



# NEWSLETTER

2016

## A BLOOMING LAVENDER LABYRINTH

This summer, members of the Labyrinth Community Network were invited into the rolling hills of bucolic Northumberland County to visit a lavender labyrinth situated on four acres of an aromatic lavender farm. To celebrate the height of the July bloom, owner-operators Sabena and Gary Brazeau conceived of a health and wellness weekend. Along with yoga and meditation, qigong and Nia, the weekend included a Saturday afternoon workshop conducted by LCN to share the health benefits and history of labyrinth walking, with instruction and materials to make and take home a 30cm x 30cm finger labyrinth.

The Laveanne Lavender Farm is an oasis of therapeutic calm. Nestled in Campellcroft at 8667 Gillmour Road, halfway between Peterborough and Port Hope, the farm had its grand opening in the summer of 2013. Laveanne has the largest collection of lavender varieties in Canada, and surprises with many colours ranging from purple to red and even white and yellow. The land has been certified organic for 10 years and all plants are pollinated by natural means. The lavender farm not only incorporates the labyrinth and gardens, but also an edible plant nursery, known as Grow Tasty, with over 400 offerings that you can safely put on your dinner plate; many are endangered heirloom

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The Labyrinth at Laveanne Lavender Farm, Cambellcroft, Ontario. Photos: Logan Brazeau.



Sabena and Gary Brazeau sitting by the lavender.

varieties. With laudable initiative, Gary and Sabena's son Logan started the operation in 2004 as an intrepid 15 year old with a grand vision: to provide healthy, organically grown produce to the public.

Aligning with the owners' original vision, the lavender farm provides the opportunity for the public to enjoy a relaxing, peaceful outing, and to become educated about the health benefits as well as the production process of lavender. The essential oil of lavender is reportedly effective as an anti-inflammatory, antifungal, antiseptic, antibacterial, and antimicrobial agent. In addition, its calming and detoxifying characteristics make it a popular home remedy ideal for baths, compresses, inhalation and diffusers.

Walking the lavender labyrinth framed on two sides by verdant forest is a unique experience. The path is reminiscent of the medieval pattern with four quadrants. There are 9 circuits and a circular centre, and the lavender labyrinth gives you choices: you may go to the centre directly, or, once reaching the centre, return directly to the perimeter. If you opt to take the traditional meandering labyrinth walk all the way in and all the way out, you have another unusual choice to make: whether to start on the right hand path or on the left. Once you have reached the centre, it is important to take note of what side you started in order to complete a return journey and not just repeat the inward one again.

Eight charming participants enjoyed the labyrinth workshop and created beautiful and colourful finger labyrinths. A few were intending to make labyrinths on their properties, including one large enough to be ridden on horseback. Like all visitors to Laveanne, we were greeted and treated by the 25 acres of organic land that sang with integrity from the dedicated vision, work and stewardship of the Brazeau family.

– VIRGINIA VIANNA

## LABYRINTHS AROUND ONTARIO



THE OLD MILLBROOK SCHOOLHOUSE, Millbrook. This winter photograph was taken during the initial design process. Permanent local fieldstone walls were subsequently created. Cretan design. 7 circuits. Photo: Robin Hood



W. J. BELL ROTARY PEACE PARK, Stittsville. Opening candlelit ceremony. Public. Wheelchair accessible. Chartres design with Rotary International logo in the centre. 11-circuit. 47 feet in diameter. Brick pavers. Photo: Barry Gray

### THE HIGH PARK LABYRINTH

The High Park Labyrinth, located just below Hawk Hill, was first a gleam in the eye of Sylvia Senensky, with much support from the Labyrinth Community Network. A large version of the Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth, it was recently repainted in a vibrant orange with help from the High Park Labyrinth Community, LCN, and the High Park Supervisor.

Perched on the Prairie Sand basin of Lake Iroquois, there is a deep sense of history and connection with the underground energy of Water, and with Earth in the sacred grove of Black Oak Savannahs that surround and shade the labyrinth. The park is home to a variety of plants, animals and birds, including the Blazing Star, butterflies, Red-Tailed and Cooper's Hawks, squirrels, coyotes and, of course, racoons.

