

# OUTLOOK

Owen Sound & District Chamber of Commerce

## LOCAL ARTISTIC CREATIVITY

Immerse yourself in all the creativity around you, enjoy it and learn from it. The following evidence just scratches the surface of our community's widespread artistic expression.

## FILLING THE ARTISAN GAP

The Georgian Bay Centre of the Arts (GB Arts) fills the gap. It's what's called a 'community access makers space' in Owen Sound that provides workshops and open studio spaces for individuals interested in the arts.

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SPRING 2022 / Issue 7



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## FILLING THE ARTISAN GAP

We can all agree that creating and sharing beautiful art works makes the world a more enjoyable, less stressful place. But mastering a medium of choice and building a career in art is not easy.

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## LISA MACLEOD MESSAGE FROM ONTARIO MINISTER OF HERITAGE, SPORT, TOURISM AND CULTURE

Our heritage, sport, tourism, and culture industries draw visitors to Ontario while showcasing our diversity and history that enrich the local quality of life in communities like Owen Sound and beyond.

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## ONTARIO STAYCATIONS GET A WELCOME BOOST

Did you know that the Ontario government has introduced a temporary tax credit encouraging residents and families to take short-term trips within the province to stimulate the tourism?

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## NEW MEMBERS

Look whose joined us! Read up on the new members of the Chamber.

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## JUST SAYING

Culturally what more could a person ask from a small city like this Music, arts, literature, drama, dance – we have it all!

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## OUTLOOK

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-Diana & Kyle Kirk

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# LOCAL ARTISTIC CREATIVITY REMAINS CONTAGIOUS: PASS IT ON

Local residents are all too aware of the pandemic that has punished us for more than two years. But as Covid winds down it is reassuring to see that another healthier reality has maintained its core strength through this adversity and is forging ahead. In Grey-Bruce artistic creativity continues to be contagious. Being around creative, artistic people is extremely infectious. You can just immerse yourself in all the creativity around you, enjoy it and learn from it. Consider the following evidence which just scratches the surface of our community's widespread artistic expression.

If you happened to be in Owen Sound's River District some time from mid January to mid February, did you happen to encounter a tiger – or maybe a pack of them? If so then you had the pleasure of being in the vicinity of the Grey Gallery, the Owen Sound Artists' Coop or The Georgian Bay Centre for the Arts. The outstanding Year of the Tiger art exhibition curated by Raquell Yang and sponsored by the Grey Bruce Chinese Heritage & Culture Association was hosted by Grey Gallery and featured prominently in the other two participating venues. More than 30 local artists each uniquely interpreted the fiery passion and daring of the majestic animal central to the lunar new year.

The inspiring impact of this effective collaboration on Grey-Bruce residents and on the local artistic community adds to an already overwhelming 'mountain of evidence' that local art galleries like Grey Gallery and the Owen Sound Artists' Co-op are much more than just space for retail. Together

with other artistic individuals and organizations they constitute an 'arena for culture'. As these galleries illustrate, what might be labelled the 'art industry' enables individuals to discover things about themselves and share those stories with the world. The art market is a platform for innovation, learning and conversation.

## GREY GALLERY

In 2018 Owen Sound was fortunate that rare book librarian Anne Dondertman and figurative artist John Lauglin chose to transition their successful careers from hectic Toronto. Far from retiring, the couple opted to make a significant commitment to this region's already vibrant artistic community by establishing Grey Gallery in a heritage building on 2nd Avenue East in the City's - then promising, now thriving - River District. As Anne explains the move, "John and I recognized from our Toronto experience that bigger isn't always better. What Owen Sound lacks in population size, it makes up for with a big arts scene – musicians, visual artists and writers.

Four years later the couple live and work in the charming, renovated Coates and Best building and offer ever changing curated collections including but not limited to fine art, paintings, figurative work, carvings and sculptures. A large collection of books about art includes many out of print items. The books are available for browsing and musing, not purchase. It's rewarding to John and me to push the boundaries in our exhibits and events", said Anne. "Happily art that is 'out of the ordinary' is in abundant supply among the talented artists in our adopted community."

Both owners take seriously what they see as Grey Gallery's role as a 'gathering space' for local and sometimes visiting artists and clients. "Social interaction, dialogue and enjoyment are essential ingredients in a successful gallery", observed Anne. "Much of this has been hampered by Covid restrictions so we have had to be creative in this regard as well. Our adjacent garden and proximity to River District events have been wonderful in enabling us to facilitate outdoor exhibits and socializing – weather permitting of course."

