

OCTOBER 2025

# the Hum

Arts,  
Entertainment  
& Ideas

free



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## Hummable Thought

Life is like riding a bicycle.  
To keep your balance  
**you must keep moving.**

— Albert Einstein



Some Almonte folks gathered in Portland for the total solar eclipse on April 8<sup>th</sup> of last year. **Amelia Ah You**, **Ed Lawrence** and **Tove Hunding** were among the people enjoying the amazing show!

Who's Reading theHumm



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

### Submissions

By email to editor@thehummm.com

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### Thumm's up this month to:

### LINDA MANZER!

The hugely talented and world-renowned luthier who just happens to call Almonte home was recently awarded the

### ORDER OF CANADA

at Rideau Hall Ottawa from the Governor General of Canada, her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon.

Linda has built guitars for musicians like Pat Metheny and Bruce Cockburn, and her Sunflower Guitar for Ukraine has been in the hands of more stars that we have room to list here. We were fortunate to have profiled her in the 2014 issue of theHumm!

You can see her work at <manzer.com>

Congratulations, Linda!

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- Oct 3** **Little Lily Baskets**  
with Maggie Glossop  
**Mississippi Valley Textile Museum**
- Oct 5** **My Own Private Shakespeare**  
presented by Music at MERA  
**McDonalds Corners**
- Oct 9** **Silk Roads Retreat**  
presented by Paint with Janet  
**Old Mill Manor, Almonte**
- Oct 10** **The Devin Cuddy Band**  
Roots and country rock  
**Joshua Bates Centre, Athens**
- Oct 10** **The Piano Men**  
tribute to Billy Joel and Elton John  
**St. Paul's United Church, Perth**
- Oct 11** **ADHS 150 Celebration**  
a community-wide event  
**Almonte District High School**
- Oct 16-19** **Duck Tales: A Double Bill**  
Two one-act plays  
**Studio Theatre Perth**
- Oct 17** **Real Love**  
tribute to Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton  
**The Spire, Kingston**
- Oct 19** **Jane Austen Wrecked My Life**  
presented by Mississippi Mills Film Society  
**Almonte Legion**
- Oct 21-26** **Sandy Toes and Salty Kisses**  
presented by Rural Root Theatre Company  
**Constance Bay**
- Oct 24-30** **Perth Ghost Walk**  
led by historian Susan Code McDougall  
**Perth**
- Oct 25** **Percussiano3: Rhythm and Song**  
presented by Almonte in Concert  
**Almonte Old Town Hall**
- Oct 26** **Jeffrey Straker**  
presented by Music at MERA  
**McDonalds Corners**
- Oct 30** **Growing Friendly**  
preserving communities that work  
**Almonte Library**
- Oct 31** **Good Vibrations**  
crystal healing workshop  
**Old Mill Manor, Almonte**
- Nov 1** **Read It Yourself Tarot Workshop**  
presented by The Other Hand Tarot  
**Perth & District Union Public Library**
- Nov 1** **Introduction to Mediumship**  
enhance your intuition  
**Old Mill Manor, Almonte**

- Oct 4&18** **A Death in the Family**  
A Victorian mourning experience  
**Perth Museum**
- Oct 6** **Why Does My Voice Wobble?**  
with Dr. Mark Wilkinson  
**Learning Again in Almonte**
- Oct 9** **Hall of Fame Gala and AGM**  
for the Lanark Federation of Agriculture  
**New Brunton Community Hall, Beckwith**
- Oct 10** **The Maywoods**  
present a John Prine birthday party  
**McDonalds Corners Agricultural Hall**
- Oct 11** **Small Rib Basket Workshop**  
with Michael Peterson  
**Mississippi Valley Textile Museum**
- Oct 11** **The Piano Men**  
tribute to Billy Joel and Elton John  
**The Spire, Kingston**
- Oct 17** **Cashing in on Cycle Tourism 2.0**  
presented by the OVCATA  
**Almonte Old Town Hall**
- Oct 18** **Botanical Gelli Printing & Bookmaking**  
with Anne Warburton  
**Carleton Place Gallery**
- Oct 20** **Horns, High Notes & Heroes**  
Mondays. A neophyte's guide to the opera  
**Almonte Library**
- Oct 23** **Offbeet**  
instrumental trio  
**Carleton Place Gallery**
- Oct 25** **Alia's Stories**  
stitching memory, culture, and solidarity  
**Mississippi Valley Textile Museum**
- Oct 25** **Bon Jovi Forever**  
tribute to Bon Jovi  
**Farrell Hall, Perth**
- Oct 26** **Canadian Songbook**  
celebrating Canadian singers and songwriters  
**The Broom Factory, Kingston**
- Oct 30** **Samhain Paint Party**  
presented by Paint with Janet  
**Old Mill Manor, Almonte**
- Nov 1** **Sacred Geometry & Numerology**  
mandala making and painting workshop  
**Old Mill Manor, Almonte**
- Nov 1** **Kate Weekes**  
Rideau Roots album release concert  
**Station Theatre, Smiths Falls**
- Nov 1** **Sing for Change**  
raising voices for community justice  
**St. Paul's United Church, Perth**

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# Linda Banfalvi — The Beauty of Chaos

Artist Linda Banfalvi delights in bringing a semblance of order to the chaos she creates with her paints. Working primarily with an oil and cold wax medium, she extricates vibrant landscapes and florals from her lavishly coated canvases that celebrate the ever-changing and always present beauty of nature. Her paintings are genuine expressions of the joy her passion for painting gives to her.

by Sally Hansen

This is how she describes her muse: “My experience working as an Emergency Room nurse has taught me to value every experience that I encounter. I choose to focus on the positive aspects and the beauty that life has to offer.” Linda loves playing with paint, and she believes that “if an artist can fall in love with the act of painting and not worry about the end results, wonderfully spontaneous images happen.” They certainly happen for her.

Primarily a studio artist, she has worked in watercolours, ink, and collage, but she most enjoys the endless opportunity to experiment and play that her current oil and cold wax medium affords. She experiments and plays with gusto.



Banfalvi characterizes her art as abstract impressionism, but that label hints at abstract expressionism and everything from Jackson Pollack’s paint splatters to Ottawa’s own hugely contentious purchase of Barnett Newman’s *Voice of Fire* painting. (As a side note, that painting has greatly increased in value, somewhat justifying its selection.) On the contrary — Linda’s paintings are accessible. In her gifted hands, her positivism and love of beauty transform her free-

wheeling enjoyment of playing with paint into truly stunning canvases.

Her subjects range from colourful impressions of familiar landscapes to vivid sunsets and seascapes, abstract representations of boats, and sumptuous florals. They are unusually evocative. Her playful, free-wheeling approach results in works that invite viewers to bring their own experiences and interpretation to each scene. In this way her abstract impressionistic art gifts the viewer the chance to re-live their own cherished memories.

Banfalvi credits her artistic parents with fostering her love of and talent for art. Her mother carved wooden sculptures, and her father painted metal sculptures. Maybe it is genetic — today Linda collaborates on pieces with her son Christopher who is a metal sculptor. She has always loved nature and the outdoors, especially from a horse or a boat. By the age of fifteen Banfalvi had earned enough money babysitting in Ottawa to be able to buy her own horse. She is proud of the fact that her art continues to supply her with the means to support her horse (and sometimes horses) to this day.

After her marriage to Tom Banfalvi, she lived with her family on a farm in rural Ashton for thirty years, where she owned and boarded horses. After her graduation as a registered nurse she worked first at the Ottawa General Hospital in oncology, and from 1989 until her retirement in 2019 at the Emergency Room at the Queensway Carleton Hospital.

She loved her job, but it was both physically and mentally challenging. Fortunately she discovered that painting was her salvation. As many other artists have attested, the creative process releases endorphins and takes you to a special place. Linda’s description is characteristic: “It was addictive. I existed in a different dimension. I had control there, especially when the rest of my life was responding to things that were out of my control.”

Along the way she graduated from the Fine Arts Program at St. Lawrence College in Brockville and completed courses at the Haliburton School of Fine Arts. She jokes that that is where she learned how to share the good teaching techniques she experienced, and how to avoid the contrary. Now she offers self-paced online courses as well as conducting occasional workshops for both beginners and more advanced artists. She is enthusiastic about her love of teaching people “... to get fearless about painting. It’s not just about the product! The process can be cathartic!”

If you’re in need of a tune-up, you might consider treating yourself to Linda’s upcoming weekend workshop on October 18 and 19 at Stone Manor Studios in Newboro <stonemanorstudios.ca>. Titled “Painting the Fall Landscape with Linda Banfalvi: An Oil & Cold Wax Weekend Workshop,” Linda’s delight in sharing the joy of fearless painting is sure



to be both refreshing and infectious. She describes her approach as “Let’s get to chaos and explore how we can make it work creatively. Fun and playfulness are key, allowing for imperfection and learning through joyful, fearless making.” And the venue, a historic 1860s stone estate in the heart of the famous Rideau Lakes in the village of Newboro, is superb.

Another influence on her art and her life is the love of boating that she shares with her husband. The couple spend four months a year in warmer climates on their boat that she has managed to convert into a floating studio. By reducing the size of her canvases and altering her framing, Banfalvi succeeds in pursuing her love of painting year-round. She also enjoys photography, and is constantly on the alert for potential compositions to inspire future work.

## Crown and Pumpkin Studio Tour

Linda Banfalvi’s lovely home in the countryside just north of Carleton Place is reverberating with vibrant paintings in preparation for her upcoming participation in the 29<sup>th</sup> annual Crown and Pumpkin Studio Tour on Thanksgiving Weekend. Located at 105 Ramsay Drive, her home is featured as Studio 6, where she is especially delighted to be hosting her son, metal sculptor Chris Banfalvi. Chris studied graphic design at St. Lawrence College, and found his artistic calling the first time he started working with metal. The two artists collaborate on pieces, including commissioned works, that cover a wide range of sizes. The results are original and striking.

The back of her Artist Trading Card at the top of this page contains all the information needed to investigate further this opportunity to view and/or participate in a glorious artistic celebration of life’s chaos.



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Who

Linda Banfalvi

What

Mixed Media Paintings

Where

Studio visits by appointment <linda.banfalvi@gmail.com>; Instagram @lindabanfalvi; online self-paced courses and demos at <lindabanfalvi.com>; art demos & tips via Youtube @lindabanfalvi710

When

Thanksgiving Weekend, Oct. 11 & 12, 10 – 4PM, Stop 6 on 29<sup>th</sup> annual Crown and Pumpkin Studio Tour, 105 Ramsay Dr., Carleton Place; <crownandpumpkin.com>

Why

"Painting is a way for me to disappear into the world of creativity and focus on the beauty and positive energy of the world."

THE HUMM

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# Joanne Beaton

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The primary suite offers patio access (with dog door) and a spa-style ensuite with heated floors, granite double vanity, tiled shower, and walk-in closet. The finished lower level adds two bedrooms, a full bath, and plenty of storage with insulated sub-flooring.

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# Rideau Roots

## A Musical Journey Inspired by the Rideau Canal

In the spring of 2022, a group of songwriters, musicians and spoken word artists set out on an extraordinary journey: paddling the Rideau Canal from Kingston to Ottawa. Led by intrepid wilderness canoe guide and award-winning songwriter Kate Weekes <kateweekes.com>, the traveling residency invited artists to write music inspired by the river, the land, and the communities along the way. The project encouraged reflection on personal and cultural identity, as well as on the colonial legacy of the canal, which was built on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat peoples. The result is *Rideau Roots*, a collection of original songs that captures the spirit of the journey and is featured on Weekes' new album.

Audiences will have a chance to experience this work live on November 1 at 2PM at the Station Theatre in Smiths Falls. theHumm caught up with Kate Weekes to learn more about this ambitious project.

**theHumm: It can be tough enough for Canadian musicians to go into a studio and record an album. What inspired you to begin this project with a travelling musical residency along the Rideau Canal?**

I had been working as a canoe guide in the Yukon and was daydreaming about starting a river-based arts residency. The Rideau canoe trip idea initially began as a solo project. We were deep in the pandemic, and I had grown accustomed to doing things without friends and closer to home. I couldn't get back to the Yukon for two years due to travel restrictions, and guiding wasn't an option. I started planning the trip and received funding from the Canada Council for the Arts to centre it around songwriting. As the pandemic restrictions began to lift, I realized there was potential to do the trip with other musicians, so I began inviting songwriters from communities along the Rideau. It was an opportunity to connect music and paddling, both enormous parts of my life. Sharing this with other songwriters and building a community around the trip made the experience more meaningful, especially after being isolated. We all had the opportunity to connect with the river that flows through our lives and explore that idea through the arts.

**How did being on the water — immersed in the landscape and local communities — shape the songs that came out of the residency?**

One of the songs is an instrumental piece called *Nowhere to Land*, named after one of the days early in the trip when we literally had nowhere to land. The bulk of my paddling has been in the northwest of Canada on wild rivers through unowned land. In that context the flow of the day is organic, and stops are made when needed. On the Rideau, we had to strategize around a shoreline that has large swaths of privately owned land.

There was also the influence of nostalgia from hearing a whippoorwill one night at Jones Falls. We had set up camp at the lock and went for a stroll by the water when the whippoorwill started singing. It's such a distinct sound and I had forgotten about it. I spent 17 summers in the north before the pandemic hit. There were all kinds of sounds, sights and smells unique to eastern Ontario that I hadn't realized I'd missed.

**The project also reflects on the colonial history of the canal. How did you approach weaving those deeper themes of identity and reconciliation?**

It was only as I began planning the trip that I realized my understanding of the Rideau Canal was exclusively from a colonial narrative. I was embarrassed to realize how little I knew about the Indigenous history and presence in the area. I didn't want the canoe trip and subsequent album to perpetuate that narrative. My settler upbringing inevitably influences how I approach this, but I'm trying to better educate myself. I reached out to the Friends of Mississippi



Singer-songwriter and wilderness guide Kate Weekes brings her *Rideau Roots* show to the Station Theatre in Smiths Falls

Mills for suggestions. They put me in touch with Chuck Commanda, an Algonquin canoe builder from Kitigan-Zibi. Chuck met with the paddlers on Zoom in advance of the trip to share his perspective on canoes and the water. Chuck will be speaking as part of the Ottawa Rideau Roots concert on November 9. Lisa Cadue from Tyendinaga will be speaking at the Kingston Rideau Roots concert on November 2.

I read the book *The Politics of the Canoe*, which is a compilation of stories about the Indigenous relationship to the canoe in various parts of Canada. The book talked about the canoe as an appropriated symbol. I hadn't previously thought of it that way. As a professional canoe guide and avid paddler, I do consider canoeing as part of my identity. I tried to create space in my songwriting for that dichotomy. I want to acknowledge that we still aren't telling the full story of what happened here, we're still unpacking it. Maybe traveling a waterway that was created as a colonial project gives us a chance to contemplate some of that. The Rideau River isn't what I thought it was. It doesn't run between Kingston and Ottawa. The Rideau is a river section that flows into the Ottawa River. It now connects to the Katarokwi river because the land in-between was blasted through. We celebrate it as an engineering feat and don't acknowledge the environmental destruction or cultural impact.

**Collaboration was a big part of this journey. How has working with other musicians and spoken word artists affected the project?**

Collaboration is such a joyful part of making music, and especially after the isolation of the pandemic. It was enormously impactful to travel with my peers. Stephen Fuller is a multi-media artist and musician from the Burritt's Rapids area. He came on the trip as the videographer. Stephen was involved in the initial planning of the trip and encouraged the process along from the beginning. His vision has manifested in three full-length music videos featuring footage from the trip. We will be releasing the videos in the weeks leading up to the Smiths Falls concert on November 1.

My dad, Alan Weekes, is a songwriter who came on the trip. He had paddled the Rideau fifty years ago and we hadn't been on a canoe trip together since I was a kid. We ended up cowriting a song and recording it with Nathan Smith, a fiddler player from Smiths Falls who was on the trip. Nathan and Stephen will both be performing in Smiths Falls.

**What do you hope audiences will experience or take away with them when they hear the music live?**

I hope that it's an opportunity for people to connect to the Rideau through music and to consider the waterway that travels through our backyards. The album addresses some challenging themes and it's an opportunity to reconsider how we view our place in this landscape, how we tell the story of the Rideau Canal.

**The Rideau Roots album is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts. The Smiths Falls concert is supported by Blue Skies in the Community and sponsored by Smiths Falls Music. Tickets are available at Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434).**



# Blues at The Cove

## Celebrating 18 Years with Another Stellar Lineup

Blues at The Cove is returning to Westport for its 18<sup>th</sup> season, continuing a tradition that has become one of the area's best loved live music series. What began as Blues on the Rideau has evolved into Blues at The Cove, enticing music lovers from across the region to enjoy outstanding Canadian blues and soul talent in the warm and intimate setting of the historic Cove Inn.

This season features an especially exciting lineup. Alongside returning artists, the series welcomes newcomers Bywater Call (on October 17) and Crystal Shawanda (March 20, 2026), who will bring fresh voices and new energy to the series. The roster also includes popular acts like Samantha Martin & Delta Sugar (November 14), MonkeyJunk (December 11), and the Jack de Keyzer Band (January 16 & 17, 2026). Each show promises a full evening of entertainment, combining a delicious full-course buffet dinner with live music, dessert, dancing, and the chance to win door prizes thanks to the support of local sponsors.

What makes Blues at The Cove so special is not just the quality of the performances, but the atmosphere of the venue itself. Nestled on the shores of Upper Rideau Lake, The Cove offers a cozy, candlelit environment where audiences feel close to the artists and the music. Each show feels like more than just a concert — it's an event that blends community, culture, and celebration. Adding to the experience is the series' commitment to giving back: a portion of each ticket sold is donated to a local charity designated for that particular performance. Guests enjoy a terrific evening of music, knowing they are also supporting important causes in the region.

The generosity of local sponsors has also become an integral part of the series. The halftime door prizes add an element of fun and surprise, creating a sense of excitement throughout the night. These contributions, combined with the outstanding musicianship and the feel-good atmosphere of The Cove, have helped make the series a favourite for long-time blues fans and newcomers alike.

