

Culture in the County

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ARTS AND CULTURE IN STRATHCONA COUNTY
A DIGITAL MAGAZINE



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OF STRATHCONA COUNTY

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SPOTLIGHT

YOUR LIBRARY

Community Hub and Valuable Cultural Resource



PROFILE

BRINGING JOY TO THE WORLD THROUGH CHOCOLATE

Founder of JACEK Chocolate Couture, Jacqueline Jacek



Culture in the County is published in digital format 4 times a year by the ACCSC, a volunteer operated, registered non-profit organization. You can reach us at info@accsc.ca



"IT'S HARD TO FIND ANYONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW THAT MOZART WAS IMPORTANT. HOWEVER, IT IS HARD TO FIND SOMEONE WHO COULD TELL YOU WHO, IN THE 18TH CENTURY, WAS THE LARGEST PIPE MANUFACTURER IN AUSTRIA."

CHAIR'S NOTES

Our County is a treasure trove of talented individuals, organizations and institutions that bring a diverse and inclusive blend of heritage, entertainment, information and culturally oriented skills to enhance the quality of life for all of us who live, work and play here in Strathcona County.

Whether it be performers, artists, artisans or musicians, dancers, cultural entrepreneurs or a multitude of other cultural disciplines,

Culture in the County aims to showcase and celebrate these talents and resources that provide us all with creative artistic activity and the preservation of heritage and knowledge.



Culture in the County is published in this digital format 4 times a year by the Arts & Culture Council of Strathcona County (ACCSC). It's free of charge and we welcome your feedback and, if you feel so inspired, your contributions!

Enough said. On with our first edition, and we invite you to celebrate culture in our county along with us.

KEN DUNCAN
CHAIR

BRINGING JOY TO THE WORLD THROUGH CHOCOLATE



After a decade in business, one prominent and successful Sherwood Park business woman has never wavered from her vision: to bring joy!

Founder of JACEK Chocolate Couture, Jacqueline Jacek said she always wanted to own a business that made people happy and brought joy. That's not only about delighting the taste buds of chocolate lovers, but also ensuring a healthy ecological sustainable supply chain; supporting cacao farmers and programs that aim to eradicate abusive child labour.

Creating fine, eye catching chocolates, Jacek's business has grown in leaps in bounds from a commercial kitchen in a spare room in her basement in 2009, to retail boutiques in Sherwood Park, downtown Edmonton and Canmore, a production facility in the Park, an online store, and a team of 24 and her husband. "Since day one, bringing joy has been the vision for the business. Bringing joy is literally the 'why' of our business. I really feel like chocolate is a great canvas for joy to design colour and flavour. It really is the best product to create a joy business."

The company aims to bring joy to one million people by July 31, 2024. "If we can achieve that, I'd be thrilled. We're around 18% of the way there so we still have a lot of work to do," smiles Jacek.. "My hope is that we can also grow our Bean-to-Bar line, which is where we make chocolate right from the cacao beans because that's where we are directly impacting communities where we buy our cocoa beans from and that makes me really proud."

Typically, the company is working about six months to a year out designing collections. "Chocolate is like a fabric. There are two very different industries in chocolates; there's a chocolatier and a chocolate maker, who is essentially a textile maker. They take the raw product, the cocoa beans, and make the chocolate. The chocolatier is like the dressmaker; they buy from the chocolate maker and create the dress. That's one of the ways that fashion is infused, by the way we talk about chocolate," she said.

As a cocoanista — a chocolate designer — Jacek launches seasonal collections. Knowing that people eat with their eyes, everything has to be beautiful; the packaging and the chocolate. Jacek acknowledged her product is more expensive because of the amount of flavours packed into each piece and it's meant to be a special treat.

“We launch our products in seasons like fashion; a spring, summer and winter collection. Flavours would typically be a lot brighter in the summer and warmer and spicier in the winter.” To further explain what fine, fashionable chocolate is all about, the company began to offer inhouse tastings and most of the events on their website are already sold out until June. “The tastings are incredibly important because people don’t know what fine chocolate is, why it’s so expensive, and don’t understand how chocolate is made. For me, it was really an attempt at education. I never imagined they would be so wildly popular,” said the business owner. “They’re becoming more and more popular because I think people are interested in where their food comes from.

JACEK’s chocolates are sold in almost 50 different Canadian retail locations, most of which are located in Alberta, as well as expanding to the U.S. through online sales. Save-On-Foods actually approached her to be a part of its Eat Local Program and JACEK is in nine Save-On stores.

In 2019 the Company opened its e-commerce side of the business and that has grown by 30 to 40 per cent with about 40 per cent of their annual revenue happens in the six weeks leading up to Christmas.

For the year ahead, Jacek noted she’s not focused on growing revenues, but rather improving internally and preparing for future growth, such as a major kitchen renovation and reevaluating processes in order to prepare for new markets and exporting domestically and internationally. “We have an interest in Europe and are in conversations with England, Germany, Romania. That’s where the interest is,” she continued. “I’m excited, nervous, it’s a bit scary, but if our mission is to spread joy, we need to enter into new markets and bring more joy to more people.

Jacek has also won a slew of awards, especially in the past five years; (2015) Sherwood Park Chamber of Commerce’s Business of the Year Award, Business Leaders Award by Business in Edmonton Magazine, Global Woman of Vision from Global TV, (2016) Top 40 Under 40 by Avenue Magazine Edmonton, and Best Chocolatier in 2016 and 2017 by Avenue Magazine Edmonton.





Photo credit - Bluefish Studios

In 2018, the Company gained international acclaim by winning a silver medal in the International Chocolate Awards for the Colombia 70 per cent bar and the Costa Rica 70 per cent bar, a bronze medal for The Edmund and the Dominican Republic 90 per cent bar, and bronze medal by the Academy of Chocolate for the Dominican Republic 70 per cent bar, the Dominican Republic 90 per cent bar and The Edmund.

For other entrepreneurs, she advises to do what you love but warns that it will be a lot of work, however as Jacek states,

“At the end of the day, if you can wake up being excited about what you're doing, it will be a lot easier.”





