

JANUARY 2014

the Hummer

free

Arts,
Entertainment
& Ideas



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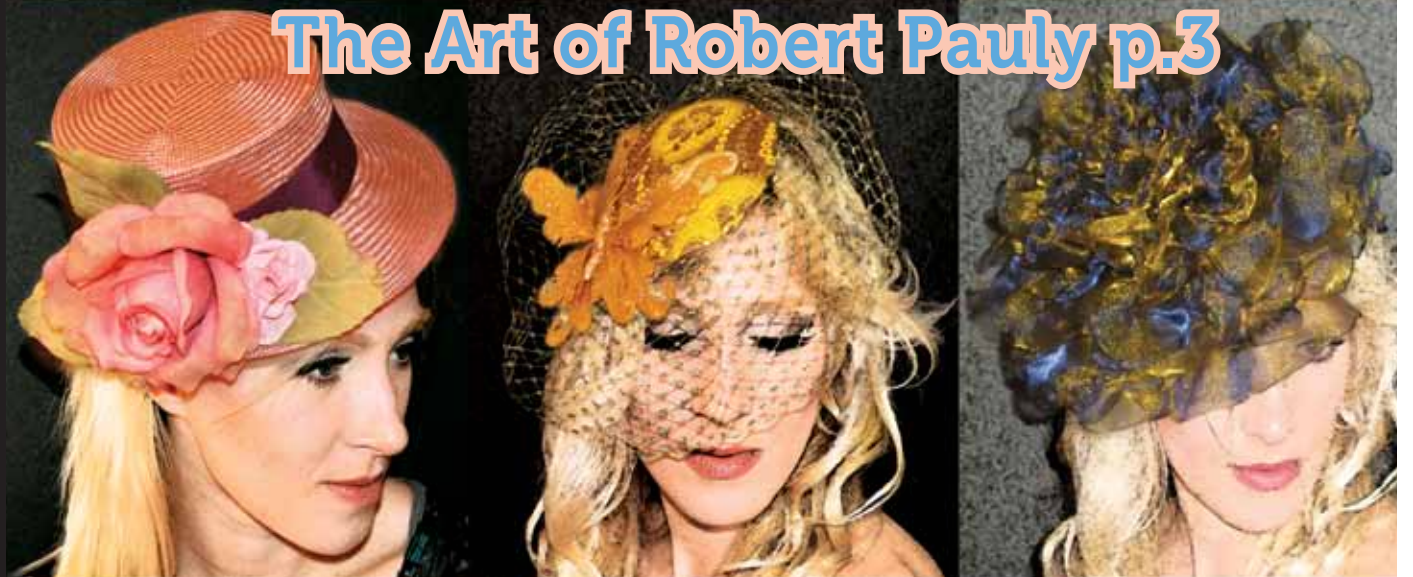


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"Bet any one of those kids could've told you what a great idea it is to put your mouth on metal in January!"

Does Your Organization Need Volunteers?

In the February 2014 issue of theHumm we plan to run our eighth annual "Get Involved, Get Connected" resource for organizations seeking volunteers (and volunteers seeking local organizations). If you are running a community organization or service club, festival, cultural event, museum, conservation area, arts or activities group within theHumm's catchment area, we'd like to hear from you! Send us 80 words (maximum) describing what your group does, what type of volunteer opportunities you offer, and how people can contact you, and we'll run them — free of charge! — in our February issue.

Due to space limitations, we can only offer **80 words per organization**, and can only include groups that serve our catchment area (Lanark County and parts of Renfrew County). We are not able to edit down longer entries or brochures, so please send the text as you wish it to appear. Please email all information or queries to <editor@thehummm.com>. All information must be received by January 22 for inclusion in the February issue.

Hummable Thought

MUSIC BRINGS A WARM GLOW
TO MY VISION, THAWING MIND AND MUSCLE
FROM THEIR ENDLESS WINTERING.

— Haruki Murakami,
from *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and The End of The World*



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Back in late 2011, **Tracey Wyeth** and **Sharon Lazette** (who had recently moved from Montreal to Almonte) wrote: We flew a Humm to Tampa, and then sailed it across the Gulf of Mexico to Cozumel for this photo. Mary Lumsden (from Mill Street Books) highly recommended this "National Park" to us before our departure.

This month, Sharon (along with her partners in thyme) is delighted to be opening Dandelion Foods <dandelionfoods.ca> in the Equator Coffee mall in town. Congratulations, and we're very glad that both of you brought your considerable talents and positive energy to the Valley!



Photo by Oliver Barber

theHumm Team (Improved and Expanded for 2014!)

In addition to the shiny (and snowy) new Humm-mobile, Rob, Rona and Kris want to welcome Earle Barber and Dagne Forrest to the 2014 Humm team! Earle and Dagne, owners of Foil Media <foilmedia.ca>, are partnering with us on the new and very much improved Humm website (...drumroll please...) **thehummm.com!**

We first met Earle and Dagne about eighteen months ago, shortly after they moved their web design and IT services business to Almonte. We were impressed by their mad web skills and project management strengths, and they were impressed with the depth of local content we had amassed over the past 15 years of publishing. After a year and a half of regular meetings (fuelled by Dagne's delicious coffee and baked goods), we decided to enter into a partnership and create the new Humm-online. It's already light-years beyond where it was, but the exciting news is that we've only just begun! We'd like to encourage all of our readers and supporters to visit, send feedback and suggestions, and subscribe to our new blog to receive regular updates about local happenings, as well as information about events that miss our print deadline.

Exclusively Online This Month

To entice you visit <thehummm.com> (once you've finished leafing through the papery version), here are a few articles that are only appearing online this month:

- John Pigeau's **Postcards from Perth**, in which he waxes poetic about cookies (chocolate chip, the size of his head), sneakers (the librarian's cardigan of footwear), and what would happen if a mule got into some medical marijuana (see — we're really putting some good stuff online!)
- Linda Seccaspina's **Styles I Wish Would Go Away in 2014**, including "anything with a Kardashian crammed into it..."
- Articles about a **Jazz Concert in Merrickville**, a Big Brothers/Big Sisters **Toy Show in Almonte**, and recent photos of Office Cat!

119 Bridge Street, PO Box 1391
Almonte ON K0A 1A0
Phone: (613) 256-5081

Editor:

Kris Riendeau
editor@thehummm.com

Layout and Design:

Rob Riendeau
rob@thehummm.com

Advertising/Promotions:

Kris Riendeau: (613) 256-5081
kris@thehummm.com

Assistant Editor:

Rona Fraser
rona@thehummm.com

Calendar Submissions:

calendar@thehummm.com

theHumm 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, Renfrew, 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!

Submissions

By email or on disk.

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Thanks this month to:

Claudia Smith for her delightful Christmas card and contribution to the cause; to author Arlene Stafford-Wilson and to Perthite-par-excellence Theresa Phillips for their kind cards; and to the Perth Grannies for the yummy cookies!

Robert Pauly — A Happy Hatter Who Hates Humdrum

Some people prefer stark, minimalist elements in their homes, their personal apparel, and their accessories. Others, like Robert Pauly, love adornment in all its forms. Pauly creates wonderful women's hats that run the gamut from whimsical to elegant. All are eye-catching.

by Sally Hansen

Many of Pauly's millinery creations are bespoke hats — custom designed in consultation with his clients for special events like weddings, galas and parties. Each is a unique sculptural achievement designed to complement its owner's stature, face shape and personal taste.

Pauly couldn't have wished for a better publicity event than the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton in April 2011, when various guests sported wonderful fascinators, or "mini hats". According to Wikipedia, the amazing model worn by Princess Beatrice of York caused such a media stir that it went on to become an internet phenomenon with its own Facebook page. The fascinator eventually garnered 99,000 Euros (roughly \$140,000) for charity when Princess Beatrice auctioned it on eBay. Canadian fashionistas took special notice when Catherine, now Duchess of Cambridge, wore a vivid red fascinator during her visit to Canada a few months later.

By then, Pauly had been creating and selling hats for many years. He has always had an interest in fashion — as a costume designer, a sculptor and a jeweller. He describes his love for the "exuberant creations that grace the fashion world runways," citing renowned designers Galliano, McQueen and Westwood among his favourites. He especially loves the hats that accompany the dresses, hovering between fashion and sculpture.

Gilding the Lily

His foray into millinery began when he started adding antique hats and feathers and bits and pieces of vintage decoration to his wide-ranging collections of beads and fabrics. Eventually he studied millinery at Fleming College's Haliburton School of the Arts, where he was fortunate to learn from Karyn

Gingras, the driving force behind Lilliput Hats, a well-known atelier and boutique in Toronto.

After Pauly blocks and shapes the base of the hat or fascinator, the form is rimmed with wire, bound with grosgrain ribbon, covered if appropriate, and lined and finished with a wide variety of vintage materials, feathers and trim. He also creates flowers and other imaginative decorations for his hats. An inveterate collector, Pauly uses his extensive assortment of antique French flower irons to form the leaves and petals unique to each flower. His hats become a showcase for the full gamut of his artistic creativity and talents, sporting everything from fabulous flowers to asparagus, depending on the occasion and the personality of the client.

Fascinators are secured to the head with hatpins and combs, so he has created a collection of gorgeous hatpins from odds and ends picked up in antique and charity shops. He roams the internet



searching for exceptional and exotic adornments for his millinery creations.

Robert Pauly also designs and creates dresses and bustiers. It was a gradual, unplanned progression. A client would ask, "What should I wear with this?" and he would get involved as a fashion consultant. Sometimes that led to creating the outfit himself. He has always been fascinated with fabrics, beads, and all the accessories we humans employ to adorn and express ourselves. If he grew lil-



ies, my guess is he would gild some of them and paint others. Next he would probably try his hand at breeding new varieties.

He held his first art exhibition in Montreal when he was barely seventeen. While working in the printing department of an Eaton's department store he took advantage of the company's liberal employee training policy to pursue art courses. He was soon exhibiting paintings with his instructor. He also worked as an electrician and stage manager in a theatre company, and became progressively more interested in costuming. Eventually he rented a shop and opened a gallery where he exhibited his aluminum sculptures.

A Dread of Dull

He didn't say so, but I get the feeling that Robert Pauly's grandmother played a very important role in how he has lived his life. "She only cared if I was happy," he tells me, as he discusses the non-traditional path he has enjoyed with his wife, Barbara Mullally, who is also a very talented jeweller. To truly appreciate Robert's avoidance of things he finds boring, I recommend a stop at their home and gallery in Clayton at 1259 Bellamy Mills Road. Words cannot begin to describe the eclectic range of decorative features he has designed and created. The siding on his house is a good example. Confronted with twenty bundles of shingles, he couldn't face the prospect of laying them out in straight lines. Instead he decided to "make it something I could stand for the next 25 years."

Robert's rules of happiness include being self-sufficient, avoiding hypocrisy and relying on your own judgement. He had an allergic reaction to the statement he heard too often as a youth — "We don't do this," from teachers, parents and counsellors. Maybe we don't, but he does if he decides it's right for him.

That is the one piece of advice he wishes his clients would follow. If you like yourself in a hat, buy it! He truly admires women who have the self-confidence to listen to themselves instead of asking a friend's or a husband's opinion. His favourite sale was to a woman whose husband remarked, "It looks like a goddamn flowerpot!" She smiled and said, "I'll take it."

Robert Pauly describes millinery as "jewellery for the head." Both his hats and his jewellery are on exhibit at Almonte's wonderful new shop at 63 Mill Street — General fine craft, art & design (generalfinecraft.com, 461-3463). He also creates art quilts and has turned his entire Clayton home into a work of art in its own right. You can reach him by email at <robert.pauly@sympatico.ca> or by phone at 256-3647. His fabulous hats are on display at <youcankeepyourhaton.ca>.



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WHO Robert Pauly
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 WHY "Hats are like jewellery for the head; I love ornamentation."

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theHumm Review

Brock Zeman's Got A Rotten Tooth

At some point, the review of a new Brock Zeman CD release will not start by mentioning his age. We are not at that point yet. At only 32 years of age, this Carleton Place native has released an impressive ten CDs, all of which have received critical acclaim and left fans wondering what it's going to take to get this guy discovered. His most recent album, *Rotten Tooth*, is another re-



by Rob Riendeau

markable collection of songs that defy easy categorization — all of which feature Brock's distinctive style of storytelling and gravelly, character-filled vocals. It has to be said that Brock Zeman's voice sounds like it's been around for a lot longer than Brock himself has.

*Black clouds fill the sky wherever I travel
 My footsteps sound like a judge's gavel*

This new album is strong and varied, and bears up well under both close scrutiny and repeated play. Stand-out songs include *I'm Going Fishin'* and *Dreamland Motel* which fall roughly into the swampy, rough-edged country blues rock genre (if there is one; and if not, there should be). Also in that vein is the terrifically dark title track that is enriched by Marc Rochon's gritty harmonica work. *Ever Since You Left Town* is a lovely piano ballad that would not be out of place on an early Tom Waits album. Some tracks are enhanced by Kelly Prescott's tasteful backing vocals, and all feature Brock's bandmates Blair Hogan and Dylan Roberts. For your listening and viewing pleasure, we have a couple of songs and a video on our website <thehummm.com>.

*Hell spit me out and heaven don't want me
 Because I'm mean as a rattlesnake and
 twice as ugly*

If you have seen Brock in concert, you already know that he delivers a great show. If you haven't

Rotten Tooth, the latest CD by Carleton Place native Brock Zeman, really hits the mark!

yet seen him in action, you should definitely check out this talented singer songwriter. Luckily, he is playing a few CD release gigs at a venue near you. Locally, he will be at O'Reilly's Pub in Perth on January 4 and the Carleton Place Legion on January 25. For readers not fortunate enough to live in our part of the Ottawa Valley, Brock will be playing at the Blacksheep Inn in Wakefield on January 11.

