

Walter Keller – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #21

January 2013

Walter Keller emigrated from Switzerland in 1967 and he now lives in Elma. In 1996, after years as a logger, forester, forest fire fighter, log builder and log building instructor, he discovered chainsaw carving. Totally self-taught, he has been self-employed as an artist since 2000 and has been teaching chainsaw carving courses since 2009.

Keller's various careers gave him an appreciation for his medium – the natural tree trunk. Incorporating the natural features of logs or driftwood into his pieces, he has progressed from chainsaw carver to wood sculptor, and combines the saw's bold strokes with the intricacies of hand tools.

Although he specializes in life-size forest animals, he sometimes sculpts free hand, to release the spirit of the wood into the world, creating whimsical creatures from stumps with intact roots, tree crowns, witch's brooms, and forked trunks.

His pieces vary, according to the wood's size and properties, and he even carves standing trunks. He scavenges from tree removal services, clear cut operations and land clearing sites.

In 2005, Keller's partner, Alexa Hoerster, took up carving. Together they expanded their repertoire, integrating wood sculpture into buildings. They now carve beams, fireplace mantles, doors, cabinets, stair cases, furniture, and bowls, with styles ranging from traditional to contemporary, fanciful to disciplined, filigree to monumental.

Today, ninety-five percent of their work is commissioned, making it hard to find time to explore new subjects or techniques.

First Nations' art has influenced Keller's perception of nature. He finds inspiration in local forests and kayak trips throughout Manitoba, and from explorations across Canada and Europe. He takes frequent trips to Europe to reconnect with family and fulfill carving commissions.

Keller has demonstrated his techniques on occasions such as Canada Day, Red River Ex, various fairs, and competitions in Switzerland and Canada. A founding member of the Eastern Manitoba Artists Coop, he has exhibited work at the Manitoba Art Expo and Eastern Manitoba Art Exhibition.

In 2004, he was featured in CTV's "Manitoba Moments." Recently, he was interviewed by a professional videographer for a TV program, showcasing Manitoba artists.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/79250953>

Kelleer's website is www.thetimberman.net-profiles.com



Walter Keller

Jodie Wentz - Focus on Local Artists - Issue #22

February 2014

Winnipeg River Arts Council features tattoo artist Jodie Wentz from Lac du Bonnet. At a very young age, from the moment she first saw them on the television show "Happy Days," Wentz knew she wanted to create tattoos.

The dancing hula girl tattoo shaking her hips with the flex of a muscle on "Happy Days" fascinated her, as she realized drawings that lived in the skin and on the body could add life to art. This allure carried on through subsequent artistic choices.

In the 1980's, in small town Manitoba, one simply didn't speak of tattoos. The response from the adults and their reaction to the TV episode was clearly negative, so Wentz simply told those who asked that she wanted to be an artist.

It took time and confidence to search out an apprenticeship in tattooing. A stickler for rules, the young artist didn't tackle this learning independently. In April of 2004, she started her apprenticeship in Winnipeg and has been tattooing full time for eight and a half years. In late 2006, she opened Rock Road Tattoo, just outside of Lac du Bonnet.

Wentz continues to develop her skills as the industry changes. She attends seminars, does diligent research and states, "If a tattoo artist ceases to strive and improve, he or she may as well stop. What can be done with inks and machines is advancing so quickly that, if one does not keep up, he or she will become a fossil."

Wentz is interested in other arts - throwing pottery on a wheel, making jewelry, and working on a series of gender bending fantasy creature illustrations for fun. She is also co-artistic director of Fire & Water Festival and vocalist and co-writer in the band "Carnival Bride."

To sum up her creative talents, she says "I am a maker. But, of all the things I have made, my daughter is most certainly my proudest achievement."

Visit www.rockroadtattoo.com for more information.



Jodie Wentz



Pinawa Public Library – Focus on Local Arts Group – Issue #23

March 2014

Winnipeg River Arts council features ***Pinawa Public Library***, located in the same building as Pinawa Secondary School and Community Centre. Nine volunteers serve on the board and the library draws from a pool of approximately fifty volunteers who work alongside staff, checking books in and out, shelving items, covering new books and doing whatever else might arise.

In addition to attending monthly meetings, board members play a hands-on role in overall operations. In contrast to most libraries, Pinawa Public Library has Adult and Junior Selection Committees who meet, suggest new purchases, and, after often lively discussion, produce a list of books and DVDs to be ordered. Their choices, plus items purchased by the librarian and book donations from patrons, make for a diverse and interesting collection.