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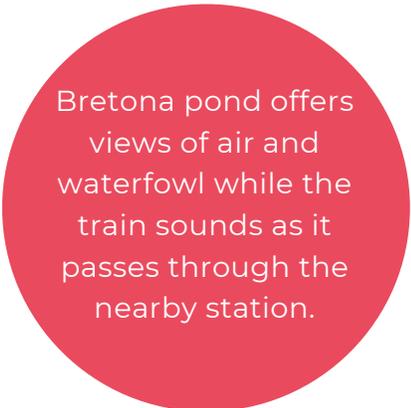
WE CALL THIS PLACE "HOME"

Nestled in the south-west corner of Strathcona County, you'll find the quaint little community of Bretona. Bretona pond offers views of air and waterfowl while the train sounds as it passes through the nearby station. The Half-Way Store (halfway between Edmonton and Cooking Lake) will provide any modest necessities and it also houses the Hercules Post Office.. To get there, follow Highway 14 until it bends, either north or east, depending on where you're coming from.

I also need to tell you when to find Bretona, not just where.

You see, if you go in 2022, you won't find it – any of it. The pond is there, but not if the weather has been too dry. To locate Bretona, you need to go sometime between 1910 and 1973. Bretona went belly up when Highway 14 divided in '73.

To find anything in the universe, you need four dimensions or coordinates: three are spatial, the fourth is time. Without all four, we wouldn't be able to find anything or anybody. When you plan to meet someone somewhere, when is an essential element. As we all know, time governs much of what we do. We are always thinking about it – how much time we have, when will be the right time, if we are running out of time, what time it is.



Bretona pond offers views of air and waterfowl while the train sounds as it passes through the nearby station.

But what is time?

Time is change in the universe. Without it, the current moment would be all there is and all that ever was. We'd have no conception of change, growth, evolution. Nothing would ever be built, nothing would fall. Time allows for the past, the past allows for history, history allows for identity.

But what is the difference between the past and history? Could it be that the past is what has happened, history is how we remember (or imagine) the past.

Undeniably, much happens that is never remembered, whether in our own personal day-to-day lives or in our collective memory. The vast majority of occurrences, and even people, that have come into being on this planet now dwell in obscurity beyond any chance of (re)discovery.

As a museum and archives, we, along with the public who bring us content, help to choose what will remain in the collective consciousness. We resist this natural flow into oblivion. We make history by actively selecting what will be remembered. This is a hearty task and one we do not take lightly.

We might conceive of history as the enfolding of time and place; it is what we remember, imagine, or dream to have happened in a particular place. From the museum's point of view, our concern is all times that occur in this given space. I would suggest that any person who calls Strathcona County 'home' might consider the same. We call this consideration of all time (past, present, and future) that occurs in a place Museum Thinking or 4th Dimensional Thinking. It raises questions like,

How do we remember those who came before us?

How will we be remembered by those who come after us?

What will we leave behind?

What will those who come after us be like, and how can we care for them even now, before they exist?

How can we care for those who have already been?

These questions impact our collections, exhibitions, educational programs and events; essentially, the stories we collect and the stories we share.

Being part of a community means engaging with that community's history – adopting it's collective memory as part of our own, much of which pertains to people and events which took place before us. We expand ourselves to include the experiences of others.

That happens through commemorative events, home-grown traditions, local history books, programs, archival collections, exhibitions.

Some cultures express 4th Dimensional Thinking explicitly, using first-person pronouns when narrating ancestral history (Zerubavel 2003: 3). Even in the modern west, we utter statements like "We got the vote in 1918" or "We've lost Medieval Days in '97."

Would we ever be so bold (or open-hearted) to make statements like, "I felt a lot of pain..." when referring to travesties suffered by our ancestors. Would we have the courage to say "I" when referring to the violence inflicted by our ancestors on others. What about when we refer to those 'others'? It seems provocative, even brazen, to consider saying "I" when we are so used to saying "they". But, perhaps that linguistic pivot would invite empathy rather than appropriation. Just a thought.

The history of this parcel of land we currently refer to Strathcona County goes far beyond its colonial identity. People have gathered here and called it 'home' for countless generations. Like them, we call this place home. Pause on that declaration for a moment.

I call this place home.

This place is my home.

This affirmation unites many across time and space within one shared identity, one common selfhood. Across all our differences, about us this one thing is the same. And it is, I would argue, the most important thing. If we're willing to permit our minds to cross the species divide, this proclamation even extends to our non-human neighbours – the flora and fauna that abound and have abounded since life first blossomed in the first pool or grew on the first rock in this corner of the planet (which I realize has shifted over its surface, of course).

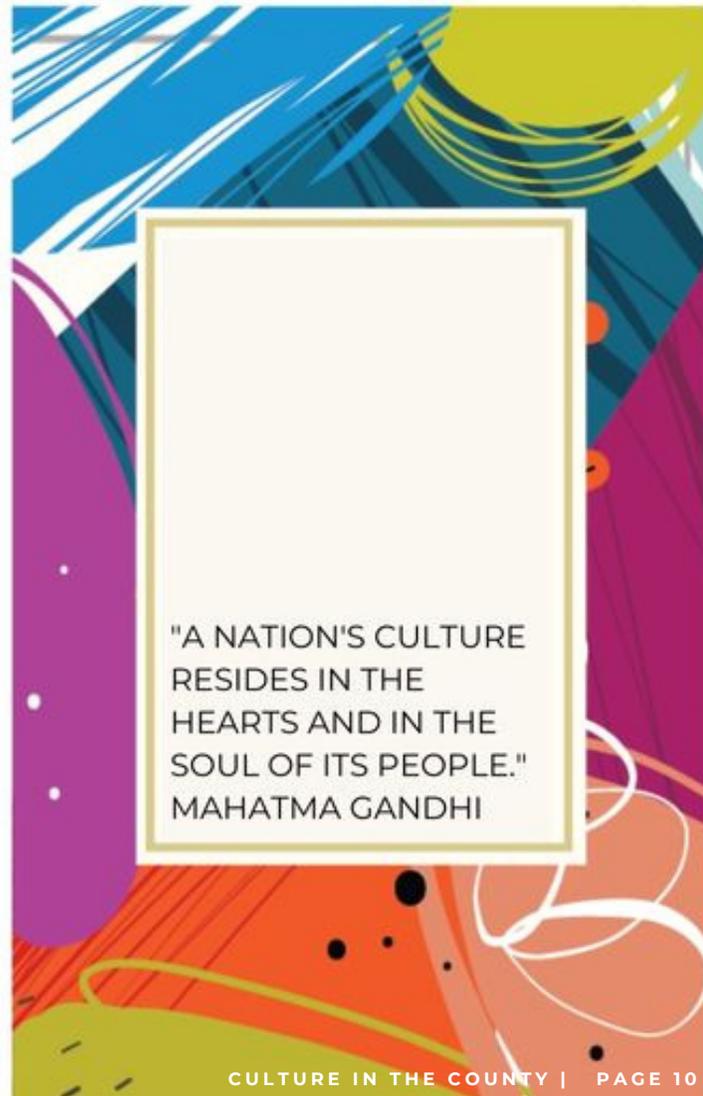
For me, this all contributes to what I refer to as The Legacy of Home. It is seeking an understanding and connection with all those who call this place home – past, present, and future. Only with that mindset can we fully experience the community we seek and build the kind of society that provides us with what we need to thrive. Human history has demonstrated that without a rich sense of connection to others - past (our ancestors), present (our family, friends, neighbours, even strangers), and future (our descendants) - we are not nurtured in the way we need to be.

