

Fun for all ages to be had at upcoming Fire and Ice Winter Festival]

Festival will take place on January 28 and 29 at the Alton Mill Arts Centre

By Zachary Roman

January will soon heat up with the return of the Fire and Ice Winter Festival.

Taking place on the last weekend of January ? Saturday the 28th from 2 to 8 p.m. and Sunday the 29th from 12 to 5 p.m. ? the 12th running of the festival will be held at the Alton Mill Arts Centre.

Over the course of the weekend, events are planned both indoors and out, such as: outdoor pond hockey, ice skating, a ?super snow slide? for kids, and a ?Hot Stove Lounge? that will feature live local music, food and drinks, and a comedy festival. There will be ice carving, creative workshops, a vendor market and a breathtaking event will be a fire sculpture crafted by renowned local artist Paul Morin.

Martin Kouprie, General Manager of the Alton Mill Arts Centre, said people won't want to miss the Saturday of the festival as it's when a lot of the action is happening. The comedy festival is happening that evening, with doors opening at 7:30 and tickets costing \$30. There will be seven comedians performing in the event titled ?Hot Mics.?

After the comedy festival, Kouprie said a local bluegrass band is going to be performing a ticketed show, also for \$30.

Before the ticketed events, as dusk falls, Morin's fire sculpture will be lit ablaze.

?It's really a theatrical event,? said Kouprie. ?There are things that interact with the fire that reveal themselves as the fire burns.?

Kouprie said Morin has done several fire sculptures before and that they're always spectacular and a real crowd pleaser. When the sculpture is finished, people can warm up inside with food and drinks before the ticketed events begin.

In the daytime, Kouprie said the snow slide and skating are sure to be hits with those attending the festival. In between all the free skating for attendees, there are several hockey games scheduled. Kouprie said it will be a true ?Hockey Night in Canada? style experience as there will be speakers set up for play-by-play commentary.

Festival attendees can watch ice sculptures be made live, as artists will be working on them all day on Saturday and Sunday. All the ice sculptors are from Caledon or surrounding areas. Local Alton bike shop, Lynx and Hare Cycles, will offer fat bike demos at the festival so people will be able to try out a growing sport that lets you cycle all year round.

?We're trying to get everybody out to celebrate wintertime,? said Kouprie. He said he's thankful for platinum event sponsor TPC Toronto at Osprey Valley, as well as all the other sponsors of the event.

Volunteers are needed to run the festival successfully, and those interested in donating their time can email info@altonmill.ca. Artists and businesses can also sign up to be a vendor and/or exhibitor at the festival. Vendor fees are \$60 plus tax and exhibitor fees are \$100 plus tax.

For more information about the festival, and a complete schedule of events, those interested can visit www.altonmill.ca.