Extreme Makeover

Andrew Hibbert

West Lorne: It has been called an extreme makeover by those involved and probably would merit being on one of those TV reality shows. The concept though was sound, to create a unique cultural hub for the region of West Elgin centred in West Lorne with the goal of enhancing rural economic development in the region through cultural heritage tourism.

The reality was a little more complicated and has been three years in the making. Take a former Bank of Montreal building, built in 1914, to be a meeting centre and photographic display area for the project. Add an 1883 timber frame barn, donated by Mary Gillett of Dutton, to the bank building to become a state-of-the-art "kitchen" where you can learn to "cook up" great ideas and fabulous food. The original timber frames and barn wood are wonderfully paired with the twenty-first century cookery.

Add to that the original Stable, now a digital photo lab and interactive photo classroom with classes starting in the fall of 2010. Blend the two together architecturally with a classical entrance and make it all work seamlessly with local help and a lot of donated funds.

They say, "it takes a village to raise a child", but in West Lorne it has taken the whole West Elgin region to raise the Arts & Cookery Bank. The exciting new facility has been pulled together through the efforts of more than 100 local volunteers and dozens of local tradesmen.

During the past eighteen months more than 1000 visitors have dropped in to the new facility. Thousands of volunteer hours have been donated since the project was begun in 2008. More than 1100 cups of coffee, and 120 dozen cookies, brownies, cakes and scones since January. Countless kilograms of nails and wood screws.

The heart of The Bank will be the stories that are being collected, through photographs and other images, along with audio and video recordings, from the four communities involved in the project — West Elgin, Dutton-Dunwich, Southwest Middlesex and Newbury. The Bank will make use of 21st century digital technology, which will be easy for everyone to use and enjoy.

The genius behind the Arts & Cookery Bank comes from Grace McGartland and her husband Duncan Morrison. Grace and Duncan returned to the area to retire to a local farm but a quiet retirement wasn't in the cards. Their dream and drive are the catalyst that has created the bricks & mortar and barn beams that have become a focal point in the western end of Elgin County.
Open House

At a recent media open house I toured the new facility just before the public opening. Actually I was late so the other media had left, which gave me an opportunity for a one-on-one tour through the new facility with Duncan Morrison. I asked Duncan where the idea for the project came from. "Grace and I bought this building more than three years ago," he said "and with a lot of input from friends and the community came up with the idea of creating a cultural heritage centre". Grace and Duncan then donated the property and the building to the Arts & Cookery Bank which was set up as a not-for-profit corporation and a registered charity.

Duncan started me off in the entrance that joins the two distinct buildings. "It's classical stick construction that marries the two original structures, the barn and the bank", said Duncan. "We are now entering the gallery, the bank area, through the original vault." "The bank went through a lot of uses after being closed as a bank including being a food market and a Laundromat" noted Duncan. Amongst the many details, Duncan noted that during the renovations two stained glass windows from the original bank building were discovered under the floor. "I think we have a great story to tell here," said Duncan, "going back to our roots with Scottish and German settlers."

I asked Duncan how they found the barn. "The barn came from a very gracious lady and friend Mary Gillett", he said "who had a barn that she wanted to sell. Our friend Wade Davey, a member of the Timber Frame Builders Guild of America was helping us with the design of a timber structure that we thought would work well on the site. Mary said she would donate her barn to the project and Wade married it to the original bank building". Duncan concluded his tour by saying "It's amazing what a group of volunteers can do when they get together with a community. It's wonderful". My tour lasted over an hour and was concluded with a delicious lunch created in the new Arts & Cookery Bank kitchen.

Opening Week

As a way of thanking their volunteers, builders, funders and friends, a series of evening events were held during the first week in August. More than 450 people toured the Bank. Chef Kim Saunders from the Windjammer in Port Stanley, cooked up some tasty appetizers to go along with Champagne and Chocolate, Chef John Mairleitner from Tall Tales Café in Wallacetown, served up Ribs to go along with St. Thomas microbrewery Iron Spike’s beer samples. A delectable "Board's Banquet" filled the Heritage Hall accompanied by the Festivo Strings Duo, Jane Eady (violin) and Ben Gitter (cello).

