



THE 61ST ANNUAL
ROCKHOUND GEMBOREE
SPEAKER SERIES
AT THE CURLING CLUB VENUE



Chris Houston

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1ST - 4:00PM

Peace & The Environment

Chris Houston, from the Canadian Peace Museum, will talk about the links between peace building and the natural environment, showing how environmental harms can lead to conflict. Chris is a Community Fellow at the Dahdaleh Institute of Global Health Research, and his talk will link themes of peace making, human health, democracy, and a fair and inclusive society. He will talk about his humanitarian work in places affected by war and how this has driven him to promote peace. He will talk about the Canadian Peace Museum and how peace is important both locally and far away and what we can do to create a more peaceful, fair society.



**CANADIAN
PEACE MUSEUM**

Introductions

- The Canadian Peace Museum is a:
 - Grassroots, Bancroft-based non profit
 - registered charity
- Chris Houston is the Executive Director. Also:
 - Former humanitarian worker
 - Faculty, University of Toronto
 - Board of directors, North Hastings Community Cupboard
 - Bancroft Safety & Wellness Committee
- Today: Peace, environmentalism
- Anything else?



'It's a Slow Death': The World's Worst Humanitarian Crisis

By SHUAIB ALMOSAWA, BEN HUBBARD and TROY GRIGGS AUG. 23, 2017

The New York Times



Yemen, March to September 2017





Residential and
warehouse
bombings

April 29, 2017

Sana'a, Yemen



Enjoying fresh
fish

April 20, 2017

Hodedah fish
market,
Yemen



Street water
distribution

April 13, 2017

Sana'a,
Yemen



Kindness & a fair society?

Absence of war?



What is

Peace?



Diplomacy & good relations?

Tranquility?



Birds Creek Beavers

Peace is:

- Calmness
- Feeling safe
- Watching a sunset on the lake
- Helping others when they fall
- Kindness
- Forgiveness
- Not being bullied

Headline News

Birds Creek students win first ever Stories of Peace Award

September 26, 2023



POSITIVE PEACE REPORT 2024

☐ Results ☐ Trends ☐ Positive Peace & Societal Resilience ☐ Positive Peace and Future Peace Trajectory



Positive Peace includes:

- Absence of crime and violence
- Well-functioning democracy and institutions
- Good relations with neighbours
- Equal access to healthcare, educations, jobs
- Gender equality, absence of all types of discrimination

Negative Peace:

The absence of fear
and violence

Positive Peace:

The presence of
attitudes, institutions,
and structures that
create and sustain
peaceful, thriving
societies

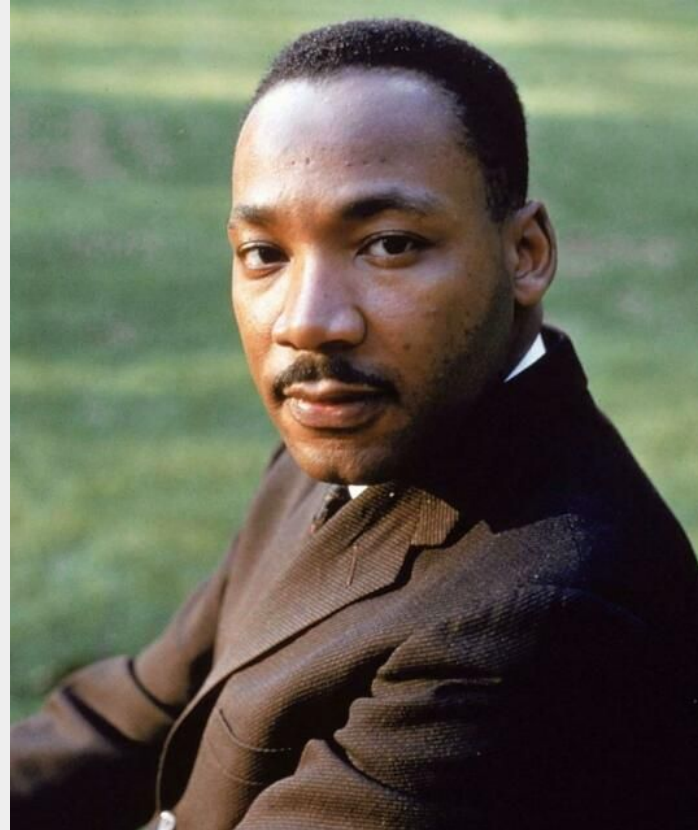
We need both

Positive Peace is the “**presence of justice**” - Martin Luther King Jr.