The Labyrinth attracts all manner of people and pets for events, including Nature Camp participants, celebrations of Earth Day, World Peace Day, and the energies of the Equinoxes and Solstices, with the attendant visible planets and Sylvia's candles still in use. We invite music celebrations called Soundings, Mandala expressive arts workshops and wellness workshops, all lovingly offered by various Labyrinth Communities. And on a daily basis, individuals arrive simply to walk the Labyrinth, experience the energies, and spur on creative meditations. With a tribute to our First Nations Communities who consider this sacred land, I'll end by quoting from Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*: "Mankind of strange race! Stern dweller of the wild. Nature's free-born, untamed, and daring child!" Treat yourself to time, however you prefer to spend it, with the High Park Labyrinth. See you there.

– LUTIA LAUSANE

*You carry Mother Earth within you. She is not outside of you. Mother Earth is not just your environment. In that insight of inter-being, it is possible to have real communication with the Earth, which is the highest form of prayer.*

– Thich Nhat Hanh

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Ruth Luginbuehl with her stuffed animals at the High Park Labyrinth. Photo: Jo Ann Stevenson.

### LABYRINTHS AT SICK KIDS HOSPITAL

When Ruth Luginbuehl moved to Toronto from Switzerland, she felt extremely homesick. Working as an art therapist at Sick Children's Hospital, she soon found help by walking the nearby Toronto Public Labyrinth.

It didn't take long for Ruth to find ways to bring labyrinths to children at the hospital. When an anxious and agitated child dying of infectious disease lost her sight, Ruth designed a teddy bear labyrinth with deep grooves onto a thin blanket which she placed over the child's tummy. The child was calmed as she traced the teddy bear to the centre, at her own navel.

Ruth and Lutia Lausanne offer labyrinth and mandala walks at High Park. "Painting a mandala can connect people with the experience they had on the labyrinth," says Ruth. "The mandala is a tangible memory they can continue to process over days, even in dreams – especially in dreams."

A richly creative artist, Ruth plans to develop labyrinth/mandala workshops for people of all ages. Watch the LCN website Newsnotes and Facebook for dates.

– JO ANN STEVENSON

Become a member of the Labyrinth Community Network. Your \$25 contribution will help us to pay for this newsletter, our website, and other expenses necessary to continue our work. We thank you.



ST. LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, Ottawa. Indoor. Permanent. Petite Chartres design. 7-circuit laser-cut marmoleum installed into the sanctuary floor. Photo: Grace Amirault.



ANISHINABE SPIRITUAL CENTRE, Espanola. Hopi/Classic design. 7-circuit. 46 feet in diameter. Path outlined in birch logs.

## A SPLASH OF COLOUR IN TORONTO PARKS

Wading pools in many of Toronto city parks have been transformed into labyrinths by long-time labyrinth enthusiast HiMY SYeD, along with various community groups and local artists. Thank you Sydney Dorfman for taking the time to photograph many during the summer. You can see these wonderful photographs in the LCN website directory. – KATHRYN KNIGHT



Labyrinth on the wading pool at Christie Pits, by HiMY SYeD. Photo: Sydney Dorfman.

## SCROLLING THE LCN WEBSITE DIRECTORY

As you scroll through our website directory, you can open yourself to some labyrinth energy with Mother Earth herself as company.

On Lorhill Farm near New Hamburg, facilitator Patricia Wagler invites you to The Knoll, a labyrinth that encourages 'self-unearthing.' The goal, says Patricia, is to delight your senses and to be kind to the earth. On the Lorhill Farm blog are visual delights such as the view of the sky while flopping down in the centre of the labyrinth, and a photo gallery of The Knoll as it was being created.

*Walking is man's best medicine.*

– Hippocrates

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Garden labyrinths in chakra colours can be enjoyed online any time of the year. The Healing Circle Labyrinth in Johnstown near Prescott is surrounded by trees and flowers and a view of the St. Lawrence River.

Sandi and David Deschambault at the Peace By Peace Counselling and Retreat Centre have a wooded acreage with a flagstone labyrinth tucked behind mature pine and cedar trees. Sandi is a registered psychotherapist and art therapist and her husband David is an elder, or Tau, in a gnostic church called St. Francis Church of Holy Light. Visit them online and read David's sermons, delivered from his chapel amongst the foliage.