*continued on page 7*





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## LOCAL ARTIST CREATIVITY - continued

### OWEN SOUND ARTISTS' COOP

The Owen Sound Artists Co-op has nurtured local artists with remarkable success since 1994. One prominent beneficiary of this stimulating artistic environment, among many others, is the Co-op's current manager Jana Miller, who was welcomed to Co-op membership as a young artist through juried evaluation while still in high school. "Having been a member artist for 22 of the Co-op's 27 years, I truly consider many of our past and present members to be family", she said recently. Echoing that thought, former member Steve Irvine, who was one of the Co-op's founders, recently described the Co-op affectionately as a community within the Grey Bruce arts community.

Located in the historic McKay building on 2nd Avenue East, the Artists' Co-op features the work of 45 local member artists and artisans who live and work in both Grey and Bruce Counties. Media represented include ceramics, glass, jewellery, metal, painting, photography, stamp collage, textiles, wood and beeswax candles. There is always an artist on duty when you visit, and most members are able to speak with passion and authority about their fellow members' creations.

Local residents and tourists are drawn to the uniqueness of the space and the vast array of quality art and crafts created by Co-op members. Many visitors are intrigued by a recent addition to the space, a 'funky' Food Gallery which displays and sells locally produced, non-perishable food products and natural body products. Among many regular, forward-looking initiatives the Co-op hosts monthly guest artists and displays exhibitions frequently in the spectacular Legacy Gallery. Covid slowed this outreach somewhat over the past two years but Co-op members persevered resiliently and have emerged relatively unscathed.

To best showcase the history of the McKay Building, Co-op members found and now highlight items from the old department store in its bustling heyday. At the front of the attractive space, there's a display case with fascinating antique merchandise. Particularly enticing is the old, originally water-based, money rail hanging from the ceiling. Once used to deliver change to cash customers, it was an ingenious conveyance long before email transfers and debit cards spelled its demise.

After graduating from the Jewellery and Metals Program at Georgian College in Barrie, Jana Miller returned to Owen Sound and applied her learning at a local jewellery store for several years before taking on her manager role. She draws on nature for inspiration, using everything from vintage beads to watch parts, and gives new life to scrap silver and gold. Based on her own life-altering youthful experience one of Jana's personal priorities over the nine months she has been Manager has been to rejuvenate the Co-op's efforts to engage more local young people in the arts. She was instrumental in reintroducing the Next Generation Program aimed at helping emerging artists by giving them an opportunity to show and sell their work in a professional gallery setting. To participate, a young artist must be between the ages of 14 and 24 and reside in Grey or Bruce counties.

Clearly, Grey Gallery and the Owen Sound Artists' Co-op each embodies an almost magical combination of artistry, entrepreneurship and collaboration. What's particularly evident as a common denominator is the underlying passion for art and for the Grey-Bruce community. Passion and imagination inspire hard work which leads to tangible creative results. People notice and enjoy. It's contagious!



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# FILLING THE ARTISAN GAP

Creating and sharing beautiful art works makes the world a more enjoyable, less stressful place. But mastering a medium of choice and building a career in art is not easy. Someone may have natural talent, but without training and guidance their raw skills may not take them very far. In Owen Sound that's where The Georgian Bay Centre of the Arts fills the gap. It's what's called a 'community access makers space' that provides workshops and open studio spaces for beginner and experienced individuals interested in arts and crafts. Founded by Morag Budgeon and Alan McIntosh in 2019, GB Arts is further proof that Owen Sound punches far above its weight when it comes to the arts.

The creativity of Budgeon, a jewelry maker, and McIntosh, who works in metal, has taken many exciting forms. They are skilled artists, entrepreneurs and social advocates who have persevered successfully over the past four years through starting a business, acquiring and renovating a heritage building, coping with the pandemic, serving their community, and, especially, inspiring and empowering the next generation of local fine artists and artisans. They even offer delectable treats in the aptly named Palette Café, tucked into the former Kresge Department Store at 938 2nd Ave East.

Currently the Centre is home to about 20 classes monthly. These workshops provide learning opportunities to both adults and youngsters. Accomplished local artists and artisans provide insight and hands-on experience in media such as pottery, printmaking, stained glass, painting, metal work, fibre arts, and jewellery.

While GB Arts' workshops cross the full artistic spectrum Budgeon and McIntosh explicitly give highest priority to crafts. About 75 percent of classes are craft based in specialized studios, with the rest allocated to fine arts. This focus is motivated by their perception that craft is frequently under-

valued. As Morag puts it: "Too often craft has been characterized as superfluous and fluffy so Alan and I have chosen to give craft back its well-deserved gravitas."

"The fundamental goal of our not for profit organization is to give more to our community than we take", said Alan. "Having this Centre as a space to be creative, to meet people, to come and engage in artistic pursuits, that's a social enterprise at its best because it helps our community. After all that we have been through, it's so exhilarating to be in close proximity with fellow artists and thriving again".

