

EcoFilm Fest to pay tribute to artist and explorer Trépanier

By Rob Paul

One of Canada's most renowned artists and filmmakers happened to be a lifelong Caledon resident who championed the community every chance he could.

That was Cory Trépanier.

The 2018 Caledon Walk of Fame inductee lost his battle with cancer in November, and it hit the Caledon community as well as the art community hard.

As a tribute to Trépanier, the Halton Hills EcoFilm Fest will screen his film, *Into the Arctic: Awakening* on Tuesday, February 22 at the John Elliott Theatre in Georgetown. There will also be a virtual screen available for those not able to attend in-person.

The film focuses on the untamed beauty of the north, where Trépanier travelled to paint the Arctic for over a decade. For nine weeks, he crossed 25,000 kilometres in his mission to bring the beauty of the Arctic to both the canvas and the screen.

Throughout the film, he explores with Inuit elders and paddles the most northerly canoe route in North America, walks in the footsteps of early explorers John Rae and John Franklin, voyages through the Northwest Passage, and connects deeply with a changing land, to bring it to the eyes of those who may never see it.

"I first came to be in touch with Cory Trépanier in the Fall of 2015," said Daisy Radigan, Halton Hills EcoFilm Fest convener. "As the film convener, I was scouting to make a playlist of environmental films for the launch of the first season of screenings for the Halton Hills EcoFilm Fest. Cory's films of the Arctic met the first of five themes that comprise our film criteria: Climate Change, followed by Food Nutrition and Security, Water Preservation (World Water Day), Earth Care (Earth Day) and Biodiversity (May 22). These themes coordinate with the UN Sustainable Development Goals."

Trépanier has left a sizeable mark on the art and film community by not only setting lofty goals with his work but achieving them and becoming a trailblazer in his industry. On a more community driven level, Trépanier helped Halton Hills EcoFilm Fest set the tone for the next handful of years as well.

"Cory impressed me immediately by a passion for his art which was magnified exponentially by the context of the Arctic," Radigan said. "Who, but Cory, would take on the whole Canadian Arctic to explore, take photos, sketch, oil paint *plein air*, and film documentaries as well? We set January 27, 2015, for the screening of *Into the Arctic II*. On the night of the film, in order to introduce Cory, I had researched more about Cory's adventures and involvements in the community and country, I was duly overwhelmed with Cory's immeasurable contributions. Cory offered that his daughter, Sydney, 16, create an EcoFilm poster for January 27, 2015. Sydney became our poster maker. What a launch! Cory and Janet arrived with one hundred and fifteen patrons from Caledon, Bolton, Brampton, Orangeville, Campbellville, Erin, Halton Hills and areas. Wow! Not only that, but Cory brought gifts for the audience like light weight flashlights, compass, gear, hiking socks, etc. Cory and Janet won our hearts and ignited our enthusiasm for the Arctic."

Having not been able to screen Trépanier's final film due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Radigan said the decision to finally air it was a no-brainer and the perfect way to pay tribute to Trépanier's lasting impact.

"Flash forward to Fall 2020," she said. "Cory had a new Arctic film hot off the press, *Into the Arctic: Awakening*. Unfortunately, COVID restrictions replaced plans for January 20, 2021. The many, many of us who knew and loved Cory Trépanier were heartbroken by his passing from cancer," she said. "There was a tremendous outpouring of love and affection for Cory and his family. Cory's physical absence aches."

?COVID restrictions are being lifted, so now we have the opportunity to honour the memory of Cory on the big screen, ?in-person' with his last film.?

Admission to the film is \$10 on-site or online (www.haltonhills.ca/theatre) for adults and \$5 for students. It can also be viewed for free, along with Trépanier's other works, online through his Youtube channel (www.youtube.com/intotheartcticfilms).