



Photo by Sabah Rahman

Mieke Thorne, originally from Sweden, dances to the tunes of a local band playing at Porchfest 2021. Thousands came out to watch a variety of performers. For more photos, see page 2.

### 12th annual Porchfest

# City comes alive with sounds of music

By Sabah Rahman

The air was crisp and buzzing with anticipation. After a week-long spell of rain in Belleville, the sun was finally shining in a clear blue sky. It was Saturday and the perfect day for Porchfest, albeit the pandemic version.

There were people gathering in small groups in front of Glanmore National Historic Site, a local museum, which was the location for the kickoff of this year's 12th annual event.

Technically in its 13th year (since last year's event had to be cancelled because of COVID), this year's event hosted over 50 local musicians across nine different genres in the East Hill's neighbourhood. Local residents lent their front porches

out to local bands that have been playing to the crowds for years.

Sam Brady, one of the key organizers, kicked off the event on behalf of the Rotary Club at Glanmore. The introduction was kept short. Aside from a few people, most of the attendees were unmasked and socially distanced as they gathered to listen to Brady. More people joined the crowd that lined the sidewalk wrapped around the museum's lush green lawn to hear Brady kick off the event.

One masked woman, who was assisting the organizers, hurriedly went from one person to the next handing out official Porchfest buttons to the spectators. A spectator happily accepted her third button as she proudly pinned them in a vertical column on her blue denim shirt.

Brady, also the lead singer of the Impish Grins, hosted his band on his lawn across from the Glanmore museum. As the band prepared for their set, Brady announced over the mic, in an almost apologetic tone, that current pandemic regulations will only allow 100 people to gather on the lawn at a time.

At the remark, several people backed out of the lawn and stood parallel to each other on the adjoining sidewalk. The spectators did not seem to mind the reminder as soon as Brady added that free beer and snacks, courtesy of the local organizers, were also being served off to the other side of the lawn.

As the band got going, the lead singer tried to get the crowd excited as he called out the names of nearby major cities.

We found out that there are people from Kingston, Peterborough and as far as Ottawa, as one family yelled out from the back repping for the nation's capital.

People came around and slowly set up their own lawn chairs. As per COVID regulations this year, the directive is "BYOC," or "bring your own chairs."

The crowd quickly grew in number as a woman exclaimed this should be called the "dogfest" instead. She shared a laugh with her friend as they noticed all the canine friends gathered around that were also drawing their own fans.

Moving on, Queen Street was filled with excitement and rows of cars lined the sides of the street. Cars passing by took extra caution, probably more than

usual, as the crowds poured into the streets.

Siblings Elaine, Dan and Rick English were at one of the houses. Rick has driven from Toronto, Elaine came from Oshawa, and Dan is a Belleville resident. There was a bit of a debate whether it is the second, maybe third, or the fourth year the three siblings and Dan's wife have gotten together to enjoy the outdoor music festival.

The siblings talked over each other as Elaine excitedly claimed that the party really started the night before for them. Kim Hunt, Dan's wife, interjected with an embarrassed laughter, "Well, she doesn't speak for the group, okay?"

...See Porchfest, page 2

# Quinte students join global climate strike

By Ethan Cairns

Banners, chalk writing and signs filled Belleville's Market Square Friday afternoon as local students and activists joined thousands of people across 99 countries that have taken part in a co-ordinated global climate strike demanding urgent action to tackle the ecological crisis.

The strike was organized by Fridays for Future Quinte, a group started by local high school students to expand the movement of the #uproottthesystem protests advocating for climate justice. It is part of a larger youth-led movement Fridays for Future started by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg.

"As youth, we know we're the ones living with the effects of climate change," said Anissa Nielsen, a grade 12 student from Centennial Secondary School and co-founder of Fridays for Future Quinte. "We were very happy to see the number of people come out to support us today."

