

Wild about Algonquin art show now on until Sept. 1



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

For those wild about Algonquin Park, there's an art show for that. On now, from July 30 to Sept. 1, the Wild about Algonquin: Discover Algonquin Park through the eyes of three artists art show is being put on by three talented painters called the Wild Women, painters of the wilderness; Linda Sorensen, Joyce Burkholder and Kathy Haycock. The show is located at the Algonquin Park visitors' centre, on Hwy 60, Algonquin Park at kilometre 43.

The Wild Women, painters of the wilderness; Sorensen, Burkholder and Haycock, have been painting the natural landscapes of Algonquin Park together for almost 15 years, with Haycock and Burkholder painting together for almost 20 years. They are attracted by the raw, natural, largely untouched landscapes in the park which provides them a myriad of vistas to spark their creativity. Burkholder says that there are often challenges, whether it's weather, bugs, wind, the light always changing, but that they find it very exciting to paint together and on location. Sorensen says they all have a shared passion for painting.

'People really like the concept of wild women. It conjures up all sorts of amazing images for people,' she says.

This is the first show that the Wild Women have had at the Algonquin Park visitors' centre since 2016, which Haycock says was the second largest show at the park. She says they're aiming for the current show to be the largest.

Sorensen says that they all have over 100 paintings they've submitted for the show, but that that they're always changing as they get sold.

'I didn't really count them. We were just happy to get them all hung. It was quite a job,' she says.

Burkholder says it's well worth the trip up to see what she calls a substantial show, and not only in terms of the original art they show.

'There's also very affordable reproductions and cards there as well as information and photographs of us painting and our equipment,' she says.

Haycock says the show has been very well received, and that she, Burkholder and Sorensen are having to replace their hung paintings ever couple of days.

'It's really opening up, bit by bit at the park. Lots of peoples camping, there's a surge of 'come back to the park' interest and I guess

the gallery at the visitors' centre is being included in that, she says.

Burkholder concurs that the show has been successful so far and that attendance has been great.

"I think everybody's needing to be doing things, you know and going places and seeing things," she says.

Haycock says that everyone she's spoken with says it is such a beautiful, colourful show, and it keeps getting refreshed almost every day as their artwork gets sold.

"The feedback is almost as good as the sales. It's nice to have sales because it supports you of course, and if someone likes it so much that they buy it that's real encouragement. But the positive feedback certainly does feed our production and inspiration. It's really encouraging," she says.

Sorensen, Burkholder and Haycock all have meet and greets for the show, where they can meet and discuss their art with the people that come by. While Haycock and Sorensen have already had theirs, on July 31 and August 7 respectively, Burkholder's meet and greet is coming up on Aug. 21 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. "It's always good when we have the opportunity to explain how we do things and why and where, because a lot of the paintings were done on location in and around [Algonquin Park], painted on the spot," she says. Haycock says that at her meet and greet, the visitors were really impressed by all their works. "People really took their time moving around the gallery, taking in everything and chatting about the art with their friends and with me," she says. Aside from the current show, the Wild Women also wrote a book, appropriately titled Wild Women: Painters of the Wilderness, which was published in 2014 from Innana Publishers. Another book, The Artists of Algonquin by Andrea Hillo, also features them and was published in 2011. The Algonquin Puzzle Company has also made several jigsaw puzzles from their paintings, and have a new series of puzzles being released in mid-August. Sorensen, Burkholder and Haycock are also part of the Madawaska Studio Tour [www.madawaskastudiotour.com], which returns from Oct. 1 to Oct. 3 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sorensen was mainly self taught as a painter, but was instructed and mentored by wildlife artist and conservationist Robert Bateman, who called her one of his most "most talented and dedicated students." After taking a break to raise a family, she returned to her art nearly 25 years ago. She works in oils and paints on site in all seasons, also painting from her own photos in studio and in the winter months in acrylic. She says she just came back from a five-day camping trip to Lake Opeongo, where she did three paintings, and she confesses that she always has her paints with her in case inspiration strikes. A lot of imagery around Algonquin Park inspires her, including the canoes she uses to get around the park and invariably end up in her paintings.

"The beautiful white pine and the red pine and the natural rock formations. Everything in the park hasn't been manipulated by man, so it's just in its natural form. So, it's not hard to find subject matter. I enjoy the natural landscape that exists in our provincial park," she says.

Sorensen's studio is called the Blue Sky Studio gallery at 1012 O'Grady Settlement Road in Killaloe, and her work is on display year round at the Muse Gallery and Café in Bancroft. You can reach her at 613-756-0478 or at linda@lindasorensen.com. You can find out more information about her and her art at www.lindasorensen.com

Burkholder has been painting for 40 years and like Sorensen and Haycock gets her inspiration from the natural landscape that surrounds her in Algonquin Park and at her studio in Wilno, Hillside Paintings and Pottery, located at 888 Wilno South Road, one kilometre south of Hwy 60. She uses oils, watercolours and acrylics to achieve her visions on canvas. She says she can be inspired by a number of things around the park. "Sometimes it's just the light, the way the light is right and the shadows are creating patterns. Or the way the sun will be shining at an angle so it's lighting up a particular tree or making patterns of light on the water. All these things are super exciting I think to all painters, but that's what I'm always looking for," she says.

In addition to painting, Burkholder also teaches workshops and is a custom picture framer. More information about Burkholder and her artistry can be found at www.joyceburkholder.com. She can be reached at 613-756-9283 or at joyce@joyceburkholder.com.

Haycock was influenced growing up by her father, artist Maurice Haycock and his painting partner A.Y. Jackson [of the Canadian Group of Seven]. She began using oils to paint in the late 1990s after years of being a fiber artist and tapestry weaver. In addition to the Wild about Algonquin show, she also has a show at A Place for the Arts in Bancroft during the month of August called Rock, Water, Wind, which is all about how she dealt with pandemic isolation, and discovered she'd been painting bedrock, water and wind in her work.

?I decided that it was because I was looking for a solid grounding [bedrock], a refreshing change or cleansing [water] and I was looking for hope of better days [wind]. So, I was sharing that positive message in the show,? she says.

Haycock's studio is called Woodland Studio in Eganville, and she can be reached at kathy@kmhaycock.com or at 613-628-1388. More information about her and her art can be found at www.kmhaycock.com.

As for the Wild about Algonquin show, Haycock says that anyone thinking of coming to see it should come right away and then return later for a chance to see it again.

?There's two opportunities to pick out a favourite piece or pieces to take home right then and there,? she says.

Sorenson says that if you love art and you love the natural world, it's a natural thing to come up and see their show.?It's through three artists eyes and it's interesting to see each of our interpretations of that. So, it's certainly worth it. It's a nice outing,? she says.

Burkholder agrees with her fellow painters, calling it an exciting and dynamic exhibition.?There's three of us and three completely different styles of painting and we work in different mediums. It's interesting because we can be painting very close to each other and yet our paintings will look quite different. So, we each have ways of interpreting scenes, what we see. There's a lot of pieces and a lot of variety,? she says. ?So, there's a lot to see in the show.?