

the Hummm

free

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Experience the Valley's Natural Charms

Fortunately for Canadians, getting out into nature is still something we can safely do.

This issue is full of suggestions for exploring the great outdoors, and if you find yourself keen to explore some new indoor spaces, just give me a call!

Pick your own strawberries at **Mississippi Berries** <mississippiberries.ca>

Rent a canoe or kayak from **Perth Outfitters** <perthoutfitters.com>

Swim at the beautiful **Burnstown Beach** <mcnabbraeside.com/play-here>

Explore the grounds and museum at the **Mill of Kintail** <mvc.on.ca>

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July's Events

Look — there ARE some!

Music

Almonte Celtfest — Virtual Edition, July 4 & 5, 2–4PM. <Facebook.com/AlmonteCeltfest>. Featuring Jessica Wedden, Jessica Pearson & The East Wind, Steel City Rovers, Kelly Sloan, Graham Lindsey, and Heather Dale, among others. Donations encouraged.

The Cove patio (Westport, 273-3636): weather permitting, 5–8PM; Wed Rack 'n Tunes w/Shawn McCullough; Sun Head over Heels on the Patio, 12:30–3:30PM

Jul 1 Canada Day Rack 'n Tunes w/ Shawn McCullough
Jul 3 Matt Dickson
Jul 4 John Wilberforce
Jul 9 Spencer Evans solo
Jul 10 Brock Zeman
Jul 11 David James Allen
Jul 16 Steve Murriner of MonkeyJunk. \$45 dinner/show. Reserve.

Jul 17 Jon McLurg solo of Turpin's Trail
Jul 18 Brea Lawrenson
Jul 24 Tom Savage
Jul 25 Bill Quigley solo of East Coast Experience
Jul 30 Sean Pinchin
Jul 31 Jeff Callery

Westport Brewing Co. (Westport, 273-2739): Tunes on Tap on the patio (weather permitting), 2–4PM
Jul 4 Scott Owen
Jul 11 JonVW
Jul 18 Mike Cochrane
Jul 25 Spencer Scharf

Visual Art

Strévé Design Studio & Boutique presents handweaving by Weavers Unlimited. <strevedesign.com>

The Flower Show, works by Linda Hamilton, Sarah Jaynes, Judi Miller, Sarah Moffat & Dawn Walker; Jul 18-25. Smart Gallery, 50 Bennett St., CP. <sarahmoffat.com>

Whitehouse Perennials presents Bloomfest Garden Art Show & Sale, Jul 21–Aug 3. <whitehouseperennials.com>

Sivarulrasa Gallery presents Michael Pittman's paintings, inspired by Nfld. [from Jul 22] <sivarulrasa.com>

Artist Talk: Michael Pittman, July 25, 3PM. Virtual Vernissage / Artist Talk in conjunction with *Hard, hard times* exhibition at Sivarulrasa Gallery. Register at <sivarulrasa.com>.

Kanata Civic Art Gallery presents virtual sale/exhibit "Scenic Route". <kanatagallery.ca>

Community

MMLT Radiothon w/Ed Lawrence & Michael Runtz, July 25, 8–9AM on Lake 88.1 FM. To donate: 253-2722 (8AM-6PM) or at <mmlt.ca>.

Claiming Column

AGH Online Auction, Aug 21–29
AGH Evening at Home Gala, Aug 27
Almonte Fibrefest, Sep 12–13
Soup for Thought, Almonte, Oct 3
Perth Autumn Studio Tour, Oct 10–12



Who's Reading the Humm

In March of 2018 **Andrea Hallendy-Mallon** sent in this happy photo and wrote: "We love theHummm! I read it every time I'm in Burnstown and I brought it to Bermuda! It's catching on! Thanks all for such an amazing paper! Cheers from **Marika Mallon, Karl Mallon and Cayden Mallon, Peter Gilroy and Jayne Benevides.**"

Take a Quick Survey for The Hub!

Almonte Community Coordinators (also known as The Hub) is conducting a survey of local needs and experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey is short (ten questions). Results will be shared with the public (once anything that could identify individuals has been removed) and will be used by community groups to help them know how to help.

Anyone over the age of 13 living in or around Mississippi Mills is welcome to complete this survey. We would like to hear from as many residents as possible so we know how you're doing and where to focus our efforts to support the community. Please consider forwarding this invitation to your local contacts.

You can skip any questions and quit the survey at any time. If you'd like to talk to someone about what you're going through, you can find support by calling 211 or Lanark County Mental Health at 283-2170.

To complete this survey online, please go to <carleton.ca/emogelab/mississippi-mills-covid-19-community-survey>. Online surveys are anonymous. To complete this survey over the phone, please call or text our Research Assistant, Casey Gray, at 778-980-3146. Phone-in surveys are not anonymous but they are confidential (we might know who you are but we will not tell anyone who called or what you said).

This survey is funded by a COVID-19 Rapid Response Research Grant from Carleton University and has been cleared by their research ethics review committee (CUREB). Anyone with concerns or questions can reach them at <ethics@carleton.ca>. You are also welcome to contact the project supervisor, Sophie Tamas, at <sophie.tamas@carleton.ca> or 853-8452.

Thank you from Eloise Caverson (President, Almonte Community Coordinators) and Sophie Tamas (Associate Professor, Carleton University).



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

Submissions
By email or on disk.

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Thumm's up this month to: the prepress technicians and press operators and all of the other folks who worked in production at Performance Printing in Smiths Falls over the past twentyish years — for all of the great service in making theHummm look good!

WANTED: Virtual or Alive!

Information about artistic, musical, literary, theatrical, cultural or community events coming up in theHummm's coverage area (wild wild West Carleton, Lanark County, Renfrew County and parts nearby). Round 'em up and send 'em off to <calendar@thehummm.com>, pardner. Our deadline is the 20th of the month prior to publication.

Humble Thought

"There are decades
where nothing happens,

and there are weeks
where decades happen.

— Vladimir Lenin

Barbora Balaban — Firmly Grounded, with Dirty Hands

Whether it's in her pottery studio or in her garden, Barbora Balaban's work is inspired by her love of nature. She has hiked and camped across Canadian wildernesses and farther afield in Argentina, Chile, Nepal and Iceland. Her unusual sculptural pottery compositions are a stunning testimony to her love of the great outdoors.

by Sally Hansen

Balaban loves to have dirty hands. On her website she writes: "In my mind *dirty hands* means challenge, relaxation, creativity, inspiration, play; building sand-castles; digging and planting in the garden; making pots of clay."

Most of her pottery is functional as well as highly and originally decorative. Pots, plates, pitchers, vases, mugs — her work is stoneware pottery that has been high-temperature fired in oxidation — rugged as well as beautiful. All have unusual shapes. She experiments with distorting and altering wheel-thrown pieces, and adds texture by stamping, folding, carving or simply adding more clay. She juxtaposes glazed and unglazed portions to bring out the texture and

expert affirmation that she is potting from a harmonious space when she was awarded membership in the Kanata Civic Art Gallery. She received feedback that the three external professional artist jurors enjoyed "the juxtaposition of the large, almost brutal shapes and the delicate patterning of the glazing." One juror "found her patterning 'fascinating,' her work 'rustic and yet alluring'." Another admired her "Monet-like palette" and commented that her large and clunky shapes contrast with the detail, causing an interesting dichotomy... "beefiness vs. delicacy." Much like nature.

Why Barcha Pottery Studio?

Balaban was born in Prague, and in Czech, all names have other nicknames. Barbora can be called Bara, Barborka, Baruska, Barka and Barcha — it is all the same name. This explains the name of Barcha Pottery Studio. Barbora (aka Barcha) graduated from the Prague College of Graphic Art where she studied the design, printing and production of packaging. She was always drawn to three-dimensional work but had no opportunity to work with clay, instead exploring the beauty of weaving, tapestry and lace making.

Even as a ten-year-old child Barcha understood the repercussions of the Communist repression at the end of the "Prague Spring of 1968" and remembers always wanting to leave, despite the natural beauty of the country. Eventually in 1989 she and her husband Alex, whom she met while rock climbing, moved with their two children to Germany to apply for refugee status en route to Canada. They arrived in 1990 with six hockey bags full of camping gear and a few clothes; when they weren't working they were



the warmth of the clay. And then she tops it all off by personalizing each piece with distinctive decorative brush work, carving and stamping, to create fascinating pottery works of art.

The great philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer wrote: "The power of nature is such that it's what all art strives to be. The more we can get in tune with the harmony of the planet, the more our art can benefit from that relationship." Balaban recently received

hiking and driving and canoeing and sea-kayaking their way across Canada. Their Karelian Bear Dog (a national Finnish Treasure) was their constant companion and faithful lookout. No bears harmed or were harmed, and they felt safe.

When they settled in Ottawa in 1995, Barcha finally got the chance to try pottery. She had always done something with her hands, starting in her grandma's garden, and by 1997 she was going to the



ARTIST · TRADING · CARD ·

studio twice a week. Her husband bought her a wheel and she started selling her works soon after at the Ottawa Guild of Potters annual sales. In 2003 she became one of the founders of the Gladstone ClayWorks co-operative pottery studio. She has taken courses at St. Lawrence College, Fleming College in Halliburton, and numerous workshops offered by the Ottawa Guild of Potters and by Fusion (Ontario Clay and Glass) with top Canadian and US Potters.

In 2007, she opened the Barcha Pottery Studio from her basement in Kanata and started selling works at the Carp Market, and in 2009 she started teaching pottery classes. In case anyone is interested, she owns too many pottery wheels, given that she mostly does hand-built pieces now. In 2015 she received the Honorable Mention Award at the Ottawa Guild of Potters Spring Exhibition.

Balaban is extremely grateful that she enjoys an ideal situation to cope with COVID-19 challenges and uncertainties. She continues her job as production coordinator for an Ottawa printing company, and enormously enjoys the two extra hours she gains each day by working from home. Instead of a tedious and stressful commute, she has repurposed the time by adding to her second-favourite hand-dirtying pastime — gardening. In 2013 another lifetime goal fell into her lap. She and Alex had always wanted a home in the country, and a friend had said, "Don't worry; the house will come to you." And it did. A wonderful log house on five acres only ten minutes from Almonte is their happy place.

