

MARCH 2025

# the Hummm

free

Arts,  
Entertainment  
& Ideas

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"Power Up" on Women's Day



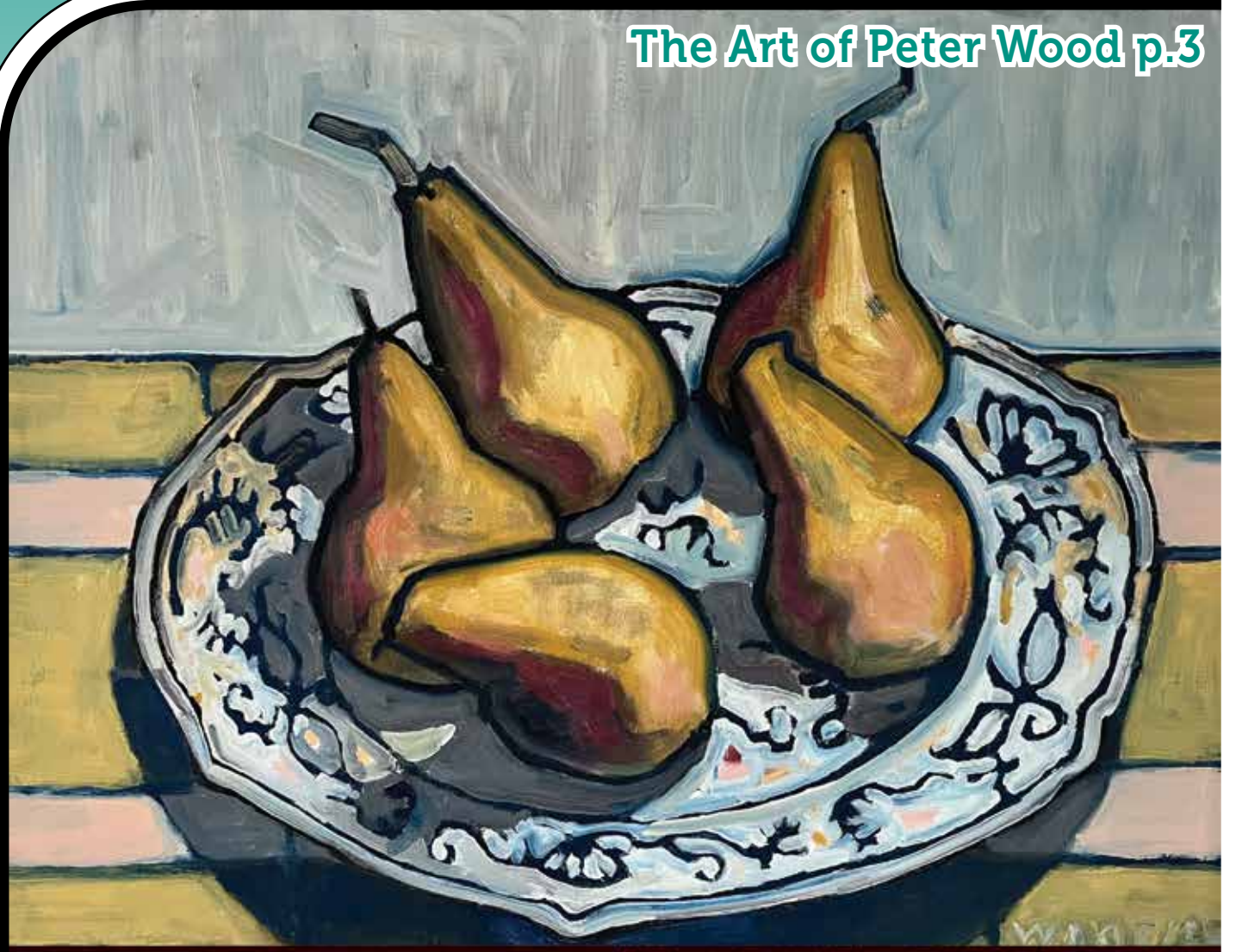
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Maple Season



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Seedy Saturday



## March is for Maple!

With the first stirrings of Spring in the air, there's no better way to get a taste of Lanark County than by visiting a local sugar bush (check their websites for hours of operation). And if you happen to get sweet on the area, just give me a call!

**Pat's Picks** Fulton's Sugar Bush & Maple Shop <fultons.ca>  
**for March:** Fortune Farms <fortunefarms.ca>  
Temple's Sugar Bush <templeessugarbush.ca>  
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# Say Cheese!

During the postal strike before Christmas, the owners of Pêches & Poivre in Almonte learned that the Almonte General Hospital's donations were down because many people still mail a physical cheque rather than donate online. Looking for a way to help out, they decided to put a donation jar on their counter, and for every piece of cheese that they sold they would put in a dollar. They also accepted donations from clients, and were astonished and pleased by the generosity of the community. Owners Sandra and Lise report that: "people sometimes put \$5 or even \$20 into the jar out of the goodness of their hearts, not to mention all the extra loonies and toonies and spare change. Through the sale of cheeses and the kindness of our clients, we managed to raise \$350 for the hospital, which we have decided to top up to \$500."

Lise and Sandra opened Pêches & Poivre in 2013 and began selling cheese about two years later, after which they launched their popular and successful cheese club. From the beginning, they made the decision to sell only Canadian cheeses through farmstead, artisan, and small-scale cheesemakers. They report that: "during the pandemic we continued to try to support our smaller cheesemakers and enjoyed a small following of Ottawa cheese lovers who learned about us, to whom we delivered cheeses on an approximate monthly basis to their doors."

For more information about Pêches & Poivre and their marvellous Canadian cheeses, visit them at 89 Mill Street in Almonte or online at <pechesetpoivre.com>.



In the fall of 2023, Gary Waterfield sent in the photo above and wrote: "In August 2023 I took part in a 3-week expedition 'Into the Northwest Passage'. It was a transformative life adventure! I am standing in front of the hamlet office of Gjoa Haven, Nunavut with my copy of theHummm, wearing my Rideau Trail toque!"

Thanks so much for taking theHummm on your travels, Gary!

Who's Reading theHummm



237 Borden Road  
Mississippi Mills ON K7C 3P1  
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

**Calendar Submissions:**

calendar@thehummm.com

theHummm is a monthly arts, entertainment and ideas newspaper delivered free to businesses and visitor attractions in Almonte, Perth, Carleton Place, Westport, Pakenham, Carp, Arnprior, Smiths Falls, Burnstown, White Lake, Balderson, and Merrickville. 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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**Subscribe to Hummail — it's Free!**

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

So far we have sent out over 225 editions of Hummail, and we have over 1800 subscribers.

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<p><b>CP Gallery Workshops and Creative Classes</b> CP Gallery, Carleton Place Ongoing</p>	<p><b>Women's Day Breakfast</b> presented by CFUW Perth <b>Perth Civitan Club</b> March 8</p>
<p>Almonte in Concert presents <b>New Orford String Quartet</b> <b>Almonte Old Town Hall</b> March 8</p>	<p><b>Our Recovery from Permaculture</b> with Scott Sigurdson <b>Learning Again in Almonte</b> March 10</p>
<p><b>Moana 2</b> March Break Movie <b>Almonte Old Town Hall</b> March 12</p>	<p><b>Tuesday</b> Mississippi Mills Film Society <b>Almonte Legion</b> March 16</p>
<p><b>Suzie Vinnick</b> presented Blue Skies in the Community <b>St. Paul's United, Perth</b> March 16</p>	<p><b>Psychic Medium Messages</b> including coffee, tea &amp; treats <b>Old Mill Manor, Appleton</b> March 16</p>
<p><b>Exploring the Magic of Cinema</b> with Tom Shoebridge <b>Learning Again in Almonte</b> March 19 to April 23</p>	<p><b>Holmes and Watson</b> presented by <b>Studio Theatre Perth</b> March 20-30</p>
<p><b>Evergreen</b> presented by <b>Oakfield Rugby Park, Perth</b> March 21</p>	<p><b>Seventh Town</b> presented by <b>MERA Schoolhouse</b> March 23</p>
<p><b>Waterwalker Film Festival</b> presented by MVFN <b>Almonte Old Town Hall</b> March 23</p>	<p><b>Spring in Bloom Dinner</b> with live music <b>Stonefields Estate</b> March 27</p>
<p><b>The Ragged Flowers</b> Art house music series <b>CP Gallery, Carleton Place</b> March 27</p>	<p><b>Manor Tour and Lunch</b> <b>Old Mill Manor, Appleton</b> March 28</p>

**SELLING TICKETS?** Concerts · Plays · Festivals  
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# Peter Wood — Painting Is His Anchor

If we're lucky, life provides us with many options. If we're really lucky, we make the right choices. Dunrobin artist Peter Wood is really lucky. He has managed to wend a circuitous path through many opportunities and emerge unscathed doing what he loves.

by Sally Hansen

Wood's passion and his gift is to create paintings that bring joy — paintings that stop us in our tracks and remind us that life is worth living despite the existential angst that is currently permeating our lives. His style reminds me of Van Gogh. The strokes are strong, the paint is thick, the colour is rich, the emotion is intense.

His celebratory portraits of our everyday companions — a tea pot, some apples in a bowl, a few flowers in a vase — create a breathing space. They remind us that we should take time to follow the best piece of advice I've ever received: "Enjoy what you have." Describing his current exhibition at Sivarulrasa Gallery in Almonte, Wood writes: "Through still life, I'm not just painting objects; I'm investigating the way they hold space in our lives... In a world that moves so quickly, the act of slowing down and paying attention is itself a radical choice." He invites the viewer to "engage with the quiet beauty of the moment and the unnoticed poetry of common things." His words also are poetic.



The title of his current show at the Sivarulrasa Gallery is *Still Life; Still Speaking*, and it reflects Wood's life as well as his art. During a fascinating and wide-ranging conversation with him, it was not surprising to discover that his first degree was a B.A. with a major in Philosophy, or that he studied hermeneutics — contemplating religious texts and existentialism. What is surprising is the number of twists and turns his life and his career have taken. After completing his philosophy degree, his fascination with God led him to travel to Europe and work on a Kibbutz. Then he travelled across Canada three times, journaling and always, always, religiously augmenting his sketch book.

Somewhere along the way his existential angst resolved into a decision to become an artist. At age 26

Peter went to Halifax and enrolled at NSCAD University where he completed a B.A. in Fine Arts and a B.F.A. in Visual Communication. Then he moved to the South Shore of Nova Scotia, where he lived for a decade. There he drew inspiration from the region's folk art that profoundly shaped his artistic vision. It remains an important influence in his work today.

When he wasn't learning, he was teaching. He worked for an adventure tourism company and spent eight years guiding bicycle tours and kayaking trips in France, Mexico, Japan, Tasmania... He also worked for a graphic design company. And he was always, always painting.

When he wasn't learning or teaching he was an entrepreneur. He started an art gallery in Mahone Bay, a picturesque tourist destination down the coast from Halifax. This choice turned out to be a disappointment; he discovered it was impossible to make a 12-month living during a 2-month tourist season. When the gallery closed, Wood returned "home" to his mother's birthplace where he had spent summers growing up — Ladysmith in the Pontiac — where he met his wife, Julie Brunelle. In addition to being his past business partner and a former high school teacher, Julie now is an accomplished artist working in fibre and ceramics. The couple also co-authored a book titled *The Artist In You* that introduces the basics of art, the art-making process, and the language of art. It includes fun projects appropriate for teens and older.

In 2012 Wood returned to Queen's University on a scholarship to complete a degree in education through the Artist in Community Education (A.C.E.) program. His new degree opened an exciting opportunity for the couple. In order to pay off student loans, they accepted a three-year posting to Abu Dhabi, the dynamic capital of the United Arab Emirates. They enjoyed living in a stylish downtown apartment, but discovered that teaching at Raha International School presented its challenges as they navigated the high expectations of both students and their parents.

After three years the couple was ready to return to Canada where they changed course and opened and operated a bicycle store (Heritage Bikes and Rentals) in Perth for six years. This entrepreneurial venture came to an unfortunate conclusion as a result of the Covid epidemic. Faced with yet another life-altering choice as to how to earn a living, Peter returned to his first and enduring love; as noted previously, his passion and his gift is to create paintings that bring joy.

The couple began scouring the Ottawa Valley for a new home. In the springtime of 2024, when the air was pink and the familiar Gatineau Hills were gorgeous, Peter and Julie moved into a small house overlooking the Ottawa River in Constance Bay. Perhaps coincidentally, it is across the river from his roots in the Pontiac. Since his return, Peter has been painting non-stop. He recently joined the distinguished cadre of artists represented at Sivarulrasa Gallery, and has launched an appealing website, complete with a blog and portfolio, at <peteraswood.com>.

The images of his artworks at his online gallery beautifully illustrate the aptness of his decision to fully



embrace his calling as an artist. His paintings are indeed works of art in the full richness of the term. On his blog he cites "...masters like Marsden Hartley, Henri Matisse, and the Group of Seven, whose mastery of light and landscape continues to shape my approach. To me, art isn't just about capturing the world — it's about telling personal, emotional stories. And now, back in the Ottawa Valley, I'm thrilled to share my own connection to this stunning landscape through my work."

### Until March 14 at Sivarulrasa Gallery

As longtime enthusiasts and supporters of the arts created in the Ottawa Valley, theHumm is delighted to welcome Peter Wood home to our stunning landscape and our amazing and ever-growing arts community. We urge you to treat yourself to a refreshing dose of enjoyment at Sivarulrasa Gallery at 34 Mill Street in Almonte to view Peter's soul-replenishing works. And don't forget to add his Artist Trading Card at the top of this page to your collection for fast reference to his coordinates.

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**WHO** Peter Wood  
**WHAT** Visual Artist, Oil Paintings  
**WHERE** <peteraswood.com>; 613-200-7057  
 <peteraswood@yahoo.ca>;  
**WHEN** Until March 14 at Sivarulrasa Gallery, 34 Mill St., Almonte, <sivarulrasa.com>  
**WHY** "It's not just something I create; it's the essence of who I am."

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## Joanne Beaton



Welcome home to **7 Mill Street**, a beautiful loft condo in the heart of downtown Almonte. Nestled in a beautiful historic mill, its modern design is sure to delight with a wonderful view of the falls! Functional modern space is enhanced by original wood beams — a delightful blend of old and new. Spacious and open-concept, rooms can be created through furniture placement.

This condo features beautiful maple flooring, granite and butcher-block counter-tops, and stainless-steel appliances including a gas range and hood fan. Features include a double-oven gas stove, a modern renovated bathroom, central-air and gas furnace, a private roof-top patio with shared barbecue, an elevator and a storage locker. The building is pet-friendly. Condo fees include gas heat, water/sewer, building insurance, management and operations.

A lifestyle choice with easy access to the OVR Trail, it would make a perfect artist's pied-a-terre. Step out the front door to downtown Almonte with its charming cafés, restaurants, art galleries, antique stores and one-of-a-kind shops!



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# Blue Skies – and Suzie Vinnick – in the Community

Blue Skies in the Community (BSIC) extends the vibrant spirit of the Blue Skies Music Festival throughout the year. The organization endeavours to foster a deeper connection to music, the arts, and local musicians in the surrounding communities. Through their commitment to support and celebrate music, they provide year-round opportunities for creative expression, skill-building, and community engagement. And they are always open to hearing new program ideas and supporting the community!

One of BSIC's programs is the Adult Music Camp that runs for three days at the festival site just before the start of the festival. BSIC has been thinking about expanding this to include workshops and concerts during other times of the year. As a test, they are hosting a winter **workshop** with Suzie Vinnick on Singing Blues and Gospel to be held on March 16 from 1–4PM, followed by a **concert** at 7:30PM. The venue is St. Paul's United Church in Perth. The workshop



Blue Skies in the Community is bringing the marvellous Suzie Vinnick to Perth for a workshop and a concert on March 16

is limited to the first 20 people to register, and you can attend both the workshop and concert for \$75.

To register for the workshop, please visit <[blueskies-in-the-community.ca/music-camp](http://blueskies-in-the-community.ca/music-camp)>. The concert is open to the public, and tickets (\$30) are available at Tickets Please (<[TicketsPlease.ca](http://TicketsPlease.ca), 485-6434).

## Kingston Choral Society Chamber Choir to Perform at St. Paul's, Perth

The music folks at St. Paul's United Church in Perth are hosting the Kingston Choral Society Chamber Choir in "A Musical Potpourri" concert, which will take place on Sunday, March 23 at 2PM.