Pinawa Public Library Board

Chair Michael Luke also serves on the Selection Committee. Ann Quinn, Chair of Operations, runs meetings when Luke is away. Secretary Anne Shifflett records minutes. Treasurer Donna Wuschke also serves on Adult Selection Committee, chaired by Elaine Greenfield. Michelle Long chairs Junior Selection Committee and helps organize the story time program. Jenny Peterson, Resident Administrator of LGD of Pinawa, is the liaison with Town Council. Patty Drew coordinates library presentations. Lyn Ewing, Member-at-Large, keeps an eye on the books and identifies those ready for deletion. Actual weeding of the collection is done through a collaborative process.

Besides specific board duties, all of the above contribute to discussions at meetings and guide development of library policy. Staff eager to greet patrons includes Head Librarian Marg Stokes, Library Assistants Audrey Miller and Cheryl Michaluk, and Student Assistants Kaeli Wilcox, Shannon Gibson and Sophie Hanson. Because their combined work week totals just forty-one hours, the library relies heavily on volunteers.

Pinawa Public Library Board and staff strongly believe that library services should be free and open to everyone. They welcome all patrons who come through their door, wherever they live, and accept everyone for membership.

Kathryn Jones – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #24

April 2014

The Winnipeg River Arts Council features artist Kathryn Jones, a potter who lives along the shores of Pinawa Bay.

After finding a pottery lesson in Winnipeg Leisure Guide in 2000, she has worked with clay ever since. She says, "I had a high stress finance job and I needed something to help me relax. After my first class, I knew that I would do this for the rest of my life."

In 2003, still working full time and taking pottery lessons, Jones, along with her husband James, purchased 2.5 acres of untouched Canadian Shield where they spent the next few years building their dream log home. Because they were so busy, splitting their time between Winnipeg and "the lake," pottery took a backseat for a while.

It wasn't until 2006, when they moved to their cabin fulltime, that she could again focus on pottery. Although Jones says, "I couldn't make a matching set of mugs if my life depended on it," this is where her passion for her craft really flourished.



Kathryn Jones



Kathryn Jones Pottery

In 2011, she seized the opportunity to purchase another piece of property and a run-down business. The couple renovated the building into a gift shop and Jones filled it with unique pieces from Canadian artists and artisans, and gourmet food. The seasonal business she now owns and operates is called Cottage Country Co. With time and luck, she hopes to include a studio, where she can create and share with others the fun and beauty of clay.

Today, you can find her at 20 Hard Rock Road, off highway 11, outside of Lac du Bonnet. She says, "This address strikes me as kind of ironic, given my love of clay."

The business is open from mid to late April until just before Christmas and she is always looking for work from talented local artists to showcase in her store. She invites everyone, tourists and locals, artists and lovers of good food, to stop by for a visit.

Roberta Laliberte - Focus on Local Artists - Issue #25

May 2014

The Winnipeg River Arts Council features visual artist ***Roberta Laliberte***.

Born in Winnipeg and raised in Pine Falls, she is primarily self-taught, since childhood. Through the years, she has gathered knowledge and experience from several sources. In 1993, she attended Mount Allison University for first year Bachelor of Fine Arts, working mainly in acrylic, watercolor, textiles and mixed media.

In 2009, Laliberte began using digital media and creating digital line art illustrations for use in crafting and digital scrapbooking. She has also done freelance work in graphic design, setting up and creating graphics for websites.

In 2010, Allard Library in St. Georges selected her to work on an art installation for their new building. She collaborated with Denise Prefontaine to create The Storybook Garden, a thirty-six panel installation with each 16"x16" panel illustrating a cherished children's book.

In 2012, Laliberte teamed up with Tanya Magnan, administrator from École Powerview School to get an ArtsSmarts grant from Manitoba Arts Council. She has continued to do arts integrated teaching in the school, working with teachers to bring the arts directly to education.

Powerview School has applied for three other art grants with Laliberte. Heritage, Culture and Sports contributed the first grant which produced The Northern Lights installation. One hundred and forty-seven students learned about the northern lights and worked on this installation.