Now open to the public for tours and fall cooking and photography classes the new facility, I'm sure, will become the centre of food and culture in the region that Grace and Duncan dreamed it could be.

For more information visit The Arts & Cookery Bank 242 Graham Road West Lorne, call 519-768-9986 or visit the web site www.theartsandcookerybank.com
The entrance to the Arts & Cookery Bank.

The new Kitchen area of the Arts & Cookery Bank in West Lorne.

The Digital Photography lab in the former stable of a timber frame barn.

Duncan Morrison
People ask, what the heck is that?

Scott Hilgendorff

West Lorne – As the Arts and Cookery Bank nears completion and people have had a chance to better understand the scope of the project, Grace McGartland, chairperson of the committee that developed the heritage project said a lot of great ideas are coming forward as people realize how they can use the new facility.

"The building is completely transformed. This is a regional cultural destination," said McGartland, "But people ask, 'What the heck is that?'"

Using the old bank building on Graham Road in West Lorne, the project is aimed at preserving and promoting the cultural history and heritage of the region.

It will be devoted toward creating experiences built around local heritage. For example, people can book a weekend at a bed and breakfast during which they will tour local farms, see a play and take a cooking class on preparing a meal from local foods they picked or harvested themselves.

Now, McGartland said people are starting to get a better understanding of the $750,000 project and lots of ideas are coming forward along with requests to use the centre.

"A lot of people have approached us for family events," said McGartland, adding people are looking to use facilities more and more for larger family gatherings like reunions or at Christmas. "It's great for people to use it but at the same time, they [will be] seeing our heritage, our culture, our legacy."

Photographs and other displays make up a large part of the heritage component and serve to teach about the area's rich cultural and historical heritage. It's the first part of the old bank building that people see in the facility that could be used for everything from hosting a prom dinner to a wedding reception, while at the same time being exposed to the history that has been built into the project.

"They aren't just renting a room. That's a great way to truly celebrate our community," said McGartland. For the few who have had a closer look inside while working with the organizing committee, she said the most commonly heard word is, "Wow".

From the entrance to the building in the heritage component, visitors then walk back into the reconstructed barn that has been attached to the rear of the building where they are in for more surprises.

"The barn has gone through a complete transformation but it's still a barn," said McGartland. A barn was donated last year from Dutton/Dunwich and physically moved and restored while being attached to the rear of the bank building.

While all the timbers and beams are exposed and you can see you are inside a barn, McGartland said people then start to notice the new stainless steel and granite fixtures that make up the cooking aspect of the project.

Going further inside, some newly built barn doors inside the building can be rolled back to reveal the state-of-the-art digital darkroom that will be used to teach digital photography that otherwise required 45-minute drives to area colleges.

The facility will be available for everything from cooking and digital photography classes to numerous community functions as well as available for private use. With a modern kitchen, McGartland said the facility could be used for education as well, able to provide resources not found in the local schools.

Idea gathering sessions are been held on an on-going basis with numerous ways for people to still get involved in the project. Another session is being planned in early June that people can attend by contacting the organizers.

Volunteers can get involved in four areas: through the idea gathering which can include being part of shorter or longer-term projects with the facility. "Shutterbug" volunteers that would like to help with the digital photography component, "Hot Pot" volunteers helping with the culinary side and "Helping Hands" willing to get involved with hundreds of different tasks, big and small, toward completing the project or helping with the operations.

McGartland said they are expecting to announce an opening date soon but want to be sure they have all the details completed before setting an official date.

To get involved, contact Tammy Oliveira at 519-768-9986. They are looking at a system of trading volunteer hours for classes in cooking or photography.

(Scott Hilgendorff has extensive experience in rural issues and economic development. He is a strong advocate for rural communities and is a member of Marketing Partners of Western Elgin Region).
Walkway installed at Arts and Cookery Bank

Jesse Cnockaert
The Chronicle

People gathered at the Arts and Cookery Bank, West Lorne May 28 to install bricks in the Bank’s Welcome Walkway. People could buy a brick for the walkway, and it was inscribed to celebrate or honour the memory of someone. In front are Kasey Kalita, 4, Hunter Van Brenk, 12, Finn Van Brenk, 4, Dane Van Brenk, 4, Val Van Brenk, 3, and Brian Van Brenk. The Van Brenk family paid for their own brick, shown in front of Hunter.

