

Issue #5

INFOCUS



**Weekends
With
Our Pets**



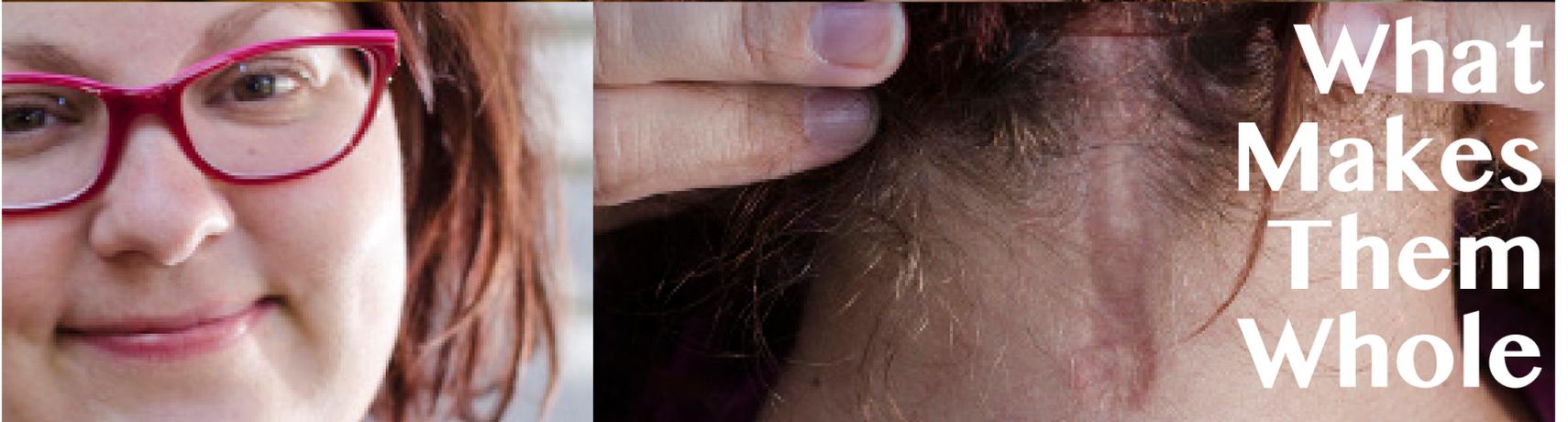
**Fishing
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Forever
Home**



Monika Sztrama loves to cuddle with her animals, especially her youngest sheep, named Sheldon. The animals on her farm are pets, not food, and she loves them like adopted children.

Weekends With Our Pets

Photos and Story by Kaitlin Abeele

The role of the 'pet' is typically reserved for a dog or cat, maybe a ferret in the odd case, but rarely used to describe a barnyard of animals.

For Monika Sztrama of Kitchener, Ont., a sheep, pig, or emu are just as deserving of the name of 'pet'.

"I tell people at work that I'm going home to hug sheep. They think it's strange, but I just love cuddling the animals," says Sztrama, while holding one of her sheep, named Sheldon, in an embrace.

Sztrama owns three pigs, five sheep, three goats, two emus, over a dozen chickens, a gaggle of ducks, and a horse.

"No we don't eat the animals. Everyone that is here is just a pet. It is a happy farm. Nobody is going to die by butchering. Just, pets," says Sztrama

Sztrama purchased a second property in Kitchener two years ago, with her partner of six years, Joel Vautour. Both Sztrama and Vautour wanted to start a farm but neither were ready to move to the country. They already had a house in the Stanley Park neighbourhood of Kitchener, but wanted a separate property to raise animals.

Vautour had found a listing for a small property along the Grand River Trail, just over one acre, which already had a barn and a farmhouse. It was in the neighbourhood of Bridgeport, tucked in among older residential houses, and a scenic walking trail that follows the river.

The major problem they faced with the property was the house. It was unlivable, and remains uninhabitable until they reconstruct the entire interior of the house. This task is primarily left for Vautour and his friend Kevin "Fish Head" Slack to accomplish. Vautour works over 50 hours a week in construction, so the job is well within his capabilities, but it is still daunting.

"He's the builder here. He's the magic man. I'm the one envisioning and dreaming things, he's the one that makes it happen. I dream it and he builds it," says Sztrama.

In its current state, the house has no insulation, no walls, no bathrooms, and a large hole where the living room floor should be. With the farmhouse unfinished, they cannot sell their other house, which means they must pay for two mortgages.

"The difficulty is mostly time and money. I think it was a little over our budget to jump into a second property, but we manage it. We have to work really hard to manage two mortgages. And because we work lots of hours, we don't have much time to spend here," says Sztrama.

"He's the builder here. He's the magic man... I dream it and he builds it."

While Vautour oversees most of the construction projects, Sztrama is largely in charge of caring for the animals, rushing over to the farm every evening after working eight hours as a florist at KW Flowers. She carries feed out into the pasture to distract the animals while she gets to work cleaning out the barn, fetching clean water and fresh bedding.