Looking forward, Morag and Alan share an optimistic vision of Owen Sound's artistic future. If over the next few years GB Arts, the Artists' Co-Op, Grey Gallery and many other community partners can continue to collaborate to attain a critical mass of outstanding artists and artisans, they believe the clear opportunity exists for the 'Scenic City' to follow the path of artistic centres like Banff and Haliburton. "Any significant upswing in the arts sector has a tsunami effect on the local economy, impacting hugely the service sector, retail, hospitality, and tourism industries." We can do the same.



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# MESSAGE FROM ONTARIO MINISTER OF HERITAGE, SPORT, TOURISM AND CULTURE – LISA MACLEOD



As Ontarians, we take pride in our province's world class institutions and attractions, extraordinary tourism and cultural experiences, and sport and recreation activities. Our heritage, sport, tourism and culture industries draw visitors to Ontario, while showcasing our diversity and history that enrich the local quality of life in communities like Owen Sound.

Throughout the pandemic I have leaned on my friend and colleague Bill Walker who has been a constant source of advice and information. He continually keeps me informed of the evolving situation in your community, has been a tremendous advocate for all things heritage, sport, culture and tourism in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and has been an incredible tour guide of your community in the last two years. From the Owen Sound Attack to the Tom Thomson Art Gallery, he consistently showcases why people love to live, work, play and visit Owen Sound.

For Ontarians, the impact of the pandemic has been undeniable on our lives and livelihoods. We've been faced with a triple-threat; an economic, healthcare and social crisis. Ontario's heritage, sport, tourism and culture industries were hit first, hardest, and will take the longest to recover as a result of COVID-19. Despite this adversity, it has confirmed how compassionate and resilient Ontarians are.

Since the start of the pandemic, our government has recognized the vital role of Ontario's cultural and heritage activities, and tourism and sport industries in helping our communities recover.

We have made major arts and culture investments over 2021-22 in Owen Sound through the agencies within my Ministry, providing more than \$1 million in support to cultural icons like the Georgian Bay Symphony, the Billy Bishop Museum, the Owen Sound Little Theatre, and the Georgian Bay Folk Society. Our government has also helped with capital and operating funding projects such as the Stephen Arena renovation and the Blue Water Curling Club. Funding through the 2021 Reconnect Festival and Event Program also helped support "Music at the Market" concerts that showcased local

artists, helping to generate an estimated \$210,000 in local economic activity.

Last summer, Bill and I had the pleasure of visiting Owen Sound and area where we explored the beautiful Inglis Falls Conservation Area and Sauble Falls Provincial Park. I was taken away by the breathtaking beauty of these magnificent works of nature.

That is why I am proud that all through 2022, tourists who come to visit Owen Sound can take advantage of the Ontario Staycation personal income tax credit, which helps Ontarians get up to 20 per cent back on their eligible accommodation expenses for leisure stays around the province.

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# ONTARIO STAYCATIONS GET A WELCOME BOOST

Did you know that the Ontario government has introduced a temporary tax credit encouraging residents and families to take short-term trips within the province to stimulate the tourism and hospitality sector while the pandemic winds down? Labelled the 'Ontario Staycation Tax Credit for 2022' it permits residents to claim 20 percent of the costs of accommodation, such as a hotel, motel, resort, lodge, bed-and-breakfast, cottage or campground when filing their personal Income Tax and Benefit Return for 2022.

Ontarians are eligible to claim up to up a maximum of \$1,000 as individuals or \$2,000 with a spouse/common-law partner or children yielding a credit of \$200 or \$400, respectively. This benefit can be for one or multiple trips. The stay must be under a month. "If a family of three or four plans to spend \$1000 and they learn they will get back \$200 they might end up spending the \$1200," said Tourism Minister Lisa MacLeod. "I think we'll start to see that money circulating across the province."

The tax credit will only be available for 2022 and only applies to leisure stays. Business travel is not eligible. It also does not apply to timeshare agreements, staying on a boat, train or other vehicle that can be self-propelled. However, under some circumstances Airbnb rentals can qualify.

Anyone who is an Ontario resident on December 31, 2022, is eligible to make the claim. But only one person per family can do so. For further information go to:  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-staycation-tax-credit>



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER



*Diane Austin CEO*

The Chamber Annual General Meeting is happening on April 21, 2022 at Cobble Beach Golf Retreat & Inn. Our guest speaker is Rocco Rossi, CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. We are very fortunate to have Mr. Rossi agree to speak at our Annual meeting and I am looking forward to what his thoughts are for the future of Chambers and small business.

This is a time we will say goodbye to some of our directors and hello to new ones.

Always at this time of year it is a double-edged sword, sadness for the wonderful people who worked on the Board as a Director or in an executive role and are leaving for new adventures. I can not express how much they will be missed.

