



Photo by Sam Brown

Dressed in a black cloak and hood (centre), David Fisher escorts a small group of people through the village of Bath on Halloween night, highlighting all the haunted buildings.

Home depicts its haunted past

By Sam Brown

By day, the Fairfield-Gutzeit house in the village of Bath is quaint historical site; a welcoming white clapboard Georgian home on a picturesque property, scattered with old knotted trees and a vista of Lake Ontario that stretches majestically behind the home.

But at night, the house disappears in the darkness, and the property itself appears to sink into an impenetrable abyss. Only the thin branches of the trees that dangle over the fence to the road are visible, like the fingers of some unnameable creature reaching out from the void.

On the evening of Halloween, a cold rain kept most trick-or-treaters indoors, and ensured even the most determined ones went home early.

By 7 p.m., there was an eerie stillness in Bath. The old buildings along Main Street were lightly obscured in the rainy haze. Just east of Main Street, where the Fairfield-Gutzeit house is tucked away from the road, the world seemed to end. The only indication that the house was there at all was a

dull light flickering in the window of the boathouse.

There was a mysterious aura emanating from the estate, carried by the dusky mists through the rest of the village. It felt as though one was caught between centuries of history and supernatural lore. Shadows, like spectral beings, sprang up out of corners and vanished on the walls of the stores in the blinking traffic lights.

On the gravel driveway along the side of the Fairfield house, a man, David Fisher, waited in the gloom to guide people through the haunted history of Bath.

"I think if you look at any small town in Canada, you're going to find that they've got a history and a past," Fisher said. "Any place that's along Lake Ontario and the shores, that happened during the War of 1812, will have a lot of similar stories or weird things that went on."

As one of the older settlements in Ontario, Bath certainly has enough history to harbour its share of burdensome secrets.

With a small group on the walking tour, Fisher described various instances of shack-

les or cages discovered in or under certain buildings. They were possibly remnants of the slave trade, or, particularly in the case of Ham House (which had a tavern), to restrain unruly and intoxicated townsfolk.

Sightings have also been reported of ghosts of British soldiers in full uniform from the War of 1812 wandering the hallways of the rebuilt Bath Academy, which was used as army barracks during the war.

Perhaps one of the most interesting spirits haunting Bath is Hester Ham, a friend of the Fairfield family in the 1700's who now haunts what used to be the boathouse of the Fairfield-Gutzeit estate.

Fisher said that sometimes Hester can be seen looking out the second-floor window of the restored boathouse (which is now the Lafarge 1812 Discovery Centre).

Fisher also talked about an instance in November two years ago, where a man moved pieces of furniture around in one of the rooms, only to discover later that they had inexplicably moved back to their original positions.

"Hester and the family would all head out

and do their thing. That's how she ended up being in this particular place, because she had warm memories of being out on the water in the summer on the boat," Fisher said.

Although he said that she was allegedly abused by her husband, George Ham, Fisher was quick to clarify that a haunting is not necessarily sinister or indicative of some historically unresolved evil.

"The ghosts that haunt the places aren't there to scare you or drive you away. They are there because they have an attachment to the place," Fisher said.

"Ghosts normally don't die in a place, a hideous, horrible death, and then just decide to stay there and haunt the place," he explained, based on what he had been told by a medium in Kingston.

"They may have died a hideous horrible death in the particular place, but they stay there because they have a connection to it. That's why they usually hang around. It is because there is a warm connection. Hester has a warm connection with the boathouse, and the days out on the water."

Fisher claims to have personally witnessed certain supernatural phenomena, which is the basis for his belief in the hauntings around Bath.

"I believe in them because I've seen them. First of all, I've seen the ghosts, I've heard ghosts. I've seen things happen in buildings where there's absolutely no light, no power whatsoever, and all the sudden the light comes on when you go by. And you're like 'Okay, wait a second, this is weird,'" Fisher said.

"They're doing something, they're showing you something. I don't know if they feel something from you, but I know the ghosts don't actually physically speak to you like they do in the movies. But it is definitely a clear message that you hear and understand."

While there has always been debate about the existence of supernatural entities, at the very least the intertwining of history and ghost stories in Fisher's tour through Bath offered a unique, if somewhat unsettling, angle on the history of the area.

Fans come out for Belleville ComiCon

By Jessie Munro

A variety of vendor and community members, many dressed in cosplay, gathered in the Royal Canadian Legion for the Belleville ComiCon on Nov. 2.

In the upstairs floor of the Royal Canadian Legion there were approximately 20 vendors, tables full of jewellery, art and paintings, vintage comics, pop-funkos and other collectables. Rows of booths wrapped around the Legion.

Chris Warmington, a new vendor, was one of many dressed in cosplay, dressed as Inuyasha from the Japanese manga series, Inuyasha.

