

Bancroft museum goes canoeing



Jan. 12, 2021

By Kristena Schutt-Moore

For several years the Anishinaabe Baptiste Community Organization and members of the Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin First Nation have hosted annual birch bark canoe builds. The last two have also been in partnership with the Bancroft North Hastings Heritage Museum.

At the last build, the museum commissioned master canoe builder Chuck Commanda to build a canoe that could be put on permanent display in the museum's Algonquin room. On Monday, Jan. 4 Commanda brought the canoe to the museum. The three-foot birch bark canoe was made in the same way as the traditional canoes with birch bark cedar, spruce root and iron wood.

The canoe will be on display in the Algonquin room and will be used as part of the museum's school program. This program helps local schools teach local history to their students. The museum's curriculum covers school courses from Grade 3 to 11, part of which includes Indigenous studies.

Each curriculum pairs with a specific room within the museum. This gives students the chance to see, and in some cases, be hands-on with local history. COVID-19 has made things more difficult for such activities, however the museum is continuing to build their school program and curriculum so that they are ready for when students can return to in-person learning.