The group was able to spread the word through social media and held an online environmental panel during the 2021 federal election in preparation for the strike, to gain traction for the event and to question the candidates on local climate issues.

Around 30 supporters participated with signs and wrote with chalk to join the call to action and encourage corporations, businesses, and governments to cut down on greenhouse gas emissions. Protesters bring attention to the growing concern around climate change and the



Photo by Ethan Cairns

(From left) Kit Carswell, Madi Leach, Anissa Nielsen, Jocelyn Davis and Isabelle Cakebread hold signs last Friday at the Fridays for Future global climate strike at the Market Square behind Belleville City Hall. The International Future Friday protests have been inspired by climate activist Greta Thunberg.

urgency of making a change before it's too late.

"It shows that there's hope and that people still do care and there is time left. We can still change our ways," said Nielsen. She mentioned that her main

motivation for this initiative is to promote a livable and equal future for the planet and breathing equities on the planet.

"The people who are contributing most to climate change and global warming are not the ones most affected by it,"

said Isabelle Cakebread, a grade 12 student from Centennial Secondary School and co-organizer of the event. "When our planet is heating up, and I have no future to rely on, why should I go to school?" Fridays for Future Quinte was started by

high school students after discussions in class of the effects and problems of climate change. The responses from their classmates encouraged them to bring awareness to these issues by taking part in the movement started by Thunberg.

The group in Quinte urges people to fight for Indigenous sovereignty, raise the voice of marginalization in the community, and understand the fact that we as individuals should not be held responsible for the widespread increase in emissions and pollution from big corporations.

Fridays For Future began in August 2018, when 15-year-old Thunberg and other young activists sat for three weeks in front of the Swedish parliament every school day to protest the lack of action on the climate crisis. She posted what she was doing on Instagram and Twitter, and it quickly became popular.

"There are now Fridays for Future groups on almost every continent, including local groups such as us, and we do work with climate strike Canada at the national level," Nielsen explained, "We started in the fall of last year during COVID-19 with four members and we have quadrupled our numbers since."

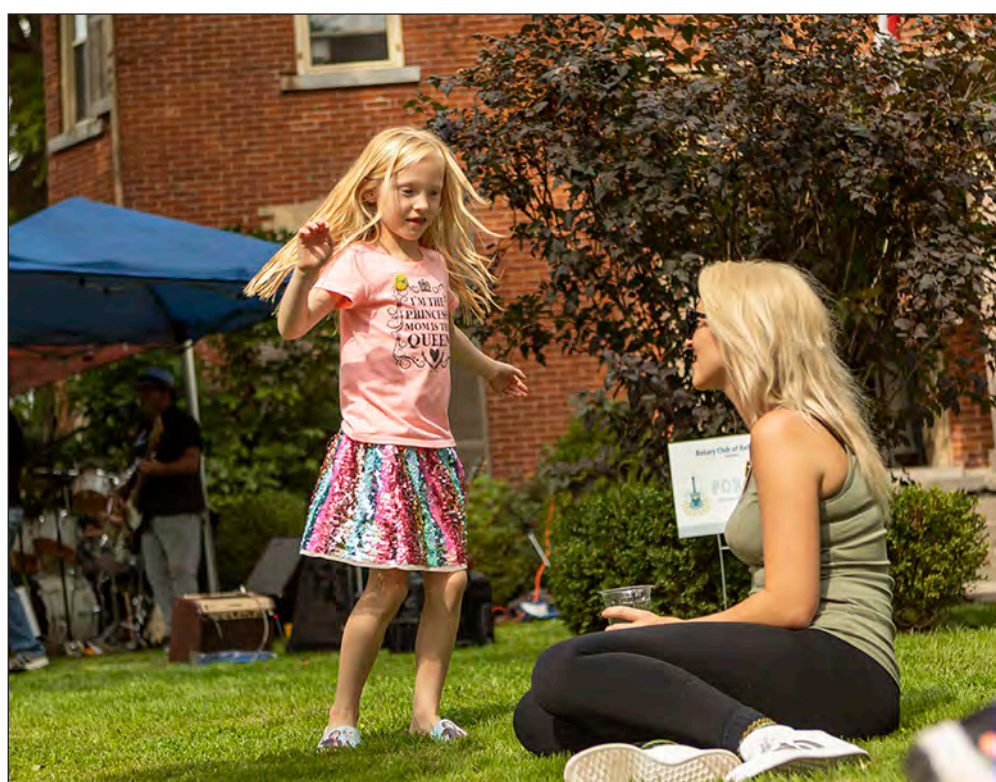
The next Fridays for Future rally is planned for October 22 with the hopes to bring out more people and to keep bringing attention to fight for the environment and continue to advocate for more action from the government.