Tickets are typically priced around ninety-five dollars plus tax and gratuity, which includes dinner and the show, with doors opening at six o'clock and dinner served at seven. Because of the popularity of the series and the intimate size of the venue, shows often sell out well in advance. Guests are encouraged to book early to secure their seats, and reservations can be made by phone at 273-3636 or by email at <thecoveinnwestport@gmail.com>.



This year's series features dynamic acts like Bywater Call (above) and MonkeyJunk (below left)

### The Importance of Local Live Music Venues

With this series starting into its 18<sup>th</sup> year, theHumm decided to ask Seamus Cowan from The Cove why established series like this one — and why dynamic live music venues like The Cove itself — are so important to Canadian musicians. We confess that we were looking for a short quote, but his answer was so personal and passionate that we knew we needed to run the whole thing. Here's what Seamus has to say on the matter:


"First and foremost, I fundamentally love music and need it in my life. Since I was a kid, my dad played me the coolest old records. Anything from Kenny Rogers to Lionel Richie, Jim Hendrix to Dire Straits, The Rolling Stones to Rare Earth. Anything was good and it was always playing.

Then I started playing music with my brother and we started a band. My folks had a bar where live bands played all the time, so I cut my teeth very quickly playing in front of the locals. But it was the infectious feeling of never knowing what to expect each night with a live performance that really got me. True adventure!

"Next I moved to Montreal to study music, but also played constantly. I then toured across North America with more bands and enjoyed the nightly excitement of the live shows and the new venues. This feeling of creating a vibe and a commitment to a cultured art scene and live music venue eventually carried through in my decision to take over The Cove from my folks.

"Here we are today — where live music happens nightly at The Cove. I almost have Covid to thank for forcing me to make the decision to dedicate our stage to having some live music every night. Many can't believe we do it, but we do. It's made up of styles from across the board too. If you look at my music collection and what I listen too, it's literally everything! And so that is what I want to continue to offer our patrons. This past year alone, we had world-class acts playing bluegrass, blues, country, folk, jazz, reggae, rock, and much more.

"Of course there is the obvious reason though. Live music needs stages. Yes, support for live music is changing as technology changes, but we ultimately need a place of focus for performance to bring it all together. Venues like The Cove sustain that and essentially encourage the creation of art while instilling confidence in the musicians themselves. The sense of community between musician and listener becomes wonderfully commonplace."



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# Red Trillium Studio Tour

By Wendy Clement on behalf of the RTST

A hidden gem in the Ottawa Valley, West Carleton has a thriving community of fine artists and crafts-people. Each spring and fall for the past 27 years, these talented folks have invited visitors into their studios as part of the Red Trillium Studio Tour, and we once again invite you to join us for the Fall 2025 Tour, which is taking place over the weekend of October 18 and 19 (from 10AM-4PM each day).

Our 29 local and guest artists are ready to welcome you at 11 different studio stops located in the communities of Dunrobin, Kinburn, Constance Bay and Carp. In addition to many returning established artists on the tour, we are pleased to welcome seven new artists, and one new studio stop to our numbers this fall. Most of the studios have more than one artist, and several studio stops are clustered together.

Featuring works in hot glass, fused and stained glass, photography, woodwork, fibre and fabric arts, watercolour, acrylic, oil, mixed media, pottery, jew-



You'll find works in many media by a variety of artists and artisans — including ceramic artist Theresa Wingar, whose bowl is pictured above — at the Red Trillium Studio Tour

ellery, printmaking and much, much more, there is something for everyone on the tour. All work is original and handmade, and some studio stops will also include artist demonstrations so visitors may experience the creative process firsthand.

Come join us for the morning, the afternoon, the day, or all weekend. Visit all the studios or the ones that interest you most (though all have something wonderful to offer). There is a map to guide you with the studios numbered, and there will be signage peppered along the way, but there is no set route. It's all up to you!

Find artist profiles on the Red Trillium Studio Tour website <redtrilliumst.com> to get a small taste of the talent and creativity to be found. While there, you will discover that nature, as a theme, is woven throughout several of the profiles. And while most definitely a common inspiration (how could it not be with all that this part of the world has to offer!), each artist's interpretation is unique.

Speaking of the beauty of the region, while you are with us, enjoy our fall landscapes. West Carleton can be quite spectacular in the autumn when the light takes on that particular soft glow and the air is crisp.

More details on the tour, including the e-brochure and route map, can be found at <redtrilliumst.com>, as well as accessibility information and available washroom facilities. And while West Carleton is a hub of creativity, it also has several special spots to eat and interesting shops to explore. We hope you will take the time to visit one or two while you are on the tour and support our local community.

We look forward to welcoming you into our studios as part of the Fall 2025 Red Trillium Studio Tour!

# Culture Days in Snow Road

On October 4 and 5, come on up to Snow Road Community Hall for Culture Days — where tradition meets fun and every story comes to life. Taking place from 10AM to 4PM each day, this inspiring event will focus on many local artists displaying their work, cultural awareness, and hands-on participation.

Highlights include pottery wheel and knife detailing demonstrations, painting make-and-take magnets, trying your hand at spin art or needle felting, finding out what your dreams mean, participating in hands-on wet fibre art, watching wood burning techniques, trying neurographic art, and observing oil painters at work. Other features include fermentation sampling and tips, as well as Indigenous displays. Artisans will be displaying their unique art and handiwork for purchase.

While you enjoy your visit, try some lunch at the petite café and enjoy homemade desserts available for purchase. All ages are welcome!



At Snow Road Culture Days you can try your hand at a variety of things, including fast-paced spin art with Christina Kearns. Photo by Joe Clayton.



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# Get Cozy with our Fall Book Picks!

Everything is going to be okay. I can say this with some certainty. And not just because it's autumn, and the trees look pretty, and the weather is cooler for sleeping, and my mom is excited about Pumpkin Spiced lattes. Those are key indicators, yes, but for me what clinches it is that the fall books are coming, and they are splendidous.

by John Pigeau

Case in point: November 4<sup>th</sup>, the day both Margaret Atwood and John Irving — two of the greatest storytellers of our time — each have a new book out. This is pretty much a literary celestial event. Booksellers will wear their finest cardigans!

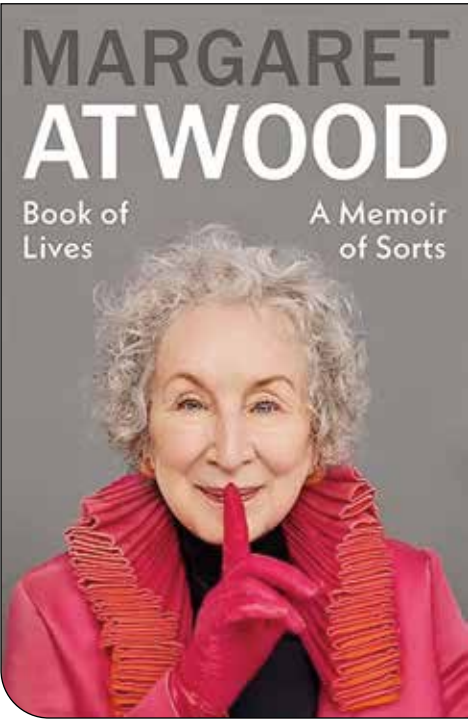
Irving returns with *Queen Esther*, a novel that revisits the world Irving created in *The Cider House Rules*, one of his most beloved books. Anyone who's read and loved it will be delighted to be returning to the infamous orphanage in St. Cloud's, Maine. *Queen Esther* sees the return of a younger Dr. Larch, the quirky, fatherly orphanage physician from *The Cider House Rules* (and Irving's favourite character from the book), but otherwise features a new set of characters. The book's protagonist, Esther Nacht, a Viennese-born Jew, is one of them.

"Like *The Cider House Rules*, *Queen Esther* is a historical novel," Irving wrote on Facebook back in February, announcing his 16<sup>th</sup> novel. "Anti-Semitism shapes Esther's life. She's born in Vienna in 1905. In the final chapter, set in Jerusalem in 1981, Esther is seventy-six. The cover depicts the snowy night Esther is abandoned at the orphanage in St. Cloud's, when she's not yet four."

I like what Irving's editor, Simon and Schuster CEO Jonathan Karp, had to say about the book: "One of the deepest pleasures of reading John Irving comes from discovering the turns in his story along with his characters, so I will give away no plot details, other than to say this: in *Queen Esther*, John Irving literally takes readers where he's never taken them before."

That certainly has me captivated. I'm sure fellow fans of Irving will be too.

Atwood's book is a memoir — a "memoir of sorts." *Book of Lives*, it's called. In its 624 pages, the story of Atwood's remarkable life unfolds — as, of course, no one else on the planet could tell it.



Beginning with her unconventional childhood, Atwood tells us what was happening in her world — and the world at large — when she wrote many of the books that have shaped our literary landscape, including *Cat's Eye* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. She also reveals more about her writing, the connections between real life and art, and details about her "magical life" with the charismatic writer Graeme Gibson. Along the way, we'll meet "poets, bears, Hollywood actors and larger-than-life characters straight from the pages of an Atwood novel." In this memoir — of sorts — we'll be privy to an intimate look at the workings of Atwood's prodigious imagination. That alone will certainly be worth the price of admission, and not just for literary scholars.

What's the word on the street? I talked with Ann Shea — bookseller extraordinaire and owner of Almonte's beloved **Mill Street Books** — to find out.

Three of Ann's fall reading recommendations were September releases, so they will already be on your indie bookshop's shelves. (Locally, that also includes The Book Nook and Spark books & curios in Perth, White Pine Books in Arnprior, and Arlie's Books in Smiths Falls.) First up, Ann recommends *Heart the Lover* by Lily King.

"Lily is one of my favourite authors," Ann says, "admired for her achingly beautiful meditations on love and relationships in books like *Euphoria* and *Writers and Lovers*.

In her latest, the narrator is a college senior in creative writing, whose life is intertwined with two golden boys, Sam and Yash, who alter her college experience with a life-changing love triangle. Decades later, her life is changed when unexpected news brings her past into collision with motherhood and her present life as a writer."

The plot of Ann's second pick, *Will There Ever Be Another You* by Patricia Lockwood, sounds absolutely fascinating. This is Lockwood's second novel, and as Ann says, it "is partly based on some paranoid delusions the author experienced during the early days of the Covid pandemic. It is described as a 'roving chronicle of the madness of illness,' written in a 'hilariously profound way.' That will surely be both insightful and funny."

I am totally down, as the kids used to say, with Ann's next recommendation: *Pick A Colour* by Souvankham Thammavongsa — "a Canadian author," Ann reminds us, "who gained recognition for her wonderful collection of short stories *How to Pronounce Knife*." *Pick A Colour*, the author's first novel, is told over a single day, and set in a nail salon, where Ning, a former boxer, works as an anonymous manicurist, dealing with the superficial veneer of her clients. It is a revelatory novel about loneliness, labour

and class. And it is featured on the 2025 Giller longlist.

Lastly, Ann suggests *Wreck* by Catherine Newman, which will be released on October 28. "This is a follow up to *Sandwich*, one of our 2024 Book Club reads," says Ann, "in which we met menopausal Rocky, on a one-week vacation with her saintly husband, adult kids and aging parents in Cape Cod." In *Wreck*, the three generations are together again, with "Rocky obsessing over a local accident and a medical condition. It promises to be both funny and profound."

You can always count on a fine bookseller to give you the goods. And Ann reports that customers at Mill Street Books are buying up Fantasy and Romantasy books ... well, like it's fresh maple syrup. Tegan Smith, who curates those sections of the store at Mill Street Books, has three fall picks to share: *Soul Searching* by Lyla Sage, *Brigands & Breadknives* by Travis Baldree, and *Brimstone* by Callie Hart.

"We are really proud that our customers have such broad taste in reading!" Ann says.

That is one thing you can reliably count on from your local independent bookseller — they care about their customers, and they are happiest when their book-buying friends are too.

## Books, Books, Books! Friends of the Mississippi Mills Public Library Book Sale

By Barbara Carroll

Get ready to stock up! The Friends of the Mississippi Mills Public Library gigantic book sale is just weeks away, and our dedicated volunteers are ready for your donations. We're looking for gently used books in good condition that you'd be happy to share. Please do not bring textbooks, encyclopedias, damaged or dusty items, outdated material, or magazines. Our volunteers sort through thousands of books and want each one to be able to find a new home.

Book drop-offs will be accepted inside the Rexall Mall on Ottawa Street in Almonte from October 1 to 16. Please follow the signs and leave donations only in the designated area during mall hours.

Then get ready for the sale! Doors open at the Rexall Mall over two weekends, October 17–19 and October 24–25, with shelves continuously restocked. You can get an early start during the sneak peek Fridays on October 17 and 24 from 12–6PM. Weekend hours are staggered, but you'll find plenty of selection throughout the afternoons. Check the posters for extended times.

There are no set prices for your purchases, but generous donations are greatly appreciated. All proceeds support the Friends of the Mississippi Mills Public Library in this important fundraiser. Thousands of books, two big weekends, and all for a great cause!

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# AUTUMN DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN

## CRAFT SHOW

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# Humm Bits

## French Guitar Virtuoso to Play Perth

Multi-award winning acoustic guitar virtuoso Pierre Bensusan has returned to North America for a very special tour. The French-Algerian musician is considered a superstar in Europe, having wrapped a sold-out tour of China in May, and selling out many of his 100+ run of concerts across the US and Canada.

One of the world's most eloquent world music artists of our time, Pierre is known as "Mister DADGAD" for his mastery of the unique guitar tuning style. He will bring his historic 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary tour "One Guitar – One Voice" to St. Paul's United Church in Perth on Thursday, October 2. Tickets are available from <events.humanitix.com/pierre-bensusan-live-at-st-paul-s-united-church-perth-on>.

Winner of the Independent Music Award for his triple live album *Encore*, voted Best World Music Guitarist by *Guitar Player Magazine* reader's poll, winner of the Rose d'Or at the Montreux Festival for his debut album, Pierre is recognized as one of the greatest guitar players of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## ADHS Celebrates 150 Years

On Saturday, October 11, the community is invited to join a special day of celebration marking 150 years of Almonte District High School. Proud alumni, current students, family members, and friends of the school will come together to share in this milestone.

The day will begin on the links with a 4-player scramble golf tournament at Pakenham Golf Club, starting at 9AM with a shotgun start. Teams of old friends will have the chance to compete for plenty of orange and black prizes.

Back at the school, the "Turkey Bowl" will return with an afternoon game of touch football at 4PM. Alumni, staff and students are welcome to take the field or cheer from the sidelines, with old uniforms and jackets encouraged.

The celebration will continue into the evening with an open house at ADHS from 3–10PM. Guests can enjoy food, drinks, live entertainment, and many opportunities to reconnect and share memories. Displays and a slideshow showcasing ADHS history will offer a nostalgic walk down memory lane. Register for only \$5 plus fees at Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485–6434).

## MERA Seeks Young Performers

Music at MERA is seeking young musical performers who are ready to present their music and talent to a public audience.

Through a new initiative at the MERA Schoolhouse in McDonalds Corners, young performers of almost any genre of music could be given the opportunity to either perform in a youth concert or be invited to play several selections before a performance by a professional musician or group.

This is open to solo performers as well as duos or small groups. The space at the Schoolhouse limits the size of presenting groups to four musicians. The aim of this new project is to give young, local talented musicians the opportunity to perform to a public audience during the next season.

Performers who are interested in participating should contact Tom Shoebridge at <tomgloria1966@gmail.com>, and include a brief summary of relevant training, experience and performances (if any).

## Grove Roves: The Spooky Edition

Join the Friends of the Grove on October 18 for another entertaining and informative wander through Gillies Grove, this time at night! Bring your lanterns (no flames please, just battery-powered) and learn some truly remarkable facts, all of a more sinister nature. The night will start out with ghost stories and some spooky fables of Arnprior's past. Then, no dark history tour of Arnprior is complete without learning about its infamous founder, the Laird Archibald McNab. Jim Austin, historian and curator of the Waba Cottage in White Lake, will be a guest speaker. Jim is an expert on the scandalous McNab, a topic he is truly passionate about.

The tour then ventures into Gillies Grove itself where Brian Hickey of the River Institute in Cornwall will join in. As a research scientist and education program leader, he specializes in bat education and will share some of that knowledge. There will be opportunities to witness bats in action if the night is warm, and Brian will bring detectors to hear their special calls. Other nocturnal species such as moths and owls will also be investigated during this forest tour. What a treat to learn about the creatures that roam at night in Gillies Grove!

Meet at 6PM on Saturday, October 18 at the end of Harrington Street in Arnprior for this 90- to 120-minute walk and talk. Please bring proper footwear, ample water and a light source for when it gets dark. This event is free, but please consider bringing a donation to help pay for the expenses of the tour guides.

In the unlikely event of having to cancel, all subscribers of the Friends newsletter will be informed by 4PM on the day of the event. There will also be updates made to The Friends of the Grove Facebook and Instagram pages. For more information, please visit <savethegroveagain.com>.

# Corb Lund, Chantal Kreviazuk Coming to a Small Hall Near You

Corb Lund will croon in your local hockey arena. Chantal Kreviazuk will dazzle at a historic church. Ashley MacIsaac will wow at the community rec centre. The Ontario Festival of Small Halls (OFOSH) is back with its twelfth edition and is set to enchant music lovers in a series of intimate settings throughout the Ottawa Valley this fall.

Since its inception in August 2014, when the team behind Ottawa Bluesfest first produced the concept, OFOSH has embarked upon an impressive journey. It began as a modest endeavor, bringing one single performer — Old Man Luedecke — through Perth, Gananoque and Bloomfield. Fast-forward to 2025 when the festival will present twenty-one artists in thirty-five communities, including Junkhouse in Carp, Devin Cuddy in Dacre, and The Once in Carleton Place.

Boundless community enthusiasm has become standard for the event. "I met a woman in line at Oakfield Rugby Park last fall," says Artistic Director Cat Côté. "She had no idea who the performer was that night, she was just a loyal Small Halls fan who loved the intimacy of the shows and knew it would be a wonderful experience." OFOSH partners with hall organizers and local community groups whose



This year's Festival of Small Halls line-up brings amazing Canadian performers like Chantal Kreviazuk (above) to intimate spaces throughout the area

part in helping to execute the shows is integral to the success of the event.

Forty-five shows total will run between October 3 to December 6 — to check out what's playing near you, visit <ontariosmallhalls.com>.