A second grant from Community Access allowed about one hundred and forty students to participate in an installation called Future Flight Path. The students learned about Canada Geese migration and each student created a feather with their dreams and aspirations written on it which have been used to create the wings and tails of the geese. This installation will be completed by June and the unveiling will be announced



Roberta Laliberte



Pinawa Art 211 – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #26

June 2014

Pinawa Art 211 organization began in late 1989 with artists from Pinawa and eastern Manitoba. Vivian Thomson, an art teacher from Whiteshell School District, was mentor and catalyst. She started giving classes for adults interested in developing their "inner artist." From these classes came Pinawa Art 211 – a reference to both the town and the provincial highway.

Initially the group met in Pinawa Secondary School but moved to the closed W.B. Lewis School. They provided space to local artists, held meetings and mentored younger people. In October 1998, Art 211 shifted to Kelsey House (Wilderness Edge) and later to houses and then back to the high school.

Over the years, members have hosted art sessions and workshops. In 1990, they started exhibiting members' work in art shows. To raise funds, they produced the ever-popular calendars, which highlighted members' artwork.

In 1997, due to AECL restructuring, Art 211 became dormant. Remaining members continued meeting to develop skills and some joined Eastern Manitoba Artists' Co-op.

In January of 2011, President Irene Friesen encouraged newcomers and former members to rebuild the organization. Although the initial focus was marketing, they became known for creative programming. Artists from surrounding communities joined and soon the group was 24 members strong.

The same year, Art 211 produced "Art in the Forest," partnering with the Manitoba Forestry Association. They created "art about the forest in the forest" at Sandilands Forest Discovery Centre near Hadashville. These works remained on display for a full year in both Sandilands and Pinawa.

In August 2012, Irene Friesen and Arlene Bohn produced "Green Water Art Show" in Lac du Bonnet, partnering with Winnipeg River Arts Council and Fire & Water Music Festival. Fifteen Eastman artists sold art during the two-day sale.

In 2013, the organization renamed itself as a collective. Members exhibited work in Selkirk at Gwen Fox Gallery, in Winnipeg at CreBery Gallery and annually in Pinawa during birthday weekends.

To honour Pinawa's 50th birthday, Art 211 hosted Eastman Judged Art Exhibition, adjudicated by professional artists, where Eastman artists displayed and sold work. Recently, they opened "The Gallery" in Lewis Business Centre. This initiative created Pinawa's first gallery, now used for exhibitions and workshops.

During Pinawa 51st Birthday celebrations (July 18-19, 2014), in the Lewis Business Centre, EMAC and Art 211 will hold "Artisan Square," co-hosted by The Gallery. Regional artists and artisans are invited to display and sell their work.

(To rent a table contact Viv Thomson at 204-753-8350).



Pinawa Art Gallery

Ray St. Hilaire – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #27

July 2014

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council features Ray St. Hilaire, from Lac du Bonnet, who plays guitar and bass, and sings. Fifty years ago, he watched the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show and realized that he needed to grow his hair long and buy a guitar. On his twelfth birthday, he got one. And, as they say “the rest is history.”

After taking lessons for six months, he recruited friends to form a rock band. They performed at school variety and talent shows, and at university frat parties. Then he started playing in Winnipeg bars and travelling with various bands from The Pas to Emerson. As he says, there are “not too many Manitoba towns I haven’t played in.” He’s been in so many bands he can’t remember all the names. Here are a few: Four and a Quarter, The Missing Link, White Rabbit, The Rich Hippies and Big Brass Band.

His other love is motorcycles and he’s performed at many Harley riders’ celebrations and shows. For four years, his band played at the Thursday Night Riders Children’s Wish benefit. This year, it will be held on October 25th at Canad Inn Transcona.

St. Hilaire enjoys teaching guitar, and is very proud of his “number one student,” his fourteen-year-old grandson, Darien Tayler, who is starting his own band. St. Hilaire’s son is an accomplished drummer who just returned from three and a half years playing in the Middle East, and his granddaughter Calista is following in this musical family’s footsteps. He has often played at Casey’s in Lac du Bonnet, and, when he retired from his job as a journeyman industrial mechanic, he decided to settle on the Winnipeg River.

St. Hilaire calls himself a “Gear Head” because of the numerous guitars, basses, amplifiers, drums and microphones he has acquired. He also works as a sound technician and he’ll be providing sound production for the 4P Festival in Powerview-Pine Falls on the Labour Day weekend. St. Hilaire recently played at Pine Falls Legion with current band “Rice and Beans.” He says, “Seeing the dance floor packed with smiling faces and gyrating hips brought me back to that magical night in 1964 when John, Paul, George and Ringo mesmerized me.”