Any society that fails to provide meaningful and holistic well-being will not last forever. Those who inhabit that society will suffer from its inadequacies. This necessity for connection reaches the land itself, the creatures that crawl over and through it, all the pieces that make this place.

Walk the local trails. Stare up at the sky like you used to. Kneel down and consider the ants like you used to. Smile and greet those who, like you, call this place home. Visit the museum and see what has been left behind. Think about what you will leave behind. Next time you sail down highway 14, say to yourself, "I lived in Bretona," and notice where your thoughts take you.

By Mathew Levitt, PhD, Executive Director, Strathcona County Museum & Archives

References Zerubavel, E. Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.



ADVENTURE



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HELPING YOUTH PURSUE THEIR DREAMS

The Festival Place Cultural Arts Foundation (FPCAF) continues to expand its fundraising activities to support innovative children’s and young adult programming through advocacy, grants, and scholarships. The FPCAF is a community supported organization with very much a mission:

To culturally enrich community life in Strathcona County through advocacy of performing and visual arts.

The organization has 3 fundamental goals:

1. To Strengthen and promote visual and performing arts through the development of community awareness
2. To Provide visual and performing artists with opportunities to develop and showcase their talent
3. And to Support and invest in visual and performing artists as well as the youth of Strathcona County with grants, advocacy and scholars



In 2013, the FPCAF developed the Iris Evans Scholarship for The Performing Arts. This is awarded annually to young adults pursuing a future within the arts and is worth \$1,000.

This was followed in 2018 by the Leo and Vivian Broks Dance Scholarship, also valued at \$1,000.

In addition, the FPCAF offers 8 x \$500 grants to local performing arts groups on an annual basis.

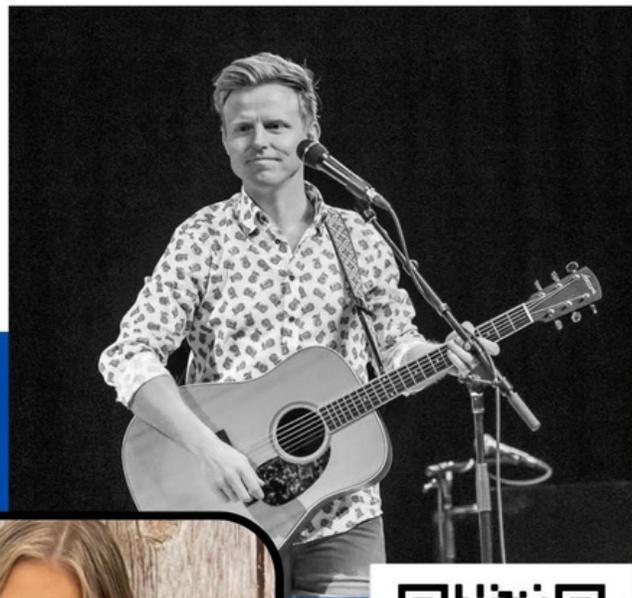
Fundraising activities have included the Black and White Gala, Festival of Trees, A Day at the Races, and a Whisky Tasting.

Their newest fundraising event is scheduled to take place on March 31, 2023, when the FPCAF presents Martin Kerr in concert at Festival Place. Buy tickets online or at Festival Place.



Presents an Evening with

Martin Kerr



SCAN ME

A fundraiser to support and invest in visual and performing artists as well as the youth of Strathcona County with grants, advocacy, and scholarships.

Samantha Wiltzen, winner of the 2022 Iris Evans Scholarship for the Performing Arts will be showcasing her talent on stage.

Friday, March 31, 2023 | 7:30 PM

Festival Place

Tickets: \$40

Purchase at Festival Place Box Office or online today!

MOONGARDEN AT MILLENNIUM PLACE FEB 17 TO MARCH 23, 2023

The world travelling public art experience, moonGARDEN, is set to land in Strathcona County for the 2023 Special Olympics Alberta Winter Games!

Positioned outside the main entrance of Millennium Place, County residents and visitors can enjoy the compelling sound and light-filled installation for two weeks only!

Since its debut at Montreal's winter festival Luminothérapie in 2012, moonGARDEN has captivated more than one million viewers of all ages from nearly every continent. Its magnificent glowing spheres have dazzled cities all over the world, including Lyon (France), Medellin (Columbia), Jerusalem (Israel), Athens (Greece), Beijing (China), and several others.