*Won't you write this on my stone before they
 lay me down
 That I'm the only rotten tooth in my family's mouth*

Call for Nominations

Organizers of the annual Young Awards Gala in Mississippi Mills are seeking nominations for the 2014 Cultural Achievement and Cultural Volunteerism awards. These awards are given to individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to the arts and culture in the community. In order to make it easier to submit a nomination, the selection committee requests that people simply send in the name of an individual or group and their own contact information — the committee will then contact them by phone to ask for more details about the nominee.

Please send the name(s) of the nominee(s), as well as your contact information, to The Young Awards Foundation: Box 1275, Almonte, ON, K0A 1A0, or by email to <awards@youngawards.ca>. The deadline for submission is January 31. Please visit <youngawards.ca> for full details and criteria.

In the meantime, mark your calendar for Saturday, May 10 for the highly anticipated 2014 **Young Awards Gala**. The mandate of the foundation is to foster dynamic arts initiatives in the schools of Mississippi Mills, and attending the Gala is a great way to show your support!

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An Open Letter to You. Yes, YOU!

Thank You!

There are many people out there who would like to thank you, but they just didn't know how to say it, or perhaps didn't get the chance, so I thought I would help and give you a big thanks — THANKS! — from all of us who appreciate you.

There are many folks out there doing good for others, all year long. Some do good "officially", by joining an organization that raises funds for those in need, gathers food so some don't go hungry, provides help to young and old, brings smiles to the sick, or brings comfort to the lost. Some do good anonymously, by doing similar things listed above. And some do good in not-so-obvious ways. And I wanted to thank them all. From all of us!

Thank you to the folks who smile at us as we walk by, even though we don't know each other; you help us feel a part of the community.

Thank you to the cashiers who chat with us — in other places you are lucky to get eye contact.

Thank you to the neighbours who wave while we clear the snow and scrape our cars, commiserating about the weather. Speaking of snow, thank you to the municipal snow plows; we may not look too happy when you leave a heap at the end of our driveway or surrounding our car on the street, but we certainly appreciate your work when we have to get anywhere!

Thank you to the coworkers who help us enjoy coming to work every day.

Thank you to the friends and family who are there for us, whether it be in person, on the phone, in a text, or online.

Thank you to the drivers who slow down as they pass us on the sidewalk, to lessen the splatter. And those who stop to allow us to cross the road in the cold, realizing they are warmer than we are. And those who allow us to merge, especially in bad driving conditions.

Thank you for holding the door for us when our hands are full, or when the snow is blowing. And for smiling at us understandingly even though you were irritated by our slowness.

Thank you for yelling after us when we dropped our glove/wallet/phone — you saved us a lot of aggravation!

Thank you to the shop owner who remembered who we were and helped a Christmas shopper pick out what we really wanted. And thanks for staying open late so that we could get there after work, even though there were family things you could have been doing.

Thank you for listening to us, even though you were busy/confused/tired.

Thank you for smiling even though you were stressed; your smile was contagious.

Our world is a better place with you in it. Thanks for all you do.

— *Sincerely, Us.*

Seeking Authenticity

Music history has been much on my mind lately. As a child of folkies, I had a view into the first folk revival — fond memories of family sings, special trips to concerts in the woods, a summer weekend chasing Pete Seeger's boat down the Hudson (he was known for playing impromptu concerts from his riverboat, but he was always just one town ahead). Listening to the next band coming to play the Folkus concert series in Almonte sure brings those days to mind. **The Strumbellas**, a six-piece "folk orchestra", have a whole lot of joyous, foot-stomping, clap-along, sing-along energy.

But the other piece of music history they call to mind is Phil Spector. Just as Spector developed his "wall of sound" to counter the tinny sound of an AM transistor radio (I always picture The Crystals coming out of a tiny, tinny radio on a beach blanket), the current wave of folk revival seems to come in answer to the compressed sound of an iPod or MP3. In direct contrast to the slick technology that brings this music to our ears, the musicians of this revival movement (Lumineers, Mumford & Sons, with Strumbellas firmly in this company) seek authenticity through their own voices, acoustic instruments, and an absence of in-studio trickery. And like Spector, their wall of sound is amazing.

The Strumbellas describe themselves as born in the alt-scene of Toronto but "conceived in Lindsay". Four members of the band — Simon Ward (guitar/vocals), Darryl James (bass), Jon Hembrey (electric guitar), and Jeremy Drury (drums) — grew up in the same small town, but didn't form a band until they met again in the Big Smoke. Bandmates David Ritter (piano/vocals/percussion) and Izzy Ritchie (violin/viola/vocals) came aboard to fill out the sound, and they round it out nicely. The texture of the piano underpins the songs (now imagine Almonte's Steinway grand doing it!), while the strings soar above. The harmonies the six achieve are truly uplifting.

With lots of airplay locally on the CBC and campus radio, it's hard to miss the Strumbellas' hooky, bluegrass-inflected sound lately. They straddle the



Folkus presents The Strumbellas (above), with opening act The Lowball Bidders, on January 18 at the Almonte Old Town Hall

worlds of alt-country and folk with passion and conviction; their lyrics, while occasionally dark, are buoyed by the optimism of melody and soar on anthemic choruses. Regardless of which pigeon-hole you file their music in, their show in Almonte should be a stomping good time.

Opening for the Strumbellas will be **The Lowball Bidders**. The fun, rockabilly sound and high energy from this new mix of local faves should provide a good start to the night.

As always, concerts are on Saturday evenings at Almonte's Old Town Hall. Show time is 8PM; doors open at 7:30PM. A special three-show pass, for all the remaining concerts, is available for \$80 at Mill Street Books. Purchase individual tickets at <folkusalmonte.com> or at Mill Street Books in person or by phone at 256-9090. Individual concert tickets will be \$30 per show (\$15 for students), available as above or at the door on the day of the show. But of course, there are no guarantees the day of the show — get your tickets early! So call your friends, mark your calendars, and join us in downtown Almonte for great tunes and a great series!

— *Sandy Irvin*

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Call for Nominations for the 2014 Mississippi Mills Cultural Achievement and Cultural Volunteerism Awards

These awards are given to individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to the arts and culture in the community. Please send the name(s) of the nominee(s), as well as your contact information, by **January 31** to The Young Awards Foundation, Box 1275, Almonte, ON K0A1A0, or by email to awards@youngawards.ca.

Please visit youngawards.ca for details and criteria.



Fostering dynamic arts initiatives in
the schools of Mississippi Mills.

Hopes, Dreams and Resolutions from Local Farmers for the New Year

For her January article, Susie Osler put out an all-call to area farmers and growers (many of whom she has profiled over the past several years in theHumm). She set them each two tasks: name one New Year's resolution to do with you and your farm in 2014; and name one or two hopes and/or fantasies for the future of farming in our area. Here are their enlightened, enthusiastic, and sometimes silly responses...

by Susie Osler

Dave Smith (Ashtonglen Farm)

Resolution: Do not procrastinate on preventative maintenance, like changing the hoses and belts on the tractor before they break.

Fantasies: That the government sides with the bees and bans neonicotinoids.

Pat Furlong-Brownlee (Elphin Gold Organics)

Resolution: To figure out and apply better people/managerial skills to be able to share the workload.

Fantasies: I could hope that one of my beautiful daughters would fall in love and want to marry a great young farmer with high hopes of taking over the farm!



Janet and Bruce Duncan (Dunbrae Farms)

Resolution: To clean up the shop and get it ready to do woodworking in the off-season. Or... do a much more organized job of rotational grazing. Or... get the hay off before November!

Fantasies: That regular consumers would understand the huge benefit to them and to the community of buying their food from local farmers and/or distributors of locally grown food. Thank you to our present loyal customers for whom the penny has already dropped. Or... that continuing numbers of young people will enter the profession and be able to sustain a decent lifestyle while feeding their customers, families and friends delicious, locally grown food. Or... that agricultural universities would reverse their present direction of educating towards large conventional farms and start educating people to feed themselves and others in a sustainable and rewarding way.



Simon Lever (Windblest Farm)

You caught me daydreaming and watching the turkeys roost. Here you go:

Resolution: Get more seeds in the ground, sooner.

Fantasies: In my dreams, our current market culture evolves into a "moveable feast" phenomenon where the growing season is celebrated throughout the area with food, music, art, science and discourse. From this arises a distinctive terroir, created organically by the community. Copious inspired output results from cross-pollination in all these fields, and Lanark Country becomes an even better place to live. Sorry, I know you said one sentence, but no matter how creative I got with the semi-colons, it was still three.



Arlee Sheets (Rock-N-Horse Farm)

Resolution: Our New Year's resolution for our farm is to build a large root cellar in 2014.

Fantasies: Perfect weather for all seasons. :)

The Heatons (Counting Sheep Family Farm & Aviary)

Resolution: To be more organized with our farm paperwork!

Fantasies: To be completely off-the-grid and solar.

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

Ray Elgersma (White Oak Farm)

My hope for our local plot of land is that it will produce at least as much as it did last year, which was a good year. I also hope that the cows will respect the fences we continue to mend and not get into our gar-

den and eat our corn, kale, beet tops, etc., or trample our tomatoes. And as we plan for earlier crops to enhance the local market, my hope is that black flies and mosquitoes will blow with the wind and have mercy on us as we plant, hoe and pick.

Fantasies: My fantasy for future farming in our area is that all of our community would think local and healthy when purchasing food, and that thinking would include buying organic fruits and vegetables at the local farmers' markets, and at the local road-stands. It would also include area restaurants being much more deliberate in linking with local producers for their food sources. This is really about improved health and reduced environmental impacts.

Further, I would like to see the development of a local food hub as a conduit from farmer to local groceries and restaurants, that would encourage the growing of local foods, the availability of local foods in these establishments, and reduced environmental impacts of current food distribution practices.

Susie Responds

To all the great farmers I've been able to converse with this year: You continue to amaze and inspire me. This piece is in honour of the Herculean efforts you all make towards keeping your communities fed well. Happy, healthy and bountiful New Year to you!

Local Food Hub Project

It wasn't that long ago — living memory for some of us — that our part of Eastern Ontario had a thriving local food infrastructure. Farmers were growing food that was destined for local consumption. There were facilities for long-term storage and food aggregation, as well as collective marketing and distribution. The last few decades, with their emphasis on centralization, specialization and globalization, have seen the steady destruction of this infrastructure. Even with the rapidly growing interest in local food, there is a mismatch between the growers and the commercial buyers. It is this mismatch that ecoPerth hopes to address with an ambitious Assessment Study for a Local Food Hub in the Lanark County and North Leeds Region.

The Food Hub concept is an innovative approach to local food distribution that is rapidly moving into the mainstream in Canada. Although Food Hubs can appear in many different forms, they are essentially centrally located facilities dedicated to coordinating aggregation and distribution of locally grown foods to the benefit of both growers and purchasers.

"Food Hubs are an important link in the local food chain," explains ecoPerth representative Cheryl Nash. "They answer questions like how best can local growers and farmers aggregate, process and market their goods? How can they most easily get what they grow into the hands of purchasers?" With similar projects cropping up in other areas close to home, like Ottawa and Hawkesbury, local Food Hubs can also provide the opportunity to link different regions and resources. With the imminent introduction of Ontario's Local Food Act, the Lanark County and North Leeds Food Hub project couldn't be timelier. The Act could lead to an increased institu-

tional demand for local food, and the Food Hub would provide a key infrastructure component to accelerate the local food movement in this region.

EcoPerth envisions the Lanark County and North Leeds Food Hub project to not only represent a storage and distribution facility, but to eventually become a community facility with equipment sharing, where growers and purchasers can take advantage of valuable resources and training. Potential facility locations are being explored in the Smiths Falls area, due to its central location and accessibility to both growers and markets in Eastern Ontario.

EcoPerth took on the project as the result of a local food networking event held last November where both farmers and buyers expressed a need for some form of coordinated production, marketing and centralized purchasing. Thanks in part to funding received from the Eastern Ontario Development Program (EODP), through Valley Heartland, the Food Hub project is now moving full steam ahead.

EcoPerth is currently undertaking a survey of growers and purchasers in the region, the first step in the Food Hub Assessment Study. The surveys canvas farmers, grocery stores, restaurants, institutions and other food service industries to quantify the supply and demand for local food. The survey results will provide an accurate measure to allow producers to better supply directly to the available demand in the region.

The surveys involve direct telephone contact and interviews, but there is also an online survey for both growers and buyers. A link to the online survey is on ecoPerth's websites: <lanarklocalflavour.ca> and <ecoperth.on.ca>. For more information about the Food Hub project, contact Cheryl Nash at <info@ecoperth.on.ca>.

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On The Fence...

Ottawa Valley Turned Fence Posts: A Photographic Journey, by Audrey Buckingham, is now available for sale at the North Lanark Regional Museum. This publication captures the landscape of the Ottawa Valley by focusing on the often unobserved turned fence post.

For those lucky enough to know Audrey Buckingham this book needs no explanation, but for those unfamiliar with her, please let me explain. Audrey came to Canada in 1946 as a war bride and eventually settled in the Ottawa Valley. Discovering the countryside while driving and riding, she soon fell in love with the charming turned fence posts of the Valley.