Paul Lussier – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #28

August 2014

The Winnipeg River Arts Council features Sculptor *Paul Lussier*.

Sculptor Paul Lussier was born into a creative St. Boniface family. At a young age, he and his siblings spent hours playing with plasticene. They created anything their imaginations could conjure – towns and forts and fantastic creatures.

They also spent many days at his aunt and uncle's home. His uncle was a famous St Boniface architect (Etienne Gaboury) and his aunt was a reputable potter. Their house was filled with sculptures and modern art. This exposure encouraged Lussier to enter an art contest at school. He went to a construction site, gathered clay, created an old man in Québec city's "artisanat" style and placed second in the contest.

Lussier left Winnipeg to teach at Powerview School where he met gifted art teacher, Sister Pauline Ménard. He took her pottery classes and discovered he liked working on the wheel but his real inspiration lay in formed structures.

Later on, he took an "attelier" with Saskatchewan sculptor Joe Fafard whose colourful caricatures led him into the style he loves today.

After thirty-one years of teaching, he retired and then decided to refocus on his artistic side. He took a course at Winnipeg Art Gallery with Nancy Litchfield-Hutchison, a ceramic instructor with over thirty years of experience. She taught him different techniques, emphasized putting emotions into clay and encouraged him to take time on details.

He has exhibited his sculptures at St. Boniface Cultural Centre and, in August of 2014, he participated in the ArtWave show in Lac du Bonnet. He's currently doing a project inspired by photos of John Paskievich (The North End) and also enjoys sculpting local people.

Lussier says, "Even though I prefer doing older people, I am fascinated by the human form. I like to capture certain emotions in the clay ... a look of struggle and despair, yet hope... a look of joy at seeing a friend. I hope to continue to do sculptures that capture our humanness."



Paul Lussier



EMCA - Focus on Local Artists - Issue #29

September 2014

The Winnipeg River Arts Council features *Eastern Manitoba Concert Association (EMCA)*.

For over four decades, the *Eastern Manitoba Concert Association (EMCA)* has presented professional entertainment, providing a venue for talented artists and enriching cultural life in Eastman.

The idea originated in the laundry room of a Pinawa apartment block. In 1971, two young mothers, Yvonne Oldaker (ballet tutor/examiner) and Joyce Hart (formerly with Winnipeg Art Gallery) met while folding diapers. Both lamented the loss of their previous artsy lifestyles. To fill this gap, they decided to hire artists to perform in Pinawa. Neither had money, but they agreed to risk it.

The first concert, a quartet, was held in Kelsey House (now Wilderness Edge) and sold enough tickets to convince the women to continue. A second concert, at F.W. Gilbert School, featured Winnipeg dancers. A third event showcased George Swinton (artist and historian) and was allegedly held in Pinawa Public Library.

The EMCA formula is simple: quality concerts and a rewarding volunteer experience. It has hosted hundreds of Manitoban, Canadian and international artists. Winners of Junos, Prairie and East Coast Music Awards and even Grammy and Oscars have appeared on the Pinawa stage. Some examples: Buffy Ste. Marie, Leona Boyd, Ian Tyson, Stan Rogers, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Natalie McMaster.

With volunteer production and local sponsors, EMCA gives Eastern Manitobans A-list performances at affordable prices. Subscribers come from Pinawa, Lac du Bonnet, Whitemouth, Seven Sisters, Powerview-Pine Falls, Beausejour, Nopiming and Whiteshell Parks.



EMCA

Marilyn McNish - Focus on Local Artists - Issue #30

October 2014

For this month, the Winnipeg River Arts Council would like to feature visual artist, Marilyn McNish, who lives on the shores of the beautiful Manigotagan River. Manigotagan is one of the smaller communities in the north Eastman region. It is located at the mouth of the river, east of the Manigotagan Provincial Park, a popular and accessible destination for whitewater canoeists.

Following many years in the corporate environment, semi-retirement finally provided McNish the freedom to focus on her true passion – painting. She now has the time and energy to dedicate herself to this art form, and has created a new art career.

She is a self-taught artist who paints vibrant and colorful paintings from photographs or memory, with her most popular medium being acrylic.

Recently, she participated in the Manitoba Art Expo where she displayed her artwork and created a themed art piece and video called, "Missing Children," for the special Showcase Gallery for Human Rights. She also teaches art classes from her home, displays her artwork in corporate offices, and participates in various art shows and juried events, including the Eastman Judged Art Exhibit in Pinawa.

