

Celebrate winter at the Fire & Ice festival

The stage is set for the seventh edition of Fire & Ice, the Alton Mill Arts Centre's winter celebration.

It will run this weekend (Jan. 23 and 24). Come out for one of their most popular events of the year.

Rediscover Canadian winter traditions and enjoy spectacular ice carvings, a super snow slide, skating on the millpond rink and a spellbinding fire sculpture. Try snowshoeing, cross-country skiing or fat biking with the experts from Caledon Hills Cycling, or watch ice carvers Winston Uytendogaart and Chris von Innerebner create a crystal sculpture garden in the Annex Courtyard. Potter Ann Randeraad will demonstrate a raku firing in her outdoor kiln, while blacksmith Ray Schindler will create whimsical ironworks in the Country Forge. Using his tools to hammer, bend and cut, he skilfully transforms wrought iron and steel into unique works of art.

Artist Paul Morin invites guests to tap their inner artist at his open-air ice canvas, and don't miss the interactive photo booth created by Lynda Clare Grant. People can pop their faces into the painting and snap a picture to share with friends.

Saturday only, experience a Canadian tradition ? outdoor pond hockey. Cheer on the teams competing in the Alton Millpond Hockey Classic fundraiser, beginning at 9 a.m.

Free skating gets underway late in the afternoon, and continues Sunday from noon to 5 p.m.

Also Sunday, a bona fide curling rink will be open, with ?rock stars? at the ready to demonstrate their technique and assist novice curlers.

All of this excitement is sure to work up an appetite. Chill out and warm up by the fire with gooey s'mores prepared by Shaw's Creek Café, a maple syrup snow pop from Love's Sweetness Maple Syrup, and Kristian Warburton's world famous beignets, or enjoy a beer and a bite, hot off the Millpond barbecue.

Indoors, stop by Gallery Gemma to see their dazzling jewellery. And be sure to enter the Count the Crystals contest. Guess how many crystals are in the jar for a chance to win a beautiful piece of Gemma jewellery.

Alton Mill's upper floor is lined with working studios and art galleries. Studio artists will be conducting workshops and demos to spark creativity. Learn about the ancient art of encaustic, or painting with beeswax. Stop by to ?give it a whirl? in the Hive, and take home art card creations (Studio 201, both days at 1 and 3 p.m., \$20 per person for supplies), or make a mark at the

No-Two-Are-Alike Snowflake Challenge in Studio 206, where artist CJ Shelton will be building a collective ?mandala,? a circular design made up entirely of individual snowflake signatures. No artistic experience is necessary ? if you can doodle, you can do it.

Things will really heat up Saturday evening when artisan Brian Oates ignites his brand new fire sculpture, entitled The Emergence. The match will be struck at 6 p.m. Bring cameras to capture the spectacle.

After the burn, if you bleed Blue and White, head indoors to the Hot Stove Lounge Pub Night. With the Leafs versus Habs game on the big screen, unwind and enjoy casual food and cash bar. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20, available at Scotiabank branch at Centennial and Riddell in Orangeville (maximum four tickets per person). As part of the fundraiser, the bank will match the purchase value of the tickets sold. They will also be available at Shaw's Creek Café in the Alton Mill (no limit on amount purchased).

CJ Shelton will conduct her Seeing With New Eyes drawing class Sunday. Drop by Studio 206 between 1 and 3 p.m. to see what CJ's students are up to, and discover how drawing helps one see the world in a whole new way.

Also Sunday, in the second-floor Falls Gallery, three presentations by Alton Mill artists are scheduled. At 1 p.m., Janet Simmons Sweet addresses the issue of global warming and discusses the motivation behind her recent series entitled Recede. Each painting depicts a glacier, and each has its own story. At 2 p.m., Sandra Kunz will introduce the Messenger Cards, a deck of 43 cards she has created, each one depicting an animal spirit painting that can be used to find clarity and focus, and help with personal evolution. At 3 p.m., Margaret Pardy will explain the technique of scratch boarding, the art of taking away instead of adding to create a painting. Pardy's work has a remarkable realism and beauty. This workshop is an opportunity to create your own one-of-a-kind piece.

Daytime admission will be by voluntary donation (suggested amount is \$10 for adults; \$5 for children; or \$20 per family).

There will be free parking and shuttle bus (Saturday only) from off-site lots. Activities are subject to change without notice. Weather conditions may affect outdoor programming.

For full details, visit www.altonmill.ca