



The Mill at Piper Creek
1742 Percy Street
Castleton, ON K0K 1M0
July 5, 2019

Dear Members and Supporters,

It is with enormous regret that Mitch and I are writing to tell you that we are putting our property here in Castleton, including the Mill building, on the market. We will be moving from Northumberland once the property has sold.

We originally relocated to Castleton from Alberta in 2011 with our young family full of joy and dreams of establishing an arts centre and collaborative space for professional artists of all types... we had searched Eastern Ontario for over a year before we found this "perfect" property. At that point, the "old Purdy mill" was in derelict condition and unsafe to enter. It had twisted badly on its foundation and would not have remained standing much longer.

We are happy to have been able to save the mill. Within a month of moving here we were working on the building: we shored up the building, re-built the foundations, and re-enforced the rafters. The back north-west corner was lifted over two feet!

Unfortunately, after we reached this stage of renovation, we learned that the access road on the north side of the mill had been sold by the Township to our neighbour. The resulting new boundary line between our property and his was literally inches from the entire north face of the mill, and the neighbour chose to build a fence across the length of the building; we were then unable to proceed further with repairs and restoration.

After two years of fruitless meetings, we were advised that our only recourse to regain access to the building was to take legal action. Several years into the lawsuit, it was established that there had been a significant error in the sale of the road to the neighbour, and that the boundary was in the wrong place. It took three more years

before it was finally brought before the Director of Land Titles, and the boundary of the road was restored to the line it had followed for 200 years. As a result, in June of 2018, we were able to access the north side of the building again—seven years after we started the restoration process.

Unfortunately, although the building access has been restored, the lawsuits remain. The entire process has been incredibly costly for our family, in both energy and finances. We are unable to continue.

We are happy to have played a part in the long and storied history of the Mill, and to have saved it. If we had not restored the building and its foundations when we had, or challenged the location of the road, the Mill would have been lost.

We were also incredibly lucky to have spent the past two years working with a stalwart group of people who helped us form the Board of the Mill at Piper Creek, and to have had people like yourselves choose to support the work we did, which was intended to promote both the development of the arts and the repurposing of a historical facility.

We have done great things as an organisation. We have hosted dozens of events between January of 2017 and April of 2019 that ranged from opera to pop music, and fibre arts to photography. These events happened throughout Northumberland County, as well as here in the hamlet of Castleton.

With zero dollars in start-up funds we created jobs and paid tens of thousands of dollars to local, national, and international artists, all of professional calibre. We were able to stimulate the local economy while providing opportunities for not just artists but audiences. Through Tourism Ontario's TREIM analysis, we know that just one of our simple ceilidhs at Castleton Town Hall, attended by 100 people, generated roughly \$15,000 in spending for the local economy.

Last September, with the help of a \$65,000 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we were delighted to host our "Yarns from the Mill Festival" throughout the hamlet of Castleton, and on the grounds of the mill property. Besides being widely enjoyed by all who participated, from artists to audience, "Yarns" was responsible for close to \$150,000.00 of local economic stimulation for the festival day alone. Less tangibly but equally importantly, it initiated an upsurge of interest in the fibre arts, and led to a significant uptake of participation in workshops and fibre events developed not only by the Mill at Piper Creek, but local artists and businesses. We were also able to spend about \$10,000 on programming for our local Northumberland Hills school through our "Yarns from the Mill" initiative.

So thank you, so much, for the part you have played in helping us realise at least part of the dream we brought to Northumberland over nine years ago.

Additionally, you might be interested to know that The Mill at Piper Creek rented the “old Oriental Hotel”, another historic Castleton landmark, from the estate of founding board member Graham Norcutt, from September 2018 through April of this year. Now that the estate has passed through the probate process, that building will also be put on the market. Should any funds remain once the expenses of the estate are settled, they will be disbursed to charities chosen and named by Mr. Norcutt. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to share access to this beautiful old building with the local community.

The Board of the Mill at Piper Creek, and Mitch and myself ourselves as the (volunteer) Artist and Managing Directors of the organisation, will be taking time to choose carefully how to proceed in the upcoming months, when we no longer are tied to the building itself. It is possible that we will continue to offer programming of some kind, and at the very least, we are intending to host a final farewell event.

Please accept our thanks for your support, and apologies for these unforeseen changes.

With gratitude,

Candace Cox

Candace Cox,
Artistic Director
The Mill at Piper Creek