The KCS Chamber Choir is a 20-voice ensemble made up of singers from within the larger Kingston Choral Society choir. This group was formed to bring Kingston audiences the chance to hear works best suited to smaller ensembles, from early music to more contemporary songs. The KCS Chamber Choir performs primarily a cappella works, but also sings with the KCS's excellent collaborative pianist Clare Marion. In 2024 the ensemble placed second in the province in the Kiwanis Music Festival.

The choir's director is Ian Juby, who has been a fixture in the Kingston music scene for many years as a high school and St. Lawrence College music teacher, performer and Music Director with Kinsmen and Thousand Islands Playhouse musicals, and is currently the Artistic Director of the Kingston Capital Men's Choir. Ian Juby and Brad Mills (Director of Music at St. Paul's) have worked together and separately with the Blue Skies Music Festival Choir.

The KCS Chamber Choir will be joined by the St. Paul's United Church Senior Choir for performances of two lovely choral works: *How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings* from the Brahms *Requiem*, and a movement from *Requiem for the Living* by Forrest. St. Paul's minister Don McLean, who is also a member of the Kingston Symphony, will add a beautiful cello line to one of the KCS Chamber Choir's pieces.

Also on the program will be "High Octane" — a barbershop octet made up of six singers from the St. Paul's choir along with a couple of musical friends. To round out "A Musical Potpourri", St. Paul's Director



St. Paul's United Church in Perth welcomes the Kingston Choral Society Chamber Choir for "A Musical Potpourri" on Sunday, March 23

of Music Brad Mills will contribute a piece or two on the church's magnificent pipe/digital hybrid organ.

St. Paul's Community Hub is located at 25 Gore Street West in Perth. There are no tickets, but a suggested freewill donation at the door of \$20 would be appreciated.

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# Is it Time to Embrace a “Buy Canadian” Approach to Books?

Last month, I wrote about a few books I've been pining to read. In early February, I stopped in at the Indigo nearest me (as I was nowhere near my favourite local independent bookseller) and happily bought one of them: *It Must Be Beautiful to Be Finished*, a memoir by Kate Gies. On the cover, I noticed, someone had placed a little sticker in the bottom left corner — a red maple leaf inside a small white circle. With a lot of talk on the news about tariffs and trade wars, it was nice to see.

by John Pigeau

And it felt particularly good to be buying a book by a Canadian author. I support my local bookstore as much as I'm able. The folks who work there feel like loyal old friends, truth be told. Still, I was happy to be supporting Indigo, our Canadian-owned chain of bookstores.

That little sticker also got me thinking: Could a “Buy Canadian” approach apply to books? Many have taken to it when shopping for groceries, so why not when buying books?

I knew just the person to ask: John Degen, the Chief Executive Officer of The Writers' Union of Canada. He was quick to get back to me, and I'm grateful because I think our readers will benefit from his considerable knowledge and insights.

“Of course, I encourage folks to read, know, and support Canadian authors and Canadian publishers at all times,” Degen said in an email, “not just when we're threatened with a pointless trade war, but now is certainly a good moment to let Canadians know where they can find *our* books. A lot of folks may not realize that Canada's book market is one of our greatest cultural successes,” he added. “Whereas our television and movie screens are dominated by American and other foreign products, there are actually a huge number of Canadian books available to Canadian readers. You just have to know where to look.”

One of the best ways to find Canadian books, Degen says, is to visit and ask a Canadian bookseller.

“Independent bookstores are experiencing a season of renewal right now, and bookstore owners and staff are a special kind of retailer.

They don't just know their product; they are passionate in their knowledge. And finding your local bookstore has never been easier. There's a handy map online at the Canadian Independent Booksellers Association site <cibabooks.ca>, which also has a directory listing all their members.”

Oddly, as a former bookseller, this was a site I'd never before navigated, so I checked it out. And John was right — the online map showcasing all the wonderful independent Canadian bookstores is an excellent resource. It is handy, user-friendly, detailed and helpful — a resource you could easily use while travelling anywhere in Canada.

There are also excellent sites online that can help you find Canadian books and much, much more. One of those is the 49<sup>th</sup> Shelf

<49thshelf.com>, which might be the next best thing to talking to your local bookseller.

“Folks can read all about Canadian titles and authors at the 49<sup>th</sup> Shelf, which allows you to search by category, book name or author name, and features endless recommendation lists by book industry insiders,” John explains. “Once you find a book at 49<sup>th</sup> Shelf, they will link you to an online retailer for print and e-books, and they have a wonderful ‘Shop Local’ button that will let you find that book at your closest independent bookstore.”

You can also opt to buy books directly from Canadian publishers. You can do so by visiting All Lit Up <alllitup.ca>, John notes, “which is an online shop run by the Literary Press Group. Get lost in their recommendations; read their many columns about Canadian books; and when you're ready click their ‘Buy’ button for delivery right to your door. They also feature the ‘Shop Local’ button directing you to the closest physical bookstore.”

Like most book-loving people I know, John Degen is a big fan of libraries. So in addition to those online resources, he reminds us that the library remains a wonderful resource.

“I'm in Toronto,” he said, “and notice that the Toronto Public Library website currently features a ‘Read the North’ list of staff recommendations of Canadian books. Check your local library.”

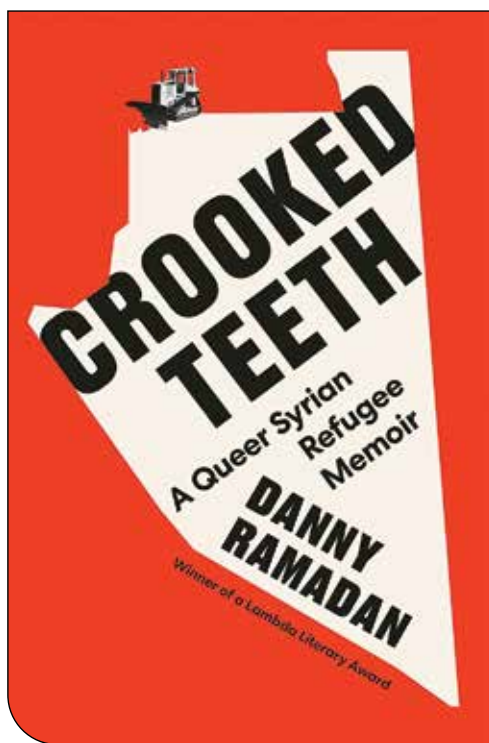
He also took a moment to recommend two wonderful Canadian books he's just finished. “They are books by the Chair and Vice-Chair of The Writers' Union of Canada, two fabulous Canadian authors I'm privileged to work with every day:

“*Crooked Teeth*, by Danny Ramadan, is a memoir of growing up queer in Syria and coming to Canada as a refugee. Breaks your heart on one page and makes you laugh out loud on the next. You think you may know the story Ramadan is going to tell you, but you don't, and *Crooked Teeth* will almost certainly challenge your understanding of Canada as a destination for refugees.

“[And ...] *The Donoghue Girl*, by Kim Fahner, is historical fiction set in a Northern Ontario mining town in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Part Jane Austen family drama, part coming-of-age, this is a fresh and captivating portrait of a

young woman pushing against the restrictions on her life and dreams. Fahner is the former Poet Laureate of Sudbury, Ontario, and draws the north with tragedy, joy and beauty.”

I'm not politically or economically savvy when it comes to tariffs and trade wars, but I do know that buying books by Canadian authors would be a good and helpful thing to do (for those authors, yes, but also for your local bookshop). Besides, Canada is home to a long list of exceptionally talented authors. There is no shortage of quality when it comes to Canadian titles at bookstores. As John Degen points out, you just have to know where to look, and sometimes, who to ask. And don't forget the library!



**Puzzle Launch!**

We're excited to announce the launch of new jigsaw puzzles by artist Andrea MacLeod!

Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup>  
10:00AM — 3:00PM

Meet the artists, get your puzzle box signed, prints available for purchase.

All of our puzzles are made in Merrickville, and feature only Canadian artists and Canadian images. We also make custom puzzles.

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Find wonderful works by artists like Leah Hicks (above) at the Art Hub Gallery in Carleton Place

## Hints of Spring Art Show

*Silver white winters that melt into spring...*

Spring may be a few weeks away according to Warton Willie, but why wait to surround yourself with that happy spring feeling? Come and enjoy *Hints of Spring* at the Art Hub Gallery in Carleton Place. Bask in the sights of spring-themed artwork that evoke the warmth and hope that this welcomed season brings. With the work of approximately 40 local artists under one roof there is so much to enjoy — from fine art, photography, stained glass, pottery and woodwork to jewellery, children's books, greeting cards and more.

Organized by Arts Carleton Place and located at 50 Bennett Street, the show runs until March 23. Art Hub hours of operation are Wednesdays from 1–7PM, Thursdays and Fridays from 10AM to 7PM, and Saturdays and Sundays from 10AM to 6PM. Find more details at <facebook.com/artscp>.

# Waterwalker Film Festival in Almonte

Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists (MVFN) is an active field naturalists club founded in 1988 to increase public interest, knowledge, understanding, appreciation and respect for the natural world. The club currently has over 300 members and is part of the Ontario Nature Network and a registered charitable organization.

On Sunday, March 23, MVFN is presenting Paddle Canada's **Waterwalker Film Festival** — a tribute to the late Bill Mason. Bill was a great conservationist, canoeist and filmmaker who cared passionately about his work and the wilderness. He wanted to share its beauty and promote its protection. As he once said: "Film is for me a means of expressing my feelings about the things I enjoy, things I am concerned about, mostly the natural world".

The Waterwalker Film Festival came together following Mason's death to help continue his vision. By presenting this festival, MVFN hopes to raise public awareness and support for wilderness conservation by celebrating films from around the world on canoeing, kayaking, safety, conservation, and protection of our waterways.

This curated screening of seven videos from the Paddle Canada's 2024 selections will take place at the Almonte Old Town Hall on March 23. Doors open at 1PM, and the films will be shown from 1:30–3:30PM. Tickets are \$20 for MVFN members and \$25 for non-members, and are available from Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485–6434).

### About MVFN

MVFN offers many activities including monthly nature talks, birding activities, field trips, nature walks, canoe/kayak outings and an annual canoe camp. Opportu-



On Sunday, March 23, the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists are hosting Paddle Canada's Waterwalker Film Festival in Almonte

nities to participate in citizen science projects allow members to explore many fascinating aspects of our natural world. They are committed to increasing the knowledge and awareness of local species and their habitat, and of the importance of conservation.

The MVFN Environmental Education team fosters a close connection with young people in the schools and clubs of the Mississippi Watershed and strives to enhance their awareness of the important connection we all have to the natural world around us. MVFN offers a series of interactive workshops through its Young Naturalists' Program. High school students showing environmental leadership are offered grants that pay for attendance at the annual Ontario Nature Youth Summit. The MVFN Cliff Bennett Nature Bursary and Elizabeth Kelly Foundation provide grants to students specializing in environmental programs at the college or university level.

The Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists club is run entirely by volunteers. They may serve on the Board of Directors, arrange nature talks, organize and/or lead hiking/canoeing/birding outings, help with refreshments, assist with audiovisual tasks at nature talks and presentations, provide vital communication on activities and projects, and contribute labour for habitat and trail creation projects.

For further information, or to join MVFN, please visit <mvfn.ca>.



## Friends of the Tay Watershed AGM

The Friends of the Tay Watershed are holding their AGM on Thursday, March 27 at the Perth Legion Branch 244, located at 26 Beckwith Street East. Come at 2PM for refreshments, meet the Board, and tour the displays. The AGM, which starts at 2:30, will cover the activities the group undertook in 2024 and what's planned for 2025.

The Keynote Speaker will be Doreen Donald, speaking on "Wetlands — Challenges from Bill 23, and Potential Impact on the Environment and Our

Water". Doreen is a Board Member and Coordinator of Nature-based Climate Solutions for Climate Network Lanark. Wetlands store carbon, protect us from floods, provide water for consumption, and support an abundance of life — including birds, other wildlife, and flora. But they are under threat and are being lost faster than any other ecosystem.

Join the Friends of the Tay Watershed on March 27 to learn how they're addressing this problem.



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# Hub Vintage Sale

A true harbinger of spring will be the third annual Vintage, Antiques and Collectables Sale, featuring select pieces chosen from the broad range of items generously donated to The Hub, Almonte.

All proceeds will be directed to Hub-supported charities and the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, which has provided the venue and promoted this sale every year. Meet some wonderful volunteers and find some real treasures on the second floor of Mississippi Valley Textile Museum from March 27–29, Thursday to Saturday, from 12:30–4PM each day. The Textile Museum is located at 3 Rosamond Street E. in Almonte.

The vintage-designated department and online sales are two endeavours added in recent years, but The Hub and its sister Rebound Store celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> year of service to the community in 2024. For more information, please visit <thehub.ca> or <facebook.com/TheHubAlmonte>.



Find great vintage treasures at the Textile Museum from March 27–29

# The Birds are Back in Town!

## MMLT's Birdhouse Auction Returns

By Andrew Dunbar and Jennifer Schnarr

Remember the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust's Birdhouse Blowout (2021), Birdhouse Bonanza (2022), and Backyard Beauties (2023)? Well, the birds are back in town! Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust (MMLT) is thrilled to announce our fourth annual birdhouse fundraiser auction: Birds of a Feather Auction Together.

The auction runs from April 15–30 with all proceeds supporting MMLT, a local non-profit charitable conservation organization dedicated to protecting nature reserves in our community and fostering engagement with nature.

This is a big year for MMLT! After the success of our special appeal fundraiser to acquire and protect Chatson Woods at Rose Hill Nature Reserve, we are now focusing on other crucial conservation efforts. Our goal? To raise \$7,500 to help acquire and protect significant conservation lands, preserving habitats for birds and other species that call them home. With natural landscapes facing unprecedented pressure, conserving land and protecting vulnerable species has never been more urgent.

How can you help? To make it happen we need birdhouse builders and buyers! Buyers will have their chance in April, but right now, we're calling on builders to donate birdhouses. In 2023 we had 76 birdhouses donated for sale. Let's see if we can outdo ourselves this year!

Donating a birdhouse couldn't be easier. Houses will be accepted up to March 31 on our website at <mmlt.ca/events>. There is no age restriction. In a previous auction, the oldest builder was 88 and the youngest was only 8. There is no entry fee, and a tax receipt will be issued after the auction. Every house will be displayed on the auction website along with the builder's name.



Calling all builders! The Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust is seeking donations of birdhouses for their 2025 event — Birds of a Feather Auction Together!

Houses can be functional (birds can nest in them) or ornamental (no admittance for birds), or even both! Imagination can run to the exotic, the fanciful, the colourful or the humorous.

Houses can be traditional or funky, and for any kind of local bird. Any kind of material can be used. They can be made from yarn, glass, metal, ceramics, wood, fabric or whatever. They can be large or small. They can be garnished with buttons, beads, ornaments, twigs, or anything you have around.

They can be made of new material or from recycled/upcycled material. Support a great cause while adding beauty to our community.

If you have a birdhouse to donate, please visit <mmlt.ca/events> and fill out the form at the bottom of the page. If you need additional assistance or have any questions, you can contact MMLT Director Jennifer Schnarr at <directorschnarr@mmlt.ca>.

Together, we can make a difference — birds of a feather support conservation auctions together!



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# A Forest, a Family, and a Tree

By Jamie Fortune

With the wintery weather this year, local maple producers expect a return to a “normal” syrup season. However, one of our old friends, a large tree we call the “Fortune Giant” will no longer be providing sap. Here is the story of this remarkable tree.

About 400 years ago, a maple seed germinated on the forest floor. With the ideal amounts of sunlight, moisture and fertile soil generated from the marble bedrock below, our seedling became a tree. It claimed a place in the forest with branches stretching out to capture the sun and roots spreading in the ground to gather moisture and nutrients. All around were other maples and beech — some died and some grew — but none as large as this maple tree.

Two hundred years later, loggers moved through the countryside harvesting the large white pine that grew in drier parts of the forest. They were not interested in the hardwood trees and our maple, along with its companions, continued its natural growth.

Following the loggers came European settlers, clearing forests to create farms and build homes for their families. The settlers learned from indigenous hunters and traders who passed through the area to value the maple trees as a supply of sugar. This forest, including our maple,

was tapped to supply maple syrup and sugar to the succession of families who farmed these acres for the next century and a half, right up to this day.

When Ray and Ruth Fortune purchased the farm in 1972, our maple tree was the largest on the farm, over a meter in diameter and growing well. It was named the Fortune Giant and was a consistent producer of maple sap, supporting four taps each year.

