go through when creating a new show?

Marion is a professional dancer who performs some magic. I am a magician who cannot dance. We both have our strengths which really complement each other. We brainstorm together about celebrating the history of the house and how to bring these stories to life through magic, dance and spine-tingling tales. I write the show and research and build props, and Marion designs and creates costumes and choreographs the entire show. We both contribute ideas for music. We have surrounded ourselves with an incredible team, including our creative director who designed the artwork to promote the show, lighting director, illusion technician, publicist, and social media strategist.

Without giving away any spoilers, what are some of the mysteries people will uncover when they attend the show?

When the audience experiences our show, they will learn firsthand why the Keyhole House wakes us up in the middle of the night — like clockwork — at exactly the same time. The house is rumoured to be haunted (but in a friendly way!) and our audience is going to learn



Ted and Marion Outerbridge are premiering a brand-new magical illusion show this summer, inspired by their iconic home in Smiths Falls. Look for shows in Smiths Falls, Perth and Carleton Place!

how. They will also find out more about the eight ancient keys that we discovered behind the fireplace mantle. One of these keys will unlock a truly enchanting experience during the show, leaving our audience spellbound. There's so much great magic in this show. And while it's about spirits and ghosts, it's not scary.

This summer you are taking your show beyond The Station Theatre in Smiths Falls. What prompted you to take it on the road?

This performance was born in Smiths Falls and the Ottawa Valley and we are very grateful to have received so much support and input from the community. The production itself and premiering it in the region is a gift back to them and the ancestors whose stories we want to tell. The area is incredibly rich in history. Smiths Falls has a Carnegie Library and the Hotel Rideau. It used to be a railway metropolis with a world-class Opera House. Frost and Wood was the largest employer in town and was known world-wide as an exporter of farm equipment. We are really excited to use our magic to bring all these incredible stories to life. We will share them with the Ottawa Valley this summer and then take *Mysteries of the Keyhole House* across North America and beyond.

***Mysteries of the Keyhole House* plays in Smiths Falls until July 22, in Perth from July 28 to August 12, in Carleton Place from August 18–26, and in Gananoque from September 8–16. Tickets are \$33 plus fees from outerbridge.eventbrite.com or 430-4626.**

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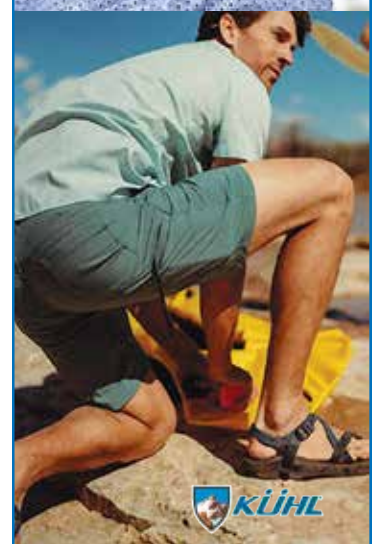
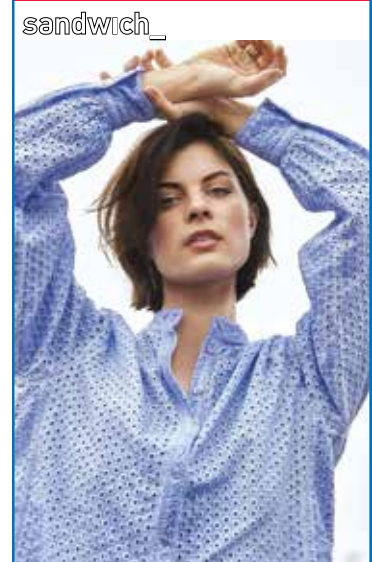


PICNIC 2023

You've been waiting for it, you know you have! Kick off summer with PICNIC - new menus, new restaurants and the ever-popular Smiths Falls picnic blankets are waiting for you! To view this season's menus please visit:

smithsfalls.ca/picnic

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Puppets! Puns! Murder! *THE FAMILY CROW: A Murder Mystery* (above) is a theatrical comedy, puppet murder mystery created by internationally celebrated puppeteer Adam Francis Proulx, and it's coming to PuppetCon this August. Visit PuppetsUp.com for details about all of the shows, panels and workshops.

Get Your Con On at the First-Ever PuppetCon!

With the debut of PuppetCon by Puppets Up! just a month or so away, tickets are starting to be snatched up by folks looking for hands-on experience building and handling puppets — or sitting back and watching a show. While some fan favourites are returning, such as the Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers, the first ever PuppetCon is really focused on building talent by providing workshops and sharing insights through panel discussions.

The organizers of PuppetCon set out to offer a little something for everyone, and early indications are that people are excited by the epic lineup.

Nostalgia Lovers Rejoice

The most eagerly anticipated event is the special “Back to the Umbrella Tree” panel discussion, which will reunite puppeteers Noreen Young, Stephen Brathwaite and Bob Stutt with actor Holly Larocque. We know this gang will have entertaining stories to swap about their time under the titular tree, and you can join the fun for only \$5. *Under the Umbrella Tree* ran on CBC in the 1980s and '90s and has a serious following among grown up kids.

Bob Stutt, supported by his beloved pal Iggy Iguana, will also be leading one of the weekend's most in-demand workshops — the “Iggy Iguana Puppetry Bootcamp”. Any soul brave enough to sign up for this session will be confronted with rampant silliness as they learn the fine art of puppet manipulation. It is a lot tougher than you think.

Many locals have seen (and several even own) Noreen Young's lookalike creations, because she has turned dozens of local celebrities into puppets. At PuppetCon you'll have the opportunity to take a workshop with Noreen and learn how to sculpt your own puppet mould in plasticine — the first step in creating one of her lifelike characters.

And fans of the Canadian classics *Nanalan* (YTV/CBC) and *Mr. Meaty* (Nickelodeon) won't want to miss “The Good, The Bad and the Fuzzy World of Making Puppet TV”. This workshop features Jamie Shannon, who will give participants a chance to drill down into the wild and sometimes wacky world of television production.

Get Your Hands Dirty (or at least Felty)

PuppetCon has a lot to offer for both amateur and experienced puppet makers. Workshops with Jeff Banks, the Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers, Ingrid Hamster, Sarah Argue and many others will give kids and adults alike the chance to design and build a wide variety of puppets and accessories.

Are you ready to learn the business side or start creating shows with puppets? You can learn how to adapt stories for puppet performances with Emily Pearlman, or how to establish your presence as a performer with Nick DiGaetano. You can then put it all together and learn how to promote and market your show with Adam Francis Proulx. This Con really does offer a soup to nuts overview of puppetry and performing!

Panels and Tickets and Shows (oh my!)

And if you need some adult-only intel about puppets, be sure to join the panel called “Below the Board,” which digs into the scandalous secrets that happen behind the scenes. Taking place on Saturday night at the Almonte Old Town Hall, it promises to be a fan favourite!

One of the favourite troupes from Puppets Up! — the Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers — is also returning with their beloved show *Everybody Loves Pirates* to the Almonte Old Town Hall. Tickets are on sale now! Learn more and claim your seats at puppetsup.com/PuppetCon.

The full Puppets Up! festival returns in 2024...

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**Saturday
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**The Small Glories
The Fretless
Mariner's Curse, Mélissandre T-B &
Alexis Chartrand, Music in the Glen,
Tripoly, The Lyons Sisters with Chad
Wolfe and Mark Allen, Barley
Shakers, Ottawa Celtic Choir
Plus Celtic College workshops 10 am - 11:30 am**

**Sunday
12-6pm**

**Jessica Pearson
and the East Wind
The Receivers, CR5,
Reel Ottawa Dance Company,
Fraser, Saloon Dion,
Danny O'Connell Memorial Award
Presentation and Showcase
Plus Fiddle Mass 10 am - 11 am**

Saturday and Sunday - Buskers downtown and Lil Celtz



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STEM Program at Lanark County Libraries

LEGO Robotics Programs for Youth Coming this Summer

Thanks to a generous donation from the Elizabeth Kelly Foundation, libraries throughout Lanark County — including Carleton Place, Lanark Highlands, Mississippi Mills, Perth and Smiths Falls — announce free LEGO robotics STEM summer programs for youth aged 8–17. STEM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) are essential for the next generation of innovators. Fun and accessible programs such as LEGO robotics are very popular and give youth the confidence to expand their skills.

Mississippi Mills Public Library (MMPL) launched a STEM program, funded by the Elizabeth Kelly Foundation and Canada Summer Jobs grants, in 2020–21. This pilot program was more successful than anticipated, with overwhelming demand for workshops. “Registration filled within hours of posting the workshops, and parents were very excited to have access to free robotics programs locally, when usually they need to travel to Ottawa and pay for them,” explains Berta Madrigal Abaroa, coordinator of MMPL STEM programs. The success of those first programs sparked the idea for a Lanark-wide STEM program.

STEM skills are not just for youth intending to pursue careers in engineering and computer science. Agriculture and agri-food industry workers need computer skills in their day-to-day farming operations,

from fixing equipment to digital cultivation software. Tradespeople need to navigate new technologies. Christine Row, MMPL CEO explains: “cultivating STEM skills helps prepare our youth for whatever path they choose.”

Libraries are the ideal place to encourage and develop science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills. Elizabeth Kelly Foundation Director Bruce Attfield states: “funding this innovative program aims to build important skills for all youth throughout Lanark County.”

Through the Lanark STEM Program, all five library systems will share LEGO robotics kits and laptops. “Steampunk Education will use these resources to bring the youth of Lanark up to speed on current developments in technology, covering topics like engineering design and procedural programming,” said Gabe Braden, co-founder of Steampunk Education. “Steampunk’s stated mission is to help rural education centres by providing high-quality STEM education.”

Partners, program details, and registration information can be found at the following sites: Carleton Place



The Elizabeth Kelly Foundation

A donation from the Elizabeth Kelly Foundation is enabling libraries throughout Lanark County to offer free LEGO robotics STEM programs this summer!

Public Library <carletonplacelibrary.ca>, Lanark Highlands Public Library <lanarklibrary.ca>, Mississippi Mills Public Library <missmillslibrary.ca>, Perth & District Union Public Library <perthunionlibrary.ca>, Smiths Falls Public Library <smithsfallslibrary.ca>, and the Elizabeth Kelly Foundation <ekellylibrary-foundation.ca>.

A Timeless Gathering at Middleville Museum

Live History is an internationally touring site-specific escape room theatre company that has been nominated for the Governor General’s award for History and Community Theatre. On Saturday, July 15, they will present two showings of their “immersive theatrical escape room experience” (at 1PM and 3PM) at the Middleville Museum. Tickets are only \$20 each, and are available from <middlevillemuseum.org>.

It was supposed to be a relaxing evening; a sit-down meal, followed by good conversation and a speaker — but things are not as they seem. Joining you at the table is a strange figure, dressed in period clothes and seeming confused. The mysterious character, identifying only as Circa, is horrified to discover they are in the modern era, and many things they remember and love are now behind glass; on shelves; written about in history books. They have no recollection of who they are, or how they got there. Some sort of historical time warp has occurred and you cannot leave unless you help. The security guard of the venue is in a complete panic — the doors have locked, and the only way to get out is to solve the mystery. Only pictures, items and stories from a time long ago seem to trigger memories about their identity. Stay with Circa for anecdotes from their life as they come flooding back, and piece together clues and riddles to figure out their identity... before the doors stay locked forever.

For the past nine years, tLive History has toured ten countries and over 200 venues, bringing local history to life with their unique customized productions. This year the company will tour Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Find more details at <livehistoryshows.com>.

The Middleville Museum is located at 2130 Concession 6D in Middleville (Lanark).



Summer Book Sale for the Perth Library

The Friends of the Perth & District Union Public Library are hosting their Summer Book Sale on Saturday, July 22. It will be held in the Library Garden, under the eaves, from 9AM to 3PM. This is a great opportunity to browse through an incredible assortment



of fiction books for adults, young adults and children. Bring your own bag and do your best to fill it! The cost of books is by donation, with all proceeds going to support the library.

Donated books will be accepted for this sale beginning on July 3: fiction only please, published in 2012 or newer, in good condition. Books may be brought to the library during operating hours. Thank you in advance for your support!

