



# CLEARVIEW'S *Sun Festivities* FOR FALL

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROSALEEN EGAN



# Creemore Festival of the Arts Part of the Small Halls Festival

Banner over Mill Street, Creemore, Township of Clearview.  
These festivals are held the weekend before Thanksgiving.

**F**rom family bowling to high-end art exhibits, from concerts to chicken races and hiking the Bruce Trail, the Small Halls Festival and Creemore Festival of the Arts offer lots of variety with a local flavour. That includes a Taste of the Town event on Sunday, and other opportunities throughout the festivals to sample local food and drink.



▲ Rozlyn Kemp and her pet chicken getting ready for the annual running of the chickens, Sunday in Duntroon.

**T**he Niagara Escarpment in the fall is stunning. If the colours are not enough to get people out exploring, Clearview Township offers individuals, families, and communities a variety of ways to discover and celebrate the area and each other.

Clearview Township, in Simcoe County, is less than two hours from the GTA, and about 40 minutes west of Barrie. It includes the

Minesing Wetlands, and the highest points on the Niagara Escarpment near Singhampton, offering great views of Georgian Bay.

The Small Halls Festival and Creemore Festival of the Arts take place over four days the weekend before Thanksgiving. This is their sixth year, and they run from Thursday, October 4 to Sunday, October 6.

Amanda Murray, community culture and tourism coordinator for

the Township of Clearview says, “There are eight small community centres in Clearview. Each hall has a board and volunteer committee. My role is to work with each of the committees to identify the type of programs, music or food event they want to have in each of the halls.”

“We start planning in January for the four-day event,” she adds. “We hold a couple of workshops with each of the hall committees.

When we work with the volunteers, we make sure there is a wide variety of programs that represent what the hall, village or hamlet is really about.”

### **The Halls**

Using the Brentwood Community Hall, near the southeastern border of the Township as an example, Amanda says, “It is one of our smallest halls, but it puts on the biggest concerts. It has a beautiful big backyard

► Log Cabin, and North America's Smallest Jail, PHAHS Festival of the Arts location, Creemore.



◀ Pet and farm chickens are given numbers and punny names, such as Plucky, and encouraged to run through the obstacles. Not all are inclined to do so. No chicken is harmed.



▲ A stop along the road to enjoy the colours: Hwy 124 looking west between Duntroon and Nottawa.

property. We set up a stage, a theatre tent, and bring in food trucks.” The hall also does a harvest market, a harvest breakfast and a beef dinner on the Friday night. “It’s really about community,” Amanda adds.

To show the variety each hall offers, Amanda says “Dunedin has really embraced live theatre. We partner with them to add in a dinner at the New Farm. Every year we are trying to enhance the small halls to give a really good experience to the visitors but also the locals.”

Each of the eight halls carries its own history, and holds its own interest. The Singhampton Community Centre, as an example, started life as a church and is the only hall owned by the community rather than the Township.

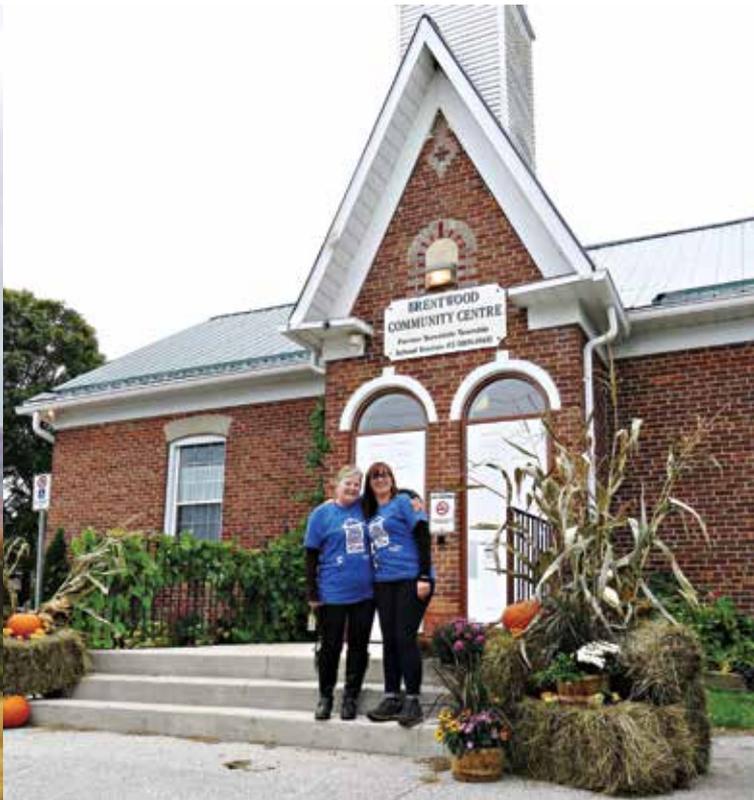
The Brentwood Community Centre was a school built in 1875. Some of the halls were former military buildings, such as the Duntroon Hall, that was originally a drill hall at Base Borden and moved to its current location after the Second World War.

