

# Purdy portrait on screen in Picton, Dec. 12

BRIGHTON INDEPENDENT NOV. 12/15

Al Purdy. An icon. Looming tall, almost always with mad, fly-away hair, a cigar in his mouth, a drink in his hand, pounding away at his typewriter or lounging by the lake. What a character. And what a writer.

Filmmaker Brian Johnson has crafted a moving and complex portrait of the artist in his documentary film "Al Purdy Was Here" to be screened at the Regent Theatre in Picton in advance of the film's full release next year.

On Dec. 12 at 1:30 p.m. Purdy fans and aficionados are invited to come together to raise some funds and spend a most-excellent afternoon bringing this Canadian icon to life.

The film was a hit at TIFF in the fall and features an outstanding array of Canadian icons, both literary and musical: Leonard Cohen, Bruce Cockburn, Gord Downie, Gordon Pinsent, Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, Sarah Harmer, Tanya Tagaq and Joseph Boyden to name a few.

The screening is a fundraiser

for two local organizations; The Al Purdy A-Frame Association – raising funds to support the upkeep of the famous A-Frame cottage and the writers-in-residence who come to work there and Festival Players – raising funds to support its world premiere production of A Splinter in the Heart, Al Purdy's only novel, adapted for the stage by playwright Dave Carley.

In the mid 1950s, when Al and his wife Eurithe bought the plot of land on the south shore of Roblin Lake in Prince Edward County, Al was just beginning to find his voice as a poet. The space played host to a who's who of Canadian Literature, Al holding court and hosting the likes of Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, George Bowering, Margaret Laurence, Earle Birney and more. The A-Frame, which had fallen into disrepair over the years, was purchased and refurbished by a Canada-wide initiative to maintain this legendary literary space.

In 2014, after a great deal of structural work had been done

on the property by numerous volunteer groups, the cottage was ready to receive its first batch of poets-in-residence. These residencies allow writers time and a space to write, to focus on their work. Writers are provided travel funds, a writing stipend, and a cozy and storied retreat.

Festival Players, celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season in 2016, has been bringing high-caliber professional theatre to the region since its inception. Artists from across the country have joined the company to perform, design, compose, and create for the appreciative resident and visiting audiences. In the 10<sup>th</sup> season, the company is focused on stories by, for, and about Prince Edward County. One of the pieces in the season will be a stage adaptation of Purdy's only novel, A Splinter in the Heart. Dave Carley, a prolific and accomplished playwright whose deep respect for his subject is clear in his work, has tackled the translation from page to stage with aplomb.

Splinter is set in 1918 in Trenton, Ontario. WWI is coming to an end but the British Chemical Plant in town is still in full swing, producing half of the TNT for the allied war effort. Patrick, the young protagonist, is struggling with looming adulthood and with his place in the world. On Thanksgiving Day the British Chemical goes up in flames and flattens the town in a nearly Halifax-sized explosion. Life for the town, and for Patrick, is never the same. Workshopped in 2015, Splinter will be Festival Players' mainstage production in 2016, the jewel in the crown

as it celebrates a great story, a great storyteller and a little known piece of this country's history.

On Dec. 12, the afternoon begins at 1:30 when guests are invited to grab a drink or a snack, browse the Purdyana, rub elbows with some lovely folks, get a copy of the A-Frame Anthology or tickets to the premiere of Splinter in 2016, browse some interesting and rarely seen bits of Purdyana. Filmmaker Brian Johnson will host a Q & A following the screening.

Advance tickets are \$20 (\$15 for students) and are available

at Books & Company, 289 Main St, Picton or online at [www.festivalplayers.ca](http://www.festivalplayers.ca).

Fundraising Screening of "Al Purdy Was Here"

1:30pm on Saturday December 12, 2015 @ The Regent Theatre, 224 Main St, Picton

1:30pm Doors open - grab a drink, browse some Purdyana, rub elbows with lovely folks

2:30 pm - screening of "Al Purdy Was Here"

4:00pm - Q & A with filmmaker Brian Johnson

4:30 - cheers and on your way

NORTHUMBERLAND TODAY NOV. 12/15

## Colborne remembers

The service and sacrifice of Canada's veterans was honoured in Colborne on Remembrance Day with a parade and cenotaph service.



MANDY MARTIN PHOTO  
Don Prentice took the salute at the annual Remembrance Day parade following the cenotaph service in Colborne's Victoria Square Park Nov. 11. Members of his family embraced the visibly moved veteran following the ceremony.



MANDY MARTIN PHOTO  
Don Prentice lays a wreath honouring all fallen Canadians at the annual Remembrance Day ceremony at the Colborne Cenotaph, Victoria Square Park Nov. 11.