You can learn more about them at [www.facebook.com/FridaysForFuture-Quinte/](http://www.facebook.com/FridaysForFuture-Quinte/)



**Haley and the Pirate Queens perform at the 12th annual Porchfest. The 2021 edition of the festival was the first Porchfest since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The festival drew crowds of music lovers to neighbourhoods across the city.**

Photo by Alex Lupul



**Siovhann McDonnell and her daughter Charlie Rose enjoy live music during the family's first Porchfest.**

Photo by Sabah Rahman

## Porchfest...

*Continued from Page 1*

Each year, the Porchfest looks a little different. The group of musicians performing may vary slightly, although there are those who keep returning. This year, the Hayley and the Pirate Queens are playing folk-style music on the same lawn they played Porchfest two years ago.

Years ago, the lead singer of the band, Hayley Austin, twisted her knee carrying a guitar amplifier and met Tracy Bray, a local Belleville chiropractor, who helped to get her better. The chemistry between them was instant, and Bray, a Rotarian and also a prominent local organizer for the Porchfest, invited the band to play on her porch in 2019.

Austin recalls, "We were scheduled for the following year in 2020, but obviously everything got cancelled in the area. We were really disappointed."

Bray invited the band to play again this year on her porch on Bleecker Street. Bray's house was also serving up refreshments like fresh lemonade and homemade chilli, with a side of corn chips.

The After Party events of Porchfest continued in the late afternoon across downtown Belleville. Local vendors from the county and beyond lined the sidewalk to sell their handmade crafts, which ranged from natural skincare, resin art, jewellery, dyed clothing,

yarn creations, candles and local thrift finds among others.

A few downtown local restaurants extended their patio seating that were spilling onto the sidewalks and were serving hungry crowds, while visitors enjoyed outdoor music, during a time when it has been difficult to host customers with indoor capacity restrictions in place.

The excitement continued with the Road Apples performance at the Market Square after the Saturday market vendors wrapped up. Despite scattered rain throughout the evening, people gathered to enjoy the band playing Tragically Hip songs.

Hip fans who did not pre-register online for the free concert tickets lined the fenced perimeter of the Market Square, while some were huddling under dimly lit stairways of adjacent buildings to hide from the rain. The organizers required registration for contact tracing protocols and reminded multiple disappointed fans at the gate, "sorry, no tickets, no entry." It was yet another pandemic directive in place.

Despite the hurdles and the safety precautions of the organizers, people gathered for the day's events to enjoy each other's company and mostly to inject normalcy in an otherwise unpredictable year for everyone. In a pandemic-stricken world, this year's Porchfest was as close to "normal" as it could get for those who were attending.



Photos by Sabah Rahman

**(Above, left) The Road Apples, a tribute band to the Tragically Hip, plays in the After Party Porchfest 2021 events at Belleville's Market Square.**

**(Above, right) Michelle Hilton, 29, owner of Custom Treasures Thrifty Finds from Whitby, Ont., serves a customer in the vendor market as part of the After Party Porchfest 2021.**

**(Right) Concertgoers David Stewart and Rebecca Gregg wait for The Road Apples show to begin at the Market Square.**