The Friends of the Perth Library is a volunteer organization supporting the library’s programs and services through fundraising and advocacy. This devoted group of supporters works diligently to help the library achieve its vision — raising funds to support improvements to the collections and services; promoting the library and its educational, informational and cultural resources; promoting literacy and advocating on behalf of the library to the community and local policy makers. If you’re interested in becoming involved with this group, please contact the library <perthunionlibrary.ca> for more information or stop by and fill out a membership form.

The Friends thank the community for their support of this fundraising endeavour. They hope to see many people at the sale on Saturday, July 22!

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Merrickville



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The Fools will perform their version of *Hamlet* at several locations in the Ottawa Valley this summer

a Company of Fools Presents *Hamlet*

From July 3 to August 26, a Company of Fools is tackling Shakespeare's most iconic play! Opening this July, they are presenting *Hamlet* on an eight-week tour of over forty parks across Ottawa and beyond.

Their fast-paced 90-minute rendition of the Bard's greatest tragedy will feature disemboweled puppets, a sword fight to the death, live underscoring, and 5 actors taking on 15 different roles.

Join the Fools this summer as they delve into the depths of the human experience and have a few laughs along the way. Whether you're a Shakespeare nerd or this is your first foray with the Bard since high school, their foolish take on *Hamlet* has something for everyone.

All shows start at 7PM, and are pay what you can, with a suggested donation of \$20 per person. Bring a lawn chair or blanket, bug spray, picnic, and your sense of humour. Pass-the-hat donations are collected at the end of the performance and can be submitted in the form of cash, credit card, cheque, or bars of gold.

Several performances are taking place within theHumm's coverage area: MERA School House in McDonalds Corners on July 15, Robert Simpson Park in Arnprior on August 3, Alexander Grove in Stittsville on August 5, and The Diefenbunker Museum in Carp on August 24. For more information and a detailed park schedule, visit <fools.ca>

The Plot

Returning home to attend her father's funeral, Hamlet discovers that another ceremony has already taken place: the marriage of her mother to her uncle. That's right, her dead father's brother. When Hamlet is visited by her father's ghost demanding that she avenge his murder, she begins to wonder — is it she who has gone mad or everyone around her?

The play takes place in a fairytale-inspired Elsinor, an extravagant kingdom ruled by the freshly crowned King Claudius. But don't let its decadent appearance fool you, there's something rotten in this fairytale wonderland.

Re-imagined to feature a female Hamlet, her feigned madness is a rejection of feminine expecta-

tions and an attempt to free herself from a fake world. This is the story of a quest for justice that exposes what happens when a young woman challenges authority.

The Team

Ottawa's Maryse Fernandes stars as Hamlet and re-imagines Shakespeare's iconic protagonist as a "mad young woman". Micah Jondel DeShazer, who played Ariel and Caliban in last summer's production of *The Tempest*, stars alongside Maryse as the diabolical King Claudius.

Rounding out the team is Ottawa's Jacqui Du Toit, a storyteller and founder of The Origin Arts Centre, as Queen Gertrude. Fools veteran Mitch Rose plays both father and son, Polonius and Laertes; and Andrea Massoud lends her talents to the roles of Ophelia, Rosencrantz & Guildenstern, and Horatio.

a Company of Fools' Artistic Director Nicholas Leno and resident designer Vanessa Imeson spearhead the production's creative team. Fools fans will remember Nicholas and Vanessa's carnivalesque take on *Romeo+Juliet* in 2019.

The Fools

Best known for their Shakespeare in the Park series, the Fools tour 90-minute versions of Shakespeare's hits to parks across Eastern Ontario.

They believe that it doesn't matter where you live, how much you make, or how old you are: theatre should be accessible to everyone! All performances are for PWYC donations, family-friendly, and their touring model means they bring the theatre right to your backyard.

Over the last 30 years, they've developed their signature foolish approach to staging Shakespeare. They work with a small cast of actors to embody 15 different characters within a production and employ styles of slapstick, mask and puppetry to create a family-friendly experience. They help first-time theatregoers discover their love for live performance through a foolish approach to storytelling!

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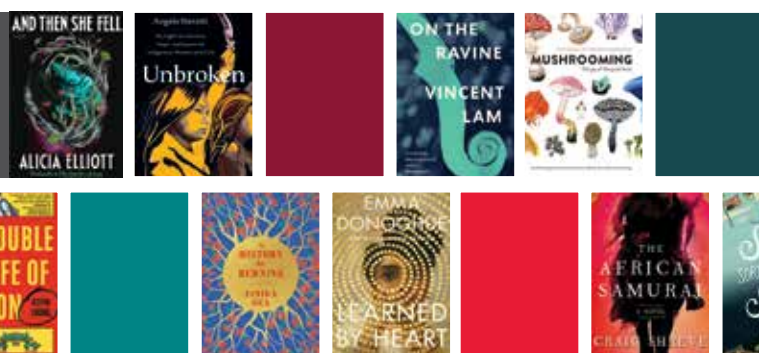
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2023 MERA Award of Excellence

There is a first time for everything! Heidi Earnshaw and Elise Abrams-Ogg are recognized as co-winners of the 2023 MERA Award of Excellence in Fine Art and Fine Craft.

"It is a pleasure to see so many high-quality submissions coming from our MERA community," wrote juror Suzette MacSkimming. The submissions this year were of such high quality that members of the three-person jury decided that two applicants were equally deserving of the winning title. Furniture designer and maker Heidi Earnshaw and classical archaeologist, organic farmer and heritage carpenter Elise Abrams-Ogg have been selected as co-winners of this year's Award of Excellence in Fine Arts and Fine Crafts, with painter Barb J. Sohn as finalist.

Jurors Sunny Kerr (Curator of Contemporary Art at the Agnes Etherington Art Gallery at Queen's University in Kingston), Victoria Henry (former Director of the Canada Council Art Bank) and Suzette MacSkimming (painter and printmaker, teacher and presenter) were impressed by the spectrum of art and abilities in all nine applicants to this year's award. Juror Victoria Henry writes: "We carefully considered all of the applications and found it challenging as there is such incredible talent in Lanark County. It was especially interesting to see the development of individual art practices at all ages. Taking this growth into account, the jury was unanimous in its recommendations."



The MERA Award is shared by Elise Abrams-Ogg (above) and Heidi Earnshaw (left)

ness? Attention? Meaning? These are some of the questions at the heart of my practice."

As a drafts person par excellence, Elise Abrams-Ogg works primarily in graphite and watercolour and describes the dual forces at play that inspire her pieces: "I am compelled by the way these once-crisp forms are transformed over time by nature and the fogginess of memory into more chaotic and romantic structures. Temples break down and we see plants and animals move into the cracks, vegetation decays. In all structures, both human-made and natural, the dual forces of precise geometry and unpredictable decay are always at work." Since studying heritage carpentry at Algonquin College in Perth, Abrams-Ogg has found another way to express herself artistically. She finds the same dynamic of precision and predictability are at play.

Jurors recognize Barb J. Sohn as a finalist for her outstanding contributions as an artist and to the community. "[Sohn] brings us light, emotion, and the clear colours of our wild environment in her beautiful, large paintings. She consistently creates works of fine quality and enduring beauty. We feel the silence, calm and sometimes even a mystical grandeur, as in her depiction called *St. Elias Lake, Yukon*." Barb Sohn is also a founder of local studio tour Art Works! Perth.

The MERA Award, which is given every two years, was conceived and made possible by a generous donation by Lanark Highlands residents Chris and David Dodge to the Perth and District Community Foundation, which manages the funds. Recognizing MERA's important contribution to the arts community, the Dodges chose MERA to select the Award winners. Anyone interested in learning more about the MERA Award is invited to send an email to <meraschoolhouse@gmail.com>, or visit <meraschoolhouse.org>. The next award will be given in 2025.

— By Helen Mogford and Alexis Scott



All three jurors were impressed by the remarkable furniture designer and maker Heidi Earnshaw's "dedication to her creative practice, her consummate skill as a designer, and her careful, caring efforts as a maker of unique pieces."

When describing her style of furniture making, Earnshaw refers to her work as "slow furniture", a term inspired by the slow movement. "There is a deeply held belief within the slow movement that objects hold our memories and traces of our daily rituals and experiences," she explains. "This begins with the maker and continues, often in very intangible ways, with the person or people who engage the made objects. As makers, can we make tangible what is intangible? Can craft and craftsmanship invite or even demand slow-



Painter Barb J. Sohn was recognized as a finalist for the 2023 MERA Award

music • theatre
poetry • jewellery
photography • painting
pottery • sculpture

Merrickville FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

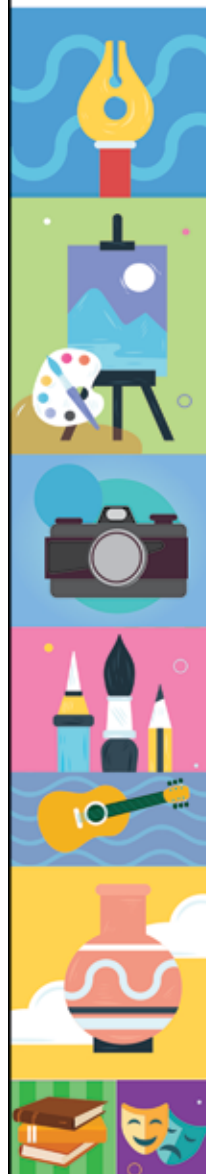
JULY 29 + 30 2023

10am-6pm | Blockhouse Park

MAG artists located on eastern section of Blockhouse Park

Plays, music and poetry readings in the Lions Club Pavilion, Blockhouse Park

Community mural painting event -
Special Concert for the Community by *Arbour Season*, 7-9pm



ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, JULY 29

- 10:30—11:15AM Bradley Smith
- 11:30am—Noon Theatre Night in Merrickville presents, *The Green Thumb Gang*
- 12:15—1:00PM Lorrie & Paul Sutterlin
- 1:15—2:00PM The Southwind Band
- 2:00—2:15PM Rogue Poets of Merrickville
- 2:15—3:00PM Arbour Season
- 3:00—3:45PM The Way Woods Band
- 4:00—4:15PM Rogue Poets of Merrickville
- 4:15—5:00PM Tom Watson
- 5:15—6:00PM Lorrie & Paul Sutterlin
- 7:00—9:00PM Arbour Season
Concert for the community

SUNDAY, JULY 30

- 10:30—10:45AM Rogue Poets of Merrickville
- 11:00—11:45AM Rob Kealey Band
- Noon—12:30PM Theatre Night in Merrickville presents, *The Green Thumb Gang*
- 12:30—1:45PM Shabraque-Celtic
- 2:00—2:45PM Gentle Sparrow
- 3:00—3:15PM Rogue Poets of Merrickville
- 3:15—4:00PM Bradley Smith
- 4:15—5:00PM Gentle Sparrow
- 5:15—6:00PM The Southwind Band

Updates | www.mag-artists.ca

Contact | nprevisich@bell.net

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10-Minute Plays

Boundless Fun in Bite-Size Form

By Karine Charland

Whether you are an aficionado or a stranger to theatre, a devout thespian or a sceptical patron, Kanata Theatre's annual 10-minute play festival will cater to everyone's tastes. Featuring seven new plays by local playwrights, the variety of styles and themes will leave you laughing, gasping, wondering, cheering, pondering, and at times even crying.

The festival runs on July 28 and 29, offering a splash of comedy with a hint of drama. In *Do Not Resuscitate*, there is there something fishy at the long-term care home... or perhaps the resident grouch is just losing his marbles. In *Screen Time*, two teenage brothers get a strange taste of reality when video games take on a life of their own. In *A Dark and Stormy Night*, odd events unfold as a playwright attempts to write a 10-minute play under the eye of his loving but sarcastic wife. In *Lessons in Loss*, a daughter lovingly accompanies her mother through a difficult journey paved by Alzheimer's, while struggling with her own grief. In *Murder and Other Hobbies*, the show must go on, but the director and cast are at odds about the script, and each has their own secret agenda. In *The Muse*, an unconventional career choice skips a generation as parental judgment sets in. In *The Key*, two church friends embark on a hilarious, covert mission that does not quite align with their catechism.

The festival features both new and returning playwrights who engaged in a lengthy labour of love to bring original stories to life, mentored by award-winning Ottawa-based playwright Guy Newsham, and supported by their peers in a collaborative writers' circle.

Jane Stott, artistic director of Studio Theatre Perth, reflects on her experience: "The best part of being involved in the writers' circle for me was the learning. You take your 10-minute precious baby to each circle, you hear it read, you write down all the great insight from fellow playwrights, and then you take it home and rewrite. Repeat numerous times. If you are lucky you end up with a perfect little bite-sized adventure where every word spoken and action taken speaks volumes."