The bulk of the work is saved for weekends, when Sztrama and Vautour will spend up to ten hours a day working on the farm. In the summertime, Sztrama keeps a vegetable garden, which gives her a break from cleaning.

Sztrama and Vautour hope to have the house finished and moved into by next winter. This would save both time and money, which are both precious commodities in their busy schedules.

Sztrama says she would ultimately like to organize trips for school children to visit the farm. In the next ten years, she would like to sell the property and purchase a larger farm in the country, which would allow them to expand the number of animals that they keep.

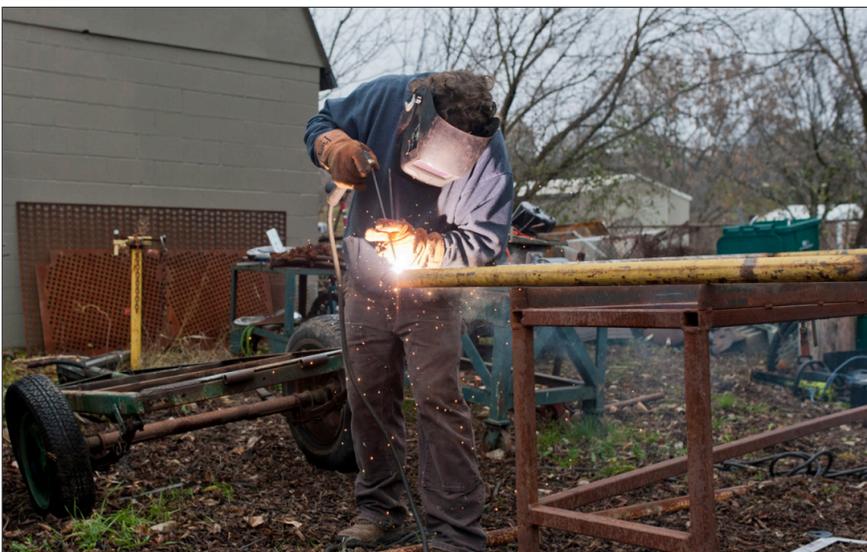
"We got really lucky. I think this was meant to be, but I don't think this will be the end of it."



An old farmhouse built in 1875 on a small one acre lot in the Bridgeport subdivision was purchased by Monika Sztrama and her partner Joel Vautour two years ago, which they use as a small farm for over 20 animals.



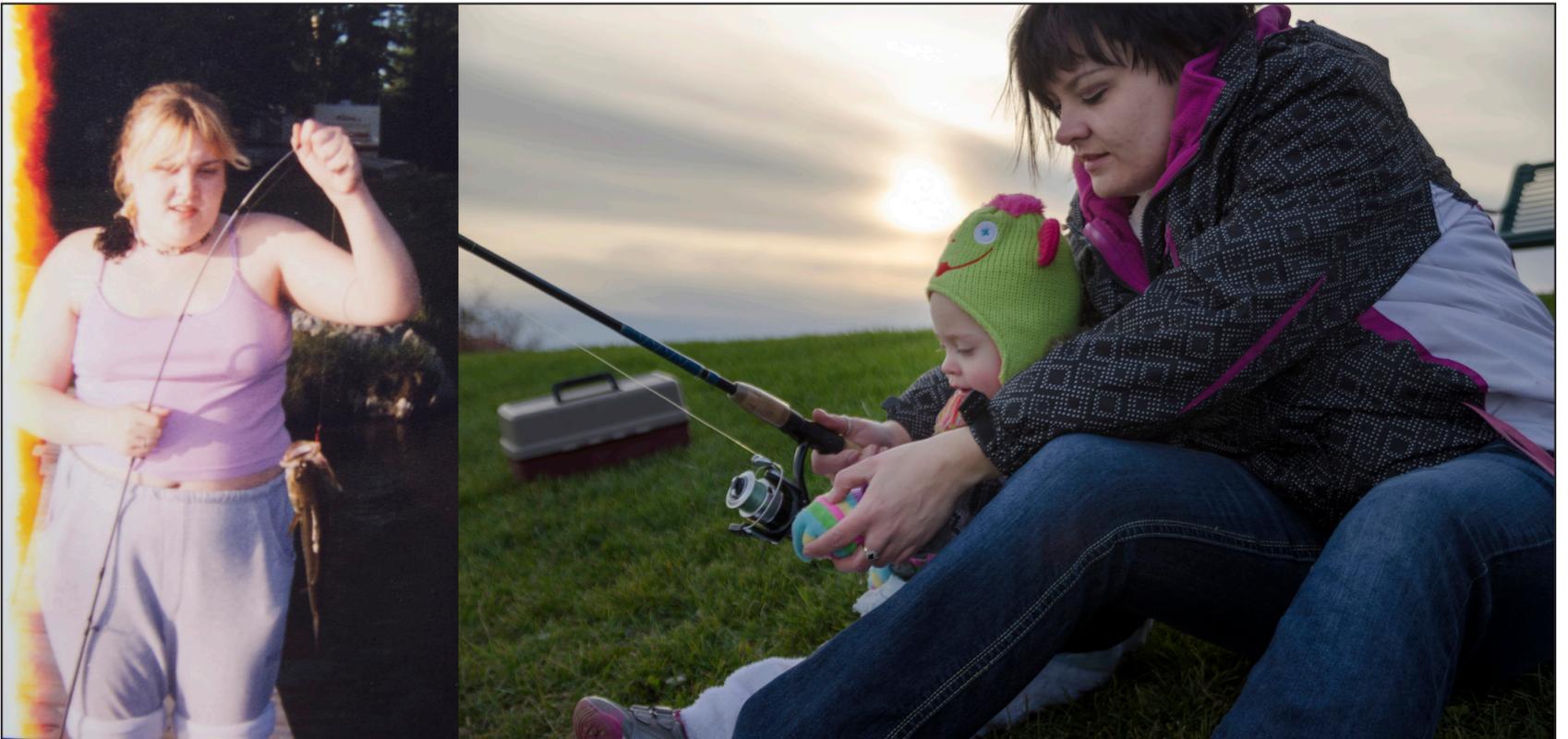
Monika Sztrama's first chore is feeding all of the animals, which she does outside in the paddock so that the animals will leave the barn so that she can muck the stalls.