The forest thrived until a destructive ice storm in January of 1998 caused severe damage, destroying over 60% of the crowns of the maple trees. Two large branches were torn from the Fortune Giant, exposing the tree to decay-causing organisms which colonized the exposed tree wounds. With fewer branches and leaves to produce energy, the Fortune Giant was less vigorous and could not ward off the fungal infections. The tree continued to produce sap, although fewer taps were placed in it due to its declining state.

Over the next two decades, the forest slowly recovered from the ice storm. The smaller trees thrived in the sunlight created by the loss of tree crowns, and most of the mature trees in the 80-to-150-year class redeveloped healthy crowns. However, some of the oldest and largest trees died off. The Fortune Giant continued to decline, and in 2024 was no longer tapped. However, the “taps” that the Fortune Giant provided have been replaced with taps on new trees that have developed around it, utilizing the sunlight and nutrients it no longer requires. With the fruiting bodies of fungus protruding from its massive trunk, and its once mighty crown reduced to one live branch, it is slowly dying. Wildlife will use the tree, and it will make new contributions to the ecosystem.

On the farm, the Fortune Family has matured as well and Fortune Farms has grown as a business under the ownership of Ray and Ruth, their son Jamie and his wife Sherry. The knowledge and experience gained over 50 years combine to steward the forest and the business. Ray and Ruth retired from farming. In their 90s now, they remain very interested in the forest and business, and provide valuable advice and support. Succession



Photo by Jim Robertson

in the forest is like succession in our family business. The younger take the place of the older, growing and developing with the support of their ecological and social communities. Ruth and Ray’s great grandchildren are now devouring maple treats, enjoying the family farm and its forest, and time goes on.

Plan a trip to a maple sugar bush this spring to enjoy some fresh air and a first taste of spring.

## Ode to the Fortune Giant Maple Tree

Oh! What a giant maple tree  
We are so glad you came to be  
You’ve grown tall with a majestic girth  
Long may you live on Mother Earth

— Ray Fortune, January 2025

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## The Reever Report

# Don't Get Me Started!

I’m thinking of putting a parent control on my computer so that I can’t get into Pinterest or decorating sites. My addiction to hardware stores should be curtailed too. A simple search for a light bulb led me past the plumbing section at Home Hardware, and before I knew what was happening, I was eyeballing a new vanity top, one with shiny taps and sleek styling. Oh wouldn’t that look grand! “Get the light bulb, get out fast”!

by Glenda Jones

What’s the harm in doing a quick measurement though, just to see if that vanity would fit? Yes, exactly right! Due to 30-year-old plumbing I’d have to have new taps, so maybe I should go back and have a cursory look; not to buy of course, only to think on.

To mitigate the chance of throwing down my credit card, I decided to shop online. If I couldn’t touch things, I couldn’t buy them. But I could sure look for a long time. And then, of course, every time I opened the computer I got scores of pleas from RONA, Home Depot and others to come see for myself, or better yet, hit that “cart” button.

By this time, the vanity top had morphed into taps, and from there to toilets, and then to flooring, and then to showers, and then... well, here’s where it got really interesting. The more I looked, the more I discovered that removing the old bathtub to make way for a walk-in shower was the environmentally and health-conscious thing to do. No more wasted water, no more fearing a fall, just luxurious and safe showers. I was mentally creating the new bathroom and I was loving it.

I needed serious help, and went looking for a contractor to either stop me in my tracks or walk me through the dreaming. Keep in mind, up to now I hadn’t spent one cent on this, but I was getting a fair idea of cost. If I started now I’d be done before spring. There were sales on everything whose siren calls suggested it would wise to get at it sooner

rather than later. How disruptive would it be to live in chaos for a few weeks, knowing the results would be spectacular?

So “let the games begin”! First thing was amassing samples. I’m on a first-name basis with Grace at Home Hardware, Paul at Home Depot, and Heather at RONA. Second thing wasn’t so easy: making up my mind. Stuff was borrowed, returned, exchanged, and reworked. Nothing was decided without the watchful eye of the contractor who mercifully agreed to schlep through the stores with me. The project was gaining momentum by the hour.

But wait: wouldn’t it be prudent to update both bathrooms? In for a penny, in for a pound? And surely buying in quantity we’d garner some savings.

In one fell swoop we added to the list, went to the sources, and bought everything we are going to need. I was exhausted; Alan was gob-smacked! Up to now he’d thought I was playing house, not really considering disassembling both bathrooms. The contractor has assured us the wait will be worth it, and we’ll do them one at a time. Dear Alan is willing to indulge my fantasy here, likely thinking it’ll be one time he won’t have to do any of the work, just pay the bills. His saying is often, “She picks, and I pay”. Works for me!

The work is getting underway in February, so this might just be part one, but for now I’m still looking at Pinterest and purposefully marching through the hardware stores looking at shiny things we’re going to need. I’m not thinking about the mess this is likely to make, only the finished product. In my Pollyanna world, it’s all going to be beautiful and clean and new when it’s done. We’ll likely be inconvenienced for a full month, and I can only hope there won’t be nasty surprises as we go along, but we’re in too far now to back out, so here we go.

I never should have started with that vanity top, which it turns out is the least expensive of all the accoutrements we need to do this. Is it any wonder I get a warm welcome at the hardware store? They’re likely waiting to see what my next big thing is going to be. Light bulbs — nothing more!



Photo courtesy Terry Boyd



In rehearsal for *Holmes and Watson* are (l-r): Robert DelGrande as Dr. Evans, Rob Millard as Sherlock Holmes #2, Chrystine Williams as The Woman, David Bird as Professor Moriarty, Patrick Bugby as Dr. Watson, and Michael Couchman as Sherlock Holmes #1.

# Holmes and Watson

## Did Sherlock Really Die at Reichenbach Falls?

By Ben Bennett

When Sir Arthur Conan Doyle killed off his wildly popular detective Sherlock Holmes, there was such a hue and cry in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain that thousands of the readers of the magazine that had serialised the Holmes adventures cancelled their subscriptions.

After dozens of short stories and a few novels, Holmes was so entrenched in people's lives he had become a real person, not a fictional character.

So a play that looks at what happened that fateful day at Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland is ripe for intrigue, and *Holmes and Watson*, opening March 20 at the Studio Theatre in Perth, delivers in spades.

Ironically, far from relishing the success of his famous but socially flawed detective, Conan Doyle was getting tired of him and wanted to move on to other projects.

In 1901, after much public pressure and tempting offers from various publishers, Holmes was brought back to life, which meant the writer needed to explain how he had survived. And this opened the door to a whole raft of creative opportunities for other writers, at the time, and even more 100 years later. Enter Jeffrey Hatcher, American author and screenwriter, who wrote *Holmes and Watson* in 2018.

In Hatcher's play, it is close to three years since the reported death of Sherlock Holmes. A telegram arrives at the home of his friend and colleague Dr. John Watson. It is from the head of a remote Scottish asylum, and says that there are three men detained there, each of whom claims to be Holmes. "It is imperative that this matter be sorted out at once and in deepest secrecy..."

Watson is asked to determine which, if any of them, is the real Holmes.

Once all the players are in place, the audience is treated to some ingenious back-and-forth dialogue in interviews between the various players, with an ending very few will see coming.

Janice Reid is "very excited" to be doing her first play as a solo director since she was in high school, although she was assistant director to Carolee Mason

for *The 39 Steps* and more recently for *Perils of Persephone*. Carolee looks after set consulting and play polishing for this show. "We have a great cast and a great play; the odds are stacked in our favour," says Janice.

That cast includes some seasoned as well as some newer actors to the Perth stage.

Patrick Bugby is no stranger to clever dialogue, having had quite the verbal combat with David Bird's Andrew Wyke in *Sleuth*. In *Holmes and Watson*, look for Patrick to cross swords with Robert Del Grande, who many will recall from *Scrooge*, *The Musical*. This play "is in the tradition of the Sherlockian Game with a mystery to be solved, puzzling conundrums and a satisfying resolution," notes Robert.

The ever-popular David Bird plays a number of roles in this production, allowing him to showcase his remarkable talent for accents.

Chrystine Williams, who played the sexy socialite in *Jane Austen's Lady Susan* and Wendy Currie in *Perils*, rounds out the more familiar faces, while Michael Couchman, Rob Millard and Garry Welsh play the three Sherlocks.

Grace Main takes on the producer's role for *Holmes and Watson*, while Becky Bellamy is stage manager, assisted by Lauren Ebidia. Brent McLaren is lighting design lead; Lou Nel looks after sound design. The costume team is led by Elaine Scott, assisted by Rosalie Williams and Mary Liz. Looking after props are Madge Jeffery, Terri Henderson and Kathy Cooke. Reiner Silberhorn is responsible for the set design and leads the set-building team.

"*Holmes and Watson* is a play that will keep the audience guessing," notes Janice Reid. And with more twists and turns than Rideau Ferry Road, she is not kidding.

*Holmes and Watson* opens on March 20 and runs until March 30, with Thursday and Friday performances at 7:30PM, and Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2PM. Tickets can be purchased at the door or online from Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434). For more information, visit <studiotheatreperth.com>.

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Planting the Seed

# Seedy Saturday Returns to Almonte

And they're back! Just in time for sufferers of "garden-withdrawal syndrome", Scott and Marisa, proprietors of Indian Creek Orchard Gardens <indiancreekorchard.ca>, have undertaken to bring Seedy Saturday back to Almonte for a second time. Their 2024 event was a huge success with over 700 attendees, so they decided that 2025 was a go!

## Workshop Room

Please note – there is limited seating, so arrive early! Sessions include **Landscaping with Native Plants** at 10:45; **Soil Blocking** (a cost-effective and fun alternative to using growing containers) at noon; and **Getting a Head Start on the Growing Season by Starting your Garden Indoors** at 1:15PM.

Kudos to Scott and Marisa for resurrecting Seedy Saturday in Almonte after a pandemic-related hiatus of four years. This is a terrific opportunity for gardeners from the area to network, for local producers to showcase their wares, and for learning. It is also a great opportunity to support local small businesses. The grass-roots nature of Seedy Saturdays — low overhead, low admission fees, local talent, and volunteer energy — distinguishes them from expensive, commercially driven garden shows. Our local gardening groups will be well represented. For me, one of the most important aspects is the opportunity for networking with many gardening groups.

This event is fantastic for the beginner gardener, but is also very timely for the serious gardener who is looking for new challenges, perhaps venturing into rare and unusual plants or starting their own seedlings under lights. Peppers, eggplant and tomatoes can be started mid-March. Now is a great time to get out and talk to experienced gardeners and check out the huge diversity of vegetable varieties that are not available in box-store garden centres.

You will walk out feeling prepared, empowered, and passionate about the upcoming gardening season. Hope you can make it.

## Other Seedy Events

Seedy Saturdays (and Sundays) are locally organized grass-roots events. The Canadian not-for-profit organization Seeds of Diversity <seeds.ca> has a loose organizational role, providing some guidance and some publicity. They encourage the use of open-pollinated and heritage seeds and enabling a local seed exchange. They are a membership organization with over 3000 members across Canada. Funding comes primarily from charitable donations made by both members and non-members.

Seeds of Diversity has a well-developed program of opportunities for youth to connect with food systems, learn practical skills, and explore careers in food and agriculture. Additionally, they create and maintain gardens on school grounds throughout their home base of Waterloo, Ontario.

For more details on the great network of Seedy Saturday (and Sunday) events taking place across the country, check out the Seeds of Diversity website at <seeds.ca>. In our region visit Ottawa, Belleville and Brockville on March 1; Perth, Pembroke and Kemptville on March 2; Smiths Falls and Kingston on March 8; Westport on March 9; and Cornwall on March 15.

Almonte Seedy Saturday is sponsored by Indian Creek Orchard Gardens and theHumm. For up-to-date information, visit the Facebook Page for Lanark County Seedy Saturday. If you would like to become a vendor, please contact <scott@indiancreekorchard.ca> for an application.

by David Hinks

Mark your calendar for Almonte Seedy Saturday, taking place on Saturday, March 15 from 10AM to 3PM at the Almonte Civitan Hall. One hundred percent of door proceeds will go directly to Lanark County Interval House, a shelter for women and children fleeing domestic abuse. In 2024 this amounted to over \$1700.

## What Will You Find?

This year's event will feature guest speakers, movies, workshops, lectures, a master gardener advice table, seed libraries, seed swap table, horticultural societies, seed vendors, nurseries, compost suppliers, and so much more.

## Who Are Scott and Marisa?

They are incredible supporters of building local community, and for the last ten years have been the proud owners of Indian Creek Orchard Gardens, a micro farm located in Mississippi Mills. They employ a hybrid of organic, agroforestry and regenerative farming principles. Their wholesome food can be found at local farmers' markets, or customers can subscribe to their garden share program which provides twenty weekly shares of fresh, seasonal, organic, vegetables and herbs. It's a marvelous way to support local, one-hundred-percent Canadian-owned sustainable farming.

## Talks and Films

**Planning Your Food Forest:** at 10:30AM in the auditorium, join Scott Sigurdson of Indian Creek Orchard Gardens as he shares his experience in edible landscaping. He will talk about how to get the most from your landscape, what works and what does not, the many layers of a food forest, how to design for resilience, and avoiding the many pitfalls for the unwary. A question-and-answer session will give you a chance to address your issues.

**Growing Edible Mushroom at Home:** at 11:45AM in the auditorium, Barrie Brodie of Forest Floor Mushrooms will deliver a workshop on mushroom propagation. He will cover many methods, including starting from a kit and using plug spawn, and will also touch on more advanced growing techniques. Last year he filled the workshop room to overflowing, so he has been moved to the auditorium.

**In My Backyard:** in the auditorium at 1PM, this film chronicles director Jamie Day Fleck's personal journey into urban agriculture as she converts her entire backyard into a kitchen garden. Using her personal story as a jumping-off point, she branches out to look at the various solutions that backyard gardeners and urban growers have dreamed up and implemented in Toronto.



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This year's Seedy Saturday event is scheduled for March 15 at the Almonte Civitan Hall

# New Property Now Protected by MMLT

The Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust (MMLT) is pleased to announce the successful protection of its 13<sup>th</sup> property, increasing its total conserved lands to over 3,600 acres. The newly acquired Chatson Woods, a 282-acre property of significant ecological value located near Denbigh, Ontario, has been added to MMLT's Rose Hill Nature Reserve, which the organization has carefully stewarded since 2011. Chatson Woods expands the Reserve to 640 acres, further strengthening the preservation of its diverse and vital ecosystems.

For 132 years, three generations of the Chatson family had owned the property.

Through their involvement in social and civic affairs, all three generations left a legacy of resilience, service, and community spirit that endures to this day. MMLT is grateful to Antonia Chatson for her partial donation of the land, which made the acquisition possible in partnership with funders and community support.

Encompassing 282 acres, Chatson Woods at Rose Hill Nature Reserve features mixed hardwood forests on rolling hills, grasslands, ponds, a marsh, and the serene Copeland Creek. It is home to a diverse range of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, including several species at risk. Throughout the two

combined properties, almost 400 plant species have been identified, of which 30 had not previously been found elsewhere in Lennox and Addington County. A full species inventory will be conducted during the year, along with trail marking and signage, after which the property will be open to the public.

MMLT's President Steve Kotze explains: "The conservation of land is one of the most important actions we can take to mitigate the effects of climate change and to combat biodiversity loss. It is also critical for our mental, physical and spiritual health that we ensure the sanctity of places where we can rejuvenate and engage with nature. I have been inspired and moved by the overwhelming public support for this acquisition, clearly demonstrating that others feel as deeply and



The Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust recently acquired its 13<sup>th</sup> property — known as Chatson Woods. MMLT now protects over 3,600 acres of conserved lands in perpetuity, many of which are open to the public.

as passionately about conservation as I do. A huge 'thank you' to everyone who helped to make this happen."

The acquisition of Chatson Woods at Rose Hill Nature Reserve aligns with MMLT's mission to legally protect and steward private lands with ecological, bio-diverse, aesthetic and cultural value, while simultaneously fostering engagement with wilderness. The organization is making a significant difference in this region with a small staff team, an expert Board of Directors, more than 60 dedicated volunteers, and vital support from local people and businesses.

This acquisition was made possible in part with the financial support of the MapleCross Fund and the many community donors who generously responded to MMLT's Chatson Woods Special Appeal.

"Support for this acquisition was astounding," adds Stacie Lloyd, MMLT's Executive Director. "The protection of these lands really resonated with the community, MMLT members, private foundations and other funders. We are grateful for the generous response from all donors."

