

Two author talks coming to South Algonquin

By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

According to the South Algonquin library board minutes from March, submitted at the South Algonquin Township council meeting on April 6, there will be two exciting author talks coming to the municipality's libraries this year. In May, author Kevin Callan will be speaking about his latest book *Once Around Algonquin: An Epic Canoe Journey* and this fall, writer Adam Shoalts will talk about his new book *The Whisper on the Night Wind*. CEO and head librarian Charlene Alexander and both authors provide all the details.

Alexander says that originally Callan was going to come do a talk in 2020, but this was put on hold due to COVID-19. She says that Shoalts visited them in 2019 and they had such a great response that they decided to have him come back to promote his latest book. She says that they have done similar author talks back in 2018 and 2019.

Alexander says that Callan will be discussing his latest work, *Once Around Algonquin: An Epic Canoe Journey*, on May 18 at 7 p.m. at the Madawaska Recreation Centre, located at 26 A Major Lake Road in Madawaska.

Callan is the award-winning author of 18 books and is a keynote speaker at outdoor events across North America. In addition to being a guest on several T.V. morning shows and CBC Radio, he has won several film awards and writes a column for *Paddling Magazine* and *Explore Magazine*. The Canadian Geographical Society has listed him as one of the top 100 modern day explorers, and he was made Patron Paddler by Paddle Canada. His website is www.kevincallan.com and his YouTube channel is KCHappyCamper.

Callan told Bancroft This Week on April 14 that he's never presented at the South Algonquin libraries before, but he's honoured to be asked. He says that Whitney has a fantastic community and it holds significant history and incredible people.

?I'm really looking forward to the event. The book isn't new, it was released in 2019, but it is my latest work, apart from the 4th edition of my *A Paddlers' Guide to Algonquin* book released in 2021,? he says.

Callan shared the following description of *Once Around Algonquin*, which is called an exciting tale of misadventure on the toughest route in Ontario's most well-loved wilderness;

While sharing his love of this paddling paradise, Callan details some of the park's history and evolution, interweaving stories from the voyage. Chuckle along with the tales behind the blisters and bruises in this bromance adventure tale, all told with Callan's trademark humour. With a storytelling vibe, 30 chapters share insights and describe some of the challenges of canoe tripping for both the uninitiated as well as for the seasoned canoeist.

In addition to working on the third edition of his popular *Top 60 Canoe Routes of Ontario*, which he says will now be *Top 70*, Callan reveals he'll have a new book out in a few weeks, a memoir titled *Another Bend in the River*. He says it's about him growing up with high anxiety, going into nature to heal himself and choosing a career that keeps him going out and promoting others to do the same. A sample of this forthcoming memoir can be found online at *Explore Magazine* at the following link; www.explore-mag.com/The-Happy-Camper-A-Sample-Of-My-Forthcoming-Memoir-Another-Bend-In-The-River.

Shoalts will be talking about his new book *The Whisper on the Night Wind*, this fall in the municipality, with the date, place and time to be determined. He is a professional explorer, geographer, historian and national best-selling author, and has been a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society for ?extraordinary contributions to geography? since 2013. He completed a nearly 4,000-kilometre solo journey across Canada's Arctic in 2017. He holds a Ph.D from McMaster University, participates in numerous archaeological projects and digs and goes on solo expeditions in remote wilderness areas. He is presently the Royal Canadian

Geographical Society's Westaway Explorer in Residence, and was named a national champion of the Trans-Canada Trail in 2016.

Shoalts' book *The Whisper on the Night Wind* has been called "a fantastic, fun and chilling tale" by Canadian Geographic. Shoalts told Bancroft This Week on April 14 that his new book invites readers on a journey to Labrador to investigate a strange mystery there from a century ago.

"It was an adventure unlike any other I've ever embarked on and it's a book I hope will keep readers guessing until the end," he says.

Although a date hasn't been scheduled yet for this fall, Shoalts says he has spoken to the staff and he's happy to come talk about his books and adventures as he's done before. He says he's spoken to students at the local schools in Madawaska and he's hopeful he'll be able to present there again as well.

"I always enjoy sharing the stories of my adventures with audiences and last time I did a public talk for the South Algonquin libraries the response from the community was really fantastic. There was a great turnout and lots of enthusiasm when I spoke about my journey alone across Canada's Arctic and my book *Beyond the Trees*. So, it will be great to come back and talk a little about my new book," he says.

Shoalts says he is always planning fresh journeys and adventures, and that he'll be leaving very soon on a new solo journey in Canada's wilderness.

"That is all I can say for now," he says.

Alexander says that the reactions she's gotten thus far to these upcoming author talks from the community has been positive and enthusiastic. For more information or if you have any questions, please contact Alexander at whitneylibrary@gmail.com or whitneylibrary@southalgonquin.ca.

In addition to these author talks, Alexander reveals that the library hours will be changing the first week of May, with both branches extending their service hours to include a Saturday shift. The new hours for the Madawaska branch will be; Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thursday from noon to 7 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Whitney branch's new hours will be; Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thursday from noon to 7 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Alexander says that the library will also be launching a public input survey in May or June, details to be forthcoming.