Joel Vautour welds the frame of a feeding trough that he is building to put in the paddock for the animals to eat hay from. Joel's makeshift 'workshop' is just a small clearing behind the farm, filled with half-finished projects and lawn mowers.



A big part of Monika Sztrama's work on her farm in Kitchener is gardening. Monika says she loves gardening and finds that it is a good stress reliever from all her other chores on the farm.



Elisha Coleman with a fish she caught on the left, in 2001 when she was 20. Coleman tries to catch more fish with her three-year-old daughter Alexis in 2013.

Fishing for Family

PULLING into the parking lot by the Bay of Quinte, it's empty except for one or two cars that look almost abandoned in the cold. The wind isn't strong enough to blow your hair around, but the air is crisp and the bite of winter is evident. The clouds are thin but cover the sky make it so there are almost no shadows.

In the marina, rhythmically the boats creak and bump against the docks. The docks are nowhere near full capacity and just like the cars in the parking lot, the boats almost look lonely and forgotten bobbing up and down. Their flags flap gently in the small amount of wind coming straight along the shore line. The docks are nowhere near full capacity and just like the cars in the parking lot, the boats almost look lonely and forgotten.

Elisha Coleman prepares her rod and walks to her spot by the lake carefully picking a safe spot on the grassy shore because, unlike the other fisherman, she has her three-year-old daughter in tow.

Coleman baits her hook with a rubber worm as her daughter Alexis stares curiously at the tackle box, full of lures, hooks and fishing line. Coleman as every parent who takes their children fishing does, she warns her that the hooks are dangerous and that she must not touch them. As she casts out her first line Coleman reminisces about the days when she would wager with her father, Ron Coleman, over who would catch the first fish. She said that when she caught the first one, she earned herself a dollar. Her father promptly offered double or nothing.

To the Coleman's, fishing isn't necessarily about catching fish, it's about casting your line into the water and waiting, chatting and making memories. Sometimes a big fish will bite and you will be able to jump and yell and get excited about it, and other times you will catch lots of little fish. The important thing about recreational fishing is to have fun doing it and make some memories. Coleman remembers betting her father five dollars she would catch the most fish and winning after she caught a staggering twelve fish when her father only caught three.

Parents teaching their children anything is always memorable and as Coleman sat down on the grass and showed her three year old how to fish a smile spread over both their faces.

Coleman reels in her line carefully as to not let it get snagged on the rocks. She disassembles her rod, organizes her tackle box and makes her way back to the warmth of the car.

Stretching her numb fingers, Coleman decided that for now, the fish have won. She goes home with a smile and the satisfaction that she got to dangle that line into the water again and continue to make memories with her daughter, like her father before.

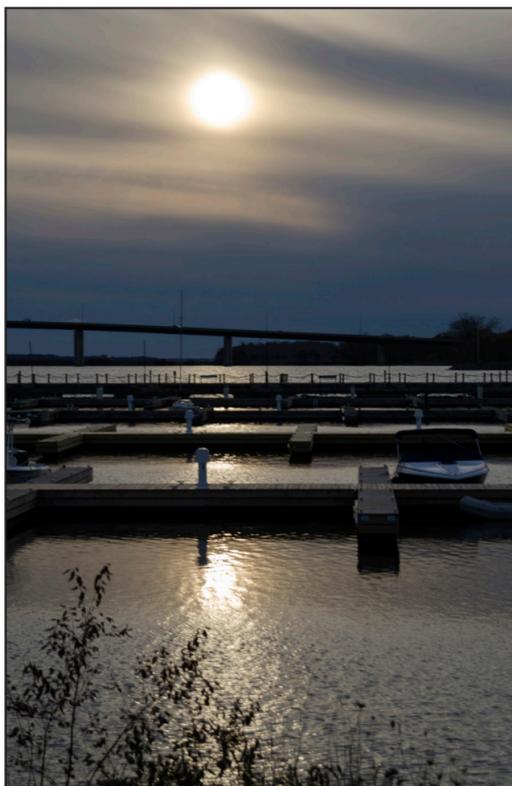
Story and photos by Anna Brown

From top, clockwise:

Coleman prepares her hook before casting it out into the bay. Coleman reminisces about the time she wagered with her father about who would catch the first fish.

