

ARTS

Art lovers enjoy sharing their passion

Cross-section of artists represented at group's monthly gatherings

By Stephanie Hounsell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Too many poems languish in writers' notebooks or on the backs of napkins, never to be read and enjoyed by others.

And to Jenny Panda, that's a shame.

"If you have a poem and it's not shared, that's kind of sad," she said.

The fourth Friday of each month, from 7 to 9 p.m., the Express the Arts group meets at Martindale Gardens on Martin Street to give poets — serious and otherwise — a chance to share their musings.

The next meeting is next Friday.

Sometimes the format is an "open mic" night, while at other times the sound equipment is abandoned for a more intimate gathering around the table, said Panda, the group's organizer.

Some people read their own works, some recite poems by the masters, while others simply enjoy listening.

All artists welcome

But it's not just a poetry group.

More recently, Express the Arts has expanded to include the visual arts and music, Panda said.

Attendees who express themselves through paint, clay or another medium, are encouraged to bring a piece of art to share, while musicians are welcome to bring their instruments to the group.

"Whenever you express yourself, you build a certain energy," explained Panda. "There's an elated feeling."

Panda — who herself is an author, poet and artist — said the group is always full of surprises.

"We really never know what will happen until it happens," she said.

In the past, the group has included bagpipes, tai chi and Indian dancers.

Members of all ages are welcome. Panda remembers a little girl who once came to play her violin to an appreciative group. She later



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

CALLING ALL ARTISTS: Express the Arts members (from left) Naz Bhimani, Elspeth Lane, Carol Chaddock, Marion and James Detlor, Barbara Ariss-Stroh-Wasser and Jenny Panda invite area artists to their group.

returned to read some of her poems.

Most teens are "full of poetry," Panda said.

The group was started in 2002 by long-time resident Elizabeth Kiddle.

In honour of National Poetry Month — which just happens to be next month — Kiddle decided to hold an open mic night at the now-closed *Espress Yourself* Café.

The turnout was beyond what Kiddle had expected.

"Nobody was more surprised than I was," she said, adding, "When I saw the response and gauged the enthusiasm, I

thought, 'We should do this once a month.'"

When *Espress Yourself* closed, the group moved to Milton Café, which also shut its doors. Now the group is enjoying its new home at Martindale Gardens.

Somewhere along the group's journey, Kiddle — who actually had no serious interest in poetry when she held the first open mic night — made an important realization.

"I had never conceptualized the idea that I was a poet," Kiddle said. "Through the poetry evening, I learned I am a poet of a certain kind."

And that's not uncommon, she said.

"There are lots of people who come and find out they're more of a poet than they realize."

Locations may have changed, but something that will always remain is the group's intimate, informal atmosphere, Kiddle said.

Group members don't critique, but simply encourage each other.

"Poetry is a matter of the heart and soul. It's not an intellectual pursuit," Kiddle said.

For more information about the group, visit www.expressthearts.com.

Stephanie Hounsell can be reached at sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

The Changing Face of Our World

House in the suburbs, kids in daycare, hubby is home on the 6:28 GoTrain, head office is in Alberta; three sales calls since noon and now... pickup mail from the PO Box, head office packages at the courier drop-off point and stuff to organize your files and, oh yes, dinner. Oops, forgot the kids at daycare!

Sounds familiar to an ever growing population in our "small town" Milton. Women and men alike are not only working from their homes, but from their cars, the closest coffee shop with WiFi or any spot that offers convenience of location.

Many seek to simplify their lives by

streamlining their daily travel, by planning routes with daily stops along the way and choosing stops that offer groupings of required services and goods to minimize the number of stops.

24/7 Mailboxes offers street addresses to receive: all your mail, all your courier packages; purchase all your office organizational needs, all your computer supplies and stuff for school projects while maintaining anonymity from business contacts, ensuring a more secure home life. Mail can be picked up securely, as the name suggests, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

24/7 MAILBOXES
182 Main St. Milton 905-878-6962

Advertisement

PICK-UP SPECIALS!

3lbs Wings | 5lbs Wings

Veggies & Dip

\$19.99

Veggies & Dip

4-591ml Bottles of Pop

\$37.99

905-876-1414
228 MAIN ST

(AT MARTIN ST)

