



MR. SANDMAN! Believe it or not, Cody Neath, 9, actually enjoyed being buried recently along the beach at the Rockwood Conservation Area. Helping out were, from left, Shayla Colby, 6, Pam Neath, 12 and Alex Colby, 8. (Doug Harrison photo)

Over 300 manuscripts for Festival

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Rockwood Miller

Pulitzer Prize-winning American poet James Tate says he has never seen anything like it. American novelist and movie-maker John Ehle calls it "phenomenal — the most successful event of its kind in North America."

Both are lauding the annual Eden Mills Writers' Festival, which has 26 writers set to perform at this year's event, the sixth annual, set for Sunday, Sept. 11.

Festival coordinator Leon Rooke said on Friday that over 300 manuscripts had been submitted, about 65 short of last year's total. While the numbers are lower, Rooke attributed the drop to the lack of supplementary mailing and added that about 100 more are expected this week.

"Every year attendance jumps about 25 per cent," said Rooke. Some 2,000 people came to the Eramosa River's friendly banks last year. "We will be offering about \$1,300 in prize money."

About one-third of the entries, he noted, come from aspiring writers in the vicinity. The rest come from western Canada, Quebec, Toronto, Kingston and some from as far as Mississippi and Colorado.

Rooke says over the years fewer plays have been written, because of the high costs to produce a play and the fact there aren't many magazines that publish plays.

Fiction writing ever-so-slightly has overtaken poetry as the preferred writing style.

"Poetry suffered a decline in recent years because it was thought too much was written about one's self and the writer lost his or her audience," Rooke explained.

"I'm thrilled to be reminded who is interested in the enterprise. Watching the people listen to the readers, the music and buy books is rather inspiring."

"Most writing is done in solitary. A lot of writers don't know who their readers are. I enjoy the volume and enthusiasm. And being outdoors contributes to the fes-

tive part of the event."

This year's festival will have a strong political component, said Eden Mills author and organizer Janice Kulyk Keefer.

"Our theme is Save the Bridge, Save the Village," she said.

The bridge in dispute is the village's dilapidated bowstring bridge. Eramosa Township council, intends to replace the bridge with a modern one.

The festival will also consist of book launchings, book exhibits and autograph sessions.

Hike is this weekend

Get out those hiking boots! This weekend sees the debut of Arts and Culture in Eramosa's much-anticipated Theatrical Hike.

If Stones Could Speak is a unique theatrical experience, which will begin at Waterside Park and wind its way through the Conservation Area and the historic

village of Rockwood.

The hike will be presented every Saturday and Sunday between 2 and 4 pm for the next four weekends (Aug. 27-28 is the rain date.)

Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for seniors and students. They are available by calling the box office at 856-9266.

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