# Cycle Tourism as an Economic Driver

## Cycle Tourism Event Moved to Friday, October 17

By Jeff Mills

I've always been amazed by bicycles. The same basic diamond frame design of the bicycle dates back over 100 years. Nowadays they are much lighter, faster, smoother and more comfortable to ride than ever, and I suppose a fair bit more expensive! They are the most efficient non-motorized vehicles in the world. Bicycles improve your physical, mental and emotional health and bring people together socially. These two-wheel wonders offer affordable, reliable and efficient transportation.

During the 1890s, often referred to as the golden age of cycling, the bicycle played a significant role in empowering women, granting them newfound freedom while riding. Bikes even changed fashions — long skirts were now out, and pantaloons (pants) were in. Bicycles also served as tools of defense during both world wars, with young men enlisting in the Cyclists' Regiments, using those two wheels for military purposes.

Fast forward to the 1980s. As railway lines removed their ties and rails, bicycle tourists started embracing these trails as a way to travel between towns. The Great Allegheny Passage in the United States is a well-

known example of grassroots economic development. Cities and towns along this former rail line were in steep economic decline, and now, thanks to cycle tourism, have experienced a vibrant revival. Over 800,000 cyclists visit this trail each year, including locals, tourists, and long-distance cycling enthusiasts.

## Cashing in on Cycle Tourism

The simple bicycle is a change-maker. They can bring not just good health, but also wealth, to communities and businesses that welcome them. Thanks to a generous grant from Mississippi Mills, Mississippi Mills Bicycle Month and the Ottawa Valley Cycling and Active Transportation Alliance are hosting **Cashing in on Cycle Tourism 2.0** at the Almonte Old Town Hall on Friday, October 17.

Please help us build Lanark, Renfrew and Frontenac Counties as bicycle-friendly destinations. Are you a local business owner? A local cyclist? An elected official? A staff person who works in tourism development? Perhaps you work in hospitality? We want your voice in the room! Register today at <Tickets Please.ca>.

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\$20 at the Door



Chris Breitner Peter Brown Roxy Swan



# Get into The Zone

## Jazz at St. Andrew's in Pakenham

You may occasionally hear musicians talk about “being in the zone”. What is “the zone”, you ask? It’s that moment in live performance when the conscious mind surrenders to the unconscious and the music floods out of a musician without planning or effort. It feels to the performers as if they are merely the channel through which the music flows. For musicians, there is no better feeling.

The zone is a wonderful experience when performing alone, but utterly amazing when shared with other musicians. There’s a wonderful connectedness as if the whole band shares one mind. As you can imagine, performances that are “in the zone” are also moving and inspiring for the audience.

Such is the case with the jazz trio comprising Roxy Swan (vocals, flute and percussion), Peter Brown (piano and vocals), and Chris Breitner (acoustic bass). Each is a veteran player who has mastered a variety of styles. The ensemble is named “The Zone”, because that is where they often find themselves.

Catch The Zone in concert at St. Andrew’s United Church in Pakenham on November 1 at 7PM. Tickets are available at the door for \$20. Come out and enjoy jazz standards, blues, original songs and pop tunes — all played with fire and finesse, and hopefully “in the zone”.

Roxy Swan sings jazz standards, funk, blues, pop, rock and her own originals — all in a rich alto voice with power and soul — while accompanying herself on drums and percussion. Roxy’s interpretations immerse you in the emotions of the songs both lyrically and musically. Over the years, she has performed with a number of well-known artists including Amanda Marshall, Michael Bolton and



The Zone (aka Chris Breitner, Peter Brown and Roxy Swan) will jazz things up at St. Andrews in Pakenham on November 1

Michelle Wright, and has performed at both Massey Hall and the National Arts Centre.

Peter Brown is a piano virtuoso with a mellow and bluesy singing voice. He is known for his soulfully passionate style on the piano and excels in rock, blues and jazz. Peter has released three albums under his own name and played as a studio musician for two dozen other artists, including Drew Nelson, Brock Zeman and Brea Lawrenson. He toured with former Rolling Stone Mick Taylor, legendary blues singer Dutch Mason, and was a member of the popular Ottawa party band Mumbo Jumbo Voodoo Combo.

Chris Breitner is an accomplished multi-instrumentalist and sonic creator with over 35 years of experience in the music industry. He has collaborated with JUNO award-winning and nominated artists such as Amanda Rheame, Kellylee Evans, and Drew Nelson. Chris contributes his versatile musical expertise to more than twenty recordings, spanning a diverse array of genres including folk, jazz, blues, country, R&B, and hip-hop.

# Sing for Change!

## A Fundraiser for Lanark County Community Justice

Local vocal groups are coming together to raise their voices for change. This community event will be a positive Voice, bringing awareness to social justice. The first performance will be held on November 1 at 5PM at St. Paul’s Church in Perth.

So far, the list of participating vocal groups includes: Rubies in the Rough, River Resonance, Tay Valley Community Choir, St. Paul’s Choir, St. James Choir, and High Octane. Each will bring their own unique style and energy to this choral extravaganza!

All these beautiful voices will come together to perform a powerful new anthem created by Dave Tilson and Linda Grenier just for this event. Come

on out, enjoy the music, and maybe sing along to *We Can Rise Above*.

Funds raised will support Lanark County Community Justice <commjustice.org>, an organization that is celebrating 25 years of delivering restorative justice programs for youth and adults, parents and families, and educators. Community Justice provides and promotes the use of restorative practices, brings people together to repair the harm from conflict and crime, builds community, and strengthens relationships.

Get your tickets for *Sing for Change!* today at Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434).



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# How to Navigate a Studio Tour

On Thanksgiving weekend, October 11 & 12, the Crown and Pumpkin tour invites you to explore the creative abundance of our community. Celebrating its 29<sup>th</sup> year, Crown and Pumpkin features 14 stops and over 50 artists and fine craftworkers. Sites are open from 10AM to 4PM daily. So, how to make the most of this event?

The tour is spread throughout Mississippi Mills, with stops in Almonte, in and around Clayton, and one at Cedar Hill Christmas Tree Farm near Pakenham. Of course, you can follow the tour in numerical order, starting at stop 1, Hummingbird Chocolate in Almonte, and make your way through town and then head west to Clayton and beyond. Or you can take a more personal approach. A visitor commented that she is interested in purchasing a painting for her office, so this sparked the idea of creating her own tour, based on her interest. Are you a fan of ceramics and pottery? Or fibre arts? Here's how a thematic tour could work out.

Some people are fascinated by the brilliant colours and many forms that glass can take.



It's an interesting material — it's really a liquid but we think of it as a solid. Would you like to see how this material can be manipulated with fire to create vessels, beads and jewellery? Stop 4 features the work of three glass artists: Kevin Wilson and Sandra Allen of Murkay Creations, and Roxanne Ward of Shiny Things by Roxanne. You can watch these artists manipulate glass with flame and air to create sculptures, tableware and colourful beads and jewellery. Glass fans will not want to miss the work of master glassblower Chris VanZanten who will be at stop 7, Union Hall, with his delightful glass bird feeders and other large pieces made with hot glass.

Are you, like our visitor, looking for the perfect painting or print to grace your home? New tour member Linda Banfalvi at stop 6 is opening her studio to display her professional-quality paintings and prints. Check out the delightful scenes of Almonte and area by Dennis Vance at stop 1, and Pauline Marshall's beautiful paintings of flowers at stop 3, Dairy Distillery. Virginia Ross will display her watercolours at stop 7. Enjoy the exquisite classically rendered paintings of guest artist Aino Lutter at Stop 11 in Clayton and then view powerful, award-winning work by tour veteran and colourist par excellence Kaija Savinainen at her Willow Creek Studio, stop 12.

If you like two-dimensional art but want more visual contrast, check out mixed media work by Trina Ganson at stop 4, Shawn Donaldson at stop 13, and Karen Bernard who specializes in work with and on paper at stop 7.

Fibre arts — including weaving, knitting, quilting, cloth bags, felting pictures, clothing and sculptural pieces — are well represented. Knitter Cindy Bowman is at stop 3, and

Duffield Design at stop 5 features elegant clothing by designer Megan Duffield and woven accessories by Jean Down and Roberta Murrant. New member Jennifer Chaplin makes attractive and practical bags and artist paintbrush rolls. See her at Union Hall. Robert Pauly, another tour veteran, has his quilts and other sculptural work at stop 10, Moondance Gallery in Clayton. Stop 14 features miniature quilts by Nadine Sculand, knitting and fibre creations by Jennifer Hoy, and felted pictures that Ilona Monahan makes from the wool of her alpacas.

Fans of pottery and ceramics can begin their tour at stop 2, the Almonte Potters Guild, where you can watch demonstrations and learn about the classes they offer. Stop 7, Union Hall, has another tour veteran, Clement Hoeck, who makes finely crafted functional ceramics (cups, bowls, etc.), as well as newcomer Sue Hoegg who will show her delightful porcelain ponies. Continuing up Tatlock Road, visit stop 9 and see pottery by Chrissie Young. Back in Clayton, visit stop 11, Clayton Clay Works, the studio of ceramist and teacher Saskia Praamsma who has been with the tour since its inception.

If sculpture is your thing, visit Dairy Distillery to check out the work of Gwen Rousseau who combines textiles and resins, and see dynamic work by Chris Banfalvi at stop 6.

Woodworking aficionados can check out the creations of Eric Young at stop 9 and then see more woodwork by Megan and John Cochran at stop 13. Colin Redknap will have his finely crafted woodturning at stop 14.

Into jewellery? See cast and fabricated silver work by Meredith Kucey at stop 1, the quirky and distinctive creations of Barbara Mullally at stop 10, and the delicate knitted



Thanksgiving weekend brings the opportunity to find works by Kaija Savinainen-Mountain (above), Eric Young (left), and many others on the annual Crown & Pumpkin Tour

silver and gemstone creations by Kathryn Stevens at stop 14.

And there's more: Mountain Beauty soaps are available at stop 12, and Deb Munro offers her natural beauty products at stop 14. Leatherworker Shawn Humphrey opens his home studio where he makes durable and distinctive leather goods at stop 9 on Tatlock Road outside of Clayton. You can enjoy maple syrup at Bellamy Mills Maple Products at stop 13 and buy Heavenly Honey at Union Hall. And of course, don't miss award-winning chocolate and enjoy exquisite hot chocolate at Hummingbird Chocolate, and vodka and related products at Dairy Distillery.

No matter how you choose to do your tour, all the artists and artisans are eager to welcome visitors. Enjoy fall colours and crisp weather while exploring the creative bounty of this community. For more details, check out <cedarhillchristmastreefarm.com> and follow Crown and Pumpkin Studio Tour on social media.

## ALMONTE IN CONCERT

### 2025-2026

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# Duck Tales: A Double Bill

## A Theatrical Evening to Quack About

Studio Theatre is serving up an evening that's witty, wise, and unexpectedly feathered. *Duck Tales: A Double Bill* brings you not one, but two acclaimed one-act plays where ducks take centre stage — and remind us that sometimes the smallest creatures spark the biggest conversations.

The evening opens with *A Little Something for the Ducks*, an award-winning gem in which two widowed strangers cross paths at a pond outside their senior housing complex. Samuel (Martin Treffers) is stubborn, Irma (Joanna McAuley-Treffers) is determined, and the ducks? Well, they're just hungry. What starts as a squabble over whether it's legal to feed them becomes a hilarious, heartfelt duel of wits about loneliness, resilience, and — of all things — chicken livers. It's funny, it's touching, and it's proof that life doesn't come with an expiry date.

Next up is David Mamet's celebrated *The Duck Variations*. Emil (Dave Clark) and George (Mike Erion) sit in a park, watching ducks. Simple, right? Not quite. Their comic, philosophical, and sometimes achingly honest banter turns the pond into a mirror of our own hopes, fears, and friendships. Mamet's trademark sharp dialogue makes this deceptively simple play a timeless classic.

And as a very special bonus, the spotlight also shines on homegrown talent: the Perth Youth Players



Above, the Perth Youth Players on location for their debut film *The Prophecy*. Don't miss it when it runs at Studio Theatre Perth from October 16-19!

début their original short film *The Prophecy*. Conceived in brainstorming sessions, crafted into a screenplay, and filmed during one sweltering week in August, this project showcases the creativity and teamwork of nine local youth. Under the guidance of their coach and director Marilyn Nicolas Dahan, these young artists have taken an idea and turned it into something magical — and our community should be bursting with pride.

This is an event worth quacking about! Tickets are available at <boxoffice@studiotheatreperth.com> or at <TicketsPlease.ca>. Shows take place on October 16 and 17 at 7PM, and on October 18 and 19 at 2PM.

# Spotlight on Merrickville

## A One-Act Theatre Extravaganza!

This November, the charming village of Merrickville will transform into a vibrant hub of theatrical talent as it hosts an unforgettable weekend of drama, comedy and creativity. From November 7-9, nine theatre groups from across Eastern Ontario will gather to perform nine different one-act plays during the highly anticipated Eastern Ontario Drama League (EODL) One-Act Festival, proudly hosted by Theatre Night in Merrickville (TNIM).

This year is particularly special, as TNIM is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary — a milestone that speaks to the organization's enduring passion for community theatre. "Theatre Night in Merrickville is honoured to welcome the troupes to our historic village," says Helen Steenburgh, festival chair and TNIM past president. "We hope that they will have a successful and fun competition."

In recognition of its golden anniversary, TNIM is pulling out all the stops. Since February, Steenburgh and a dedicated team of volunteers have been working tirelessly behind the scenes, overseeing everything from hospitality to scheduling, to ensure a seamless and exciting festival weekend.

The EODL festival is a juried event, and this year's adjudicator is Carey Nicholson, a respected figure in Canadian theatre with over 40 years of experience in the performing and creative arts. Nicholson will be on hand throughout the weekend to offer insightful feedback during brief public adjudications following each session, giving audiences an opportunity to gain deeper insight into the art of theatre-making.

Festivalgoers can expect a whirlwind of performances — all one-act plays, each under 60 minutes (most ranging from 25 to 45 minutes), offering a diverse and engaging program. Sessions will feature three plays with intermissions, and audience members are welcome to come and go as they wish. Each session concludes with Nicholson's live adjudication — a 15-minute critique that is both informative and entertaining.

The festival kicks off Friday, November 7 at 7PM, with TNIM's performance of *Art for Bertie's Sake*, an original comedy by Ian Bell, a long-time member of the company. Saturday brings two more sessions: a matinée at 1PM, starting with *A Little Something for the Ducks* by Studio Theatre Perth, and an evening session at 7PM, opened by Domino Theatre from Kingston presenting *The Fall After Midsummer* by Chloe Whitehorn.

Other participating groups include Ottawa Little Theatre, Kanata Theatre, North Grenville Theatre, Dundas County Players, Ghost Light Production, and ITR Theatre Company (Osgoode and Rideau-Goulbourn) — each bringing their unique voice to the stage.

The weekend concludes on Sunday morning at 11AM with the Awards Brunch, where accolades will be presented for excellence in acting, directing, set design, costumes, and more — a celebration of the immense talent within the Eastern Ontario theatre community.

Tickets are just \$20 per session, or \$50 for a weekend pass. Tickets for the Awards Brunch are \$35. For tickets and full festival details, please visit <merrickvilletheatre.org>.



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# Putting Your Garden to Bed for the Fall

How do you feel about the garden in October? I find that I have very mixed feelings. It can be really hard to let go of warm weather. One eye is on the coming blast of winter, but to be fair there are many fine fall days in October... and the bugs are gone.

by David Hinks

These fine days offer the opportunity to finish gardening tasks. I am always in favour of doing as much clean-up as possible in the fall. Our spring is such an incredibly short period of time to get all the gardening chores done — especially if one hopes to observe some of the spectacular migration of the returning birds in the spring.

There is a certain satisfaction in cleaning out the compost bins, spreading compost on the garden beds, clearing plants from the growing beds and adding them to the composter, clipping the dead or dying foliage of perennials (remember to leave upright stems with seed pods such as coneflowers as winter feed for the birds) and digging and storing the summer bulbs and tubers such as dahlias, gladioli and cannas. When building the compost pile, remember to layer the plants with two parts dry (carbon) to one part wet (nitrogen). Save a few shovelfuls of compost from the old pile to add to the new, thus introducing all the bacteria that you will need to feed the composting process.

In the garden, the space occupied by tomatoes, peppers, squash and basil can be cleared, spread with compost, and spaded to be ready for next season. Many vegetables can still be harvested from the garden, such as Swiss chard, sorrel, kale, salad greens,

spinach, Brussels sprouts and cabbage. October is certainly the month that separates the frost-tolerant plants from the heat-lovers. It always amazes me that many plants have so much built-in tolerance and actually thrive in cold conditions while many others have little or no resistance. Some species have evolved to survive freezing temperatures by suppressing the formation of ice in living cells or by allowing water to freeze in plant parts that are not affected by ice formation. The implications for gardening are all-important. We need to know the growing requirements of vegetables and how they fit with the realities of our climate.

While nearly all of the garden is winding down and winter is just around the corner, October is the time for planting garlic. I always find this such a symbolic activity, planting in anticipation of a harvest next August. While the rest of the garden is completing its cycle of growth and harvest, the little garlic cloves will be growing up to 10cm of roots this fall and will be ready to produce strong green shoots when the snow has barely gone next spring. If you are not a garlic fan, the same cycle works for tulips and other spring flowering bulbs.