MMLT now has 13 properties entrusted to its care in perpetuity, in the region of the Mississippi River basin extending north to the Madawaska River. Many of these properties are open to the public to enjoy outdoor activities in nature such as hiking and snowshoeing, as well as events such as the upcoming Winter Tree ID walk, Notes for Nature music benefit, and the family-oriented Festival of the Wild Child held each summer.

For more information about MMLT and upcoming events, please visit <mmlt.ca>.



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Above, Becky Sparks leads a workshop called "Strings" that shows students how to use some of the tools in an Actor's toolbox

## Lights, Stage, Action! Perth Youth Theatre Workshops Return for the Spring of 2025

Calling all young performers and creative minds! The Perth Youth Players (PYP) are back with an exciting new season of theatre workshops. Whether you're a returning participant or stepping onto the stage for the first time, Studio Theatre Perth promises a spring session packed with creativity, learning, and most of all, fun!

Led by seasoned theatre coordinator Marilyn Nicholas Dahan, the spring 2025 program offers ten new hands-on workshops for \$75, making it an affordable way for kids to develop confidence, express themselves, and build lasting friendships.

This season's workshops will cover a variety of engaging topics including acting techniques, stage movement, character development, voice work, and behind-the-scenes theatre arts. Learn all about stage fighting — new moves and techniques to create the illusion of a fight or battle. There is a puppetry workshop where students complete their own puppet and bring it to life on stage. Students will learn

how to tackle their first read-through after being cast in a play.

"Wardrobe Whimsy" is a workshop that teaches the basics of costume design. Then, with the help of a life-sized animatronic for inspiration, students can transform their basic costume into something fantastical. Experience some vocal techniques, warmups and cool downs, as well as basics for recording your voice using software and equipment.

Register in person on Monday, March 3 or Wednesday, March 5 at 6:30PM in the Studio Theatre Lobby at 63 Gore Street East, or online at <studiotheatreperth.com/youth-players> where you can also see the full spring workshop details and instructor profiles.

The first workshop begins on Saturday, March 29. Student workshops take place on Saturday mornings from 9:30AM to 12:30PM at the theatre.

Spots are limited, so don't miss your chance to be part of this exciting season of storytelling, creativity, and theatre magic!

## Meet the Artists at MERA

MERA's art gallery in Dean Hall welcomes Brent McGillivray and Maureen Bennett of Times Gone By Studio in Perth. Come by on Sunday, March 2 from 2-4PM for a Meet the Artist event. Their work will be displayed at MERA for the months of March and April.

Maureen Bennett interprets classic Canadian landscapes in a contemporary, bold and graphic manner. When you look at her paintings, you can see how her designs are influenced by her history of working with stained glass. She says her inspiration always comes from a memory and the emotional experience of time spent in Algonquin, Georgian Bay, and the Western provinces, as well as the Group of Seven. She developed a signature style of vibrant colourful parallel lines juxtaposed by simple forms and solid

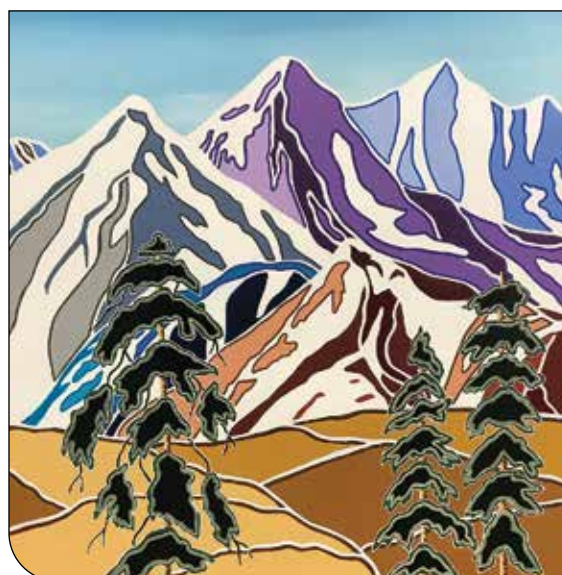


MERA welcomes artists Brent McGillivray (above) and Maureen Bennett (at left) in March and April

shapes outlined in white. Her paintings evoke feelings of peace, solitude and quiet.

Brent McGillivray creates "photo realistic" acrylic and watercolour paintings of disappearing urban and rural architectural landmarks and advertising signage. He says he is drawn to roadside restaurants, motels, abandoned buildings and neon signs. He works back and forth between photography and canvas. He draws on his training as an architectural draftsman to create meticulously rendered images. He is influenced by the bold and innovative architectural style of Frank Lloyd Wright and Luis Barragan as they blend art and architecture.

Everyone is invited to the MERA Schoolhouse in McDonalds Corners (974 Dalhousie Concession 9A) on Sunday, March 2 to meet the artists, view their works and purchase that "must have" piece. If you cannot attend the Meet the Artist event, please contact Tim Booth at <timothybooth9@gmail.com> to arrange another viewing time.



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# “Power Up” on International Women’s Day!

On Saturday, March 8 — International Women’s Day — Rachelle from Project Pine Designs will be hosting a women’s-only walk through the tool department of the Rona Carleton Place. **Power Up! Confidently Navigating the Tool Department** will be an inclusive and open space to help women navigate the power tool department with confidence. As an amateur DIYer and woodworker, Rachelle has learned a lot over the last ten years, and she will share her favourite tools and advice she wishes she had known when she was first getting started.

Throughout the walkthrough, Rachelle will provide a safe space to answer questions you may have hesitated to ask. Things like: What’s the first tool I should buy? Do you have to buy the same brand? Should you buy cordless or plug-in tools? What’s the difference between a miter jaw and a jig saw? What would you use an impact driver for? How do I turn this tool on? No question is too basic!

Registration is \$10, and 100% of proceeds will be donated to Lanark County Interval House <lcih.org>. Attendance is limited to 15 people per session, so be sure to sign up and secure your spot as soon as possible at <projectpinedesigns.com>.



Take a walk through the tool department at RONA in Carleton Place with Rachelle from Project Pine!

# The Longing for Community

By Stephanie MacGregor

In today’s world, independence is often celebrated as the ultimate achievement. Many of us are taught to pursue success through individual effort, to prioritize personal goals, and to rely on ourselves above all else. Yet as society becomes more individualistic, something vital is slipping away — the sense of deep, meaningful community.

Community has always been an essential part of human existence. Historically, people lived in close-knit groups, supporting one another through shared work, collective problem-solving, and intergenerational knowledge. The idea that it “takes a village” wasn’t just a saying — it was a way of life. But as modern life pushes us toward self-sufficiency, we are losing the very thing that makes us thrive: connection.

The effects of this shift are everywhere. Loneliness and isolation are on the rise, mental health challenges are increasing, and despite being more “connected” than ever through technology, many people feel profoundly alone. Social media, while offering a sense of digital connection, often lacks the depth and support that true community provides.

For those raising children, the need for community becomes even more apparent. A child benefits from having a network of people who care about them — whether extended family, close friends, or chosen family. Being part of a collective group provides not only emotional support but also a broader sense of belonging and shared responsibility. When we raise children within a community, we teach them that they are not alone, that they have people to turn to, and that life is richer when it is shared.

But community isn’t just for children — it’s essential at every stage of life. It gives us a sense of purpose, a support system in difficult times, and a way to contribute to something larger than ourselves. Being part of a group — whether through friendships, organizations, or shared activities — reminds

us that we are interconnected, that our struggles and joys are not meant to be faced in isolation.

One of the most powerful ways to rebuild and strengthen community is through shared experiences. Volunteering, participating in nonprofits, or joining programs that bring people together can foster the kind of deep connections that many are missing. I joined the non-profit group Ninth Wave Arts looking for connection, and I found a space where relationships are built not just through learning, but through shared experiences.

Organizations like Ninth Wave Arts, which offers herbal crafts, forest walks, jewellery making, sound healing, tarot readings, nature-inspired wisdom and creative workshops, create spaces where people gather not just to learn, but to connect. The wisdom that arises when folk gather plays a crucial role in community development, and art in any form that is born from the simplicity of everyday life also offers community opportunities — even the simple art of being human in a complex world. In these spaces, relationships form naturally, built on common interests and the desire to belong.

True community means knowing that if you need help, someone is there. It means celebrating together, grieving together, working together, and growing together. It is about creating spaces where people feel seen, heard, and supported — where they belong.

In a world that often encourages self-reliance at the expense of connection, perhaps the greatest fulfillment comes not from standing alone, but from building a life intertwined with others. Community is not something we simply hope for; it is something we create. And as more people seek meaningful connections, it is through shared purpose, collective care, and intentional gathering that we can rediscover the power of belonging.



**April 5<sup>TH</sup> & 6<sup>TH</sup>**  
10AM - 4PM

# Maple Weekend

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Come celebrate the sweetest time of the year during Maple Weekend in Lanark & District and enjoy specials and activities like syrup samples, maple taffy, wagon rides and more!

Find a participating producer near you at [ontariomaple.com/lanarkdistrict](http://ontariomaple.com/lanarkdistrict)



This spring's Union Hall Pancake Breakfast takes place on Sunday, March 30

By Linda Camponi

The Union Hall Community Centre, a Registered Charity, is situated at 1984 Wolf Grove Road at the corner of Tatlock Road, an 8km drive west of Almonte. The hall has been proudly owned and maintained by the local community continuously since 1857. It is currently closed for the winter, but we are working on improvements to the facility with a view to year-round operation.

Each spring people look forward to Union Hall's Pancake Breakfast, a major fundraiser for the hall. This year the event is scheduled for Sunday, March 30 from 8AM until noon. Bring the whole family and enjoy good food while reconnecting with your friends and neighbours in the cozy atmosphere of this community hub.

Volunteers will be dishing out generous portions of pancakes with maple syrup (courtesy of Fortune Farms), sausages, baked beans and blueberries, accompanied by fruit juice,

tea and Equator coffee. A gluten-free option is available. Prices for large and regular portions are \$16 and \$14 respectively. Children five and under eat for free.

Last year the event ran smoothly in part due to a system of reserved timeslots, which reduced line-ups at the door and allowed us to ensure a manageable flow of visitors. Patrons had the assurance that there would be room for their party at a time of their choosing. We also increased the number of volunteers to make sure these hard-working folks had a couple of minutes now and then to rest and maybe even sample the goods!

To be sure of a spot, book your tickets now at Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434), or contact Linda at <camponi@storm.ca> or 256-2277, and we'll make sure you don't get left out.

We are grateful for financial support from the Municipality of Mississippi Mills and The Hub/Rebound.

## 2025 MERA Award of Excellence

Every two years since 2009, the MERA Schoolhouse puts out a special call to all artists living in this area. This call is to apply for the very generous award of \$1000 given to acknowledge a body of work demonstrating exceptional artistic skill, originality and quality.

The application is open to artists working in fine arts and fine crafts. It is specifically open to local residents, those living in the Townships of Lanark Highlands, Tay Valley, Drummond/North Elmsley, Central Frontenac, North Frontenac, and the Town of Perth. Previous non-winners may apply again.

The prize is funded in large part by the generous donation to the Perth and District Community Foundation (PDCF) made by Chris and David Dodge, who conceived the Award. The Award is administered and given by MERA.

Applications for the 2025 MERA Award of Excellence will be accepted up until April 30. For further information, please visit <meraschoolhouse.org>, email <meraschoolhouse@gmail.com>, or write to MERA at: MERA Award of Excellence, McDonalds Corners/Elphin Recreation & Arts, 974 Concession 9A Dalhousie, McDonalds Corners, ON, K0G 1M0.

MERA (McDonalds Corners/Elphin Recreation) is a not-for profit charitable corporation dedicated to enriching the lives



The image above is by Elise Abrams-Ogg, co-winner of the 2023 MERA Award of Excellence

of members of its community of all ages by providing and encouraging a variety of opportunities for personal expression, instruction and appreciation of the visual and performing arts. MERA's activities are based in a heritage schoolhouse in McDonalds Corners in the Township of Lanark.

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**MARCH 12 ALMONTE**  
1-3pm Skating  
2pm Movie (upstairs)

**MARCH 13 PAKENHAM**  
2-4pm Skating  
3pm Movie (upstairs)

**St. Patrick's Day DANCE**  
Featuring: **The Ryan's** with Terri-Lynn Mahusky  
**MONDAY, MARCH 17**  
Stewart Community Centre, Pakenham  
Light lunch will be served  
8PM - MIDNIGHT

Tickets available at Nicholson's in Pakenham and Almonte Old Town Hall, 2nd floor  
[MISSISSIPPIMILLS.CA/EVENTS](http://MISSISSIPPIMILLS.CA/EVENTS)

# “Take a Chance” on ABBA Revisited in Perth

If you've been craving the ultimate tribute to one of the most iconic bands of all time, ABBA Revisited is here to make your dreams come true. As North America's #1 ABBA tribute act, this sensational group has been dazzling fans across the globe since 2001 with their stunning costumes, spectacular harmonies and note-perfect musicianship. With every performance, they transport their audience on a musical journey through time, bringing back the magic as if the '70s never left.

Come out to St. Paul's United Church in Perth on Saturday, April 12 at 7:30PM, when Dream Rock Entertainment presents a very special concert by this fabulous tribute band. Tickets are \$39 plus fees from Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434), or \$44 at the door if available — so don't wait until the winner takes it all!

From Vegas to Bermuda, Mexico to Dubai, ABBA Revisited has performed for audiences of all ages, proving that the name of the game is timeless music and unforgettable fun. And does your mother know that this is a family-friendly event?

So gimme, gimme, gimme a ticket before they're gone, and ring, ring your friends to make plans for a night of dancing queen-worthy entertainment!



STANDING ROOM ONLY BIG BAND  
**TEA DANCES**  
 Almonte Old Town Hall, March 2 & April 13  
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# Jenny's House of Joy

Theatre Night in Merrickville is gearing up to bring a fun and saucy play by Norm Foster to the stage this May.

Jenny runs the best little house of ill-repute in Baxter Springs, Kansas, in 1871 at the height of the booming Wild West. It's business as usual until a young doctor's wife escapes her abusive husband and decides to try her hand at the oldest profession in the world. Then things get hairy for Jenny and her girls when a customer's wife threatens their livelihood — and their lives — if they don't stop servicing her man.

New director Andrea Lewandowski has been working hard to make her fallen ladies shine in this colourful and hilarious show. “This is Norm Foster at his best,” explains Lewandowski. “It's tightly written, funny as heck, and a little bit saucy.”

While the content is for mature audiences, she says there's nothing explicitly R-rated about *Jenny's House of Joy*. “Sure, they swear a bit, and there are lots of tongue-in-cheek references to knocking boots

and all that goes with it, but it's tastefully done. You'll laugh a lot, and if you cry a bit at the end then we've done our job.”

With a strong cast and crew working hard to bring Jenny's House to life, this show offers an array of gorgeous costumes and a stunning set that will make you forget you're anywhere other than the parlour in a lively and popular brothel.

“There are no men in the cast,” says Lewandowski. “How are we going to pull off a busy cat house with an all-female cast? Well, you'll just have to come and see for yourself.”

The cast features TNIM newcomer Jenny Pfitzer, along with Peyton Horning, Connie Coleman, Liah Naidoo and Janet Rice.

*Jenny's House of Joy* runs Thursday to Saturday, May 1-3, at 7:30PM; and Sunday, May 4 at 2PM. Tickets are \$20 online at [merrickvilletheatre.org](http://merrickvilletheatre.org) or at the door. Follow TNIM on Facebook (Theatre Night in Merrickville) and Instagram (@merrickvilletheatre) for sneak peaks of the show over the next few months.



The cast of *Jenny's House of Joy* poses with their doppelganger Barbies during rehearsal. Clockwise from top: Janet Rice as Clara, Connie Coleman as Frances, Liah Naidoo as Anita, Peyton Horning as Natalie, and Jenny Pfitzer as Jenny.

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Celebrate all things maple on the weekend of April 5 & 6!

## Maple Weekend Celebrate the Sweetest Time of the Year!

Get ready to tap into tradition — Maple Weekend is back for its ninth annual celebration in Lanark & District, and it's shaping up to be the sweetest one yet. On April 5 and 6, the Lanark & District Maple Syrup Producers (LDMSP) invite visitors to experience the magic of maple syrup season at local sugar bushes across the region.

Since its launch in 2015, Maple Weekend has become a springtime tradition for families, foodies, and outdoor enthusiasts alike. Visitors from Ottawa, Brockville, Kingston and beyond make the annual pilgrimage to get a firsthand look at how Canada's liquid gold is made. From sugar shack tours and sap boiling demos to fresh maple taffy on snow, this free, family-friendly event is the perfect way to celebrate Ontario's maple heritage.

