

New music school opens in Belleville

By Paulina Uy

The newly opened All Access Music Performance School at 40 Wilson Ave. is all about passion.

That is one thing that inspired Belleville resident, Rob Waite, to open the school in September 2013.

He has been teaching music lessons for 15 years and has been playing for 27 years.

"I've been teaching for a long time from home, and this is kind of an expansion of what I was doing at home and it's a bigger concept," said Waite.

Waite plays the piano, drums, bass and guitar.

"Guitar is my baby. That's what I always come back to. Guitar is my passion but everything else kind of flows from there."

He started playing when he was 13.

He said that once you start getting into learning an instrument, the theories are applicable to other instruments.

"So you learn the guitar, then you can transfer that to piano, drums, keyboards, bass, all that kind of stuff, vice versa."

He said his dad had an equestrian shop — that's what he grew up with — which is why he turned to playing guitar — to get away from all the horse stuff and do his own thing.

"For some reason it (playing the guitar) caught me, and I've always done it."

"Nobody in my family plays, I had no lessons growing up, it is just something I wanted to do and it kind of evolved and grew from there and it became a part of me."

Having no family member to sit around and teach him or play with him, also became a motivation to open a school where "people could go and experience" music.

He wanted people to have a place where they could do the things they loved doing. And he also wanted an opportunity to play and not just teach.

Waite worked professionally in Toronto before moving back to Belleville in early 2003.

He had worked with Toronto-based alternative rock band Our Lady Peace, and French-Canadian band, Simple Plan.

Loyalist College student government president, Chan-



Photo by Paulina Uy

Belleville resident Rob Waite presents his All Access Music Performance School at 40 Wilson Ave. It opened in early September.

tel Johnston, has joined forces with Waite to teach vocals at the school.

Johnston has been singing for years and has been a part of a tour with three other young artists.

"It's a family-oriented atmosphere, great for opening up and fostering a love for music. All the teachers are fantastic and I simply can't say enough about Rob. He has started a great thing here and I'm glad I can be

a part of this experience."

Since opening the school in Belleville, classes have held about 20 to 25 regular students, of all ages, from all over the Quinte area.

Most classes are held during evenings and Saturdays, by appointment.

Students range from five to six years old, to seniors who are just starting to play or have played for a long

time, but want to advance their skills.

"Music connects — it connects people, it connects stuff that's going on, it connects stuff in your brain. I want people to, if they want to do it, come here and we can do whatever you want."

Waite plans to hold workshops and seminars in the spring and summer.

He also wants to organize camps for March break.

Time to have a conversation about mental health

By Dawn Barger

On Tuesday, Bell Let's Talk invited Canadians to be a part of the conversation to fight the stigma surrounding mental health with Bell Let's Talk Day.

For every text message sent, wireless call and long distance call made by Bell and Bell Aliant, and for every person who joined their campaign on Facebook and Twitter, Bell contributed five cents to programs dedicated to mental health.

On Wednesday, Bell donated a further \$5,472,585.90 to Canadian mental health programs.

Since 2010, Bell Let's Talk has committed \$62.5 million to mental health initia-

tives in Canada.

Loyalist College opened its doors to the Bell Let's Talk Day. The college also offers many services for students dealing with mental health issues.

On campus, Student Success Services had a table set up outside of the Shark Tank from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. to promote the event and share information on Loyalist's mental health resources and the community services available.

Counselling Services co-ordinator Adam Gosney, "We recently partnered with the Good To Talk help line, which is a help line for college and university students. Not everyone wants to see a counsellor face-to-face, not everybody can.

Sometimes we have booked appointments and someone walks up and needs to just talk to someone, but it's not a crisis where we would interrupt a session. Or perhaps they want to call from the privacy of their own home."

Some of the symptoms of mental illness include changes in any of the following: sleep patterns, appetite, energy levels, mood, relationships or the ability to take pleasure in your daily life.

The college also has mind and wellness services which give students an opportunity to receive assessment, education and referrals to support them through a variety of difficulties in maintaining balance in their life.

A mind and wellness practitioner is

available to teach relaxation techniques to help students learn how to keep their stress levels balanced.

Mind and wellness services can provide students with feedback, information and referral to counsellors at Loyalist or services available in the local community, depending on the students need.

Common concerns with students include alcohol and drug problems, anger, anxiety, bipolar illness, depression, eating disorders, gambling addiction, homesickness, learning to live with chronic pain, loneliness, porn addiction, schizophrenia, sexuality questions, stress, trauma, relationships/socialization difficulties.

"On Feb. 12, we are going to be rolling

out the Good To Talk official launch from 1 to 3 p.m. in Alumni Hall. They're going to be here talking about their service and highlighting some on campus mental health supports as well," said Gosney.

Bell Let's Talk partners with a growing number of mental health leaders across the country, including Kids Help Phone to support the mental health of young people in Canada, Adolescent Mood & Anxiety Disorders at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto, student mental health, and Canada's first university-certified workplace mental health training program in support of Canada's National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

Many still can't live on Ontario's minimum wage

By Duncan Cairns-Brenner

After a four-year freeze, the provincial government is raising Ontario's minimum wage from \$10.25 to \$11.

Kathleen Wynn's government is acting on advice from the Ontario Minimum Wage Advisory Panel, a non-partisan group of stakeholders that issued a report Monday outlining five recommendations for minimum wage in Ontario.

The report asserted that the minimum wage should rise with inflation. The committee also recommended that there be four months' notice to employers when minimum wage is to be raised, and that these issues be reviewed every five years.

This past week discussions centred around whether the Liberal government would decide to retroactively adjust minimum wage based on the 6.7 per cent inflation since 2010. This retroactive

adjustment would have brought the minimum wage to \$10.94, just below the \$11 rate announced today.