October can also be a good time for seed saving. When clearing the beds, I carefully check any remaining bean and pea vines for dry seed pods that I may have missed when I was picking their fresh produce. These seed pods can be cracked open and the bean seeds collected, dried and then stored for planting next spring. This is one of the easiest ways to start on the path to seed saving. Peas and beans have self-pollinating flowers, in which the flower accepts its own pollen with or without insect intervention, so the possibility of cross-pollination with

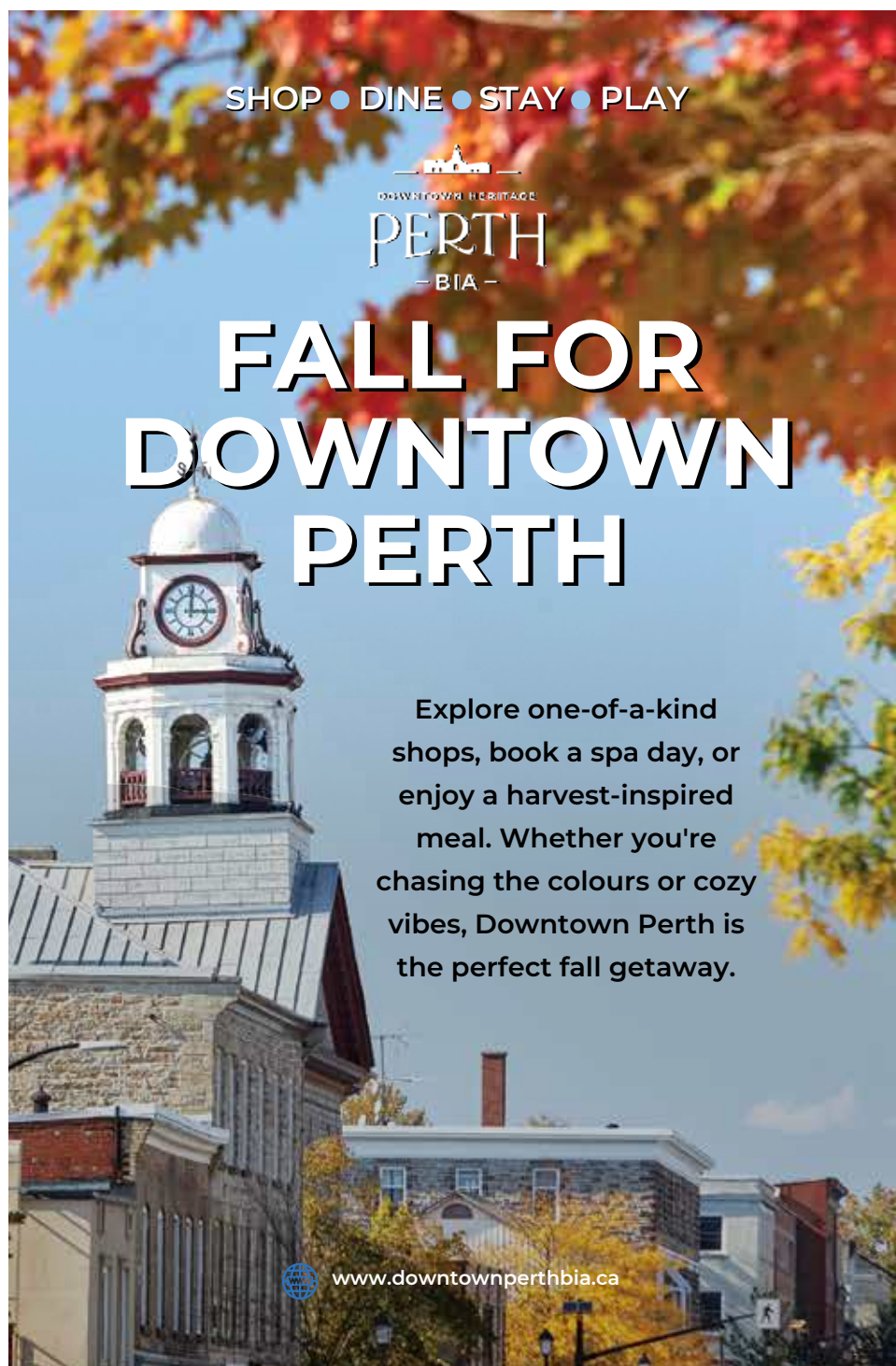


other plants is greatly diminished (by 95 per cent or more). Most other vegetables are either wind-pollinated (corn, beets, spinach, Swiss chard) or insect-pollinated (most of the rest). Cross-pollination only occurs within a species but can result in very surprising results. For example, carrots readily cross-pollinate with Queen Anne's Lace, a common "weed" but a very close relative — the resulting seed would probably produce long white skinny inedible roots. Cross-pollination does not affect this year's crop, only the seed that is produced and that will be planted the following year.

While much of the garden debris can be added to the compost bin, there is no need to truck larger material away, especially if you have a larger property. Hügelkultur is a centuries-old, traditional way of building a garden bed from rotten logs and plant debris. Mound-shapes or berms are created by

heaping up woody material (ideally already partially rotted) topped with compost and soil. They are massive heaps of logs, branches, leaves, straw, cardboard, grass clippings and manure or compost, mounded to be wider at the bottom than at the top. Downed trees, fallen branches headed for the brush pile, and rough lumber can all be used. As the wood shrinks and breaks down, a Hügel bed sinks; one that is a metre or more high, for example, will ultimately sink to less than half of that after several years of decomposition and settling. I have found that moisture is retained — an important consideration to help get plants through a drought.

And of course, no job is done until the paperwork is finished. October is a great time to compile all those notes and thoughts about what worked and what didn't work in the garden this year, and dream about how much better next year will be!




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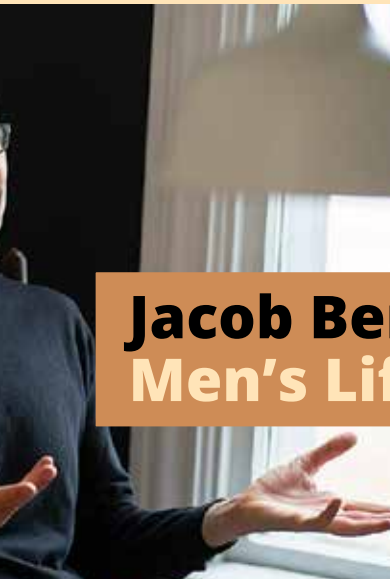
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# Murder on the Rerun

Jane finds herself at the bottom of the stairs surrounded by “friends”, and realizes that her death was not accidental — someone pushed her and she was in fact murdered! She submits a request to come back to earth and figure out who did the dastardly deed and why. Jane (Katharine Coleman) is given permission to return; however, there is one hitch: Kitty (Kathryn McKeigan), a celestial being who is on the verge of going through the gates, will be her helper, and the two of them will try to discover which of the group actually wanted her dead.

Their net is a wide one! Suspects include Edwina (Wendy Monagle), a gossip columnist who will do anything for a good story; Valerie (Ann MacLaughlan), an aging movie star trying desperately to hold onto her relevance; Justin (Sean O’Malley), the director who is only as good as his last flick; Betsy (Shannon Riley), the sweet young ingenue with a heart of gold; and Hugh (Rich Croteau), Jane’s husband and one of the biggest stars in Hollywood. They are all returned to the scene of the crime — a Vermont ski chalet — but will Jane and Kitty be able to suss out the perpetrator and get Kitty her wings?

This fast-paced show mixes comedy with mystery, along with a soupçon of the supernatural. The script is tight with a lot of “war of words” scenes playing out amongst this group of Hollywood upper crust. No one actually seems to like each other, and their acidic words and actions often underscore this. This production is



Someone has pushed Jane down the stairs, but which of her “friends” could it be? Kitty watches from above, hoping to solve the mystery and get through the pearly gates...

shaping up to be a funny, lighthearted mystery with some twists and turns to keep the audience guessing.

The play runs for seven performances over two weekends, with 7:30PM shows on October 17, 18, 23, 24 and 25; and 2PM matinées on October 19 and 26. Station Theatre now offers seat selection when you order your tickets online at <smithsfallstheatre.com> (even if you have season vouchers — just use the voucher code in your order). Orders can also be made at Special Greetings, 8 Russell Street East in Smiths Falls, Monday through Saturday from 9AM to 5PM. You can also call the store at 283-2244. Adult tickets are \$24, student tickets are \$10. This year’s season of plays has something for everyone — visit <smithsfallstheatre.com> to find out what’s coming up!

# Sandy Toes & Salty Kisses

This fall, Rural Root Theatre is delighted to present *Sandy Toes & Salty Kisses*, a romantic comedy by Michael and Susan Parker, from October 21–26 at the Constance and Buckham’s Bay Community Centre. Directed by Ron Gardner, this lively comedy promises plenty of laughs, misunderstandings, and unexpected twists, all set against the backdrop of a seaside hotel in disarray.

The story takes place at the Lovers’ Landing Beach Hotel, a venue advertised as the perfect destination for weddings. Recently inherited by Audrina Brown, the hotel quickly proves to be anything but a tranquil paradise. Audrina learns that her Uncle Bubba, the eccentric hotel manager, has been running some questionable side businesses without her knowledge. As Audrina tries to bring order to the chaos, she finds herself juggling bizarre wedding parties, tangled romances, and comic mishaps that spiral hilariously out of control.



Rural Root Theatre presents a fun beachside comedy from October 21–26

Complications multiply when Beatrice Rutherford-Smythe and her daughter Traci arrive to organize Traci’s upcoming wedding. They are soon joined by Traci’s fiancé, Peter Mudd, and the mysterious Douglas DuPont, whose presence raises questions and sparks a chain of mistaken identities. Bubba struggles to keep his antics hidden, Audrina tries to steer the hotel toward respectability, and the result is a whirlwind of laughter, romance, and classic comedic mayhem. Audiences familiar with the Parkers’ previous hit, *Sex Please, We’re Sixty*, will recognize the same quick pace and irresistible humour that keep the comedy flowing from start to finish.

This production also celebrates both new and familiar talent. Three first-time actors will make their Rural Root débuts, bringing fresh energy to the stage, while four returning performers lend their experience and chemistry to the ensemble. Together, this cast promises a performance filled with vitality, timing, and charm.

Performances run Tuesday through Friday evenings, with matinées on Saturday and Sunday at 2PM. For those looking to make it a full evening out, Rural Root is offering a special dinner-and-show package on Thursday and Friday nights. This year, the dinner will be prepared by internationally trained chef Allan Zander, adding a gourmet flair that is sure to impress. Tickets for both the show and the dinner option are already on sale at <TicketsPlease.ca> and are selling fast, so early booking is highly recommended.

With its mix of seaside setting, hilarious situations, and a talented cast under Ron Gardner’s direction, *Sandy Toes & Salty Kisses* promises a terrific night of comedy and community theatre.

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# Blame Jane Austen...

By Glenda Jones

Perfect for a Sunday afternoon, *Jane Austen Wrecked My Life* is the movie choice of the Mississippi Mills Film Society for October 19 at the Almonte Legion. This light-hearted story of love and literature will resonate with book fans who'd like to work in a bookstore like Shakespeare & Co. in Paris or take up residence in a writers' retreat. When the heroine embraces the notion of writing a novel, she must first rid herself of her fantasy world built around Jane Austen and get on with creating a life of her own, open to love and adventure.

Released at Toronto International Film Festival in 2024, this romantic comedy was a hit with audiences. It's "lovely... enjoyable... delightful" and obviously a comfortable way to spend a pleasant afternoon. No one's life is ruined in the end. In fact, maybe Jane Austen is the creator of something wonderful.

The movie will be shown on Sunday, October 19 at 2PM at the Almonte Legion. Tickets are \$15 from Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434). Proceeds



The Mississippi Mills Film Society presents  
*Jane Austen Wrecked My Life* on October 19

from the series go to the Mississippi Mills Public Library for special programming — a great way to support the library while enjoying the company of film buffs in the community.

## A Choral Concert in Perth River Resonance Choir Joins Capital Chamber Choir

On October 4 at 3PM, the Capital Chamber Choir (CCC) will be performing at St. Paul's United Church in Perth! CCC is an auditioned ensemble of experienced choral singers from the National Capital Region, committed to bringing a diverse range of choral music to audiences. CCC is proud to sing in Perth for the first time, and to present *Northern Elements*, a concert of music that they are preparing for their upcoming live recording project on October 19 in Ottawa. You'll hear choral favourites by emerging and established contemporary composers from Canada and beyond. Find more information and tickets at <capitalchamberchoir.ca>.

For this special concert, the Capital Chamber Choir will be joined by Perth's own River Resonance Choir! River Resonance is an emerging choir geared towards offering members the chance to learn both challenging and accessible music. Their focus has always been on music written, arranged and published in Canada. They are known for their yearly dock concerts on Otty Lake and their love of collaborating with other groups. Director Nicola Oddy has led community choirs for over twenty years and brings her many years of vocal and choral experience to the group. Find more information about both Nicola and the choir at <nicolaoddy.com>.

## A Day of History, Music & Community

Come for a memorable day filled with history, music, and community spirit! The Lanark County Genealogical Society, in partnership with the Middleville Museum, is excited to present this special event, taking place on Saturday, November 8 from 10:30AM to 3PM at the Middleville Community Hall.

Start your day at the Middleville Museum by exploring fascinating exhibits and uncovering the rich heritage of the area. The entrance fee is \$5, with all funds going towards museum maintenance.

Next, enjoy a delicious catered hot buffet lunch with friends and neighbours in the warm, welcoming setting of the Community Hall, followed by a presentation about *Lanark County Mansions* — the

latest book by author Arlene Stafford Wilson. Arlene will share captivating stories and insights into the grand mansions of Lanark County.

The day finishes with a sing-along with local musicians. Led by Grant, a talented group of local performers will bring music to life — come sing along and celebrate the joy of community!

Admission to the Community Hall events is \$15 per person. For tickets, please contact <lcs president@gmail.com> or call 257-9482. Ticket sales end at noon on October 30.

All ages are welcome — come for the history, stay for the harmony! The Community Hall is located at 4203 Wolf Grove Road in Middleville.

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# Come to Christmas in the Valley!

## 35 Years of Exceptional Gift Choices

The Christmas in the Valley Artisan Show is thrilled to be back again this November 1 and 2 from 10AM to 4PM at the John Levi Community Centre/arena upper hall, located at 182 Bridge Street in Almonte. At the Valley Artisan Show you are sure to find gifts with originality, quality and attention to detail. Forgo the gift cards, big box stores and stressful malls, and make this your first holiday shopping destination. Over 30 artisans, crafters and food vendors will be presenting their original creations in a relaxed, friendly and festive atmosphere.

The Valley Artisan Show always strives to bring in lots of new artistic talent, as well as returning favourites, to provide a wide variety of handcrafted items for those special people and pets on your shopping list. You'll find great items to put under the tree, add to gift baskets and fill stockings, plus a few things you'll want for yourself! You'll find sun-catching fused glass, pottery in many forms, scented soaps and scrubs, beeswax candles and flavoured honey, repurposed silver-plated jewellery, and silver crocheted wire adorned with gems. There will also be silly gnomes to decorate your home, games



Find jewellery by Kathryn Stevens, candles by Heavenly Honey, and lots more at this year's Christmas in the Valley show

to play with the family and books to read to children, leather goods, metal items, felting, miniature quilts and sewing in many forms. Treats include delicious cookies and sweet confections, decadent jams and jellies, local maple syrup, and various teas for healthy living. That's just a sample of what the many talented vendors will have to show you.

For more details on participating vendors, visit <valleyartisanshow.blogspot.ca> and find the show on Facebook. Parking and admission are free, and you can enter for a great door prize. The Lanark Animal Welfare Society <lanarkanimals.ca> will be selling raffle tickets, calendars and other items to raise money for their shelter.

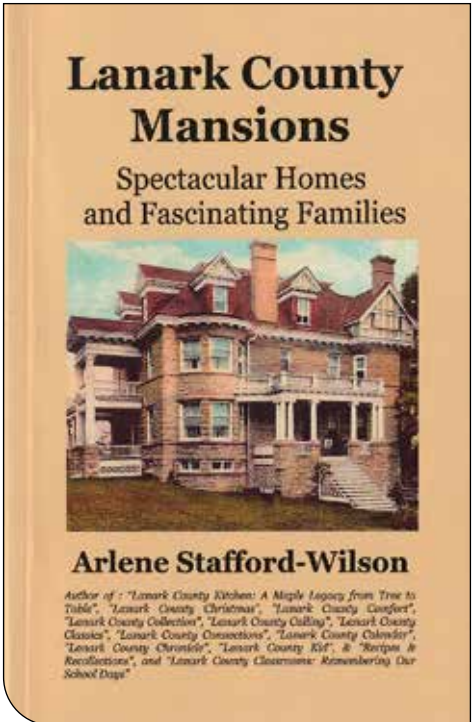
There are plenty of reasons to plan a daytrip to Almonte besides a visit to the Christmas in the Valley Show. You can take a stroll down the main street with its boutiques, antique stores and restaurants, and enjoy the views on the winding Riverwalk pathway. For even more handmade shopping, there are several other crafts sales happening in town that same weekend!



# To the Manor Born

By Glenda Jones

Who wouldn't love to live in a mansion, servants at hand, and social events filling the calendar? Local author Arlene Stafford-Wilson gives us the opportunity to peek through the windows at mansions of the past in her latest book, *Lanark County Mansions*. From Perth to Almonte, Carleton Place to Smiths Falls, Stafford-Wilson has carefully chosen an array of beautiful homes, many still standing, to highlight the fascinating stories of thirty houses.



Arlene Stafford-Wilson's latest release lets readers peek into the grand homes in Lanark County

Most built by industrial magnates with whose names we readily recognize (Rosa-mond, Thoburn, Burgess and Findlay, to name a few), these homes have had their share of joy and tragedy. The 1800's was an era of progress in Lanark County, and people were drawn to the area, often building these mansions to accommodate young families and provide social status along the way.

Tracing the ownership of these homes has obviously been a labour of love, as each one is documented from its origins to the present day. Some have remained as homes, others have become offices, and a few have undergone transformations to take them back to their original glory. All have stories to tell locked in their finely detailed interiors, revealing the quirky family histories that might have been gossip in their time.

It's a credit to the owners of most of these homes that they are occasionally open to the public to enjoy and imagine the lives lived there in the past.

Stafford-Wilson is renowned for her continuing interest in the history of Lanark County, this being her thirteenth book. She does considerable research and offers her personal take on the families she explores. She even tells us the story of her own home, a loving touch on which to conclude her interesting latest look at Lanark. The book will provide hours of entertaining reading, not only as history, but also as a testament to a way of life long gone. Readers will be tempted to take a walk to the past, stop in front of these homes, and read their stories and imagine the families who have maintained these gems for over a hundred years.



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# Forty Strokes to Freedom: Gesture, Structure, and Discipline in Painting

By Kim Lulashnyk,  
When designing painting experiences, I often think about the different ways artists approach their craft. Some devote themselves to control and discipline, while others lean into freedom of expression, embracing spontaneity, accident, and flow. There is no single right way to paint; each approach teaches us something valuable. But in a workshop setting, balance matters. Too much discipline can leave students feeling intimidated, while too much freedom can make them question what they are truly gaining from the class.