The Arts and Cookery Bank in West Lorne has taken another stepping stone towards completion, so to speak.

On May 28, supporters of The Bank on Graham Road visited the site to install the stone bricks in the “Welcome Walkway,” outside the main reception entrance of the building.

The bricks are part of a fundraiser; people bought each brick for $100, and they could get them inscribed with the names of a chosen loved one. About 50 bricks were sold.

“It was a way for people to honour, celebrate or remember their loved ones,” said Grace McGartland, Arts and Cookery Bank Chair. “The fundraising money is going to the programming, that will involve community events, programming for students, programming for seniors and adults.”

When completed the Arts and Cookery Bank hopes to be a cultural hub, combining Dutton-Dunwich, West Elgin, Newbury and Southwest Middlesex, and be a tourism site that promotes the value of a rural lifestyle through historic photo collections and local food.

Bricks are still being sold for the Heritage Pathway, which will be located on the other side of the building. Anyone interested should call (519) 768-9986. That pathway will be installed June 25.
Thank You With your help...

The Heritage Pathway will offer a genuine, warm welcome to visitors who come to The Bank or wander the Carolinian Gardens. Your purchase will help bring The Bank’s vision of celebrating our communities’ rural cultural to life. With your tribute or memory “carved in stone”, you are creating a living legacy to be enjoyed for years to come.

The Arts & Cookery Bank

As a regional cultural destination, The Bank offers a snapshot of Dutton-Dunwich, Newbury, Southwest Middlesex and West Elgin’s rural communities, blending photographic and cooking experiences in a way that will delight your senses and enhance your understanding of rural culture.

The Bank—the restored 1914 heritage building will house a permanent photographic collection and feature rotating exhibits with digital, multi-media displays. The first floor—“The Great Hall”—is a flexible space, appropriate for sit-down meals, community celebrations and special events.

The Cookery—the restored 1883 timber-frame barn will be a multi-use space, where hands-on cooking sessions and digital photography classes will be held.

The Reception—The Welcome Pathway brings all visitors to the Reception, in a “universal access” entrance linking The Bank and The Cookery.

The Gardens—The Heritage Pathway will meander through Carolinian gardens, which will be a permanent photography showcase area and teaching garden.


The Arts & Cookery Bank
242 Graham Road, Box 174, West Lorne, ON N0L 2P0
Phone: 519-768-9986
Email: info@theartsandcookerybank.com
www.theartsandcookerybank.com

It’s Easy.
To become part of The Heritage Pathway.
Just follow the three steps on the inside to confirm your purchase.

• The Pathway will be created using 6" x 9" rustic stones.
• You can choose from three engraving formats.
• You can choose the location for your stone—the Welcome Pathway, or the Garden Pathway.
YOUR ORDER FORM

Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________
Telephone: ________________________________
Email: ________________________________

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY. Limit 14 CHARACTERS PER LINE.

NOTE: SPACES, COMMAS and HYPHENS COUNT as characters.
Each order should be done on a separate order or plain sheet of paper.

Step One: My stones should be engraved as follows...

Line 1: CELEBRATING REMEMBERING HONOURING

(Choose one box only)

Line 2: ________________________________

Line 3: ________________________________

Step Two: Place my Heritage Pathway Stone on the...

Please check one box: ☐ Welcome Pathway ☐ Garden Pathway

Step Three: Please send your completed order form and cheque to:

Send to:
Cheques Payable to: The Arts & Cookery Bank
242 Graham Road, Box 174
West Lorne, ON N0L 2P0

$100.00 per each stone order

For more information or assistance, call Tammy Oliveira 519-768-9986
Charitable receipts will be provided.
WEST LORNE

Bank exceeds expectations

QMI Agency

WEST LORNE — The Arts and Cookery Bank is welcoming visitors in West Lorne, following the official opening July 17.

The bank has been a work in progress for the last three years. The main building, on Munro Street, includes photography exhibits showcasing the local history.

