

New Food Art Gallery opens in Coe Hill



By Nate Smelle

Artists and art lovers in North Hastings now have a new place to go to exhibit and appreciate creativity. The Food Art Gallery located in the grocery store in downtown Coe Hill officially opened its doors to the public on May 20. Wendy Mortimer, the owner of the grocery store, said she came up with the idea for the exhibition space in March after she decided to wall off a portion of the store. "I was originally thinking of creating some office space, Mortimer explained, "but once we painted the new partition, it just seemed like an art gallery had to be the first use. It was time to hang some art in the Food Art store." With so much talent in the Coe Hill area, Mortimer said she wants to help local artists showcase and sell their work. She said the first exhibit brings together the work of seven local artists, including Arne Roosman, Barb Allport, Sheila Ottonen Leuschner, Michael Jain, Lee Lander Maidlow Anita Murphy, and David Pickett. Noting that Roosman is a good customer of the grocery store, Mortimer said "it was a natural development" to ask him if he would like to be the Food Art Gallery's inaugural featured artist after she was invited to see some of his paintings on display at his home/studio. Happy to share his artwork with the community and promote the new local gallery, Roosman took Bancroft This Week on a tour of the space. After admiring the work of his fellow artists, he took time to share the inspiration and story behind each of his paintings decorating two full walls at the gallery. "This one here was on the stage at the Village Playhouse for a production of *The Jungle Book*," said Roosman, pointing to a large painting of animals playing. "This is Gabriella," he said pointing to another painting of an angel with rainbow-coloured wings that is blowing into a trumpet, and blanketing the Earth in sound. "Gabriel is the one that wakes up Jesus Christ and everybody else in the Bible. Gabriel is a noisemaker, but I made him into a woman. That's our private universe here - our Earth - all this around her is the new technology going into our space." Mortimer said all of the art is available for purchase on consignment. She said she would love to sell out the show and make room for new works in August or sooner. "I envision this space as an ever-changing location for our customers who are also artists to display their work and have great exposure to interested supporters," said Mortimer. "We may, depending on responses, have themed shows, such as wood art, fibre art, or photography; and mini courses in the crafts related to the shows." For more information on the Food Art Gallery and/or to purchase one of the paintings on display, visit the store at 5480 Hwy 620 in Coe Hill; or, contact: (613) 337-5741; orthecoehillgrocerystore@gmail.com. The Food Art Gallery/Store is open throughout the summer: Monday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tuesday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Wednesday: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Thursday: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Friday: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.