Her garden is beautiful and fulfilling. Like her excursions into the wilderness, Barcha's gardening is a constant source of inspiration for her pottery. She calls her current body of work "Permanent Garden." Her gardening advice is priceless: "The key is to plant what grows." Take it to heart gardeners — it's irrefutable. Partly as a pandemic-coping mechanism, Barcha has started growing herbs and creating tinctures that she shares with family and friends. Her daughter finds that feverfew eases her migraines, and now Barcha doesn't have to wait for her sister to bring her a nasturtium tincture from the Czech Republic. Nasturtium was first introduced in Europe from Peru in the 1600s and has been used for thousands of years as a medicinal plant, primarily for its healing and disinfectant properties.

Instead of the "Where" list of shows and shops and openings that previously would have appeared here and on the back of Balaban's Artist Trading Card at the top of this page, COVID-19 currently limits our options to visiting barchapottery.wordpress.com. It is definitely worth a visit, and think of all the commute time you'll save! If you'd like to purchase a uniquely "organic" pottery creation, contact her to schedule a safe appointment to pick it up at her studio. You might get a look at the garden too.



MICHAEL PITTMAN

Hard, hard times

July 22 - August 28, 2020

SIVARULRASA
GALLERY

34 Mill St, Almonte ON
sivarulrasa.com
613.256.8033

WHO Barbora Balaban

WHAT Potter

WHERE Barcha Pottery Studio, 10 minutes from Almonte, by appointment, 762-2942, <barchapottery.wordpress.com>, <barcha_pottery@yahoo.ca>

WHY "I like working with soil and clay — I call my current work 'Permanent garden'."

ARTIST TRADING CARD

Have a Perfect PICNIC in Smiths Falls

Support Local Restaurants, Enjoy the Outdoors!

Picture this: it's a warm summer evening, the sun is filtering through shady trees, and the gentle sound of nearby water provides the perfect backdrop to a delicious picnic prepared for you by top-notch local restaurants. And when you open your picnic box you find free gifts! If this sounds appealing to you, then Smiths Falls is the place to be this summer.



PICNIC Smiths Falls offers a perfect way to sample local restaurants and enjoy the beautiful outdoors this summer!

The Town of Smiths Falls, in partnership with participating restaurants, is pleased to announce the launch of a new take-out dining program — PICNIC Smiths Falls. This exciting new initiative offers a relaxing physical distancing "picnic in a park" experience.

The program was officially launched in June, and now features offerings from The Pickled Pig, Boomtown, C'est Tout Bakery, Chuckles Jack, Harvest Social, Perfect Thyming and Two Guys for Lunch.

Diners are invited to contact one of the participating business and purchase a custom-printed picnic box that includes a meal for two, a Smiths Falls Visitor Guide, a Smiths Falls Heritage Walking Tour guide, and free gifts from the Town of Smiths Falls and partners. Each meal will include two main dishes, two side dishes, two drinks and two desserts.

"With the summer weather officially here, we are looking at how we can best support our restaurants given the current physical distancing restrictions," explains Jennifer Miller, Manager of Economic De-

velopment and Tourism. "PICNIC Smiths Falls is one way that residents and visitors can continue to support our restaurants while enjoying a restful picnic in one of the town's many beautiful outdoor parks along the Rideau Canal."

At **Lower Reach Park** parents can relax while young children cool off at the splash pad before or after their meal, or picnickers can swim at the beach at **Murphy Park** and then dine beneath one of the many shade trees in **Centennial Park**. The grassy area and gazebo at **Heritage House Museum** offers the perfect park-like setting for a romantic picnic for two.

For more details and contact information for participating restaurants, please visit <smithsfalls.ca>.

Need 'em... need 'em... got 'em...
Clip and save the Artist Trading Card
All the cool kids do it!

ALMONTE FARMERS MARKET

OPEN SATURDAYS
from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

155 HIGH ST. ALMONTE
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visit almontefarmersmarket.com
for details about COVID measures

Weavers Unlimited

Featured Artists in July:

- Lise Loader
- Mary-Anne Dalkowski
- Jean Down
- Ellen Good
- Karin Hendriksen
- Roberta Murrant
- Anne Rombeek
- Deb Templeton

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Thank you for your continued support.

Bloomfest Garden Art

A Show and Sale at Whitehouse Perennials

For many years gardeners have marked their calendars for the third week of July when the display gardens and daylily field at Whitehouse Perennials are in full bloom. This year there is another reason to make the trip to Almonte — our Garden Art Show and Sale.

The display gardens and daylily field are a great venue to showcase garden art! Beginning on July 21 the work of twelve artists will be installed, and it will remain in place until August 3. The gardens are extensive and the art will be placed throughout the entire area, allowing visitors to comfortably maintain social distancing. The lineup of participants includes local artists as well as some from southern Ontario and Quebec.

Doug MacDonald from **Rue Royale** is well known for his cast sculptures of gargoyles and grotesques, whimsical mushrooms and smiling sun faces. David Card from **Peace of Mind Creations** uses the natural form and colour of wood to create one-of-a-kind sculptures of animals, faces and even flowers. His work, often with a humorous bent, is equally at home in house or garden. Frank Sammut of **Kokopelli Woodworking** turns locally harvested wood into unique indoor and outdoor furniture that showcases the natural beauty of the wood grain.

The work of **Rusty Girl** already graces many area gardens, including our own. From practical items like peony rings, trellises, obelisks, bird baths and much more, Clare's rusty metal creations will find a place in any garden. Specializing in outdoor art and sculpture, Rob and Sue Thomas of **A Twist of Metal** turn steel and sometimes stone into original sculptures. Fish, herons, owls and flying geese as well as more abstract creations all come to life in metal.



Whitehouse Perennials has come up with a safe way for local artists to display and sell their work — arrayed among their extensive gardens and daylily field!

Whimsical and brilliantly painted little houses, framed in cedar wood and decorated using old copper wire, are the work of Stephane Lavallee of **L'art-Verre**. Each little house sits on a beaver stick that holds it in place in the garden. The benches and tables of **Tuscany Concrete by Design** are works of art that are fabricated for outdoor use but could easily find a place in your home. Wildlife, birds and landscapes are all captured in concrete with subtle shadings of colours and patterns.

Glass artist **Chris Van Zanten** makes weatherproof glass totems and whimsies in a rainbow of colours. His brilliantly coloured glass bird baths, sitting in twisted black metal frames, are always popular. Swinging from a tree, lounging on a little branch or just playing around, **Raymond Warren's** enchanting ceramic sculptures can decorate your garden or your coffee table. Each one-of-a-kind piece is hand-sculpted and then wood-fired. This process produces subtle shadings and colours that make the little figures come to life. The brightly coloured characters from Bonnie Lindsay of **Garden Daydreams** are created using Powertex, an environmentally-friendly water-based textile hardener. They can be left out year-round to add a splash of colour on your patio or in your garden. Norfolk County artist **Colin Logan's** handcrafted metal and stone creations will make you smile. Stone and metal birds, flying insects and little "creatures" flow from his imagination. Flora and fauna are the inspiration for the wire art and driftwood mobiles of **Betty Letendre**. Colourful fish and animals sculpted in wire on driftwood bases are perfect for informal garden spaces.

Garden Art adds the finishing touch to a garden. You can enjoy a beautiful metal or glass sculpture year-round. A bench can be both a resting place and a piece of art. A brightly painted sculpture provides different colours and textures than can be found in plants. This has been a difficult season for artists, with many shows cancelled. We are excited to be able to host this show and feature the work of these talented individuals. Admission is free, and information about the show and the participating artists can be found at <whitehouseperennials.com>. — Suzanne Patry



THE COVE COUNTRY INN

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WEDDINGS

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All Events Subject to Weather due to Patio Service Only

Every Wed	Rack 'n Tunes 5-8 (Acoustic Country/Rock)
Every Sun	Head Over Heels 12:30-3:30 (Acoustic Folk/Rock/Blues/Jazz)
Fri. Jul. 3	Matt Dickson (Acoustic Rock/Folk) 5-8
Sat. Jul. 4	John Wilberforce (Acoustic Folk/Rock) 5-8
Thu. Jul. 9	Spencer Evans (One Man Show Piano Player/Singer, Plays Everything) 5-8
Fri. Jul. 10	Brook Zeman (Original Acoustic Folk/Rock/Blues) 5-8
Sat. Jul. 11	David James Allen (Original Acoustic Folk/Blues) 5-8
Thu. Jul. 16	Steve Marriner of JUNO Award Winning MonkeyJunk (Original Acoustic Blues/Rock) 5-8 \$45 Dinner + Show. Reservations Only.
Fri. Jul. 17	John McLurg Solo of Turpin's Trail (Acoustic Folk) 5-8
Sat. Jul. 18	Brea Lawrenson (Original Acoustic Country) 5-8
Fri. Jul. 24	Tom Savage (Original Acoustic Folk/Rock/Blues) 5-8
Sat. Jul. 25	Bill Quigley Solo of East Coast Experience (Acoustic East Coast Folk) 5-8
Thu. Jul. 30	Sean Pinchin (Original Acoustic Blues/Folk) 5-8
Fri. Jul. 31	Jeff Callery (Acoustic Folk/Rock) 5-8

Neat™

Wishing everybody a safe and happy Summer!
We hope to have shows rolling very soon but in the meantime come relax in our huge extended garden patio and try some of our amazing food, coffee or drinks.

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CFUW Perth Education Awards

Nine impressive young women recently received Education Awards from the CFUW (Canadian Federation of University Women) Perth and District club to help them achieve their post-secondary educational goals. Supporting the education of women and girls is a major aim of CFUW.

The 2020 recipients are: Alesha Barber-Williams, Summer Clair, Cassidy Drummond, Mikayla Gemmell, Lili Hansen, Zoe Ingleby, Christina Reid and McKinley Van Klei. A special award was also presented this year in celebration of CFUW Perth and District's 50th Anniversary (1970-2020). It was given to Masters student Aja Rowden.

The recipients come from local municipalities including Almonte, Elgin, Jasper, Carleton Place, Perth and Smiths Falls. Their educational plans encompass a wide range of disciplines: Medical Professional, Nursing, Dental Assisting, Commerce, Environmental Science, Sports Studies, Arts, Cognitive Science and Engineering.

These women have set clear goals for themselves and have already demonstrated their maturity, intelligence, determination and community spirit in high school. CFUW Perth and District is proud to be able to assist such motivated members of our community.