An 1883 timber-frame barn was transported, frame by frame, and attached to the bank, and has been renovated to include a photo lab and a state-of-the-art cooking studio. The Arts and Cookery Bank will offer culinary programs, cooking seminars that promote the use of local food and visual arts programs.

"The single word that we hear is 'Wow,' and that describes how I feel. It far exceeded my expectations," said Grace McGartland, Arts and Cookery Bank chairperson.

Regular summer hours are Tuesday-Friday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Arts and Cookery Bank nearly done

Jesse Cnockaert
The Chronicle

With the Arts and Cookery Bank in West Lorne nearing completion, a series of tours were provided over the last week for selected guests. When completed, the Bank aims to be a hub for the communities of West Elgin, Dutton-Dunwich, Southwest Middlesex and Newbury, and showcase the histories of these areas through photographic collections, as well as culinary experiences. The finished Arts and Cookery Bank is made up of two buildings; a 1914 Bank of Montreal, and an 1883 timber-frame barn. The barn was donated by Mary Gillett, and it was taken from Shackleton Line Dutton, piece by piece so that it could be attached to the west end of the bank. Approximately $526,000 has been spent on construction, with the total project coming to around $843,000. The official grand opening will be sometime this summer.

"These old timber barns, there’s less and less of them every year. This was a way to preserve one of these beautiful barns," said Arts and Cookery Bank board member Bill Denning. The "barn" part of the building includes a fully-functional kitchen to be used for hands-on cooking sessions, and the old stables have been converted into a photo lab. The "Bank" part of the building includes a large front hall, and computer screens mounted on many of the walls which display a digital photo archive showcasing the history of the surrounding municipalities from the late 1700’s to the present.

Members of the public donated their old pictures to the Bank so they could be scanned and placed into the archives. The archive currently contains over 1,000 photos and is still growing. The collection includes a photo of the first motorized hearse, used in the 1930’s by Dugald Walker, funeral director of Rodney from 1905-1950, and a picture of St. Henry’s, the first Catholic Church in the Township of Aldborough.

"We want not only to celebrate the past, but the present, and moving on into the future," said Grace McGartland, Arts and Cookery bank Chair. "This is not your everyday barn... Right from the get-go, this was a project with no legs, but a lot of heart."

Some pictures will be made into large, permanent wall murals that will decorate the building.

What’s cooking?

Jesse Cnockaert The Chronicle

The Arts and Cookery Bank in West Lorne gave tours last week to give a preview of what the Bank will have to offer when it officially opens later this summer. Grace McGartland (L), Arts and Cookery Bank Chair, and Norma Schnekenburger (R) helped chef Kim Saunders prepare a meal of Lake Erie Yellow Perch, and a summer salad, made with local produce.
Dear Editor,

After three years of planning, digging, renovating and building, we are thrilled to announce that The Bank will be opening to the public on July 17, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., and we are inviting everyone to step inside this incredible venue.

We’re celebrating three years of work with three ribbon cuttings. Are you an Early Bird? The first five people to arrive at 8:05 a.m. will participate in the Early Bird Ribbon Cutting Opening on Monroe St. At 10:15 a.m. Come around back to the Garden Deck for the Cookery Ribbon Cutting. The Final Ribbon Cutting will occur at 11:45 a.m. on Graham Rd, on the steps of The Bank.

On behalf of The Arts & Cookery Bank, I would like to extend a huge thank you to the more than 100 volunteers and the numerous tradespeople, construction workers and community members who, over the past three years, have supported an idea and a vision. We know you’ll experience the same pride and enthusiasm we all feel, seeing the dream of a regional cultural centre come to life.

If you would like to volunteer at The Bank, we welcome enthusiastic and reliable volunteers. We are looking for “Shutterbug Volunteers”, “Hot Pot Volunteers”, “Heart & Hand Volunteers” and “Bank Tellers.” Please—come share the excitement with us.

Grace McGartland, Chair, The Arts & Cookery Bank

The Bank opens its doors

Submitted

After three years of planning, digging, renovating and building, The Arts & Cookery Bank will open to the public July 17.