A fence designates property lines, contains livestock, and protects playing children. And while some fences are intentionally decorative, most are utilitarian.

Audrey became captivated by the turned fence posts, which were part of many of these fences throughout the area. Why would any farmer or land owner spend the countless hours with a lathe to decorate these posts?

Audrey Buckingham has created a "photographic journey" of turned fence posts in the Ottawa Valley



Intrigued, she began photographing the turned posts and documenting the changes over the past fifty years. She watched as the elements took their toll, as cracks and rot appeared, and as once proud posts began to fall.

In 2012, she decided to share her journey and began working with Heather Sword to create a publication. The result — *Ottawa Valley Turned Fence Posts: A Photographic Journey* — is now available for sale at the North Lanark Regional Museum in Appleton for \$25.

The museum is open by appointment in January; please call 257-8503 or email <appleton-museum@hotmail.com>. The book can also be mailed for an additional \$5 shipping/handling fee.

— Sarah Chisholm, Project Coordinator of the North Lanark Regional Museum

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Jan. 9-Feb. 13 (6 weeks)

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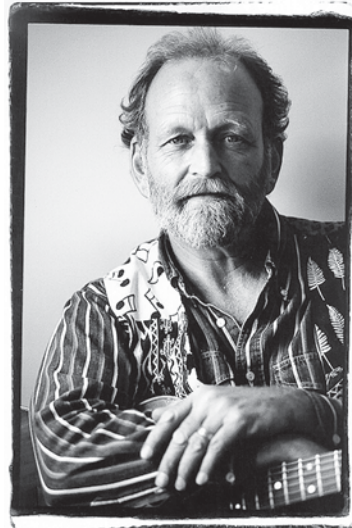
“Play us a Valdy song!”

Yes, this incredible iconic Canadian singer/songwriter will be featured in concert right here in the Valley, at the newly refurbished Gallipeau Centre Theatre in Smiths Falls on January 15.

What can be said or written about this unique individual that hasn't been said before? He is so much more than the 14 albums, 22 singles, many worldwide tours, numerous TV and radio appearances, two Juno Awards and long list of accolades he has earned. Valdy is in a class all his own.

Born Valdemar Horsdal, Valdy is best known for the songs *Play Me a Rock n Roll Song*, *Peter and Lou*, *Sonny's Dream*, *Let's Dance the Old Dance Once More*, *Landscapes*, *Give Me the Simple Life*, *A Good Song* and many others. He's an ageless hippie who possesses a tremendous amount of energy, dancing and swaying on stage while wearing his trademark red running shoes. A true people person, humanitarian and environmentalist, he makes his home on Salt Spring Island, BC, where he shares a house with his

wife Kathleen, two dogs and two (large) cats. He is a very strong proponent of Canadian music and musicians, and has done much to assist new artists to develop their careers.



Catch Valdy on January 15 at the new Gallipeau Centre in Smiths Falls

But, in the end, his greatest strength is likely his on-stage performance. Possessing a tremendous voice and incredible personality, this guy is nothing

short of a treat to both hear and see. Call it “The Valdy Experience”.

Opening the show will be **The Richmond Ramblers**, a classic country/bluegrass ensemble from Ottawa. This seven-piece group performs a lot at festivals and seniors' residences, and is sure to add a nice touch to the evening.

You can have The Valdy Experience yourself by contacting <Ticketpro.ca>, checking out <gallipeaucentretheatre.com>, or calling the box office at 283-3717. Showtime is at 7PM.

The Gallipeau Centre Theatre is an exciting new venue for entertainment in Eastern Ontario. Located on the grounds of the former Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls, it is an 850-seat auditorium that is part of an overall redevelopment that the site is undergoing. One of the goals of the project is to see Smiths Falls become the heart of first-rate entertainment in the Ottawa/Kingston/Brockville area.

— Lyle Dillabough

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- * Thursday: Drawing — basic beginner skills
- * Friday: large format abstract (20% off canvas purchased at JB Arts)

Sat., Jan. 18, 10AM-1PM Wine Glass Filigree \$40
Sat., Jan. 25, 10AM-1PM casting in resins \$40

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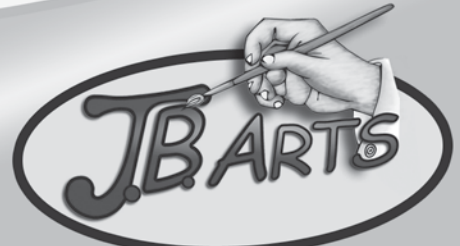
KIDS PROGRAMS

8 weeks starting Jan. 21, 5:30-7PM
\$170+hst

Tuesday: Acrylic - paint with bright colours!
Wednesday: clay boats, ships and things that float
Thursday: Draw your pet scales, feathers and furs
Friday: Awesome airbrush projects

Sat. Jan. 18, 2-4PM Clay bird Feeder part 1
Sat. Jan. 25, 2-4PM Clay bird Feeder part 2

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Nothing But Blue Skies...

On January 5, from 2–4:30PM at the Maberly Hall, just when you are feeling that the Christmas season is truly over... come on out to a **Little Christmas Concert** given by the Blue Skies Community Fiddle Orchestra, with a performance by special guests the Celtic Heritage Fiddle Orchestra. Admission is \$5, with children getting in for free.

The Blues Skies Community Fiddle Orchestra begins its 15th season on Saturdays in January, from 10AM to 12PM at

the Maberly Hall. A dedicated all-ages community group, the members meet to learn a wide range of fiddle tunes in a fun environment. The orchestra is currently recruiting fiddlers, as well as players of the mandolin, cello, viola, string bass, small pipes, and percussion. Those interested in joining should have a couple years of study to feel comfortable. Beginners can join the Prep Orchestra to learn the repertoire of the Blue Skies Orchestra at a learning speed.



The Blue Skies Fiddle Orchestra will play their annual "Little Christmas Concert" on January 5 in Maberly

A new Prep Orchestra begins on January 11 at Maberly Hall, meeting from 9–10AM.

Blue Skies in the Community sponsors the orchestra to ensure that membership fees are only \$50 per term, and also supports the instrument

lending program, with different sizes of violin available for rent.

For further information, please contact conductor Cindy McCall at 613–278–2448 or <cindy.fiddlemusic.mccall@gmail.com>.

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Step It Up This Winter!

Here's a great daytime activity that will add some spice to your exercise routine this winter, as you "step it up" with... line dancing!

There are several reasons why you should consider participating in this very popular activity. Keep in mind that, in addition to being suitable for every age, line dancing also offers many "senior-friendly" options for the interesting varied dance moves used.

Line dancing is definitely in the "fun to do" category, and activates those good-for-you hormones. Formats available include Western Swing, Waltz, Latin Rhythms, Jazz, Country,

Cha-Cha, Celtic and many others. And here is a bonus: signing up with a dance partner is not a requirement, as it often is for some other dance forms. At the same time, both genders and all ages are most welcome to join in the fun.

This activity is also very instrumental in exercising your body as well as your brain. First of all, the movements provide some basic aerobics, and the dance form is acknowledged as an effective weight-bearing exercise. Next, your brain power is continually "in gear" with fun challenges, and receives a beneficial boost as you aim to learn

and retain the repetitive sequences presented, which range from the ultra-simple to more involved levels of input and concentration as you progress. These physical benefits all combine to improve muscle tone, agility and brain-power.

Another important aspect is the obvious social interaction with others in the sessions; moreover, this also extends to include involvement within your community. Dancing with this Valley group — The Hy-Liners — gives you the opportunity to volunteer locally, for example, by performing for residents and staff at hospitals and seniors' res-



The Hy-Liners, an Ottawa Valley Linedance group, performed in late summer 2013 for residents and staff at the Carleton Place Manor.

New line dancing classes are starting up in 2014 throughout the area!

idences, and assisting with fundraisers for churches, children's camps, local support groups, and others. To top it all off, daytime line dancing programmes are currently offered through a recreation centre right in your area, or at least nearby... in places such as Almonte, Arnprior, Carleton Place and Pakenham. And with its steady growth in popularity, this activity might also become available at other sites in the area, starting with spring sessions in 2014. Suggestions of such additional sites will be welcomed and considered.

With its all-ages and senior-friendly approach, previous experience is not a prerequisite, and many alternate moves are demonstrated for those who prefer to have easier options for some of the more intricate steps. This ensures that every participant enjoys dancing within her/his comfort zone!

This winter, all sessions will run from the beginning of January to mid-March, from 1:30-3PM, at the following locations: Monday at Arnprior's Nick Smith Centre (623-7301); Wednesday at the Carambeck Community Centre in Carleton Place, (257-1704); and on Thursday in the Town of Mississippi Mills (256-1077), alternating between the Almonte Community Centre and Pakenham's Stewart Community Centre. Prospective participants are encouraged to pre-register right away by contacting the instructor, Hyacinth — a certified bilingual Ontario educator with decades of experience — at 623-0976 or <mais-brown@sympatico.ca>.

So, don't delay! Put Daytime Line Dancing on your calendar for your choice of afternoons in Winter 2014 — Mondays, Wednesdays, and/or Thursdays!

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OSFK Goes Western

When **The Cowguys** hit the stage at the end of this month, kids (and their parents) will be entertained by juggling, magic and the comedic stunts of one local and two Ottawa performers. The Cowguys, Ottawa's award-winning juggling variety troupe, are coming to Almonte on January 26 as part of On Stage for Kids.

The Cowguys are an Ottawa-based performing group that has been delighting audiences worldwide since 1990. In their award-winning show, they expertly blend circus, western and magic skills with dexterity, wit, danger and foolishness. Their show graces the stage at hundreds of festivals, theatres and corporate events every year, and this month they are heading to Almonte for the first time!

One third of the Cowguys troupe, Almonte resident Jon Lockhart, is thrilled to bring the show to his hometown. By day, Lockhart is the Theatre Technical Director at the University of Ottawa. Weekends and evenings he performs globe walking, fire eating, plate spinning and much more, for delighted crowds. Lockhart, who started the troupe with his high school friend Brian Wilson over twenty years ago, moved to Almonte three years ago with his wife and two children. The two, along with recent addition Nick Miller, have had crowds laughing in Canada, the U.S., Singapore, Scotland, England, Belgium, Holland and Spain ever since.



On Stage for Kids brings The Cowguys to town on January 26

"It's great to be performing in Almonte. I have always loved going to the festivals here with my family (Puppet's Up!, the Highland Games, etc.). There is so much to do and this town has so much talent! I love living here. I am glad that I get a chance to bring my troupe here to perform. It's a great show

— I have seen it before. Most of the time The Cowguys put on solo or two-person shows, but we have worked out a really special three-Cowguy show that combines all of our talents. It will be a lot of fun for the whole family!"

The show features a barrage of tricks laced with continuous patter between themselves and the audience. They create a non-stop roller-coaster ride of a show by expertly meshing a high level of technical skill with hilarious banter. The Cowguys' show will be full of juggling, magic, circus stunts, comedy, bullwhippery, tomfoolery, escape acts and more. This is a show that will be fun for all ages!

So be sure to catch The Cowguys at On Stage for Kids on Sunday, January 26, at 2PM at Almonte and District High School.

This is the second of four performances in On Stage for Kids' 2013/2014 season. Now in its 25th year, On Stage for Kids features four great hand-selected Canadian performances aimed at kids between the ages of two and ten. Tickets are \$10 per person and can be purchased online at <onstageforkids.com> or at the door.

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Learning in Almonte

Two new series start in mid-January:

Nuclear Power and its Problems
 by Don Wiles, starts Tuesday, January 14

Beautiful Losers: The Social Psychology of Contests and Competitions
 by Warren Thorngate, starts Thursday, January 16

These courses are six weeks in length. Each comprises one two-hour lecture every week, from 1:30-3:30 in the Almonte Public Library Classroom. No final exam, but lots of discussion time! \$75 per course.

To register contact Don Wiles at 256-4376 or don_wiles@carleton.ca

The Illusion of Choice

I'm a pro-choice sort of person. Choice is good when it provides options, teaches us to make good decisions, and makes us less like rats on a treadmill and more in control of our lives. However, there are limits to what constitutes a healthy amount of choice. Too much of anything can be unhealthy.

A trip down the grocery store aisles confronts us with what is quite frankly an absurd amount of choice. Is it necessary to have quite so many types of toothpaste? I stand before the rows of little cardboard boxes, eyes glazing over, searching for something recognizable, or even just a simple label. Currently, I am using a brand that comes in a flip-cap tube that clogs with such a gluey mess it cannot be kept clean or closed properly. From this experience, at least I know what brand *not* to buy. However, there are so many others from which to choose.

It used to be that certain brands offered certain attributes. Now it seems like they all offer the same myriad of options. Paste or gel? Whitening or gum protection? Whitening *and* gum protection! Stain removal or minty fresh? Herbal or baking soda? (I haven't seen organic toothpaste yet, but surely it's out there.) There are so many variants it requires careful scrutiny just to be sure which price tag corresponds to which product. In our barcode age, you can no longer find price stickers on the actual product.

And here's the thing. What I really wanted was a product that came in one of those tubes that neatly stood up on end rather than laying on my bathroom counter. The one feature I actually desired seemed not to be available! At least as far as I could tell — every brand was packaged in a sealed and windowless cardboard box, with no picture of the contents on the outside. I suppose a picture would leave no room for the helpfully descriptive wording we find instead, along the lines of "Advanced Whitening Tartar Defense Antibacterial Sensitivity Control Optic Splash Maxi-mint". Whew. (Those that

boast "anti-cavity" are particularly amusing. Don't all toothpastes do this?) Tempting though it was to surreptitiously slit open a few boxes and look inside, I could imagine the store PA system announcement, "Code white in aisle four," followed by the grocery store equivalent of bar bouncers escorting me to the exit after asking me to pay for all those boxes of toothpaste I'd opened but didn't want... and the stares of passersby as I gibber "but... but the tubes don't stand up on end!"