CFUW Perth and District publicizes its awards through its website <cfuwperthanddistrict.wordpress.com>, Facebook page and local media. Club volunteers advise local schools and youth organizations that the application process is open to girls and women who can demonstrate a need for financial support with their post-secondary studies. This year 29 applications were received, and the volunteers had the difficult job of short-listing to a number that could be funded with this year's resources. The final nine successful applicants will receive their awards at the beginning of the university year in September.

Financing for the 2020 awards came primarily from the club's major annual fundraising activity, the Heritage Perth Christmas House Tour. Eight households generously allowed visitors to see their special homes, which were decorated for Christmas by the homeowners and local florists and designers. Area restaurants and businesses also sponsored homes, purchased advertising, or provided gift certificates in support of the tour. By the time the event took place in early December 2019, over 200 volunteers had worked to make it a success.

CFUW Perth and District is grateful for all the support received each year from participants and visitors alike and congratulates the Education Award winners for 2020.

The Ottawa Children's Theatre

Online Summer Camps

Musical Theatre, Improvisation, Drama, Acting
July 6 – August 21, Ages 4 – 18
 Interactive and online!

www.ottawachildrenstheatre.net

Waterway Photo Tour

MVFN Celebrates National Canoe Day

In celebration of National Canoe Day — Friday, June 26 — the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists (MVFN) created a virtual pictorial tour of the Mississippi River and other waterways and lakes of Lanark County, as seen from the water. They invited everyone to get out on the water between National Canoe Day and Canada Day to capture in pictures the natural world that we can see from the water in beautiful Lanark County.

After July 4, everyone is invited to visit <mvfn.ca/national-canoe-day> to view the final map and take the “Magical Mississippi/Lanark County Waterways Virtual Tour”. Happy viewing!



Loving Local Food

foodcoreLGL Hopes Interest is Here to Stay

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a variety of impacts on our food system. Shortages of some products created a new appreciation for and concern about supply chains that many of us take for granted. foodcoreLGL (Leeds, Grenville, Lanark) is a regional network working to bring to life to the LGL Food Charter drafted by our communities in 2012. While recognizing the many challenges and hardships the pandemic has created, foodcoreLGL members are hopeful that the boom in interest in the food system and demand for locally sourced food will be a lasting, positive shift in our communities.

Local farmers and producers are adapting to the new realities of physical distancing and an increase in consumer demand by pivoting to online sales. Local options for sourcing food are promoted through Transition Brockville, which built a local food directories section on its website, and Lanark Local Flavour, which significantly updated theirs.

Social media conversations about local food abound. The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit (a foodcoreLGL member) reports that collectively, posts from the Health Unit's Facebook and Twitter page mentioning local food had reached close to 10,000 social media users by early June.

The volume of sales and the number of “direct from farm” boxes of produce and products have skyrocketed. Shannon Miller from Miller's Bay Farm says: “In this time of unprecedented uncertainty, people want to do all that they can to ensure that their family's food supply is stable. For many, that means

connecting directly with the producer — someone they can see, speak with and trust.”

Many are addressing their concerns about the food chain by taking up gardening or expanding their gardens. At the start of the growing season, people's attention turned to community gardens and thousands across Ontario successfully advocated to the government to reopen community gardens with certain restrictions. Hopefully this move to closer relationships with our food will bring with it renewed attention to food system challenges and actions to address the negative effects of climate change, the decrease in smaller farms and processing facilities, the issue of food waste management and the need to maintain safe and fair working conditions for all food system workers.

foodcoreLGL's Food Inventory contains a wealth of links to information about how to source and grow your own food. Check out their series of toolkits for ideas about advancing the goals of the Food Charter in your municipality, schools and home.

foodcoreLGL is a coalition of food activists and organizations who work to take practical steps to realize the vision of the LGL Food Charter. They developed the local Food Charter and resources to help implement it. They organize events like the Good Food in Schools forum. They share information through the Food Inventory, their website <foodcorelgl.ca>, Instagram and Facebook page. Their Stewardship Group has representatives from farming, food production, municipal and provincial government, community health and community food programs.

Reid GARDENS

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Find us on Facebook/Reid Gardens

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

AGH Invites You to an Evening Gala at Home!

Each year, the Almonte General Hospital Fairview Manor Foundation has four signature events to support our patients and residents, ensuring they receive high quality healthcare in our community.

As we look at 2020, three of our four signature events have had to be postponed until 2021. This challenge presents us with an exciting opportunity to develop some fresh ideas and create some new fundraising events that will continue to support patient and resident care at the hospital and manor.

AGH FVM Foundation has created an Evening at Home Gala, a fundraiser that features sumptuous summer food prepared by Almonte's finest restaurants — Heirloom Cafe and North Market — on Thursday, August 27 beginning at 6PM.

The Gala Experience Includes:

- Six mouth-watering small plates prepared with fresh local ingredients and highlighting the culinary specialties of the chefs that work and live in our community

- An exciting online auction with a variety of fun and interesting items (opens on Friday, August 21 at 8AM and closes Saturday, August 29 at 8PM)
 - Door prizes drawn throughout the evening
 - A concert by friends from Rip Roar Music: Tracey Brown, Randall Prescott and friends broadcasting via YouTube (only available with purchase of a ticket) into your dining room, backyard or summer room. Kaylen Prescott is the video director/editor.
 - Words of Welcome from Foundation Chair Rob Scott
 - An update by Hospital President and CEO Mary Wilson Trider
 - Thank you and acknowledgement to partners
- Only 150 tickets are available, at \$150 per person (tax receipt of \$75). For more information please contact Louise Beckinsale at <lbeckinsale@agh-fvm.com> or 256-2514 x226.

AGH Spring Dance

Please note that the Spring Dance that had been rescheduled to August 29 has been postponed until next year. Hold on to your tickets — the date is confirmed for April 24, 2021 at the Civitan Hall.



The Evening at Home Gala will bring a concert by Tracey Brown, Randall Prescott and Friends, delicious food, door prizes, and an online auction right to your door!

Orchid Viewing a Go!

The highly popular Purdon Conservation Area, home to Canada's largest colony of Showy Lady's Slipper orchids, is open for the 2020 bloom season. Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA) has put the following measures in place to help protect the health and safety of all visitors and staff:

- Directional signage: A portion of the boardwalk will be one-way.
- Face masks: Given the narrow boardwalk, a physical distancing space of six feet cannot always be maintained and therefore it is recommended that visitors wear face masks.
- The porta potty will be opened and sanitized on a regular basis.

Visitors are reminded to practice physical distancing by staying at least two metres or six feet apart when possible, not to congregate in groups, and if they feel ill to stay at home. MVCA is also asking the public to plan short visits to areas that have been reopened to ensure the space can be shared with all

those looking to get outside and into nature. Visitors are also reminded to obey signage, keep their pets on a leash at all times and take any garbage with them when they leave.

The typical bloom season is the third weekend of June through to early July. Orchid updates will be posted on <mvc.on.ca/places-to-see/purdon>, Facebook and Twitter, as well as the hotline: 253-1756 x4.



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Virtual Celtfest: July 4 & 5

Almonte Celtfest organizers are delighted to announce that they'll be hosting a virtual festival on Saturday, July 4 and Sunday, July 5. They have coordinated with a number of performers who have pre-recorded video performances — these are currently being produced professionally and edited into a single video that will be broadcast as the virtual festival. It will be posted in two parts — one on Saturday and one on Sunday — and each will run about two hours in the afternoon.

The lineup includes video performances from Jessica Wedden, Jessica Pearson & The East Wind

(pictured above), Steel City Rovers, Kelly Sloan, Graham Lindsey and Heather Dale, among others.

There is no fee to watch, as is traditional with Celtfest, but viewers will have opportunities to make donations throughout the festival because every dollar donated goes back to the performers themselves. Links will be provided, and alternative donation methods will be available for those who aren't comfortable or familiar with Facebook donations.

To participate, you can follow the links from <almonteceltfest.com> or find Almonte Celtfest 2020 on Facebook. And since it's virtual, kilts and pants are optional!

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Art Keeps On Keeping On in the Valley!

Weaving is Unlimited!

Cheryl Straby of Strévé Design Studio Boutique and Gallery is pleased to announce a summer exhibition of handweaving by Weavers Unlimited, opening June 29.

Founded on a shared passion for handweaving, Weavers Unlimited is a collective of dedicated artisans who strive to explore the intricacies of handweaving and develop new approaches to creating woven

Fergus, Jean Down of Nepean, Ellen Good of Ompah, Karin Hendriksen of Nepean, Roberta Murrant of Dunrobin, Anne Rombeek of Kanata, and Deb Templeton of Ottawa.

A shared passion to innovate and inspire will be apparent in this exciting collection. Strévé Design Studio Boutique and Gallery is located at 64 Gore Street E. in Perth. For more information, call 267-0230 or visit <strevedesign.com>.

Michael Pittman: Hard, Hard Times

From July 22 to August 28, 2020, Sivarulrasa Gallery is pleased to present **Michael Pittman: Hard, Hard Times**. A native of Corner Brook, Newfoundland, Pittman's paintings examine elements of Newfoundland and Labrador's history, vernacular culture and folklore in a contemporary context. His works are often introspective and highly subjective, using a personal lens and a striking visual language that he has developed over nearly two decades.

The title of this exhibition comes from a Newfoundland folk song *Hard, Hard Times* that has inspired the artist. "There are universal parallels throughout the lyrics that resonate particularly loudly for me these days, in both personal and societal contexts," he states. The song presents life as a series of tribulations, with each verse outlining a particular hardship faced by a fisherman/livyer.

Michael Pittman received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, and a Master's degree in painting from the Waterford Institute of Technology in Waterford, Ireland. He has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards, and his work is exhibited regularly in Ontario as well as in Newfoundland and Labrador. His works are held in many private and



Sivarulrasa Gallery will feature Newfoundland & Labrador artist Michael Pittman

by Miss Cellaneous

fabric. The group has gathered since 2003 to share their interest in mastering traditional techniques, investigate complex and innovative weave structures, and explore the fascinating effects of colour and non-traditional materials. During this time each member has also pursued their own weaving interests as well as collaborating as a group on many exhibitions in Ontario and New York State.

In this exhibition and sale, the Strévé Gallery will showcase new handwoven wearables, accessories and décor textiles. These pieces capture the personal style, expertise and interest of each weaver. The diversity of techniques and approaches is evident in these pieces and reflects the unlimited possibilities of handweaving.