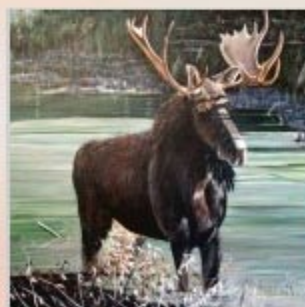
Her subjects and interests vary, allowing McNish to paint many interesting compositions, which she feels diversifies and challenges her skills. Her artistic themes include local wilderness, prairie vistas, farmyard animals, birds, flowers, trees, winter scenes, wildlife, boats, planes, beaches, oceans, images from her travels, and various illustrations intended to evoke thought and contemplation.



Marilyn McNish



Missing Children



Moose County



The Canoeist

Stu Iverson – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #31

November 2014

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts Council features photographer **Stu Iverson** from Pinawa. He has been taking pictures all my life, progressing from a black and white darkroom he built as a teenager to his present digital color “darkroom.”

Iverson's training and career were in science so only recently in his retirement has he found the time, energy, and opportunity to devote to the serious study of photography including color printing. The combination of digital cameras, which allow easy experimentation, with the internet, which provides an incredible information resource, has allowed him to progress at a rate which would have been unthinkable only twenty years ago.

He shoots mainly nature and landscape scenes from across Canada, from Newfoundland to British Columbia and the Yukon, and in Manitoba from the southern regions to Churchill. He has also travelled further afield.

He says that his best pictures have a kind of simplicity where the elements in the frame all work together. His style is naturalistic, similar to the pictures found in National Geographic, and he likes the subject of the photo to be the centre of attention without adding distracting styles or techniques.

He states, “Of course, the real world is far from simple. The greatest challenges are to select and fine-tune the view through the lens and then seize the critical moment to click the shutter. The next challenge is translating the digital image into a print on paper while maintaining the impact of the original scene.”

Although he finds inspiration in new and exotic locations, he finds plenty of subjects and inspiration hiking on the Trans-Canada Trail or at Old Pinawa, waiting for the sun to set or the fog to start to clear.

Iverson is also a member of Pinawa Art 211. A collection of his photography will be exhibited for the general public at the Pinawa Art Gallery in the Lewis Centre – November 27, 28, 29 and December 4 and 5, 2014 from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.



Karen Munn – Focus on Local Artists – Issue #32

December 2014

For this month, Winnipeg River Arts council features quilter and fibre artist, **Karen Munn**. With her husband, she moved from Winnipeg to work as Pinawa Golf Club's chef and manager but, in 2006, she retired from this job.

Munn is now the owner of Karen's Market and Quilt Stop in Pinawa. She says, "If someone had told me forty years ago that I'd quilting and doing fibre art, I wouldn't have believed them."

In 1959, she joined the Navy but left after three years, married and moved to Edmonton. After her son was born, she worked as a server but found she liked the kitchen better. It was where she discovered the joy of cooking different ethnic foods and inventing recipes. There were not many women chefs around in the sixties but she managed to take cooking lessons. Although she spent several years doing other jobs, she eventually opened a company in Winnipeg called Tasty Vittles. For almost ten years, she supplied frozen meals to seniors.

After retiring from the golf course kitchen, Munn wrote cookbooks and spoke about wellness to groups around Manitoba but soon realized there was still something missing. Then she discovered quilting and learned how to co-ordinate colours, putting them together to make something unique and beautiful. She says, "It was the hobby that got away. Like cooking, my imagination went to work and it seems that I could not learn enough."

After Winnipeg fibre artist, Pat Findley, came to Pinawa to teach about fibre art, this class unleashed Munn's other fabric talents. Now she adds buttons, beads and other items to her quilted backgrounds. She says, "If I had more time, I'd have so many pieces that there would no place to store them."

The public can view one of her pieces at the recently opened WRAC office, at 4 Park Avenue, Lac du Bonnet, or visit Karen's Market & Quilt Stop, S20 – 24 Aberdeen in Pinawa. If you go there, you might catch her making another picture in fibre art.

In the accompanying picture, you can see Karen Munn seated beside the beautiful "Love Quilt" she made and donated to the Winnipeg River Arts Council for a raffle to raise funds for the upcoming Manitoba Theatre Centre's touring presentation of "Armstrong's War" on February 14, 2015.



Karen Munn