My grief was not restricted to the toothpaste section. Two aisles over, in laundry detergent, it was déjà vu. Which brand? Which scent? Powder or liquid? High efficiency or not? I once came home with a bottle for high efficiency machines, having failed to read the fine print, and had to take it back. Cold water or not? Is it only me that ponders what fate befalls laundry done using warm or hot water with cold water detergent? Perhaps I think too much about these things. I've an overactive left brain. Rather than reading labels, perhaps one should simply have a favourite brand/product/colour/flavour/scent, and grab it off the shelf, blinders to the rest. That must be what normal people do. I suppose there are those who actually enjoy the thrill of the chase, the challenge of choice; those tiresome folk who boast that they always find the best choice at the lowest price. Such people may even be invigorated, as opposed to paralyzed into indecision, by trips to the grocery store. I don't mean to single out grocery stores here. The pharmacy, the hardware store, any big box outlet; all are just as daunting.

The overabundance of choice is a result of "You Sell" marketing, according to Steve Maich and Lianne George in their 2009 book *The Ego Boom: Why the World Really Does Revolve Around You*. It's a trend that has become so pervasive that we are, to paraphrase their words, like cooked frogs — you put a frog in boiling water, it jumps out, but if you put it in cold water and slowly raise it to boiling, the frog is cooked without knowing what hit it. Marketing tells

each of us every day that we are the most important person in the world (ok, that's true in my case) and that therefore we should narcissistically get exactly what we want — the product exactly tailored to our wishes and ours alone. Not the rubbish everyone else wants. The reality, of course, is that we can only choose from amongst what the marketing research has concluded is an effective array of choice. Add a little bit more artificial colouring here or aromatic ester there... Is this too cynical? Isn't the consumer subsidizing all those different variants, not to mention the salaries of the advertising folk that dreamed up "Advanced Whitening Tartar Defense Antibacterial Sensitivity Control Optic Splash Maxi-mint"?

I'd be relieved if I had less choice in things that don't matter, and more choice in things that do. We do not need dishwashing liquid to come in fifteen different colours and scents. It's unfortunate that global warming, typhoons and tsunamis, war, poverty, and famine can't be solved by marketing and corporations with shareholders and highly paid executives. Beyond the corporate world, politics and governments have been also infected by the "You Sell". As Susan Delacourt reveals in her new book *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, marketing has become so pervasive that voters are now treated more like consumers. Our buying habits and commercial desires, information many people happily offer up for free to online social networks, are used to obtain our votes. It's long been known that vocal minorities, special interest groups, and short electoral terms have crippled our ability as a society to plan for the longer term. Now, politics and ethics are increasingly being subverted by materialism and consumerism.

Knowing this may not help in the toothpaste aisle, but it's wise to be aware. Remind yourself that this smart phone and that toilet paper and those automobiles were not really created specifically for you. All the glitz they wave in front of us may be a distraction so we won't think to ask about what actually matters, such as the battery life, or what exactly "double roll" means, or the true gas mileage. I'm not a conspiracy theorist, but I do think that marketing bombardment distracts us from more important issues.

What to do? Moving to Nunavut might be an extreme way of reducing my consumer choices. For now I'll continue to "vote with my wallet" by choosing simpler, less-hyped products that will probably work just fine. I tell myself, repeating like a mantra, that the whiteness of my teeth and the cleanliness of my jeans are not going to hang in the balance of my choice. It occurs to me, as I stand in the check-out line, that this might be a new twist on the term "retail therapy".

— Rick Scholes

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Flip, Flop and Fly to Perth

The legendary **Downchild Blues Band** is coming to the PDCI (Perth & District Collegiate Institute) auditorium for a fundraiser on February 1, in aid of the Perth Splash Pad. The event is being presented by Burns Jewellers in Perth and produced by Choose The Blues Productions, who have organized the successful Blues On The Rideau series at The Cove Inn in Westport for the past nine years.

Downchild is Canada's best known and best-loved blues band. Formed in Toronto in 1969 by Donnie Walsh (guitar, harmonica) and his brother Hock (lead vocals), they were inspired by the Chicago jump blues style of Jimmy Reed and James Cotton. The band became internationally famous when some of their songs were featured on the Blues Brothers *Briefcase Full of Blues* album in 1978, and used in the movie that followed. It is said that John Belushi ("Jake") and Dan Aykroyd ("Elwood") took the idea for their characters from the Walsh brothers.

The current members have been together since the early 1990s — Donnie Walsh on guitar and harp, Chuck Jackson on vocals and harp, Michael Fonfara on keyboards, Pat Carey on sax, Gary Kendall on bass and Mike Fitzpatrick on drums. Over their long career, all of them have been nominated for and/or won Maple Blues Awards, and the band has won a Juno, four Maple Blues Awards and the CBC's "Great Canadian Blues Band" Award. Downchild has recorded 17 albums over the past 44 years, including their most recent one *Can You Hear The Music*. This concert is part of their Canadian tour in support of it. This will be a great night of big band, big time blues!



Don't miss your chance to see the legendary Downchild Blues Band live in Perth on February 1

The **Perth Splash Pad** project was initiated in July 2012 by a group of residents, and has been strongly supported by the Town of Perth. A committee was formed with the goal of raising 10% of the cost of building the Splash Pad at the Conlon Farm Recreation Complex in Perth. They have now raised over \$60,000 through local fundraising initiatives, and have secured grant funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Perth & District Community Foundation and Hydro One. The Splash Pad will be built and fully functional by the spring of 2014. It will be free to use, fully accessible to people with disabilities, and will help children and adults of all ages to achieve more physical activity. It'll also be a lot of fun! Burns Jewellers and Choose The Blues Productions, with the support of sponsors, are very pleased to be able to help raise funds for this very worthy project.

Doors open at the PDCI auditorium on February 1 at 7PM, with wine, beer and refreshments being served in the foyer by the

Perth Civitan Club, both before and after the concert. The show starts at 8PM. This theatre-style auditorium is well known for its excellent acoustics and sight lines — there basically isn't a bad seat in the house.

Tickets can be purchased at Burns Jewellers (66 Foster Street in Perth), by calling 267-4466 or by visiting <burnsjewellers.com>, where there is also further event information. The VIP Orchestra Front seats at \$65 are already sold out. Orchestra Main Floor Front seats are \$55, Orchestra Main Floor are \$45, and Balcony seats are \$35 (plus HST). All seats are reserved seating — first come, first served.

This concert fundraiser is presented by Burns Jewellers, with proceeds going to the Perth Splash Pad <facebook.com/groups/perthsplashpad>. It is sponsored by 101.9 DAWG FM Ottawa, Lake 88.1 Perth, The Perth Courier/EMC Metroland, theHumm, McLean Insurance, Best Western Plus Perth, Dan Aykroyd Wines and The Perth Brewing Company.



Snow Angel Making Party

February 9 is your opportunity to make snow angels with abandon! The 4th annual Snow Angel Making Party is taking place at Highlands Gate, 4381 Wolf Grove Road in Lanark Highlands, from 1-4PM.

The act of making a snow angel produces an inexplicable sense of joy, relaxation and contentment. Making more than one angel multiplies the feeling, and when a whole group of people are making snow angels at the same time, the collective energy has to be experienced to be believed! The invitation is open to everyone and anyone. There is a play structure with a curly slide, horses to feed carrots to, and sliding hills. There will be a campfire with hot cider and good cheer, and you are welcome to bring something to cook over the fire or a treat to share. Dress for the weather and wear a coat with a hood so you don't get snow down your neck when you are flailing around.

Everyone is welcome, so spread the word and we will see if we can fill the field with angels — it's bound to be good for your soul!

From Almonte, continue on Almonte Street, through the lights at the ESSO station (Almonte Street then turns into Wolf Grove Road), drive 20km, go through the flashing yellow light in Middleville, and then look for the second laneway on your left after the flashing light. Bring your snowshoes or cross-country skis if you want to tour the farm after making snow angels. See you there!
— Susan Cressy



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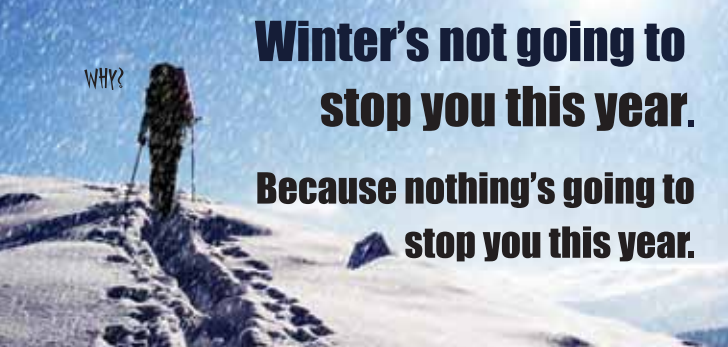
Wed. Jan. 8, 15, 22 Wings & Tunes with **Shawn McCullough**, 6-9
Fri. Jan. 10 **Blues on the Rideau** presents **Rick Fines & Suzie Vinnick**, \$60 Dinner and Show, 7-11
Sat. Jan. 11, 25 & Feb. 1 **Head Over Heels**, with Kevin Head & Miss V (vocal guitar duo), 6-9
Sat. Jan. 18 **Jr. B Elimination Draw Fundraiser** with Shawn McCullough, 6-9
Fri. Jan. 24 **Chinese Buffet & Karaoke** Buffet 6-9, Show 7-10. \$25 Dinner & Show
Wed. Jan. 29 **Norman Hardie & Hinterland Wine Dinner** (Prince Edward County) \$75 5-course dinner with wine pairings.
Fri. Jan. 31 **Ladies' Night** Tarot cards, massage, facials, jewelry making, food and door prizes! Reservations only, 6-9
Sun. Feb. 2 Sunday Roots Matinée with **Henry Norwood & Friends**, 1-4, \$5

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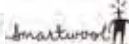
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Evalyn Parry to Play MERA

Award winning songwriter, poet and theatrical creator Evalyn Parry will perform the first concert in MERA's **Sunday Schoolhouse Winter Concert Series** on Sunday, January 26, at 2PM.

For most of her life, this Toronto songwriter has had one foot in music, the other in the theatre. So it's no surprise that this daughter of folk musician, writer and actor, the late David Parry, is able to embrace both worlds in her performances and recordings, juxtaposing long spoken-word monologues with quaintly poignant songs, and also to conjure up colourful characters and often extravagant dramas seemingly at whim.

From 19th century cycling heroines to 21st century sailors, from "feminine protection" to bottled water to the quest for the Northwest Passage, Evalyn's outspoken creations hold out a powerful vision of social and personal change, while her irreverent wit holds nothing sacred. Accompanying herself on guitar, bicycle, water bottle, concertina, shruti box and loop pedals, Parry shoots from the hip and aims for the heart. Fierce, funny, poignant and original, her work has been widely broadcast and anthologized, and over the last decade she has appeared at storytelling, poetry, music and theatre festivals all over North America.

She has released four CDs (Borealis Records); her latest musical performance project *SPIN* (starring The Bicycle as Muse, Musical Instrument, and Agent of Social Change) was nominated for a Canadian Folk Music Award in 2011 (for "Pushing The Boundaries"), and the stage show has toured widely in the past year, including a special staging in August at the

Blue Skies Music Festival for that event's 40th anniversary.

Her performance at MERA will be a much more intimate event than *SPIN*, featuring an eclectic mix of song and spoken word, covering a broad range of ideas and topics.

After Evalyn's show, the three-concert winter series continues with **Terry Tufts and Kathryn Briggs** on February 23, and **The Boxcar Boys** on March 30.

All concerts in the series are at the MERA Schoolhouse in McDonald's Corners, and take place on the last Sunday of each month. Tickets are \$55 for three concerts. Single-concert advance



Photo by David Howe

tickets are \$22, and MERA members are entitled to a discount on the ticket fees. All tickets are available from Tickets Please at 39 Foster Street in Perth (Jo's Clothes), by phone at 485-6434, or online at <ticketsplease.ca>. Tickets can be reserved at Tickets Please and held for pick-up at the door.

Upcoming concerts in the spring segment of the series include Garnet Rogers, Trent Seavern and Jason Fowler.

Funny You Should Write...

Resolved: Not to Wine

Disclaimer: Please consult Dick-Clark Ryan Seacrest before heeding any of the following advice. Got a question? Email Miss Write at <misswrite@thehummm.com>.

Dear Miss Write,

Short of getting a prominent tattoo (and maybe bumper sticker) that reads "Life is too short to drink homemade wine", is there any way to gently dissuade my generous and well-meaning friends from giving me a bottle of their holiday home brew? I'm feeling guilty about pouring it down the drain (and also worried about my plumbing being able to handle the acidity).

Just Say No to Plonk

by Emily Arbour

Dear JSNtP,

You're looking at this entirely the wrong way! The way I see it, your guests bringing you homemade wine means more of the good stuff for you! When next your winemaking comrades pop by for a visit, thoughtful gift in hand, I want to hear you gleefully suggest an immediate sampling! Disappear to the kitchen with the bottle, find your biggest wine glasses and pour them each a healthy glass. Fill your own with a brand you prefer and join them in the living room. Now, I realize there may be a distinct difference in the colour of the two wines, so consider having a pottery, or coloured vessel for yourself (maybe a mug is safest) just for these very occasions. No need to overdo it on the compliments either. Thank them and leave it at that. It may also serve you well to make mention of your resolution to cut back on the wine consumption in the New Year. They might think twice about bringing a bottle in the future to support their friend. Cheers!

