

Hooray for Kids? Craft Day



Sawyer Alexander, 6, points out his handprint on the collage made by children during the Kids' Craft Day

By Jim Eadie

March Break was quite a busy week for parents, grandparents and kids alike, all home together or visiting the cottage for the first time in the new year. There certainly was lots to do in the Coe Hill area with thanks to the Wollaston-Limerick Library and friends, and a remarkable collaboration with the Wollaston volunteer fire department, Tri-Township Optimist Club, and the North Hastings Wildlife Association.

On Tuesday, the community was treated by Friends of the Wollaston Limerick Library to a live puppet show at the Wollaston Community Centre, followed by a puppet making workshop presented by Shelley King and her 'Puppeteria' troupe.

In a skit written by King, and performed by her with hand puppets and a homemade stage, over 60 children and their adult friends were held spellbound by 'The Magic Triple Mooner Surprise.' Three moons appear in the sky every thousand years or so, according to the story, and then magic happens! This sends the puppet characters on an adventure, scurrying about the forest for secret instructions and magic ingredients, which included such things as 'two ooglie googlies, a sticky licky, and a long stretchy tubular thing.' You will have to attend a Puppeteria show somewhere to get the rest of the story.

Following the show, the participants were provided a large variety of simple materials and shown the tricks used to make their own puppets. King encouraged the children and their adult friends to use their wildest imaginations, create a character and a story in their heads, and then fashion their own puppet with a story.

Remarkably, the event was enjoyed by everyone from toddlers to young adults to grandparents. Several high school aged students admitted coming to see the kids have fun. 'We actually had a great time,' said Alexis Toth. 'I think we are all little kids at heart.' She was inspired by the creativity and sense of story magic encouraged by the presentation.

A few days later at the community centre in Coe Hill, children and their adult friends filled the hall with the sound of happy children playing as the library, along with the local Optimist Club, hosted the 'Kids' Craft Day.'

'This is such a great thing,' said Mary Mieczkowski, a grandmother from Toronto visiting their cottage along with her granddaughter Julia for the week. 'The kids can come and play with other kids, and by the end of the week it sure helps. Thank you.'

A special and popular feature was a mural prepared by children in bare feet with paint on their feet and hands. Other crafts included making collages, paintings, and beading. A lunch of homemade pizza and hot chocolate topped off the activities for the day.

'Friends of the Wollaston Limerick Library (FOWLL) organize an event every year during the March break,' said Anne Ireland.

'We use funds from our annual Giant Book sale on the long weekend in July. We also have been organizing an event every month in the community to promote interest in the community and our library.'

The next event to be hosted by FOWLL is a talk by local author R.G. Johnston on self-publishing. It will be held at the Coe Hill Legion on April 2 at 2 p.m., and will feature wine and cheese.

The Tri-Township Optimist Club serves Wollaston Township, Limerick Township, and the Township of Tudor and Cashel. Optimist International is a worldwide volunteer organization made up of more than 2500 local clubs, whose members work each day to make the future brighter by bringing out the best in children, their communities, and in themselves.