Mary Ellen Vice, who co-produces the festival and is a seasoned actor, retired drama teacher and long-time Arnprior and Renfrew resident, echoed this sentiment: "Kanata Theatre's 10-minute playwriting exercise was an inspiring adventure that allowed me to learn and hone the craft. I attribute this to our mentor,



Kanata Theatre's 10-minute play festival takes place on July 28 and 29, by cash donation at the door

Guy Newsham, and to the collaborative space of our Writers Circle. Such a creatively satisfying project!"

Now in its third year, the 10-minute play festival is deeply rooted in the Ottawa Valley. Studio Theatre Perth premiered the sold-out event in the summer of 2021, in collaboration with Kanata Theatre. Tourists and locals alike braved rain and heat to see plays in various locations around the historic town of Perth, while new theatregoers saw them performed onstage at the Ron Maslin Playhouse. Almonte-based Jennifer Pfitzer, who appeared as a memorable bloodsucker in 2021's *Mosquito*, lent her talents this year to creating the festival's new branding.

The upcoming festival promises to be just as original and entertaining as its predecessors. Don't miss this unique event at Kanata Theatre's Ron Maslin Playhouse. Performances are Friday, July 28 (7:30PM) and Saturday, July 29 (2:30PM and 7:30PM). Tickets are available at the door, pay what you can pricing, cash only. For more information, please visit <kanatatheatre.ca>.


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(l-r) The Cove's Seamus Cowan, Grace Lloyd (a volunteer with Westport In Bloom) and James Doran — presenting the donation of \$410 raised at the Blues on the Rideau show featuring David Rotundo on May 13

James Doran — 30 Years of Choosing the Blues

After 30 years of being in the blues promotion business in Canada, James Doran announced that his Choose the Blues Productions has closed its doors. The final "Blues on the Rideau" show at The Cove Inn in Westport, Ontario took place on June 2, 2023. Over the decades James has produced three major blues festivals including Tremblant and Smiths Falls, spent six years on-air with his "Inside the Blues" radio show on DAWG FM in Ottawa, and presented 178 Blues on the Rideau shows over 17 years at The Cove Inn. In addition to creating thousands of new blues fans, those shows also raised over \$86,000 for local charities and good causes.

Seamus Cowan, manager of The Cove, has this to say about James and his legacy: "James Doran is a special breed, with a passion for covering all the right details in running a consistently great product of live blues at an intimate local venue. He even confided that his real intent of the Blues on the Rideau

Series was to find a place where he could book all his favourite bands and have his friends help pay for it! And it worked! 17 years is an incredible run, and all his friends, the musicians, the sponsors, the partners and concert goers alike will miss his joie de vivre and enthusiasm for the blues. They will also miss his anecdotal stories, his direct historical connections to the musicians, and his undying promotion of this great music. We wish James all the best, and you will most likely see him from time to time at musical events in the future at The Cove."

Seamus adds that: "the Blues on the Rideau Series will continue in much the same way, just under a different name. It will now be called Blues at The Cove. We invite everyone to check out the Summer Series outdoors on the patio, after which the series will pick back up again indoors in the fall. Thanks for your support as we move forward with live music and Blues at The Cove!"

Bridge St. Summerfest!

Summerfest, the iconic summer market festival, returns to downtown Carleton Place on July 29 from 10AM to 3PM. Over half a kilometre of the newly renovated Bridge Street streetscape will be filled with fabulous live entertainers and a juried selection of vendors. Spend the day exploring artisans, makers, crafters, vintage & thrift resellers, pop-ups and the Town's own local businesses.

Downtown Carleton Place is so excited to host this incredible event after a three-year hiatus. If you've never attended in the past, get ready for a world-class outdoor shopping experience.

Dena Comley, local business owner and member of Town Council, enthuses that: "Summerfest is an excellent opportunity to connect as a community. With local businesses, artists and organizations all coming together for this great event, there is something for everyone to enjoy. It is a great way to meet

new neighbours and discover what's new in Downtown Carleton Place."

Admission is free, and more information can be found at <downtowncarletonplace.com>.





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Celebrate 20 Years of Conservation with MMLT and Lake 88.1

Submitted by the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust

Mark your calendars! On Saturday, July 15 at 8AM, Lake 88.1 FM will broadcast a one-hour Radiothon to benefit the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust (MMLT) on its "All About the House" program.

It's an exciting year for MMLT — our 20th anniversary — and to celebrate, this year's Radiothon will feature interviews from a few founding members of the land trust. You will hear fascinating stories from Howard Clifford, Mary Vandenhoff and Donna Davidson, as well as from Emily Giles, current MMLT director and Chair of the Fundraising and Communications Committee, about why the land trust's job has never been more critical. Our inspiring speakers will recount exceptional moments in MMLT's history, emphasize the importance of protecting land in perpetuity, highlight fun upcoming family events, and reveal exciting new land trust initiatives. You won't want to miss our big announcement!

Please tune into Lake 88.1 FM, or listen online at lake88.ca on Saturday, July 15 to



Tune into Lake 88.1 on July 15 at 8AM for the annual MMLT Radiothon!

enjoy the discussion and offer your support for the important work we do in preserving natural lands. After all, the Lake 88.1 Radiothon is one of MMLT's biggest fundraising initiatives of the year!

MMLT relies on the support of generous community members and businesses to continue and expand our work. Never have natural landscapes been under such pressure to be developed, and never has the need to conserve land and protect vulnerable species been more urgent!

MMLT's phone lines (253-2722) will be open from 8AM to 6PM on Radiothon day to accept donations over the phone. Our website, mmlt.ca, is also accessible anytime for quick and easy online donations and to find out about upcoming events.

MMLT thanks Lake 88.1 FM for hosting this event.

Three New Shows at Sivarulrasa Gallery

Almonte's Sivarulrasa Gallery will present three new exhibitions in July. *William Liao: City Limits*, featuring new paintings by Vancouver-based artist William Liao, will run in Gallery III from June 30 to August 4. In this new body of work, the artist explores the chaos and beauty of urban life, capturing the energy and excitement of the city while also revealing its hidden charms and unexpected moments of stillness. "I hope to invite viewers to see the city in a new way," he says. "Not just as a collection of buildings and streets, but as a living, breathing organism that is constantly changing and evolving."

Elaine Carr: In Unexpected Places will run July 7 to August 11 in Gallery II. This installation by Windsor-based artist Elaine Carr considers the intricate and delicate connections among beaver dams, rivers, ecosystems and the concept of home. The artist uses a variety of media, including drawing and mapping, to explore the beauty and significance of natural phenomena. The installation includes new mixed media works as well as an intriguing centrepiece suspended from above.

Catherine Gutsche: News Blues will run in Gallery I from July 7 to August 11. This body of work by Ottawa-based artist Catherine Gutsche draws on observations from life over the past few years — in particular the pandemic — the feeling of watching from a

distance as events passed by. "Participation not being a viable option, we sat back and absorbed events as they were presented from third parties," she says. Working with non-representational compositions, Catherine Gutsche's paintings are largely process-driven, using a variety of tools to allude to forms in nature and life.

Meet the Artists

Meet the artists at the combined Artists Reception for these three shows on Saturday, July 15 from 2-4PM. Registration is not required; for more information please visit sivarulrasa.com.



Beneath the Surface (above) will be featured in the show *Elaine Carr: In Unexpected Places* at Sivarulrasa Gallery

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Just 15 mins from Almonte or Kanata, 42 acres surrounded by tranquil countryside. This land has open fields that for years was used for hay crops and grazing cattle, no pesticides. Woodlands at the back for hiking, walking the dog and enjoying the beauty of nature. Located on paved road that is school bus route and has curbside garbage pickup. Zoned Rural Countryside for your new home and home-based business. Survey 2023. Listed for \$549,000

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HerbFest 2023 takes place on July 30 on the banks of beautiful White Lake

HerbFest – a Celebration of Healthy Living

HerbFest 2023 kicks off at 9AM on Sunday, July 30 on the beautiful grounds of the historic Waba Cottage Museum and Gardens. With more vendors and exciting new workshops this year, organizers expect to surpass last year's 2,000 visitors.

This celebration of healthy living offers a unique shopping experience in the vendor market, bringing in fantastic local artisans, farms and delicious food from all over Ottawa and the Valley. Live music, interactive workshops and demonstrations, tours and a children's area make this outdoor festival a must-attend!

The Kyle Felhaver Band, Spencer Scharf, Laurie Telgan, Lana Chenier and Emily Hass will all grace

the main stage throughout the day. Visitors can try their hand at watercolour painting, get gorgeous henna tattoos, cruise the river on a pontoon boat ride, satiate their hunger from a diverse array of local eats, and quench their thirst in the shaded beer garden. Vendors include produce and meat from local farms, herbs and plants, soaps and self-care products, gifts and hand-crafted items, jewellery and more!

Admission is free and there is ample parking on the grounds. An accessible washroom is also available. HerbFest runs from 9AM to 4PM on July 30 at 24 Museum Road in White Lake.

Please visit mcnabbraeside.com/play-here/herbfest-2023 for more details!

PICNIC in Smiths Falls!

Smiths Falls' fourth annual PICNIC program is officially open, featuring nine restaurants, with more expected to join as the summer unfolds.

Initially introduced in the summer of 2020 to support local restaurants and provide a safe takeout option during the pandemic, the award-winning PICNIC program has not only fulfilled its purpose over the last few years but has also gained popularity among restaurants, residents and visitors beyond the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

Julia Crowder, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism, says: "the program's success in supporting local businesses during Covid had transformed into a favourite summertime experience in Smiths Falls for both residents and visitors alike. The program emphasizes the ongoing commitment of shopping local, which continues to aid local business recovery and support area restaurants in showcasing the delightful culinary offerings they produce." She adds: "since the program's start, 1,111 boxes have been

sold, generating almost \$49,000 in direct revenue to participating businesses."

PICNIC boxes typically include two main meals, two side dishes, two drinks, and two desserts, although some boxes are designed as a single serving for those who want a meal on their own. Again this year, customers purchasing a PICNIC box will receive a complimentary Smiths Falls branded PICNIC blanket.

Participating restaurants include Boomtown, Bowie's, C'est Tout, Sagar Indian Cuisine, Sip, The Vault, The Pickled Pig, The Dessert Plate and 2 Guys for Lunch. While some restaurants have chosen to introduce new menu items, allowing customers to explore different culinary experiences, others have decided to retain their popular menus due to high demand.

To view the complete list of menu options and restaurant hours, please visit smithsfalls.ca/picnic. To purchase a PICNIC box, kindly contact the participating restaurants directly, place your order, and get ready to enjoy a delightful picnic experience in Smiths Falls!



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ALMONTE CELTFEST



July 7-9, Almonte

A weekend celebration of the Valley's Celtic roots, featuring music, song and dance in Gemmill Park. Admission by donation on Saturday and Sunday.

www.almonteceltfest.com



Every Wednesday in July, Almonte

Free outdoor music concerts in Almonte's Augusta Street Park. BBQs, potlucks and more.

[f /FriendsOfAugustaStreetPark](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfAugustaStreetPark)



CLAYTON FEST July 22 in Clayton

Live music, friends, food, and fun for all ages. Come out and celebrate the community.

www.claytonontario.ca

Bicentennial Community Celebration



July 29 from 11AM to 3PM

Hosted by our local service clubs. BBQ and family friendly activities!

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Mississippi Mills



Visit local farms, learn about farming throughout history to today. Lunch and gift bag included. Tickets \$30.

August 5

www.mississippimills.ca/200



CELEBRATE JAMES NAISMITH 3-ON-3

August 12 in Almonte

Canada's Walk of Fame Hometown Stars' collaboration with Mississippi Mills and the Naismith 3x3 Basketball Tournament in honour of the inventor of basketball, Dr. James Naismith

www.mississippimills.ca/events



Come Home to Pakenham Weekend!