Ottawa-based painter Janet Slavin offers a fresh perspective on this dilemma. Through her 40 Stroke Gestural method, Janet demonstrates how structure itself can become a doorway to discovery. By imposing a simple boundary, she shows how hesitation can be transformed into decisiveness.

“The discipline is in the colour,” Janet explained. “The freedom comes through the gesture. Limiting yourself to forty strokes

forces you to simplify, make big gestures, and commit.”

The premise is deceptively simple: forty strokes, no more. At first, it seems like a rule that would box artists in. Yet what unfolded at the Studios was the opposite. Limitations shifted painters out of their habits. It demanded boldness, clarity, and risk. And attention.

Janet traces her own breakthrough to learning the method from artist Katherine Kehoe. “It freed up my painting like you wouldn’t believe,” she explains. “Because of the restriction, you have to approach things differently. You’re forced to simplify. You’re forced into big gestures. You learn an enormous amount about colour and how to see it.”

She added, however, that her own teaching emphasizes gesture in a way that makes her approach distinct. “I learned the 40-stroke from Katherine, but I teach it differently because I like to focus on the gesture. That is unique. I focus on both colour and gesture.”

In practice, the process begins with careful looking. Artists spend time analyzing the colour they see, mixing it accurately on the palette. When it comes time to apply the stroke, though, there is no hesitation: a brush, a decisive gesture. Each stroke counts.

“Painting is really just a beautiful act of attention,” Janet reflected. “It’s enormously challenging, and that challenge is what keeps me coming back. Observational painting requires an intense level of focus, and I find that deeply rewarding.”

For Janet, gesture is not about looseness or play. For her, it is a bridge between analysis and expression, between colour and form,

between painter and subject. By limiting the number of strokes, the mind sharpens; choices become clearer, and new possibilities open in execution.

This approach aligns perfectly with the kinds of workshops I enjoy designing. While there is a value in trying to produce a finished painting in a session, the experience is truly about shifting perceptions; in short, learning. For Janet, too, the real goal of the 40-stroke method is not the outcome on canvas, but the way it changes how students see their own practice.

“What I want people to get out of the class is the realization that there’s another way to paint,” she explained. “It can be both freer and more disciplined at the same time. The process demands focus, but it also opens up another way of being.”

Beyond her workshop at Stone Manor Studios, Janet’s teaching extends into another world: the Perley and Rideau Veterans’ Health Centre, where she works with residents, including those living with PTSD, dementia, physical challenges, and mortality.

“It’s very different from teaching the 40-stroke,” she says. “At the Perley, everything is tailored to the individual and their specific needs. Some are taking up painting at ninety or even a hundred years old. One former fighter pilot told me I opened up a whole new world for him. That’s incredibly gratifying.”

Here, too, painting becomes an act of attention, a practice of focus, connection, and possibility. As an artist, Janet continues to evolve. She is moving into abstraction, exploring new directions in her own painting, and hopes to see her work enter public collections.



Janet Slavin teaching at Stone Manor Studios in Newboro

In the long term, she envisions a studio of her own, large enough to house both her personal work and her teaching practice.

“I really love teaching,” she said. “It’s as much a part of my practice as painting itself.”

That passion was unmistakable. Surrounded by freshly gathered flowers from Stealing the Bloom Farm just down the road, arranged in vessels ranging from hand-thrown ceramics to silver pitchers and humble coffee mugs, participants confronted the challenge of forty strokes. Within the discipline of limitation, they discovered something more: a heightened appreciation of colour, a newfound decisiveness, and a brighter, bolder way of seeing.

— Kim Lulashnyk is the owner of Stone Manor Studios in Newboro <stonemanorstudios.ca>



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# New Players Join the Humm Team!

## Humm Team Productions Joins Forces to Present Three Locally Written Shows

After a short hiatus following their 2024 musical comedy *The Wizard is...Odd!?*, Humm Team Productions is gearing up for a busy 2026/27 season, with three locally written shows on the roster. With all that activity planned, founders Kris and Rob Riendeau are happy (and relieved) to announce several new players on the production and writing team. "This is the first time we've planned several shows in advance," explains Rob, "so we wanted to get the word out and encourage people to sign up for our newsletter so they can find out about auditions and other opportunities to become involved." Visit <hummtteam.ca> for details and to subscribe!

### The Perfect Time

First out of the gate will be a new original musical entitled *The Perfect Time*, which will be performed at the Almonte Old Town Hall in May of 2026. Co-produced with The 20 Bureau, it features a book and lyrics by Kelly and James Torck, and will be directed by Kris Riendeau with musical direction by James. "After discovering James and Kelly's mad talents during *The Wizard is...Odd!?* we were so excited to hear that they were inspired to write their own full-length show," says Kris. "We are delighted to help bring it to the stage."

James Torck is a keyboardist, bassist, singer, and composer with over 40 years of performing experience. He was a member of several Ottawa-area bands and has written music for theatre, TV and film. In addition to writing and arranging the songs for *The Perfect Time*, James is currently singing bass in a barbershop quartet and playing with the band Field Trip.

Kelly Torck has performed in dozens of theatre productions and spent many years as an alt-pop vocalist and keyboard player. Following a long and rewarding career with Environment and Climate Change Canada, Kelly has now turned more of her attention to creative pursuits. Most recently, she performed in the staged reading of *Get What You Need*, a fundraiser for the Friends of the Mississippi Mills Public Library, and as a singer in *The Wizard is...Odd!?*. Kelly is appearing in this fall's Mississippi Mudds production of *Annie*.

In *The Perfect Time*, Kate, a high-powered over-achiever, is butting heads with her talented and moody daughter Ruby, who is about to graduate high school and has her heart set on art college. Kate's husband John, an English professor who dreams of being a

famous writer, is trying to keep the peace. Despite being on the verge of burnout, Kate decides to organize her high school reunion. Meanwhile, after years abroad, glamorous Lucy, John's high school sweetheart, returns to town and offers to help with the reunion. What could possibly go wrong?

*The Perfect Time* is a musical about grappling with when and how to be true to ourselves and follow our hearts, no matter what age. Is there any such thing as the perfect time?

Auditions will take place in early January. To find out more, email <auditions@the20bureau.ca> or subscribe to the newsletter at <hummtteam.ca>.

### Save the Slate!

Riding high on their sold-out show in the fall of 2024, Rob and Kris immediately booked the Almonte Old Town Hall for November of 2026... which meant that they had to come up with a new show!

Written by Rob Riendeau, *Save the Slate Avenue Tavern* tells the fictional story of a small-town live music venue struggling to stay relevant and financially viable in a changing entertainment landscape. Run by a couple now in their early 60s, the Slate was a beloved gathering place in its heyday, serving as both a community hub and a launching pad for young and up-and-coming musicians. These days attendance is dwindling, and the owners realize they need to appeal to younger generations, which may mean embracing new technologies and styles of music — a tough pivot when it takes all their energy just to keep the lights on.

Small venues in small communities provide important opportunities for performers to hone their skills and reach new audiences. By telling the story of one such place, its hard-working owners, and the quirky characters who find and build community there, *Save the Slate* hopes to encourage the support and appreciation of these venues.

Directed by Kris Riendeau, with musical direction by the fabulous Ian Guenette and assistance from the multi-talented Bonnie Vallentyne, *Save the Slate* will be casting in the spring of 2026.

### My Cup of Tea

Looking ahead to the spring of 2027, Humm Team is planning to produce a play called *My Cup of Tea*, written by Almonte resident Will Richardson. Will is a director, writer, actor and singer with over 40 years of experience on stage and screen. After retiring from



(l-r) James and Kelly Torck, Ian Guenette, Bonnie Vallentyne and Will Richardson are joining forces with Kris and Rob Riendeau of Humm Team Productions to bring two original musicals and an original play to the stage in 2026-27!

a decade of directing *The Kayak Fishing Show* for Fox Sports, Will was pulled back into the local theatre scene. Since then he has performed in multiple Humm Team and Mississippi Mudds productions. He appeared as the hilarious Tin Man in *The Wizard is...Odd!?*, as the lead role in *Groundhog Day*, and will be appearing as Daddy Warbucks in the Mudds' production of *Annie*.

In a summer kitchen in rural Ontario, sisters Margaret, Edna and Jean, along with the ancient and crabby Aunt Eulalia, gather to make one last quilt. They requisition the help of daughters Kate and Laura in an effort to pass along as much wisdom as possible to the next generation. This heartwarming story is full of kitchen wisdom, buttertarts, and plenty of tea.

Will explains that: "*My Cup of Tea* was inspired by all the incredible women who raised me. My Grandma Tex was an incredible woman who spent her final years not remembering herself or anyone around her. I wanted to make sure that somehow she was remembered. In my early career, I worked at the Centaur Theatre with Michel Tremblay on *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*, and my first set design was for *Les Belles Soeurs*. His work, telling the stories of French Canadian households, inspired me to do the same for my family."

To find out more about these locally written and produced endeavours, and for information on auditions, back-stage opportunities and ticket sales, visit <hummtteam.ca> and subscribe to the newsletter!

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**Fall Literary Events**



Thursday October 2, 6:30PM  
Mississippi Mills Public Library

**Author  
Merilyn Simonds**

Celebrating the launch of her new book *Walking with Beth: Conversations with my Hundred-year-old Friend*





Tuesday October 28, 6:30PM  
Mississippi Mills Public Library

**Indigenous Author  
Brian Thomas Isaac**

Discussing his writing process and his two novels *Bones of a Giant* and *All the Quiet Places*





Wednesday November 26, 7PM  
Almonte Old Town Hall

**Author & Explorer  
Adam Shoalts**

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# Almonte’s First Annual Highland Haunt & Harvest

*Submitted by Destination Almonte*  
Mark your calendars and prepare to experience Almonte like never before. This October, our charming town becomes a destination where autumn magic meets community spirit, and everyone’s invited to be part of the spooktacular festivities.

The idea for the Highland Haunt & Harvest was sparked by the beloved Mid-Winter Milling making its official return earlier this year. The energy from that weekend got us dreaming bigger, and we wanted to bring that same excitement into the fall season. Our goal is to make Almonte a destination where people can come together and enjoy fun, Salem-inspired adventure on a smaller, cozier scale (for now!). Our members were eager to jump in, offering ideas and pitching in to help bring the vision to life.

The inaugural Highland Haunt & Harvest, a month-long celebration, promises something enchanting for every age and interest. This exciting new festival combines Halloween-themed fun, the warm spirit of the fall harvest season, and a dash of witchy “Salem of the North” vibes.

The festivities kick off on October 1, launching a calendar bursting with creative workshops, spooky entertainment, and community spirit. The extensive lineup of participating local businesses proves it truly is a community-wide effort, and the celebration doesn’t stop with scheduled events. Whether you’re a longtime resident looking for new ways to celebrate the season or a visitor seeking a unique autumn getaway, the Highland Haunt & Harvest offers the perfect blend of events ranging from family-friendly activities to adult entertainment. Whether you’re into the whimsically spooky or the hauntingly scary, there’s truly something waiting for everyone.

#### Scheduled events include:

- October 1: Highland Haunt Kick-Off
- October 3: Halloween Costume Drive/Exchange for The Hub
- October 5, 19, 26: Pumpkin Heads & Ghost Portraits with Pure Natural Portraits
- October 15: Spooky Trivia Night at North Market
- October 17: Sip & Paint a Chocolate Skull at Hummingbird Cafe
- October 17, 18, 24, 25: Almonte Haunted Walk by Destination Almonte & Riversong Players
- October 18: Spooky Board Game Night at Equator Coffee Roasters; Halloween Clay Hand-Building Workshop at JB Arts; *Spooky Shakespeare* by Riversong Players
- October 19: Chilli Cook-Off with Hummingbird Chocolate Makers & Cafe



Photo by Stephanie de Montigny of Pure Natural Portraits

Almonte will be full of spooky and spectacular events this October!

- October 24: Haunt & Harvest Dance (19+) at Almonte Old Town Hall
- October 25: Trick or Treat on Mill Street; Spooky Karaoke at The Barley Mow hosted by Riversong Players; Family Pumpkin-Carving & Plaster Tombstone-Making Workshops at JB Arts; Pet Communicator at Simply 4 Paws; Creepy Choir & Cabaret by Riversong Players
- October 26: Spooky Bingo with Kentfield Kids & The Cooperative Nursery School of Almonte
- October 29: Skullastic Pumpkin Decorating & Book Bar at Equator Coffee Roasters; Spooky Storytime for Toddlers at Mill Street Books
- October 30: Samhain Paint Party with Janet Beath at The Old Mill Manor
- October 31: Crystal Healing & Astrology Readings at The Old Mill Manor

#### Month-long events include:

- Themed Art Exhibit at Sivulrasa Gallery (until October 24)
- Scavenger Hunt hosted by The Hub
- Ghost Hunt for Kids hosted by Kentfield Kids
- Porch Décor Contest hosted by Micheline Dumont Design
- Fall Family Photography Sessions with Pure Natural Portraits
- Spirit & Ghost Adoptions at Witch Haus (on weekends)
- Spooky Cocktails at Vodkow & The Sterling
- Tarot Readings with Other Hand Tarot

The month-long celebration culminates on November 1 with a closing ceremony at the evening Pumpkin Promenade on the Almonte Alameda, a perfect finale to what promises to be an unforgettable autumn adventure.

Visit [destinationalmonte.com/events](https://destinationalmonte.com/events) for the complete list, event details, schedules, and registration information; individual event posters and updates will be shared as they become available.



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**FRI.OCT.17**



# Fibre by the Locks

## A Textile and Fibre Show in Merrickville

By Deb Alexander

The Pews in Merrickville is opening its doors to a new fibre and textile show: Fibre by the Locks.

The idea started as a friendly “wouldn’t it be nice if...” conversation amongst several fibre enthusiasts at an event at the Pews in February. Now, six months later, a dedicated group of organizers is working hard to make this first-time event a reality.

As a fundraiser for the Pews, Fibre by the Locks is committed to welcoming artists, makers, suppliers and craftspeople of all ages as vendors. Equally important to the organizers is the opportunity to celebrate our local fibre and textile history, the community groups that are keeping these traditional arts alive (and thriving!), the people who joyfully gather in guilds and clubs to create, share and enjoy the love of their craft, and the hardworking farmers who provide the raw materials to convert into so many beautiful things.

Fibre by the Locks welcomes Ann Martin from the Merrickville and District Historical Society, The Kemptville Quilters Guild, Victoria’s Quilts, Rideau Valley Rug Hooking, The Merrickville Knitting and Crochet Club, Doug Savage and Carol Williams (sheep farmers), and Janet Stark of Janet’s Artisan Coats.

In lieu of admission, a by-donation table will be set up with gifted fibre and textile treasures

for visitors to browse through and take home. All donations go to The Pews to support many more community events.

Thanks to Mrs. McGarrigles Fine Foods, Violets on Main Bakery, Alpaca Tracks T(h)read Lightly, and Healthily Ever After Health food Store for their kind and generous sponsorship.

The Pews and Fibre by the Locks cordially invite you to come and help celebrate this local tapestry of all things fibre and textile on Sunday, October 19 from 10AM to 4PM at 100 St. Lawrence Street in Merrickville.



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# Autumn Days Are Here Again

## A Local Craft Show with Heart in Renfrew

By Andrea Caillier

The Renfrew Armouries will be filled with creativity and community spirit on Saturday, October 18, when Autumn Days Are Here Again takes place from 10AM to 3PM.



Find funky hats by The Crafty Stitch on October 18

Hosted by the Curious Crafters Collective, the show will feature 75 vendors offering jewellery, knitted and crocheted items, woodworking, cards, wreaths, candles, and food.

Admission is free, but visitors are encouraged to bring donations for the Arnprior District Humane Society. Items most needed include paper towels, bleach, Temptations or Party Mix treats, Whiskas Meaty Selections, Purina Kitten Chow, and canned food like Friskies or Fancy Feast Pâté.

Adding to the excitement, guests will have the chance to win a Nintendo Switch. Raffle tickets will be available throughout the day, with all proceeds going directly to support the Humane Society.

"This show is about more than shopping — it's about celebrating creativity and supporting our community," say the organizers. "We want families to feel welcome, discover amazing makers, and know they're helping a local cause."

The event is family-friendly, full of Ottawa Valley pride, and a perfect way to celebrate autumn.

Follow @curiouscrafterscollective on Facebook and Instagram for updates.

# Fall in Love with Books!

## Autumn Events at Mill Street Books in Almonte

By Ann Shea

As the fall season approaches, Mill Street Books is delighted to announce a number of exciting literary events, with several popular authors heading to Almonte to share their stories. On Thursday, October 2, author Marilyn Simonds returns to the Almonte Branch of the Mississippi Mills Public Library for the local launch of her beautiful new memoir entitled *Walking with Beth: Conversations with my Hundred-Year-Old Friend*. Through a series of very personal and inspirational conversations taking place over three years, beginning during the Covid pandemic, we glean many precious insights and wisdom shared between these two thoughtful women. Through their walking and talking we get to know them as they open up about their heartfelt passions, sharing their triumphs and heartbreaks. This is an inspirational account of how to age gracefully, and one you will want to share with close friends.

Author Brian Thomas Isaac will be in town on Tuesday, October 28 for our second event at the Almonte Library. Brian is a member of the Syilx Okanagan Nation, and is based in West Kelowna, BC. His first novel, *All the Quiet Places*, was a finalist for the 2022 Governor General Literary Award for Fiction, as well as being on the 2022 Giller long-list and a nominee for CBC Canada Reads, among other literary awards. A haunting coming of age story of Eddie Toma, it is the story of what can happen when every adult in a person's life has been impacted by colonialism and generational trauma. His follow up, *Bones of a Giant*, shares the story of Eddie's younger brother Lewis, dealing with Eddie's mysterious departure and becoming an adult on an Okanagan Reservation in a similar landscape in 1968.

Brian became a published author later in life, after a career working various jobs in the oil sands of Alberta. We hope you will join us to hear about his interesting life and writing process. These events are presented free of charge, in collaboration with this Mississippi Mills Public Library,

with a 6:30PM start time. Register on the library website at <[missmillslibrary.com](http://missmillslibrary.com)>.