The other is excitement for the new directors with their brand new ideas and perspectives. I look forward to what they will be bringing to our Board.

I welcome our newest members and thank our loyal members for their continuing support for 2022 and it is our hope to bring more workshops and seminars and in-person events. Let's say goodbye to Covid restrictions and move forward with bigger and better things.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD



*Marg Benedict Chair*

As Chair of the Owen Sound and District Chamber of Commerce I would like to welcome everyone to the first issue of our Outlook publication for 2022.

Working through the last two years of COVID-19 restrictions has been a challenge to the Communities & Small Businesses but we remain strong and endeavor to focus on the future.

These past two years the small businesses in our community have shown strength and resilience especially during the ups and downs of lockdowns and restrictions. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed. Thank you to our community for your outstanding support of local businesses during this time. Nothing is stronger than a community that stands together.

Thank you to the Chamber Board & Administration Office, your support, strength & wisdom keeps our local Chamber successful. 2022 will be the best year yet!

Warm regards

Marg Benedict  
Chair of Owen Sound & District Chamber of Commerce



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## Kiwanis<sup>®</sup> Club of Owen Sound

Over the past two years the Kiwanis Club of Owen Sound has continued to help strengthen our community when it was needed most. Last year alone we donated over \$150,000 to local organizations who every day improve the lives of children and their families. The global pandemic reminded us all of our connection to each other and the importance of working together to create a healthy society. As our journey toward pre-pandemic activities continues, we are seeking new members eager to find a way to help others. If you are interested in volunteering with like-minded people in fellowship and in good deeds, we are ready for you. To learn more about our efforts in the community, visit our website or join us for a meeting. Together we can make a bigger difference.

[www.kiwanisowensound.com](http://www.kiwanisowensound.com)



Guest Speaker  
Ontario Chamber of  
Commerce CEO  
Rocco Rossi

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Owen Sound & District  
Chamber of  
Commerce

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# JUST SAYING

by Dave Carr



## Everything's Right Here!

Later this year, I'll observe the 50th anniversary of my arrival in Owen Sound. I came here for my first job offer, but the fact is, I had no idea what awaited me, What I'm mostly referring to here (badly I confess), is that I'd never been to Owen Sound before, had hardly heard of it. Making a commitment up here was a truly tentative testing the waters with only my toes. But in the interval, Oh! what I found here! *Everything is here.*

Culturally what more could a person ask from a small city like this is, where this is. Music, arts, literature, drama, dance – we have it all! Me, I start with one of the most celebrated and respected public libraries in the province. And 50 years on, I just can't keep up with the innovations and services delivered by The Library. Nor have I yet fully embraced The Tom, our public art gallery from an esteemed permanent collection to fresh and compelling exhibitions along with programs beckoning every artist of every age, seemingly every day!

The Roxy Theatre may seem like just a physical showplace on 9th Street to a visitor, but to us the name shouts so much more: a vibrant, active, deep, award-winning community of artistically professional people both trodding the boards and maintaining them. Who has theatre like Owen Sound? To paraphrase a business catch-line, "Noooooobody!"


Who arrives here knowing we have a symphony orchestra? I didn't for the longest time, but that may be because it arrived the same year I did. I can only direct you to the symphony's website and its "About" page for reminders of everything from local performance, to Toller Cranston, to the Moscow Symphony. But really, if you're reading this, I suspect you know at

least one person who plays or has played in the Georgian Bay Symphony. I'll also bet you know someone in a choir!


Through the years, we've had and have mural art; public sculpture and more; we have a Poet Laureate. When I came here, Owen Sound was producing dancers who competed and won on the world stage. Today, they teach the following generations. We have recording studios producing the music of local musicians who also perform on the world stage. Pretty much every year you can visit any corner of this country, or England, or Germany or wherever and know that an Owen Sound resident musician has played there or is on their way. The best part is, they love playing right here at home.

And of course, we have all the commercial artists of every fabric whose work simply makes this a beautiful place, and us beautiful people (even when we maybe don't feel like it...)

Our collective artistic blessing is that we are not really near anything or anybody else. The TSO is *not* just down the street. Massey Hall is *not* just around the corner. We start by entertaining ourselves, and what has happened in my 50 years here is that the music, the art, the drama, the spoken and printed word ... it has all come home to Owen Sound. And it truly is an arts collective: *Everything is here!*



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## UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS

21 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
April 21, Cobble Beach at 6 pm

06 MAYOR LUNCHEON  
May 6, Best Western 12 pm

12 ALL CANDIDATES MEETING  
May 12, Harmony Centre 7 pm

Events



Check out [www.oschamber.com/event](http://www.oschamber.com/event) for more details

## GET IN TOUCH

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