"It’s been a courage and commitment from the beginning," said Grace McGartland, Chair of The Arts & Cookery Bank Board of Directors, "And we couldn’t be more thrilled to see this day arrive. We want the entire community to join in the celebration of this incredible venue. We are so excited."

To mark the official opening, there will be three ribbon cuttings, one for each year, symbolically. The Early Bird Ribbon Cutting will be at 8:05 a.m., on Monroe St. at the Reception entrance. The first five to arrive will have the honour of cutting the first ribbon. The Cookery and Foto Stable Ribbon Cutting takes place at 10:15, on the Garden Deck at the entrance to The Cookery. The 1863 timber frame barn has been turned into a studio kitchen and digital photo classroom. The Final Ribbon Cutting, at 11:45, will take place on Graham Rd on the steps of The Bank.

The first Photographic Exhibit, "From This to That," will be on display until early autumn. This exhibit showcases the entire building process and the people who made it all happen.

The Bank welcomes volunteers who can sign up at The Bank. "Shutterbug Volunteers" are photography enthusiasts who are eager to help out in Foto Classes. "Hot Pot Volunteers" will help chefs in the Cookery. "Heart & Hand Volunteers" work behind the scenes. "Bank Tellers" work with the public, telling the communities’ story.

Training is provided and volunteers can earn free admission to future Bank programs, events and classes for their time.

"This entire project could not have happened without the help of more than 100 volunteers. The Bank is truly a community-driven, volunteer-supported project. We are so thankful for the hundreds of hours our volunteers have put in at every stage of the project. There really isn’t a word to describe our gratitude," said McGartland.

Regular summer hours will be Tuesday - Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. beginning on July 20.

There is no entrance fee. "Food & Foto" programming will begin in September 2010.

"There really isn’t a word to describe our gratitude"

— Grace McGartland
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Letters to the Editor

Grand opening of Arts and Cookery Bank

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Grace McGartland, Chair, The Arts & Cookery Bank
Culinary program starts at Arts and Cookery Bank

Grace McGartland, Arts and Cookery Bank Chair

The “Nine Wednesdays” program, the first series of culinary classes offered at The Arts & Cookery Bank in West Lorne, has begun.

Four local chefs are featured in these interactive cooking classes, where participants roll up their sleeves to help prepare the meal, then sit down together to enjoy it.

The first two classes took place October 6 and 13, and the next classes will be October 20 and 27.

No cooking experience is required to participate, according to Grace McGartland, Arts and Cookery Bank Chair.

The chefs—Ryan Watson (The Villa), John Mairleitner (Tall Tales Café), Kim Saunders (The Windjammer Inn), and M. Earl Watson (M.E. & Suzie’s)—will lead the group step-by-step through the process, from appetizer to main to dessert. Along the way, they will offer tips and techniques to use at home.

There is a variety in the menus. John Mairleitner starts off with a Harvest Feast, including a Lemon Tart with Lavender Meringue. Kim Saunders features Crêpes Galore. Ryan Watson’s first meal is Great Garlic and Earl Wilson will be preparing a range of appetizers that pair well with various beers.

Classes are limited in size to 12, so everyone will be able to get up close and personal with the chef.

The series runs until December 1.

For more information, go to the website, www.theartsandcookerybank.com, to their Facebook Page (The Arts & Cookery Bank) or call The Bank at 519-768-9986.

The Arts & Cookery Bank is a registered non-profit, charitable organization.
Nine Wednesdays
A New Chapter for The Arts & Cookery Bank, in West Lorne
By Debra Bagshaw

The Arts & Cookery Bank presents its first series of culinary classes this fall. Featuring local and seasonal foods, the evening sessions are designed to be imaginative, interactive, creative, and fun. The classes, entitled “Nine Wednesdays,” are also the start of another significant chapter in the remarkable story of The Bank, located in the rural community of West Lorne.

A wonderful cookbook (or culinary magazine) may tantalize with words, and then take the seduction to another level with pictures. The ultimate goal, though, is to entice the reader to delve into a more intimate food adventure of touch, aroma and taste. The Arts & Cookery Bank story has itself evolved largely through a step-wise progression from words to pictures to culinary experience.