August 18-20

Come home to Pakenham for a weekend long celebration! Enjoy live music, fireworks, kids' activities, a fun family dance and much more!

www.mississippimills.ca/200



September 8-10 Almonte

The Almonte Fair has entertainment, midway, livestock shows and homecraft displays all weekend.

www.almontefair.ca

For more information about Mississippi Mills Bicentennial events and activities visit www.mississippimills.ca/200

Bloomfest Garden Art Show and Sale

By Suzanne Patry

Mark your calendar for the third week of July when the display gardens and daylily field at Whitehouse Perennials are in full bloom. This is the fifth Bloomfest Garden Art Show, and the number of participating artists has grown to twenty-one. Every day beginning on July 22, the work of the artists will be installed throughout the three display gardens and the daylily field — a perfect venue to showcase garden art. It will remain in place until the show closes on July 30.

The lineup includes local artists as well as some from southern Ontario and Quebec. Doug MacDonald from **Rue Royale** and Dave Card of **Peace of Mind Creations** are both well known locally and have been participating since the first year of the show. Doug will have a selection of his cast gargoyles, animals and planters. Dave uses the natural form and colour of wood to create his sculptures. His carved faces on cedar rails always draw a reaction from visitors.

Chris Van Zanten, a well-known local glass blower, makes weatherproof glass totems and bird feeders in a rainbow of colours. Jane Christie of **Twisted Tees** is a new participant. She recycles t-shirts into weatherproof whimsical and colourful animals that can be tucked in throughout your gardens. Frank Sammut of **Kokopelli Woodworking** turns locally harvested wood into unique indoor and outdoor furniture. The birdhouses of **Portshell Crafts** are both colourful and functional.

Caprice Segall of **My Recycled Dreams** is another birdhouse artist. Her brightly coloured creations are decorated with bugs, birds and flowers and are topped with recycled metal roofs. Cecilia Troy is a mixed-media artist who creates her unique birdbaths and other pieces from salvaged objects of metal and wood under the name **Artified Living**. Shelly Amor is a painter who also makes exterior, weatherproof wall hangings. These are made to be hung on fences or walls to block unsightly views, create privacy or just add colour to a dark corner of the garden.



Find dragons by Twisted Tees (above), flower pots by Klay Kreations (left), and garden art by many other creators at Bloomfest — taking place from July 22–30 at Whitehouse Perennials

Murkay Creations uses molten glass to produce wind chimes, outdoor wall hangings and multi-coloured dragonflies that glisten in the sun. **1 Glassy Broad** is another new artist who also works with molten glass to create flowers, bugs and fence art. The metal work of Clare Scott Taggart, better known as **Rusty Girl**, is always in demand. From practical items like peony rings to obelisks and bird baths, Clare's rusty metal creations will fit in any garden. Rob and Sue Thomas of **A Twist of Metal** turn steel and sometimes stone into original sculptures. Each year Rob brings favourites like bull rushes and dancing cranes, but there is always something new and unique.

In his Ottawa Valley studio known as Walden Three, **Jack Stekelburg** has been creating one-of-a-kind abstract metal sculptures for many years. He describes his work as "sometimes representational but most often not". Stephane Lavallee of **L'art-Verre** has a following of people who collect his brilliantly painted little houses, framed in cedar wood and decorated using glass and recycled copper wire. The benches and tables of **Tuscany Concrete by Design** are works of art in cast concrete. They are fabricated for outdoor use but are equally at home indoors.

Raymond Warren's enchanting ceramic sculptures are one-of-a-kind pieces that are sculpted, then wood-fired. The subtle shadings and colours make his little figures come to life. **Colin Logan** handcrafts metal and

stone creations that will make you smile. Birds, large dragonflies and little turtles are made from metal and stone. Every year visitors are anxious to see what **Cindy Laneville**, a mosaic glass artist, has created. Brilliantly coloured hanging windows and art framed with live edge are two of her specialities. Marie and Howie Levine of the **Glass, Wood and Resin Boutique** also work with live edge wood using sparkling insets made of mirrors, glass and resin. Another new artist, Karen Kurtzrock of **Klay Kreations**, is an Ottawa-based ceramic artist. She works in stoneware clay, making unique objects for the home and garden.

Garden art adds the finishing touch to an outdoor space. It is always fun to imagine how a piece of art that catches your eye would look in your own garden. We are excited to be able to host this show again and to feature the work of these talented individuals. Admission is free, and information about the show and artists can be found at <whitehouseperennials.com>.

5 Wednesdays in July

Free Outdoor Live Music Concerts in Almonte's Augusta Street Park

July 5 **Dr. Brown's Uptown Travelling Medicine Show**
featuring: the Almonte Legion Pipe Band, Judge a Book, and more
5:45PM Start
Almonte Civitan Club BBQ (vegetarian option available)

July 12 **Gentle Sparrow Lanark County Revival**
6PM Start
Community Potluck

July 19 **TRXSTR Kamengo Culture Troupe**
6PM Start
Almonte Civitan Club BBQ (vegetarian option available)

July 26 **Colby & Cash Jasper Bridge**
6PM Start
Community Potluck

Please join us for a summer's end music celebration!

AugustaFest
Aug. 26 Noon to 6PM

More info: [f/FriendsofAugustaStreetPark](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofAugustaStreetPark)

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[perthantiqueshow.com](https://www.perthantiqueshow.com)

What the Hill??

The noun “hill” is encountered fairly frequently in instructions for growing vegetables, as in *plant squash, pumpkins or corn in hills*. I checked some of my gardening books gathering dust on the shelf and did a few searches with Dr. Google, and ended up perhaps a bit more enlightened and perhaps a bit more confused.

Certainly, recipes can be found for creating mounds for planting squash and pumpkins. These generally involve the digging of a hole a foot or so deep, the filling of that hole with composted manure, the creation of a volcano shaped mound with the soil from the hole, and the planting of 3 or 4 seeds in the centre of

concerned that not every seed will germinate, I might plant 2 seeds every 8 inches. Why would I waste seed and create the need to thin out the extra plants (not a task I often get around to)? Wait a minute — perhaps the company selling the seeds has an interest in how many seeds I use!

So back to why would a gardener choose to plant squash or pumpkins in a mound on top of composted manure. The horticultural needs of these plants are demanding. They require lots of heat, need to have their roots in very well-drained soil, and are quite heavy feeders. They require a long growing season, but their seeds will rot in soil that is too wet and cold. Well-drained soil that warms up early will contribute to successful germination and growth. Perhaps worth building a mound! Many gardeners try to ensure success by starting seeds about 4 weeks before our May 24 “safe” outdoor planting date for frost-sensitive plants. Seeds need to be planted in a minimum 4-inch biodegradable pot that can be planted directly in the garden. Squash and pumpkin (and other vines such as cucumber) do not like to have their roots disturbed.

In our Food Bank Blakeney Garden this year, we dealt with very dry conditions at the end of May when we were planting corn, squash and pumpkins. Instead of creating a mound and “raising” the seed bed, we chose to go deeper to connect with whatever moisture there might be deeper in the soil. We created a hole a foot or so across and about 4 inches deep, dropped in 3 or 4 seeds and covered them with about an inch of soil, tamping it down so the seeds connected with whatever moisture was there. Similarly with corn, we dug a furrow 3 or 4 inches deep, planted the seed and covered it with an inch or so of soil. Germination and growth have been quite acceptable. While the soil is heavy clay, the field is on the edge of a ravine and is quite well drained.



Some plants, such as squash and pumpkins, grow well when planted on a hill or mound

by David Hinks

the “volcano”. Other sources indicate that ‘hill’ refers to a grouping of plants — probably 3 or 4 — rather than being planted in a row. There is a suggestion that since gardeners often pull soil around the base of corn plants to stabilize heavy plants, overtime it may resemble a hill.

Planting in hills is not to be confused with “hilling-up” potatoes. Hilling potatoes involves drawing up the soil on either side of the row (creating a bit of a hill, I suppose...). We do this because as the potato plant grows from the seed potato, it sends out horizontal stems where the new potatoes form. Depending on how deep the seed potato was planted, these new potatoes may push out of the soil. If exposed to sunlight, potatoes turn green and will irritate the digestive system if eaten.

Forgive me for a tangent on the subject of seed packets that drive me bonkers. Many packets have instructions such as *plants seeds 2 or 3 inches apart and then thin to 8 inches apart*. Many packets also indicate the expected germination rate, which is generally over 90%. If I am

A further experiment was to plant on top of last year’s compost pile. About 90 feet long, it still has large bits of uncomposted material. We dug depressions in the compost about every 4 feet, added a shovel of composted manure, and planted 3 or 4 seeds about an inch deep in each “hill”.

For adults who want to help the community and learn much more about vegetable gardening (and try new exciting techniques!), might I suggest volunteering at the garden created by the Lanark County Food Bank in Blakeney. This two-acre garden began its third year in May. In the first two years 30,000 pounds of fresh organic produce was grown for Food Bank clients. Volunteers are asked to commit to a weekly 3-hour shift throughout the growing season. Experienced gardeners lead the work in a gorgeous rural setting. For more information, please contact Food Bank manager Tammy Parent at <lcfb.thehungerstop@gmail.com>.

I trust that my ruminations have been worth more than “a hill of beans” (whatever that means)!

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Kindness is Everything

Something beautiful is in the air. Twelve incredibly talented, loving, and beautiful artists are collaborating in a group art exhibition called *Kindness is Everything* at the Art Factory in Renfrew. The quality, depth and variety of the artworks being shown will certainly captivate your imagination.

Beautiful hearts do beautiful things. The artists have collectively decided that they will each donate a HEARTwork to the Bernadette McCann House. “Survivors of domestic violence who are leaving the shelter to rebuild their lives will be offered a piece of HEARTwork to take with them to their new homes. Several members of the group have experienced domestic violence firsthand, and we want to highlight the important work this organization performs,” explains Patrick John Mills, show organizer and owner of the Art Factory <liveloveartfactory.com>.

Kindness is Everything runs Wednesday through Saturday from 10AM to 5PM until July 22. Admission to the Art Factory is always free.



The painting at right is by Don Bruner

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 Book a workshop with abstract metal sculptor **Jack Stekelenburg** and create your very own metal sculpture using various metal objects of your choice.

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 8AM–5PM

We have what you need for your next DIY interlocking stone project!

Small but Mighty

Join the Carleton Place Water Dragons!

By Bridget Flynn

Does your child love to swim but get bored waiting their turn at swimming lessons? Are you looking for a low-impact cardio workout that will also help keep you toned? Join the award-winning Carleton Place Water Dragons Swim Team! We have programs for all ages and abilities with both competitive and non-competitive options.

We are a non-profit club with over 25 years in the community. Our staff of certified coaches and our volunteer Board of Directors work hard to ensure that we foster and teach the sport of swimming in a fun team environment. Head Coach Rod Agar has over 40 years of experience coaching swimming and is especially proud to have previously coached Bailey Andison who represented Canada at the Tokyo Olympics.

Our 2022-23 season was jam-packed. Swimmers participated in both local and away swim meets, team-building community activities like our entry in the Carleton Place Christmas Parade, as well as fundraising. This year our small group of swimmers was able to raise \$10,000 at our much-anticipated Swim-a-Thon! We will also be cheering for CPWD swimmer Fiona Brophy as she competes in her first Canadian Junior National Swim Championship this August. Go Fiona Go!

Mark your calendars, as registration for the 2023-24 season opens in July with early bird rates ending in August. More information about our club and registration can be found at <cpwd.ca>. Join us as we kick, splash and swim fast!



The Carleton Place Water Dragons welcome swimmers of all ages to join them for their 2023-24 season. Register now for early bird rates!