The sun sets on the Bay of Quinte.

Coleman arrives with her daughter Alexis at the Bay of Quinte to go fishing.



Coleman remembers fishing at the Bay of Quinte with her parents. She recalls taking bets with her father over who could catch the most fish. She says she won five dollars after catching a staggering nine fish more than her father.



Coleman and her daughter walk back to the car with big smiles, but with numb fingers and no spoils from their fishing adventure.



Candice O'Grady, 32

Living the single life.

WITH drastic shifts in how people think about marriage and sex in societies around the world, and ever-evolving technologies that constantly impact the nature of courtship – the number of people living alone is on the rise.

An article published in *The Guardian* in March 2012, cited data produced by market research firm Euromonitor International, claiming “the number of people living alone globally is skyrocketing, rising from about 153 million in 1996 to 277 million in 2011 – an increase of around 80 percent in 15 years.”

In mainstream media, being single is often portrayed as the result of some inherent physical or mental defect. And the depiction of that solitary existence is usually characterized differently depending on gender.

Unmarried men are cast as commitment-phobic Don Juans, as in the classic film *Alfie*, remade in 2004. Jude Law plays the near-pathological bachelor on the road to ruin, after breaking the hearts of countless women, from the patient and loving single mom, to the blonde with movie-star looks, considered the zenith of the heterosexual dating pool.

In the novel-turned-film, *Bridget Jones's Diary*, Renée Zellweger is the affectionate, though ultimately neurotic spinster. Complete with wine-soaked renditions of *All by Myself*, and unruly pounds brought on by self-pitying ice cream binges, *Bridget Jones* solidified and possibly revived the desperate 30-something female archetype.

The movie's problematic stereotyping has not escaped widespread criticism, but its cultural resonance cannot be denied. The film, along with its 2004 sequel, grossed over \$500 million at the box office. Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie in her 2009 *Ted Talk* said, “the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete.”

According to Statistics Canada, 13,788,492 Canadians identified as single in 2012. Yet many uncoupled people feel misunderstood.

“Nobody talks about single people. There are no stories written about them,” said Ross Henwood, a 38-year-old single man living in Hull, Québec.

“If you watch any movie, a single person is like a lone wolf or an anti-hero. Like, ‘What’s wrong with them? Why wouldn’t they want to find somebody and settle down?’ ... I think the last two marginalized groups are fat people and single people.”

The perception of singles is often polarized. Friends and family offer pity or envy, implying the lifestyle is either pathetic or glamorous. According to Ross “being alone is a bit of a paradox. It’s both really good, but it’s also a bit of a drag at the same time.”

Candice O’Grady, 32, of Toronto, says her feelings about her status are always changing. “I go through phases; sometimes it bothers me and sometimes it doesn’t.”

Like many, Candice finds it impossible to meet people, and says it only grows

more difficult with age. “I find it so hard to picture meeting someone. That’s what’s changed for me. I never worried about that when I was younger, because obviously it’ll just happen.”

Many say being unattached also impacts their social life, and how they interact in groups. Ottawa resident Kate McInturf, 45, identifies an uncomfortable dynamic in her experience as a single woman.

“I have a couple of close friends who are couples, and I’m aware of trying not ever to be alone with the husband... not because anything has ever happened... I just don’t want the [woman] in the couple to ever feel awkward about it.”

McInturf debunks the stigma of the desperate, middle-aged divorcee, explaining that she isn’t on the hunt for just any man.

“I’m pretty comfortable being alone and being independent. And so I don’t feel like I have to rush out and find someone. Or put up with someone just because I want to be with someone. I’m way more confident now than I was in my 20s. Way more confident. Much more likely to think about do I like him, than I am to think about does he likes me.”

Alanna Makinson, 25, says she has had a passive attitude towards dating.

“I’ve actively gone after everything that I wanted with regards to education, career, hobbies, traveling. If I wanted it, I would just make it happen. ... And I just never did that with relationships. ... The thing that I find challenging about relationships is they can be so up and down. ... So I think that I chose in the rapid instability of my familial life - I think I just chose stable things to focus on.”

“The thing that I find challenging about relationships is they can be so up and down.”

Candice O’Grady

But single people, as resilient as they may be, don’t wish to be regarded as invulnerable either.

Celia Posner, 33, is an ASL instructor in Ottawa. She says she’s becoming increasingly set in her ways, and finds it difficult to make concessions in relationships. But at the same time she admits that finding a partner is all-consuming.