Our marquee event of the fall season is one we have been planning with explorer and author Adam Shoalts for well over the past year! We are delighted to be hosting an interactive talk with Adam at the Almonte Old Town Hall on Wednesday, November 26 at 7PM. If you follow Adam on social media, you know he leads a very exciting life exploring our beautiful country and sharing his stories with us through a number of bestselling books. His upcoming book, *Vanished beyond the Map: The Mystery of Lost Explorer Hubert Darrell*, is one of the most anticipated releases this fall in Canada, and this will be your opportunity to hear his stories firsthand and procure a signed copy of this book, which will no doubt be featured on many gift lists this holiday season. This is one evening you will not want to miss! Tickets for this event are available at Tickets Please ([TicketsPlease.ca](http://TicketsPlease.ca), 485-6434).



Author Marilyn Simonds returns to Almonte with her new book, *Walking with Beth: Conversations with my Hundred-Year-Old Friend*, on October 2



# Perth Autumn Studio Tour

## Come Experience the Warmth and Creativity!

The colours of Autumn have emerged and the ground is painted with fallen leaves. These are sure signs that the Perth Autumn Studio Tour is just around the corner. This Thanksgiving weekend, on Saturday October 11 and Sunday October 12 (from 10AM-5PM each day), come explore the art and beauty of the Brooke Valley countryside. Celebrating its 32<sup>nd</sup> year, this cherished tradition highlights the creativity and talent of 30 local artists across five unique stops. It offers an inspiring array of art and hand-crafted wares.

This year's tour promises a delightful experience for art lovers and families alike. Each stop will feature a diverse range of artistic disciplines, showcasing ceramics, woodworking, textiles, printing, ironwork, jewellery, fine arts, and delectable chocolate. These talented artists are committed to connecting with customers and sharing their craft, where every piece tells a unique story.

### Artist-Run and Community-Minded

The Perth Autumn Studio Tour is an artist-run annual event that started in 1993 and continues to be a catalyst in creating human connections through diverse artistic media. It celebrates the skill and dedication of local artists and fosters a sense of community. It brings together creators and admirers in a shared appreciation for the arts. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet the artists, learn about their ideas and processes, and purchase one-of-a-kind pieces.



This year's Perth Autumn Studio Tour features works by blacksmith Graham van Houten (above), wildlife photographer Jordan Walmsley (at left), and many other talented participants

### Harvest Lunch at Brooke Valley School

As part of the tour, guests are invited to enjoy a delicious homemade lunch at Brooke Valley School, a parent-run two-room schoolhouse that embodies the spirit of community. The meals and desserts are made by the school parents and other community members. It provides a delicious and wholesome way to break up your day. Soups, chilis, desserts and drinks will be served from 11AM to 4PM at the school, both Saturday and Sunday.

Brooke Valley School has been operating for 48 years and offers a unique approach to education for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 students. To learn more about the school, please visit <brookevalleyschool.com>.

### A Thanksgiving Tradition

Mark your calendars and come on out from 10AM to 5PM on both Saturday and Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend. Join artists for a memorable weekend and feel the vibrant energy that makes the tour a beloved tradition. Bring your family and friends to experience the warmth and creativity that thrives here. Whether you are looking for a unique gift, inspiration from local talent, or simply a beautiful day in nature, the Perth Autumn Studio Tour offers something special for everyone.

Visit <perthstudiotour.com> to find more details and a map, and follow @perthstudiotour on social media to stay in the loop and see artist features. See you at the Tour!



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# Centre for Creative Living

## Yesteryear: The Vintage Variety Show

By Sue Evans

Mississippi Mills is such a wonderfully vibrant and creative community, a place where people can find purpose and places to meet, work and play with others who share a desire to live life with joy. The list of opportunities in the area is long.

One small part of this web of activities is the Centre for Creative Living (CFCL). Newly incorporated, it is meant to be a “food bank for the soul” for ordinary folks who enjoy creative activity for its own sake. Located in the hospitable but modest spaces of St. Paul’s Anglican Church, one of Almonte’s beautiful historic buildings, CFCL now hosts five creative circles that meet weekly: Creative Writing, Off the Wall Artists, Textile Arts, Contemplative Photography and Yesteryear Variety. It also offers an inexpensive “Every Body” yoga program. These activities are participant-led with support from experienced mentors who volunteer their time to nurture people’s imagination and skills. No one need feel they are not good enough to join. It’s all about helping each other find their creative voice and discovering enjoyable ways to express this. Members find that CFCL is a place where friendships form, where stimulating conversations happen and also where support is available when needed. The annual membership fee is \$125 and entitles you to participate in any of these groups. However, please note that we also offer subsidies to anyone for whom the fee would be a barrier to participation.

The most recent addition to CFCL activity is *Yesteryear: The Vintage Variety Show*. Led by mentor Kathy Tasse, this group provides people an opportunity to not only have a great deal of fun but also to make a differ-

ence for seniors in the community. Kathy chooses music that would be familiar to people living in local seniors’ homes, and participants lip sync songs sung by familiar voices from the past as if they are singing the words themselves.

Kathy (who always signs her emails with “music in my heart”) summarizes this group as “a traveling troupe of volunteers wearing timely attire who entertain seniors with songs of their Yesteryear while pretending to be the artist.”

Kathy says she actually conceived the idea when she was a child in the ’60s. Much to the delight of her relatives (especially her grandfather), she acted out songs from her parents’ favourite albums at family gatherings, pretending to be the actual singers. She recalls how elated she was with their amusement. It is clear if you talk with her about Yesteryear, her drive to pursue this dream has really been a lifelong calling.

She explains that: “music has always been my passion. Even though unfortunately I have never been proficient enough to either sing or play an instrument well, I was not going to let that deter me from fulfilling my musical aspirations. I have found other avenues.”

In the 1980’s Kathy managed a rock and roll band and became a radio DJ, and that eventually transitioned into a TV production.

Over the years, Kathy’s love of music has guided her through the good and the bad. During Covid, for example, she found work at Orchard View Gardens where she enjoyed serving meals in the dining room to the residents. Orchard View was often in lockdown, and the seniors were unable to

pursue their usual activities or have visits from family and friends. Kathy took this sad situation as an opportunity to entertain them by singing songs they were all familiar with and could in all probability join in. She says doing this took their minds off Covid. It made their days a little brighter, especially because the songs brought back so many memories for them. As she watched faces light up with pleasure she found her own heart warmed, and suddenly a new idea was born — *Yesteryear: A Vintage Variety Show*.

Yesteryear has now completed its second season, performing in the spring at four different venues after a winter of practicing. The first year, each performer chose songs from the ’50s and ’60s that they loved — songs like *Strangers in the Night*, *Que Sera Sera*, *Hound Dog*, *The Tennessee Waltz*, and *It’s My Party*. Last season, the group performed several songs from *My Fair Lady*, *The Sound of Music* and *Mary Poppins* while wearing delightful costumes including a nun’s habit, generously lent to the group by Suzart Productions. Dani of Broadway Workout helped with choreography, teaching the players how to use the “stage” and interpret the music more effectively. How wonderful it is to have such help.

This coming year, the group is going to create three different shows again with a little professional help, with three different themes: Christmas, a night at the Oscars, and a third still to be determined. You can find videos of their work on their Facebook page: Yesteryear, The Vintage Variety Show. Kathy would also like to thank Bob Lesser of the Civitan Club for volunteering to produce the first video, and Kala Ritchie who did the second season for a minimal fee.



Yesteryear: The Vintage Variety Show is looking for volunteers to lip sync and sing to seniors this season

If you would like to join this group (or any other at CFCL), please contact me at <cfcstpauls@gmail.com> for more information. To join the Yesteryear group, no acting experience is needed and no audition required. In the CFCL tradition, what you take on will depend on what you yourself would like to do, including interpreting or actually singing the songs themselves if you wish. You are welcome to bring your voice, a musical instrument, ideas, and talents, but especially your passion for music and fun. Yesteryear will be meeting Tuesdays from 3–5PM upstairs at St. Paul’s beginning on October 7.

You can find more information about CFCL and our programs on our website at <centreforcreativeliving.ca>.

— Sue Evans is the Coordinator of the Centre for Creative Living

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MMLT's annual hike up beautiful Blueberry Mountain takes place on October 18

# Celebrate Fall Colours

## Hike up Blueberry Mountain with MMLT!

The air is turning crisp, the leaves are bursting into colour — it's the perfect time to head outdoors and experience autumn in all its glory. One of the best places to do just that is Blueberry Mountain in Lanark County, where sweeping views showcase the spectacular fall landscape.

The Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust (MMLT) invites the community to join them for the annual Fall Colours Walk at Blueberry Mountain at cliffLAND on Saturday, October 18. Thanks to the generosity of Howard Clifford and his family, this special fundraising day has become a cherished tradition supporting MMLT's ongoing conservation work in the Mississippi-Madawaska region.

Visitors are welcome anytime between 10AM and 2PM to hike the trail, enjoy the forest, and take in the

famous summit view. Recognized as one of the Seven Wonders of Lanark County, Blueberry Mountain has earned its reputation as a must-see destination during the fall season.

Along the way, hikers can pause at the Circle of Gratitude, a meaningful installation of posts and plaques honouring MMLT's dedicated supporters.

Blueberry Mountain is located at 502 Hills of Peace Road in Lanark, with parking available at the trailhead. The trail is a 5km round trip with a gradual forest ascent, a waterfall, and a short, steep climb to reach the lookout. Light refreshments will be provided, and leashed dogs are welcome.

To learn more about the Fall Colours Walk and MMLT's work protecting natural spaces in the region, visit <mmlt.ca/events>.

# The Samhain

## Artisan Market

### A Daytime Gathering of Craft and Community

As autumn deepens and the veil between worlds grows thin, the Samhain Artisan Market emerges as both celebration and invitation. Held in the golden glow of a fall day with crisp air and forest leaves crunching underfoot, this gathering beckons you into a realm where craft, story, and spirit intertwine.

#### A Market of Mystery and Magic

Wander through paths lined with artisan stalls that feel like doorways into tradition and imagination. Each maker offers creations woven with intention: protective charms, seasonal remedies, ancestral art, jewellery inspired by myth and sunlight, and treasures born of the harvest. The market is more than a place to shop — it's a living story told through the hands of every crafter.

#### The Rhythm of Community

At the heart of Samhain lies remembrance, connection, and the honouring of cycles. The market reflects these truths, bringing together artisans, seekers, and celebrants in the light of day. As you browse and

shop, you'll find yourself woven into a tapestry of kinship, laughter, and shared appreciation beneath the turning leaves.

#### Craft, Ceremony, and Song

Beyond the vendor stalls, the market invites you to linger; join in crafting spaces where your own hands shape tokens of remembrance or gather in circles of music and story, voices rising with the rustle of wind through trees. Every corner holds an invitation to participate, to celebrate, to remember.

The Samhain Artisan Market is not just an event — it's a daytime experience honouring the turning of the year and the sacred balance between endings and beginnings. Come step into this threshold space. Celebrate the season. Discover treasures to carry into winter and leave with your spirit nourished by community, craft, and the magic of Samhain.

The Market takes place on Saturday, October 25 from 11AM to 4PM at 4596 Carp Road (parking off Thomas A. Dolan parkway, follow the signs), and is brought to you by the Ninth Wave Arts Team <ninthwavearts.ca>.

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STUDIO THEATRE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

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DIRECTED BY: MARILYN NICHOLAS-DAHAN

**A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR THE DUCKS\***  
By: JEAN LENOX TODDIE  
Two old Ducks find out it's never too late to make waves!

**THE DUCK VARIATIONS**  
By: DAVID MAMET  
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\*Our entry into the EODL One-Act Play Festival.  
\*A Little Something for the Ducks and The Duck Variations are presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com  
Poster Credit: Marissa Barry

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EODL One-Act Festival, Merrickville, Nov 7-9  
Rosemary Leach Open Studio, Almonte, Nov 7-9  
Almonte Harvest Market, Nov 8  
A Day of History, Music & Community, Middleville, Nov 8  
Itty Bitty Artisan & Art Show, Carleton Place, Nov 8-9  
Amanda Rheume, Nov 9, McDonalds Corners  
Nathan Smith, Nov 12, Perth  
Puppets Up! Chautauqua, Nov 15, Almonte  
Guatemala Stove Project Dance, Nov 15, Perth  
Dans la peau de Cyrano, Nov 16, Almonte  
CCR Tribute, Nov 22, Perth  
Vinta, Nov 23, McDonalds Corners  
An Evening with Adam Shoalts, Nov 26, Almonte  
The Lion in Winter, Nov 27–Dec 7, Perth  
Annie, Nov 28–Dec 7, Carleton Place  
Kenny & Dolly Tribute, Nov 29, Perth  
Almonte Holiday Market, Nov 8  
AIC Christmas Concert, Dec 6, Almonte  
Mudmen, Dec 27, 28, Perth

2026  
Elinor Frey, Jan 25, Almonte  
Amos the Transparent, Jan 31, Almonte  
Hadelstown, Teen Edition, Feb 13–21, Carleton Place  
The Weber Brothers, Feb 28, Almonte  
Scandalous Romantics, Mar 7, Almonte  
Broadway Showstoppers, Mar 20-22, Carleton Place  
Old Man Luedecke, Mar 28, Almonte  
Vnukowski/Odin Quintet, Apr 11, Almonte  
Danny Michel, Apr 18, Almonte  
The Play that Goes Wrong, Apr 30–May 3, Carleton Place

Literature  
An Evening with Author Merilyn Simonds, Oct 2, 6:30PM. Almonte Library. Register at missmillslibrary.ca  
FoMMPL Book Sale, Oct 17 & 24 (12–6PM); Oct 18 & 25 (10AM-4PM); Oct 19 (11AM-3PM). Rexall Mall, Almonte. Proceeds to Miss Mills libraries. missmillslibrary.com  
Author Talk, Oct 18, 2PM. Local author Nadee Fernando-O'Driscoll. Carleton Place Public Library. carletonplacelibrary.ca  
Book Club, Oct 27, 7PM. New members welcome, email millstreetbooks@gmail.com to join. Mill Street Books, Almonte. Free. millstreetbooks.com  
An Evening with Indigenous Author Brian Thomas Isaac, Oct 28, 6:30PM. Almonte Library. Register at missmillslibrary.ca

Local Food  
Apple Cider & Scarecrow Day, Oct 5, 12–4PM. Middleville & District Museum. Adults: \$5, Youth 12 & under: free. middlevillemuseum.org  
Almonte Farmers Market Last Outdoor Market, Oct 11. Almonte. Alameda. almontefarmersmarket.com  
Perth Harvest Farmers Market, Nov 1, 10AM-2PM. Crystal Palace, Perth. perthfarmersmarket.ca

Visual Arts  
Lanark Highlands Basketry Museum Workshop, Oct 4, 10AM–3:30PM. Information on collecting, storing, preparation and appropriate techniques. Lanark Highlands Basketry Museum, McDonalds Corners. \$125. lanarkhighlandsbasketrymuseum.ca/learn  
Madawaska Valley Studio Tour, Oct 4–5, 10AM–5PM. Self-guided tour of artists' studios. Madawaska Valley Studio Tour, Combermere to Eganville. madawaskastudiotour.com  
The Big Art Walk, Oct 4, 11AM. Downtown Smiths Falls. \$10. info@smithsfallschamber.ca

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<p>Destination Almonte presents a <b>Highland Haunt &amp; Harvest</b>, events run all month &lt;destinationalmonte.com&gt; General Fine Craft presents new works by Katherine McNenly (paintings), Mary Philpott (animal sculptures), and Colin Hamer (pewterware) &lt;generalfinecraft.com&gt; MississippiValleyTextile Museum presents <i>A Lifetime of Collecting Part 2: Canadian Handwoven Overshot Coverlets from the Dennis and Sylvia Mills Collection</i> [from Oct 18] &lt;mvtm.ca&gt; Sivarulrasa Gallery presents <i>Marina Raika: Signals</i>, and <i>Hannah Cretien: Porosité</i> &lt;sivarulrasa.com&gt; The Arts CP Art Hub presents the group show <i>Conversations</i> [to Oct 25]</p>			<p>An Evening with Author Merilyn Simonds, Almonte James Walters, The Barley Mow Songwriters Showcase with Lynn Miles, Merrickville One Guitar – One Voice, Perth Original Thursdays – Rob Lutes, The Cove</p>
<p>Why Does My Voice Wobble?, Almonte Jon McLurg, The Cove</p>	<p>Tim Loten, The Cove Silent Book Club, The Barley Mow</p>	<p>Fall Trails Walk, Merrickville Wings N Tunes with Shane McCullough, The Cove Song Circle, Carp</p>	<p>Annual Lanark County Agricultural Hall of Fame Gala &amp; AGM, Carleton Place Carleton Place Toastmasters Club Spencer Scharf, The Barley Mow Irish Mythen, Perth The Arrogant Worms, McDonalds Corners Original Thursdays – Jessica Wolowich, The Cove</p>
	<p>Noah Malcolm, The Cove</p>	<p>Wings N Tunes with Shane McCullough, The Cove Craft &amp; Chat, Carp</p>	<p>Indigenous Collaborations with Sultans of String, Pembroke Susie Ungerleider, The Cove Duck Tales: A Double Bill - Opening Night, Perth Ali McCormick, The Barley Mow</p>
<p>A Fireside Chat with Lloyd Axworthy, Perth Jon McLurg, The Cove</p>	<p>Sandy Toes and Salty Kisses, Constance Bay Joe Nolan, The Cove</p>	<p>Sandy Toes and Salty Kisses, Constance Bay Wings N Tunes with Shane McCullough, The Cove</p>	<p>Murder on the Rerun, Smiths Falls Sandy Toes and Salty Kisses, Constance Bay Original Thursdays – Emilie Steele, The Cove Carleton Place Toastmasters Club Snow Road Music Night Concert with Wade Foster and Jeff Call, Snow Road Station Brock Zeman, The Barley Mow Offbeet, Carleton Place</p>
<p>Jon McLurg, The Cove Book Club, Almonte Almonte &amp; District Horticultural Monthly Meeting, Almonte</p>	<p>An Evening with Indigenous Author Brian Thomas Isaac, Almonte Tea Time, Carp Shane Pendergast, The Cove</p>	<p>Perth Ghost Walk, Perth Break The Fake Presentation, Carleton Place Lennie Gallant, Neat Coffee Shop Wings N Tunes with Shane McCullough, The Cove</p>	<p>Perth Ghost Walk, Perth Original Thursdays – Brock Zeman, The Cove Growing Friendly, Almonte James Walters, The Barley Mow</p>