The members of the group participating in this exhibition include local Perth weaver Lise Loader, Mary-Anne Dalkowski of



Strévé Design Gallery in Perth is hosting a summer show by Weavers Unlimited

public collections, including The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, the City of St. John's, the Waterford Institute of Technology and Memorial University. The artist gratefully acknowledges the support of ArtsNL, the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council.

On Saturday, July 25 from 3-4PM, Michael Pittman will join in live via video link from Newfoundland for a **Virtual Vernissage / Artist Talk**. You can join from the comfort of your home through a video link that can be accessed on your computer or phone. Please email <info@sivarulrasa.com> and they will send you the link. For more information, visit <sivarulrasa.com>.

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Ramsay Creek: New Kids on the Block

As someone who lives in Almonte and drives to Carleton Place frequently, I was fascinated to see a new, rather large greenhouse develop from the ground up last fall along Ramsay Concession 7A. As someone who prefers not to travel 110 km/hr on the highway, Concession 7A is a wonderful rural road with lots of opportunities to check out the latest bird arrivals (please don't tell anyone about it!).

Not surprisingly, the business that was unfolding there is not part of a global multi-national empire. Ramsay Creek

by David Hinks

Greenhouse is a truly local enterprise with perhaps a bit of an unexpected "Mission Statement". I have led many workshops on an introduction to organic vegetable gardening and have seen how complicated many novice gardeners find the world of gardening. The very refreshing mission of Ramsay Creek is to simplify gardening and make it enjoyable and gratifying for everyone. I am eager to see this vision become reality!

Business partners Elizabeth Salter and Carolyn Styles built Ramsay Creek around this dream of making gardening more accessible to everyone. They perceive that many people find gardening intimidating and they want to show that gardening is for everyone — that it can be accessible, maintainable and affordable. The nursery sells annuals, container gardens, perennials and shrubs, as well as veggies and herbs. In the future they plan to offer workshops, seminars and custom design services. They currently provide employment for five seasonal full-time staff and two part-time staff.

Carolyn was born and raised on a dairy farm in Kinburn. A veteran business owner for a quarter of a century, once she stepped into the greenhouse industry she fell in love with gardening and growing. She has never looked back. Elizabeth studied agriculture, horticulture and floristry. She has been working in the landscape and greenhouse industry since she was just fourteen years old. She has always dreamt of building a greenhouse of her own.

They transformed a field with a forgotten municipal drain into "Ramsay Creek", an imposing structure approximately eight minutes from either downtown Almonte or Carleton Place. Construction started in August of 2019. The heat got turned on three days before Christmas, but actual planting did not start until the beginning of February. They opened for online shopping in April 2020, and opened for traffic in May as soon as they were allowed to, following COVID protocols.

Their connections with the local community run deep — between incredible family support and a web of support they found in Lanark County, many people gave them excellent guidance about opening up a business.

Further evidence of their commitment to the community was reflected in the construction phase. They were their own contractor and used local companies for everything they could — Carroll Cartage for excavation and grading, SMR for electrical, and Valley Plumbing. They consulted with Niagara greenhouse specialists for the structure, function, and some other aspects.

One small example of local collaboration was with Gilligallou Bird Inc. this spring to design a hanging basket that attracts hummingbirds. It was made up of plants loved by hummingbirds and a Gilligallou feeder that hung perfectly underneath.

Opening in a pandemic had many levels of crazy. Elizabeth observes that "it feels like we've lived three years in three months, so trying to remember details of the build/opening is such a haze at this point. I think because we were working so hard to get open in time, once COVID hit we just switched our focus and drove to the next issue. And COVID constantly threw curve balls which affected finishing the greenhouse, deliveries, scheduling, and most importantly selling. You had to make a lot of Plan Bs, then Cs, and Ds, etc. In a way it made things feel normal because our attitude never faulted from go-go-go, but now we're coming off such a rush and we are all just tired. I think anyone in this industry would say they are tired at this point."



Business partners Carolyn Styles and Elizabeth Salter picked an interesting year to open their new business!

Where do they plan to go from here? They aim to continue to grow great plants, and to help gardeners bring colour and life to their yards. The plan was to have lots of workshops on growing and designing, so once things loosen up they will figure out ways to host those within the greenhouse. They will have a fall



crop, and lots of Christmas designs this year. Next year they will again have a focus on veggies, with more varieties and offerings. Interestingly, the most requested plants this season have been tomatoes and marigolds.

They swear that every day is rewarding as they are constantly learning and growing. And this is something that gardeners can identify with — one of their most rewarding moments was the first

time they went to check on the growth of their first seedlings and pulled out a "glorious" pot of white roots — they were actually doing what they wanted to do, which was to grow plants.

I really admire their spirit as they were able to roll with the punches when absolutely nothing went as planned. The major frustration that stands out for them was not being able to hug their family in celebration once the business opened.

Check their website <ramsaycreek.com> or Facebook page for the latest information on hours of business and COVID protocols.

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Summer of Quarantine Family Fun List

50 family-friendly activities in the Ottawa Valley

Dear folks with kids: Welcome to the “summerofquarantine” Family Fun List! At first glance, the summer seems pretty daunting with little ones when everywhere you turn your go-to fairs and festivals have been cancelled. No summer vacations outside the province, no Ferris wheels, no concerts in the park. It is going to take a bit of time to rework your family summer traditions, but I hope to help you realize that there is still so much fun to be had.

by Sarah Kerr

So take this list and sit down with your family to plan some new memories, and maybe new traditions, by creating your own “summerofquarantine” Fun List. I’ve got you started with fifty family-friendly activities to do in our own backyard — from rafting down the Ottawa River or hiking through Canada’s old growth forests to sleeping overnight in a train caboose! IT’S ALL OPEN! You can have so much fun and stay in line with public health recommendations. So get out there (not too far) and have fun this summer!

Everywhere

- Curate a **summer playlist** on Spotify to give a fun soundtrack to your summer
- Download the **Geocaching** app and head out on a real-life scavenger hunt all over the Valley
- Get kids **reading** through library pickups and the TD Summer Reading Club with so many fun jokes, story starters, colouring sheets and book clubs



Carp

- Eat **homemade ice cream** at Carp Custom Creamery
- Attend a **Kids Golf Clinic** at Irish Hills Golf & Country Club starting mid-July
- Book a **family campfire or picnic** and register for summer camp at Saunders Farm

Almonte

- Visit the **Almonte Waterfalls** (we usually grab an Almonte Ice Cream Shop cone first)
- Cool off at the **splash pad** or hit the **skate park** at Gemmill Park
- Join the **summer art club** at JB Arts! Camp runs all summer for kids 6–14
- Go out for **fish ‘n chips** at the Cheeky Chippy
- Order a **picnic box** from North Market any Saturday and then:
- Go **play in the rapids** at the Mill of Kintail
- **Learn to sew** at “Sew Much Fun” Sewing & Fashion Camp in August (ages 10+) <marglee@teksavvy.com>
- Book a **sleepover** at the Almonte Riverside Inn, get **wood-fired pizza** from the Lobby Bar restaurant and **paddle up the Mississippi** to see the sunset on one of the prettiest towns in Ontario!

Pakenham

- Pack a picnic and head for a day of fun at the **Pakenham Beach**
- Don’t leave town without checking out the famous **Scoops Ice Cream**
- Go **fishing for bass** under the historic Five Span Stone Bridge
- **Teach kids to golf** at Pakenham Highlands — it’s free for kids under 16 when with an adult!

Carleton Place

- **Pick your own strawberries** in July at Beckwith Berries
- **Dance under the rainbow** at the Beckwith Splash Pad
- Book a game of **paintball**, laser tag, obstacle course or axe throwing at Marked Adventure Park
- Sign up for **Canoe Kids Camp** at the Carleton Place Canoe Club for kids aged 7-9 will run all summer



From beaches to berries — there’s still so much to do in this area!

Smiths Falls

- Visit the **Railway Museum** — Sunday afternoon pre-book tours starting July 19
- Book a **sleepover in a Caboose** — starting July 1 you can sleep over with the whole family in a real Canadian National Railway or Canadian Pacific Caboose
- **Visit the locks** and watch the boats go through Rideau Canal National Historic Site
- **DIY yacht cruise** with Le Boat! Scrap the east coast adventure and spend a week cruising the Rideau Lakes system

Perth & Lanark

- **Movies Under the Stars** at the Port Elmsley drive-in!
- **Play mini-golf** at the Perth Outfitters
- **Rent a canoe**, kayak or stand up paddle board for ½ day at Perth Outfitters
- Check out the **skate park and splash pad** at Conlon Farm
- Go **bird watching** at Murphy’s Point Provincial Park! You can see all kinds of warblers, indigo buntings, Baltimore orioles, scarlet tanagers, owls, hawks and more. Take the 2km Silver Queen Mine Trail to see an old mica mine and miner’s bunkhouse!
- Book a **family yoga class** (for adults and teens) on stand-up paddle boards on the water with Bobbi at Aruma

Calabogie

- **Calabogie Peaks Resort** has \$60 family day passes which gets you into their beach facility, pool, golf course, tennis courts, water sports, nightly campfires and more!
- Hike **Eagles Nest Lookout** in Calabogie

Burnstown

- Pack your sunscreen for a day at **Burnstown Beach**
- Order **take-out pizzas** from Neat Café
- Don’t forget your **ice cream** at Café Laurent

Arnprior & Renfrew

- Book a **family rafting trip** with Wilderness Tours
- **Hike the Gillies Trail** in Arnprior — a 2.7 km trail along the Madawaska and through some of the oldest growth forest in Canada!
- Sign up for a day of **archery and horseback riding** at Frontier Trails summer camp in Eganville

Pembroke

- **Pick your own blueberries** at Hugli’s Blueberry Ranch by mid-July
- **Starlight at the Skylight** in Pembroke – drive-in movie \$20/car
- **Natural Water Slide** at High Falls in Algonquin Park — go interior camping at Achray campground and visit the natural water slide on the Barron River at High Falls Lake and Stratton Lake (my dad took my brother when he was two but this really is for more experienced little campers!). You can also hike in from Achray on the Eastern Pines Trail.
- Visit the **Barron Canyon** while you’re there!

Bonus Points: Ottawa

- Learn about the history of our Capital region and book an **Indigenous Walks Tour** — book your group tour at <bookings@indigenouwalks.com>
- Take your bikes into the **Ottawa Bike Paths** to see the Parliament buildings, canal and locks

Physical distancing is natural on the water!