There are over 150 labyrinth listings in the directory and you are heartily welcome to visit each in person. [www.labyrinthnetwork.ca](http://www.labyrinthnetwork.ca)

– JO ANN STEVENSON

## The Lehi Key

By Kelly Child

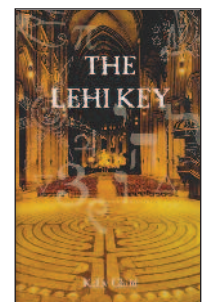
The Finisher's Publishing, 2015

Kelly Child's book, *The Lehi Key*, delivers a rigorous scholastic account of the author's experience of the sacred geometry of Chartres Cathedral: its dimensions, its stained glass windows, and especially, its labyrinth.

Child is informed by medieval Christianity, Masonic symbolism, Paganism, Mormonism, Hermetic Qabalah, Egyptian mythos and great thinkers and mystics such as Lehi.

Interwoven is his personal perspective as a modern man and a Mormon teacher. In one analogy he notes that the Silicon Valley encodes our intellect in software, while 1000 years before, were chiseled with compass and square into Chartres Cathedral.

– JO ANN STEVENSON



## MICHAEL FRANKLIN: IN HIS OWN WORDS

**M**ichael Franklin, LCN's Music Director, is an accomplished musician – and labyrinth facilitator – who performs an eclectic mix of festive, spiritual, meditational, dance, and trance-dance music with voice, percussion, hurdy-gurdy, shawms, bagpipes, flutes, recorders, double recorder, crumhorn, pipe and tabor, jaw harp, and singing bowls.

We asked him to share with us some thoughts about his choices when planning and providing music for special events at the Toronto Public Labyrinth.

“Most of what I do at the labyrinth is improvised in the moment, on whatever sound tools and musical instruments I have been moved to bring with me on the day. Some aspects of it may be planned in advance, but more often than not, especially if I am to be the only one doing the majority of the sounding, it is very much last minute. Even ideally, decided in the moment.

“As a ritualized sound journey tailored to the labyrinth walk experience, there are some continuities. I generally begin with sounds like the tingsha, the conch shell horn, sometimes elemental sounds, intended to clear and energize the space. Throughout the improvisation I keep in mind the three-part structure of going into the labyrinth, spending some time in the centre, and then coming out of the labyrinth. The music will not closely accompany the literal experience of each individual, but acknowledging that three-part structure seems to give meaning and integrity to the sounding.

“Before the walk I generally take stock of any feelings I have about the moment, as far as the astrological aspects, recent political, social, and economic events, and any other events that seem



LCN Music Director Michael Franklin.  
Photo: Jo Ann Stevenson.

to be resonating in the collective consciousness.

“Just before playing I try to open myself to the needs and intentions of those present.

“Whatever comes out is my sense of all that filtered through an ongoing practice and experience of medieval inspired modal melody and contemporary shamanic sounding.”

From this walker's perspective, what “comes out” accompanies but never overwhelms, deepens the experience of the walk, and like the labyrinth itself, seems to meet each walker on the path. LCN is grateful to be the recipient of Michael's musical gifts.

– CAMILLA GRYSKI

*Music in the soul can be heard by the universe.*

– Lao Tzu

## From the President

Coming up to our 20th anniversary in 2017, the Labyrinth Community Network continues to reflect our intention to be of service to the labyrinth community: to keep the labyrinth vibrant; to help people trying to build or purchase labyrinths; to hold regular open public walks and an annual retreat day; to maintain a resourceful website and to support labyrinth initiatives.

Whether it be in retreat centres, in hospitals or hospices, or in urban public spaces, isn't it remarkable the way this simple, welcoming pattern in a circle meets people, without words, where they are?

Even just looking at the labyrinth pattern or tracing it with your finger can serve as an antidote to the sad and traumatic images we are

faced with every day. Labyrinths are finding their way into our lives when we need them most.

The late Marjorie Sharpe, our first board chair, leaves us her labyrinth wisdom in her book, *Governing with Soul*. The book underlines that not only logic but creativity is needed in the important business of governing charities – that walking a labyrinth helps unleash the full spirit of the organization. It's that way for individuals too.

We would like to know what is it you value most about labyrinths for yourself and for your community, and we thank you for supporting this work.

It is our hope that you will celebrate these potent patterns along with us at our Toronto Public Labyrinth walks and our 20th anniversary retreat day in June, 2017.

– JO ANN STEVENSON

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