Dear Miss Write,

Every year our family receives one of those "year in review" letters from family friends. Though I genuinely enjoy some of the updates, some of them are nauseatingly braggish. You're a writer. What's the secret to writing a good annual family newsletter without coming off like bunch of narcissists?

Writer's Blocked

Dear Writer's Blocked,

The best way to avoid writing like a narcissist is to keep your letter simple, humble, and to a single page — two max. Personally, I love when people get crea-

tive with their newsletters. What about profiling each member of your family's annual accomplishments including "fun facts" like how much they grew, how many times they changed their hair colour, how many bones they broke... That kind of thing. Spice it up! If you're a crew of overachievers, consider designating a paragraph to "the highlight reel" and talk about the single greatest achievement of each person. It could be anything from catching the biggest fish at the cottage last summer, to graduating Harvard. Whatever was important to your family this year should be in the letter. Even if it's not something the rest of the world would find impressive. Last but not least, enclose at least one photo that sums up the family. Something not too posey, if you can swing it. This picture should show how you've all changed over the year, as well as convey a little of the dynamic of your family as a whole. If you're goofy, send a goofy picture! Have fun with it and we'll all have fun reading it.

Dear Miss Write,

It's another New Year and time again to make my resolutions. This year I have several ideas in mind but my question is, how do I make a resolution with... well, with *resolve*?! January always comes with good intentions. But February? Not so much. Any tips to sticking with the Jan Plan?

Resolved to See it Through in 2014

Dear Resolved,

The trick to keeping your New Year's resolution is really to remember you made it in the first place. Decide on the one thing you most want to change this year. Write it down. Think about why you want to change this thing and then write that down too. You may not want to post something in your home or office for everyone to see, but I think it's still important to have a visual daily reminder. Find a quote that means something to you, or a picture that will spark the memory of what you've resolved to do. Frame it on your night stand, make it your screen saver, slap it on a coffee mug, do what you need to do to keep it fresh in your memory, and your odds of keeping your promise to yourself will increase tenfold. Happy New Year!

— *Emily Arbour is a freelance writer and shop owner who lives and works in Almonte. By no means is she an expert in anything but having an opinion and making things up. You can go ahead and take her advice, but you'd probably do just as well asking her kids how to stay up until midnight and still wake up on the right side of the bed. Only difference is they don't have a column in this fine publication.*

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Are You an Innie or an Outie?

Our enjoyment of January often depends on three things: proportion of sunny to grey days, proportion of nice-day-for-a-walk to wind-chilled-freezing-rain-don't-bother-getting-up days, and how much you enjoy outdoor winter hobbies. The avid skiers, boarders, snow-shoers, skaters, etc. have the proper outdoor clothes, combined with the joy of their pastimes, to get them outside and happy about it. I mean, when I was a kid, I *loved* being outside! Whether I was

I definitely encourage you to go out there and take advantage of any nice days — we need our sunshine, and if you need help staying out of the wind, call me and we'll build a snow fort... But in case you *don't* have a fort, and it is too cold or icy to make one, I thought I would give you some ideas of how to make the most of our "stay indoors" weather.

Stay Inside

No, not in a curtains drawn, rock in the corner, when-will-it-be-over kind of way. I suggest you try this four-step process.

Step 1: Sort through your home, getting rid of any clutter, 'til it feels like a peaceful oasis. This may take hours or days, depending on how bad you have let it get (mine is taking weeks), and the task will likely wear you out a bit... but that will make the next step even sweeter.

Step 2: Relax and enjoy your calm and organized surroundings. Maybe you can stay in your PJs all day and read one of those books on your To Read pile, or watch an entire season of some TV show — dealer's choice. Yes, if you have young kids this may be more difficult, but I'm sure they would enjoy a PJ day as well.

Step 3: Enough quiet solitude! It's time to invite some friends over for dinner so that they too can enjoy your welcoming tidy home. If the idea of cooking for all your friends makes you tense, then make it a potluck or get it catered! Downside: you will be left with dishes. Upside: you don't have to go out into the cold, and you

can go to bed five seconds after the last guest leaves.

Step 4: Well, I think it's about time you get out of the house, don't you? At the very least you need more groceries, another book, and perhaps some other indoor hobby accoutrements, such as knitting wool, plant catalogues, bath salts, or eye masks (is napping a hobby?).

Get Out... for a Minute

What?! I thought we were making the most of the indoors! Well yes, but sometimes you have to step out for a minute to get to a different "indoors".

Now is the perfect time to take that class you've been interested in. What was it — pottery wheel? Glass blowing? Yoga? Cooking? Perhaps continuing education or the Learning in Almonte series? You only have to go outside long enough to get to class, and you know you don't like taking a class during BBQ season, so now's the time! Strike while the iron's hot! Or cold, I guess.

Remember back in the summer, when you and your friends all had conflicting holiday schedules? And then it was the busy pre-Christmas period, and then the busy Christmas period, and then the I-must-catch-up-on-sleep-or-die period? Well now it's time to reconnect. Plan a night out at a local restaurant, or perhaps a play or a movie. They have some great film series in Arnprior, Perth and Smiths Falls, you know. Time to take a look through the Humm calendar to plan some concert and theatre outings!

Get Out... Way Out

Now is definitely a great time to plan a long trip away. Firstly, the weather is generally unwelcoming. Secondly, there are way too many fun things to do in this area all summer long, so it's best to travel in the off-season or you'll miss something BIG!

Plan for Summer

Yes, speaking of summer, I recommend you start planning *now*. You know how it is — you spend weeks planning your camping trip only to realize that your friends were coming to town for the Stewart Park Festival! You know that we at theHumm are your buddies, right? You know we've got your back. If you turn to page 18 of this issue, you will see (in the upper left column) a list we've made *just for you!* So get out your Nudes of Mississippi Mills calendar or your family's Google calendar or whatever, and write in the festival dates now. And don't forget the plays that looked interesting. And weren't you thinking of volunteering for that annual event this year? Better get in touch with them and find out what is involved.

Feedback for Next Month

Do you have a book or movie that you find particularly helpful at getting you through winter? I would love to hear about it — please drop me a line at <Rona@theHumm.com>, by January 15. I will also give the question some thought and perhaps let you know next month!

by Rona Fraser

building a snow fort or skidooing with my dad, building a snow fort or tobogganing with my friend Sheri, or simply building a snow fort on my own... I was happy.

Yes, I had an uncommon love of snow forts. I would incorporate little fridges in them — for snacks, of course. My dad even brought Sheri and me a grilled cheese lunch, out to our monster snow fort in the backyard (a particularly glorious one made from giant balls of snow, like so many snowman bellies stacked as bricks, built with my dad's help). Wow... I am now getting a strong urge to go and make a snow fort! ... but I digress.

These days when it snows, I think more of clearing the driveway than playing, though I do enjoy some downhill skiing (at a Mount Pakenham level), and taking photos of the town draped in new-fallen snow.

"Wow. I really regret that workout."
Said no one, ever.



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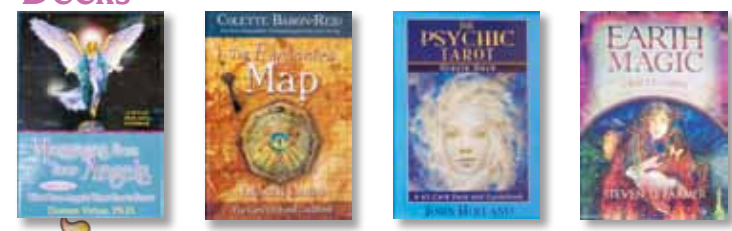
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Words From Westport

Words for the New Year

As I sit and gaze out my window in Westport on these very, very cold (but at least snowy) days and evenings, I can see the wonderful tree up on Foley Mountain. It warms my heart to think of the spirit of those who put this lovely vision up there for us to behold. The message of love and community caring glows from each and every bulb.

I don't suppose I should mention the R-word here, except it seems to be the word of a new year coming. So, what have you

by Georgia Ferrell

resolved to accomplish in 2014? I really don't know exactly, yet (as I write in December), but I am working on my list of things needing doing, especially things that will improve not only my life, but the lives of those I know and care about.

Firstly, I will quit being any kind of naysayer. No more "I can't do it", or "it's too hard", or "if only so and so would do their part, I would be able to do mine", etc. No — no more excuses. I resolve to take full responsibility for all that I do, and think, and be. I resolve to be open and not expect folks to know what is on my mind, or what I would like to do, unless I tell them, and reach out to them for assistance.

I also want to be more active in my community. Here in Westport we have so much, but we cannot rest on our laurels. The arts are growing wings, with an active arts council and wonderfully talented artists. I have a dream for new and wonderful arts programs here, including classes and workshops, new exhibits, kids' art camps, and poetry and writers' readings. If the success of the life drawing class is any indication, we are on the right road to bigger and better things. I hope to get our Bottles of Hope program going again, to support folks undergoing treatment for cancer. I want to see all the arts flourish and grow. And I resolve to be part of the work to make it happen, and to honour



Snowy Westport, with Foley Mountain as a lovely backdrop

all those who have worked so hard before me so that we can continue to prosper.

I especially resolve to take better care of myself, to eat more nutritionally good food — no more junk and no more excuses for not preparing healthy and good veggies, meats and whatever my body needs to stay healthy. When I was in hospital last February I thought a lot about how lucky I was — to be alive, yes, but also to be healthy enough to spend only six days there for a major brain trauma suffered in a totally avoidable accident. I should have just let the books fall down the stairs instead of trying to stop them and thus going down with them myself. There have to be some good lessons in that tale, and I resolve to find them and live by them.

I also resolve to be a better business person, to help in any way I can to bring more folks here to Westport, whether to become a permanent resident or a happy tourist. We have so much good here, it behooves us to welcome everyone who visits, and to ensure that they have the best possible experiences here so that they will continue to come back many times.

So I hope that the spirit of the tree will guide us this season and in the new year ahead and well beyond. I see it as the embodiment of our community and spirit. Happy New Year, everyone!

Literacy in Lanark County

The Canadian Federation of University Women, Perth and District (CFUW), are delighted to start 2014 with a bang by inviting the public to a meeting on the topic of Literacy in Lanark County. You are invited join them on Monday, January 20, at 7PM in the Perth Legion at 29 Beckwith Street East.

What exactly does "literacy" mean? What do the statistics tell us about literacy issues in Lanark County? What are the causes of these issues? What is being done to support literacy development in the County? How do we move forward and how might we become more involved? These are some of the questions to be discussed by the panel of people "in

the know": Kathy Boelsma (an Early Literacy Specialist from Children's Resources on Wheels and the Ontario Early Years Centre, Smiths Falls), Emily Cassell (Data Analysis Coordinator at Children's Resources on Wheels), and Elizabeth Goldman (CEO and Chief Librarian of the Perth Library). Be sure to have your questions and suggestions ready for this panel of knowledgeable and passionate professionals.

CFUW is an organization of women, linked nationally and internationally to promote quality education, participate in public affairs, and improve the status of women and girls, all in an atmosphere of friendship and fun.

The Metropolitan Opera HD LIVE

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Post-Holiday Angst?

Bah to resolutions. What I need is to get some "issues" off my none-too-ample chest.

Old Nelly hasn't been out of the barn in several months. It's time to saddle up, kids, and take a ride on the high horse.

If January can get any worse than December, it will. Here we are supposed to be revelling in the idea of a gorgeous winter, and we are being bombarded with snowstorm after snowstorm. I love to shovel, but really, when it's over the railing of the deck,

by Glenda Jones

ENOUGH ALREADY! The days may be getting longer — that sure is how they feel all right, especially when we are forced indoors thanks to a generous layer of freezing rain and ice. I want proper winter, with good skiing like we had in November, and snowshoe trails with no dog poop on the sides! (Well, I might have to concede on that one.)

Here's the next thing. It's making me cross when I look in the mirror and see this old lady looking back. You know, the one who went into the holidays with a fresh hairdo and manicure and who has come out the other end looking bedraggled and harried, thanks to perpetual toque-head! She's got a bad case of the complaints now, too. Complaining about cold feet in wet snowboots, dry skin, soggy mitts — you know, the usual inertia that sets in this time of year. She can't even sit down and make proper resolutions to which to aspire. No motivation!

Biggest complaint? Just when I was enjoying cards and letters over Christmas, Canada Post slaps us with the threat to discontinue delivery, because we aren't using their service! DUH! The postal rates prohibit sending anything heavier than a snowflake! I'm not one of the seniors who will be dancing merrily to collect the mail, singing all the way the loud praises of Canada Post providing us with exercise. For heaven's sake, whose desperate attempt at humour is that fairy-tale? I'm always in terror that the *Citizen* will stop delivery of our morning paper. It's a true calamity when I put on all the weather gear, tromp to the end of the laneway, only to find NO PAPER. We sit dimwittedly for a half hour, moping about no news. Listen up, all you public services: give us service — we've earned it, we're paying for it, and we want it. Stop this nonsense of raising the price of stamps until they are collectors' items. Where is the common sense in that?

Sorry there, Nellie. I got a little carried away with the pace there! You'd better slow to a trot, because this next issue is huge.