“It’s really all I think about. It’s everywhere. I drive to work, and I check out other cars to see if there’s a hot guy in it. And so what if there is? He’s not going to be my boyfriend: “Pull over. We’re getting married.” What am I thinking? Who cares? But that’s all I think about.”

While modern-day singletons would like the stories told about them to reflect their diverse realities and ways of thinking, there does seem to be agreement across this demographic, for an eternal ban on unsolicited romantic advice – and in particular: “It will happen when you least expect it.”

More to the Story

by Natalie McMullen

“I suddenly felt very old. I never cared about my age until this year. I turned 35 and I felt like I didn’t have a whole lot to celebrate. I was off work with depression... and my marriage was falling apart... I felt pretty humbled, pretty small... I was terrified at first. I thought I was too old for the game. I was worried and I’m still worried about being an old father.”

Ryan Mill, 35



“When I came here, I don’t know what’s wrong with him. Every time I went out, he get pissed off. He wants me to stay in my room or whatever. He doesn’t want me to mingle with other people. He doesn’t want me to grow. I feel tight. I can’t breathe. So I asked him, ‘I want my freedom. I want my life before...’ I like it better now. Free-spirited, care-free, no commitment. No other things to think about except for myself.”

Haydee Flores, 32

“I used to take jam and peanut butter packets from restaurants – not for me, but for her grandmother, who was in a retirement home and didn’t have access to those things. So we used to store those and bring her a big shopping bag full of them. And I would do that for a little while after [we broke up], and then I was like ‘ah shit’, and throw them out walking halfway home.”

Benjamin Fox Dickerson, 36



“Sometimes it’s just frustrating ‘cus it’s hard. It would be nice when my car breaks down that I could call my husband to come and get me. Or just when - because I’m human - when the little girl is being too much to handle I can just step away and say, ‘can you take over for me?’ Or in the middle of the night I’ve got nobody to tag team. She’s throwing up and I’m trying to clean up the bed and comfort her at the same time. Those times I feel really alone. It just would have been nice to have that. I’ve never really had that.”

“Jackie”, 39



“Even if I hear any hundreds of people idea, I have to make sure that I have something strong idea... Even if something really ugly or not agree for them. But I have to have something idea very strong. ‘Cus otherwise it’s going to be easy to lose myself...’ “I’m not judging or anything. But I think you have something that I answer for yourself already. It’s just that you want to hear that more idea and then satisfy yourself. That’s only you’re doing right now. Which is very interesting, I think.”

Hiko Komatsu, 34

MIX AND SERVE



Barbara Rickert has been bartending for 34 years. Ten of those years have been spent bartending at Vic's Place in downtown Belleville.

As night approaches, some prepare to come home from work while others prepare to start their shift. People in the medical profession, taxi drivers and fast food workers are only a few of the many workers whose night is day.

Bartenders, included.

Whether it's a moonlighting job or a profession that's been pursued for decades, people choose to bartend for many different reasons.

For Barbara Rickert, it's a long-time profession that's brought her to the Quinte area from Quebec.

Rickert has been a bartender at Vic's Place in downtown Belleville for ten years. Rickert previously owned a bar in Montreal, and has been bartending for 34 years.

"I sold my bar in Montreal and came here, and now I just want to work."

Rickert's favourite drink to make is a long island iced tea.

It's not uncommon to find bars inside of restaurants, usually in a certain section with higher stools and televisions that play the sports channels.

Melanie Roy is also experienced in bartending with 27 years of it under her belt. Roy is the bar manager at Montana's and has been bartending since it opened 11 years ago.

Roy has always enjoyed bartending, noting that the people she works with and serve on a regular basis make it a particularly great job.

"It's just a very social job. I have great bosses, and it's good team," Roy says.

Roy's favourite drinks to make are Alabama Slammers and margaritas.

For Alyssa Farley, it stemmed from a desire to be a part of the family business.

Farley has been bartending at the Red Lion Pub in downtown Belleville for nine months. Farley's grandfather has owned the pub for 14 years.

"It's the family business. Just thought I'd start up."

Farley's favourite drink to make is a Vanilla Thug.

Some choose to work in a club atmosphere: lots of lights, music blaring, and dancing, which typically attract the younger crowd in Belleville.

Alex Brown has been bartending for two and a half years at Matt & Joe's Nightclub in Belleville.

"I really like the service industry. I started waitressing here, and I just really like being around people. It's just a good vibe in here."

Brown's favourite drink to create is a Rocket.

For Hilary Schick, bartending is something she picked up when she started college.

Schick has just started bartending at the Shark Tank Pub at Loyalist College this school year. Schick has had experience serving, but never making drinks.

"I just like the social atmosphere, I like talking to people, and it's just a really fun thing to do through school."

Schick's favourite drinks to make include anything with tequila.

Female bartenders in Belleville have a range of experience and reasons to bartend, and while they all may vary, they are united under the title of their contribution to nightlife.