Perth Autumn Studio Tour, Oct 11–12, 10AM–5PM. Free self-guided tour. Brooke Valley. perthstudiotour.com  
Crown and Pumpkin Studio Tour, Oct 11–12, 10AM–4PM. Free self-guided tour. Mississippi Mills. crownandpumpkin.com  
Fine Batiks Sale, Oct 11–12, 10AM–5PM. Maberly. finebatiks.ca  
RedTrillium Studio Tour, Oct 18–19, 10AM–4PM. Free self-guided tour. West Carleton. redtrilliumst.com  
Autumn Days Are Here Again Craft Show, Oct 18, 10AM–3PM. Renfrew Armouries. curiouscrafterscollective@gmail.com  
Exhibit Opening, Oct 18, 1–4PM. Canadian Handwoven Overshot Coverlets. Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, Almonte. mvtm.ca  
Fibre by the Locks, Oct 19, 10AM–4PM. A new fibre and textile show, fundraiser for The Pews. The Pews, Merrickville. By donation. thepews.ca  
Fibre Demo, Oct 19, 12–4PM. A Bunch of Whimsy, Carleton Place. abunchofwhimsy.com  
Christmas in the Valley Artisan Show, Nov 1–2, 10AM–4PM. Over 30 artisans and crafters. John Levi Community Centre, Almonte. valleyartisanshow.blogspot.ca  
Dart Tournament, Oct 18, 12:30PM. Almonte Legion. \$20 per person. chair@mmyc.ca

Theatre  
A Death in the Family: A Victorian Mourning Experience, Oct 4, 18 & Nov 1, 1–4PM. Perth Museum. \$125 at TicketsPlease.ca  
High Times at the Heart Institute, Oct 5, 2PM. A musical comedy tribute to Canada's health care system. Rankin Culture and Recreation Centre, Pembroke. Tickets at TicketsPlease.ca  
My Own Personal Shakespeare, Oct 5, 2PM. MERA Schoolhouse, McDonalds Corners. Tickets at TicketsPlease.ca  
Special Movie Matinee: How to Train Your Dragon, Oct 11, 2PM. The Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. \$12 (at the door only). smiths-fallstheatre.com/event-detail-movies  
Movie Weekend: The Friend, Oct 10–11, 7PM. The Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. \$12 (at the door only). smithsfallstheatre.com/event-detail-movies  
DuckTales: A Double Bill, Oct 16–17, 7PM, Oct 18–19, 2PM. Studio Theatre Perth. Tickets at TicketsPlease.ca  
Murder on the Rerun, Oct 17–26, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 7:30PM, Sunday, 2PM. The Station Theatre, Smiths Falls. smiths-fallstheatre.com

YukYuks Comedy Show, Oct 18, 7PM. Final Score Sports Bar, Carleton Place. \$22.50 + HST. yukyuks.com/carletonplace  
Jane Austen Wrecked My Life, Oct 19, 2PM. Almonte Legion. \$15 available at TicketsPlease.ca  
Sandy Toes and Salty Kisses, Oct 21–24 (7:30PM); Oct 25 & 26 (2PM). Rural Root Theatre Company, Constance Bay. Tickets at TicketsPlease.ca  
Perth Ghost Walk, Oct 24–30, 7PM. Perth Museum. \$12 at TicketsPlease.ca.  
Fright Up the Night Murder Mystery Oct 25, 6:30PM. Performed by the Mississippi Mudds. Almonte Civitan Hall. Tickets at almontecivitan.com/product/murder-mystery-dinner  
One Guitar – One Voice, Oct 2. St. Paul's United, Perth. events.humantix.com  
First Thursdays - Songwriters Showcase with Lynn Miles, Oct 2, 7:30PM. The Pews, Merrickville. \$20+HST in advance or \$30+HST at the door. thepews.ca  
AHI, Oct 3. Almonte Old Town Hall. \$30. ontariosmallhalls.com  
The Pairs, Oct 3. Maberly Community Hall. \$25. ontariosmallhalls.com

Northern Elements, Oct 4, 3PM. Capital Chamber Choir with the River Resonance Choir. Information and tickets at capital-chamberchoir.ca. St. Paul's United, Perth  
"A Friendly Gathering", Oct 4, 7–9PM. St. John's Anglican Church, Smiths Falls. \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. stjoh-smithsfalls.com  
The Perth Citizen's Band, Oct 5, 2PM. Crystal Palace, downtown Perth - free admission. perthband.ca  
The Pairs, Oct 5. Chaffey's Lock Community Hall, Elgin. \$25. ontariosmallhalls.com  
The Rowdymen, Oct 5. Carleton Place Arena. \$25. ontariosmallhalls.com  
Irish Mythen, Oct 9. Oakfield Rugby Park, Perth. \$35. ontariosmallhalls.com  
The Arrogant Worms, Oct 9. McDonalds Corners Agricultural Hall. \$35. ontariosmallhalls.com  
The Piano Men, Oct 10, 7:30PM. The ultimate tributes to Billy Joel & Elton John. St. Paul's United, Perth. \$39 in advance, \$44 at the door. TicketsPlease.ca  
Ashley MacIsaac, Oct 10. Carleton Place Arena. \$45. ontariosmallhalls.com  
Irish Mythen, Oct 10. Newboro Community Hall. \$35. ontariosmallhalls.com







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### The Reeve Report

# One, Two, Three, A-Larry

My prized possession when I was ten was a very hard black rubber ball, a lacrosse ball, although at the time, we had no idea what lacrosse was (B.C. kids... really!). We all had our favourite, and heaven help anyone who snatched it. We played this game where we'd throw the ball against a wall, sing this little ditty, and catch the ball under our leg.

by Glenda Jones

It set me on a habit of counting things, a habit I keep to this day. I worked in a greenhouse popping seedlings into a tray: four, eight, twelve... I worked at my sewing business: two sleeves, four, six, eight... I even do it when we're at exercise class: one two three four, four three two one and done!

I'm hauling our winter's wood into the basement, and here I am: two, four, six pieces; back to the pile: two four six... you get the idea. Then it's into the basement and count again as I stack the wood. The day will come when the woodstove requires filling, and I'll count again. Did you know that from standing tree to inside stove wood gets handled 12 times? And yes — I likely have counted every time I handle it.

This isn't a bad habit, as it can turn the most mundane task into an achievement. There are many things we need to do that are nothing short of mind-numbing. Did you go strawberry picking? Did you count the baskets? You spend the day backside-over-brain and the only upside is counting the baskets as you worked along the rows. Did you build a deck this summer? Every board came off the truck — one, two three four — and then was laid out — one, two, three, four. Okay, straighten up and look back to see what you accomplished. Good for you!

Way back before the Fitbit craze I counted steps as I ran, likely not accurately because I was still trying to breathe, but still those numbers ran through my head. Even now, I find myself counting when I'm doing any sort of physical exercise, especially if there's a regular cadence to it. Mowing the lawn, raking leaves, pulling weeds even.

I love making bread and kneading the dough: one, turn, two, turn, three... until ten minutes have

passed and the dough gets plopped in the bowl. Making cookies? Same routine: one pan takes thirty, one takes twenty and each cookie gets counted as it goes onto the pan, onto the cooling rack, and into the can. No, we don't count as they get eaten, although very likely we should.

I had four dozen bulbs to plant: dig the holes, throw in the compost, put in the bulbs, and cover the hole. And there I was counting them out so each one was equal. I often do this out loud, and the dogs, who are eager to help (ha ha) aren't too good at keeping count, so I have to do it myself.

Counting creates patterns in the brain to help us figure out routines. We all rely on clocks to keep our schedule on track. We count the hours until something exciting is going to happen; we count the scores during games; we count our possessions, our money, our social contacts, and so much more. We don't have to do this, but we all do it. It often makes a task go quicker if every step is counted until all are completed. It's usually only the first one that's difficult, and then it becomes an accumulation of numbers.

We take numbers for granted and I'm sorry, because I've likely created a sort of ear worm for you. You'll be toting things up all day now. I've already done it: three dogs, 60 minutes of training, twenty minutes each. Thirty treats, three leashes, and 5 kilometres to the field and back.

I'm not particularly good at math, so an accountant husband has been a big help. I don't think he counts activities like I do, probably a blessing. But when tax time rolled around, he was the one adding up the numbers, he was the treasurer, he was the banker. He'd be delivering financial reports while I was counting the number of people at a meeting. It was a good combination, all told.

Most everything can be meted out in numbers, but we can't count the numbers of our days. Here we are in the throes of gorgeous fall sunshine and colour, and we should add up every day as a treasure even though we are longing for rain. We need to bank these days against the cold and relish every one. The winter days too will have their rewards, you can count on that!

## 2025 GEM STORM

### 54th Annual Gem & Mineral Show

**OCT. 17 - FRI. 5pm - 9pm**  
**OCT. 18 - SAT. 10am - 5pm**  
**OCT. 19 - SUN. 10am - 5pm**

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# Happy Birthday, John Prine!

## The Maywoods Perform in McDonalds Corners

A show honouring John Prine's songwriting genius is an annual Nashville music event on October 10, the date of his birth. The Maywoods — the Lanark County quartet comprising Vicki Brittle, Tyler Craig, Nathan Sloniowski and Jessica Winskell — have transplanted this tradition in Canada. The band's first John Prine Birthday concert last year at the Almonte Civitan Hall attracted a full house, and this year they're bringing their show to the historic McDonalds Corners Agricultural Hall on Friday, October 10.

According to *Rolling Stone*, Prine started writing songs at age 14, and "wrote for working people, sad people, old people and lost people. His style, inspired by John Steinbeck, was deceptively simple. Many emulated it, but only he could do it."

Prine received a lifetime achievement award at the 2020 Grammys. Struggling with health issues throughout his life, he passed away from complications caused by Covid-19 that same year. Enduring songs like *Angel from Montgomery*, *Sam Stone* and *Please Don't Bury Me* earned the enduring admiration of Bob Dylan, Bonnie Raitt, Gordon Lightfoot, Elvis Costello, and loyal fans around the world.

The Maywoods are named after the legendary recording artist's hometown of Maywood, Illinois. They're renowned for their rich harmonies and multi-guitar arrangements, along with stories behind John Prine's sing-along classics as well as lesser-known deep cuts. The Maywoods have enjoyed seven sold-out shows throughout the Ottawa Valley since they formed in 2023, and also played a set at the Clayton-Fest outdoor musical festival this summer.

Tickets to The Maywoods' John Prine Birthday Concert in McDonalds Corners are available at Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434). Doors open at 7PM with the licensed event running from



The Maywoods are throwing a birthday concert for John Prine at the McDonalds Corners Agricultural Hall on Friday, October 10

7:30PM to 9:30PM including an intermission. General admission tickets are \$30 plus fees. A limited number of tickets are also available at Highlands Country Store in McDonalds Corners. All proceeds from beverage sales as well as a percentage of ticket sales are going to the McDonalds Corners Agricultural Society.

# \$200 and Under Sale

## Kanata Art Club Celebrates Community

On the weekend of November 8 and 9, the Kanata Art Club (KAC) invites art lovers to their studio (630 Cameron Harvey Drive) for their popular \$200 and under sale. Now in its seventh year, the non-juried sale will feature original works from thirty KAC artists working in a variety of genres and styles including watercolour, oil, acrylic and mixed media, to name a few.

Each artist will have nine ready to hang small-to medium-sized works on offer. It's a perfect opportunity to find artworks by both emerging and established artists.

The KAC started over sixty years ago, and over the years has grown to more than two hundred members. The club offers a packed program of classes, workshops and open studios, as well as opportunities to show art at the Eva James Memorial Community Centre.



Find works by Brenda Beattie (above) and other KAC members on November 8 and 9

"The focus of the club is on learning, celebrating each other's art and creating a community of mutually supportive artists," KAC president Kie Delgaty says. "It's fun. We say that right in our mandate."

The KAC offers a variety of weekly classes taught by accomplished local artists as well as numerous workshops featuring internationally acclaimed painters. In addition, their open studios are also a great way for members to get to know each other and to have a good learning experience.

Delgaty says the \$200 and under sale is all about the club members getting together to show and sell their artwork. "I know that everyone involved in the sale always has a really good time," he notes.

Last year, sale organizer and club member Karen Horl reported that 90 percent of participating artists sold at least one painting. Horl has been the powerhouse behind the sale for the past six years, but also credits the volunteers who step up every year to make sure the sale runs smoothly. Although it involves a lot of legwork, Horl says she enjoys everything about running the event. "I love dealing with the public and the art is so beautiful," she adds. "People can get great art at an affordable price too."

The sale venue is conveniently located in Kanata North just around the corner from the intersection of March and Dunrobin Roads. It is open from 9AM to 5PM on Saturday, November 8 and from 9AM to 4PM on Sunday, November 9. Shoppers will enjoy plenty of free parking, access to public washroom facilities, and complimentary snacks and beverages.

The KAC welcomes new members of all skill levels. They are also looking for new board members, as several longtime directors will be retiring in the next 18 months. Training will be provided to all new recruits who will be charged with the exciting task of leading the KAC into the future. Further details and contact information are available at <kac1.ca>.



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A workshop on regaining the power of your voice  
with vocal coach Mark Wilkinson  
Monday, October 6, 7PM

**Horns, High Notes and Heroes**  
A neophyte's guide to the opera with Mark Wilkinson  
Mondays, October 20 to November 10, 7PM

**Growing Friendly**  
Angus Affleck on creating and preserving  
communities that work  
Thursday, October 30, 7PM

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# Folkus 2026

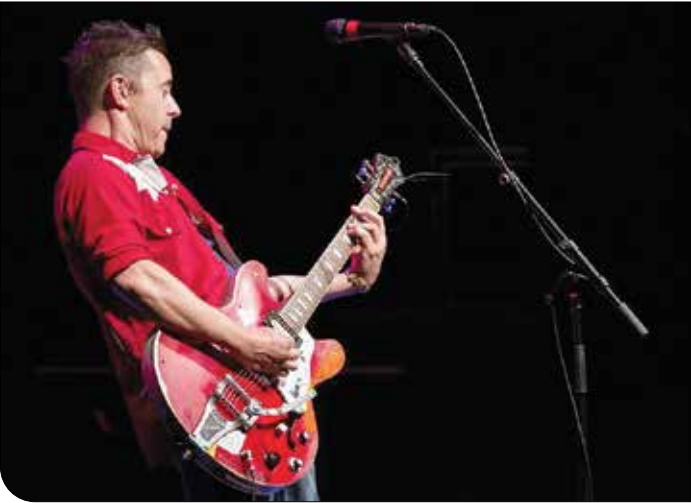
By Steve Wildesmith

Almonte's Folkus Concert Series is back again for 2026 with a stellar lineup from near and far. As usual, our concerts will be held on the last Saturday of January, February, March and the second last Saturday of April. This year's dates are January 31, February 28, March 28 and April 18.

We are truly honoured to have the use of the incredible Almonte Old Town Hall as our venue again this season. Our series is a "listening room" seated format, with refreshments available before the show and during the breaks.

We take great care in selecting artists that are interesting, musical and entertaining. We take the time to make sure all the artists understand the incredible acoustics of our room that allow them to perform with barely any amplification. We also encourage performers to come out after the show and say hello to the audience.

It is a very special experience. The season will open January 31 with a lovely 6-piece ensemble from right here in the Ottawa area. **Amos the Transparent** is a truly original group featuring cello, guitars, keys and percussion. They will be playing a lively set of material from their extensive repertoire of original songs, and maybe the odd cover, which is always a real treat because they make them their own.



The 2026 season of Folkus concerts includes the dynamic and talented Danny Michel

Amos will perform two sets, one featuring songs from their latest recording due to be released this coming December.

Our February show will feature the amazing **Weber Brothers** — a duo (sometimes trio) from Peterborough who are joyful and musical. The Weber brothers always make for an animated and entertaining evening that is not to be missed. They will have Carleton Place singer-songwriter Don Bray open their set. Don has released six records to date, is an amazing guitar player, and writes beautiful songs. He will be a great complement to the Weber Brothers.

March brings a genuine character and incredible songwriter, a JUNO winner and all-around fascinating performer, all the way from Canada's East Coast. **Old Man Luedecke** will keep our hearts warm and play songs that are musical, charming, and witty. Heather Adeney will open this show. Heather is a genuine treasure from the Almonte area folk scene whose songs have been played on *Canadian Spaces* many times.

The season finale will feature a longtime Canadian favourite, a songsmith in a league of his own, **Danny Michel**. One of Canada's folk music treasures, Danny's songs come from many different perspectives and his lyrics are thoughtful and engaging without being too serious — a genuine accomplishment. Add to that his remarkable musicianship combined with his positive and infectious banter, and you have a wonderful and memorable evening. Opener Matt Moodie is an accomplished singer-songwriter with a soulful voice and songs about real life; a wonderful complement to Danny Michel.

Season passes will go on sale November 1 through Tickets Please ([TicketsPlease.ca](http://TicketsPlease.ca), 485-6434), and are \$150 plus fees. Individual show tickets will go on sale December 15 this year. Prices will be posted at when the season tickets go on sale.

Looking forward to seeing everyone again!  
— Steve Wildesmith is Folkus's Artistic Director

# Open House at the Museum of Nature

## Free Event Showcases Canada's National Natural History Collections

Fall is a wonderful time to get outside and appreciate the wonders of nature. It's also the time for another nature-inspired tradition, one that will amaze and delight anyone who marvels at the diversity of life and the evolution of the planet.

On Saturday, October 18, the Canadian Museum of Nature opens the doors to its national research and collections facility, the Natural Heritage Campus, located at 1740 Pink Road in Gatineau, Quebec.

This free event, which has taken place annually since 2013 (except for two years of "virtual video visits" during the pandemic), allows the public to go behind-the-scenes and glimpse some of the museum's scientific collections of more than 15 million specimens of plants, animals, fossils and minerals, as well as a selection of rare books and nature art. Curators, researchers, collections staff and volunteers will be on hand to answer questions and share their knowledge.

