



Photo by Amanda Cheung

Alexandria Barker leads her yoga class for ladies 50 and over into different poses at Eastminster United Church in Belleville on Tuesday.

Yoga offers 'grounding' for participants

By Amanda Cheung

In a society where women are bombarded with what they are supposed to look like, yoga is "one-size-fits-all."

Alexandria Barker, 57, has been teaching fitness since the age of 22.

"All kinds of fitness you can imagine," laughs Barker. "But I thought I'd keep yoga for old age."

It wasn't until her father passed very suddenly in her early forties that Barker decided she needed a more substantial

spiritual influence in her life. She tried yoga and never looked back.

"I wished I started when I was younger," says Barker, "instead of just thinking it was for old people and that when I slow down physically, then I'll do yoga."

Every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. for the past eight years, Barker has been teaching yoga to ladies 50 years old and up.

"Yoga allows people to be more intimate with their bodies and be in touch with themselves," says Barker.

"I find it very grounding because it

brings you right to your centre. With every breath, you're breathing in inspiration."

Barker's classes are held at the Eastminster United Church in Belleville.

Despite the pounding noise caused by construction on the church to remove ice, one lady in the group mentioned that she didn't even notice the noise stopping because the yoga was helping her centre herself and be grounded.

A mantra Barker uses is "may I be happy, may I be healthy, may I live with ease." She got it from a metta meditation

from Marci Shimoff's book, *Happy for no Reason*, "metta" being the Sanskrit word for 'loving kindness.'

Barker has her group of ladies meditate on these words at the end of class. They meditate on the words first to themselves, then to those beside them and lastly to whomever they would like to be thinking of.

"People tend to get stressed out and project these fears into their future," says Barker. "So just by repeating (the mantra) a few times can bring you back into that place of peace."

Barker has taught a wide range of ages. She was a volunteer teacher to a group of junior kindergarteners to whom she's now known as the yoga nana.

"I was a journalist and a fitness teacher and was just busy, busy, raising a family and I just thought 'I don't have time to sit and do that. I don't have time to meditate.' Now if someone tells me that, I tell them, 'you don't have time not to because you can really be so much more productive.' Really, it's giving you time and not taking it away from you."

Shining a light on local filmmakers at DocFest

By Paul Terry

This past weekend, Belleville's downtown core heralded the fourth annual international documentary film festival, DocFest 2015, an event that presents stories celebrating life and human dignity around the world.

One of the defining aspects of DocFest has been the presence of stories told right here at home, with local filmmakers being given the opportunity to screen their films to wider audiences, and network with other filmmakers.

Only one local film was screened at the first DocFest (*The Faces of Cancer 2012* by Michael Brethour), comparably to the 14 local films screened at DocFest 2015.

In the spirit of DocFest, local filmmakers were also given the chance to develop their skills through a series of workshops.

On Sunday, March 1, one of these workshops, hosted by the Ontario Arts Council, was well-attended by 20 hopeful and promising filmmakers.

This workshop brought in many artists from the immediate and surrounding area who had questions on whether they were eligible for media arts grants. Two of the local filmmakers in attendance were Michelle Annette Tremblay and Sean Buk, whose Bancroft-centered shorts *Building the Future* and *Friends in the Community* premiered earlier that weekend.

Before moving to the Bancroft and North Hastings area, Tremblay was a Vancouver-based copywriter and college writing instructor. As each year passed, she became more specialized in her field, but as a creative person she yearned for more variety.

Tremblay and Buk have partnered with various agencies and non-profits to

work on multiple different projects, all of which, Tremblay says, makes them feel more connected to and grateful for the close-knit community of Bancroft.

This is what led to them starting their *Building the Future* and *Friends in the Community* projects.

"I think it's easier for us to get paid video work in North Hastings because there's less competition than in a film-centric city like Vancouver," says Tremblay. "Also, there's a lot of cool stuff going on in Bancroft; more than most people realize."

When serving smaller populations, you have to be diverse as a media professional. The lower cost of living allows devoting more of your income toward equipment upgrades.

In addition to their filmmaking collaboration, Tremblay and Buk are life partners, parents, and homeowners.