"We're looking forward to another fantastic maple season," says LDMSP Chair Leann Thompson. "After a long winter, there's

nothing better than welcoming visitors back to the sugarbush to experience the sights, smells and tastes of fresh maple syrup being made."

Whether you're craving a classic pancake breakfast, eager to watch sap being gathered and boiled, or just looking for a sweet outdoor adventure, Maple Weekend has something for everyone. Activities vary by location but can include sugar-making demonstrations, wagon rides and hiking trails, taffy on snow and more.

With 14 local sugarbushes participating across Almonte, Pakenham, Lanark, Tichborne, Westport, Athens, Mallorytown, Clayton, Perth and McDonalds Corners, there's no shortage of spots to experience the magic of maple. For the full list of participating sugarbushes, interactive maps and special offerings at each location, please visit <ontariomaple.com/lanarkdistrict>.

## Big Band Tea Dances in Almonte

On Sunday, March 2, the classic big band Standing Room Only (SRO) with vocalist Saffron Bradbury will stage the next in its series of Sunday afternoon "tea dances" for ballroom and swing dancers. The dances are held in the auditorium on the third floor of the historic Almonte Old Town Hall located at 14 Bridge Street.

Tea dances are afternoon events that were popular in the '20s, '30s and '40s, when big bands were king. They were held in hotels and, of course, featured a live band. As implied by "tea", beverages were non-alcoholic.

The band launched the popular dances in 2006. They give guests a chance to listen and dance to live big band music in a period atmosphere. The dances attract ballroom and

swing dancers from the Ottawa area and as far away as Brockville and Deep River.

The dance on March 2 will be held in the Almonte Old Town Hall, a beautifully preserved venue with a clean and spacious wooden dance floor, natural lighting, and wonderful acoustics. Doors open at 1PM and dancing is from 1:30-4PM. Admission is \$15 per person at the door, cash only. Reservations are not required. Light refreshments including delicious treats and a range of non-alcoholic beverages will be available at reasonable prices, cash only.

The final tea dance in the 2024/2025 season takes place on April 13. For more information, please visit <srobignand.ca> or <facebook.com/srobignand>.



Two more tea dances are coming up — on March 2 and April 13



# The 2025 Pakenham Maple Run Tour

Get ready to shake off the winter blues and welcome spring at the 2025 Pakenham Maple Run Tour on April 5 and 6. Featuring nine stops presenting works by thirty Ottawa Valley artists, Maple Run is a unique blend of art, heritage buildings and spectacular spring scenery, all set within a 40km tour route that runs right through maple syrup country. This delightful self-guided free tour, where you can experience the charm of Pakenham and area and connect with the creators of exceptional art and fine craft, is truly a breath of fresh air after a long winter. Visit <mapleruntour.com> or find the tour on Facebook for more information.

You can visit all the stops in a day — and add to your experience with a visit to Fulton's Sugar Bush and Maple shop — the newest stop on the tour. Wondering where to start? The pretty heritage village of Pakenham, with its unique stone bridge spanning the rushing Mississippi River, is the heart of the Maple Run Tour. A cluster of four stops welcomes you there. Visit Keepers Coffee Bar, located in a charming yellow Victorian building and offering upcycled tea cozies and hats from a local artisan, as well as coffee, pastries and snacks, vintage items and plants. Paddy Mann's clothing design studio,

in a heritage stone building, will give you a whole new look with custom designed and ready-to-wear clothing from this award-winning designer. The sunny and welcoming Pakenham branch of the Mississippi Mills Library is your next stop, where you can discover three artists presenting landscape painting, paper art, and hand painted jewellery. St. Andrew's United Church, a local architectural gem, is a perfect spot for a light lunch from the church ladies after visiting the six artists who will present miniature quilts, weaving and felting, handmade soaps, art glass jewellery, candies and cards, and fibre art.

Heading west from Pakenham, a short drive takes you to Cartwright Springs Brewery, hosting a ceramic artist and a vibrant tie-dye artist. While there, be sure to enjoy the brewery's fine craft brews and even their unique bottled maple sap, perhaps with a side of pulled pork or wood-fired pizza. Then continue on to the warm and entertaining Chris Van Zanten studio where you can see demonstrations of the fiery art of glass making — an experience of colour and drama which for many visitors is a highlight of Maple Run.

Head east from Pakenham to visit Farmgate Cider, a family-owned and operated cidery with its beautiful heritage post and beam barn. There you will find the tour's largest group of artists, featuring basketmaking, pottery, animal portraiture and barn quilts, natural skin care, woodturning, fabric sculptures, artistic blacksmithing and hand-stitched leathergoods. Cider tasting (cold or hot) and sales are also a highlight of this location. For visitors from Ottawa or Arnprior and the Ottawa Valley, this location is easily accessed via Highway 417.

South of Pakenham you will find the last two stops: the heritage Cedar Hill Schoolhouse, and Fulton's Sugar Bush and Maple Shop. Step back in time and visit the one-room schoolhouse which still retains its school maps, blackboards and bell, and which hosts artists presenting leatherworking, hand painted pottery, gemstone jewellery, hand dyed yarns, baking, honey products and wildlife photography. At nearby Fulton's, a family-owned sugar bush for generations, experience a springtime tradition of maple syrup production, and visit the Maple Shop to stock up on freshly-made maple treats and unique artisan candles.

Bring your family and friends, and plan for a great spring daytrip through art, craft and the sweet traditions of maple season. Visit <mapleruntour.com> for more information, artist bios, images and more.



This year's Maple Run Tour will feature local food, heritage, and art (by artists such as Laurel Cook, above, and Chris Van Zanten, at left)



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## Learning Again in Almonte



**Our Recovery from Permaculture**  
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**Ginawaydaganuc Village**  
Learn about this innovative, indigenous-led concept. Lecture on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Exploring the Magic of Cinema**  
Enhance your understanding of films with **Tom Shoebridge**. Course begins March 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Heritage Matters**  
with Conservation Specialists **Keith and Alex Blades**. Course starts April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Photo: Trevor Johnston Photography

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# Oceans of Fate: a New Book by Dan Black

By Heddy Sorour

Dan Black's new book *Oceans of Fate* is billed as maritime history; but as a military historian, author and former editor of Canada's *Legion Magazine*, Black is a master storyteller who focuses on how individuals were directly impacted by war and peace. His book describes the building and ocean voyages of an iconic long-haul Canadian Pacific steamship, but instead of an operational or technical history, he introduces the reader to those who designed, built, worked, and walked between her decks.

As one reviewer noted, it is a "flesh and bone" history.

*Oceans of Fate: Peace and Peril Aboard the Steamship Empress of Asia*, published by Dundurn Press — one of Canada's leading and traditional book publishers — was nationally and internationally released on February 18. It is Black's fourth non-fiction book, because, as he points out, as a former journalist he is focused on telling fact-based stories.

"I don't need to create a character because I've got them, and through very dogged research you can find some amazing stories to tell and not have to create people because they're already there to discover. Some of the stories are stranger than fiction, they're extraordinary," says Black. "And I find it very interesting to learn how so-called everyday people witnessed their moments in time."

*Oceans of Fate* is the haunting tale of a vessel that plied the oceans as a passenger liner in peacetime and was requisitioned for service in the First and Second World Wars. In early 1942, while serving as a troopship, she was destroyed by Japanese bombers off Singapore. Black's skillful writing and meticulous research weave an intricate and

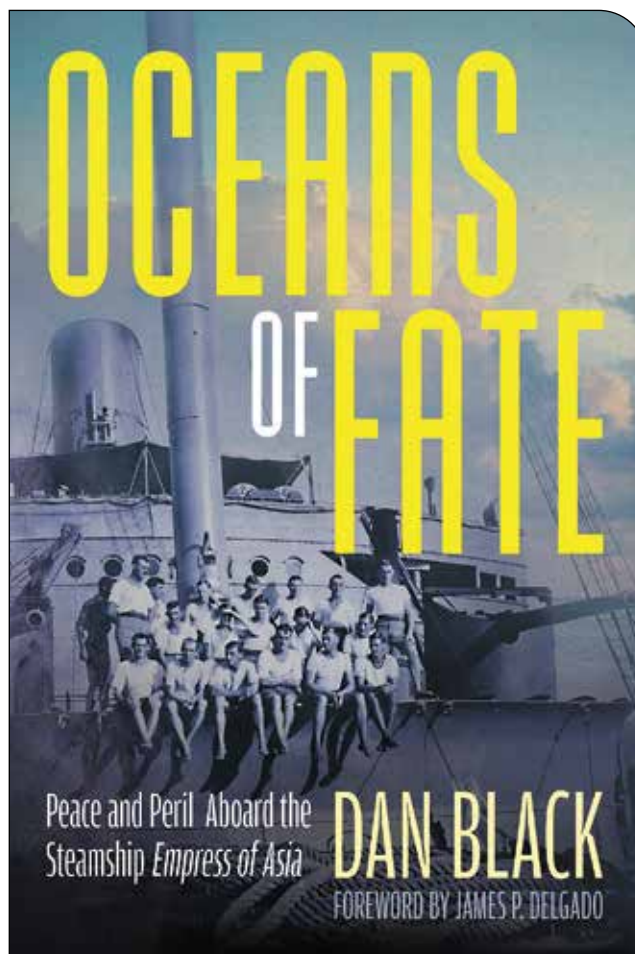
colourful tapestry of passengers and crew members, their lives, hopes and dreams. We read about people lost at sea, refugees from war and natural disasters, drug smugglers, and soldiers answering the call to arms or returning home. The people he chronicles are so vivid, the reader longs to know what became of them, and Black doesn't disappoint. At the end of the book, he narrates the fate of main characters we've met along the voyage.

It's that very humanity that moved Dr. James P. Delgado, renowned ocean archeologist, author, National Geographic television host and former executive director of the Vancouver Maritime Museum, to write the book's foreword.

"What struck me was first of all Dan has done an incredible job with the research, but I also liked the approach he took in writing this story," says Delgado. "So many maritime stories get lost in the drama of a shipwreck or in the technology of shipping. This appropriately focused on people and their connections to that ship throughout its life."

The *Empress of Asia* was one of several CP passenger and cargo ships that traversed the Pacific Ocean, but Black chose her because of her Canadian pedigree. The *Empress of Asia* maintained a Canadian registration throughout her working life, unlike some other Empress ships.

"With the *Empress of Asia* story I was after a ship that was built for peace, entered the First World War, changed personali-



Author Dan Black will be launching his newest book on April 22 at the Merrickville Legion

It took the Merrickville, Ontario author four and a half years to research and craft the story, working mostly from home. Along the way he was assisted greatly by West Coast researcher Nelson Oliver, the son of one of the ship's wartime officers. "A lot of the research occurred during the pandemic, so I couldn't travel much and had to rely on email and telephone calls," says Black. "But I was very fortunate to meet or talk with some of the ship's last survivors."

Most of that time was spent reaching out to families of the ship's passengers and crew, and he is grateful for how quickly people responded — eager to share old photos, letters, diaries and biographical material. The goal was to draw back the curtain on a slice of maritime history and tell it in a way that would inform and entertain.

"As a maritime archeologist who's been at this for close to five decades, the book spoke powerfully to me," adds Delgado. "Dan did a tremendous job."

In mid-March, Black will present at the Maritime Museum of British Columbia in Victoria, and have a book signing in downtown Vancouver. Locally, the Merrickville branch of the Royal Canadian Legion will host the book's Eastern Ontario launch on April 22 at 7 PM.

"I'm really looking forward to that, and I promise to keep the talk fairly tight, allowing time for refreshments and questions," promises Black.

ties — back to a luxurious passenger liner and doing what she was meant to do during the 1920s and 30s — and then suddenly re-entering war service again. So, she had this split personality of dark grey, worn-down troopship, merchant cruiser, and bright white passenger ship," explains Black.



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"Where the  
World's Coins are  
Bought & Sold"

# Evolution Wellness

## Young Entrepreneur Opens New Clinic in Almonte

Emma Kealey has spent the last few years learning about growing businesses in the heart of Almonte. For the past two-and-a-half years she and her husband Patrick have been the proud owners of Ottawa Valley Coffee Almonte, a bustling hotspot on Mill Street. OVC offers a variety of beverages and treats, as well as a cozy place to visit with friends, get some work done, or just chill and enjoy the vibe. Since 2021 Emma has also been working hard at establishing a busy RMT practice.

Although you would think these businesses would be enough for any 25-year-old, with her true passion always being health and wellness, Emma just couldn't stop there. In late 2024 she opened the doors of Evolution Wellness, and is excited about welcoming new practitioners and clients to her beautifully renovated space.

In 2020, Emma graduated from the International Academy of Applied Health with an advanced diploma in Massage Therapy, and she also has her certification from the Canadian Institute of Ashiatsu Massage. In 2023, she started her 200-hour yoga teacher training and has been passionate about spreading her knowledge with others as yoga has been a great tool in her own wellness journey.

Drawing upon her decade-long personal yoga practice, while completing her yoga teaching training, Emma identified a significant gap in the local wellness



Emma Kealey's Evolution Wellness clinic offers yoga, massage, Reiki and more!

scene — a lack of diverse yoga offerings. Finding a path in teaching yoga was a natural progression for someone deeply rooted in the ethos of holistic health and mindful living.

2024 marked a pivotal moment in her evolution. With a thriving massage practice and a newfound love for teaching yoga, Emma recognized the need for a holistic wellness hub that combined various modalities under one roof. Thus, Evolution Wellness was born — a testament to Emma's growth not only as a practitioner but also as a person. The name itself embodies the essence of her journey — a constant evolution towards greater health, happiness and self-awareness.

Located at 453 Ottawa Street, Unit 5, Evolution Wellness currently offers hot yoga, yoga, Registered Massage Therapy, Ashiatsu Massage, a variety of facials and skincare, pedicures, Reiki, Registered Psychotherapy, and Integrative Energy Healing. Emma is dedicated to consistently growing this practice in the years to come and to be able to offer more wellness modalities as they become available to her community.

If you would like to learn more about the practitioners or book an appointment, please visit <evolution-almonte.com>. Emma is looking forward to helping you move forward in your own journey of wellness.



**Waterwalker Film Festival 2024**

**SUNDAY, 23 MARCH 2025**  
1.30 pm - 3.30 pm / Doors open at 1:00pm

**Almonte Old Town Hall, Ron Caron Auditorium**  
14 Bridge St., Almonte

Seven films will be featured from the Paddle Canada 2024 Waterwalker Collection

It is a tribute to the late Bill Mason, a great conservationist, canoeist, and filmmaker who cared passionately about his work and the wilderness. He wanted to share its beauty and promote its protection. As he once said, "Film is for me a means of expressing my feelings about the things I enjoy, things I am concerned about, mostly the natural world."

Don't miss this opportunity to be captivated by nature  
Name of Films: Discovering Eden, Save Solace, The Nutchattitz, Wild Sea, Moyeha, The Coppermine River, Checking in with Bill Mason

TICKETS PLEASE at [Ticketsplease.ca](https://www.ticketsplease.ca)

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
[www.mvfn.ca/waterwalker-film-festival/](https://www.mvfn.ca/waterwalker-film-festival/)

Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists

APPLY TO THE 2025

**MERA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE IN FINE ARTS AND FINE CRAFTS**

Deadline to apply:  
April 30th, 2025

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT  
[www.meraschoolhouse.org](https://www.meraschoolhouse.org)

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**Spring is in the air!** Showcasing unique, functional and decorative, handcrafted works of art for all occasions by Canadian designers near and far.

Copper Dragonflies • Pen & Ink Illustrations • Architectural Rings  
Fused Glass • Original Paintings • Limited Edition Prints  
Copper Painted Necklaces & Earrings • Fibre Art • Stained Glass  
Blown Glass • Mosaics • Pottery • Wood ... and more

Don't let another gift giving event pass you by without visiting

**The Gift Boutique**

348 Honeyborne St., Almonte  
613-921-6001 [yharrington@xplornet.ca](mailto:yharrington@xplornet.ca)  
Mon-Wed by appt | Thu 10-5 | Fri 10-5 | Sat 10-4

**Friends of Mississippi Mills Public Library**

**Present their annual online auction**

**100 of the best local services in Mississippi Mills/Lanark County**

**Coming in May/June, 2025**

**Blue Spoon Atelier**  
Chef Burcu Gencer, PhD

**Healthy, Tasty, and Easy**

A boutique bakery and teaching kitchen specializing in **sourdough** and artisanal baked goods.

We use only **natural, unprocessed ingredients** to craft delicious, health-conscious treats.