Since 2007, when the idea for The Bank was born, words have been used to solicit support from all levels of government and to inspire community members and more than 100 volunteers to help create a regional cultural destination focused on photography and food, and created around the stunning venue created from a 1914 Bank of Montreal building and an 1885 timber frame barn. On the food side of things, words like “ignite a passion for cooking,” “rural culture stirred,” and “culinary riches” have dotted conversations at meetings, in the community and in the press. They have helped to crystallize the organization’s core ideas related to building tourism based on local food and heritage.

The phrases have helped to kick-start the narrative of the culinary story, and have inspired the community to share recipes, heritage china, time, resources and ideas. They also convinced some fine local chefs to support the initiatives with interactive fund-raising dinners, which were created at a point when the Cookery (kitchen) was still a drawing (based upon a heritage barn located on a farm field). When the dream kitchen became reality, those same chefs created the memorable, culinary-themed community celebrations that was part of The Bank’s official opening week.

Alongside the words, photographs soon began to accumulate and contributed another colourful and enticing layer to the unfolding food story. In those pictures, community members savour home-baked fruit pies at “sneak peeks” which punctuated the year during the building’s transformation; candles thaw a glow over multi-coursed fund-raising dinners held at the century farmhouse of board chair Grace McGarland; jewel-toned produce from nearby farms bedazzles as chefs tried out the new kitchen and prepared treats for media gatherings.

The click of the cameras reached an unprecedented level at celebration and media events leading up to The Bank’s official opening in July 2010. The Arts & Cookery Bank chefs helped to show off the state-of-the-art kitchen, local foods, and the beautiful new venue. Rooms and outdoor space were filled with a happy people-hum, with sensational aromas and photo ops galore, including a sparkling board banquet held in the elegant heritage hall, a chocolate and strawberry reception, a barn board & beer barbecue, and a multi-course kitchen party. The only sound that eclipsed the “click” of eager photographers during the opening week was the off-heard exclamation, “Wow!”

The “Cookery” at the Arts & Cookery Bank is a dream kitchen created from the heritage barn. Hand-hewn barn timbers frame stainless steel and marble-top cabinets, and hand-poured concrete floors lend a rustic feel. It is a seasonal food, which will elicit from many visitors an impulse to talk food, stir a simmering pot, help chop fragrant herbs, prepare some of the season’s harvest for roasting, and taste the wonderful results.

“Nine Wednesdays” cooking classes will be led by the four chefs who have become an integral part of the Bank’s story. They share an appreciation for the richness of local cuisine, the rhythm of the seasons in this corner of southwestern Ontario, and the possibilities of showcasing this philosophy at the Bank.

Each of the chefs is uniquely inspired by cooler days, colours of fall, pumpkin-dotted fields, apple-picking season, and harvest time. They will create cooking experiences around harvest foods, slow cooking, and ideas focused on people who, nonetheless, value real food.

Chat, stir, chop, smell, eat, drink! A picture, they say, is worth a thousand words; an experience at The Arts & Cookery Bank – priceless! Or as they say at The Bank – outrageous! Outrageously rural.

The Arts & Cookery Bank was created from two buildings, the heritage barn, transformed into “The Cookery,” and a 1944 Bank of Montreal, now the elegant Heritage Hall, where multi-media touch screens provide a visual feast of rural culture. The venue is a perfect space to host a family, community or business celebration.

“Nine Wednesdays” classes run weekly from Oct 6 to Dec. For more information about The Bank and the cooking classes, call 519-768-4986, email info@theartsandcookerybank.com, or visit www.theartsandcookerybank.com.

DEBRA BAGSHAW is the editor of Relish Elgin (www.relishelgin.ca).
Course Title: PHOTO 1- The FUNdamentals

Location: The Foto Stable

PHOTO 1- The FUNdamentals

Who should attend: This five week class is geared to the digital point & shoot camera owner who wants to get better images of friends and family and has a basic knowledge of how to use the camera.

What you will learn: Learn the ins and outs of your digital camera and the basic photographic elements of good composition and reading light. You’ll see the difference in your photographs immediately. These techniques will improve your overall photographic skills. Learn from others as you explore our community with your lens!