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Dandelion (Or, A Wave of Brilliant Resistance)

The vision that came to me today, on the summer solstice, while the world continues to grapple with the uncertainty around COVID-19 and rallies to rid our systems of vile toxicity, is a dandelion-covered lawn. It may be an odd association, but I love dandelions and a sea of them registers for me like a wave of brilliant resistance — deep rooted, resilient and unstoppable.

by Susie Osler

I believe wholeheartedly that plants have much wisdom and medicine to offer us if we spend a bit of time with them observing and learning about their ecological roles, their flavours, their medicinal qualities, and — for some of us — developing a sense of connection to them. I also am beginning to suspect that plants may present themselves to us when and where they are most needed — as a sort of quiet, botanical elder wanting to offer us a bit of advice. This sort of “guidance”, however, often seems to be lost on humans — particularly when coming from a plant that does not suit our taste, seems a bit wild and uncultivated, and (perhaps especially) when its message is something we would rather not hear.

We have become stuck as a culture, I’d argue, with questionable aesthetic norms and ideals, and with hierarchical systems of design and control descended from colonial aristocracies. Think, for instance, of one cultural norm that still holds strong —

“the lawn”. In the lawn’s polite and cultured company the dandelion is *still* an unwelcome interloper that must be controlled. Is it not time to question our prejudices and to transform our landscapes of domination — where plants, animals and humans themselves are denatured and subdued — into landscapes where we trust and allow the wild wisdom of the earth and all beings to be fully and freely expressed? For many of us this might require a period of certain discomfort, and also a great willingness to let go! But what would this look like? What would *we* feel like? In what corners of our lives and habitats might we give it a go? What is holding us back?

And what has this to do with dandelions? Perhaps it has to do with re-establishing flow. Dandelion has a talent for loosening areas of congestion or stagnation in the body, and for breaking up and revitalizing compacted soil. Literally and metaphorically, our world, and many of us individually, could use a dose of Dandelion medicine now.

Happily, all parts of Dandelion help to support the systems of digestion and elimination. The root can be tinctured, eaten in soup or made into tea or even a coffee substitute. It is full of inulin — a prebiotic which feeds the good bacteria in our gut. It is also full of minerals pulled up from deeper soils. It has a mildly sweet, earthy taste and is understood by herbalists to be cooling, cleansing, and calming to the body. It is one of the most widely used “alteratives” (herbs

that gradually restore proper balance and vitality to the body).

The leaf has been appreciated for centuries as a valuable bitter green — a taste we seem to have forgotten in North America, especially with a diet dictated by an addiction to sweet and salty flavours. The bitter flavour is a powerful digestive stimulant. The side salad, which originally accompanied or preceded a meal, would have included bitter greens such as dandelion or chicory — taken to prime the digestive system. Dandelion’s root is also a common component of bitters (herbs tinctured in alcohol to extract their beneficial qualities) which are still commonly used today in cocktails.

Finally, the flower itself is full of polyphenols, antioxidants and anti-inflammatory agents that can help protect against many diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, neurodegenerative diseases and diabetes. Some research has suggested that the flower might contain the most medicinal components of the plant. This year, inspired by friend and local herbalist Meghan Robinson (Instagram @clarendonherbals) I made batches of dandelion flower pesto. It is delicious as a dip, on vegetables or pasta, and in salad dressing — and it is brimming with nutrients!

The events unfolding this year are inviting — or rather *demanding* — a review and reshaping of collective beliefs and systems that do not serve the “whole body”. There is a backlog of toxic residue that needs clearing. There are compacted, static beliefs that need loosening and revitalizing. Our



society needs its own “alterative” for deep and lasting healing. But like Dandelion medicine, these results will only happen through prolonged and deliberate practice.

So why don’t we start now by taking some time to reflect on the dandelions around us and rethink any long-held responses to them as undesirable, invasive and disruptive in our blind adherence to “the lawn” and other archaic and sometimes oppressive ideals. Look at how bright and beautiful they are and ask what prevents you from seeing this and praising them! Begin drinking Dandelion tea. Incorporate a leaf or two into your salads. Collect the flowers and make some pesto. Learn to celebrate the bitter flavour! And thank Dandelion for its abundant gifts!

For more on Dandelion and other featured plants, visit @pineoakarrow on Instagram.

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Activities include a meet and greet reception, 4 group classes, a 30-minute private lesson with the clinician, and a personal tour of beautiful Heritage Perth led by our Town Crier! Registration rates also include 4 nights accommodation (private room with ensuite), 7 meals including a formal gourmet dinner at Perth Manor, and 2 social evening events. On the final evening — a concert presented by the clinician just for you!



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Folk Harp
July 20-24



Kelli Trotter
Fiddle
July 27-31



Erika Nielsen
Cello
August 17-21



Jana Starling
Clarinet
August 24-28

The cost per week is \$930 per person plus HST. We are able to accommodate a limited number of spouses/partners staying in the same room under current COVID 19 restrictions on a first come, first served basis. If this number is raised by the Provincial government, we will invite those on the waiting list. Participating spouses/partners are charged at a reduced rate of \$470.00 plus HST. Non-participants attending only meals and events \$240.00 plus HST. For more information or to register, please contact 613-264-0050.

Nature Fosters Creativity

Finding Inspiration in a Sacred Space

I love reading about where famous authors wrote their books. It's no surprise that many of them cherished peaceful, quiet, isolated places in which to write — sheds, huts, cabins and cottages, many of them quite modest.

Dylan Thomas, for instance, wrote poems and stories in a small wooden boathouse in Laugharne, Wales. The place was tiny but serene, and overlooked the River Taf. Virginia Woolf wrote in a shed hidden away in the garden at Monk's House in Sussex, England. Sparsely furnished with a large writing table and several chairs, the view and smell of the garden must have been lovely.

The playwright George Bernard Shaw built himself a 6-square-foot writer's hut in his garden in St. Alban's, England. The cabin rotated on a circular track so he could always see the sun. Henry David Thoreau, of course, wrote *Walden* in a tiny cabin on Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts. Anne Morrow Lindbergh wrote the beloved book *Gift from the Sea* in a "bare sea-shell of a cottage" on Captiva Island in Florida. It was quite modest. "No heat, no telephone," she wrote, "no plumbing to speak of, no hot water, a two-burner oil stove, no gadgets to go wrong."

A dear friend recently pointed out to me that nature and creativity were two things that Canadians could still safely celebrate...

Nature fosters creativity. Every one of these authors knew that well. They did their best to shut off the external world, to go off alone, to be without distractions. They tucked themselves away amid nature, and were nourished by lakes and trees, gardens and beaches, evening rains and quiet forest strolls.

A dear friend recently pointed out to me that nature and creativity were two things that Canadians could still safely celebrate. And she was right, of course. In such an anxious, sorrowful, uncertain time, there's likely never been better occasion to get out of our homes, to venture into nature, and to rest our weary minds. And, if we're of the mind, to create.

I am writing this, quite gratefully (and with very sincere thanks to the Ontario Arts Council), from Studio House PEC in Wellington, Ontario. The cottage is a converted 1860's carriage house, open and charming and rustic, a short walk from the sandy beach and the cool breezes off Lake Ontario. I'm here on a writing retreat, finishing a book. This

lakeside village reminds me very much of Westport and Perth, and I could just as easily be in either of those places. Much of the Ottawa Valley is cottage country, and beautiful peaceful scenery abounds in the forests and on the lakes, down the trails and off the charming old county roads.

It's both a blessing and luxury to be here, to go off alone. In this serene space my mind is clear and unhurried. I feel in harmony with the nature all around me. I wake early, well rested, and write first-thing. The only distractions are rather pleasant ones: birds singing in the tall leafy trees, a friend's cat sidling up for a morning hello and an ear scratch, kids cycling by with treats from the ice cream shop. I write hundreds of words in an easy rhythm, then break for a quick lunch.

An afternoon walk to the water is refuelling and gently soothing — the waves lazily break on the shoreline and the seagulls squawk and fly in swooping arcs over the water then eventually gather on the rocks near the old lighthouse. The cool lake wind is utterly refreshing. The sunlight on my face is sumptuous. I walk back to the cottage, at peace and inspired, then write again until five or six; I only stop when my stomach grumbles or I happen to look up at the clock on the stove.

Many of my writer friends say they, too, are inspired by nature. "It reassures, centres and calms me," says Carol Bruneau, an award-winning novelist who lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

"Nature empties me," says Edmonton poet, essayist and short story writer Catherine Owen. "Then resurges the energies and sounds necessary to re-feel."

Nature is restorative, undeniably. It can also cleanse the mind.

"Swimming in lakes and oceans is the only meditation I am happy practicing," says Jowita Bydlowska, author of the bestselling memoir *Drunk Mom*.

Getting Out There

Getting to a cottage or a cabin isn't always feasible or accessible for some. Many artists — and folks in general — find walking to be an inspirational activity, by a lake, a stream, through a park or an orchard. Any outdoor activity can be a balm for a busy mind. In the Ottawa Valley, there's ample opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. **Perth Outfitters** rents kayaks and canoes by the day <perthoutfitters.com>, and playing their mini-golf course looks like an absolute blast.



Sunset at Appleton Bay Park

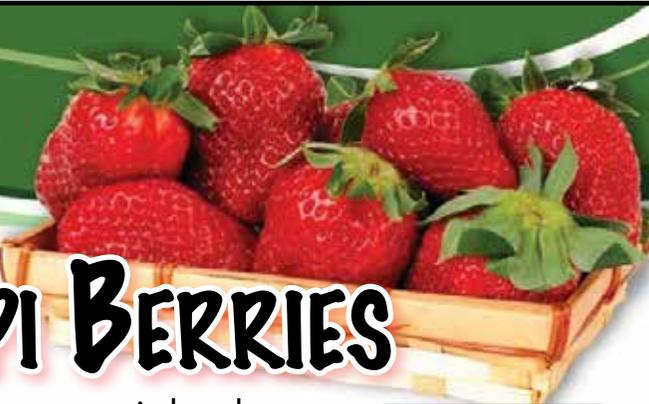
A leisurely stroll about the **Purdon Conservation Area** in Lanark Highlands <mvc.on.ca> would fill up one's senses too. Thousands of their beautiful orchids are in bloom right now. The Museum at the **Mill of Kintail** has just re-opened as well, and so have the trails at **Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust** properties <mmlt.ca>. The **walking tours of Mississippi Mills** <exploremississippimills.ca> are always a pleasant escape; the Old Town Hall visitor centre re-opened in late June.