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www.perthgarlicfestival.ca

Yellow Bus Farm Tour, Almonte, Aug 5
 Monkeyjunk, Westport, Aug 10
 PuppetCon, Almonte, Aug 11-13
 Killaloe Craft Fair, August 11-13
 Naismith 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament, Almonte, Aug 12
 Perth Garlic Festival, Aug 12-13
 Come Home to Pakenham Weekend, August 18-20
 North Lanark Highland Games, Almonte, Aug 26
 Tarts and Arts Butter Tart Festival, Arnprior, Aug 26
 Sundance Artisan Show, Maberly, Sep 2-4
 Almonte Fibrefest, Sep 6-10
 Miss Emily w/ Band, Westport, Sep 7
 Almonte Fair, Sep 8-10
 OPP Chorus Concert, Perth, Sep 22
 JW-Jones, McDonalds Corners, Sep 22
 Perth Autumn Studio Tour, Oct 7 & 8
 Crown & Pumpkin Studio Tour, Mississippi Mills, Oct 7 & 8
 Jane Austen's *Lady Susan*, Perth, Oct 12-22
 The Magpies, MERA, Oct 29
Matilda - the Musical, Perth, Nov 16-19
The Millworkers' Musical, Almonte, Nov 17-26

Festivals

The Barra MacNeils with Lynn Miles, Jul 7, 7PM. Celtfest kickoff concert. Gemmill Park, Almonte. \$38.61 adults, \$27.96 youth and senior. almonteceltfest.com

Almonte Celtfest, Jul 8-9, 12PM. A family-friendly celebration of Celtic music. Gemmill Park, Almonte. By donation. almonteceltfest.com

Stewart Park Festival, Jul 14-16, 9AM-late. 3 days of free live music, plus food & artisanal vendors. Stewart Park, Perth. StewartParkFestival.com

Merrickville Festival of the Arts, Jul 29-30, 10AM-6PM. Outdoor art show, plays, music & poetry performances. Blockhouse Park, Merrickville. mag-artists.ca

Literature

AuthorTalk, Jul 6, 5:45-6:45PM. With Josephin Matyas and Craig Jones, authors of *Chasing the Blues*. Perth & District Union Library

Summer Fiction Book Sale, Jul 22, 9AM-3PM. In the garden, all sales by donation, proceeds to Perth Library. Perth & District Union Library. perthunionlibrary.ca

65 Years of NASA, Jul 29, 1-3PM. Frank Hitchens discuss some of NASA's greatest missions. Perth & District Union Library. perthunionlibrary.ca

WHAT'S ON IN

Monday **Tuesday** **Wednesday** **Thursday**

The Art Factory presents *Kindness is Everything*, Wednesday through Saturday, 10AM to 5PM [to July 22] <liveloveartfactory.com>
General Fine Craft presents abstract by nature — new encaustic and acrylic paintings, and intaglio prints by Dunrobin's Susan Ukkola <generalfinecraft.com>
Mississippi Valley Textile Museum presents *Woven Woods: A Journey through the Forest Floor*, and *Knit Markers: Collaborating with Machines* <mvtm.ca>
Sivarulrasa Gallery presents *William Liao: City Limits*; *Elaine Carr: In Unexpected Places*, and *Catherine Gutsche: News Blues* <sivarulrasa.com>
The Almonte Library Corridor Gallery presents *Swashlines* — an exhibition of Beach Finds by printmaker Melanie Brunton
Art & Class in Perth presents daily art classes all summer long <artandclass.ca>

<h1>3</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carp Celtic Jam, Carp Masonic Lodge Nolan Hubbard, The Cove 	<h1>4</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SF Bridge Club, Smiths Falls Music Trivia, The Barley Mow Eric Uren & Meghan Balogh, The Cove Zach Martin, Cheshire Cat 	<h1>5</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Brown's Uptown Travelling Medicine Show, Almonte Trivia Night, Bowie's Duplicate Bridge, Almonte Open Mic w/Redneck Limousine, Waterfront Gastropub Wings 'n Tunes with Shawn McCullough, The Cove Summer Sketch Club, Perth 	<h1>6</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music in the Glen, Almonte Author Talk, Perth Open Stage, Bowie's Cashmen Ford, Waterfront Gastropub Spencer Evans, The Cove Key Strings, Cheshire Cat David Bell, Urban Angus
<h1>10</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carp Celtic Jam, Carp Masonic Lodge Nolan Hubbard, The Cove Music in Riverside Park, Carleton Place 	<h1>11</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Texas Horns, Almonte SF Bridge Club, Smiths Falls Music Trivia, The Barley Mow Zach Martin, Cheshire Cat Sarah Smith, The Cove 	<h1>22</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gentle Sparrow & Lanark County Revival, Almonte Summer Sketch Club, Perth Trivia Night, Bowie's Duplicate Bridge, Almonte Open Mic w/Redneck Limousine, Waterfront Gastropub Wings 'n Tunes with Shawn McCullough, The Cove 	<h1>23</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Stage, Bowie's Cashmen Ford, Waterfront Gastropub Steve Strongman Band, The Cove Carleton Place Toastmasters Club, contact for link Sierra Levesque, Cheshire Cat
<h1>17</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carp Celtic Jam, Carp Masonic Lodge Nolan Hubbard, The Cove 	<h1>18</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SF Bridge Club, Smiths Falls Music Trivia, The Barley Mow Zach Martin, Cheshire Cat Eric Uren & Meghan Balogh, The Cove 	<h1>19</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TRXSTR & Kamengo Culture Troupe, Almonte Summer Sketch Club, Perth Trivia Night, Bowie's Duplicate Bridge, Almonte Open Mic w/Redneck Limousine, Waterfront Gastropub Wings 'n Tunes with Shawn McCullough, The Cove 	<h1>20</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perth Citizen's Band Open Stage, Bowie's Cashmen Ford, Waterfront Gastropub Spencer Evans, The Cove Brock Zeman, Cheshire Cat Dezlorado & The Ranch Hands, Urban Angus
<h1>31</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carp Celtic Jam, Carp Masonic Lodge Nolan Hubbard, The Cove Bloomfest Garden Art Show & Sale, Almonte Music in Riverside Park, Carleton Place 	<h1>31</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SF Bridge Club, Smiths Falls Music Trivia, The Barley Mow Zach Martin, Cheshire Cat Eric Uren & Meghan Balogh, The Cove Bloomfest Garden Art Show & Sale, Almonte 	<h1>26</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colby and Cash & Jasper Bridge, Almonte Summer Sketch Club, Perth Trivia Night, Bowie's Duplicate Bridge, Almonte Open Mic w/Redneck Limousine, Waterfront Gastropub Wings 'n Tunes with Shawn McCullough, The Cove Bloomfest Garden Art Show & Sale, Almonte 	<h1>27</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Stage, Bowie's Cashmen Ford, Waterfront Gastropub Carleton Place Toastmasters Club, contact for link Spencer Evans, The Cove Bloomfest Garden Art Show & Sale, Almonte Ken Seeley, Cheshire Cat Kyle Fellhaver, Urban Angus

Local Food

Back Forty Curds & Cooks, Jul 1, 11AM-6PM. Local beer, wine, artisan food vendors, music. Back Forty Artisan Cheese, Mississippi Station. artisancheese.ca

Visual Arts

Rideau Lakes Studio Tour, Jul 1-2. A free, self-guided studio tour featuring more than 18 artists. Rideau Lakes area. rideaulakesstudiotour.ca

Summer Sketch Club, 6-8PM. All skill levels welcome. Perth, Jul 5, Hourglass Café; Jul 12, Last Duel Park; Jul 19, St. James Anglican; Jul 26, Stewart Park. Free. perthunionlibrary.ca

Meet the Artists of 3 Exhibitions, Jul 15, 2-4PM. William Liao, Elaine Carr, Deborah and Catherine Gutsche. Sivarulrasa Gallery, Almonte. sivarulrasa.com

Bloomfest Garden Art Show & Sale, Jul 22-30, 9:30AM-5PM. Whitehouse Perennials, Almonte. whitehouseperennials.com

Art Fair, Jul 29, 9AM-4PM. Artists from inside and outside Renfrew County. Art Factory, Renfrew. Free. liveloveartfactory.com

Youth

Academy for Musical Theatre presents **Disney's Newsies Jr.**, Jul 7, 1PM; **Disney's Alice in Wonderland Jr.**, Jul 14, 1:30PM. St. Paul's United Church, Perth. \$18 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434.

Theatre

Mysteries of the Keyhole House, every Friday (7:30PM) & Saturday (2PM & 7:30PM) until July 22. See the Grand Masters of Illusion. \$33 plus fees, eventbrite.com or call 430-4626. The Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. \$33. smithsfallstheatre.com

Hamlet, Jul 15, 7PM. By a Company of Fools. Pay-what-you-can. \$20 suggested donation. fools.ca. MERA Schoolhouse, McDonalds Corners

A Timeless Gathering, Jul 15, 1PM & 3PM. Escape room mysteries for ages 12+. Middleville & District Museum. \$20. middlevillemuseum.org

Yuk Yuks Comedy Show, Jul 21, 7PM. Featuring top Canadian comedian Derek Seguin. Final Score Sports Bar, Carleton Place. \$34. yukyuks.com/carletonplace

10-Minute Play Festival, Jul 28 7:30PM; Jul 29 2:30PM and 7:30PM. Presented by Kanata Theatre. Kanata Theatre. Pay-what-you-can, cash at the door. kanatatheatre.ca

Mysteries of the Keyhole House, Jul 28-Aug. 12, every Friday (7:30PM) & Sat (2PM & 7:30PM). See the Grand Masters of Illusion. Studio Theatre Perth. \$41. eventbrite.ca/cc/carleton

Music

MERA Makers Market, Jul 1, 15, 22 & 29 10AM-2PM. Crafts, music, great food, refreshments and more!. MERA Schoolhouse, McDonalds Corners. meraschoolhouse.org

Canada Day Hootenanny, Jul 2, 10AM-12PM. Live entertainment by the Brownie Bunch. Beckwith Park. Free. twp.beckwith.on.ca

The Three2Go Band, Jul 2, 2-5PM. Live music. The Opinicon, Elgin. opinicon.com/default.aspx

5 Wednesdays in July, Wednesdays, 6PM. Augusta Street Park, Almonte. Free live music. Jul 5 (5:45PM start) Dr. Brown's Uptown Travelling Medicine Show; Jul 12, Gentle Sparrow & Lanark County Revival; Jul 19, TRXSTR & Kamengo Culture Troupe; Jul 26, Colby and Cash & Jasper Bridge. facebook.com/FriendsofAugustaStreetPark

Music in the Glen, Jul 6, 7:30PM. Traditional trio from Ireland at Sivarulrasa Gallery. \$44 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434

John Dorsch, Jul 8 & 23, 1-4PM. Live at Stewart Park Bandshell. Stewart Park, Perth. johndorschmusic.com

Music in Riverside Park, Jul 10 & 24, 7:30PM. Free concert. Riverside Park, Carleton Place. facebook.com/cpadcb

