




Orangeville
Historic Charm Dynamic Future

Farmers' Market	Sat. May - Oct.
Taste of Orangeville	Aug. 19 20
2016 Founders Cup Host	Aug. 15-21
Theatre Orangeville	Sept - May

www.orangeville.ca

welcome

► “The Farmer” by Jim Menken of Mono welcomes people who enter downtown Orangeville from the east. The first large-scale carving ever created by Menken, it changed his career from teacher to carver. The dates on the sign are last year’s.



ORANGEVILLE'S STREET ART:

Enhancing Community

Written & photographed by Rosaleen Egan

“THEY ARE SURPRISING WHEN YOU COME UPON THEM,” says occasional visitor to Orangeville, Mary Anne Giannini, about the 54 tree sculptures around town. “They make you pause, and they call for a response, to connect to the here and now, although they may not be of the here and now. They cause you to break from busy-ness and wonder at the artistry. And that is always good.”

To help with that connection, giving some background of each sculpture, the location, and information about the artist, the Town of Orangeville updated the Art Walk of Tree Sculptures brochure in the fall of 2016. It now also has a web app that includes everything in the brochure plus the ability of an observer to hear a short story about a sculpture on a cell phone and to check in at each site via Facebook. According to the brochure, “The goal of the program is to sustain the life of trees that have reached the end of their life expectancy in a way that allows them to continue adding character to our community.”



▲ The “movement” of the sculpture “Victorian Lady” complements the elegance of the homes and old trees on Zina Street. It is a private commission by artist Robbin Wenzoski. Besides sculpting, Robbin teaches a chainsaw sculpture introductory course each summer at the Haliburton School of the Arts.

The Town of Orangeville in Dufferin County, sits just south and west of the Niagara Escarpment. Early settlers used a tributary of the Credit River, Spring Brook, as a water source and to power several mills. The town grew from there.

Along the Art Walk of Tree Sculptures are sculptures related to the history of the area from farming to sports, and the influence of certain individuals and music on the community. Local wildlife appear, as well as tree spirits, whimsical and fantasy characters. Really something for everyone, produced by 18 artists from

across Ontario and the Headwaters Carving Club.

Each of the sculptures, and the sculptures as a community, add warmth and vibrancy to the town. Although it may be unexpected from something wooden, the sculptures add personality. They are an unusual way to access local history and what is important to those who live there. The walk allows for exploration of the town

as it now exists and brings visitors to unknown areas.

Sheila Duncan, communications manager for the Town of Orangeville says “A former mayor first saw a handful of tree sculptures in Nova Scotia and thought it was a great idea to prolong the life of trees, to add character to the streetscape and promote the community, to promote art, and to tell stories about our history.”

Carving Tree Stumps

The town had avenues of Maple trees, with many of those reaching the end of their life expectancy. Sheila says “John Taylor of Palgrave kicked off the carving of tree stumps in downtown Orangeville August 16, 2003. He carved a design on the tree located in front of 269 Broadway, near Clara Street. There is a band of text carved at the bottom – Homage



▲ Donations of about 100 people in the community made this sculpture of local teacher, librarian and storyteller Marilyn Doekes possible. Sculpted by Jim Menken, “The Storyteller” stands outside the Library.

To The Tree That Was.”

Jim Menken of Mono, who has carved more of the Orangeville sculptures than any other artist, says “Depending on what’s requested, the log can determine what can be carved. Sometimes the wood speaks to you.” In describing the carving process he says, “It is extreme art. There is danger to it. You can be way up on scaffolding using a chainsaw.