Story and photos by Mandy Larade



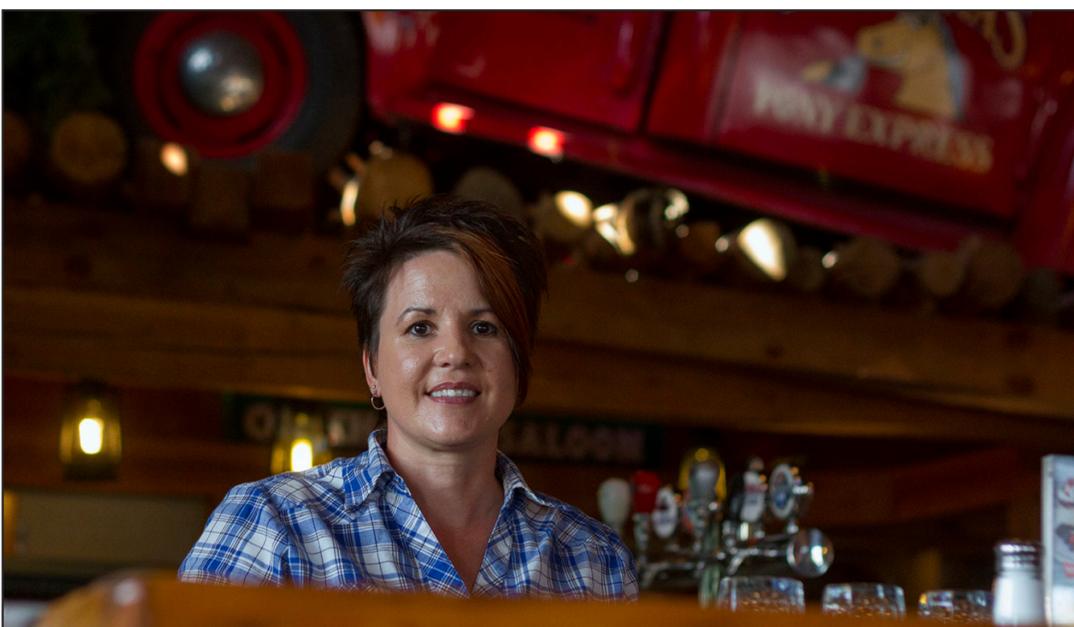
Alyssa Farley has been bartending for nine months at the Red Lion Pub in downtown Belleville. The Red Lion Pub is owned by Farley's grandfather.



Alex Brown has been bartending at Matt & Joe's Nightclub for two and a half years.

*"I sold my bar
in Montreal
and came here,
and now I just
want to work."*

Barbara Rickert



Melanie Roy has been a bartender for 27 years. 11 of those years have been spent working at the Belleville Montana's right from when it opened.



Hilary Schick started bartending in September 2013 at the Shark Tank Pub when she started attending Loyalist College.



Amanda Latham, 31, was in a serious car accident when she was 20 years old. The scar on her throat is from her tracheostomy. Amongst many other injuries, she broke two vertebrae in her neck and could have been paralyzed.

What Makes Them Whole

"SCARS are not injuries... A scar is a healing. After injury, a scar is what makes you whole," writes China Miéville in his book, *The Scar*.

Everyone has scars, but some are more telling of the individual than others. Some are inside, others out. Some are accidental, others on purpose.

All the people shown here have learned to embrace their scars as a part of their body, which serves as a reminder of their past. Some are at different stages of this acceptance, but these stories are examples of how flaws can be more beautiful than perfection.

Holly Mosienko had a scarification artist etch a star into her bicep, sort of like a tattoo.

Mosienko says, "The majority of people like it, think it's kind of different and unusual. The odd person doesn't like it at all. My mother was very upset at me.

"The one on my shoulder, I was going through an awful lot at the time. It would definitely be kind of like a midlife crisis, but it meant a lot to me at the same time."

The current popular literature at the time influence her design.

"I was reading the Da Vinci Code at the time and I read a lot about how powerful the star symbol was and how ancient it is and how it's been interpreted in different ways. And that it has strong feminine background to it."

Taylor Weaver's scars were also on purpose. Weaver resorted to self-harm as a way to deal with her emotions. She has since stopped, and begun to heal.

"It's not something I'm proud of, but it's a landmark in my life, something I got over. It's not something I'm ashamed of," Weaver explains.

The heart shown on her hand (below right) is not a mark of self-harm; it's a reminder to love herself.

"I got it on my left palm because it used to be the first thing I'd see when I'd go to cut myself."

Someone who has accepted her life changing scars is Amanda Latham. Eleven years ago, Latham was in a major car accident. The driver of the other vehicle was drunk and had dementia. Amanda defied doctor's expectations; she was able to breathe and walk on her own.

Despite the pain she is still in, she says, "In the end I'm very comfortable with my scars now, because they're a part of who I am. Yeah, people gawk and stare and point and whisper; okay, you can gawk and stare and point and whisper after you've survived what I did, then we'll talk."