I thought we were alone in the complaints department with Hydro One, but now I hear there are thousands of us, trailing around in random circles, trying to get even one logical person to unravel the intricacies of these Smart meters. Our call is so "important to them" that we can spend an hour waiting for the response that... "Your call is important to us. Please consult our website." We're afraid to have them come out and check the darned thing, but we are pretty confident that it is not recording properly. Further, they changed their billing schedule without letting us know, leaving us without a hydro bill all summer, and hitting us with a whacking big one in October. But wait, it gets better: they were "so very very sorry for our inconvenience," that they gave us a \$30 discount! Their contrition is only matched by their generosity.

I'm buying one of those old-fashioned wooden drying racks to put by the woodstove in the basement so I don't have to use my dryer anymore. May dig a root cellar next spring and get rid of the fridge too. Oh, they do annoy me!

The phone company has always been another mystery to us: rates, plans, promotions, bundles and oodles, and I don't know what all. Not knowing the lingo to converse with that esteemed conglomerate, we've steered clear of it, paid the bill, and hoped they wouldn't follow Can Post and cancel service due to lack of use. However, one well-placed call can do wonders. It netted us a service call — on time, no less — a new satellite dish, and a PVR. Now, if I can learn to program the thing, we'll be all set. It didn't improve the TV programmes — only the reception — but at least now I'll be able to watch my favourites before I'm nodding off at 9PM.

Here's my consolation that is keeping me from running poor old Nellie right into the ground here. My amaryllis is getting ready to bloom, there are eyes forming on the potatoes downstairs, and my orchid is sending up a flower shoot. Hope springs eternal when a few flowers can wrestle their way into being in late January. Further, I'm knitting a lovely pair of socks with variegated yarn in rainbow colours. They'll be a fashion statement to take into spring.

It's time I got down from this high saddle and let the poor old horse back in the barn before some punster remarks that we're both old nags!

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 Jan. 10 The Matts
 Jan. 17 The Matts
 Jan. 24 Brea Lawrenson
 Jan. 31 Basement Ramblers

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 Jan. 4 Terry Tufts & Kathryn Briggs
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Les Misérables, Perth, Feb 6-9, 13-16
Snow Angel Party, Middleville, Feb 9
Leaving Home, Perth, Feb 13-16, 21-23
Steve Strongman, Westport, Feb 15
Willy Wonka Jr., CP, Feb 21-Mar 2
Evening Hymns, Almonte, Feb 22
Cake & I Scream, Almonte, Feb 23
Maxim Bernard (AiC), Mar 8
JW Jones (BOTR), Westport, Mar 14
Dusty Drifters/Sweet Alibi (Folkus), Almonte, Mar 22
Maple Run Studio Tour, Pakenham, Mar 29-30
Drumhand (OSFK), Almonte, Mar 30
Lorne Elliott (PPAC), Perth, Mar 31
The Lion in Winter, Perth, Apr 3-6, 11-13
Pakenham Home Show, Apr 4-6
Quartango (PPAC), Perth, Apr 11
Gryphon Trio (AiC), Apr 12
Hogtown Allstars, Westport, Apr 18
Fox on the Fairway, CP, May
Handmade Harvest, Almonte, May 3
David Rotundo, Westport, May 9, 10
Art in the Attic, Almonte, May 9-11
Young Awards Gala, Almonte, May 10
Little Women — The Musical, Perth, May 22-25, May 30-Jun 1
Mississippi Mills Bicycle Month, June
Busfusion, Almonte, Jun 5-8
Gaslight, Perth, Jun
Cantores Celestes, Perth, Jun 7
The Lure of the Lights, Perth, Jul
Celtfest, Almonte, Jul 4-6
Come Blow Your Horn, Perth, Jul 11-Aug 3
Stewart Park Festival, Perth, Jul 18-20
Herbfest, Almonte, Jul 27
The Country Wife, Perth, Aug
Puppets Up!, Almonte, Aug 9-10
Dial M for Murder, Perth, Aug 8-31
Highland Games, Almonte, Aug 23
Harvest Food & Drink Show, Almonte, Sep 13
Fibrefest, Almonte, Sep 13-14

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
30 🎵 Carp Celtic Jam , Carp Masonic Lodge	31 🎵 NYE Party Spencer Evans Trio , The Cove 🎵 NYE Snowflake Ball , Carleton Place	1	2 🎵 Jazz at Bally's , Ballygiblin's 🎵 Open Mic w/The Matts , Golden Arrow
6 🎵 Carp Celtic Jam , Carp Masonic Lodge	7 🍷 Green Drinks , Perth	8 🍷 Adult Bereavement Group , Perth 🎵 Open Celtic Jam , Naismith Pub 🎵 Shawn McCullough , The Cove	9 🎵 Open Mic w/Matt Dickson , Golden Arrow
13 🗳️ All is Lost , Arnprior 🗳️ Almonte & Area Artists' Assoc Mtg , Almonte 🎵 Carp Celtic Jam , Carp Masonic Lodge	14	15 🎵 Open Celtic Jam , Naismith Pub 🎵 Shawn McCullough , The Cove 🎵 Valdy , Smiths Falls	16 🗳️ Flippin' Art Night , Carleton Place 🎵 Open Mic w/Riq Turner , Golden Arrow
20 🗳️ Almonte Quilters' Guild , Almonte 🎵 Carp Celtic Jam , Carp Masonic Lodge 🍷 CFUW Meeting , Perth 🗳️ Haute Cuisine , Arnprior	21 🍷 Music Trivia Night , Almonte	22 🗳️ Arnprior Quilters' Guild , Arnprior 🎵 Open Celtic Jam , Naismith Pub 🎵 Shawn McCullough , The Cove 🗳️ The Hunt , Perth	25 🗳️ Open Mic Poetry & Music , Perth 🗳️ The Hunt , Smiths Falls 🎵 Brock Zeman CD Release , Perth
27 🎵 Carp Celtic Jam , Carp Masonic Lodge 🗳️ Cas & Dylan , Arnprior	28 🗳️ Lanark County Quilters Guild , Perth 🍷 Music Trivia Night , Almonte	29 🍷 Adult Bereavement Group , CP 🎵 Open Celtic Jam , Naismith Pub	30 🎵 Open Mic w/The Matts , Golden Arrow

Visual Arts

Vernissage, Jan. 10, 7-9PM. Catherine Blake - acrylic & mixed media. Almonte Public Library, 155 High St. 256-0108
Vernissage, Jan. 10, 7-9PM. The Ottawa Modern Quilt Guild. Refreshments. Brush Strokes, 129 Bridge St., Carleton Place. 253-8088, brushstrokesart.ca
Almonte & Area Artists' Assoc Mtg, Jan. 13, 7:30PM. Free admission; all welcome. Almonte Public Library, 155 High St. 257-8481, 4a-artists.ca
Flippin' Art Night, Jan. 16, 5-7PM. Featured: artist Angelique Willard, photographer Al MacLachlan, Sarah Evans. Ballygiblin's, 151 Bridge Street, Carleton Place. artscarletonplace.com. Free
Almonte Quilters' Guild, Jan. 20, 7-9PM. Monthly mtg. Everyone welcome. Almonte Civitan Hall, 500 Almonte St. 257-8444, mfshurben@gmail.com
Arnprior Quilters' Guild, Jan. 22, 6:30PM. Guest: Rennie Hickey. Christian Education Centre, 257 John St. N., Arnprior: arnprior-districtquiltersguild.com. \$5; \$20/yr
Lanark County Quilters Guild, Jan. 28, Noon. Speaker: Brenda Miller. Trunk Show and sale of patterns. Brown bag, refreshments. Guests welcome, \$3. Lions Hall, Perth Fairgrounds. 264-9232

Youth

Despicable Me 2, Jan. 24, 6:30PM. Family Movie Night, all welcome, canteen, (MINIONS!), Brunton Community Hall, 1702 9th Line, Beckwith. 257-1539, cmcgregor@twp.beckwith.on.ca. Free
On Stage For Kids: The Cowguys, Jan. 26, 2PM. Juggling, magic & comedy for ages 2-10. Almonte & District High School, 126 Martin St. onstageforkids.com. \$10

Festivals

Pakenham Frost Festival, Jan 24 (6:30PM-close), 25 (7AM-close), 26 (11AM-3PM). Indoor & outdoor activities. Pakenham. 256-1077, mississippimills.ca

Theatre

O'Brien Theatre Film Group presents *All is Lost* (Jan 12 at 1PM, Jan 13 at 7:30PM); *Haute Cuisine* (Jan 19 at 1PM, Jan 20 at 7:30PM); *Cas & Dylan* (Jan 26 at 1PM, Jan 27 at 7:30PM). O'Brien Theatre, 147 John St. N., Arnprior. 622-7682, obrien-theatre.com. \$10; 4 for \$38; 8 for \$70
Film Night International presents *The Hunt*, Jan 22, 2&7PM (Full Circle Theatre, Perth); Jan 23, 7PM (Station Theatre, SF). filmnightperth@gmail.com. \$10
Live At The Met: Tosca, Jan. 25, 1PM. Puccini. O'Brien Theatre, 147 John St. N., Arnprior. 623-4007, obrien-theatre.com. \$22

Literature

LIPS Poetry Slam, Jan. 3, 7PM, Lanark County Live Poets Society. Doors open/signup 6:30PM. The Thirsty Moose, 20 Bridge St., Carleton Place. lanarklips@hotmail.com, \$5
Open Mic Poetry & Music, Jan. 23, 9PM, Golden Arrow, 71 Foster St., Perth.
Collectible Toy Show & Sale, Jan. 26, 9AM. 30+ vendors. Appraisal clinic 1-3PM. Fundraiser for Big Brothers Big Sisters. Almonte Civitan, \$5, under 12s free. 283-0570

Music

Brock Zeman CD Release for *Rotten Tooth*, Jan. 4 (O'Reilly's, Perth), Jan. 25 (Carleton Place Legion). brockzeman.com
Little Christmas Concert (Fiddles), Jan. 5, 2-4:30PM. Blue Skies Community Fiddle Orchestra w/special guests the Celtic Heritage Fiddle Orchestra. Maberly Community Hall, 172 Maberly Elphin Rd. 278-2448, cindy.fiddlemusic.mccall@gmail.com. \$5 (free for under 12s)
BOTR: Rick Fines & Suzie Vinnick w/Band, Jan. 10, 7-11PM. Blues on the Rideau. Proceeds to Friends of Foley Mountain. The Cove, 2 Bedford St., Westport. 1-888-COVE-INN, choosetheblues.ca. \$60+tx dinner & show. Call to reserve
Jazz House Concert, Jan. 11, 7:30PM. Peter Liu Trio. Location TBD. jazzn.ca. \$20

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

<h1>3</h1> <p>📖 LIPS Poetry Slam, Carleton Place</p>	<h1>4</h1> <p>🎵 Terry Tufts & Kathryn Briggs, Golden Arrow 🎵 Brock Zeman CD Release, Perth</p>	<h1>5</h1> <p>🎵 APEX Jazz Band, The Royal Oak 🎵 Little Christmas Concert (Fiddles), Maberly 🎵 Open Mic w/Kelly Sloan, Ashton Pub 🎵 Valley Singles Lunch, Renfrew</p>
<h1>10</h1> <p>🎵 BOTR: Rick Fines & Suzie Vinnick, Westport 🎵 The Matts, Golden Arrow 🖼️ Vernissage, Almonte 🖼️ Vernissage, Carleton Place</p>	<h1>11</h1> <p>🎵 Head over Heels, The Cove 🎵 Jazz House Concert 🎵 Riq Turner, Golden Arrow 🎵 Winter Dance - Glen Silverson Band, Almonte</p>	<h1>12</h1> <p>🎵 All is Lost, Arnprior 🎵 Magnolia Rhythm Kings, The Royal Oak 🎵 Open Mic w/Kelly Sloan, Ashton Pub</p>
<h1>17</h1> <p>🎵 The Matts, Golden Arrow</p>	<h1>18</h1> <p>🎵 Folkus: The Strumbellas, Almonte 🎵 Jr. B Fundraiser w/Shawn McCullough, The Cove 🎵 Lucky B's, Golden Arrow 🎵 Songs By The Fireside, Merrickville</p>	<h1>19</h1> <p>🎵 APEX Jazz Band, The Royal Oak 🎵 Haute Cuisine, Arnprior 🎵 Michael Kaeshammer, Neat Coffee Shop 🎵 Music at the Manor Concert, Perth 🎵 Open Mic w/Kelly Sloan, Ashton Pub 🎵 SRO Big Band Tea Dance, Almonte</p>
<h1>24</h1> <p>🎵 Almonte Lectures, Almonte 🎵 Brea Lawrenson, Golden Arrow 🎵 Despicable Me 2, Beckwith 🎵 Ill Scarlet, Neat Coffee Shop 🎵 Pakenham Frost Festival, Pakenham 🎵 RAVE-olution: A Blacklight Cancer Fight, Perth 🎵 Steve Barrette Trio, The Swan at Carp</p>	<h1>25</h1> <p>🎵 Brea Lawrenson, Golden Arrow 🎵 Grievous Angel - The Music of Gram Parsons, Neat Coffee Shop 🎵 Head over Heels, The Cove 🎵 Live At The Met: Tosca, Arnprior 🎵 Pakenham Frost Festival, Pakenham</p>	<h1>26</h1> <p>🎵 Cas & Dylan, Arnprior 🎵 Evalyn Parry, McDonalds Corners 🎵 Magnolia Rhythm Kings, The Royal Oak 🎵 On Stage For Kids: Cowguys, Almonte 🎵 Open Mic w/Kelly Sloan, Ashton Pub 🎵 Pakenham Frost Festival, Pakenham 🎵 Traditional Song Session, Almonte 🎵 Collectible Toy Show & Sale, Almonte</p>
<h1>31</h1> <p>🎵 Basement Ramblers, Golden Arrow</p>	<p>🖼️ Brush Strokes presents The Ottawa Modern Quilt Guild, Jan 4-31 <brushstrokesart.ca> 🖼️ MVTM presents <i>Fabric of a Small Town, Transformations: Taking Felt in New Directions</i> (from Jan. 21) <mytm.ca> 🖼️ Ottawa West Arts Assoc Gallery presents <i>Anticipating Winter</i> (to Jan. 10) <owaa.ca> 🖼️ Palms Coffee Shop presents Nona Argue's linocut prints, photographer Shawn DeSalvo <palmsonline.ca> 🖼️ The Mississippi Mills Chambers Gallery presents Leslie Lambert's landscapes (oil & watercolour) 🖼️ The Almonte Library Corridor Gallery presents Cathy Blake's mixed media 🖼️ Kanata Civic Art Gallery presents group show <i>Points of View</i> <kanatagallery.ca> 🖼️ Fairview Manor Foyer presents Gayle Marshall's watercolours of children</p>	