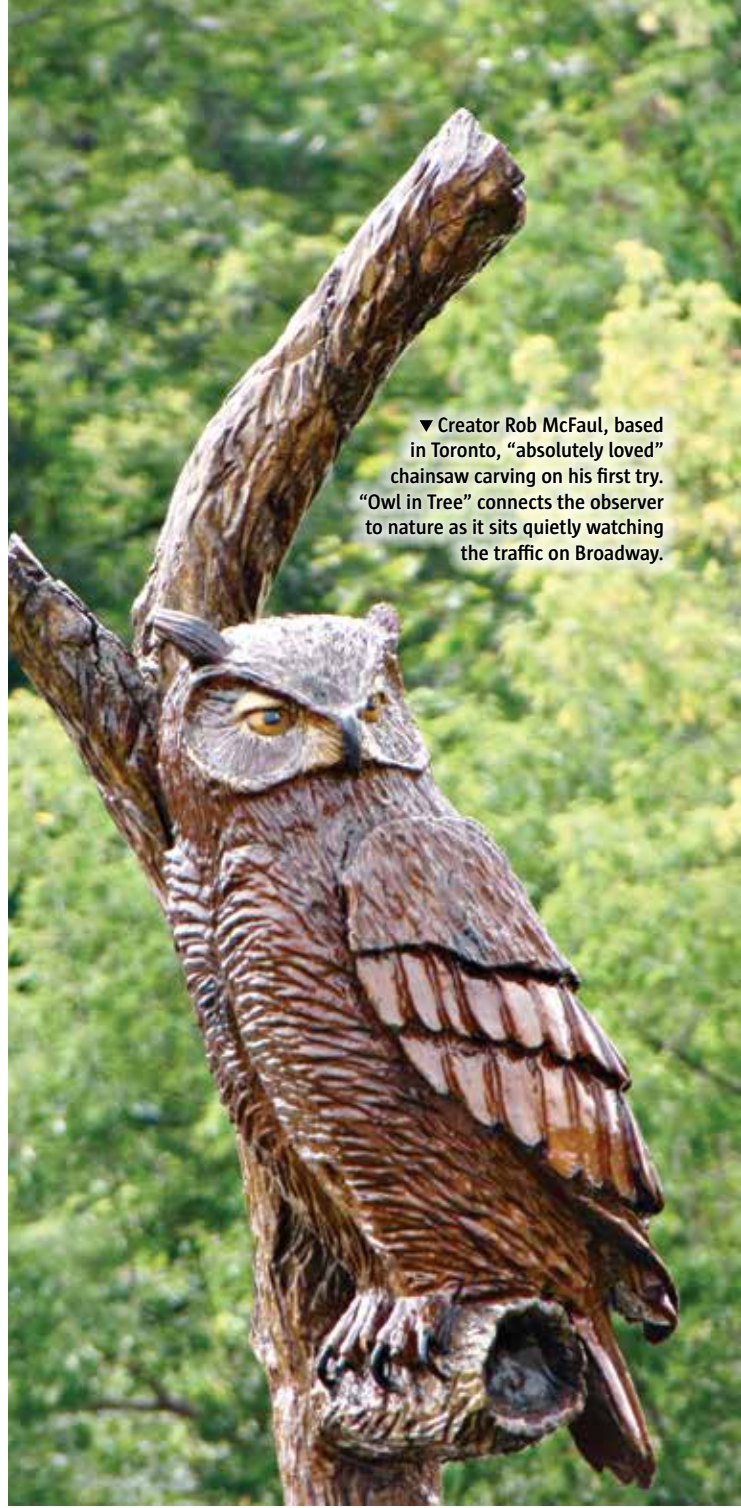
And it can be hard to do detail without kickback. The carving bar can come back at you.”

According to Sheila, “One-third of the sculptures were created in place. Over time, due to health and safety concerns and the risk of an artist encountering too much rot, the trend is to have the art created in artists’ studios. That permits the municipality to create a sloped base so

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► “The Dancer” by artist Bobbi Switzer of Atwood adds grace to the corner of Town Line and Broadway.

