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Rollo at the Registry

Local favourite Ben Rollo returns to The Registry Theatre Friday night (Feb. 7) for Great Canadian Singer-Songwriters Vol. VIII: The Acoustic Sessions. The popular annual concert this time around features special guests Claire Voy (SHEBAD), Christine Bougie (Bahamas), and Emma Cooper & Jacob Macpherson. Show time is 8 p.m.

www.registrytheatre.com

Hotz on on the Run

Canadian comedian Jeremy Hotz brings his award-winning brand of observational comedy to Guelph's River Run Centre on Saturday (Feb. 8). The stop is part of his 10th national tour, dubbed Très Misérables, offering up fresh takes on life's absurdities.

www.jeremyhotz.com

Tim Schmalz's latest project is close to home

Local sculptor wants to place a version of Tennyson's 'Lady of Shallot' in Wellesley to honour his father and uncle

Andrea Eymann
Observer Staff



Tim Schmalz works on another project in his Elmira-based workshop as he waits to hear back from Wellesley Township about his plans to donate a sculpture. Andrea Eymann

LOOKING TO CELEBRATE THE MEMORY of his father, St. Jacob's artist Tim Schmalz plans to donate a sculpture to Wellesley Township.

'Lady of Shallot' is named after Alfred, Lord Tennyson's 1833 poem, one of the artist's favourite literary works, as he first heard it when he was around 20.

The piece of art is proposed for a spot by the pond in Wellesley village's Albert Erb Park.

"The idea was to put a sculpture in a spot where the community can appreciate it, and consequently, the memory of my father [Paul] and my uncle [Peter] can live on in a positive way, in a sense, contributing to the community that they grew up in by putting beauty within that small community," Schmalz, 55, said.

"It is more or less what I perceive as my father giving a gift to Wellesley," he emphasized.

"It's not a tombstone... the whole project is a gift to the Township of Wellesley on behalf of my father, and I do believe that the sculpture is something that will be universally appreciated because it is such a universally accepted poem."

But Schmalz noted there might be some excitement because it is honouring some past residents who used to live there, adding that some older people might remember the identical twins, Peter and Paul.

They were born October 22, 1938, and grew up at the local gas station, garage and lunch stop, which sat on the main street with the river running behind the property. Both attended EDSS, where Paul met his wife, Myrna.

Schmalz told The Observer his father was head of the English department at Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate, while his uncle was head of the history department at Walkerton High School.

Paul died during the summer of 2024 at the age of 85. Peter died in 2021 at 82.

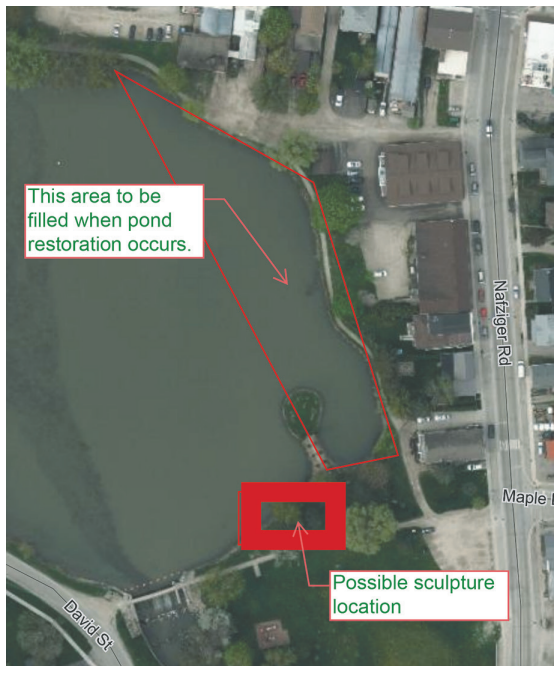
"They were both involved in the arts and humanities, so to have a sculpture that was really kind of a pinnacle of the arts, captured by the poem and represented by the sculptor, is very important," he explained of the motivation for the art project.

Schmalz said his father was a big influence on him, boosting the arts and encouraging him when he wanted to pursue an artistic career.

"I had conversations about philosophy, and we would sit even right before he passed. We would have great discussions about philosophy, art and literature throughout our whole lives, and I enjoyed that," the son said of his favourite memories of his father.

The Wellesley sculpture will be the second version of 'Lady of Shallot,' with his first version to be found on the Isle of Wight in England, where Tennyson lived. It's displayed at Dimbla Museum and Galleries in Freshwater, one of many international installations of his sculptures, from Philadelphia to the Vatican.





Identical twins, Paul and Peter Schmalz, the artist's father and uncle, who the statue will honour. The photo on the right shows the proposed location of the sculpture in Wellesley village's Albert Erb Park, at the southeastern corner of the pond. Submitted

Schmalz's planned donation is currently being reviewed by Wellesley council, which discussed the idea last week before deferring a decision until after some public consultation. The matter is expected to be back on the table February 11.

"I think I'd like to hear a little bit more from the residents of the town to see what their feelings are on this," said Mayor Joe Nowak at the January 27 meeting.

"It is their ponds, our pond, the township's pond, it's multi-layered."

Schmalz thinks one "stumbling block" for some community members is they won't know who Lord Tennyson is.

"But my hope is also that a plaque is created near the sculpture that celebrates the poem by actually having a carved out or a QR code that will bring people to the poem so they can read the poem," Schmalz said.

Additionally, the life-sized bronze sculpture, created from some 2,000 pounds of clay, depicts Lady Shallot in a boat, where Schmalz carves scenes from the composition onto the statue itself, which provides visual cues to the narrative.

For example, if it mentions the moon, he includes a depiction of the moon.

Nowak remarked: "I think it's a great idea, and it could open a whole new era of arts and culture in the village and the township, but I still think we should try to get some input from the community on this as possible."

Schmalz will be responsible for all the installation costs, including preparation, shipping and placing the sculpture.

If the plan is approved, the installation would likely take place in the spring.

If you have any comments about this creation, contact a Wellesley councillor or the township clerk, Grace Kosch, at gkosch@wellesley.ca.



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