**Naturally fermented sourdough**

**Gluten-free & vegan options available**

**Tradition meets innovation**

**Now open in Carleton Place!**  
5 Allan Street tel.:438-497-4621

**Come taste the difference!**

Maple Run Tour, Pakenham, Apr 5-6  
 Maple Weekend, Lanark County, Apr 5-6  
 Fierbois, Almonte, Apr 12  
 ABBA Revisited, Perth, Apr 12  
 SRO Tea Dance, Almonte, Apr 13  
 Songwriting w/Lynn Miles, CP, Apr 23  
 Lynn Miles, CP, Apr 24  
 Get What You Need, Pakenham, Apr 26  
 Jonas and Barry in the Home, SF, Apr 25-May 4  
 Jenny's House of Joy, Merrickville, May 1-4  
 Waiting for the Parade, Perth, May 1-11  
 Symply Skynyrd, Perth, May 3  
 Bray and MacLean Trio, CP, May 29  
 The Savannah Sipping Society, SF, June 20-29  
 Perth Kilt Run, June 21  
 TRiPOD, CP, Jun 26  
 Stewart Park Festival, Perth, Jul 18-20

## Monday

## Tuesday

## Wednesday

## Thursday

**Arts Carleton Place Art Hub** presents *Hints of Spring*, a group art show [to Mar 23] <artscarletonplace.com>  
**General Fine Craft** presents new works by Saskia Praamsma (pottery), Meredith Kucey (silver jewellery), and Tanya Deacove (pysanky eggs) <generalfinecraft.com>  
**Mississippi Valley Textile Museum** presents *Signs of the Time*, works by Egils Rozenbergs <mvtm.ca>  
**Sivarulrasa Gallery** presents *Elizabeth Desrosier: Looking In*, and *Peter Wood: Still Life, Still Speaking* <sivarulrasa.com>  
 The **West Carleton Arts Society** presents their *Spring Fling* group art show [Mar 3-16] at the Kanata Civic Art Gallery <westcarletonartsociety.ca>

<p>3</p> <p>Perth Youth Players Registration, Perth</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Pakenham</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Wings 'n Tunes with Shawn McCullough, The Cove                  Perth Youth Players Registration, Perth                  MFNC Monthly Meeting, Arnprior                  Lanark County Camera Club Meeting, Perth                  Still Life Sessions, Arnprior</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Original Thursdays - Matt Dickson, The Cove                  Red Dirt Skinkers, Perth</p>
<p>10</p> <p>Pysanky Egg Workshops, Pakenham                  Our Recovery From Permaculture, Almonte</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Moana 2, Almonte                  Wings 'n Tunes with Shawn McCullough, The Cove                  Still Life Sessions, Arnprior</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Original Thursdays - Jon McLurg, The Cove                  Carleton Place Toastmasters Club, contact for link                  Writers Monthly Discussion Group, Almonte</p>
<p>17</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day Dance, Pakenham                  All-day live music for St. Patrick's Day, St. James Gate                  St. Patrick's Day Party, Perth                  St. Paddy's Day with The Celtic Kitchen Party, The Cove                  Almonte Quilters Guild Meeting, Almonte                  Pysanky Egg Workshops, Pakenham</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Ashton United Church community breakfast, Ashton</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Wings 'n Tunes with Shawn McCullough, The Cove                  UK Gardens, Pakenham                  Still Life Sessions, Arnprior</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Holmes and Watson, Perth                  Songwriter Circle, The Cove</p>
<p>21</p> <p>Pysanky Egg Workshops, Pakenham                  Almonte &amp; District Horticultural Meeting, Almonte</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Wings 'n Tunes with Shawn McCullough, The Cove                  Talking &amp; Eating... but not at the same time!, Pakenham                  Still Life Sessions, Arnprior</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Holmes and Watson, Perth                  Hub Vintage Sale, Almonte                  AGM of The Friends of the Tay Watershed, Perth                  Community Open House, Almonte                  Jeff Plankernhorn, The Cove                  The Ragged Flowers, Carleton Place                  Social Swing Dance with Revival Swing, Almonte                  Music Night Concert, Snow Road Station                  Carleton Place Toastmasters Club, Zoom</p>
<p>31</p> <p>Pysanky Egg Workshops, Pakenham                  Coco Love Alcorn, Perth</p>			

## Literature

**Equator Coffee Write-In**, Sundays, 1-3PM. Writers work on their projects in a supportive environment. Equator Coffee Roasters, Almonte. Free. Almonte Writers Guild, Facebook  
**Writers Monthly Discussion Group**, Mar 13, 7-8:30PM. Topic: TBD. Almonte Public Library. Free. Almonte Writers Guild, Facebook

## Local Food

**Seedy Sunday**, Mar 2, 10AM-3PM. Gardening workshops, seed swap, and seed & gardening vendors. Perth Civitan Club & Hall. perthfarmersmarket.ca  
**Seedy Saturday**, Mar 15, 10AM-3PM. Seed swaps, vendors, workshops and more, in support of Interval House. Almonte Civitan Hall. indiancreekorchard.ca

## Visual Arts

**Still Life Sessions**, Wednesdays, 10AM-1PM. Rendering of inanimate objects using your own personal medium. Arnprior Art Loft. Free. arnpriorartloft.godaddysites.com  
**Art Circle Saturdays**, 10AM-1PM. Bring a current project with you and create with others. Arnprior Art Loft. Free. arnpriorartloft.godaddysites.com

**Meet the Artists**, Mar 2, 2-4PM. Brent McGilivray and Maureen Bennett of Times Gone By Studio in Perth. MERA Schoolhouse, McDonalds Corners. meraschoolhouse.org  
**Lanark County Camera Club Meeting**, Mar 5, 7PM. Improve your photographic skills. Algonquin College, Perth. Free. lccameraclub.com  
**Puzzle Launch**, Mar 15, 10AM-3PM. New jigsaw puzzles with artwork by Andrea MacLeod. The Occurrence, Merrickville. theoccurrence.ca  
**Almonte Quilters Guild Meeting**, Mar 17, 7PM. Guest presenter and showcase. Via Zoom. \$35 annual membership; Guests \$5. almontequiltersguild.ca  
**Art in the Manor**, Mar 22, 1-3PM. Vernissage for "Spring Festival": paintings by the 4A's, (runs Mar 12 - May 1). Almonte General Hospital & Fairview Manor. Free. almontehospitalfoundation.com  
**Resin Night Fundraiser**, Mar 28. A creative evening similar to a Paint Night. Mississippi Mills Youth Centre, Almonte. \$45. mmyc.ca/store

## Youth

**Perth Youth Players Registration**, Mar 3 & 5, 6:30PM. Youth aged 10-17 can register for a series of 10 workshops on various aspects of community theatre. Studio Theatre Perth. \$75 for the series. studiotheatreperth.com  
**Moana 2**, Mar 12, 2:30PM. Canteen by donation. Almonte Old Town Hall. \$3 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. mississippimills.ca/events

## Theatre

**There Goes the Bride**, Mar 2, 2PM. Farce by John Chapman and Ray Cooney. The Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. \$24 Adults; \$10 Students. smithsfallstheatre.com  
**The Great Canadian Comedy Caravan**, Mar 8, 8PM. With television writers and Just For Laughs veterans. The Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. \$33. smithsfallstheatre.com  
**Wicked**, Mar 14-15, 7AM. Movie night. The Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. \$12 at the door. smithsfallstheatre.com  
**Magician Impossible: Amazing Magic Live On Stage**, Mar 15, 2PM. Magic show. The Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. \$30; \$25. smithsfallstheatre.com

**Tuesday**, Mar 16, 2PM. Heart-rendering fairy-tale film about a mother (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) and daughter confronting Death. Almonte Legion. \$15 from ticketsplease.ca, 485-6434  
**Holmes and Watson**, Mar 20, 21, 27 & 28 at 7:30PM; Mar 22, 23, 29 & 30 at 2PM. Is Sherlock Holmes dead or alive? The game's afoot! Studio Theatre Perth. TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. studiotheatreperth.com  
**Waterwalker Film Festival**, Mar 23, 1:30-3:30PM. 7 videos from Paddle Canada's tribute to Bill Mason. Almonte Old Town Hall. \$20 (members), \$25 non-members from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. mvfn.ca

## Music

**Oakfield Traditional Session Sundays**, 2-5PM. Live Celtic music in an informal setting. Oakfield Rugby Park, Perth. Free. oakfieldrugbypark.com  
**Off the Rock**, Mar 1, 8PM. Great Big Sea tribute. Farrell Hall, Perth. \$35 in advance/\$40 at the door. TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434.  
**Women In Music Night**, Mar 1, 7PM. Music and storytelling with KellyLee Evans, Vicki Brittle and Cait Porteous. Tickets from online.carletonplace.ca. Carleton Place Town Hall. \$30

**Mardi Gras Party**, Mar 1, 7-11PM. Live music by Average Height, cajun snacks, beads and mask. Althorpe Bolingbroke Community (ABC) Hall. \$25. abchall.ca  
**Anna Ludlow**, Mar 1, 7:30PM. Live music concert. Oakfield Rugby Park, Perth. \$25 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434  
**SRO Tea Dance**, Mar 2, 1:30-4PM. Dance to big band Standing Room Only. Entry (\$15) & snacks: cash only. Almonte Old Town Hall. facebook.com/srobighband  
**Red Dirt Skinkers**, Mar 6, 7PM. Live music. Studio Theatre Perth. \$37. studiotheatreperth.com  
**Red Dirt Skinkers**, Mar 7, 6:30PM. Live music. Urbandale Arts Centre, Kemptonville. \$38  
**Death and the Maiden**, Mar 8, 7:30PM. New Orford String Quartet. Almonte Old Town Hall. \$44 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. almonteinconcert.com  
**Suzie Vinnick in Concert**, Mar 16, 7:30PM. Folk/blues singer/song-writer. St. Paul's United - Perth. \$30 at TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. stpaulsperth.ca  
**St. Patrick's Day Dance**, Mar 17, 8PM. With The Ryans and Terri-Lynn Mahusky. Stewart Community Centre, Pakenham. \$25 from Nicholsons, Almonte Old Town Hall, Stewart Com. Centre. mississippimills.ca/events

## Friday

## Saturday

## Sunday

<p><b>30</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Miss Emily Band, The Cove</li> <li>Brock Zeman, St. James Gate</li> <li>Scottish Country Dancing, Perth</li> </ul>	<p><b>1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chris Allaby, Urban Angus Steak &amp; Wine</li> <li>Women In Music Night, Carleton Place</li> <li>Mardi Gras Party, Bolingbroke</li> <li>Anna Ludlow, Perth</li> <li>Off the Rock, Perth</li> <li>Generator Party: The Band, The Cove</li> <li>Art Circle Saturdays, Arnprior</li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seedy Sunday, Perth</li> <li>SRO Tea Dance, Almonte</li> <li>There Goes the Bride, Smiths Falls</li> <li>Meet the Artist, McDonalds Corners</li> <li>Eric Uren &amp; Meghan Balogh, The Cove</li> <li>The Grapes Of Wrath, Neat Coffee Shop</li> <li>Oakfield Traditional Session Sunday, Perth</li> <li>Equator Coffee Write-In, Almonte</li> <li>Open Mic hosted by Brock Zeman, The Barley Mow</li> <li>Country Pickin' with Shawn McCullough Band, The Cove</li> </ul>
<p><b>7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kristen Martell, The Cove</li> <li>Red Dirt Skinners, Kemptville</li> <li>Cait Porteous, St. James Gate</li> <li>World Day of Prayer, Perth</li> <li>Scottish Country Dancing, Perth</li> </ul>	<p><b>8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Women's Day Breakfast, Perth</li> <li>No Principals feat. Dave Balfour + Jamie Campbell, The Cove</li> <li>Death and the Maiden, Almonte</li> <li>Basia Bulat, Neat Coffee Shop</li> <li>The Great Canadian Comedy Caravan, Smiths Falls</li> <li>Power Up! Confidently Navigating the Tool Department, Carleton Place</li> <li>Art Circle Saturdays, Arnprior</li> </ul>	<p><b>9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oakfield Traditional Session Sunday, Perth</li> <li>Equator Coffee Write-In, Almonte</li> <li>Open Mic hosted by Brock Zeman, The Barley Mow</li> <li>Eric Uren &amp; Meghan Balogh, The Cove</li> </ul>
<p><b>14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wicked, Smiths Falls</li> <li>Henry Norwood + Shawn McCullough, The Cove</li> <li>Tom Watson, St. James Gate</li> <li>Cuff The Duke, Neat Coffee Shop</li> <li>Scottish Country Dancing, Perth</li> </ul>	<p><b>15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seedy Saturday, Almonte</li> <li>Puzzle Launch, Merrickville</li> <li>John V W, Westport Brewing Co.</li> <li>Wicked, Smiths Falls</li> <li>Magician Impossible: Amazing Magic Live On Stage, Smiths Falls</li> <li>Birds of a Feather, The Cove</li> <li>Ryan MacIntyre, Urban Angus Steak &amp; Wine</li> <li>Alan Cross, Neat Coffee Shop</li> <li>Art Circle Saturdays, Arnprior</li> </ul>	<p><b>16</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Winter Tree I.D., Carleton Place</li> <li>St. Patrick's Day Open House, Almonte</li> <li>Tuesday film, Almonte</li> <li>Suzie Vinnick in Concert, Perth</li> <li>Oakfield Traditional Session Sunday, Perth</li> <li>Equator Coffee Write-In, Almonte</li> <li>Psychic Medium Messages, Appleton</li> <li>Open Mic hosted by Brock Zeman, The Barley Mow</li> <li>Eric Uren &amp; Meghan Balogh, The Cove</li> </ul>
<p><b>21</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holmes and Watson, Perth</li> <li>Old Mill Manor Lunch &amp; Tour, Almonte</li> <li>JW Jones Band, The Cove</li> <li>Jamie Douglas, St. James Gate</li> <li>Evergreen, Perth</li> <li>Hill McGraw, Smiths Falls</li> <li>Comedy Night, Neat Coffee Shop</li> <li>Scottish Country Dancing, Perth</li> </ul>	<p><b>22</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ginawaydaganuc - Nurturing the Vision in Mississippi Mills, Almonte</li> <li>Art in the Manor, Almonte</li> <li>Holmes and Watson, Perth</li> <li>umberlune, Perth</li> <li>Ariel Posen, Neat Coffee Shop</li> <li>Art Circle Saturdays, Arnprior</li> </ul>	<p><b>23</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waterwalker Film Festival, Almonte</li> <li>Holmes and Watson, Perth</li> <li>Seventh Town, McDonalds Corners</li> <li>Kingston Choral Society Chamber Choir, Perth</li> <li>Oakfield Traditional Session Sunday, Perth</li> <li>Equator Coffee Write-In, Almonte</li> <li>Open Mic hosted by Brock Zeman, The Barley Mow</li> <li>Eric Uren &amp; Meghan Balogh, The Cove</li> </ul>
<p><b>28</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holmes and Watson, Perth</li> <li>Hub Vintage Sale, Almonte</li> <li>Zach Teal, The Cove</li> <li>Rick and Lindsay, St. James Gate</li> <li>Resin Night Fundraiser, Almonte</li> <li>Scottish Country Dancing, Perth</li> </ul>	<p><b>29</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holmes and Watson, Perth</li> <li>Hub Vintage Sale, Almonte</li> <li>The United Church of Canada 100th Anniversary Celebration, Carleton Place</li> <li>Jason Kent, The Cove</li> <li>Kyle Felhaver, Urban Angus Steak &amp; Wine</li> <li>Findlay's Foundry Reunion, Carleton Place</li> <li>Art Circle Saturdays, Arnprior</li> </ul>	<p><b>30</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holmes and Watson, Perth</li> <li>Pancake Breakfast, Almonte</li> <li>Chicken Pickin' with Shawn McCullough Band, The Cove</li> <li>Andrew Hyatt, Neat Coffee Shop</li> <li>Oakfield Traditional Session Sunday, Perth</li> <li>Equator Coffee Write-In, Almonte</li> <li>Open Mic hosted by Brock Zeman, The Barley Mow</li> <li>Eric Uren &amp; Meghan Balogh, The Cove</li> </ul>

**Hill McGraw**, Mar 21, 8PM. A tribute to Faith Hill and Tim McGraw. The Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. \$35 + tax and fee. smithsfalls-theatre.com

**Evergreen**, Mar 21, 7:30PM. Traditional Celtic music and original songwriting by Fern Marwood, Javier Mullally and Oscar Mullally. Oakfield Rugby Park, Perth. \$20 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434