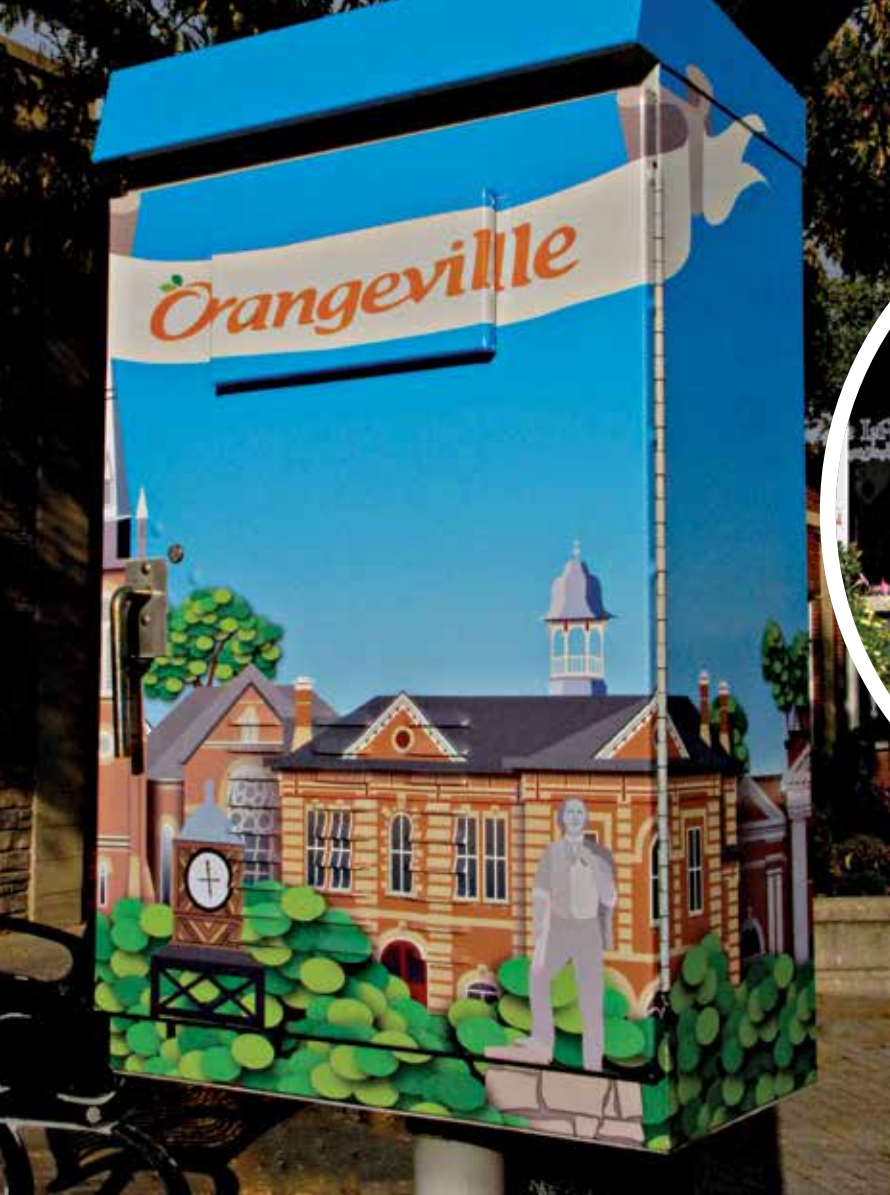


▼ Creator Rob McFaul, based in Toronto, “absolutely loved” chainsaw carving on his first try. “Owl in Tree” connects the observer to nature as it sits quietly watching the traffic on Broadway.



▲ Thanks to a fundraising initiative of the Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival, the carving “The Musicians” was created by Jim Menken to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the festival in 2012. They play their silent music in Alexandra Park.

► Rope posts are a speciality of Jeff Waters from Stayner, where he is a baker and part-time carver. In “Braided Rope Post,” it’s fascinating to see how the braided “hair” of the male and female weaves this two-sided carving into a whole.



▲ One of Orangeville's utility boxes before getting the artistic treatment.

◀ Graphic design student Madison Pflance of Mono interpreted Orangeville's landmark buildings and an image of founder Orange Lawrence, using digital art. It was selected from submissions to the 2016 Box Art Display Program, printed on vinyl wrap and affixed to the box at John St. and Broadway.

▶ Jim Menken at his home studio in Mono. Currently, 23 of the 54 carvings in the Art Walk of Tree Sculptures are credited to him.

the water doesn't pool at the bottom and seep into the sculpture and extends the life of the art piece."

Every summer and fall a municipal employee checks the condition of each sculpture and applies preservative as needed. A status report is maintained.

Some of the sculptures on the Art Walk are private commissions, others are commissioned by the town. The Town, local group, or individual resident initiates an idea. Residents or groups bring their idea to the town by contacting Sheila Duncan or emailing info@orangeville.ca. Sheila says "The Town is currently working with three new sponsors, two residents and one developer, who have presented ideas for sculptures."

Wrapping Utility Boxes

Besides the tree sculptures being an artistic addition to town, Orangeville is in its second year of the utility box art display program. Plain, sometimes ugly, metal utility boxes are being covered with artwork printed on a special vinyl wrapping that goes around the box.

Artists from Dufferin County over 18 years of age are called to submit a piece that is "innovative in design, fosters community pride, strives to counteract graffiti vandalism, and contributes to a sense of identity for residents and businesses." An art jury decides the winning submissions.

Ruth Phillips, economic development manager, says

"The program was an idea formulated by councillor Sylvia Bradley, the Town's Arts and Culture chair, who had heard about a similar project in another community. Councillor Bradley wanted to find a unique way to help beautify Orangeville while also supporting local artists. This public art program recognizes local artists, celebrates the Town's culture and history, and helps promote Orangeville as an arts and culture hub for the region."

The beauty and personality of Orangeville are enhanced by this program and the Art Walk of Tree Sculptures that now brings in busloads of tourists. Seeing a tree sculpture by chance, or by intention with the help of the brochure or app, heightens an

experience of Orangeville. It gives an opportunity to pause, wonder at the artistry and gain a sense of the community, which is always good.

Brochures and the app can be downloaded at orangeville.ca.

Print copies are available at: Orangeville Town Hall, 87 Broadway, Orangeville Public Library, 1 Mill Street and the Orangeville Visitor Information Centre at the corner of Broadway and Hwy 10. **NEV**

Rosaleen Egan is an independent writer, editor and photographer with a website rosiewrites.com. Her last feature for Niagara Escarpment Views was "Willow Park Ecology Centre: Success and Sustainability," Summer 2016.