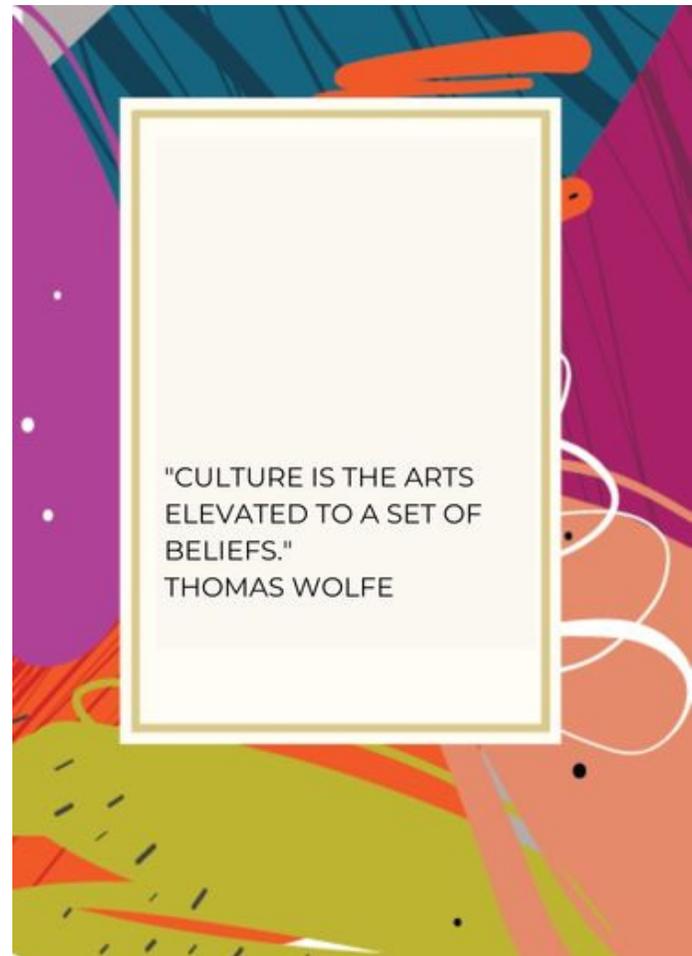


**Lucion's
moonGARDEN in
Beijing, China,
2018**

Ranging from six to 15 feet in height, two of the five giant spheres hold a unique spectacle of shadow theatre amidst a dreamy soundscape and radiant light. The shadow puppets were specially designed for the 2023 Special Olympics Alberta Winter Games to honour the commitment, perseverance, and achievement shared by Special Olympics athletes.

Like Special Olympics Alberta, inclusion is at the heart of moonGARDEN. Lucion founder and CEO, Bernard Duguay, draws a visual connection between moonGARDEN and set theory, which is a mathematical concept that uses circles to illustrate how different groups of numbers belong together. As a metaphor, set theory demonstrates that regardless of differences, there is room for everyone within a community.

Created by Lucion Media Toured by Wireframe Public Art Agency



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Custom-designed shadow theatres make moonGARDEN's exhibition in Strathcona County extra unique. Image courtesy of Lucion.

About Lucion Media

Lucion is an incorporated collective of visual artists, authors, storytellers, urban designers, interactive developers, and musicians that develop narrative environments. They draw energy from creating inspiring spaces that bridge arts, technology and sciences. Art has become their most effective ally to help reach beyond the known boundaries and create new pockets of beauty and awareness. The team blends avant-garde technologies and low-tech elements to produce theatrical-style experiences with eclectic and human dimensions. Over the last 20 years, Lucion has taken part in more than 400 artistic, museum, and corporate events.

About Wireframe

Based in Montreal, Wireframe is a public art agency that brings interactive art to cities and events all around the world. With logistical expertise and a commitment to impactful placemaking, Wireframe connects Canadian artists to an international stage.

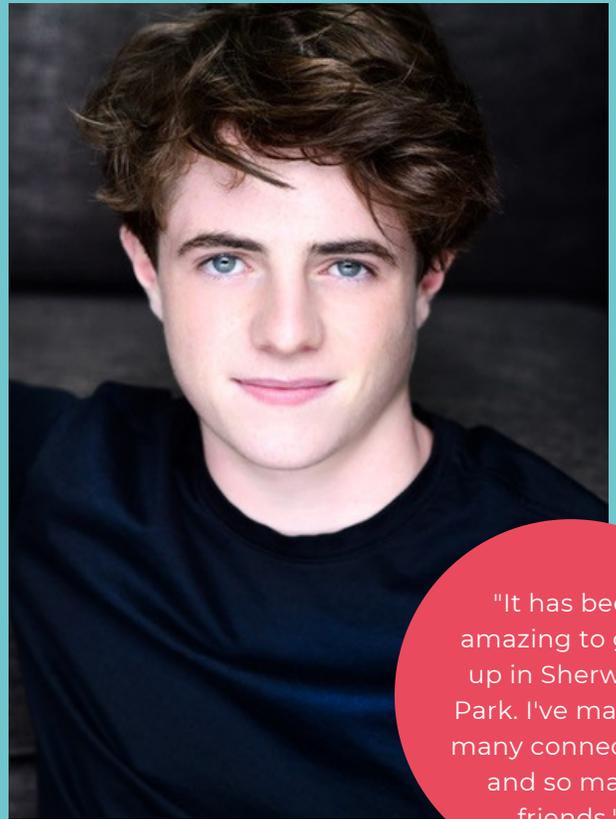
JENNY WILLSON IN CONVERSATION WITH YOUNG ACTOR AND LIFELONG SHERWOOD PARK RESIDENT, WILL BRISBIN.

On the coldest, snowiest day of 2022, Jenny Willson sat down to talk with young actor Will Brisbin. A young actor and life-long Sherwood Park resident, Brisbin has already found success in his acting journey with on-stage roles and, most recently, the leading role in a major motion picture, PAW Patrol: The Movie. Culture in the County cozies up to find out what has inspired this young actor's career so far.

JW: Will Brisbin it is so great to meet you today! Why don't we start with you telling us a little bit about yourself.

WB: Of course, I am 17, and I go to Bev Facey High School - I love it there. I've been putting a lot of focus into Bev Facey theatre. Last week we finished a run of Clue, the classic Parker Brothers Board game and two weeks before that we did a show called Holder Posey the Felonious Photographer. It's been a busy theatre season and super fun!

Coming up in the second semester, we're doing Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. I'm very, very excited about that. I also, love hockey - love the Oilers - baseball, and the Blue Jays. I'm also a huge movie fan of course.



"It has been amazing to grow up in Sherwood Park. I've made so many connections and so many friends."

JW: You grew up in Sherwood Park, can you tell us about that?

WB: I've spent my whole life here. It has been amazing to grow up in Sherwood Park. I have made so many connections and so many friends. I have nothing but good things to say about all three schools I have attended. I feel very fortunate with my education here, for sure.

JW: When did you realize you had a passion for acting?

WB: It was actually not me who realized that...it was my friend's Mom. She was talking to my Mom and said "Will has a big personality. Maybe you could channel some of that (energy) into acting classes?" So I enrolled in some classes at the Foote Theatre school at The Citadel in Edmonton, and from there I just really grew to love it.