Emily Vissers' scars were also caused by someone else, and they are very hard to see: they effect her from the inside.

In the summer of 2013, she was attacked by an opponent during a soccer game. The attack left her with two vertebrae out of alignment in her neck, a rotated shoulder, a concussion and level two whiplash. It also effected her emotionally, creating a lot of anxiety, especially when the school year started up again.

She says it helps her to talk about the incident and that people sympathize with her, but charging her attacker brings her the most empowerment.

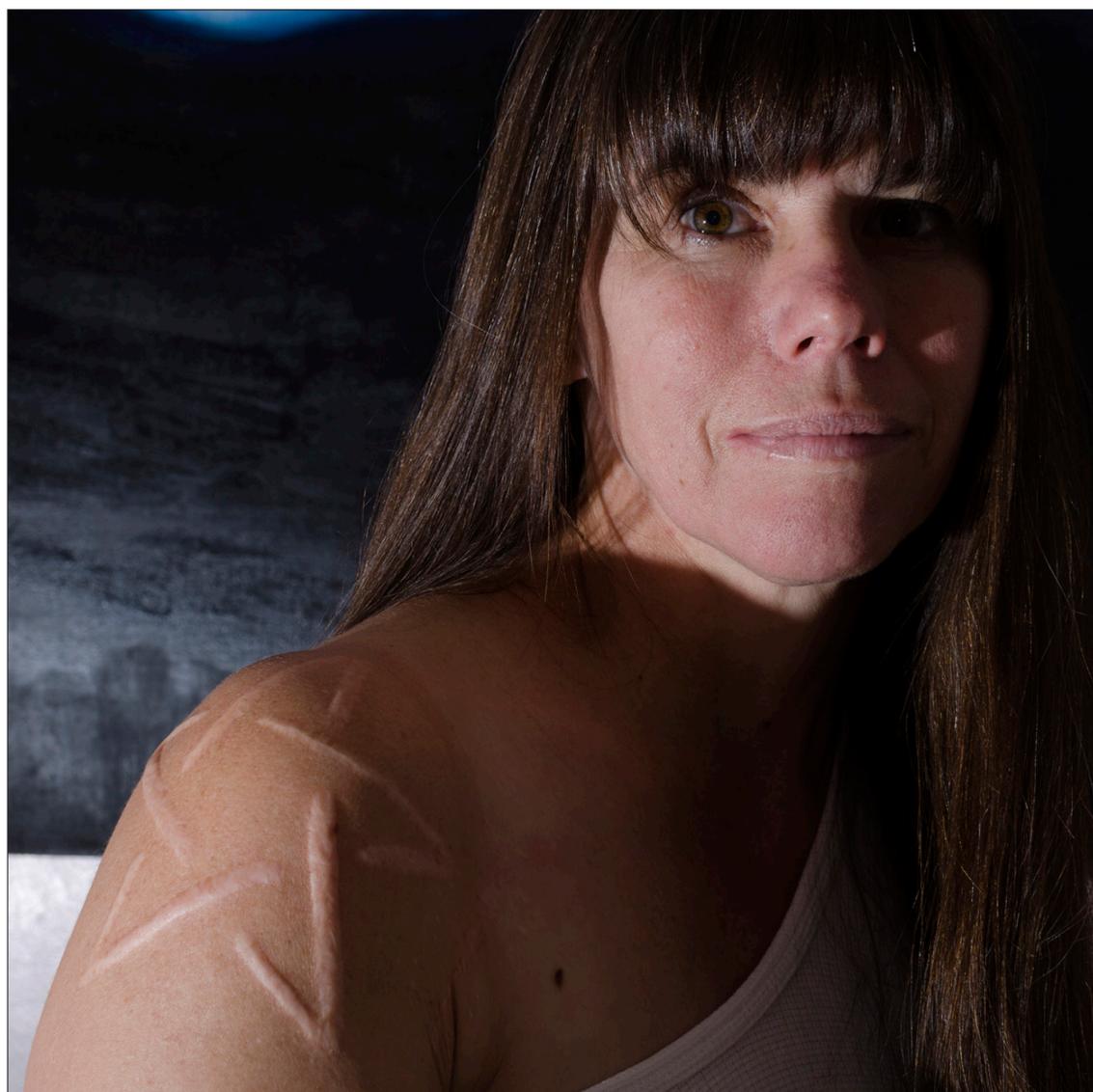
"The fact it happened gets a lot of people, I think. Whenever they hear how it happened, they always get kind of worried and understand that it's more emotional. The physical stuff too always makes it worse. All together it adds up. Either one without the other would still be bad, but together they make it worse."

In all cases, emotions are tied heavily with the marks left on the body. Whether it stems from divorce or assault, that part of someone's life will be carried with them forever to serve as a reminder of life gone by.

Story and photos by Sarah Vissers



Emily Vissers, 19, was attacked by an opponent during a soccer game. The attack left her with physical and emotional injuries.