You can also enjoy Pakenham's distinguished heritage by following their "**Museum on the Streets**" self-guided walking tour. The scenic **Ottawa Valley Rail Trail** is also open to cyclists, people on mobile scooters, and folks on foot. And if you're interested in seeing the Rideau Canal by boat, **Le Boat** <leboat.ca> in Smiths Falls can set you up with everything you need.

Truth be told, you can find artistic inspiration in a laundromat or a tavern on the corner. You can find it on your neighbour's porch or on an early morning walk down a tree-lined street. For me, these languid days and nights at a lakeside cottage are fitting the bill rather nicely, and the book is taking shape. I could not be more grateful for this creative time, these winds and these waters — my soul at ease in a very sacred space.

— John Pigeau

Now Open

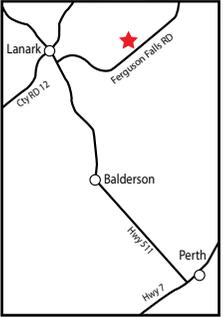


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Libraries are Lifting Spirits

The challenges of working in a public library in these times! It has been perplexing, stressful, amazing and heartwarming, all mixed in together. Speaking with

by Kelly Thompson

colleagues in other smaller libraries, we have been overwhelmed with telephone calls, social media messages, emails and even frantic waves on the street. People asking when we are re-opening, if curbside is available, saying how wonderful it has been to watch a virtual story time, participate in a Zoom program, or how fantastic that library staff can pick books for them. While we have had to step up our game and figure out how to connect with our communities, our amazing communities have figured out how to connect to us as well!

While I know of many libraries that are using creative, outside-the-box thinking to engage people, all of the libraries have dealt with the situation slightly differently depending on their municipalities, the layout of their buildings, etc., so I can only speak to my library in this article. At Renfrew Public Library, we jumped headfirst into virtual programming. This included YouTube story times and tech tutorials, podcasts, book clubs using Zoom, and even TikTok videos! We used our podcast <renfrewpubliclibrary.podbean.com> to host a gardening series and a mental health series, and it has become quite popular!

The goal was to lift people up and continue to engage with them. Libraries can help promote positive mental health by providing opportunities to learn, engage, be entertained and connect (even if

only on a virtual level). What was incredibly difficult was knowing that many of our patrons have no access to the internet. One of the staff suggested we engage in wellness calls to connect with some of our more vulnerable or isolated patrons. Prior to curbside being allowed, we were at least able to chat and infuse a bit of conversation into their day. The response was heartwarming. Once the province allowed curbside pick-up for libraries, we were able to take connection to the next step. We were immediately flooded with calls requesting pick-ups!

As we move forward and slowly begin opening back up, there is still a ton of work to get done. Our main floor has been completely rearranged, cabling run, new washable keyboards purchased, seating that needs to be replaced... the list goes on. The important thing is that public library staff are working diligently to ensure that when we get to see all of your smiling faces again it will be in a safe space so that sharing, learning and engaging can continue and libraries can continue to uplift communities and promote vital connections.

In the meantime, here are some feel-good reads to boost your spirit:

- *This Book Will Save Your Life* by A.M. Homes
- *Hyperbole and a Half* by Allie Brosh (one of my personal faves!)
- *The Book of Awesome* by Neil Pasricha
- *The Happiness Project: Or, Why I Spent a Year Trying to Sing in the Morning, Clean My Closets, Fight Right, Read Aristotle, and Generally Have More Fun* by Gretchen Rubin
- *The Overdue Life of Amy Byler* by Kelly Harms

For the Love of Pets

When I was twelve my father and I conspired to get a puppy, a spaniel we could name Mickie, like the one my grandparents had when my Dad was courting my Mom. My Mom was adamantly opposed, saying it would become HER dog, and she didn't want one. She knew full well that regardless of our whining and total commitment, she would become the owner of the dog. She opined that spaniels smelled of "wet dog" all the

by Glenda Jones

time, that she'd be the one walking it, cleaning up the messes, feeding it... and having a cat was plenty, thank you very much! I got a nylon bolero sweater for my twelfth birthday, a poor substitute. We didn't try again. My Dad never got his dog.

Never have our dogs been more significant than in the last few months. Hugs are out of the question, but it's not forbidden to pick up one of the dogs for



I'm just keeping it warm...

a good hug and snuggle. Other people can pat them, and I don't go into apoplexy. Nearly everyone on our road has a dog, and we all feel the same: our dogs have taken on new meaning in our lives.

We welcome the feel of dog fur on our finger tips, a little nose nuzzling our knee, and yes, even the barking that occasionally drives my neighbour to distraction. (I'm really sorry about it too, and try to mitigate the racket when I can.)

Our isolation has not been a problem: the woods allow us plenty of exercise, especially when the dogs are happily exploring, chasing chipmunks and inaccessible squirrels. They make us laugh even when they are on their own agenda and won't come back when we call. They distract us from the angst of disease at

our doorstep, play as if life is beautiful, no worries in the world unless the food dish is empty. They took us through the joys of spring and now into summer as if nothing were amiss in their world.

Indeed, they are right: everything is normal for them. We still get up at 6:30, we still walk twice a day, I still throw the ball until my arm aches. And when we are done I pick up Diva and give her a hug, and she brushes my face with a kiss, her version of "Thanks, Mom."

When the pandemic was in full swing in April, I made a special effort to give them some agility training. All of them were happy to see a jump they could use, a ball with treats hidden in the centre, and some commands they could follow. What a joy to see that none of us had forgotten our routines!

In the evenings when the dogs settle, we get the full benefit of dog fur. Brandi sits beside me and lets me run my hand through her silky soft coat. It's a slow stroke that calms us both. Her eyes blink and close, my hand stays on her back, and she relaxes into a snooze. Diva is at my feet, as close as she can get. Bonnie, full-coated and always warm, has her own pillow between our chairs. All cares dissolve as we sink into the quiet of evening. We can convince ourselves that life is going on around us as normal as it can be at this time.

While not the best of conversationalists, the dogs are the best of listeners. So all day long I can tell them what we're going to do, that they have to stay home, that it's woods walk time, that "this radio programme isn't something you should hear", just about any bit of trivia I want to say, and they respond — or not, as it pleases them. I can't imagine being silent and alone, as I know so many have been. When conversation runs out, we can simply sit together and talk nonsense, like "does the puppy need a belly rub?" I know they hear "blah, blah, blah...treat, walk, car" but that's all right; at least we get to hear our own voices too.

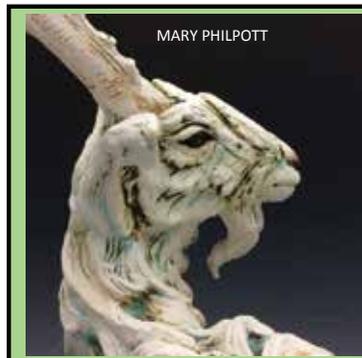
The dogs provide entertainment without commercials. They'll tug on toys, chase each other, bother the cat and argue over the treat balls, all in a bid for attention. We can watch their antics until they tire of playing, no matter how long that takes. It's our private live programming!

Every fibre of our being responds to the lure of our pets, either cat, dog, bird, or — well, maybe not fish. Animals are tactile, and have proven beneficial in so many ways as people navigate change. They never judge, just love and trust that their owner will return the favour. Our families may be far away, but these cherished pets are right here, right now, the best most faithful companions any of us could ever have.

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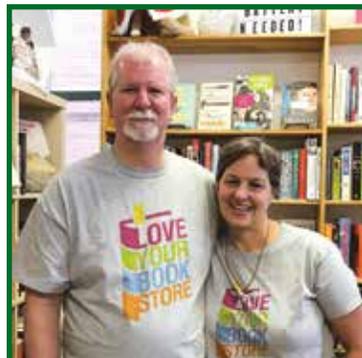
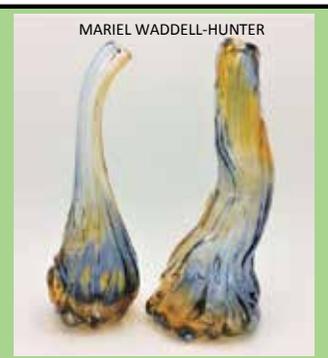


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Making Music at the Perth Manor

Gordon and Linda Craig — owners of the Perth Manor Boutique Hotel — are bringing a very special musical opportunity to the Town of Perth this summer. We spoke to them about how they are finding ways to safely incorporate music instruction into their summer plans.

theHumm: First of all, how have you and the Manor been faring since COVID hit? Have there been any noticeable changes since this part of Ontario moved to Stage Two?

Linda and Gordon: March had started off quite strong; we had events booked ahead into the summer and reservations were filling in nicely. However, the day the Premier declared a state of emergency we lost \$14,000 in cancelled events and reservations and it went downhill fast from there. Although we remained open — we were declared an essential service — guests were very scarce. However, as we move into Stage 2, reservations are slowly coming back. Bookings tend to be more last-minute, but the cancellations have slowed down. Moving forward it will be a matter of rebuilding “traveller confidence”.

Your hotel is a lovely place to stay, and over the past several years you have also built a great reputation for your Music at the Manor events. With live performances being curtailed, what are your musical plans for this summer?

We have planned four Workshop Weeks running Monday to Friday. Each week will feature a fabulous guest clinician on a specific instrument. Over the course of the week there will be four sessions with the clinician as well as a 30-minute private lesson, and a meet-and-greet cocktail gathering. There will be opportunities to explore Perth — to shop and try out some of our great restaurants. We will also serve a formal dinner prepared by Gordon, and the final night will feature a concert performance by the guest clinician!

Can you give us details about some of your instructors?

Week one (July 20–24) will feature folk harp with **Sharlene Wallace**. Sharlene is one of Canada’s finest harpists and has performed at Perth Manor a few times now. She teaches at various universities in Ontario, plays in several orchestras, and one of her many beautiful recordings can be heard on CBC radio quite often. Week two (July 27–31) will be piles of fun as we feature the fiddle with **Kelli Trotter**. Kelli was recently inducted into the North American Fiddlers Hall of Fame and was featured on our Canada, eh? dinner event a couple of years ago along with her partner Don Dawson on piano. She has also performed at Stewart Park Music Festival!