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Canada Day Eve, Pakenham 🎸 Mysteries of the Keyhole House, Smiths Falls 🎸 Pre-Canada Day Party, The Cove 🎸 Drag Show, Urban Angus 🎸 Ken Armstrong, Waterfront Gastropub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Back Forty Curds & Cooks, Mississippi Station 🎸 Mysteries of the Keyhole House, Smiths Falls 🎸 Canada Day in Perth 🎸 Canada Day with Birds of a Feather, The Cove 🎸 Canada Day Bash, Urban Angus 🎸 Canada Day, Almonte 🎸 Rideau Lakes Studio Tour 🎸 MERA Makers Market, McDonalds Corners 🎸 Rob Kerr, Al Tambay, Waterfront Gastropub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Rideau Lakes Studio Tour 🎸 Sunday Market, Perth 🎸 Canada Day Hootenanny, Beckwith 🎸 Strawberry Social, Pakenham 🎸 The Three2Go Band, Elgin 🎸 Head Over Heels, The Cove 🎸 Bob Peppin, Waterfront Gastropub 🎸 Dylan Watts, Cheshire Cat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Mysteries of the Keyhole House, Smiths Falls 🎸 Disney's Newsies Jr., Perth 🎸 Quilts on the Tay, Smiths Falls 🎸 Benni Vander, The Cove 🎸 The Barra MacNeils with Lynn Miles, Almonte 🎸 Nick Straccini, Urban Angus 🎸 Ken Armstrong, Waterfront Gastropub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Almonte Celtfest, Almonte 🎸 Mysteries of the Keyhole House, Smiths Falls 🎸 Quilts on the Tay, Smiths Falls 🎸 Perth Antique Show & Sale, Perth 🎸 John Dorsch, Perth 🎸 Robert Keyes, The Cove 🎸 John Chandler w/ Blair Hogan, Cheshire Cat 🎸 Comedy Night, Neat Coffee Shop 🎸 Drag Show, Urban Angus 🎸 Rob Kerr, Al Tambay, Waterfront Gastropub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Almonte Celtfest, Almonte 🎸 Perth Antique Show & Sale, Perth 🎸 Portraits in the Park picnic, Almonte 🎸 Bob Peppin, Waterfront Gastropub 🎸 Dylan Watts, Cheshire Cat 🎸 Head Over Heels, The Cove
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Stewart Park Festival, Perth 🎸 Disney's Alice in Wonderland Jr., Perth 🎸 Mysteries of the Keyhole House, Smiths Falls 🎸 Young Petty Stones, The Cove 🎸 Vicki Brittle, Urban Angus 🎸 Ken Armstrong, Waterfront Gastropub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Stewart Park Festival, Perth 🎸 MMLT 20th Anniversary Radiothon, Perth 🎸 MERA Makers Market, McDonalds Corners 🎸 A Timeless Gathering, Middleville 🎸 Meet the Artists of 3 Exhibitions, Almonte 🎸 Hamlet, McDonalds Corners 🎸 Mysteries of the Keyhole House, Smiths Falls 🎸 Jeff Callery, The Cove 🎸 Steve Stacey, Cheshire Cat 🎸 Nick Straccini, Urban Angus 🎸 Rob Kerr, Al Tambay, Waterfront Gastropub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Stewart Park Festival, Perth 🎸 Bob Peppin, Waterfront Gastropub 🎸 Dylan Watts, Cheshire Cat 🎸 Head Over Heels, The Cove
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Mysteries of the Keyhole House, Smiths Falls 🎸 Eric Uren, The Cove 🎸 Barn Dance, Perth 🎸 Yuk Yuks Comedy Show, Carleton Place 🎸 Ryan O'Neil, Urban Angus 🎸 Ken Armstrong, Waterfront Gastropub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Bloomfest Garden Art Show & Sale, Almonte 🎸 MERA Makers Market, McDonalds Corners 🎸 Mysteries of the Keyhole House, Smiths Falls 🎸 Summer Fiction Book Sale, Perth 🎸 Bullmoose, The Cove 🎸 Huntley Slim, Cheshire Cat 🎸 Rob Kerr, Al Tambay, Waterfront Gastropub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Bloomfest Garden Art Show & Sale, Almonte 🎸 John Dorsch, Perth 🎸 Bob Peppin, Waterfront Gastropub 🎸 Dylan Watts, Cheshire Cat 🎸 Head Over Heels, The Cove
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Bloomfest Garden Art Show & Sale, Almonte 🎸 Cameron Wyatt & Friends, The Cove 🎸 CA & Sonny Folk Show, Urban Angus 🎸 10-Minute Play Festival, Kanata 🎸 Mysteries of the Keyhole House, Perth 🎸 Ken Armstrong, Waterfront Gastropub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Bridge Street Summerfest, Carleton Place 🎸 Merrickville Festival of the Arts, Merrickville 🎸 Bloomfest Garden Art Show & Sale, Almonte 🎸 Mysteries of the Keyhole House, Perth 🎸 Art Fair, Renfrew 🎸 MERA Makers Market, McDonalds Corners 🎸 Bicentennial Community Celebration, Almonte 🎸 Drag Brunch, Urban Angus 🎸 65 Years of NASA, Perth 🎸 10-Minute Play Festival, Kanata 🎸 Matt Dickson, The Cove 🎸 Joe McDonald Duo, Cheshire Cat 🎸 Sierra Levesque, Urban Angus 🎸 Rob Kerr, Al Tambay, Waterfront Gastropub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🎸 Herbfest, Waba 🎸 Bloomfest Garden Art Show & Sale, Almonte 🎸 Merrickville Festival of the Arts, Merrickville 🎸 Bob Peppin, Waterfront Gastropub 🎸 Dylan Watts, Cheshire Cat 🎸 Head Over Heels, The Cove

The Texas Horns, Jul 11, 7PM. R&B horns from Texas with Matt Chaffey & friends. Almonte Community Hall. \$40 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434

The Three2Go Band, Jul 15-8, 9PM. Live music. Golden Arrow, Perth. goldenarrowpub.com

Free Public Concert, Jul 20, 7:30PM. Perth Citizen's Band. Crystal Palace, Perth. perthband.ca

Barn Dance, Jul 21, 7-11PM. Featuring Marley Hill. Enjoy live music, food, and drinks. Ecotay, Perth. \$25 per person. ecotay.ca

The Cove (Westport, 273-3636): 5-8PM unless noted; Mon Nolan Hubbard; Tue Eric Uren & Meghan Balogh; Wed Wings 'n Tunes w/Shawn McCullough (5:30-8:30); Sun Head Over Heels Jun 30 Pre-Canada Day Party, 7-11PM, \$80

Jul 1 Canada Day with Birds of a Feather, Jul 6, 20 & 27 Spencer Evans Jazz Night, \$10

Jul 7 Benni Vander
Jul 8 Robert Keyes

Jul 11 Sarah Smith
Jul 13 Steve Strongman Band, 5-9PM, \$110 + hst

Jul 14 Young Petty Stones, 7-11PM, \$80 + hst

Jul 15 Jeff Callery
Jul 21 Eric Uren

Jul 22 Bullmoose, 7-11PM, \$80 + hst

Jul 28 Cameron Wyatt & Friends
Jul 29 Matt Dickson

Bowie's (Smiths Falls): Wed Where is my Mind Trivia, 8-10PM (sign-up online); Thu Open Stage, 8PM (casual sign-up); Fri original live music 8:30 & 11:30PM

Carp Masonic Lodge: Mon Carp Celtic Jam, 7PM, \$3

The Barley Mow (Almonte, 256-5669): Tue Music Trivia, 8PM

The Cheshire Cat Pub (Carp, 831-2183): Dylan Watts, 2-4PM every Sunday; Zach Martin, 6:30-8:30PM every Tuesday

Jul 6 Key Strings, 7-9PM

Jul 8 John Chandler, Blair Hogan, 8-10PM

Jul 13 Sierra Levesque, 7-9PM
Jul 15 Steve Stacey, 8-10PM

Jul 20 Brock Zeman, 7-9PM
Jul 22 Huntley Slim, 8-10PM
Jul 27 Ken Seeley, 7-9PM
Jul 29 Joe McDonald Duo, 8-10PM

Urban Angus Steak & Wine (Arnprior, 558-5050)

Jun 30 Drag Show, 9:30PM

Jul 1 Canada Day Bash, 6:30-9:30PM

Jul 6 David Bell, 7PM

Jul 7 Nick Straccini, 8PM

Jul 8 Drag Show, 9:30PM

Jul 14 Vicki Brittle, 8PM

Jul 15 Nick Straccini, 8PM

Jul 20 Dezlorado & The Ranch Hands, 8PM

Jul 21 Ryan O'Neil, 8PM

Jul 27 Kyle Fellhaver, 7PM

Jul 28 CA & Sonny Folk Show, 7PM

Jul 29 Drag Brunch, 11AM

Jul 29 Sierra Levesque, 8PM

The Waterfront Gastropub (CP, 257-5755): Open Mic w/Redneck Limousine, 8PM-12AM every Wed; Cashmen Ford, 8PM-12AM every Thu; Ken Armstrong, 8PM every Fri; Rob Kerr, 3-6PM every Sat; Al Tambay, 9:30PM-12:30AM every Sat; Bob Peppin, 3-6PM every Sun

Community

SF Bridge Club, Jan 3-Dec 31, 12:45PM every Tuesday Tues, 12:45PM. 283-2690. Smiths Falls Legion. 256-4747

Duplicate Bridge, 12:45PM every Wednesday Almonte Legion. 256-4747

Canada Day Eve, Jun 30. Traditional parade, live music, and kids' activities. Stewart Community Centre, Pakenham. mississippimills.ca

Canada Day, Jul 1. BBQ, refreshments, kids crafts & fun, music. Gemmill Park, Almonte. mississippimills.ca

Celebrate Canada Day in Perth, Jul 1, 5-10:30PM. BBQ, magic shows, and fireworks. Conlon Farm, Perth. perth.ca/en/visit/canada-day.aspx

Sunday Market, Jul 2, 10AM-3PM. 50+ vendors plus food, drinks, and music. Ecotay, Perth. Free. ecotay.ca

Strawberry Social, Jul 2, 2-4PM. Fundraiser. All welcome. Cedar Hill Schoolhouse, Pakenham. Adults \$10, Children \$5. 256-2014

Quilts on the Tay, Jul 7 (10AM-7PM), Jul 8 (10AM-5PM). Vendors, tea room, and boutique. Smiths Falls Memorial Community Centre. \$10. lanarkcountyquiltersguild.com

Perth Antique Show & Sale, Jul 8 & 9, 10AM-4PM. Dealers from ON & QC. Perth Civitan Club & Hall. \$7 entry. perthantiqueshow.com

"Portraits in the Park" Teddy Bear Picnic, Jul 9. Fundraiser for CHEO. \$50 per child, portraits taken & available for sale. Gemmill Park, Almonte. purenaturalportraits.com/TBP

Carleton Place Toastmasters Club, 7PM every other Thursday. All welcome. via Zoom, contact for link. carletonplace.toastmastersclubs.org

MMLT 20th Anniversary Radiothon, Jul 15, 8-9AM. On Lake 88. I with founding members and current director. Lake 88. I FM, Perth. mmlt.ca

Bicentennial Community Celebration, Jul 29, 11AM-3PM. BBQ and family friendly activities. Town of Mississippi Mills, Almonte. mississippimills.ca/200

Bridge Street Summerfest, Jul 29, 10AM-3PM. Artisans, makers, crafters, vintage & thrift resellers, pop-ups and local businesses. Downtown Carleton Place. downtowncarletonplace.com

Herbfest, Jul 30, 9AM-4PM. An annual celebration of healthy living. Vendors, demos, refreshments & entertainment. 24 Museum Road in White Lake. midsummerherbfest.ca

Opening Soon in Carleton Place...

Four local artists — Colleen Gray, Ginny Fobert, Gillian Marston and Pamela Stewart — are busily working to bring a new art gallery to life in downtown Carleton Place. Located at 210 Bridge Street (right on the Mississippi River), the Carleton Place Gallery will feature work by approximately twenty regional artists and artisans from diverse backgrounds on a rotating basis. It will provide them with affordable and accessible gallery, studio, workshop and meeting space, and help them to sell their work.

The four organizers are also the gallerists, and have formed an official partnership to own and operate the gallery. This fall they will be preparing a studio/workshop space as part of the gallery that will be used for meetings, studio space, education and workshops.

They plan to open as soon as they are able to procure and install their lighting system, and are hoping for a mid-August soft opening with a grand opening sometime in September.

In the interim, please visit their website <cpgallery.ca> or connect with them on Facebook or Instagram @CarletonPlaceGallery. The website has artist information (the submission application process is now open for artists interested in joining them) as well as information on sponsoring the gallery and a VIP email sign-up list to get updates and an invitation to the opening.



Four local artists (pictured above in Carleton Place's hottest new coffee spot) celebrate the signing of their legal partnership agreement for a new downtown art gallery

Their vision is to cultivate a true local artists' hub, to support and grow local art, and to help local and regional artists sell their work, while keeping exhibition costs as low as possible. They are also setting up a Patreon account for anyone who wishes to help support them in realizing this vision, so check them out at <patreon.com/CarletonPlaceGallery>!

A Very Special Teddy Bear Picnic

Photographer's Initiative Supports CHEO

Stephanie de Montigny, owner of Pure Natural Portraits, has put together an exciting event for a great cause. The inaugural Teddy Bear Picnic "Portraits in the Park" fundraiser will be held on July 9 at Almonte's picturesque Gemmill Park, where children can enjoy a delightful day out with their favourite stuffed animals while supporting the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO). All proceeds from the registration fee will be donated to CHEO to aid in their

invaluable work of providing specialized healthcare for children in need.

The Teddy Bear Picnic promises to be a heartwarming event filled with fun, laughter and cherished childhood memories. Families are invited to bring their little ones and their beloved teddy bears or other stuffed animals for a styled picnic in the park. Children will have the opportunity to be photographed alongside their cuddly companions, capturing the precious bond between them. The sure-to-be-adorable portraits will be available for purchase, with proceeds further contributing to the fundraising efforts.

"I am thrilled to host the Teddy Bear Picnic, an event that not only celebrates the innocence and joy of childhood but also supports the critical services provided by CHEO," explains Stephanie de Montigny, event organizer. "By participating in this event, families can make a real difference in the lives of children facing health challenges while creating lasting memories for their own little ones."

The participation fee of \$50 per child will go directly to CHEO. Additionally, sponsors are working together to support the event, ensuring that every dollar raised will make a meaningful impact. Registration for the Teddy Bear Picnic is now open and can be completed online at <purenaturalportraits.com/TBP>.

For more information about the event, sponsorship opportunities, or how to get involved, please contact Stephanie at 371-4594 or <hello@purenaturalportraits.com>.