Each hall is equally funded and promoted through the Township. Clearview helps pay for new and enhanced activities and events, musical artists, culinary chefs for activities, and live theatre.

“Because my team works directly with the hall boards, and we have that one-to-one contact, there is a great working relationship,” says Amanda.

Clearview uses the Small Halls Festival as a key driver for tourism, with the hope that visitors attracted to the many activities





▲ Amanda Murray (right), and Lily White, a culture and tourism assistant, outside Brentwood Community Centre.

▼ Back Roads Rally sign, Hwy 124 and Hwy 91, Duntroon looking toward Nottawa. Participants receive a map and the route to the various small halls is well marked.





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▲ Dunedin Community Centre, next to the Noisy River and Dunedin Park, is beautifully situated on the Niagara Escarpment near the Bruce Trail.

included in the festival will then return to the area. The Township hosts 12 signature events throughout the year, plus there are three farmers' markets that occur weekly.

### Back Roads Rally

Added to the festival in 2017, the Back Roads Rally is a car and motorcycle tour. The idea is to connect the visitor to five different halls that are open on Sundays.

"They get to experience all the events and activities that are happening on Sunday afternoon, win prizes, and just have a great time experiencing the back roads of Clearview," Amanda says.

The rally provides a great opportunity to take in the

colours and landscape of the Niagara Escarpment. Besides the villages and hamlets, suggested points of interest along the route include The Devil's Glen Provincial Park south of Collingwood, with the highest lookout along the Escarpment, and the EcoPark & EcoBark Dog Park in Stayner. Each participant receives a package with a map and challenges that are representative of each hall as a way to learn about the halls and to win prizes. Proceeds from the rally support the halls' accessibility and operational expenses.

### Creemore

Station on the Green in Creemore was built in 2000

in honour of the village's rail history and to act as a cultural and heritage centre.

Adding even more variety and interest to the Small Halls Festival, Clearview Township partners with the Purple Hills Art and Heritage Society (PHAHS) that presents the Creemore Festival of the Arts the same weekend.

"It's an amazing partnership," says Amanda. "The Festival of the Arts brings in marquee artists. They are high, high-quality Canadian artists, some are local and some are nationally recognized. PHAHS makes sure the log cabin and the Station on the Green and all of downtown Creemore are programmed. When

people come into the village, there's lots to do. They can really spend the whole day experiencing all of our artists and crafters. It's really the locals that make it unique."

The marquee shows are art- or heritage-based, and presented by collectives, partnerships or individuals. The artists on location component involves artists and artisans who display original works of art or one-of-a-kind crafts. Open studios are encouraged so visitors can see the artists' process. Some art activities are interactive.

The Small Halls Festival and the Creemore Festival of the Arts offer the discovery of the talents, the family and community spirit, and the



▲ Singhampton Community Centre and Park is the only small hall owned by the community, not the Township of Clearview. It's called the Tall Small Hall because of its high elevation on the Niagara Escarpment.



▲ Avening Community Centre, former barracks at Edenvale Aerodrome, and moved after Second World War, hosts family events and concerts. There is a bowling alley in the basement.

beautiful coloured landscape of the Niagara Escarpment as it presents itself in the Township of Clearview.

More information:  
 Small Halls Festival:  
[smallhallsfestival.ca](http://smallhallsfestival.ca)  
 Creemore Festival of the Arts: [phahs.ca](http://phahs.ca) **NEV**

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