Dates: Five Weeks.
  Saturdays—October 16, 23, 30 —9:00 am to 12:00 noon
  Sundays—November 7 and 14 —12:00 noon to 3:00 pm.

Fee: $55

What you need to bring: Digital Point & Shoot Camera and its manual.
Nine Wednesdays continues

Ryan Watson (l), of The Villa Dining Lounge in Glencoe, was the third Chef during the Nine Wednesdays interactive cooking experience at the Arts and Cookery Bank in West Lorne October 20. Twelve guests including visitors from Union, Port Stanley, and Thamesford joined the culinary class. Steve Shaw from Union is shown pureeing the soup as Ryan Watson looks on. For more information on the Nine Wednesdays program, visit www.theartsandcookerybank.com.

Cookie Day celebration at Arts and Cookery

The Arts & Cookery Bank is stirring up an all day Cookie Bake on Nov. 27 as part of its week-long Hang it Up, Light it Up, Bake it Up Celebration.

Bakers of all ages will bake the cookies, share some with their fellow bakers and then contribute a portion of their cookies to the West Elgin Daffodil Auxiliary.

The Bank's goal is to bake 2,010 cookies in all.

“This is going to be one huge community cookie bake,” said Karen Carroll, a baker.

“This is an event for the whole family,” said Jerry Galbraith, director of The Arts & Cookery Bank, who is coordinating the efforts with the Daffodil Auxiliary.

“It will give the community a fun way to work together and top off the Christmas food baskets for the Daffodil Auxiliary, too.”

Caren Emery, owner of Tasty Sweets Cafe & Bakery adds, “This is a wonderful way to celebrate the community and help fill 80 Christmas food baskets with homemade cookies.”

Interested community members are asked to register in advance for this event and will be asked to contribute some of the ingredients, such as flour, brown sugar and butter.

For more information, go the website, www.theartsandcookerybank.com, to The Arts & Cookery Bank Facebook Page or call The Bank at 519-768-9986.
And the total is...

On Nov. 27, the Arts and Cookery Bank tried to set a world record for most cookies baked in a community. To finish off the day, they baked a big cookie with the final total written on it in icing. Sabrina Oliveira, 12, and Summer Kirschner, 14, are shown holding the final cookie. The results will be sent to the Guinness Book of World Records.

Arts and Cookery tries for world record in cookies

The Arts and Cookery Bank in West Lorne is shooting for a world record, but mostly, they’re interested in everyone having fun making cookies.

On Nov. 27, people were invited to the Bank to bake cookies. The goal was to bake 2,010 cookies between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., and hopefully, get into the Guinness Book of World Records for ‘Most cookies baked in a community.’

“We’re all about cooking and food and photography, we’re always trying to do something that centres around that in some way,” said Grace McGartland, Arts and Cookery Bank Chair.

McGartland estimates between 25-35 people helped bake cookies that day. She doesn’t know for sure since many people came, baked, and left before the end of the day. But the hard work was clear since by noon they had already reached their target goal. Bakers were busy making oatmeal cookies, chocolate chip, oatmeal raisin, spritz cookies, gingerbread and sugar cookies. By the end of the day, they had made 3,553 cookies.

The day of baking was photographed and video recorded for documentation purposes, and they’ll make an entry to Guinness. Grace McGartland says that if this gets into the record book, great. But even if not, the cookies won’t be going to waste. Bakers got to take many cookies home with them, and between 800 to 1,000 cookies will be donated to the Daffodil Auxiliary.

“I think the other thing is to show how [the Bank] can be a hub of activities,” said McGartland.

The cookie bake day was one day during a week-long program of special events at the Bank. Earlier in the week, the Bank had an evening for children to come and make gingerbread houses, a special clock dedication and a Christmas party. The rest of the week following the cookie bake day included “the White Cup Yuletide Brunch,” a cultural festival (featuring Portugal), and an interactive culinary night.

Jesse Cnockaert
The Chronicle

Twan Dieker, 13, Stanley Wilkins, 13, and Emma de Wit, 13, were just a few of the volunteers who came to the Arts and Cookery Bank Nov. 27 to bake cookies.