

Experience Fire and Ice ? Festival of flames, food and fine art at Alton Mill

The stage is set for the fifth annual Fire and Ice festival at the Alton Mill Arts Centre this weekend (Jan. 25 and 26).

Warm up to winter, and bring the whole family to this arts-rich weekend. Enjoy skating on the Millpond, snowshoeing lessons, igloo building, ice sculptures, raku and blacksmith demonstrations, indoor art activities and workshops, stories, music and more. Cozy up by the fire with hot drinks and treats from Shaw's Creek Café, try a maple syrup snow pop from Love's Sweetness Maple Syrup or enjoy a beer and a bite hot off the grill at the Millpond barbecue.

Saturday only, experience a Canadian tradition: pond hockey on the rink. Cheer on the teams competing in the Millpond Hockey Classic beginning at 9 a.m. Junior, women's and men's games are scheduled. Opening ceremonies take place at 11:45 a.m., with dignitaries in attendance.

Free skating, shinny and cider jug curling get under way at 3:30 p.m. Saturday and continue Sunday from noon to 5 p.m.

Elsewhere on the site, create an igloo with snowmeister Martin Fischer (Saturday from noon to 5 p.m.), or hone your skill at the snowball target and help construct a snow fort with Alton Public School.

Learn how to snowshoe with the experts from Caledon Hills Cycling, and watch potter Ann Randeraad's demonstration of Raku firing (Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m.). Experience the drama when Randeraad lifts the ceramic pieces from a hot outdoor kiln into freezing temperatures.

In the Livery, the Country Forge blacksmith will host demonstrations throughout the weekend. In the Annex Courtyard, watch ice sculptor Winston Uytenbogaart at work (Saturday from noon to 3 p.m.).

Inside the Mill, studio artists will have workshops and demonstrations to warm body and soul. Offerings will include the chance to ?Give it a whirl? at The Hive's encaustic workshop (Studio 201, both days at 1 and 3 p.m. ? \$10 per person for supplies), or make your mark and ?Create Words of Fire? in Studio 206 where artist CJ Shelton will be building a collective word ?mandala,? a circular design made up entirely of written words. At Cedar and Stone Floral (Studio 213, Saturday starting at noon) Karen Cal will create a fresh arrangement using the bold colours and textures of flowers from the Tropics. Throughout the building, witness art in action as new paintings, glass, jewellery and pottery take shape in the art studios.

Things will really heat up Saturday evening at dusk when artist Paul Morin ignites his brand new fire sculpture. Without revealing too much, his hints indicate that ?bridging the sky and earth, male and female, the mythic shape of a pyramid will be set ablaze in a live musical event.?

Bring cameras and enter the Capture the Burn Photo Contest. (Details at altonmill.ca) After the burn, the release of sky lanterns, each carrying a wish for the new year, will cap off the day.

Sunday, indoor and outdoor activities will continue, including snowshoe demonstrations and skating on the Millpond from noon to 5 p.m.

Admission will be free, but donations are being suggested of \$5 per person or \$15 per family.

Activities are subject to change without notice. Outdoor activities are subject to appropriate weather conditions.

For full details, visit www.altonmill.ca