After Kelli will be Cello Week (August 17–21) with **Erika Nielsen**. We have known Erika since she started in the Kingston Junior Strings! We watched her grow up through the Kingston Symphony and go on to a very successful career performing, teaching, and publishing books. Our workshops will conclude with **Jana Starling** on clarinet. Jana is a nationally and internationally recognized performer-teacher. She is on faculty as Assistant Professor at the Don Wright Faculty of Music at Western University. She teaches at the International Music Camp, the Inter-



Award-winning fiddler Kelli Trotter is one of four fine musicians who will be teaching “Workshop Weeks” at Perth Manor this summer

provincial Music Camp (Ontario) and is the co-founder of the Lift Clarinet Academy — an innovative summer program in Colorado. She has numerous award-winning recordings to her credit and tours with the Ironwood Trio. We are very happy to have her to round out our Workshops!

Describe the students you are hoping to attract to these workshops.

The workshops will be geared to adult amateurs at the intermediate level. Players with community bands and orchestras, and/or those taking private lessons looking for additional experience.

Why do you think it is important to continue to try and engage people in creative activities even with the challenge of maintaining safe practices and physical distancing?

I think one of the things that has become evident in this pandemic experience is how important the arts and creative outlets are to people. Sometimes that gets lost in budget cutbacks and talks of technology in “normal” times. People have been looking to social media for their arts experiences, and may have to do that a lot more in the foreseeable future. With a maximum of eight participants, these workshops will provide people a safe environment to play with others and improve their craft.

How do you think events of this type can benefit the wider area?

Built into the schedule are times to get out and experience Perth and its beautiful surroundings. There will be opportunities for participants to go to local restaurants, hike, cycle, shop, canoe and kayak, and we have arranged for a private walking tour of Perth with our very own Town Crier (and Queen’s Music Grad) Brent McLaren. I hope our guests will see how much Perth has to offer and will plan to return in the future when even more things are up and running — our festivals, theatres and so on.

What are you optimistic about in terms of both music and small-town tourism as we emerge from the pandemic?

I hope that people involved in our workshops will have a memorable musical experience in an elegant setting that promotes our beautiful town and all it has to offer. In the broader sense, I also hope people remember how important the arts are when it comes to our education system and arts funding in the future. I think the experience of this pandemic has shown people how much the arts are taken for granted, and we really need to change that. When times are tough, people turn to music, art and dance for strength, relief and reassurance. We need to nurture that, and both Perth Manor and Perth, Ontario are great places to do just that!

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Dramatically Different

An Interview with Amanda West Lewis

Amanda West Lewis is an actor, author, and founder of The Ottawa Children's Theatre (OCT). We contacted her to find out how the OCT is rising to the challenge of providing creative instruction to kids during this time of social distancing.

theHumm: You live in Brooke Valley but have been active in the Ottawa youth theatre scene for many years now. Are you finally getting to work from home? If so, what have you enjoyed about it, and what are you missing?

Amanda West Lewis: I've been lucky to have had Brooke Valley as my base for the last thirty years. But I've also lived in Ottawa off and on, which has allowed me to be part of the vibrant arts community in that city. For the past six years running The Ottawa Children's Theatre, I've worked from home during the week then gone to Ottawa to work in the studios with the kids on the weekends. It's really been the best of all possible worlds.

Now, with isolation, my schedule is basically the same, except that everything happens from my Brooke studio. I'm not travelling anywhere. I love that I've lowered my environmental footprint and that I have a bit more time to get into my garden.

But I do miss being in the same physical space with people — I miss the spontaneity and energy that is generated by the live space. Before COVID, we had twenty-seven classes happening every weekend. The studios buzzed with energy! I loved seeing what all of the different groups were doing. There is nothing more inspiring than watching kids create and share their stories! But now that the courses are taking place on virtually platforms, I don't get a chance to pop in and watch what others are doing. I'm excited by the classes I am teaching, but there is that sad moment when I hit the "end meeting for all" button, and everyone disappears.

I also miss talking to parents. We were very much an extended family, all dedicated to giving the children and youth the best experience we could. I miss those personal interactions.

You and your instructors have been busy pivoting from live classes to "LIVE Online" classes. What can people expect from this new format?

I'm working with the same core team of dedicated instructors that I've worked with for many years. We've developed a really strong curriculum that is both fun and teaches specific skills. None of that has changed. Converting to online has meant we've made the class sizes smaller so that we can focus on

each child as an individual. We're making sure to take time to listen to each child's needs.

We're running Musical Theatre, Drama, Acting, Improvisation and Writing camps this summer. We've designed the camps to be really interactive. There is a lot of physical and vocal activity. There is a lot of ensemble and shared work. Even the breaks keep kids occupied — we've designed off-screen breaks where campers do theatre crafts. No one is just sitting and watching.

How has the technology been treating you? Have there been unexpected benefits, or major challenges you and your team have had to overcome?

The great advantage of teaching drama from home has been how personal it is. I have weekly Zoom meetings with my instructors, and it's made us really close. We are sharing all of the joys and frustrations of our lives in isolation, as well as brainstorming how to teach drama online. It's pushed us to be really creative problem-solvers. Also, the virtual medium is more intimate — we're talking to each other from our homes, with our art on the walls, our books on our bookshelves, and our pets, children, and partners in the background.

Some of this immediacy carries over to our relationships with students. You need to be attentive at all times when you are teaching online. There isn't a moment of downtime. So the classes take on a different kind of bonding.

But the really exciting and unexpected benefit is that not only can our students come from all over the world — we have students from Europe and across North America — but our instructors aren't tied to a location. I have some fabulous actors, writers and composers from New York City teaching for us this summer! They are inspiring all of us with their talent, passion and commitment.

The technological challenge in Lanark County, however, is bandwidth. I get my internet via a satellite and as those of us who live in the country know, it isn't exactly a consistent signal. I cross my fingers every day that there won't be a storm while I'm teaching. I've also had to make a decision to buy a new computer. I've been working on a ten-year old laptop which was fine for admin but not the best for online teaching!

Why is it important to try and keep young people engaged in artistic activities and pursuits even when we can't physically get together?

Oh, my goodness, where do I start? Drama is all about communication. We work with language and



Amanda West Lewis (top left) participates in a virtual theatre class with students as part of the Ottawa Children's Theatre's new LIVE Online format

gesture. We work with our voices, bodies and minds to tell our stories. Is there anything more important for young people than the ability to communicate their ideas, fears, hopes and dreams? Especially now, when their voices are diminished because of isolation, young people need the opportunity to be *seen* by someone who isn't a parent or teacher. Someone who can hear them and give them tools to express themselves. Someone who can help them to keep their heart and mind open.

Do you think that both children and adults will continue to perform (and watch others perform) while we are not allowed to gather in person?

I think that stories are more important than ever. I think we will always need to watch and listen to other people's stories. Through story, we come to understand who we are. Story gives us a way to put the puzzle pieces of life into some kind of coherent whole. And I think that people will always need to share their stories, as they have done since the beginning of human times. We became a story telling species the moment we created language, the moment that we understood the concept of time, of birth and of death. I don't think that isolation will stop that. In fact, I think the need has been exponentially increased.

What are you personally most concerned about at this time?

I'm concerned about the children who have fallen through the cracks. There are countless children who have no access to computers, let alone the kinds of opportunities I am talking about. When we were on-site, I was able to give scholarships and bursaries to kids in need. But now? Who is looking after those children? Who is enriching their lives? There are so many children whose isolation is a nightmare. They are falling behind socially and academically. It is taking a terrible toll on their formative years.

There is a huge disparity between people in terms of how they are able to navigate the pandemic. This inequality in society will, I think, become even more apparent as we transition to the next phase, whatever that phase is.

What are you optimistic about in terms of what happens to the arts during and after the pandemic?

As I've said, I think the arts are necessary to give people the skills to understand and appreciate the world around them. I'm incredibly moved by what artists are doing online right now — the kinds of things that are being shared are powerful testaments to the resilience and empathy of human beings.

We are going to have huge challenges coming out of the pandemic. We won't be going back to the way things used to be. COVID and the deep inequalities of our society require us to make major changes. Re-imagining our lives is not going to be easy. But I think that the arts will give us a voice to build that new world.

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Perth Studio Theatre is Waiting in the Wings

I was in our theatre just a few days ago, remembering the first few plays of our 2019-20 season. We had talented actors in amazing costumes interacting on gorgeous sets, being exposed by brilliant lighting designs. Then we entered into the drama of the pandemic. These days, everyone is slowly trying to find a new normal. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, our theatre will be back, and the arts will return to Perth Studio Theatre. We are a vibrant community theatre offering film, concerts and live theatre year-round. As Artistic Director I wanted to spearhead some things that would ensure that our beloved actors were not forgotten — to help them weather the storm of the uncertain times we were experiencing.

A committee was formed, and we organized a presentation of Orson Well's 1938 radio play *The War of the Worlds*. Over twenty actors took on roles, while one of the actors with her daughter sourced and added in over forty sound effects — everything from boat whistles in the harbor to artillery fire. Everyone involved learned how to work within the confines of Zoom. Everyone who tried out for a part was able to invite two guests, and the Board was invited to listen in as well. Our Zoom host Roberta Peets orchestrated all the rehearsals and the show itself.

The committee's next initiative was to present an opportunity to our actors to try their hand at playwriting. There is no better way to give an actor appreciation of a role and dialogue flow than to ask them to try writing a play. We were very fortunate to have a playwright amongst our actors, Guy Newsham, who has had several of his plays performed in Canada and the United States. Guy presented a PowerPoint presentation via Zoom to interested Studio Theatre actors, entitled "A 10-Minute Guide to Writing 10-Minute Plays". Topics covered included play structure, essential elements, formatting and process. We learned that a ten-minute play is about ten pages of double spaced dialogue — between 1500 and 2500 words. Every interested participant went off to try their hand at playwriting, and two weeks later the entries were read over in a blind format — the judges having no knowledge of who the playwrights were. Four promising plays were selected to proceed to the next phase, which involved more rewrites, play polishing, and one-on-one meetings with Guy, our playwright-in-residence. Still to come later in



While their doors remain closed for now, Perth Studio Theatre has been creating opportunities for its members — including the creation of four new locally-written ten-minute plays!