"We kind of balance each other out and fill in each other's gaps," Tremblay says. Juggling these labels doesn't deter them from finishing a project. Tremblay stresses that post-production sessions are very intense.

After their kids are in bed, what commences next is an obsessive all-nighter editing session. "Around 2 a.m., we'll really piss each other off, but by 4 a.m., we're high-fiving and singing each other's praises. It's totally fun."

Tremblay and Buk are in the fairly busy and expensive stage of their lives, where focusing on lining up paid video work for them selves is more beneficial. Raising young children and paying a mortgage doesn't allow much time to focus on indie projects.

On the topic of being included in the local lineup for DocFest 2015, Tremblay feels she is now inspired to pursue lon-

ger, and more independent projects – especially after attending an Ontario Arts Council workshop.

For local filmmakers, being featured in the DocFest 2015 lineup is a tremendous opportunity to share their work and gain exposure, while also connecting with other filmmakers and finding inspiration for future productions.

DocFest 2015 emcee and PR representative Dug Stevenson states that one of the event's main goals is to develop the art of documentary filmmaking at a local level, and support independent filmmakers as a potential development opportunity.

"Both of our films that were in the festival this year were produced under very tight deadlines, and they're both very short," she says. "We know we want to go bigger, and we want it to kick our current films' butts!"

Board games making a return

By Amanda Cheung

Board games are making a comeback. According to The Guardian, board game purchases have risen by 25-40 per cent annually in the last four years.

Mike Sparks, an employee of P Market Buy and Sell on North Front Street in Belleville, has taken up the initiative for organizing a weekly board games night.

Sparks recently moved from Ottawa where there were board game nights almost every night of the week.

"I looked for something similar here and couldn't find a thing, so I decided to start one up here," said Sparks. "Peter, my friend and boss are big board game geeks, so he loves the idea of me spear heading a regular board game night."

Peter Tsitiridis is the owner of P Market Buy and Sell. He bought the business four years ago and have always wanted to do a board games night.

"I'm not good at being online and telling people about it, so I got Mike to do it," says Tsitiridis.

Sparks and Tsitiridis are trying to plan regular weekly games nights every Tuesday at 7 p.m. at P Market Buy and Sell.

They play a variety of games and are always welcoming new people to join them.

The store front is located right across from Metro and looks small but there's a room that opens deep into the back of the building.

Once inside, there are stacks and stacks of games everywhere. Toy figurines line the wall and there's even a case of vintage boxed Nintendo games,



Photo by Amanda Cheung

Steven Ketcheson, employee of P Market Buy and Sell, teaches owner and boss Peter Tsitiridis how to play the board game *Smash-Up* on Tuesday. They hope to start a weekly board game night every Tuesday at 7 p.m.

perfect for collectors.

In the room are several long tables, plenty of space for people to come and have multiple games going on at once.

Every Friday, the store also holds Magic: The Gathering tournaments.

"I enjoy playing board games because it gives my brain a workout and it's a fun social outing that usually affords no loss of fun things to talk about, be it about the game itself or whatever," says Sparks.

"Another employee of the store here is an avid board gamer too, so there will pretty much always be sufficient people here on a Tuesday night, especially so, if one or two, or more, outside people come in for the night."

Passport

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"It is our hope that Passport funding will give people who have a developmental disability and their caregivers the ability to purchase tailored services that will directly benefit the recipient. This is a brand new way of providing direct funding to families that should allow people a modern approach to securing supports and services of their choice."

There was a presentation by Heather Summers, Passport co-ordinator, about the various ways in which the Passport funds could be used, and other information that was quite evidently valuable. This was followed by another presentation by lawyer Brendon Pooran, who touched on the legal side of Passport funding.

Even though the snowy evening turned into a night of freezing rain, the turnout was impressive.

Patti Preston, mother of an adult daughter with a developmental disability who receives passport funding, said she found the presentations illuminating.

"We came tonight to receive more information, to know how best to use the funds that she has been allocated in a more effective way. I learned a lot. But I wish there was more on how to use the funding creatively."

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