



Andrea Brennan-Doucette, shown in this Oct. 17 photo, plans on spending the 40 days of Lent committing random acts of kindness in her home, place of work and anywhere else she may.

Woman gives instead of giving up for Lent

By Myriam Lublink

Thousands of people give something up for Lent every year, however Andrea Brennan-Doucette plans on ‘giving’ in a different way for the next 40 days.

Lent is the 40-day period from Ash Wednesday to Easter. Lent was originally observed with a focus on self-examination in preparation for Easter. To demonstrate this, Christians of the fourth century would fast for the duration of Lent. Now, some do still fast, but the majority of people who observe Lent give something pleasurable up like chocolate, meat, coffee or something that they feel they ‘need’.

Tina Manuel, pastor at the Salvation Army Community Church in Trenton, says that many Christians use Lent as a period of time to sacrifice something important to them because of what Jesus did for them.

“Lent is a time when many Christians chose to deny themselves of something or fast, in remembrance of what Jesus did for us by sacrificing his own life,” said Manuel.

Manuel runs the Family Services at the Salvation Army during the week, and with her husband, Steve Manuel, does a church service on Sunday mornings.

“I think Lent is a great thing to remind us of the love that Jesus had for us,” said Manuel.

Brennan-Doucette, a Belleville mother, decided to try something new for Lent after realizing that, because of some

drastic changes in eating habits, she had nothing left to give up.

“On Wednesday, Lent begins, but I don’t have anything left to give up! I think I will commit random acts of kindness every day until Easter instead,” said Brennan-Doucette earlier this week.

Brennan-Doucette started this in 2012, as she couldn’t think of something to give up after she had spent the previous four years making the change to only healthy eating. Knowing that Lent is part of the Christian faith, Brennan-Doucette felt she still needed to do something from Ash Wednesday to Easter.

“I just thought it would be fun and that my deeds would probably inspire the recipients to follow suit and be kind to someone else. In that way, the love keeps spreading and my small act may benefit even more people. I thought it was more Christ-like than just saying no to coffee for a few weeks.”

Brennan-Doucette plans on random acts of kindness towards strangers, friends and family while keeping it all anonymous. She did the same thing during the 40 days of Lent in 2012 and felt that it was a great success.

“I did it last year and I never saw the reactions because all my kind deeds were anonymous. Things like paying for someone’s order at the drive through, leaving gift cards in mailboxes, flowers on a co-worker’s desk, cards with supportive messages, etc. It was so much fun to come up with ideas,” said Brennan-Doucette.

Pope says goodbye

By Jessica Nyznik

A resignation like this isn’t seen often. In fact, it’s been 719 years since the last one.

During a meeting of the Vatican cardinals on February 11, Pope Benedict XVI announced that he would be stepping down at the end of month.

“After having repeatedly examined my conscience before God, I have come to the certainty that my strengths, due to an advanced age, are no longer suited to an adequate exercise of the Petrine ministry,” Benedict told the cardinals.

Michael Swan, associate editor of The Catholic Register, said in a phone interview that while resigning from pontification is unusual, the idea has existed for a long time and Benedict had raised the possibility even before he was Pope.

Swan said he feels Benedict made a “courageous decision” to resign and he put the “interests of the church above his own”.

Father Richard Whalen, of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Belleville, agreed with Swan saying he thought it was an “act of humility”.

Whalen admits that Benedict’s resignation came as a surprise because the Catholic community is accustomed to popes staying on until the end, meaning that they serve until they die.

While Whalen said it is not common in the “ordinary world” to work up until such a late age (Benedict is 85) the church is seen as a life of service and a calling of God.

However, Whalen said that he does not see this as Benedict retiring, because he will continue to love and pray, but as “moving onto a different phase of service”.

There has been much speculation by the media that Cardinal Marc Ouellet from Quebec, who is currently the head of Congregation for Bishops and resides in Rome, is a frontrunner to take over for Benedict. Swan and Whalen agree that there is no way of knowing who will be elected.

Both men believe that Ouellet would be appealing because of reasons of continuity regarding his present-day position at the Vatican but that the selection of a new pope is a deeply mysterious and spiritual process.

If Ouellet was elected, Swan said he thinks having a Canadian pope could have an upsurge of interest of the papacy, an increase in seminary enrollment and an overall rising of interest in the Catholic Church for our country, as it did in Poland and Germany after having popes in power from those countries.

Becoming pope, however, may not be something Ouellet would want to be considered for. Published reports say that Ouellet has said that becoming pope “would be a nightmare”.

Swan spoke of a “room of tears” that the newly elected pope is ushered to immediately after beginning papacy, where he is fitted for his robe and inevitably sheds some tears.

“No sane person” would want to be responsible for a legacy of more than 2,000 years and one billion Catholic people, said Swan.