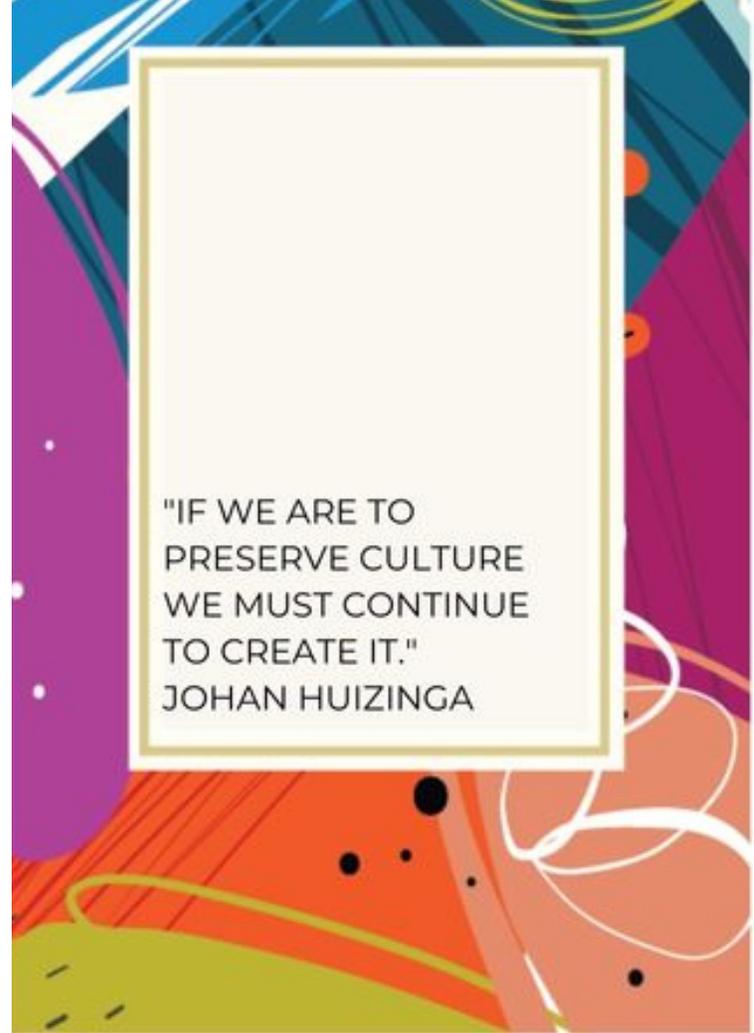
JW: You've already built up an impressive list of film and TV credits. When did you start getting serious about acting and how did you make your first step into that world?

WB: My first audition for a theatre show was when I was in second grade, so I was seven. It was for the Festival Place Christmas show, which was Oliver that year. I ended up getting a part as a little orphan, it was my first ever performance. At that point I just fell in love with theatre and from there, the rest has been history.

My first professional endeavor was in A Christmas Carol at the Citadel. I starred as Tiny Tim, which was so much fun! That was really when I started to get serious about it- even though I was only in third or fourth grade. That was the first time I thought, man... I wanna do this for the rest of my life.

I ended up performing at the Citadel for a number of years and it was an amazing experience. It made me grow as a person. It taught me so many life lessons and I made lifelong friends, and it just showed me that the industry I was going into - or would like to go into, was one that I actually could succeed in and have fun in.

"Acting should never feel like a chore, it should never feel like a job. It should just always be fun."



JW: What do you most enjoy about acting now?

WB: I've gotten to experience both worlds, the film world and the theatre world, and they are both very, very different. It's fun with theatre because with certain shows, like with Clue and with Holder Posey, which we just finished, they're very much comedically stylized and with them being theatre shows, you have a lot of freedom on stage.

But what I really love most is the real-time connection with the audience. To be able to see joy on people's faces, to make them feel different emotions. That's why I do it. I love that feeling and it makes me excel in performance when I have that connection with the audience.



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With film, you don't get that direct connection, but it's magical in so many different ways. There are so many different layers. It is such a beautiful art form to me and I just, I cannot say enough good things about both industries.

JW: How did you first step onto the silver screen - your first movie or TV show?

WB: I was around the age of nine or ten. It's been a while! I ended up starting to look for agents (laughs). I say "me", but it was my Mom. She did a lot of that work. I ended up signing on with Darrell Moore, who's an Edmonton agent, my first agent, and I was with him for a year, but I got a taste of commercial acting in some smaller TV and extra roles in film and just to break the plane at such a young age and be able to work professionally in both theatre and film was just really cool for me.

JW: You're a creative person, clearly. How do you feel like that creativity has impacted your life?

WB: Probably the amount of stories I've gotten to experience, to tell. I feel they have contributed to me having a creative brain. I love to tell stories, I love to create stories in my head and I love to map out, you know, movie ideas in my head. I owe a lot to that.

JW: Do you come from a family of creatives?

WB: Pretty much. I feel I got the acting gene from my dad's side of the family. My Grandpa was always a performer. He worked with CBC for a while, and then my Grandma was a long time educator, she worked a lot in theatre at both Bev Facey and Salisbury Comp (High Schools). So I think I definitely got that side of the family's genes (laughs).

JW: How have you been developing your skills and self as an actor?

WB: I think the biggest thing for me is just the mindset of acting. I never want to stop learning. Every time I watch a movie, or I watch a show... I learn something new. I learn a new style of acting or a new style of shooting on camera. To have an open mind, one that never stops learning is just how I think I've gotten better consistently.



Making Space at Gallery@501

Whether you're an artist, arts and culture enthusiast, or just looking for something new to experience, I encourage you to check out the arts and culture opportunities in Strathcona County. With 2023 well underway, now is the time to discover (or re-discover!) Gallery@501.

As we look back on 2022, "making space" holds many positive and powerful meanings. It's about upgrades to our physical gallery spaces, making more areas for artists to show their work. It's hosting space for art-making classes and making inclusive choices in programming. It's about hands-on participatory learning spaces in exhibits that help visitors reflect and share their perspectives. It's making our gallery visitors and art class participants feel welcome, comfortable and safe in the space. And it's about making thoughtful decisions around exhibitions, so that visitors can experience a variety of voices as we continue to grow and evolve in the diversity of artists and cultures reflected in the gallery. If you just want a quiet space to be on your own with your thoughts, or if you're looking for higher engagement and socialization with others, we've made space for that and everything in between.

For those who may not have visited us yet, Gallery@501 is Strathcona County's municipal public art gallery, located in the Community Centre at #120, 501 Festival Avenue, Sherwood Park. Our mission at Gallery@501 is to support, inspire and grow a love of the arts while providing a welcoming space for all. We host curated art exhibitions and offer art classes for all ages, school programs, group bookings, gallery memberships with great benefits for artists and art lovers, arts events, and more. Admission to the Gallery is free.