**umberlune**, Mar 22, 3-5PM. Spooky original acoustic music. No cover; tips encouraged. Jazzy's Brewhaus, Perth. \$10 suggested. jazzysbrewhaus.com

**Seventh Town**, Mar 23, 2PM. Four-piece Celtic folk band from Prince Edward County. MERA Schoolhouse, McDonalds Corners. \$30 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434

**Kingston Choral Society Chamber Choir**, Mar 23, 2PM. "A Musical Potpourri" concert with other guests. Suggested freewill donation \$20 at the door. St. Paul's United, Perth. stpaulsperth.ca

**The Ragged Flowers**, Mar 27, 7PM. Live folk music. Carleton Place Gallery. \$35 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. cpgallery.ca

**Social Swing Dance with Revival Swing**, Mar 27, 7-9PM. Intro lesson followed by social dance. No experience or partner needed. Hillside Reformed Presbyterian Church, Almonte. \$5 entry - cash please

**Music Night Concert**, Mar 27, 7PM. Live music with Jewel Darby. Snow Road Community Centre, Snow Road Station. \$15. snowroadcommunitycentre.com

**Coco Love Alcorn**, Mar 31, 7PM. Pre-paid reservations required. Oakfield Rugby Park, Perth. \$30. 613-267-7902

## Pub Listings

**Neat Coffee Shop** (Burnstown, 433-9960): 8PM

- Mar 2 The Grapes Of Wrath, \$55
- Mar 8 Basia Bulat, \$80
- Mar 14 Cuff The Duke, \$40
- Mar 15 Alan Cross, \$35
- Mar 22 Ariel Posen, \$40
- Mar 30 Andrew Hyatt, \$30

**St. James Gate** (Carleton Place, stjamesgatecp.com): 7-10PM

- Feb 28 Brock Zeman
- Mar 7 Cait Porteous
- Mar 14 Tom Watson
- Mar 17 All-day live music for St. Patrick's Day, 11:30AM
- Mar 21 Jamie Douglas
- Mar 28 Rick and Lindsay

**The Barley Mow** (Almonte, 256-5669): Tue Music Trivia, 8PM; Sun Open Mic hosted by Brock Zeman, 2-4PM.

**The Cove** (Westport, 273-3636): 5-8PM unless noted; Wed Wings 'n Tunes w/Shawn McCullough (5:30-8:30); Sun Eric Uren & Meghan Balogh

- Feb 28 Miss Emily Band, 5-9PM. \$95 Dinner, Show + Charity
- Mar 1 Generator Party: The Band, 8-11PM. \$25
- Mar 2 Country Pickin' with Shawn McCullough Band, 1-4PM. \$10
- Mar 6 Matt Dickson
- Mar 7 Kristen Martell
- Mar 8 No Principals
- Mar 13 Jon McLurg
- Mar 14 Henry Norwood + Shawn McCullough, 7-10PM.
- Mar 15 Birds of a Feather
- Mar 17 St. Paddy's Day with The Celtic Kitchen Party, 4-8PM. \$20
- Mar 20 Songwriter Circle, 7PM
- Mar 21 JW Jones Band, 5-9PM. \$95 Dinner, Show + Charity
- Mar 27 Jeff Planknerhorn
- Mar 28 Zach Teal
- Mar 29 Jason Kent
- Mar 30 Chicken Pickin' with Shawn McCullough Band, 1-4PM. \$10

**Westport Brewing Co.** (Westport, 273-2739): Tunes on Tap, 2-4PM

- Mar 15 John V W

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

- Mar 1 Chris Allaby, 6PM
- Mar 15 Ryan MacIntyre, 7PM
- Mar 29 Kyle Felhaver, 6PM

**Community**

**Scottish Country Dancing**, Fridays, 9:30AM. Beginners and experienced dancers welcome. Annual membership \$30. Contact Simone at 264-2767 for details. McMartin House, Perth. \$30 per year

**Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**, Mar 4, 4:30PM. Pancakes, toppings, maple syrup, sausage and baked beans. St. Andrew's United Church, Pakenham. Free will offering. standrewsunitedpakenham.org

**MFNC Monthly Meeting**, Mar 5, 7PM. Monthly meeting. Guest Speaker: Arnprior Curling Club. Non-members: \$5. mfnc.ca

**World Day of Prayer**, Mar 7, 2PM. Ecumenical service, all welcome. Bethel United Church, Perth. Freewill offering. 267-3855

**International Women's Day Breakfast**, Mar 8, 8-10AM. Buffet breakfast and guest speaker celebrating womens' achievements. Perth Civitan Club & Hall. \$25 at TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434. lcih.com

**Power Up! Confidently Navigating the Tool Department**, Mar 8. Rachele from Project Pine Designs hosts a women's-only walk through the tool department of the Rona Carleton Place. All proceeds to Lanark County Interval House. Register for a time at projectpinedesigns.com. RONA Carleton Place. \$10. 253-6173

**Our Recovery From Permaculture**, Mar 10, 7:30PM. Scott Sigurdson reflects on his decade-long journey developing agricultural ecosystems. Almonte Public Library. By donation at TicketsPlease.ca. learningagainmonte.ca

**Pysanky Egg Workshops**, Mar 10, 17, 24, 31 at 6:30PM. The spiritual practice of decorating Pysanky eggs for Easter. St. Andrew's United Church, Pakenham. \$15 + \$18 materials. standrewsunitedpakenham.org

**Carleton Place Toastmasters Club**, Mar 13 & 27, 7PM. Improve public speaking and leadership skills. via Zoom, contact for link. Free. carletonplace.toastmastersclubs.org

**Winter Tree I.D.**, Mar 16, 10AM-12PM. Free, register at mmlt.ca/events. Poole Family Nature Sanctuary, Carleton Place

**Psychic Medium Messages**, Mar 16, 1-3PM. Mystical afternoon with coffee and treats. Old Mill Manor, Appleton. \$44 from TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434

**St. Patrick's Day Open House**, Mar 16, 2-4PM. Open house and music by Robin Averill. Call 963-5000 to reserve your spot. Orchard View by the Mississippi, Almonte. 963-5000

**St. Patrick's Day Party**, Mar 17, 2-6PM. The Three2Go Band with special guests. Perth Legion. \$10 meal - Irish Stew

**Ashton United Church community breakfast**, Mar 18, 9-11:30AM. With music by Dave Brown and friends. Ashton United Church. Freewill offering. 791-6246

**UK Gardens**, Mar 19, 7:30PM. By the Pakenham Horticultural Society. St. Andrew's United Church, Pakenham. gardenontario.org/society-listing/entry/51

**Old Mill Manor Lunch & Tour**, Mar 21, 12-2PM. Tour; historical talk; lunch in the Manor's dining room. The Old Mill Manor, Almonte. \$44 at TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434

**Ginawaydaganuc - Nurturing the Vision in Mississippi Mills**, Mar 22, 2:30PM. An evening with the elders who conceived of Ginawaydaganuc Village. Almonte Library. Pay what you can at TicketsPlease.ca. learningagainmonte.ca

**Almonte & District Horticultural Monthly Meeting**, Mar 24, 7:30PM. Building a Native Plant Garden. Cornerstone Community Church, Almonte. adhsmailbox@gmail.com

**Talking & Eating... but not at the same time!**, Mar 26. Join for a simple meal and conversation. St. Andrew's United Church, Pakenham. Free. standrewsunitedpakenham.org

**AGM of The Friends of the Tay Watershed**, Mar 27, 2PM. Refreshments, meet the Board, and tour the displays. Perth Legion

**Community Open House**, Mar 27, 2-4PM and 5-7PM. John Levi Community Centre, Almonte. Free, info about programs, sports, hobbies and more. mississippimills.ca/events

**Hub Vintage Sale**, Mar 27-29, 12:30-4PM. Featuring select pieces, proceeds to The Hub charities and the Textile Museum. Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, Almonte. mvtm.ca

**The United Church of Canada 100th Anniversary Celebration**, Mar 29, 4-7:30PM. Silent auction, trivia, cards. Early bidding: 3PM. Free entry. Food & refreshments available to purchase. Zion-Memorial United Church, Carleton Place. zion-memorial.ca

**Findlay's Foundry Reunion**, Mar 29. Former Findlay workers (and their families) are invited for refreshments and to reminisce. For details, call 253-7013 or email cpbmuseum@outlook.com. Carleton Place and Beckwith Heritage Museum. cpbheritagemuseum.com

**Pancake Breakfast**, Mar 30, 8AM-12PM. w/ maple syrup, ham or sausages, beans or blueberries, juice or coffee/tea. GF option. Book time at TicketsPlease.ca. Union Hall, Almonte. \$16 large, \$14 small. mississippimills.ca/en/play/unionhall.asp



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Climate Network Lanark

# The Return of CNL's Climate Concierges

I confess — with the extraordinary (I dwell on that word) political disaster we find ourselves in, I am having a hard time staying focused on the overarching disaster of climate chaos. I don't like to play the game of what disaster will do us in first. I refer you to the prescient work from 1970's *The Limits to Growth* and to Nate Hagens' *The Great Simplification* if you want to go down those paths.

by Sue Brandum



Pictured above are members of one of Climate Network Lanark's very first Concierges — groups that meet regularly to support each other in finding and implementing the best ways to cut greenhouse gases in their home. The next phase of this fantastic program is starting up and seeking new members!

But here we are. And in a bizarre way I find it somewhat easier right now to address climate change, because, quite frankly, we know what to do about it. We just need to get on with the doing!

So here's an opportunity — Climate Network Lanark is starting up our great Neighbourhood Climate Concierge program again this spring! This initiative supports residents in navigating and implementing climate action in their homes, empowering them to make informed decisions about sustainable practices to reduce their environmental impact.

Lots of people are really excited by this. Our major funder (the Peter Gilgan Foundation) first came on board with our pilot project, and loved it so much they actually approached us to help us scale it up. We have a developing partnership with Lanark County which we'll be announcing in the next few months. We have strong support and participation from industry reps in the home energy assessment, housing retrofit and building trades, and energy technology sectors.

But more importantly, we have great support and endorsements from the 45-plus participants in our pilot project last year.

## A Personal Story

Here's a story from one participant, Noelle Reeve, who is the Planner for Tay Valley Township:

"As a land use planner married to a farmer, I understand the impacts climate change is having on our communities. In recent years we have experienced droughts, wildfire smoke, flooding, and a derecho in our area, made worse by changes to the climate.

"I also know there are solutions out there, and had heard from friends and in my profession about heat pumps. We had moved from expensive oil heating to propane (with a fireplace) a few years after moving into our house. Now we were finding propane going up in price and had concerns about its availability.

"When we heard about the federal government grants and loans to increase home heating energy efficiency, we thought this would be a great time to get off propane. But we really weren't sure how. We didn't know anything about who to hire as an energy auditor to tell us about the condition of our house. And we really didn't know anything about what it would take to replace our heating source.

"Fortunately, Climate Network Lanark was offering a Climate Concierge program at the library in Perth to help people like us who knew we wanted to do something but weren't sure what. And it was a great service. They brought in a range of speakers to explain what an energy audit would and wouldn't do, what a heat pump was, and that it would also provide air conditioning (which we didn't have)!

"One of the best things about being part of the program was the support from the members of the group. We shared what we learned from different contractors about types of windows, insulation, and heat pumps. Connections made between strangers (who in one case lived just down the road from us) have carried on after the concierge program ended.

"I was happy I participated in the Climate Concierge program for a lot of reasons. It felt like the small step we took to replace fossil fuel heating was amplified by the changes others in the group made. Small changes add up to a big change. I met new people, we shared our challenges and successes together, and if they needed help in the future I would provide it and I feel they would help me too. So that builds community. And a sense of community provides resiliency to climate change impacts.

"Making the commitment to show up to the meetings (even when they switched to virtual), learning

from expert presenters, and being encouraged by the experiences of members of the group made the difference between thinking it would be a good idea to actually having a heat pump installed.

"We have tracked our savings from propane and calculate that with the federal government grant, the return on investment is 2.5 years. So even if we didn't care about how climate change will affect our children, getting a heat pump was the smart thing to do."

## Program Expansion

Climate Network Lanark is thrilled to be able to offer this program now to everyone else throughout Lanark County and for the next two years! We are planning to have Neighbourhood clusters in Almonte, Lanark Village, Carleton Place, Perth, and Smiths Falls. Each cluster has about 6–10 homeowners participating. We have found it most valuable for people to come together in physical meetings: better sharing happens, more information is exchanged as people get to know and trust each other, and confidence builds exponentially.

However, we are also planning to have a couple of virtual/online groups as demand dictates, and if we get sufficient requests from a particular area we can set up a physical cluster there.

Our preferred process is to meet for two hours once per month over six months (the time of the meeting is decided by the participants and our staff). That provides sufficient time for participants to arrange assessments, get in different trades, etc. During those six meetings, CNL will bring in experts to walk you through a home energy assessment, the technologies from furnaces to heat pumps and solar PV, and how to make your house more resilient to climate disasters. We will provide information on all the latest programs (there are many and they change regularly) as well as various funding and financing programs available. We use the power of community to help build your confidence to take on retrofits and do more than you had initially planned.

We will be launching the Perth and Almonte Clusters in the last week of March, with the remaining clusters starting as soon as they reach the minimum number of participants.

We are taking registrations for those and for Smiths Falls, Carleton Place, Lanark Village, and for virtual clusters. Simply go to <climatenetworklanark.ca/> climate-concierge to sign up.

It's very motivating and calming to realize there are things we can do to make positive changes. As Joan Baez said, "Action is the antidote to despair."

Act now! Register for the Neighbourhood Climate Concierge, and sign up for CNL's free newsletter at <climatenetworklanark.ca>.

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# Spring Fling Art Show

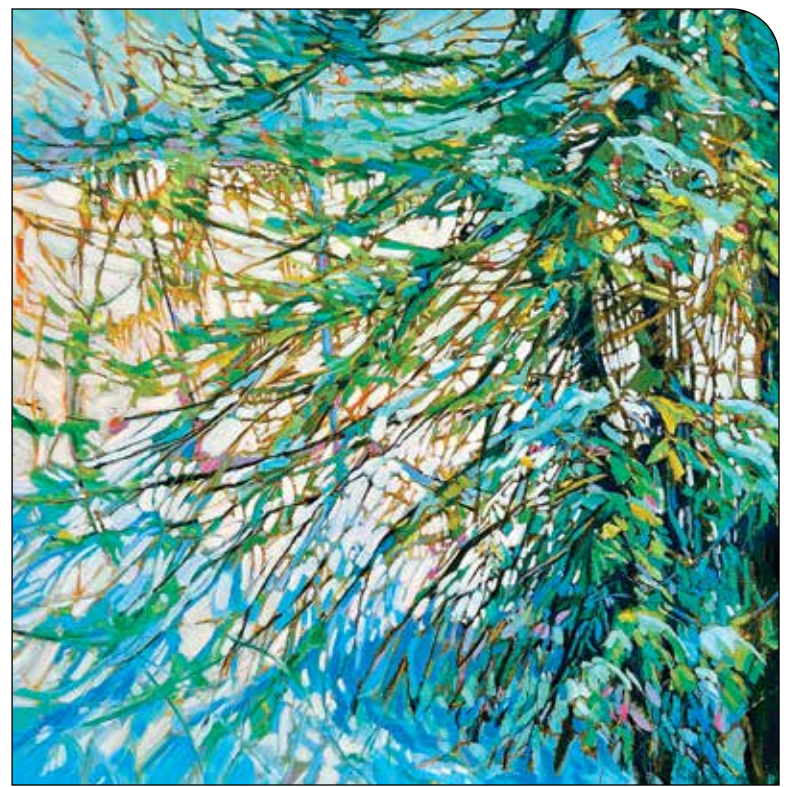
The Kanata Civic Gallery regularly hosts invitational art shows, and this year they are pleased to present the “Spring Fling” exhibition organized by the West Carleton Arts Society (WCAS).

Established in 1988, WCAS is a vibrant, non-profit volunteer organization composed of talented visual artists and fine craftspeople. The society organizes annual art conferences and workshops but primarily focuses on providing opportunities for both emerging and established artists to showcase their work in public spaces and art shows throughout the region. The “Spring Fling” exhibition at the Kanata Civic Gallery was juried without an overarching theme. However, submissions of “spring-like” paintings, prints, photographs, or mixed media pieces that captured the colours and moods associated with the upcoming season were encouraged.