With the Vatican hoping to find a replacement for Benedict before Easter, there is no doubt that Benedict’s leadership will be missed.

Born Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger, Benedict was elected as the 265th pope in April 2005 at the age of 79.

“I love Pope Benedict. He has a tremendous sense of faith and brought peace to the church,” said Whalen.

Art plays significant role on tourism

Over nine million tourists enjoyed art-related activities while in Ontario

By Dayna Lefebvre

Local artists have mixed reactions to a recent report about arts and tourism, commissioned by the Ontario Arts Council and released in January.

The report states that the “economic impact of arts and culture tourism in Ontario is considerable.”

“People are coming from larger cities, wanting to see something different,” said Ricarda Forbes-Loth, a mixed media painter from Picton. “The Quinte region in general encapsulates what those people are looking for.”

The report determined that over 9.5 million tourists enjoyed arts-related activities while in Ontario – over 22 per cent of all Ontario’s overnight tourists.

The Hastings-Prince Edward County area in particular is brimming with arts and culture attractions, including the PEC Arts Trail, which includes over 30 studios and galleries. Another popular tourist destination is Sandbanks Provincial Park, which brings in thousands of visitors per year, according to its official website.

“With Sandbanks being a popular tourism destination, there’s always people coming and enjoying what the area has to offer,” Forbes-Loth said.

Another local painter, Amanda Latham from Belleville, feels that social media has a lot to do with the increasing numbers. “It seems that people are able to get more information about the arts in our area. Many people that aren’t from the area are very interested in meeting the artists.”

According to the report, of all Ontario tourists, 66 per cent were Canadian, 23 per cent were American, and 11 per cent

were from overseas.

“Artists are being recognized in a more positive way,” says Latham. “I believe tourism helps artists in many ways.”

The report determined that the average Ontario arts and culture tourist spends nearly twice as much per trip than a tourist who does not participate in arts-related activities. They also stay in Ontario up to 42 per cent longer than other tourists.

However, local artists say they believe more could be done to help promote them and their work.

“I’ve asked a few local businesses to hang my pieces so the public can see what I offer. The one business that will help advertise for me is owned by a good friend of mine, who also happens to be an artist,” said Latham.

Zoë Shane, an illustrator and photographer, feels there is not enough media coverage of the local art scene.

“All I hear about is music in the community, not any other form of art,” she said.

Forbes-Loth believes that artists are being covered and recognized, but it is a small group of older, established artists. “There’s a lot more for a specific group. People in their 20s wanting to experiment artistically hardly get coverage in the Quinte and Prince Edward County area.”

Forbes-Loth’s paintings are abstract pieces that are full of colour and pop vibrantly. “The people who visit are generally looking for something specific -- a picture of Sandbanks, a historical building,” she said. “My work doesn’t reflect that, so I sell in different ways.”

“Arts councils in our area need to take an interest in the current young, emerging artists that are all around,” said Forbes-Loth. “If a person shows promise, that person should be given the same opportunities and support, whether they are a member of a council or not.”



Photo by Dayna Lefebvre

Ricarda Forbes-Loth displays original prints on her coffee table. Her home is lined with artwork by both her and her three-year-old son, Quin, who Forbes-Loth raises as a single mother.

Pancakes served up as guests enjoy Shrove Tuesday event

Day before the beginning of Lent includes feasting

By Adam Dietrich

It was an evening of friends, fun, community and of course pancakes at Eastminster United Church’s Shrove dinner held Tuesday.

The event marks the day before Ash Wednesday, which is the beginning of Lent in the Christian calendar, a time of penance for observers. The Shrove feast, colloquially called, “Pancake Tuesday,” is a day to celebrate before the start of Lent.

Organizer Garnet Thompson, said this year is right in line with previous years. He estimated at least 170 meals were served.

“We’ve been doing this for about 25 years” he said. “This year is definitely a good one.”

Thompson is part of an organization called, As One That Serves, which

organized the event. The organization is a United Church outreach program founded in 1925. Thompson, the national president eight years ago, said the purpose of the program is youth outreach.

On Tuesday though, their goal was the efficient distribution of pancakes.

“The biggest challenge we faced,” said Thompson, “would be finding all the volunteers we need.” About 25 people agreed to help, enough for the event.

For some church members, like 86-year old Jim Rapino, volunteering for something like this is an annual event. “I’ve done this for about 30 years now,” he said as he flipped a line of pancakes.

Thompson said part of the event and the purpose behind As One That Serves is to engage the community outside the church.

Peter Gray, a father of three who has lived here since 2005, said they decided to come even though they’re not church members. “I saw an ad for it in the paper and thought it would be a nice night.”



Photo by Adam Dietrich

Jim Rapino, 86, pours pancake batter onto a skillet on Shrove Tuesday this week. Rapino has been volunteering to make pancakes at Eastminster United Church’s pancake Tuesday for the last 30 years.