Previous Open Houses at the Natural Heritage Campus have attracted thousands of visitors, who can tour an area equivalent to about five NHL hockey rinks. The collections and the research undertaken at the museum provide fundamental evidence and knowledge to study the biological and geological diversity of Canada and other parts of the world.

Each year, the museum's collections are accessed by hundreds of researchers across Canada and around the world to address questions about environmental change over time, biodiversity loss, species at risk, climate impacts, and a host of other scientific issues.

Among this year's highlights, you can see dinosaurs and other fossils collected by museum scientists from fieldwork projects, then roam through the National Herbarium of Canada where plants of all kinds are pressed and preserved, including lichens, seaweed and mosses.

In the Large Skeleton Room you can marvel at the wall of antlers, whale bones and animal skeletons, then visit the Wet Vertebrate Lab which includes reptiles, amphibians and fishes. The invertebrate collection allows for up-close inspection of tiny pinned insects, colourful corals and other creepy crawlies that account for much of Earth's biodiversity. Learn how the museum is digitizing scientific data from its collections to share biodiversity information globally.

You can even enjoy selections from the Rare Book and Nature Art collections and engage with museum partners, including Environment and Climate Change Canada, Kitigan Zibi Guardians, Polar Knowledge Canada, the Students on Ice Foundation, and the Geological Survey of Canada.

The event is free, but visitors should reserve timed tickets to ensure a spot. Tickets will be available as of Monday, October 6, and can be reserved at [nature.ca/openhouse](http://nature.ca/openhouse), which also has information about the location, free parking, what you can expect upon arrival, and other details. Visiting hours are from 10AM until 4PM, with the last slot starting at 2:45PM.



# An Open Letter to Prime Minister Carney on the EV Pause

Dear Mr. Carney,

I'm writing this as I sit in the waiting room of my auto dealership, having brought my car in for its 60,000km service.

A month ago, you paused the implementation of the mandate requiring auto manufacturers to sell a certain number of EVs by certain dates in Canada. You did this in part because of pressure from the Canadian auto manufacturing sector, and in part because China had put tariffs on Canadian canola exports in retaliation for Canada's tariffs on Chinese EVs.

by Sue Brandum

I was certainly disappointed, as were many Canadians who are deeply concerned about the climate crisis and who had high hopes for you as a leader who understands how severe that crisis is.

But we live in hope, and so we want to hope that your re-evaluation in this pause will result in stronger — not weaker — action for the climate.

Representing Climate Network Lanark (a grassroots organization with 1200 supporters) and many others in our community, I have some ideas for you to consider in this re-evaluation.

Two critical things we know absolutely from our supporters:

1 – Many people want to buy EVs, but the cars are just too expensive.

2 – The charging network across the country needs to continue to be improved quickly.

## People Want to Buy EVs

CNL has organized shows of our supporters' EVs around the County, presented ourselves at community events on EVs, and hosted excellent presentations from the EV Council of Ottawa. We know there is strong interest in EVs. Those of us who own them are regularly stopped by strangers with questions. The notorious first question: "What range do you get?" My notorious answer is always: "Better than my bladder." And the conversation goes from there.

Recent polls support these local observations. Some 45% of Canadians are interested in buying some sort of EV, either full battery or hybrid. And a Nanos Research survey with CTV News found 62% either support or somewhat support removing a 100% tax on all Chinese-made EVs, in the hopes that China may remove tariffs against Canadian crops like canola.

I can personally attest to that. I posted a comment on Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew's Facebook page in response to China's imposition of tariffs on canola. I said Canada should allow Chinese EV auto manufacturers into Canada to establish assembly plants, that our companies and workers could learn about EVs in the same way Chinese companies had learned about tech from Apple setting up manufacturing in China.

I was floored by the response I had to my post. Some 150 positive responses and only about 10 negative, with virtually everyone saying they wanted to buy an EV but they were too expensive. The demand is there.

People are getting the message that maintaining an EV is a lot simpler and less costly than maintaining an internal combustion engine car. In fact, I didn't need anything at my 60,000 km service call. I have a 2022 Hyundai Ioniq 5. It's coming on 4 years old, and a stranger commented recently that it looks new.

## Expanding the Charging Network

People who don't have EVs don't understand how disruptive and transformative the notion of charging at home is — not having to go to a gas station. There are 3 levels of charging:

Level 1 is the same as plugging in a regular appliance. To charge my car this way might take 1.5 days. But it's fine if I'm not leaving home very often.

Level 2 is a common charger at home and in many, many, many commercial sites across the country. I happily charge my car overnight, scheduled to start at midnight to take advantage of the cheap electricity rate of 2.6 cents/kwh, as opposed to the regular rate of about 16 cents/kwh. It takes a few hours. I'll

use a commercial Level 2 charger if I only need a bit while travelling or if I'm stopped for a while — for example, overnight at a hotel. These are also great for commuters who can charge at their place of work.

Level 3 is a "fast" charger. These are critical for long-distance travel. In my car, I can get from 20% to 80% charge in about 20 minutes, or just enough time to empty that bladder and get a coffee. It's these fast chargers that we need a lot more of, Mr. Carney. This is a nation-builder project! We have excellent models — Circuit Electrique in Quebec is absolutely fabulous. Other networks are improving. And the Tesla network is opening to non-Tesla vehicles. But frankly, we need to be able to charge in Wawa.

Fundamentally, we need the electricity supply to support the conversion to EVs (and heat pumps). What most people don't understand is that both those technologies, in using electricity, use much less (25-50%) energy than similar technologies burning fossil fuels. This is the real nation-builder project! We need to seriously ramp up renewables.

Here in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville we have been called the Solar Capital of Southern Ontario. We have at least 17 solar farms, and in my own lower-tier municipality, there are proposals for two more. And there is a BESS — Battery Energy Storage System — being built in Mississippi Mills. We need more of these so we can manage some of our own electricity supply here in our community and not be dependent on the big lines from the Pickering nuclear power station.

Here's the bottom line, Mr. Carney: led by China, the world is going electric. In 2025, 1 in 4 new automotive vehicle sales globally were expected to be an electric — either fully electric or a plug-in hybrid. In China, the world's largest car market, more than half of all new vehicle sales are electric. The International Energy Agency has reported that two-thirds of fully electric cars in China are now cheaper to buy than their gasoline equivalents.

We don't want to be hanging our star to a fading one to the south of us. We're not stupid, we're well aware of the integration of the Canadian, US and Mexican auto industries, of how Canada consumes about the same number of vehicles that it exports — 1.8 million — making our economy so dependent on exports, and of course we are aware of the chaos the US government is creating in that sector.

But this is an opportunity for us. If we don't drop the tariffs on Chinese EVs, please at least enable the import of European EVs and set us on a path to less expensive Canadian-assembled EVs in quick order.

Developments in safety and batteries are galloping forward, and we risk losing out completely.

A new EV strategy must help facilitate Canadians buying them, a better and stronger charging network, and an R&D component that takes advantage of what we have already done — witness the Canadian Arrow EV.

The Canadian Automotive Parts Manufacturers Association, with 60 partners and suppliers, produced Canada's own electric vehicle this year, fittingly named The Arrow <projectarrow.ca>. In other words, we know we can do it, we have the brains, the businesses, all the parts we need to do this. Clearly, we have an industry that knows where the future lies and wants to be a player, not a follower. Talk about a nation-building project!

Quite frankly, Mr. Carney, I am fed up with the anti-EV campaign of the oil and gas industry (well documented by DeSmog Blog) and the misleading information from that industry.

Please, use this pause to deeply explore how we can establish a strong EV assembly system that provides Canadians with the cars they can afford and a charging network that works for all of us — and dramatically cuts the contribution of transportation to the climate crisis.

Thank you, Mr. Carney.

Yours sincerely,

— Susan Brandum, Co-founder and Director of Climate Network Lanark

PS. I would be negligent if I didn't acknowledge that a critical step to addressing the climate crisis and transportation as the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions is to seriously ramp up public transit,



Pictured above is an image from Project Arrow <projectarrow.ca>, Canada's first zero-emission concept vehicle

but I'm addressing EVs in this article. Watch for an article to come on the Transportation Feasibility study underway by Lanark County and CNL's advocacy for micro-transit, now adopted in North Grenville and Pembroke.





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Directed by Ron Gardner, assisted by Marianne Black

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# A Lifetime of Collecting

A new exhibit is coming to the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum on October 18. Entitled *A Lifetime of Collecting Part 2: Canadian Handwoven Overshot Coverlets from the Dennis and Sylvia Mills Collection*, this exhibit is guest curated by Danielle Marshall. Coverlets from the MVTM’s collection will be displayed from October 18 to December 20, and the show opening will take place on October 18 from 1–4PM.

Dennis and the late Sylvia Mills can trace their roots back to long-established Ontario families. Meeting when they were both secondary school teachers, they began a life of collecting together. Dennis had been a serious collector of Canadiana since his teen years, with a special fascination with handwoven textiles, while Syliva’s engagement with fabric had manifested in her own collection of vintage clothing and fashion accessories. Both these avid collectors moved beyond simply acquiring objects and became committed to researching and showcasing them through conferences, seminars, and special exhibitions. As Dennis says, “collecting is not about gathering (or hoarding) artifacts, but unveiling the stories within and around them.”

Dennis Mills’ collection of Canadian handweaving was inspired by the work of Royal Ontario Museum curators Dorothy and Harold Burnham, whose research on Canadian handweaving culminated in their seminal 1972 exhibit and publication of the same name, *Keep Me Warm One Night: Early Handweaving in Eastern Canada*. The Textile Museum recently acquired Dorothy Burnham’s papers, and a group of volunteers contacted Dennis to explore the possibility of borrowing some of his artifacts for an exhibition of Canadian handweaving related to the Burnham archive. This, in turn, led Dennis to consider donating his comprehensive and well-documented collection to the Museum, beginning with 19<sup>th</sup>-century jacquard coverlets and this second installment of



A new exhibit at the Textile Museum features Canadian handwoven overshoot coverlets

these beautiful overshoot coverlets. Dennis focused on acquiring high-quality examples, documenting their provenance, and preserving the stories of the weavers. Notable weavers represented in this exhibit include Samuel Fry of Niagara, John Campbell of Komoka, Charles Irvin of Mount Charles, and Peter Fritz of Selby. These pieces highlight regional weaving traditions that are often overlooked today.

Everyone is invited to the opening on October 18. More information can be found at <[mvtm.ca](https://mvtm.ca)>.

# Learning Again in Almonte Musical Offerings Answer Common Questions

By Jane Ellens

Last year Dr. Mark Wilkinson presented a course on the human voice for Learning Again in Almonte (LAIA) that I, quite frankly, thought would never interest me in a million years. Since others on the committee were keen, I arranged to meet with him. On being exposed to his enthusiasm, charm and mindboggling depth of knowledge, all my reservations were set aside and, like everyone who attended the course, I was mesmerized. The clamour to have him back was deafening, so this fall he will return with one workshop and one course to answer the following questions:

**I love to sing, but find that my voice is now as reliable as that of a 13-year-old boy. What can I do?**

On Monday October 6, from 7–9PM, Dr. Mark will give a workshop called **Why Does My Voice Wobble?**, which will explain why your voice, as it ages, can develop a wobble, blindside you with unpredictable hoarseness, or peter out due to diminishing breath stamina. Once the why is addressed, he will guide you through practical exercises to reclaim what you thought you had lost or prevent you from losing it in the first place. I’m looking forward to, if not being invited to Carnegie Hall, at least not enraging neighbours with my shower rendition of *Gonna Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair*. Who knows where those of you with better foundations than mine will find themselves?

**What the heck is the big deal about opera?**

At 18, I was dragged off to *La Traviata* on a first-year English Lit course, which confused me because they were singing in Italian! I bolted before the second act to find “music of relevance” at The Horseshoe Tavern. Hopefully gaining a modicum of wisdom in the ensuing years, I did begin to wonder what I was missing. Such an abiding art form with legions of devoted fans must have something more to offer than the unschooled youth in me had been able to see. So, for four Mondays evenings from October 20 to November 10, Mark will return with **Horns, High Notes & Heroes: A Neophytes Guide to the Opera**. You will discover for yourself why this

seemingly inaccessible musical genre has endured over many generations and ignites so much passion in its devotees.

In session one, Mark will introduce us to opera’s beginnings and its foundations in theatre, music and literature. In the second session we will look at the Baroque and Classical period when the form flourished in the hands of Handel, Mozart and the great Italians. Session three will look at opera’s grandeur, where we will dive into the period that made it seem so high-fallutin’ and unattainable as we search for meaning and universal truths in a grand art form. In the fourth and final session Mark will explore opera’s modern take and impact on popular culture (surely we all remember that Bugs Bunny episode...). We will discover how opera is a bigger part of our lives than we think, and how it has influenced modern culture in ways that we never imagined.

Dr. Mark Wilkinson is one of Canada’s foremost baritone soloists and voice teachers who happens to call West Carleton home. Dr. Mark’s beautiful voice, truthful acting, singular musicality, disarming personality, and gift for collaboration have earned the respect of colleagues and audiences worldwide. His remarkable broadcast début came with Soundstreams Canada and Maria Guinand at the tender age of 21, followed very quickly by a creative collaboration with Margaret Atwood on the North American premiere of *The Year of the Flood* for the Ottawa International Writers Festival. He was also asked by PDQ Bach himself (Peter Schickele) to perform at Music and Beyond. Innumerable performances around the world have followed.

Mark’s broad understanding, along with his enthusiastic and sometimes irreverent communication of the subject matter, have made him a popular speaker on all things music, and we are delighted that his affection for this community has encouraged him to return to Learning Again in Almonte. We hope you will come and experience this magic for yourself.

To learn more, visit <[learningagainalmonte.ca](https://learningagainalmonte.ca)> or register directly at Tickets Please ([TicketsPlease.ca](https://TicketsPlease.ca), 485–6434).



# Entertainment on Tap at Puppets Up! Fall Chautauqua

By Susan Macaulay

The line-up for November's Puppets Up! Chautauqua Variety Show looks exactly as producer Jane Torrance and director Kris Riendeau had hoped it would: diverse, predominantly local, energized (and energizing) and, most important, full of fun.

"We've got singers (a barbershop quartet, a couple of soloists and a small choir), highland dancers, stand-up comedy, a local poet reciting one of her favourite poems by a famous Canadian, and, not surprisingly, a couple of outstanding puppeteers," Kris says. "And 80 percent of the acts are local, which is precisely what we were aiming for."

Almonte hosted its first Chautauqua back in 2005.

"The Riveredge Festival (now defunct) produced a Chautauqua, and it was the first time that many of us had ever heard the word! It was the brainchild of our dear friend Reva Dolgoy, and we wanted to honour her memory and continue the legacy," Jane explains. "It was a huge success the first time around, and we thought it would be fun to revive it and raise some money for next year's Puppets Up! International Puppet Festival, which will be happening in Almonte on the weekend of August 8 and 9, 2026"

The history of Chautauquas goes way beyond Almonte, and way back to the late 1800s.

According to <Chautauqua.com>, "Chautauqua is a Haudenosaunee word with multiple meanings, including 'a bag tied in the middle' or 'two moccasins tied together.' The word describes the shape of Chautauqua Lake, located in southwest New York, which was the setting for the Chautauqua Institution, the first educational assembly in what became a significant movement at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century."

The site goes on to say that the founders' intent was purely secular and educational and that the institution soon became "nationally known as a centre for rather earnest, but high-minded, activities that aimed at intellectual and moral self-improvement and civic involvement." A precursor to the more recent worldwide TED movement, perhaps?

While there is a very slight informational aspect to some of the Puppets Up! Chautauqua acts, this variety show is clearly focussed on fun, entertainment and community.



The Puppets Up! Chautauqua Variety Show will feature singers, dancers, comedians, and even an alien named André (shown here with his human, Bobby Knauff)

"The content will all be PG-13, and while we didn't specifically set out to prioritize gender and age diversity, lo and behold the show is really well balanced," adds Kris. "We have an equal number of female and male performers ranging in age from 19 to 69. Some came to us through our September auditions and others by invitation, and all of them are wonderfully talented. Audiences will be amazed at the vocal prowess of ADHS student Maggie Boughner, and we even have an alien who will knock your socks off," she chuckles, in reference to Bobby Knauff's comedic puppet partner Andre the Alien. See Bobby and Andre in action at <youtube.com/watch?v=3Uins2A1pSM&t=65s>.

Hosts-with-the-mosts Jon and Patti Lockhart will keep things moving along hilariously (with help from a few special latex guests), and audiences will even be treated to a few sponsor "jingles" in three-part harmony.

Shows will take place at 2PM and 7:30PM on Saturday, November 15, and tickets are only \$25 plus fees from Tickets Please (TicketsPlease.ca, 485-6434). See you there!

## Fall Fling Fibre Art Show

On Friday, October 24 and Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup>, from 10AM to 4PM, the Out of the Box Fibre Artists are holding their popular Fall Fibre Fling Art Show at Kitchissippi United Church, located at 630 Island Park Drive in Ottawa. Admission is free, with monetary donations gratefully accepted for the Ottawa Food Bank.

The two-day art show and sale will showcase the fibre art of nearly 100 artists from Ottawa and the surrounding areas — offering a range of works including embroidery, felting, wall hangings, purses, silk scarves, and cards.

"Visitors feel a personal connection to our artworks," says Sandy Goldsmith, co-chair of Out of the Box. "They are inspired not only by the textures, materials, and techniques but also by the ways diverse ma-

terials evoke memories and emotions that connect them to our themes and subjects. Our visitors welcome the opportunity to find treasures and wonderful gifts for the holiday season."

Several artists will be on hand to share insights into fibre art and offer demonstrations on various techniques. You will have the chance to meet machine and hand embroiderers, art quilters, weavers, felters, doll makers, embellishers, silk painters, beaders, dyers, book artists, mixed-media creators, and other fibre artists.

"This is our 17<sup>th</sup> year of showcasing fibre art," adds Goldsmith. "Our events continue to grow every year and the breadth of work by our artists is amazing. Every time I am amazed by their creativity and skill. We invite you to come and enjoy the art."

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