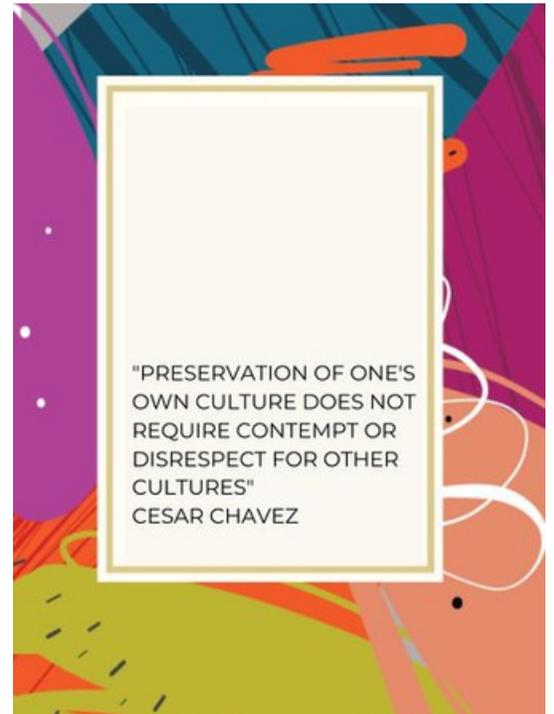


As a public art gallery, our focus is on exhibition and education. We strive to bring in exhibitions that reflect a broad diversity of stories and artists in our community, region and across Canada. Local artists are represented in Members' Shows and Member of the Month displays, along with exhibits in the Main Gallery, Foyer Gallery, and Artrium spaces. Local artists can also have their artwork included in the annual Salon Series exhibition, which is then juried for acquisition for Strathcona County's Art Collection. Gallery@501 also hosts exhibitions from artists across Canada, connecting our community with a broad range of stories and perspectives.

2022 is the first year since Gallery@501 opened in 2011 that we have expanded our exhibition spaces and moved to an annual call for exhibit submissions. This allows more artists to participate in exhibitions, more exposure for the artists, and a more inclusive range of opportunities for artists working at all stages of their careers. Beginner, emerging and professional artists can find ways to connect with this gallery community.

Gallery@501 hosted our annual Members' Show from December 9 – January 21, featuring two exhibits from Gallery members. "Sea Change: a profound transformation" featured artwork connected to the theme of a profound or notable change. Inspired by Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, the art reflected various interpretations of transformation in the artists' personal lives, materials, art styles and world events. "Flourish" showcased artwork Gallery members have created within the last two years, encompassing many themes, styles and media. From fibre art to glass, painting and sculpture, each exhibit provided a glimpse into the creative minds of 43 artists from the 501 community.

In 2022, we were fortunate to host exhibitions by many talented artists. This included Main Gallery exhibits by artists Lisa Matthias (Edmonton), Fibre Arts Network (Western Canada), Alberta Council for the Ukrainian Arts, Jason Frizzell (Calgary), and internationally renowned Denesuline artist Alex Janvier (Cold Lake First Nation, in collaboration with Janvier Gallery). Exhibits by local artists included Charlene Wildeman, Oksana Zhelisko, Jamie Panych, Judy Madden, Ting Elger, Myrna Landers, Mark Morris, Marlies Belksma, Suzan Berwald, Georgette Starko, Pamela Hodgson, Melissa Baron, Amy Cotterall, Cheryl Metcalf, Dennis Yowney, David Yowney, Shelby Willis, Joanne Guinan, Ken Duncan, Ken Hawtin, Geoff Blenkinsopp, Connie Kulhavy, Julie Kaldenhoven, and the forty-three member artists in the Members' Show.



There is a great line-up of exhibitions in the works for 2023. Artists selected through our call for submissions are from Alberta (Strathcona County, Edmonton, Calgary, Medicine Hat, Red Deer), British Columbia (Vancouver, Prince George), Newfoundland (St. John's), Ontario (Hamilton), Saskatchewan (Saskatoon) and New Brunswick (Saint John). We are excited to host exhibits from ten artists from outside Strathcona County, as they bring new stories and perspectives to our community. We are also thrilled to be offering over 200 exhibiting spots to local Strathcona County artists in 2023. With shows in the Main Gallery, Foyer Gallery, Artrium and Member of the Month, local artists are a key focus of Gallery@501's exhibitions.

Upcoming exhibitions will include themes involving personal stories of the land, art and mental health, natural and technological impacts on the environment, cultural identity, Members Shows, Salon Series acquisitions and more. New calls for submissions for 2024 will be available in early 2023.

As you look ahead in 2023, I encourage you to make space for something creative that fits for you. Take a small step or a giant leap. You don't need any art experience to walk into a gallery and have a look around. Just bring yourself or a friend and experience the stories these artists are sharing. Make space in your life for something creative and you'll find the benefits to your well-being are endless.

Stay in touch with us by signing up for the bi-weekly e-newsletter full of exhibition information, regional arts opportunities, Member of the Month highlights and more. Sign up by calling the Gallery at 780-410- 8585 or email artgallery@strathcona.ca. You can also find us on Instagram using @gallery501 or drop by the Gallery at #120, 501 Festival Avenue – hours are listed on our website www.strathcona.ca/gallery501. Wishing you and yours a warm and healthy winter, we look forward to seeing you at Gallery@501! Kris Miller, Curator Strathcona County, Gallery@501.

CULTURE PROGRAMS IN STRATHCONA COUNTY

PERFORMING ARTS

Get ready to act, dance and sing on the extravagant Festival Place stage. Our weekly classes include options for kids and teens and special programs occur for all ages seasonally. Spring, summer and fall camps immerse children in a fun, and supportive environment that develops their imagination and performance skills.



Scan to view
performing art programs

strathcona.ca/PerformingArts

VISUAL ARTS

Gallery@501

Kids, adults and seniors can get creative with watercolour and acrylic painting, needle felting, printmaking, cultural arts, and much more. Be inspired by contemporary art exhibits and engage in inspirational classes in our fully equipped studio.

Smeltzer House Visual Arts Centre

Pottery, fused glass, and mixed media classes take place within the Smeltzer House grounds where you'll refine your craft in an environment that inspires creativity.



Scan to view
visual art programs

strathcona.ca/VisualArts





Your Library: Community Hub and Valuable Cultural Resource

For more than two hundred years, public libraries have supported communities and their citizens in the quest for literacy. Your library here in the County continues that tradition and has expanded it, responding and adapting to many of the challenges of modern life.