Warmington says, "This is my sixth or seventh event, but I like to dress up and come to these. It's a lot of fun."

Warmington looks down at his booth full of anime collectables and laughs, "It (ComiCons) justifies buying all this stuff. I sell it and then I buy more."

Fans and community members filled the Con from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Belleville is one of many Pop Culture Canada Comicons in the area. Upcoming Cons will be in Markham, Bolton and Cobourg. Kingston and Trenton recently held Cons.

'It (ComiCons) justifies buying all this stuff. I sell it and then I buy more!'

Vendor Chris Warmington

Rachel Silver, a vendor at the Con, says she has been attending the events for three to four years and makes clay figurines, paintings, and earrings and necklaces. "Some take not too long, some take a few hours to a couple days depending on what it is," Silver says, standing behind her booth that is filled with rows of hand-crafted earrings, clay figures of characters from *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, as well as bottle cap necklaces.

The ComiCon hosted three special guests: Marvel comics writer Jim Shooter, voice actor John Shook and Dan Day, a comic book artist.

"I like to come to local Cons; I don't do many smalls Cons. I like to do the big ones that travel through the states and Canada," Stocker says. "I'll go almost anywhere, I like to bring my wife with me." He has been

to Cons as far away as New Zealand.

Stocker began his career as an on-camera performer, and after years working in many small series and CBC, he began working as a voice director and actor. He is most well-known for voice acting as Beastly in the *Care Bears*, as well as Toad from the *Super Mario Bros. Super Show*. He was also the voice director for *Sailor Moon*. Stocker says voice directing the anime *Sailor Moon* is why many Con events want him there.

With many anime characters, Marvel and DC comic books and action figures, Stocker did not see characters of his that he has acted in. "I don't know if anyone's selling them, it's just a picture unless its autographed," he says, referring to memorabilia of the characters he has voice acted in. "If you talk to me for a few minutes then it has more of a personal touch, a little bit of a memory."

Stocker says with a smile and laugh, "If I'm selling them, it's great." He says he enjoys Cons for the experience with his fans. 'Belleville ComiCon included a \$5 admission and food donations were accepted at the door and donated to the Local community Food Bank.



Photo by Jessica Munro

Chris Warmington, cosplaying as Inuyasha, was a vendor at the Belleville ComiCon on Nov. 2. It's a lot of fun," says Warmington, who sells anime action figures and collectables.



Sisters Victoria, 7, Katelyn, 6, and Jessica, 4, sit together on a Campbell's Orchard's wagon, proud of the pumpkins they collected with their father, David Lloyd.

Family fun at Campbell's Orchards

Story and Photos by Jonathan Matthie

Campbell's Orchards is celebrating its 50th anniversary this season. The family's farm, which spans over 200 acres, is part of Prince Edward County's heritage.

Over the past 30 years, Colin and Dianne Campbell, along with their children Amelia and John, have continued to build the business started back in 1969 by their children's grandfather, John Murray Campbell.

"Apples are Campbell's main business, what they are known for, and you have to come here to get them because they don't sell their apples anywhere else," says Jacqueline Jesser, who wears a bright, fluorescent-orange hat and drives a tractor-pulled wagon that hosts the apple- and pumpkin-picking runs for guests to the orchard.

"When the Campbell children were young, they would be allowed to take anything they picked themselves to the Belleville Market, and keep the money," Jesser explains. "While they now only sell their wares directly on-site in their own market store, daughter Amelia has since formed a new company, Apple Falls Cider."

Nearly 30 years ago on Christmas Eve, 1996, a devastating fire at Campbell's Orchards destroyed nearly the entire market area, and much of the farming equipment. Since most had to be rebuilt or refurbished, the Campbells decided to improve the design, adding a new wing to the market with a gift room, which now includes the Apple Falls Cider tasting room. Amelia's husband, Matt Oskamp, also sets up cider beverage tents at a variety of local Bay of Quinte events.

The apple-growing part of Campbell's Orchards covers about eight to 15 acres of the farm, according to Jesser. But as a farm, it also produces a variety of other crops, including pumpkins.

Cory Mestre, athletic co-ordinator for Loyalist College's fitness facilities and campus recreation, is friends with the Campbells. On the weekends, especially dur-



Jacqueline Jesser explains how to shine your picked apple to perfection.

ing the fall season, Mestre mans the pumpkin desk deep in the heart of the Campbell's Orchards. As the wagon full of visitors is given the okay to jump off and begin gathering up their pumpkins, Mestre announces: "Those of you who are getting pumpkins for carving, gather over here!" "Your pumpkins are guaranteed to last until Halloween under two conditions: 1. Don't leave it outside during frost, that will cause a rot to set in, from the inside-out. 2. Don't carve them until the week of Halloween. If you take them home today, and you carve a delightfully spooky pumpkin, you'll have a

spooky Thanksgiving pumpkin that won't make it past next weekend. So be sure to not carve them until the week of Halloween!"