Valley Singles Lunch, Jan. 5, 1PM. All welcome. Reg: 256-8117. Shanloon Restaurant, 41 Raglan S., Renfrew

Green Drinks, Jan. 7, 5:30PM. Informal meeting of environmental folk. Around the Corner, 40 Foster St., Perth. Perthgreendrinks@gmail.com, GreenDrinks.org

Adult Bereavement Group, Jan 8 (1-3PM, Lanark Lodge, Perth); Jan 29 (1:30-3:30PM, Waterside, CP). 267-6400, rebeccab@chslc.ca. Topic: Definitions of Grief. Free

CFUW Meeting, Jan. 20, 7PM. Topic: Literacy in Lanark Co. Public is invited. Perth Legion, 26 Beckwith St. E., Perth. cfuw-perth-district.com

Music Trivia Night, Jan. 21, 28, 8PM. The Barley Mow, 79 Little Bridge Street, Almonte. 256-5669

Almonte Lectures, Jan. 24, 7:30PM. Jeff Manthorpe: Drug Discovery & Marketing. Almonte United Church, 106 Elgin St. don_wiles@carleton.ca. Free - donations accepted

RAVE-olution: A Blacklight Cancer Fight, Jan. 24, 7-10PM. Rave-themed fitness party. Wear neon, glowsticks. Perth Civitan Hall, 6787 County Rd 43. 267-1058, cancer.ca/RAVEolution. \$40

Winter Dance - Glen Silverson Band, Jan. 11, 8PM-midnight. Country music, silent auction, refreshments. By Almonte Fair Board. Almonte Civitan Hall, 500 Almonte St. 256-6263. \$15; \$12 in adv

Valdy, Jan. 15, 7PM. Iconic Cdn singer-songwriter. Opener: Richmond Ramblers. Gallipeau Centre, 316 Queen St., Smiths Falls. 283-3717, gallipeaucentretheatre.com. \$29.50+charges

Folkus: The Strumbellas, Jan. 18, 8PM. Openers: Lowball Bidders. Tickets \$30, at Mill Street Books or door. Almonte Old Town Hall, 14 Bridge St. 256-9090, folkusalmonte.com

Songs By The Fireside, Jan. 18, 6-8PM. \$40 dinner w/jazz duo Anouk-Michelle Gregoire/Pierre Monfils. Baldachin Inn, 111 St. Lawrence St., Merrickville. 269-4223, baldachininn@gmail.com

Music at the Manor Concert, Jan. 19, 2PM. The Perth & Queen's Connection: Bruce Kelly (baritone), Brad Mills (piano). Seating is limited. Perth Manor; 23 Drummond St. W., Perth. 264-0050, events@perthmanor.com., \$35

SRO Big Band Tea Dance, Jan. 19, 1-4PM. With Standing Room Only, Almonte's own big band. Refreshments. Almonte Old Town Hall, 14 Bridge St. 563-7044, sroteadances.org. \$14; \$25 per couple

Evalyn Parry, Jan. 26, 2-5PM. Sunday Schoolhouse Concert Series. MERA Schoolhouse, 974 9th Concession A, McDonalds Corners. 485-6434, ticketsplease.ca. \$22 (\$55 for 3 concerts)

Traditional Song Session, Jan. 26, 2-4PM. Join in traditional songs w/choruses. Anyone can lead. The Barley Mow, 79 Little Bridge Street, Almonte. 355-5552, dpbaril@gmail.com

The Royal Oak (Kanata, 591-3895): jazz on Sun, no cover
Jan 5, 19, Feb 2 APEX Jazz Band, 2-5PM
Jan 12, 26 Magnolia Rhythm Kings, 3-6PM

The Cove (Westport, 273-3636):
Jan 8, 15, 22 Shawn McCullough, 6-9PM, no cover
Jan 11, 25, Feb 1 Head over Heels, 6-9PM, no cover

Jan 18 Jr. B Fundraiser w/Shawn McCullough, 6-9PM
Feb 2 Henry Norwood & Friends, 1-4PM, \$5

Ballygiblin's (CP, 253-7400), jazz, no cover
Jan 2 6-9PM Peter Brown, Don Paterson, Glenn Robb & guests

The Swan at Carp (Carp, 839-7926):
Jan 24 Steve Barrette Trio, jazz, 7-10PM, no cover

The Naismith Pub (Almonte, 256-6336):
Open Celtic Jam Wed (excl Jan 1), no charge (7:30-10PM)

Neat Coffee Shop (Burnstown, 433-3205): shows at 8PM
Jan 19 Michael Kaeshammer, \$60
Jan 24 Ill Scarlet, \$30
Jan 25 *Grievous Angel - The Legend of Gram Parsons*, \$40

Carp Masonic Lodge: Carp Celtic Jam, \$3/\$25 for 3 mos, all levels, Mon (7-9PM)

Ashton Pub (Ashton):
Sundays Open Mic w/Kelly Sloan, 2-5PM

Golden Arrow Pub (Perth, 267-4500): shows at 9PM
Jan 2, 30 Open Mic w/The Matts
Jan 4 Terry Tufts & Kathryn Briggs
Jan 9 Open Mic w/Matt Dickson
Jan 10, 17 The Matts
Jan 11 Riq Turner
Jan 16 Open Mic w/Riq Turner
Jan 18 Lucky B's
Jan 24, 25 Brea Lawrenson
Jan 31 Basement Ramblers
Feb 1 Jazz Night

To ensure that your event makes

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calendar@thehummm.com

by January 22nd.

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Stevie Rave On

Reasons to be Cheerful

I don't shop. There are a couple of reasons I don't shop. Number one: DNA. I'm a man and I just don't think we have it in us to shop well. Shopping for some people is a relaxing, fun, even social event meant to take one's mind off of the other stresses in life. Myself, shopping *is* the stress in my life. I'd rather eat peanut butter through a straw than step inside a mall; I just don't think men have it in them to be patient enough to be good at shopping. It's a skill set that few men possess. Not our fault, we're just

by Steve Scanlon

not built that way. It's one of the many faults inherent with being the male of the species. The women who do it well should be applauded (or institutionalized). If you go to any shopping mall, grocery store or box store in the country you are going to see women focused on the task at hand with a job to be done, a mission to be accomplished and a clear vision of the finish line. In those same malls, you will see a few men wandering around aimlessly with that lost look on their faces like they've just come out of a coma and it's not 1961 anymore. Christmas is a time to be Cheerful... shopping does not make me cheerful.

The second reason I'm no good at shopping is because I'm a part-time procrastinator — I procrastinate when it's something I really don't want to accomplish. I can, and do, procrastinate procrastinating when it comes to shopping... it's a talent I have (or do two procrastinations make a right)? Being a semi-professional part-time procrastinator, my Christmas shopping inevitably ends up being last minute. This year was no exception and I found myself at Wal-Mart (ya, I know) on the Monday before the big day. I struggled through crazy mall-to-mall traffic getting to the store and parked my car the required three miles away from the front doors where I ventured through the acres of slush into the madhouse that is Wal-Mart two days before Christmas. Another reason to be Cheerful? No! What's the opposite of Cheerful? I was Cheer-empty.

I should explain that the reason I chose to shop at Wal-Mart of all places (believe me when I tell you that Wal-Mart is exactly the last place I want to be... ever. I would rather start every conversation from this day forward with, "this diaper is really uncomfortable" than ever walk into another Wal-Mart) is because just as I was leaving the house to embark on my once-a-year Christmas shopping adventure, my wife (the lovely and talented) handed me a piece of paper with writing on it. This, I would come to realize, was a shopping list... a list of items one shops for... in a grocery store... full of people who are also shopping... presumably with lists of their own. So, being the multitasker that I am (not), I decided then and there that I would kill two birds with one stone and shop at Wal-Mart where they have both groceries and gifts. Despite the Christmas ornaments hanging from every steel beam and light fixture and the carols being broadcast from inside a tin can and being drowned out by the sound of squeaky shopping cart wheels, I was not at all full of cheer. Go figure.

I won't bore you with the grizzly details. Suffice it to say that I managed, eventually, to find everything on my wife's list and everything I needed from this particular store and was mentally prepared to move on to the next stop — preferably a

small independent store with happy, smiling staff interested in what they were selling and with interesting things to buy... but I digress.

For those who have never been to a Wal-Mart (and I'm assuming once you've seen one Wal-Mart you've seen too many), there is one section of the store dedicated to payment. There is a series of cashiers in a squared off section of the store and the only way to get access to these cashiers is by lining up in what seems like an endless column that snakes past every confection know to man. It's like a shopping cart corral. I may be wrong, but I think this is exactly the same way they herd cattle to the slaughter. Anywho... I had been in the line-up a good sixteen hours when I heard somebody a couple of carts behind me say: "It's twelve items or less". This didn't really register with me much until a much louder voice came from the same person; "It's twelve items or less". My brain did an involuntary inventory of my shopping cart. I was over the limit. Not good. Crap. Guilty as charged.

I turned around and this little white-haired lady was staring at me. In other circumstances I'm sure people would describe her as sweet or pleasant, even lovable. They've never seen the glare though... I was a little frightened... I may have peed. "It's twelve items or less, the sign is right above your head". I looked up and sure enough she was right, it was right above my head, I had to step back to see it in all its BOLD text glory. Crap. I really was

I had been in the line-up a good sixteen hours when I heard somebody a couple of carts behind me say: "It's twelve items or less". My brain did an involuntary inventory of my shopping cart. Crap. Guilty as charged.

totally unaware of this sign and just how significant it was; I just saw people herded together for the cash and joined them. I was a Wal-Mart Lemming. But I was in the wrong, so I began to apologize and pull out of the line when the same lady said: "Well, you may as well stay in line now" (I had made significant progress in the seventeen hours I was in line). What I thought was: "seriously"? Followed by: "this is precisely why god invented pepper spray". What I did was: apologize again like a good Canadian and say "No, no, it's all right, I'll go to the correct cashier". When she magnanimously insisted for the third time that I stay in the line, I felt it my duty to remind her that she, not I, had brought up the fact that I was in the twelve items line and I pointed out to her... as I slowly counted my items, one by one... that I actually had sixteen items (two of which were hidden under a larger item that she would have had to crawl under my shopping cart to see...), which was far beyond the legal limit and therefore, as much as I would miss her and that I too cherished the bond we had created, I felt we both needed to move on with our lives. I wished her a heartfelt Merry Christmas and moved to the next cashier. Now THAT'S Cheerful! (Despite the additional eighteen hours of life I am never going to get back, standing in line for the sixteen items or more cashier.) I went from Mal-Wart (was that a spelling mistake or intentional... we'll never know) to that small independent store with its smiling staff and interesting products and again felt that Cheer... it was turning into a pretty good day. True Story.

My wife got everything she wanted for Christmas... except the eggnog... don't make me go back for the eggnog...

Have a Happy and prosperous New Year.

Start Winter as You Plan to FiNish It

Film Night International (FiNI) promises to banish your winter blues with a great line up of Golden Globe-nominated films, in both Perth and Smiths Falls.

Starting on January 22 in Perth and January 23 in Smiths Falls, *The Hunt* (Denmark) is about the fallout after a teacher is falsely accused of child abuse. In February, see the American film *Blue Jasmine* on the 5th/6th, which recounts the tale of a wealthy New York housewife who loses everything in her husband's Ponzi scheme, followed two weeks later (February 19/20) by the acclaimed German film *Hannah Arendt*, based on the true story of Arendt's coverage of the Adolph Eichmann trial.

March 5/6 brings *The Attack* (Lebanon/France), about an Israeli Palestinian surgeon who

finds out his wife is responsible for a suicide bombing, and on the 26th/27th, Robert Redford stars in *All is Lost* as a man who fights for survival after being lost at sea.

In April, the spotlight is on Canadian films: *Gabrielle* (April 9/10) centres on a developmentally challenged young woman living in a group home, who longs for independence; *Siddharth* (April 23/24) is about a man who travels across India searching for his missing son. The final two films in May have yet to be announced.

"We're so proud to be able to bring such wonderful national and international films right into our community," says FiNI founder Faye Cunningham, "especially in the midst of Canadian winter. They're like a little ray of sunshine."

Buy a pass to all nine films for \$75. Tickets at the door are \$10 each. Matinées start at 2PM and evenings at 7PM. Screenings in Perth are at the Full Circle Theatre and in Smiths Falls at the Station Theatre. Tickets are not interchangeable between screening times or venues for any of the films.