One of the Library's important roles is to help the very youngest County residents build their early literacy skills. But there are other types of literacy they support, including: Digital literacy, or skills and confidence with online environments; Information literacy, to help weed out misinformation and disinformation; and Financial literacy, through resources to build financial knowledge and skills.

The Library has also become a community hub for people of all ages and interests, including job seekers and newcomers to Canada. On any given day, you will find residents using the Library spaces for studying, for research, for meeting up with community groups and for accessing a broad spectrum of services: free computers, printing, scanning, one-on-one technology tutorials, and more. They also offer several hundred program sessions each year on topics ranging from storytimes to robot building to winter gardening.

The Library purchases resources to support arts and culture in the community. On the first floor, there's a treasure trove of children's art books, for preschoolers to teens. On the second floor, you'll also find plenty of art, culture and color in our non-fiction collection. Starting in the 700's, several hundred books cover a full range of art-related topics, from the history of art to detailed instructional books on subjects like drawing, painting, and design. Several more can be found on our Bookmobile, including titles chosen with rural interests in mind.

Books are only a small sample of what they have to support creative expression. There's a CD collection on the second floor and their DVD collection contains independent movies as well as films in languages other than English. If you prefer to use digital formats, the library has purchased subscriptions to streaming services. You'll find new-release music on Hoopla and a wide range of classic and indie movies, as well as documentaries, on Kanopy.

If hands-on creative expression is what you're looking for there's Creativebug, an online resource that features thousands of lesson and project videos. You can learn how to decorate cakes, do calligraphy, create adorable amigurumi crochet work, make your own perfume and much, much more!

Interested in exploring other cultures through food? Check out the A to Z World Food, another online resource with more than 7000 recipes, sourced from across the globe. Or If you'd rather work with a hard-copy cookbook, you'll find a comprehensive selection of them on the second floor, opposite the public computers.



Strathcona County **LIBRARY**

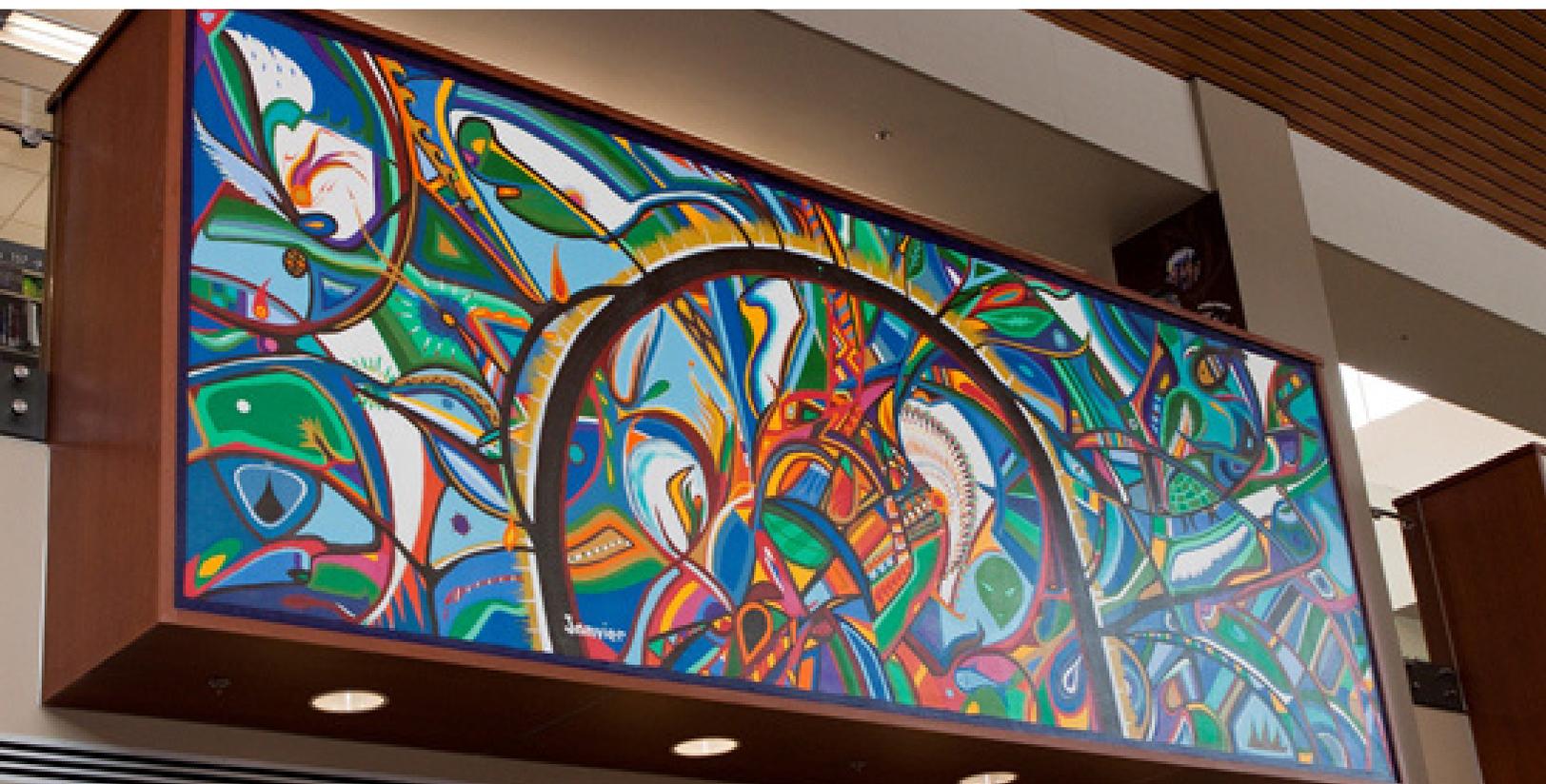
The library also has resources in multiple languages. The children's French collection is in the Discovery Zone on the first floor and works for adults can be found on the second floor. If you're interested in learning another language (or working on your English), there are language kits you can borrow, and you can also hone your skills with Pronunciator, an online language resource that's free with your library card.

If you like your art and culture in bite-size servings, the Library has been offering a variety of take-and-make craft kits on the Bookmobile and at the central library. There are multiple programs running through the year that focus on the different aspects of art and culture, and are available for both children and adults.

One of the most popular of these has been an ongoing series of art nights in rural community halls, hosted by the Bookmobile. They also offer special programs in partnership with the Gallery @ 501, including The Art Lover's Book Club, which marries a book and a related art project.