Holly Mosienko, 51, who owns Body Piercing by Holly in Peterborough, has multiple scarifications done.



Taylor Weaver, 18, a photojournalism student at Loyalist College, has her personal history displayed on her arm. Weaver used to resort to self-harm to help deal with her emotions.



A twelve-week old black Lab puppy sits in his newly assigned cage at the Quinte Humane Society. Many cats and dogs are either abandoned, such as this dog, or dropped off at the shelter until they find a home.

My Forever Home

WHILE families in the Quinte area settle into the new year, the Quinte Humane Society prepares for the next couple of cold winter months ahead.

In the last few months, the Quinte Humane Society has been experiencing an overflow of cats and dogs, fluctuating at 200-300 cats and 30 dogs at a time.

Winter months are the least favourite time of year for the Quinte Humane Society because more animals are found on the streets and brought into the shelter, causing less room for the animals.

Much like 5,000 community animal shelters nationwide, the QHS relies only on generous donations of the community, which at this time of year gets especially hard due to the other charities that also need help in the cold months. Despite the phrases 'humane society' and 'SPCA', many shelters that do use those names are not part of an organization or the OSPCA.

"Although our spring and summer months get busy with animal offspring, winter constantly brings in more and more homeless animals that we struggle to find space for every day," said Marja Bernhardt, a long-time employee of the Quinte Humane Society.

"Dogs stay here until they are adopted or transferred to a local shelter or the Toronto Humane Society. We are a no-kill shelter. The amount of time a dog stays here depends on how full we are. They could be here for five days or five weeks," said Bernhardt.

The Toronto Humane Society is a non-profit organization funded through charitable dona-

tions, completely separate from the OSPCA (Ontario Society for Prevention to Cruelty of Animals), not receiving any government funding.

The THS takes in animals of every shape and size from local animal shelters as well as surrendered pets of the city. They do not put down their animals due to lack of room at the shelter or an expiry date, but keep them there until the right home comes along through extensive application and interview processes.

Only two percent of cats that are brought into an animal shelter are ever returned to their owners, and only 15-20 percent of dogs are returned to their owners, both being identified by microchips, tags or tattoos.

The Ontario SPCA takes the issue of euthanasia very seriously, although sometimes despite best efforts, animals must be put down. Reasons the OSPCA euthanizes include: terminal illness or injury with no recovery, behavioural problems that pose a threat, disease, old age, as well as the unfortunate cases of stray or feral overpopulation and shelter overcrowding.

Animal shelters nationwide try their hardest to find homes for animals elsewhere, including other shelters in the area, hospices, and foster families. Unfortunately due to best efforts our government spends approximately \$2 billion dollars to round up, house, kill, and dispose of homeless animals.

"We do our best for our animals, we give them a chance for hopes to either adopt them out or relocate them somewhere else," said Bernhardt.

Photos and story by Samantha Quinn



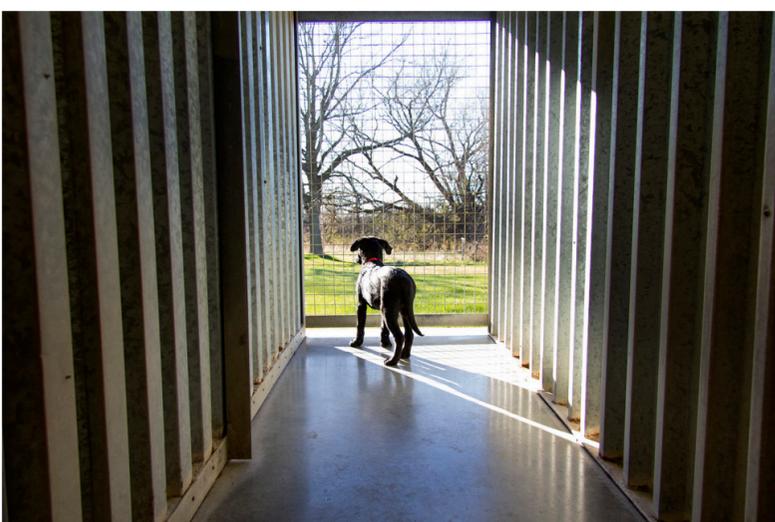
A co-op bring in the male dogs from the outside cages at the Quinte Humane Society. All of the dogs at the shelter spend a majority of their time in either the indoor or the outdoor cages unless they are walked by the volunteers.



A child cradles a tabby kitten at the Quinte Humane Society. Once given their shots, many of the kittens are put into playgrounds for people to take out and play with.



The dogs spend most of their time in either the indoor or outdoor cages unless they are being walked or played with. Thankfully the shelter is mostly volunteer oriented and the volunteers spend most of their working hours with the animals of the shelter.



Twelve-week-old unnamed black lab puppy sits in his newly assigned cage at the Quinte Humane Society. Many cats and dogs are either abandoned such as this dog until found a new home.



Many people who choose to adopt from the Quinte Humane Society mail in photos of their newly adopted family members, sometimes even with messages such as this.