Jesser follows up Mestre's announcement with one of her own, gathering everyone back together for the next part of the journey. "All right! Have we got everybody back on? Are you red-y to go apple picking? That's right folks, we're going to head to our apple orchard next, where we can pick up a delicious snack."

The wagon continues along the trail, passing another wagon of smiling guests waving as the two groups

pass each other.

There are many apple varieties that have come and gone over the years at Campbell's Orchards. Empire in particular, is a cross between McIntosh and a Red Delicious apple. "That's what gives them their beautiful colour: that deep, deep purple colour from the Red Delicious, and the really great flavour, from the McIntosh," says Jesser. McIntosh themselves, are still a common breed. But hybrids like Empire, Spy, and Honey Crisp are quickly becoming classic favourites for guests.

First, however, there is precise instructions on apple picking. A few minutes of choice apple selection go by amid hushed talking and giggles among guests, followed by subsequent, happy munching sounds.

"A really wet spring, then a really dry summer, has been particularly tough on the apples this year," says Jesser, "and Empires are notoriously small apples anyway. So it's really exciting when you find an especially big one during an opposite rotation. But with so many wagons full of hungry apple pickers," she laughs, "the big ones always seem to be much higher than you want them to be!"

She then adds one more, final instruction. "Now these apples, you can see, they have a bit of a film on them? Well, that's a natural product from the tree itself. It helps protect the apple from insects and moisture. We call it 'orchard musk' — though it doesn't smell or taste like anything, so don't worry, it's not bad for you. And, if you'd like a shiny apple? Just rub it a little, and you can make it very, very shiny!"

Once everyone's apples are picked, rubbed and finished being snacked on, Jesser wraps up her presentation.

For over five decades, Campbell's Orchards has never lost John Murray Campbell's dedication to growing quality apples and other produce that are sold directly to the public. It also provides a fun, agricultural learning environment for the community to enjoy.

Owner fulfills her dream with new business

By Kenzie Friesen

Board games cover the walls, the scent of fresh coffee and grilled cheese fills the air, and the laughter from customers playing the games they love can be heard while visiting Pieces Board Game Café — and that's just the way Brenda Ripley likes to keep it.

The dream of owning her own business began for Ripley when she was just 10 years old. It was a small seed planted in her head by her foster mother, a strong, single woman who flipped houses for a living, all the while juggling her children and owning her own candy dispensary business.

She would always tell her foster children that if they wanted something in life, they just had to do it. "Don't try, Do," she said.

This is something that stayed with Ripley long enough to encourage her to go back to school and work full-time after having her first child at the age of 20.

"Not easy to even look at opening a business at that age, never mind the fact that I didn't have the financial backings to even consider it," Ripley explained.

"So I went to school and started working and raising my amazing sons.

"My education is in medical administration, personal support worker and transcriptionist, nothing to do with board games."

While waiting for all of the pieces to come together in her life so she could finally open up her dream business, Ripley was employed at Luso Canadian Charitable Society where she ran and planned



Brenda Ripley's smile never disappears as she hosts a Werewolf game night at her board game café, Pieces.

events for the adults in the day program that were living with disabilities. Ripley referred to this as her "dream job" and eventually walked away from it after four

years with tears in her eyes as she left to finally pursue her new dream, the newest piece to her perfect puzzle.

Ripley not only gave up on a perfect

job in order to finally get her life-long dream, but her first ever home as well.

In January of 2019, Ripley made the decision to sell the first ever home she

ever had, the home that her father and grandfather helped her purchase, and used that money to finally open Pieces Café in Belleville.

Ripley said it was a decision she almost didn't make after the painful passing away of both her grandparents. But it was the thought "Don't try, do," still in her mind that made Ripley realize that she didn't want to regret not trying her dream.

So, using the money from her own house, she finally opened up her very own business, Pieces Café, this past May.

"I just had the realization that if the Café doesn't work out, I still have my career to go back on, and fabulous friends and family."

And I will have no regrets," she said.

Pieces Café hosts a number of different gaming events each week. These game nights always include something for everybody, which was very important to Ripley from the beginning.

"Board games scream socializing," says Ripley. "They scream family. They slow us down. They are inclusive. I wanted to open up a place that felt like my living room did when the boys were growing up, just open and included."

Ripley has nothing but more dreams and aspirations for her café, such as community events that go beyond board games such as film clubs, laughing yoga, art nights, and more. And with more and more people from the community continuing to pack the café full of new customers during the themed game nights, it looks like Ripley and her café have the best pieces yet to come.

Photo by Kenzie Friesen