The inaugural Teddy Bear Picnic 'Portraits in the Park' fundraiser for CHEO will be held on July 9 at Almonte's Gemmill Park

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9:30 am to 4:00 pm

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Participants and Vendors Contact for Applications!
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Silent Auction will support Club projects including
Teachers Against Poverty (TAP)

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PEOPLE OF ACTION



On July 29 and 30, you'll find art by Stephane Gendron (left), Mary Loos (right) and other members of the Merrickville Arts Guild, as well as live music and performances by Theatre Night in Merrickville

Merrickville Festival of the Arts

The community of Merrickville-Wolford is delighted to host the third Merrickville Festival of the Arts on July 29 and 30. It will take place at the beautiful Blockhouse Park on the banks of the Rideau River adjacent to the historic Rideau Canal locks. This is a collaborative effort involving the Merrickville Organization for Culture & the Arts(MOCA), the Merrickville Arts Guild (MAG) and Theatre Night in Merrickville(TNIM). This year they have added a number of exciting new musical performances from local and area musicians. Of special note will be an evening concert on July 29 from 7-9PM by Arbour Season.

In addition to viewing the beautiful art produced by thirty MAG artists, you will also be able to hear thought-provoking poetry by the Merrickville Rogue Poets, and see Theatre Night In Merrickville's delightful one-act play *The Green Thumb Gang*.

Merrickville-Wolford has a well-deserved reputation for being a community that supports and appreciates the arts in its many forms. They will be putting their best foot forward to welcome you to the third Merrickville Festival of the Arts. Admission is free to all!

For additional information, please contact Nick Previsich at 355-3488 or <nprevisich@bell.net>.

MERA's Makers Market

Artisans, Live Music, Food and More

The MERA Makers Market and Café is being held on Saturdays from 10AM to 2PM throughout the summer. Enjoy the best of local arts in a charming rural setting. Featuring crafts, music, great food, refreshments and more, it's a great way to connect to the community and enjoy unique locally made goods.

Come out for great music this month featuring: Melwood Cutlery (July 1), The Two Michaels (July 8), Ali McCormick (July 15), TRXTRS (July 22) and Long Sault Trio (July 29).

MERA is located at 974 Concession Road 9A Dalhousie, in mightly McDonalds Corners. By shopping at the MERA Makers Market and Café you are helping this local arts and recreation facility offer music events, workshops, community dinners and much more.

MERA is always looking for vendors, volunteers and new ideas. Interested in participating in the Makers Market? Contact Tim Booth at <timothybooth9@gmail.com> or <meraschoolhouse@gmail.com>.



Ali McCormick plays at MERA on July 15

Voices Rise from the Ashes

The world is in a time of growth and change. The Valley Voices are using the ashes of the last few years as a place to grow from. Building on 20 years of singing, the Valley Voices are growing again. Almonte's community choir is opening auditions for their 2023 fall/winter season soon, and invite everyone to come give it a try.

The Valley Voices are a mixed choir led by Becky Goodwin. Becky has a BA Honours, with a focus on choral directing. She has taught vocal lessons privately and has over 25 years of directing experience. The Valley Voices sing at least twice a year at concerts they host, as well as participating at events in the area such as Celfest, Puppets Up!, charity variety shows, exhibit openings at the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, and more.

If you would like to join in this new adventure, please email <valleyvoicesofalmonte@gmail.com> or follow ValleyVoicesofAlmonte on Facebook where they will be posting the dates for auditions shortly.



TOWNSHIP OF McNab/Braeside

HerbFest

FREE ENTRY! Sunday, July 30, 2023
9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Waba Cottage Museum & Gardens
24 Museum Road, White Lake

- Live Music
- Local Eats
- Beer Tent
- Vendors
- Boat Rides
- Kid's Area
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“Your Presence is Our Present”

Whoop hoo! A birthday party! Invite as many kids as you can, because each one is bringing something in fancy paper just for you. If it's in a big box, so much the better. None of those squishy things that likely are clothes, but something in the shape of a book would be all right. Paper is shredded, and it's all fun and games. On party day there's no thought of all the thank you notes to be written, or where on earth all this stuff is getting stored.

This is big birthday month is our house — three of us within a week of each other — and we learned early on that a one-day party was plenty. We tired of the hullabaloo of the whole kid birthday thing and gave up on invitations, loot bags, greedy little boys plundering a cake, and little girls fighting over where they were sitting. We went to a family birthday with minimal gifts, and what a relief that was.

by Glenda Jones

A few years back we upped our game and went to no gifts for any occasion, including that consumer panic mode called Christmas. Sure, it was traumatic the first year, but after that, not so much: nothing to buy, nothing to return, nothing to keep and put away forever.

We've all been to celebrations where the invitation has the catch phrase “your presence is our present”, but we feel self-conscious going empty-handed so we take a card with a monetary liner, or buy some trinket or gift card, likely not what the recipient would want. What they wanted was that family and friends gather to recognize their special time without having to burden either side with purchases not needed.

We should be able to simply take them at their word and greet them sincerely with good wishes. Would the celebrants think less of us? Would they be truly grateful that we came giftless as directed? For me, I'd be truly grateful. The last thing I want or need is a wrapped-in-paper gift.

However, can you really ignore a birthday? The day is important to you, maybe to your family, but that's all. The shout-outs on Facebook for someone's birthday are really facetious. Many people don't even want the reminder that they're one year older, although they likely enjoy the fact that their presence is noted.

This year, I decided to reverse-celebrate my “old as dirt” birthday. I made my own plan for the day involving people I love. I made a cake — what's a birthday without cake? — and took fat slices to my neighbours, a nice surprise for them when they'd worked very hard for several days. I treated my dog friend to a morning at the agility field, but I didn't let on it was my special day until we were leaving. That way there could be no fuss and bother. Alan took me for lunch, always a good thing, we went to concert in the park, I invited people for dinner, and I shared my garden tour purchase with my friend Barb.

What I really like is to “gift” someone else, not with a “thing” they have to look after or store, but with time together, even a couple of minutes when you'd both like the time to expand. I don't usually even mention it's my birthday, but all the while we're together, I think of how much I enjoy their company every day. Everyone who gives me their precious time so often,

from the wonderful lady at the grocery store to my dearest friends and family, deserves my thanks, and if I can return that in some small measure, then I'm gifting them something special.

The best present anyone can give you is a little piece of their time, whether it's planned or impromptu. The kids used to make up time promise cards: “an afternoon of shopping”, “a week of drying the dishes”, that sort of thing. But the truly remarkable time gift was the half-hour we spent watching our favourite TV programme together, not planned, just there. The gift of time, their mere presence, was priceless. It wasn't an obligation that they might resent, but rather a few minutes freely given in the spirit of sharing.

Here's the rub though: like any gift, time spent together must be recognized. Yes, your mother's admonition is hanging over your shoulder. Have you ever written a thank you note simply to say how much you enjoy someone's company? Wouldn't that be a treat to find in your mail?

Your presence will always be my best present, something only you can offer, and something I will never take for granted, but instead will treasure like the biggest present with the biggest bow any six-year-old would want. And trust me, I'm way past that magic moment!

Here's a present I really love: my dear friend has given me reading material for the whole summer, BUT as I finish each book, it has to go back to her. What a perfect solution to the gift business. LOVE IT — and her for thinking up such a novel (ha ha) idea! Thank you, Barb!



Mill Street Books Hosts Where's Waldo Event

Few children's book characters are as immediately recognizable as Waldo. His signature red-and-white-striped shirt and black glasses are known to people ages six to sixty, and with over seventy-eight million books in print worldwide, he's been delighting eagle-eyed readers around the globe for more than thirty years. This popularity makes Waldo the perfect ambassador for one of the earliest and longest-running Shop Local campaigns, Find Waldo Local.

Since 2012, children's book publisher Candlewick Press has celebrated Waldo with a month-long promotion. This July, bookstores will once again host Find Waldo Local scavenger hunts in their communities, partnering with other local businesses and organizations on this free, family-friendly activity.

Mill Street Books is partnering with no fewer than 25 businesses in Almonte, so be sure to come to town and take a good look around in July! Small Waldo standees are hidden in these local businesses, and seekers are encouraged to find him in all the shops participating in the program.

Participants can pick up a Find Waldo stampcard at Mill Street Books, and then collect a store stamp or signature for each Waldo they locate. Sharp-sighted seekers will also be able to find Waldo's glasses hidden

somewhere in Mill Street Books. A grand finale party with treats and prizes will be held on Wednesday, August 9 at 3PM, just outside the Almonte Library.

Find Waldo Local has become a tradition in many communities, with local customers and summer visitors alike stopping by independent bookstores throughout July to pick up a Find Waldo Local guide. Bring the kids to Almonte this July and be part of the fun!



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Heat Pumps & Conservation Win the Day!

Neighbours Help Neighbours Reduce Dependence on Fossil Fuels

After last month's CNL column about the value of electric heat pumps as a response to our need to get off oil, natural gas, and propane for home heating, we wanted to add more information to help people make the change.

This is such a big story because of the profound way it can lower the carbon and methane pollution created by running our homes, and get community, technical and financial support to do it.

by Chandler Swain

A new project is being launched by Climate Network Lanark: one where neighbours work with neighbours to help a cluster of homes get off fossil fuels, electrify their homes and benefit Earth's climate.

CNL started talking about this idea last fall before it had any resources to start the project. But there was such interest they started a pre-pilot project in Mississippi Mills called the Almonte Climate Concierge Cluster. Over the past months, owners of seven homes met monthly, learned together and from each other,

This is exactly what she hopes will help others — having the cluster be the place where people share information, so retrofitting doesn't feel like a trial. They can avoid the short-term inconveniences but still reap the benefits and have the whole process be an enjoyable experience.

Similarly, Scott Hortop has had nothing but positive experiences since joining the Almonte Cluster. "Strange to say, but having everybody over to meetings here has been a thrill," he enthuses. "Especially after Covid, getting together in our place has been great. I'm an introvert, but I enjoy conversations where I can be useful and helpful. Being useful is maybe something to think about as we model and build each cluster. It's important to have people with different levels of experience."

Scott's home is an early 20th century log farmhouse with several additions. He and his wife moved into it in 2018, just as the heating oil tank was about to require a 20-year replacement. Instead of getting a new tank, and excited by the cold climate capabilities of heat pump technology, they opted to join the exit from fossil fuels. They went through a lengthy process of getting quotes but were able to install in November 2022, just in time to retire the old oil tank. Wanting to save others from some of the same challenges, he joined the Almonte Cluster, where his knowledge and recent experience have been invaluable. After the first winter of operating their heat pump they are no longer paying the rapidly increasing cost of heating oil, and because they were able to also retire a supplementary electric baseboard heater from the kitchen addition, their electric consumption has dropped too — now about 10% lower, even while operating the new heat pump!

Time to Act!

Given the pressing need to cut fossil fuel pollution, it's distressing to note that the unfortunately misnamed "natural gas" is currently being expanded in Ontario, including locally. It's worth repeating that natural gas is mainly methane. Methane is a potent but relatively short-lived greenhouse gas, and is eighty-six times more harmful than carbon dioxide over a twenty-year period.

We used to see "natural gas" as a transition fuel, helping us shift from coal and oil to cleaner renewable energy forms such as hydro (water), solar, and wind. That's no longer the case. With the climate crisis occurring much faster because of inaction, and so much methane being released into the atmosphere from leaking pipelines, storage facilities and fracking wells, we now must curtail methane. In fact, Canada has a stated commitment to reduce methane emissions by at least seventy-five percent by 2030. And it's why the Greener Homes program does not subsidize conversions to methane gas.

Given that we need to eliminate fossil fuels by 2050, if not sooner, it makes no sense to build out the infrastructure that would expand fossil fuel use, yet that is planned and being done in communities throughout our region including Perth, Balderson and Lanark Village. And it makes no sense for people in those areas to choose to invest in natural gas equipment when they can get excellent financial support to switch to electric heat pumps.

There's a perception that "natural" or fossil gas is the cheapest heating form in our region. This is old information. The developments in heat pump technology mean that a cold weather heat pump will cost an average of \$20,000 less over the lifetime of the

equipment than a natural gas furnace. This applies to people who use propane too, most of whom live rurally where it's common to have two heating systems, one as back-up. Propane is a fossil fuel, and electric heat pumps are less expensive than propane furnaces to operate.

And there are all sorts of additional benefits, grants and zero-interest financing to go this route.