July will be the casting of these four plays, rehearsals, and finally the presentations to all of the participants and the board in a final Zoom session. I anticipate that this Evening of Ten-Minute Plays will be enjoyed and applauded in the same enthusiastic manner as was our radio play. Look to see these little gems live on stage when Perth Studio Theatre welcomes you back to resume our season.

Zoom presentations, although live, are not the same experience as attending a real theatre presentation. Two very important aspects are missing — an audience and a stage. Actors look to the audience to supply the magical energy that brings each character to life. Actors blossom like spring flowers in the rain to the reactions they evoke from you. Remember how important you are to the production when you get to attend live theatre again, and don't hold back on your emotions. The second aspect of a full-on theatre event is what the audience experiences. Sitting in a cavernous auditorium, the lights go down, the curtain comes up, and you are transported. You, and perhaps a companion, but also every other person in the audience, are linked. You are all on the same roller coaster, the same water slide, and you get to ride it out to the last words spoken, and then to rise to your feet in a surge of accolades.

"Curtain up, light the lights, we've got nothing to hit but the heights! We'll be swell. We'll be great. I can tell, just you wait!" (from the musical *Gypsy*).
— Jane Stott



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To Mask or Not...

Why is it Even a Question?

I am writing this as an appeal to our community residents when considering whether to wear a mask. I am an active and (so far) healthy 75-year-old retired health care professional. I understand germ warfare and once demonstrated the hidden violence of these invisible critters to nursing students by having them swab their purses and culture what grows on them after being left on a public bathroom floor. You don't want to know!

I have been a diligent adherent to the rules these past many weeks (now months): I have cancelled trips of a lifetime, not seen my grandchildren for weeks, and continued to do my own grocery shopping every two weeks while wearing a mask and following the pandemic precautions posted. I have been to several stores throughout the area and have been dismayed by several persistent observations:

- most customers don't wear masks
- staff in some stores don't wear masks and don't always respect physical distancing rules with customers
- it's easy to forget the 6-foot rule when you're in a hurry to grab your stuff off the shelf and get home safely.

The option to wear a mask is an option for now... but many jurisdictions are debating the possibility of making it mandatory. The messaging from various experts has been confusing over these last several weeks, but here's the reason why I think there should be no doubt about the need to wear a mask.

Wearing a mask is your spit stopper!! Your spit is likely to be carrying some unsavoury microbe — maybe even COVID-19! It could be lurking in your saliva, nose drippings or sputum *even if you do not have a fever, cough or running nose* (aka asymptomatic carriers, in medical speak). Masks prevent your spit from getting into my system because the mask stops it. The virus is carried in droplets. That's what causes your glasses to steam up a little and why your mask needs to be washed



Thanks to Robin Andrew of Unposed — and to her handsome model sporting a Paddy's Mask — for this adorable photo

frequently. Your excretions are moist and transmittable. So if you can't reliably stay 6-feet or 2-metres away from someone, wear a mask!

EVERYONE should be wearing masks! Clerks, shelf stockers, shoppers. We should all assume *everyone* is possibly a carrier ready to transmit it. As the experts do more research on this new virus the evidence is building that about 30–40% of infected people have no symptoms.

For the sake of all of us, please wear a mask! This virus is going to be around for a long time yet and we are all getting a little weary of being restrained. There is growing evidence that mask wearing does slow down transmission and could prevent a second wave.

There are LOTS of non-medical masks available — hanging on gates, through Social Service agencies, online and even at Farmers' Markets. There are different patterns online to make your own. Many generous sewers have been hard at it and their dedication and artistry is amazing.

Please use your influence and encourage your family, friends and coworkers to wear a mask. If you have doubts, go to the Leeds Grenville Lanark Health Unit website at <heathunit.org/coronavirus>.

— Sherryl Smith

Where's Weetabix, and What the Heck's Hummail?!

So glad you asked! And you did, right? Of course you did. Well, with abject apologies to our favourite food columnist, we confess to having been a bit short on space in our July issue. For that reason, you will find Sebastian Weetabix's latest "Opinion Ate It" missive online at <thehummail.com>. In it he speaks with Ian Carswell, the award-winning chef of the (currently closed and hopefully soon-to-re-open) Black Tartan Kitchen in Carleton Place. You'll also find interviews with Mike McCormick (from The Arrogant Worms), and with Jenny Whiteley & Joey Wright.

And speaking of not enough space, we have a fabulous interview lined up with Sarah Reside — a young lady who grew up in Almonte and recently created (and is the administrator for) the Facebook group "Lanark County Letters". This is a fascinating active democracy initiative, and you'll have to wait for the August issue of theHummail to read it... unless you subscribe to Hummail! *What's Hummail* I hear you ask? (I swear I heard you this time.) Well, it's a weekly e-newsletter that features an interview with a local mover and/or shaker, as well as notices about upcoming events (virtual and in-real-life) and other artsy and community-minded tidbits. Just like theHummail, but delivered right to your inbox! Each week! For free! Just visit <thehummail.com> to subscribe, and we promise not to share your email address with anyone. Even if they beg us. Although if they offer us a lot of money... No! Not even then!

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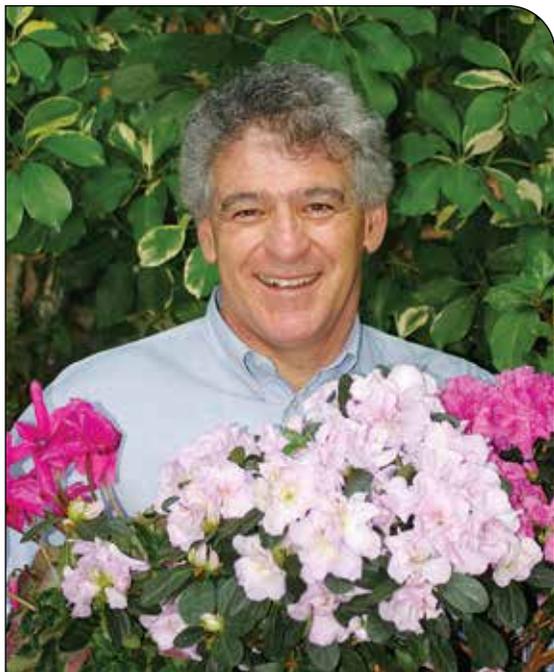
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Radiothon Supports Local Land Trust

It's no secret that the forests and wetlands within the Mississippi and Lower Madawaska watersheds provide us with countless environmental and health advantages. Being in these wild areas can give us many emotional, spiritual and physical benefits. They also purify both our air and water and provide homes for so much of our favourite wildlife. Wild areas are a key resource in our efforts to slow climate change because they sequester large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere.

The Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust (MMLT) is a volunteer-based charity committed to ensuring that wild landscapes are protected for us, our children and grandchildren. MMLT stewards over 2,500 acres in the region — some lands it owns, other lands on which it has a Conservation Agreement with the landowner.



CBC gardening guru Ed Lawrence (above) and author/naturalist Michael Runtz will participate in a Lake 88.1 FM Radiothon on Saturday, July 25 to help raise funds for Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust

Over the past few months, many of us have gained a new appreciation for how vital our natural areas really are. You may even have been among the hundreds of visitors we've seen since reopening to the public four of our eight MMLT nature reserves: High Lonesome Nature Reserve (Pakenham), cliffLAND (Blueberry Mountain near Lanark), Poole Family Nature Sanctuary (Carleton Place) and Rose Hill Nature Reserve (Denbigh).

Visitors tell us how walking our trails reduces their stress levels, provides much-needed physical activity, encourages artistic inspiration and offers longed-for connection with nature — whether it be watching birds or simply immersing themselves in the beauty.

MMLT relies on the support of generous community members and businesses to continue and expand its work. In normal times, MMLT would be hosting its popular "Discover the Wild" series of field workshops, bringing nature enthusiasts together with expert guides to explore various aspects of the environment on our properties. These and other fundraising events would traditionally provide the income to meet our annual goals. But these are not normal times.

So this year, MMLT, together with radio station Lake 88.1 FM, is trying something new and different. If we can't bring people together to explore nature, we will bring expert naturalists to listeners in their homes.

At 8AM on Saturday, July 25, Lake 88.1 FM will broadcast a one-hour Radiothon to benefit the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust. Special guests Ed Lawrence (CBC gardening guru) and Michael Runtz (noted horticulturalist and naturalist), will share their experiences exploring MMLT properties and bring to life the intriguing plants and animals found there.

We invite you to tune in to the Lake 88.1 FM Radiothon to enjoy the discussion and offer your support for the important work of the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust. Phone lines will be open for donations from 8AM until 6PM (253-2722). You can also donate online at <mmlt.ca>. This event is sponsored in part by Lake 88.1 FM and the Carleton Place Terrace.

— Carolyn Piche



Happy (and hot) volunteers turned up to help plant 102 trees

The Almonte Alameda Takes Root!

In June, the final phase of a project that has been over a year in the making started actually "taking root" along the Ottawa Valley Rail Trail (OVRT) in downtown Almonte. More than thirty volunteers helped plant 102 lovely large maple trees — all paid for by local donations — along the "Almonte Alameda".

Key organizers Stephen Brathwaite, Ed Lawrence and Ron Ayling were full of praise for the volunteer planters and local donors, as well as Cavanagh Construction and Merv Logan for donating soil and Don's Meat Market for donating cold water (and pepperoni!). The project has also been embraced and supported by both Lanark County and the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

Although the weather was pretty hot on the day that the trees arrived, Ed Lawrence was delighted to report that: "People jumped in to help plant them in the same way they did with (financial) support. Some have even said that 'if you don't have enough for us to do today, we'll come back tomorrow!'"

The Town of Carleton Place has also embraced the OVRT and has a significant investment in Carleton Junction — a stopping point for users of the Trail and a way to direct them into the downtown business community. According to Stephen Brathwaite, "Mayor Doug Black came to see what we've done in Almonte and to learn from our experience in order to do a similar 'Alameda' in CP. We talked about mobilizing the community to fund it and also about the importance of the use of sugar maples as a single species. The sugar maple is the brand of Lanark County as the Maple Syrup Capital of Ontario, and the aesthetic impact of the single species and consequent slash of consistent colour in the fall will be spectacular."

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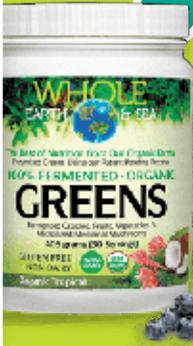
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