Film Night International is part of the Film Circuit, which was founded in 1989 as a division of the Toronto International Film Festival Group. With over 180 locations in over 165 communities across Canada, Film Circuit helps build markets and audiences for Canadian and international film in under-served communities.

All profits from the series go back into the Perth and Smiths Falls library communities. Perth screenings support the Perth



Film Night International will be screening Golden Globe-nominated films (such as *Blue Jasmine*, above) in both Perth and Smiths Falls this winter

Library, while profits from the Smiths Falls screenings are donated to the Smiths Falls Library. For more details about the FiNI series, visit <filmnightinternational.blogspot.com>, find Film Night International on Facebook, or email <filmnightperth@gmail.com>.



Photo by Lindsey Gibreu, Volberg Imaging

Mississippi Mills resident Janet Rice appears in the CBC mini-series *Best Laid Plans*, which begins airing on January 5. Don't miss any episodes, as some scenes were even filmed in Perth and Burritts Rapids!

Local Actor's Best Laid Plans

In 2011, Terry Fallis won Canada Reads with his novel *The Best Laid Plans*. This past summer, CBC made it into a six-episode mini-series filmed in Perth, Burritts Rapids, and various locations in Ottawa. This series is due to begin screening on Sunday, January 5, and it features one of our local actors — Janet Rice — in every episode (unless she has ended up on the digital equivalent of the cutting room floor!).

When she auditioned for the role of Edna May, an occupant of the old folks' home who works on the campaign to elect a Member of Parliament, Janet didn't feel that she had a very good chance as she had one of her arms in a cast, the result of a fall while on holiday. She is so glad that she was successful, because the cast and crew assembled by PDM Productions were terrific to work with. She hopes that the television audience will laugh as much watching the series as she and the rest of the cast did while making it.

Janet started her acting career being dragged onto the stage of the Mississippi Mudds' production of *The Murder Room* about twelve years ago, and since then has appeared on any stage that will have her. She has also appeared on TV in *The Stepson* with Adam Beach, and in *Being Human*. Her next stage appearance will be with 9th Hour Theatre Company in their spring production based on C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

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There is nothing quite like live performance. As much as we may admire listening to an artist's recordings, seeing that person perform live brings our appreciation to an entirely different level. Record-

by Tony Stuart

ings are often subject to the limitations of radio play, which is why popular songs rarely exceed four minutes in length. However, in concert those limitations are gone, and the same song can be explored fully. I can't help but think of an artist like Hawksley Workman. To fully appreciate him as an artist, you need to see him live, as his recordings don't do him justice.

In December, many music teachers put on Christmas or holiday concerts. These concerts represent a culmination of the many rehearsals that have been going on since September. It is a very rewarding process to hear a band or other performing ensemble go from sounding tentative, out of tune, and struggling to play the music

on the page, to being a polished group where all members are playing their parts fluently, listening, and recognizing how their part contributes to the ensemble as a whole. It is even more gratifying when they perform in concert, and realize that all of this hard work was worth the investment of their time. We had our own Christmas concert a few weeks ago, and the buzz in the hallways the next day was electric.

For me, the rehearsal process and final performance is what makes the study of music so valuable for our students. I've mentioned before that one of the biggest challenges we face as educators is how to deliver the message that hard work and perseverance are vital parts of the human experience, in an age of "instant everything". When I teach new students for the first time, one of the first things we talk about is how there aren't any shortcuts to learning how to play an instrument. While this can be difficult, it is also immensely rewarding.

Live performance is an exciting thing. No two performances are going to be exactly the same, and there is always the risk of mistakes being made, or technology not working the way it is supposed to. With any luck, all of the hours spent learning music and rehearsing together give you the tools that you need to deal with these issues quickly, especially because your senses are heightened since

you are playing in front of a crowd. Quite often, an audience isn't even aware that a train wreck was threatening to happen on stage.

There are times as a musician when the possibility of making mistakes during a live show brings out the best in you. For instance, in a jazz combo that I play in, no two performances are ever alike, because improvisation is such an important part of being a jazz musician. Before we start a tune we will usually decide how it will start and who will solo first. When you are soloing, you have the freedom to really explore the song, and once in a while there are times when you can just feel that you are coming up with something incredible. My advice is to enjoy those times, as they don't happen as often as we'd like. Plus, after you've played it, that brilliant solo is gone, and you have to create something totally new and different the next time.

With the same jazz combo, we often realize as we get near the end of a song, that we never really discussed how we were going to end the tune. It becomes a little bit like a roller coaster ride as you watch and listen to each other and try to come up with something that works. Some of our best endings have developed this way. The trick then becomes trying to remember what we did to make it work so effectively.

For musicians, live performances represent the chance to make each performance slightly different, and to share something special with an audience. In our schools, it also brings out the best in our students, and in the end bringing out the best in them is incredibly important, no matter where their journey leads them.

— Tony Stuart is the Music Director at Notre Dame Catholic High School in Carleton Place, and a freelance professional musician.

Craft Meets Passion

The Miguel De Armas Quartet Plays Almonte with Tracey Brown

Miguel De Armas doesn't just play the piano — he tantalizes the keys with his elegant fingers; he stares down the notes until they yield to his exacting standards; his expressions parallel the tonal challenges hidden in the composition. All in all, when Miguel performs, he sweeps you away with his creative passion and virtuosity.

Miguel has made an enormous impact on Ottawa music critics and jazz lovers in the few short years that he has called Canada home. So, on February 2, how very lucky Almonte and area music lovers will be to welcome Miguel and his Latin Jazz Quartet to perform at the Almonte Old Town Hall. The Quartet includes superb bassist Marc Decho, engaging drummer Michel Medrano and conga-player extraordinaire Arien Villegas.

Like all gifted artisans, Miguel's story is grounded in a profound understanding of his craft and an unrelenting passion for personal expression. Raised in Havana in the 1960s, Miguel's schooling included a music degree from the University of Arts of Cuba. Although he majored in percussion, Miguel was drawn to the piano, and with the influence of pirate jazz radio that filtered from the US over the Cuban airwaves, he soon found his passion in the rhythms, tones and colours of Latin Jazz.

Miguel continued to hone his craft in the late 1980s as co-founder of NG La Banda (NG stands for nueva generación — next generation). He worked with the band, experimenting with non-traditional music forms and styles that resulted in "Timba", a dance and musical movement reflecting a fusion of salsa, funk and R&B. NG La Banda grew to international popularity in the 1990s, giving Miguel exposure at jazz festivals and events around the world, with opportunities to jam with many jazz legends, such as Chick Corea, Chucho Valdés, George Benson, and Wynton Marsalis.

Always looking for inspiration and opportunities to share his gifts, now in snowy Canada,

Miguel continues to follow his passion. Working with a variety of artists, he enjoys a rigorous performance schedule, teaches at Carleton University, and mentors young musicians. In Almonte, Miguel will welcome vocalist **Tracey Brown** as guest artist. The fusion of Tracey's rich and elegant vocal skills with Miguel's fiery jazz stylings will offer a unique opportunity to experience two masters of their craft, performing together for the very first time. In addition, Miguel has generously agreed to work with **Tony Stuart** and **The RetroActives** Stage Band

in rehearsal, and will give this youth band the stage to open his February 2 concert.

Presenting this fusion of a Latin Jazz piano virtuoso, a seasoned cross-genre vocalist, and young musicians, in a jazz concert in our town, has been dream for me! It is the essence of what I created JazzN.ca to stand for back in 2012: a growing community of listeners who can engage in and enjoy live jazz at close quarters. The jazz house concert is something akin to the salon music of yesteryear, where the like-minded gather "either to please or to educate". Much like the immersive experience of a curated fine art exhibit, JazzN.ca's JazzNhouse concerts — 12 in the last 18 months — have become the equivalent of a musical vernissage. And so, I hope, this JazzNAlmonte concert and future offerings will provide local audiences with a renewed love of live music carefully crafted and passionately performed.

Tickets for the Sunday, February 2, 3PM, concert are \$25, and available at Mill Street Books in Almonte <MillStreetBooks.com>. Details are available at <jazzN.ca>

— Arnie Francis, JazzN.ca



Tracey Brown lends her vocal stylings to the Miguel De Armas Quartet at the Almonte Old Town Hall on February 2

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Orion Tackles *Les Misérables*

After the hoopla of holiday pantos and Christmas shows, area theatre-goers begin to anticipate the breath of fresh (if somewhat frosty) air that heralds Orion Theatre's winter production. Orion is known for tackling substantial musical theatre fare (*Cabaret*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, among others) with talented actors and a dynamite house band. theHumm recently caught up with Heidi Stepanek, the artistic and musical director of this production, to ask her about Orion's latest undertaking.

by Kris Riendeau

theHumm: Orion Theatre has never shied away from taking on the giants of musical theatre, but *Les Misérables* could probably be described as an extra-meaty giant. What elements help you to tackle a show of this stature?

Heidi Stepanek: Over our eleven-year history we have developed an incredibly strong pool of local actors, singers, technicians and musicians who are passionate, talented, and willing to commit their time to these, as you so aptly call them, "extra-meaty giants." We have learned together and we are constantly looking for new material that is bigger and better to keep us all challenged, as both our skills and our passion for these excellent shows continue to grow. We are extremely proud of, and so glad to be a part of, such a wonderful and like-minded community.

Does a show like this one (with a blockbuster movie version still fresh in people's minds) bring a wider range of talent out for auditions?

Indeed. The net has definitely spread to include actors and musicians from as far away as Ottawa, Kingston and even Burnstown, who are willing to make the drive to Perth twice a week to rehearse, even in the thick of a Canadian winter, for such a prominent production. The audition process was an incredibly powerful, and difficult one, with so many talented performers in attendance. Orion's mandate has always been to produce small-cast musicals and, though this show has a "cast of thousands", we are attempting to work our theatre magic and create this illusion through a cast of 22 (and lots and lots of costumes!). Though we could only cast a small fraction of those who auditioned, it gave us an incredibly broad field from which to choose, and we are proud to present our strongest Orion cast ever, which is also a very diverse one, both geographically and age-wise.

Performances in blockbuster movies and Broadway productions can be technically flawless, but real magic often happens in an amateur production. Tell us a bit about your cast, and how they are making the roles their own.

As *Les Mis* has been such an iconic international production on stage over the past 27 years, as well as being rendered in such a powerful blockbuster film so recently, it does indeed leave us with a difficult challenge in maintaining some of the traditional elements of stage and screen, as well as making the production unique to us. There are certainly ele-

ments that are going to make Orion's version fresh, new and surprising, such as our choice to mount the show on a thrust stage with cabaret-style table seating, with the fourth wall completely obliterated, in order to make the production more accessible and intimate. Our cast is also finding amazing ways to make this oh-so-familiar material unique. Keegan Carr (a Perthite), who plays Eponine, is a mere thirteen years old, though her phenomenally powerful and rich vocals, and her well-timed and emotionally-laden acting, go far beyond her years. She consistently amazes the cast with the absolute magic that she works onstage, and has us all gaping open-mouthed and tear-streaked during rehearsals — her performance will be a treat indeed. And this is just one example of a cast laden with talent and fresh perspectives.



Grantaire & Marius (Michael McSheffrey and Andrew Galligan) rehearse for Orion Theatre's February production of *Les Misérables*

In a musical, the music is pretty darned important. Fortunately, Orion is known for its tremendously talented house bands. Who will audiences hear from this time?

We are so pleased to present a full fifteen-piece orchestra under the baton of local maestro Peter Woodwark for this epic show. Most of our players are those who have worked with us for years, sharing their incredible skills, and we have added some new players from Ottawa to our ranks. Three keyboards, a warm and full brass section, bass and cello, a full woodwind section, and two percussionists on a slew of instruments are already sounding so fabulous in rehearsals.

You have opted for "cabaret-style" seating for this show, which will be staged upstairs at Code's Mill. What particular challenges and advantages does that give you to work with?

We are really excited to be back at this beautiful venue — we have done two productions there in years past (*Cabaret* and *Guys and Dolls*). It provides an open and intimate experience for the audience, who may purchase drinks to enjoy at their tables both before and during the performance. We have opted for a thrust stage design for this production, with the audience surrounding the stage

on three sides. This does present more acting challenges for actors used to the traditional "picture frame" proscenium stage, but we have been contemplating a thrust design for years, and after taking several thrust-stage directing classes at the Stratford Festival, I am excited to be able to put these skills into practice!

We are really pushing ourselves, both artistically and technically, for this epic production. To this end, we will be renting several of our period costumes from companies such as Ottawa Little Theatre, Orpheus, and Stratford. We are also incorporating some exciting new lighting effects in the production, including some new technology (swivelling LED lights), and various interesting and atmospheric gobos (lighting projections) to set us in the grime and squalor of nineteenth century France. We will also be individually headset-microphoning each of our 22 singers so that the powerful vocals (often in up to eight-part harmony) are well balanced against our phenomenal orchestra.

Where can we get tickets?

Tickets are available at Tickets Please in Jo's Clothes in Perth (ticketsplease.ca or 485-6434). Tickets are \$24 each for individual seats, or \$160 for a table of eight. Our opening night ticket special is just \$15 each (plus HST and vendor fees). Shows are February 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, and 15 at 8PM, and February 9 and 16 at 2PM, at Code's Mill on the Park in Perth (codesmill.com). For more information on Orion Theatre Company and *Les Misérables*, please visit <oriontheatre.ca>, or like us on Facebook.

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