According to a 2013 report by the Ontario Association of Food Banks, over 10 per cent of those who regularly access food banks are fully employed.

Susanne Quinlan, director of operations at Belleville's Gleaners Food Bank, concurs.

"It's hard for minimum wage workers," she said. "Raising minimum wage is a two-headed thing... Can small business support the new wage without just cutting people's hours?"

When asked if the number of working people who attended the food bank will change when minimum wage is raised, Quinlan sighed.

"It will stay the same; that's the reality of it," she said. "They pay 75 per cent of their income to rent. That's the issue right there. If the food bank closed, landlords wouldn't get paid. People need to eat... It's a vicious world out there for those earning minimum wage."

The increase to \$11 will predominantly affect youth under 24, women, and newcomers to Canada, who comprise the majority of minimum wage earners, according to a 2013 research study by the Toronto-based Wellesley Institute. Even with the raise, minimum wage employees would still be living under the poverty line. If employees worked 40 hours a week, 52 weeks of the year, their annual income would be \$22,880, leaving them \$418 under the low-income cut-off, based on the 2011 census.

Small town economies are becoming increasingly service-based, as manufacturing jobs are increasingly being shipped off shore. The recent layoffs at the Sears logistics centre are a prime example.

Advocacy groups in the province have been demanding the government to increase minimum wage to \$14, putting low-wage employees above the poverty line. Wynn's government was not swayed, instead raising minimum wage by 75 cents.

Art partnership

By Taylor Hermiston

The John M. Parrott Art Gallery and the Belleville Art Association have partnered to put on regular monthly art workshops on the last Tuesday of every month. The workshops will be held at the John M. Parrott Art Gallery, located on the third floor of the Belleville Public Library.

A wide variety of art forms will be taught at the workshops, including painting, drawing, crocheting and sculpting. It's a way for people to explore art in an unstructured environment, which gives the participants an opportunity to learn at their own pace, depending on their level of expertise. It also allows them a chance to get to know other artists and learn new skills from them.

Both organizers emphasize that anyone can take part in the workshop, artist or not. There is a fee of three dollars to attend the workshops.

For a multi-media presentation, go to: <http://www.qnetnews.ca/?p=33846>

Party planned for Chinese New Year

By Mandy Larade

The end of January is quickly approaching, and so is the beginning of a new year. Chinese New Year, otherwise known as the "Lunar New Year" or the "Spring Festival", is this Friday, Jan. 31.

For Cherry Wang and her family, not only does this mark a new year, but it also marks their 10th anniversary of moving to Canada.

Wang and her husband, Morris Mao, immigrated to Canada from Hangzhou, China roughly a decade ago. The couple taught English in Chinese schools, and Wang is currently teaching French in Belleville, saying that moving here from a standpoint of communication was not difficult.

"We didn't have the language barrier," Wang said.

Although there were many different factors for wanting to come to Canada, Wang said that one of the main reasons was that they wanted to have a second child.

"If we had a second child, our jobs would be done with, so we couldn't. We wanted to have more children and that's why we applied to Canada — for a possibility to move here and have more children."

They have two children: Bobby Mao, who was born in China, and Justin Mao who was born in Belleville.

Overall, Wang and her family have had "such a good impression of Canadian people," especially people in Belleville.

"We still recall when we came here that people here were so, so friendly and they just smiled to you on the way and said, 'hello'. We were not used to that because we came from a big city," Wang said.



Photo by Mandy Larade

Cherry Wang holds a banner which translates to "a happy/joyful heart". Wang and her husband Morris Mao are organizing this year's Chinese New Year celebration at Quinte Alliance Church Feb. 1 at 6:30 p.m.

Their only complaint is the lack of Chinese food available in grocery stores and supermarkets in the Quinte area.

"It's not so easy to get Chinese groceries," Wang laughed.

Wang and her family are ringing in the new year on Saturday at 6:30 p.m. with other members of the community at Quinte Alliance Church in Belleville. The annual celebration usually takes place at

the First Pentecostal Church, but because there weren't enough people to organize it this year, Wang and Mao are organizing the event.

"There's the talent show...International games, riddles, singing, and dancing," Wang said.

There are 12 animals that circulate for each new year in the Chinese calendar, and each animal symbolizes

something different for the upcoming year.

This upcoming year is the year of the horse.

"It means ambition, hard working, success," Wang said.

For more details on the Chinese New Year celebration at the Quinte Alliance Church, phone 613-969-4473 or email office@quintealliancechurch.ca.

Canadian funnyman visits

By Melyssa Gloude

He's an East Coast Canadian funnyman, a comedic wordsmith and he's taking no prisoners.

Ron James delivers poetically-charged two-hour long sets that never fail to leave the audience laughing, and one of his stops on this Canadian "Take No Prisoners" tour is Belleville's Empire Theatre, on March 1.

Andy Forgie, the promotions manager for the Empire, says he is looking forward to the performance.

"Ron has performed at the Empire many times. He's always been a fan favourite," says Forgie, who believes that the comedian's visits mean extra business for downtown Belleville.

"Tickets always sell out when he comes to town, which means more business for the downtown core. Restaurants fill up before and after the show so it's great for the community as well."

James, a Nova-Scotia native, has had six critically acclaimed one-hour comedy specials and a television series entering its fifth successful season. He has also appeared at the Just For Laughs Comedy Festival in Montreal, as a headliner with his own show.

His filmography includes but is definitely not limited to, credits for writing, acting and producing multiple television series and films.

"The Empire has an excellent reputation with booking agencies all over the world, which can land us some great performers," says Forgie.

"Ron is very funny. He's very clever. He's definitely what you could call a 'thinking man's funny'."

"I fully expect that there won't be a seat left in the house by showtime."