The jury included a realism and mixed-media artist from the Kanata Civic Gallery and an abstract artist represented by Galerie St-Laurent Hill. They were impressed by the range and variety of works sub-

mitted. This year over 75 artworks were submitted, highlighting a diverse array of media and styles. Each submission was evaluated based on composition, use of the elements and principles of art, visual impact, technical merit, and creativity, which included originality and an innovative approach to the use of media and subject matter. Ultimately, fifty-one artworks were accepted into the show.

Lori Ridgeway’s oil painting *In Defence of Winter* received the highest acclaim, being awarded the Juror’s Choice and Best in the Show honours. It is a stunning piece of art, professionally framed, and is available for sale at the exhibition! Visitors to the gallery will also have the opportunity to vote for their favourite piece of art, which will receive the People’s Choice Award at the end of the show. The West Carleton Arts Society’s Spring Fling Art Show will be open from Monday to Friday, 1–8PM, from March 3–16. Everyone is invited to visit the Gallery (located at 2500 Campeau Dr. in Kanata) to support local artists and enjoy their exceptional work!



Lori Ridgeway's oil painting *In Defence of Winter* was awarded the Juror's Choice and Best in Show honours at the West Carleton Arts Society Spring Fling exhibition, which runs from March 3–16 at the Kanata Civic Art Gallery

# Findlay's Foundry Reunion at CP Museum

Findlay's Limited of Carleton Place was once a household name in much of Canada.

On May 24, The Carleton Place and Beckwith Museum will open “Findlay's Foundry: Moulding Our Town”, an exhibition celebrating the foundry and the family.

David Findlay of Paisley, Scotland, arrived in the village of Carleton Place in 1858. Trained as an iron moulder, he found work at the Fuller iron foundry and by 1860 had built his own small foundry in a log barn on Charlotte Street.

Originally producing ploughs and agricultural tools, Findlay began the manufacture of stoves in 1876. They were an immediate success, as an editorial in the *Carleton Place Herald* from October 16, 1879, attests: “Since the cold mornings have set in, we have given Mr. Findlay's new stove a trial. With one or two sticks of hardwood it will keep up a moderate heat all night and can be used for either coal or wood.”

By the time David Findlay died in 1890, Findlay stoves were being shipped all over the country. The business was being run by his two eldest sons, David



Former Findlay workers and their families are invited to a reunion on March 29

and William. Under their ownership, the company widened production to such items as gas and electric ranges, furnaces and cast-iron cookware.

Findlay's was more than a foundry — it helped mould our community!

By sheer size the foundry loomed large in Carleton Place. The massive brick building stretched from High Street to the Mississippi River between Water and McLaren Streets. There was no way you could escape its presence. The factory whistle, heard all over town, gave order to each weekday, blowing six times a day and defining mealtimes for all.

After more than a century of ownership, Findlay's was sold to a Quebec firm in 1965. The High Street foundry building was closed in 1972 and demolished in 1974, but remnants of Findlay history are still visible all through town.

## Findlay Worker Reunion

On Saturday, March 29, all former Findlay workers (and their families) are invited for an afternoon at the museum to chat, to remember and to reminisce! In preparation for the upcoming summer exhibit all about Findlay's, the museum is hoping to connect with former workers, their families, and anyone in the community with stories to share about Findlay's Limited and the Findlay family.

There will be coffee, some snacks, and Findlay displays and memorabilia on exhibit. Staff will be collecting information and memories to help put together the summer exhibit. Bring your stories and your friends (and maybe some Findlay “stuff”!)

For more information, please call 253-7013 or email <cpbmuseum@outlook.com>.



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## Loving Local Flavours

### Local Food Directory Helps with Buying Canadian

FoodCore Leeds-Grenville Lanark is updating and expanding the Lanark Local Flavours directory, originally created by EcoPerth. The directory connects local producers and consumers to promote sustainable agriculture, fresh and local food products, and community-based food systems. This directory will allow local farmers to showcase their products and consumers to enjoy the abundance of high-quality, locally grown food available right in their own backyard. The previous database is in need of updating, and plans include expanding it to include Leeds-Grenville producers to cover FoodCoreLGL's full area of activity. Due to increased interest in buying Canadian and buying local, the updated and expanded directory will help people learn about their options for buying local food.

FoodCoreLGL will also be posting updates on social media, so a like and follow on Facebook or Instagram will keep people informed. Watch for the directory launch later this year!

Leeds Grenville Lanark Local Flavours is supported with funding from Lanark County's Community Grants Program.

Foodcore LGL is a coalition of food activists and organizations who work to take practical steps to realize the vision of the LGL Food Charter. The Stewardship Group includes members from farming, food production, community health and community food programs, working to support sustainable local food systems in the Leeds-Grenville and Lanark regions.

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March 16th  
10 am  
Poole Family Nature Sanctuary

### Calling All Local Farmers and Producers

FoodCoreLGL invites local farmers and producers in Leeds-Grenville and Lanark Counties to join the Local Flavours directory. Whether you're growing fresh fruit and vegetables, raising livestock, offering honey and maple syrup or other local foods, FoodCoreLGL wants you to be part of this effort to expand access to local food and strengthen our regional food systems.

### Get Fresh in Leeds Grenville Lanark!

Local Flavours isn't just for farmers — it's an opportunity for consumers to support their community and buy local products! LGL Local Flavours will help connect consumers with the best local food offerings in the region, ensuring the freshest choices available.

Producers and consumers can join the Local Flavours project by signing up with FoodCoreLGL. Consumers just need to provide their contact information, while producers can provide details about their products and sales outlets. Find the LGL Local Flavours Form at [forms.gle/WvhpvesN43q2aLhH8](http://forms.gle/WvhpvesN43q2aLhH8). Producers and consumers can also contact project coordinator Lauren Larmon directly at [localflavours@thetablecfc.org](mailto:localflavours@thetablecfc.org).

## Perth's Seedy Sunday

Come on out to the Perth Civitan Club on Sunday March 2 from 10AM to 3PM for the Perth Farmers' Market Seedy Sunday event! This annual, unofficial start to Spring is a great place to get together with gardening friends and browse through seeds for the garden. There will also be hourly free workshops in the conference room and a seed swap table on the stage! Admission is free with an optional donation.



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# Celebrating Women in Arts and Crafts

By Yvonne Harrington

Inspired by International Women's Day, I would like to honour a few of the women I have come to know who are making an artistic mark on our community. I am thrilled to introduce you to these women through their lens — makers of handmade artisanal creations and fine art prints, who also offer inspiration and mentorship.



**Diane Ford** is a passionate woman who loves everything mosaic. She began her journey about nine years ago after seeing some mosaics in a gift store in Arnprior and thinking: "Wouldn't that be fun!" Self-taught, she has evolved into a creator of some very fine functional art. Diane indicates that this particular passion is "not for the faint-hearted," as many cut fingers will attest. Her conscientious approach to the affordability of her art is paramount, so recycling and repurposing of found items became an extension of her abilities.

One of Diane's functional items is the handy hot pad that adorns many a table. Her bright and colourful *Spring Tulip* design is one of her favourites. Diane explains: "I never seem to tire of this type of art. You can mosaic almost anything that stands still." At any given time, she can look at her collection and think, "wouldn't that pretty turquoise glass make a lovely flower piece," and away she goes again.

**Barb Belland** loves fused glass and its endless design possibilities. Although Barb has loved glass "forever", it wasn't until she

moved to Almonte twelve years ago that the real joy began: the creation of beautiful and functional fused glass designs. She indicates that fused glass ignites her imagination with a myriad of colours and shapes. Once you have cut out the pattern and fired it in the kiln, you get to hold it up to the light where the glass just glistens. Absolutely glorious!

"When you look at my green vase, you will see why I love fused glass," Barb enthuses. The vase is created with three layers of glass, but once fired, the pieces seamlessly flow together. The wonder of this art! This vase is very functional as it becomes a vessel for cut flowers and even for a plant such as an orchid. As with any avocation, trial and error becomes the norm until you feel like you've perfected your craft. Failures still happen; however, persistence does pay off and sometimes a small blip can lead to something even more fantastic.

**Suzanne Empey** impresses me with her ever-evolving ideas and techniques. Suzanne uses watercolours to express her passion to produce "children's whimsical art" that exudes much whimsy and joy. Through trial and persistence, a series was born. From her



originals, Suzanne created limited edition watercolour prints on board. The first of the series is *Lady 'O'* pictured at right. Her goal is to evoke a smile from everyone who sees these prints. The detail is in the presentation along with the addition of metallic foil that draws you in. When the sun shines on the metallic foil, it is mesmerizing.

Suzanne had the privilege of early training from Morton Baslow, past president of the Ottawa School of Art. She indicates that his amazing techniques fed her inner desire to paint. More recently, she has enjoyed the talented teaching of Rachel MacDonald and Vic Dohar. Suzanne notes that: "Every teacher or mentor has brought out the beauty I see and appreciate in all works of art".

— Yvonne Harrington is the curator and owner of *The Gift Boutique*, located at 348 Honeyborne Street in Almonte, where the art of each of these women can be found. You can reach her at <yharrington@xplornet.ca> or 921-6001.



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## Evergreen to Play Oakfield Rugby Park

On March 21, come on out to the Oakfield Rugby Park for the premiere performance of a new group called Evergreen. The talented trio of Fern Marwood, Javier Mullally and Oscar Mullally will present clever arrangements of traditional Celtic music and profound original songwriting, home-grown in Lanark County.

Fans of musical theatre in this area may recognize Javier from his role as Jesus in Orion Theatre Company's 2024 production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and Fern from her leading role in the most recent Humm Team Productions show *The Wizard is... Odd?! You won't want to miss these stellar musicians making their performing debut as a trio!*

This is a fully licenced, all-ages event in a fully accessible facility. There is ample free parking. Doors open at 7PM and the show starts at 7:30. Tickets are just \$20 from Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434).

### About Evergreen

Javier is a classically trained tenor and fiddle player who has been playing with The River-thieves for nearly 10 years. He is an accomplished musician who has played at many



(l-r) Javier Mullally, Fern Marwood and Oscar Mullally are Evergreen

festivals and theatres across Ottawa Valley, including Almonte Celtfest and the Stewart Park Festival in Perth. Oscar is a multi-instrumentalist who has been playing music most of his life, starting with the violin. He was classically trained, and has since picked up other string instruments such as the guitar, bouzouki, dulcimer, and also some percussion instruments like the drums and the bodhrán. Fern has been playing the fiddle for 19 years and the banjo for 9. She is a two-time Canadian Folk Music Award nominee who has played at several festivals and venues across Canada, including the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival in PEI, Almonte Celtfest, and the Showplace Performance Centre.

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theHumm Interview

# The Everlasting Cycle

## Botanical Art, Science, and the Power of Close Observation with Kerri Weller

Botanical art is more than a creative pursuit — it is a practice in patience, observation, and appreciation for nature's intricate details. From the earliest botanical illustrations used for scientific classification to today's contemporary renderings, this art form bridges science, history, and artistic expression. In an age of digital immediacy, botanical art encourages

by Kimberly Lulashnyk

us to slow down, look closely and connect deeply with the natural world. Kerri Weller, an award-winning botanical artist and educator, knows this well.

Before photography, it was essential for artists to document plant species. Botanical illustrations allowed scientists to study, classify and share knowledge about plants, often serving as the first official record of a species. Historical botanical art is not just beautiful — it is an archive of biodiversity, capturing plants that may have since changed or disappeared. Today, scientific illustrators continue to work alongside researchers to depict species with precision and clarity beyond what photography can provide.

Botanical art remains relevant in conservation, education and ecological research, preserving knowledge for future generations. It is a tool for understanding plant morphology, medicinal properties and environmental changes. Artists who engage in botanical illustration contribute to a legacy that extends beyond aesthetics into science and ecological preservation.

Kerri Weller has dedicated her career to capturing the beauty and precision of botanical subjects. Her paintings have been juried into international exhibitions, including those of the American Society of Botanical Artists and the Art Renewal Center. Her plant portraits are part of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation's permanent collection,



Botanical artist Kerri Weller will lead a series of workshops at Stone Manor Studios

and she has designed coins for the Royal Canadian Mint, demonstrating her mastery of precision and detail.

With a graphic design and medical illustration background, Weller brings scientific accuracy and artistic sensitivity to her work. Beginning in 2006 with classes at the Nepean Visual Art Centre in Ottawa, she has pioneered botanical art education in Eastern Ontario, guiding students in the fundamentals of observation, drawing, and watercolour techniques.

Weller says, "I always tell people anyone can learn to draw. You don't need a special skill — just observation skills and a desire to learn. I always say, 'If you can write cursive, you can draw.'"

Botanical art fosters close observation and requires patience and deep engagement. Studying roots, stems, leaves, flowers and decay mirrors the cycles of life, prompting artists to consider nature's impermanence. Through this process, botanical artists develop a deeper appreciation for the beauty and transience of the plant world.

For those eager to explore botanical art, Kerri Weller will lead a unique series of workshops at Stone Manor Studios in Newboro. This is a rare opportunity to develop skills throughout the seasons—spring, summer, and fall. Drawing is at the root of it all. The series begins with two intensive weekend workshops on drawing and refining observational and journaling skills. The final workshop shifts to watercolour representations, allowing artists to capture botanical subjects in rich detail.

This workshop series is an invaluable opportunity for artists of all levels to develop their ability to see, interpret, and translate the natural world into art. For more information or to register, visit [stonemanorstudios.ca](http://stonemanorstudios.ca) or call 851-2536.



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# Early Childhood Education

## In Conversation with Nick Foy

As the federal and provincial governments work together to establish and expand Canada-wide affordable child care, many point to the need to recruit and retain early childhood educators in order to make spaces available for more families. Child care is a female-dominated industry — more than 95% of workers in the field are women. Nick Foy works at the Pakenham Community Early Learning Centre (PCELC), and recently Laura Penney, a local mom whose son is a student in Nick's classroom, contacted him to ask what the job means to him and what it could mean to other men who are thinking about joining the profession.

**Nick Foy:** I was born and raised in the Arnprior area where I currently live with my wife and three-year-old daughter. After graduating high school, I worked in a restaurant and began filling in as a cook at a local daycare. I was later asked to help out as a supply teacher, where I worked with many different age groups, from infant all the way to school-aged. I decided to leave my job as a cook and pursue a career in child care. Every day was different and exciting, and I really enjoyed interacting with the children and watching them learn and grow. Over the years I

where the parents come in to socialize and have the children show them their favourite toys or an activity we have set up is important and helps ease the children into the day. I love messy group craft activities; watching the children working together and exploring the elements of an activity is really something to see. I'm a big fan of nature and outdoor play, and think that we are lucky to live somewhere with so much around that we can take advantage of. Even a simple walk down the trails brings so many invitations to experience and ask questions about. Circle time is a big part of our day, where we can slow down and ask questions about our days. After so many years I've learned that you don't need to have the best voice — just the best attitude to enjoy and have the children be engaged. There are many aspects of the day I love and enjoy, and I take each day one at a time, finding moments of happiness.

I find that many people go into a position in the field especially right after school, thinking it's going to be like babysitting your niece or nephew, only to find that there is a ton of work we do behind the scenes. Being a child care provider is not a job that you can just turn off at the end of the day. I am always thinking, "Oh, that would be nice in the room" or "I really wish we could do that". Having your job "on" all the time can be a lot and can create a burnt-out feeling.

As for getting more male presence in the profession, the stereotype that caregiving is primarily for women leads to misconceptions about men's roles in child care, resulting in judgment from others when men pursue careers in this field. There are many positives to having men in the field, such as having diverse role models, different perspectives, and a balance in care. Male child care providers can serve as positive role models for children, which is especially important for children who may benefit from seeing men in nurturing roles.

To help attract more people to the job, continuing education grants and competitive wages are two crucial factors. Having more access to resources such as workshops and training sessions would be beneficial to not only attract new staff but also keep current staff needs met. I personally think a classroom budget based on the number of children and their ages would be a great help to plan activities and crafts for holidays, because who doesn't love a homemade keepsake!



Nick Foy (posing here with his family) works at the Pakenham Community Early Learning Centre

have provided one-on-one assistance to school-aged children with special needs and spent many years as a toddler program assistant. I feel like I have really honed my skills as an educator, planning interesting and engaging experiences for children and making lasting relationships with their families.

My favourite part of the day is drop-off in the mornings — seeing the parents and hearing about the children's weekend and nights. I think having time

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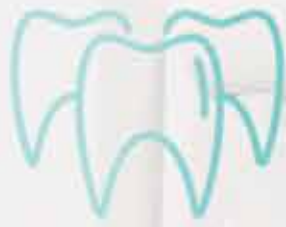
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