Your Library is an intrinsic and vital part of the artistic and cultural fabric of Strathcona County. There's visual art throughout the central library space, starting with two large paintings by Alex Janvier at the front entrance. These are two of a number of public art pieces commissioned for the Community Centre, and Janvier's response to the theme "Creating a Heart for Our Community."

On the first floor, by the chapter books, you'll find a small statue of Benny the Dreamer, created by internationally-acclaimed Alberta artist Okedoki, and donated to the library. The design of the preschool area of the library (called the Enchanted Forest) sprang from the imagination of professional theatre set designer, Marissa Kochanski. Marissa worked with Todd Johnson, a construction professional, to build the Reading Tree, as well as the puppet house and reading nook found in the Enchanted Forest. Their two children's programming rooms, Readmore Hall and Storybook Cottage, have also been decorated by this talented Duo.



The section of the library dedicated to elementary-aged children is called the Discovery Zone. The imaginative hand of Marissa Kochanski was also applied to this part of the Library's space, with a full-size mural on the west side wall featuring our local constellation, and "discovery rings:" small sculptures around the structural pillars, which tell an inter-connected story.

As you come up the staircase from the main floor, one of the first things you'll see is an enormous glass installation, titled park.land.home and created by the late Manola Borrajo- Giner. This is another public art installation in the Community Centre. It was inspired by the prairie landscape of Strathcona County. This beautiful piece recreates the Parkland region of Alberta in a dreamy but colorful way. In 2011, Manola also gifted the library with a smaller glass panel, created in the same style as park.land.home, which is used to commemorate library volunteers. You'll find it next to the second-floor elevator.

The talented artists of Strathcona County motivate and thrill County residents and your library can return the favour through their collections, spaces, and installations, all of which will inspire future creations.





WHAT'S MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD?

A short drive, just a few minutes east of Sherwood Park, takes you to a small acreage that is home to Michael & Kelly Thompson and their three boys. They call this acreage home, and it is also where Michael manufactures the Viking Wood Splitter. The wood splitter is quite the unique object....it looks like a huge sword. In fact that's pretty much what it is. Except the wood splitter is about 46 1/2 inches long and weighs over 10 pounds. Wow!

Michael left the family farm north of Saint Paul some 30 years ago to take up the trade of apprentice welder with a manufacture in Leduc. He spent most of his working career with the company starting as an apprentice and working his way up to superintendent. But when the oil downturn hit in 1995 the company ceased doing business. He soon found work as a superintendent on several other construction projects but these were up and down times and, once again, Michael found himself out of work.

We asked Michael how this unique piece of artisan workmanship came to be!

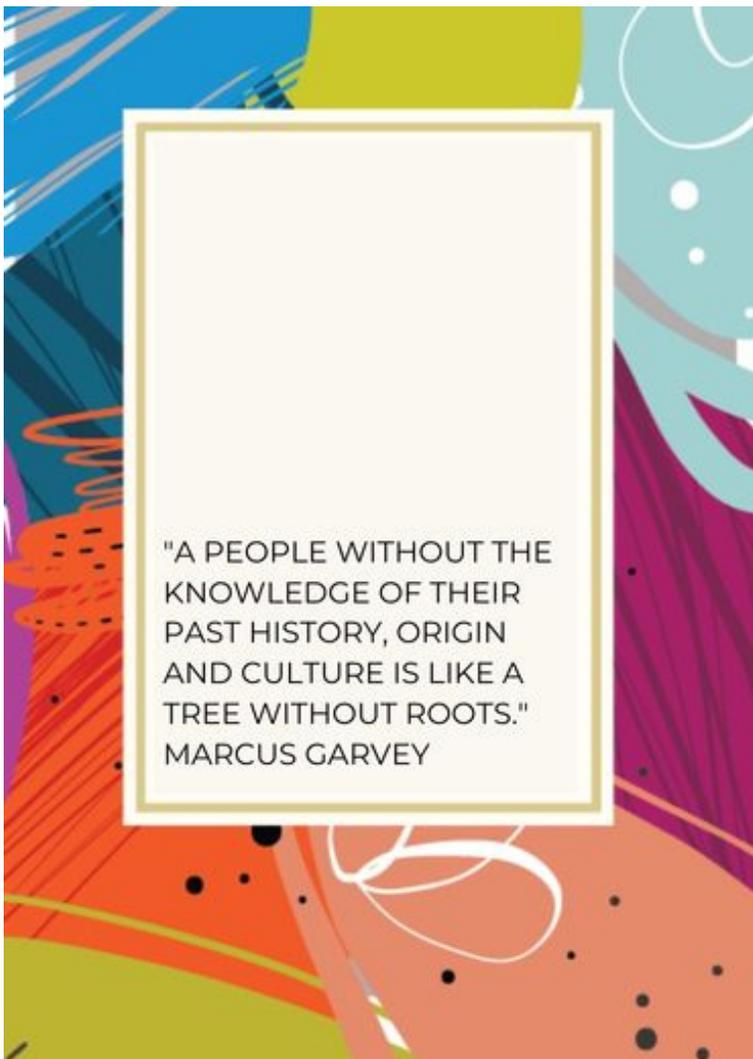
"I had the germ of an idea, to build a log splitter" he answered, "One that looks like a sword." He was able to develop a prototype that was built just to hang in the garage but then sitting with some buddies around the campfire on night one of them said "I bet it would really split wood."

Michael used the wood splitter on a number of occasions and received great encouragement from friends and family to take it further.



Eventually he did, after a chance meeting with a website developer who set up Michael's first website and really got him going. Michael has steadily improved his product over the years starting with a good one and finishing up with a great one. There were many minor enhancements along the way and today's product is the result. "It's safer than an axe. It'll go 18 years without being sharpened, it will split any wood with ease and you'll have fun doing it! He smiled.

Michael says that he likes to display and demonstrate his wood splitter at fairs and festivals throughout the Province and he can be found at most medieval fairs and or Highland Gathering's.



"A PEOPLE WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR PAST HISTORY, ORIGIN AND CULTURE IS LIKE A TREE WITHOUT ROOTS."
MARCUS GARVEY



Strathcona County is located on Treaty Six Territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region Two and Four. Strathcona County honours the First Peoples of this land. We recognize that we stand upon land that carries the footsteps of Cree, Métis, and Blackfoot amongst many other Nations, who have been here for thousands of years. Therefore, Strathcona County has an inherent responsibility to foster healthier relationships with First Peoples and further the Calls to Action as outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.