You also get air conditioning as a by-product of a heat pump, at a lower cost to operate.

The Greener Homes program from the federal government provides up to \$5,000 for a heat pump and/or other measures that cut Greenhouse Gas emissions from a house, including insulation, air sealing, windows and doors.

If a house is on oil, it is eligible for an additional \$5,000 to convert to an electric heat pump (so combined with the Greener Homes grant, this is a total of \$10,000 for a cold weather electric heat pump). Furthermore, having a Greener Home audit and taking action gives access to a \$40,000 loan at 0% interest amortized over 10 years.

Too much info, too hard to figure out, don't know who to call? This is where the neighbourhood support idea comes in. A lot of folks will need help to arrange an audit, determine which suppliers are worth calling, find an insulating company, source a heat pump, etc. Neighbours who have been through part of the process can help each other out. This is community building at its essence and can lead to further climate action.

Please get in touch with the knowledgeable folks at Climate Network Lanark if you want to join a cluster. They'll be forming in Almonte, Carleton Place, Lanark Village, Perth and Smiths Falls and running from this summer to mid-December. For more information, please contact Sadie Brule at <sadie@climatenetworklanark.ca> or call her at 323-2553.



This eco-friendly group of folks (l-r: Sally Hortop, Scott Hortop, Julie Yeaman, Susan Brown and Stewart Yeaman) have been meeting over the past months to learn from one another and support each other on their quests to switch from fossil fuels to heat pumps. Climate Network Lanark can help you connect with a similar group in your area!

and have built the confidence to have energy audits, find suitable local tradespeople, get retrofit work done like insulation and windows, buy and install heat pumps, and figure out the loan process.

Here's what some of the Almonte Climate Cluster members have to say about the experience.

Even though Janet Duncan has yet to install a heat pump in her house, a home built by her husband's parents in 1974, she has found the Almonte Cluster to be immensely helpful in her decision to choose an auditor and eventually a brand of heat pump (currently, she is leaning towards the Mitsubishi). She currently has an oil furnace and tank which she will retire, and a woodstove which she mostly uses in the winter and will continue to have as a backup.

"Meeting with the group has been really fun, sharing the decisions. Involving neighbours and friends really helps open up about things that can be considered private, like money. It's always easier working with a group of people you like," says Duncan.



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Bookin' It

Arlie's Books Celebrates 42 Years in Smiths Falls

A good day at Arlie's Books isn't measured by how much money is in the till at closing time.

No, a good day in this beloved bookstore — which is now, impressively, celebrating its 42nd year in business in Smiths Falls — is “obviously one that pays the bills but it's much, much more” than that, says owner Kerri Edwards.

by John Pigeau

“My favourite days or times are when you have a customer who is completely blown away by something they've found in the store,” Kerri says. “I love the times where I've heard ‘no way!’ or ‘I can't believe this!’ coming from the far end of one of the aisles. That moment when a customer holds up that one book that they've been searching for, or the book from their childhood that triggers a core memory — that's bookstore gold. There's that look on their faces of pure joy and excitement. I love that. Those are the moments when I think to myself, ‘Yep, that's why you're here!’ It's satisfying!”

For more than four decades, Arlie's Books has been offering its customers that truly special experience: “bookstore gold.” Although the store wasn't always solely a bookshop.

“Arlie's started in 1981,” Kerri explains. “My grandparents bought the building on Market Street and decided to create two businesses: Glen's Repair was to be my grandfather's side — he was an electrician by trade and Glen's was his appliance repair shop. The other half was ‘Old and New,’ a second-hand thrift type store that very quickly morphed into Arlie's Books. My grandmother, Arlie, was an avid bookworm, and to pass time in the thrift store she read books, then came a book rack or two, and then more books. Eventually all other items were evicted, and books became the business.”

Kerri was about twelve when Arlie's opened. She would often help her grandmother in the shop back then. After college, she worked part-time in the store. Sadly, in the summer of 2008, Kerri's grandmother passed away, and not long after, her grandfather announced that he was selling the building and the business.

Kerri, who was working in policing at the time, bought the building and the business, and about a year after she'd retired from her policing job she took on Arlie's full-time. Her first order of business was to expand the bookstore into the second room of the building.

The bookstore hummed along nicely for years, an absolute go-to for a great many book lovers, in Smiths Falls and otherwise. Then in 2021, during the pandemic, Kerri says, “I sold the Market Street building and started the hunt for a new location.”

Fairly quickly, she found the perfect spot on the newly revamped Beckwith Street, and the shop reopened on March 23, 2022. Kerri remembers the date precisely.

The new Arlie's, as Kerri has referred to it, has books new and used — and plenty of them — gifts, puzzles and more. There were other changes after the move, and most of them were good, she says.

“The largest downfall is that our new store is smaller than our original; we actually had a giveaway of over 2,500 books before we moved just to fit in the new location.”

On the other hand, “We see a lot of new faces as the population of Smiths Falls changed big-time

during the pandemic,” she says. “Lots of people, mostly from larger cities, have moved to the area. The bulk of our old familiar customers have followed us to Beckwith Street.”

For a mom-and-pop shop, that was welcome news. But perhaps the best change of all? “Arlie's has really become a destination spot,” Kerri happily reports, “and I hear daily that people have made the visit to Smiths Falls to come to Arlie's specifically because they're bookworms and that's what bookworms do, they seek books.”

You can take Kerri's word for it — having worked in the family's much-loved bookstore for decades, she knows a bookworm better than most.

More often these days, people have come to think of independent bookshops as a vital part of a community. Kerri thinks they are too.

“Bookstores are special,” she says. “They are a place of learning and leisure and adventure. I've heard many times, ‘I don't know what I'd do without you.’ Many customers have been coming since 1981 — it's a routine and a place they feel they are a part of after 42 years. Reading and books are far from dead. Bookstore



Owner Kerri Edwards is celebrating Arlie's Books 42nd year in business in Smiths Falls

customers are special too, these people have consoled me through the passing of my grandparents, health crises in my family including my own cancer fight in 2017, the growth of my son Quinn, heck — they even know my Jack Russell terrier, Gilbert!”

In typical “book nerd style,” she says, Kerri's Jack Russell is named after Gilbert Blythe from Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, while Farley, her Great Pyrenees, owes its name to Farley Mowat.

Bookshops like Arlie's are normally crammed full of dog-eared paperbacks, pulp fiction, an assortment of children's classics, a few first edition hardcovers and a sprawl of books lovingly collected and carefully curated, ready to be enjoyed again by some lucky new reader — and Arlie's is like that too. Charmingly so. In all those boxes of books that come in, Kerri has found some really neat things.

“To the point where I'm determined to at some point create a ‘Found in Books’ collection in the store,” she says. “I've found photos, vintage and modern, letters back home from soldiers, death notices and

funeral cards, Valentine's and greeting cards and the most beautiful inscriptions! Everything but cash,” she jokes.

Just last week, she posted a vintage Christmas card from 1972 on Facebook. You can see that delightful card, of course, by visiting Arlie's Books on social media.

Kerri has no plans for a special celebration of the bookstore's 42nd anniversary, but “I'm saving a bash for our 45th,” she says. “Look out 2026!”



Introducing ArtPontiac and Portage-du-Fort

Looking for a new destination for art and culture? Tucked away in the little hamlet of Portage-du-Fort, Quebec, overlooking the majestic Ottawa River, is an art gallery and gift shop that's a perfect destination for summer daytripping. The area itself is steeped in history, on the banks of the river that was the main means of travel for Indigenous people and fur traders. A thriving logging and trading centre, Portage suffered the loss of many of its wooden buildings in the catastrophic fire of 1814. Thankfully, many of the stone buildings survived, including the Stone School that has been "home" to the members of the Pontiac Artists' Association (artPontiac) since 2009.

Sitting alone at 28 rue Mill Street, square and severe in outlook but alive with colour and community on the inside, the Stone School Gallery has hosted numerous exhibitions and workshops over the past twenty years. In 2022, the Stone School underwent a transformation with the opening of a boutique in what was originally a first-floor gallery. A wide range of crafts was added to the display of work on the walls in the upper Gallery and the Stone School Shop. As an organization founded by and intended for the promotion of art and member artists, artPontiac does not charge a commission on sales.

In July, the Gallery features *Leaving Traces* — the wonderfully intricate and colourful work of fibre artists Meredith Filshie, Nancy Garrard, Karen Samanski and Wendo Van Essen, all members from outside the Pontiac region. Their vernissage will take place on July 7. Don't miss a chance to experience the food and warm ambiance of an artPontiac Vernissage.

In August, the Gallery will host a major multimedia group show entitled *Animalia*. Nature is a source of inspiration for many creators, and this show welcomes the work of more than 25 artists, celebrating everything from insects and birds to mammals of all types in the region. This is the Gallery's second exhibition focusing on conservation and preservation of the biodiversity of the region, and the habitats needed for their survival. Space is still available for artists who would like to place work in this show. The Pontiac is renowned for its wilderness, its wildlife and the many scenic spots that attract so many summer visitors.



September brings *Dumoine River Reflections* — a display of work completed in August by artist members of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. Each year a group of artists camps on the banks of the now protected Dumoine River and creates work that will be available for sale to support the conservation program.

Summer Camp for Adult Artists

From July 24–28, artPontiac invites artists of all levels to participate in one- to three-day workshops in a wide range of disciplines. Find the full list of offerings at <artpontiac.com> under "School". The primary focus will be on maskmaking, with two workshops led by well-known artist Clelia Scala. The first will be a three-day session to introduce the elements of mask design and techniques in sculpting in clay, mold-making, papier-mâché casting and painting. The second will be a day of working with Worbla thermoplastics to explore mask design, shaping and painting to create a wearable eye mask.

The camp also includes excursions for plein air painting and sessions on printmaking.

The week ends with a studio visit, artist talk and demonstration by Geraldine Classen of her method

of incorporating and preserving photographs and found objects into acrylic paintings. Her work is informed by history, love of place and family, and will likely appeal to many who are interested in genealogy or recreating moments of their lives on canvas. There is also the opportunity for a small group of three to attend a class with master coloured pencil artist

Jelly Masee at her studio. Jelly's work is stunning in its detail and realism.

Evenings will be spent visiting with your hosts or joining other campers to check out local venues for meals, wine, music and entertainment.

You can sign up for specific courses or the whole week, at a cost of \$120 per day for non-members, \$100 for members. Accommodation is in the homes of local artists, and is available for an additional \$50 per night. There is still space left — for details and to register, please contact Cheryl at <info@artpontiac.com>. Registration closes on Friday, July 7.



A bunch of budding artists display their special creations

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- Every Tuesday **Eric Uren + Meghan Balogh** (Folk/Roots, Westport) 5–8 (except Jul 11)
- Every Wednesday **Wings 'n Tunes** with **Shawn McCullough** (Country) 5:30–8:30
- Sat Jul 1 **Canada Day** with **Birds of a Feather** feat. John Wilberforce (Folk/Rock) 5–8
- Thu Jul 6 **Spencer Evans aka Jazz Night** Solo on the Patio 5–8
- Fri Jul 7 **Benni Vander** (Pop/Rock Keyboards, from Miss Emily, Picton) 5–8
- Sat Jul 8 **Robert Keyes** (Instrumental Acoustic Pop/Jazz/Rock Guitar, Belleville) 5–8
- Tue Jul 11 **Sarah Smith** (Blues/Rock, Pender Island BC) 5–8
- Thu Jul 13 **Blues At The Cove** with **Steve Strongman Band** (JUNO + Maple Blues Award Winning Blues, Hamilton) 5–9 on The Cove Patio. \$110 + HST
- Fri Jul 14 **Young Petty Blues**: The Music of Neil Young, Tom Petty + The Rolling Stones 7–11 \$80 + HST Dinner + Show
- Sat Jul 15 **Jeff Callery** (Folk/Rock, Brockville) 5–8
- Thu Jul 20 **Spencer Evans aka Jazz Night** Solo on the Patio 5–8
- Fri Jul 21 **Eric Uren** (Folk/Rock, Westport) 5–8
- Sat Jul 22 **Bullmoose: A Rock & Roll Reunion** 7–11 \$80 + HST Dinner + Show
- Thu Jul 27 **Spencer Evans aka Jazz Night** Solo on the Patio 5–8
- Fri Jul 28 **Cameron Wyatt + friends** 5–8
- Sat Jul 29 **Matt Dickson** (Classic Rock Party, Perth) 5–8

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