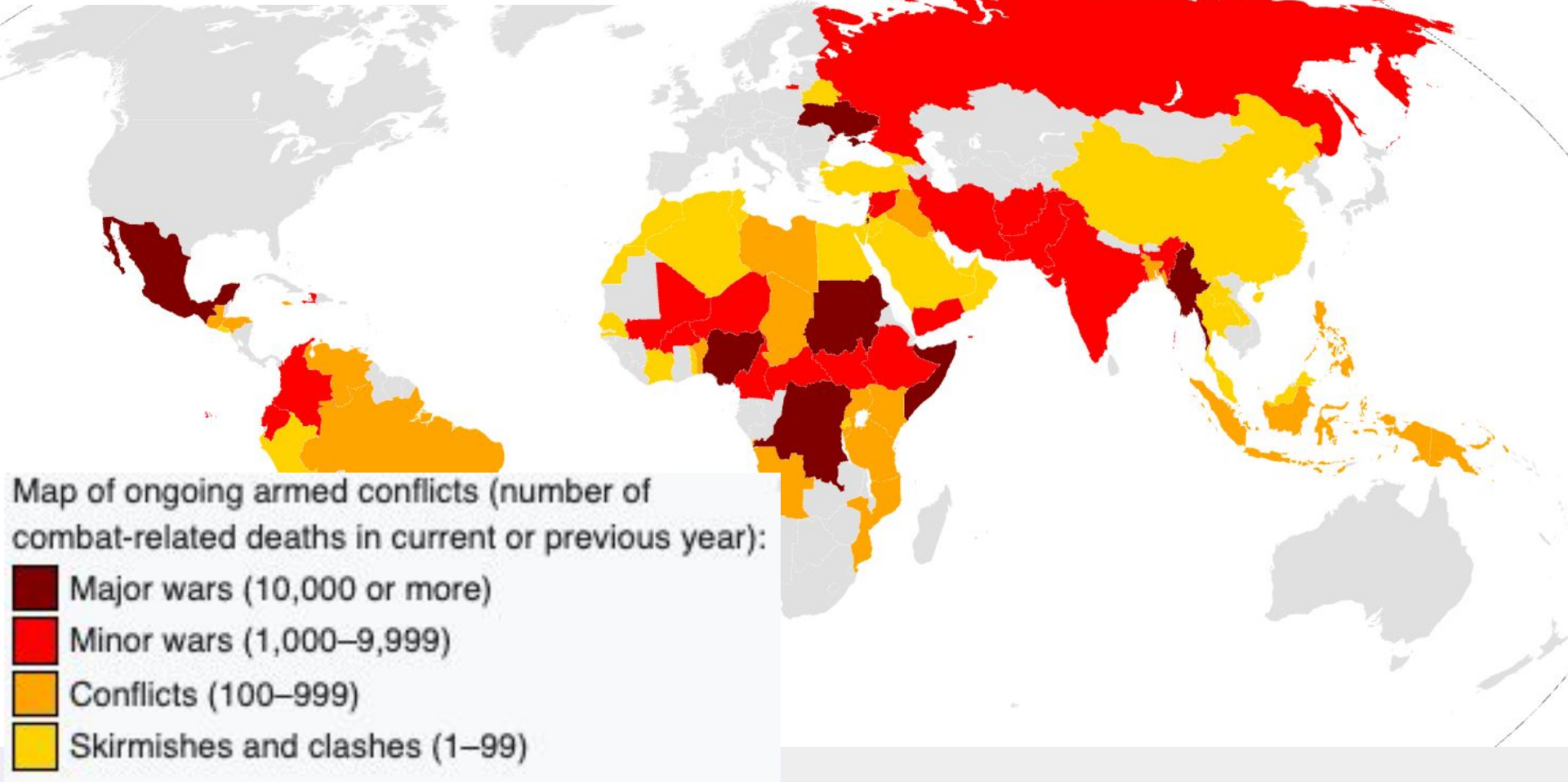
Letter from Birmingham Jail, 16 April 1963



Recreation of Martin Luther King Jr.'s cell, the National Civil Rights Museum (Memphis, Tennessee)



Ongoing armed conflicts



Increasing prevalence of wars

France 24

Israeli attacks in Gaza have stepped up since halt in bombing in Iran

At least five Palestinians were killed in Israel
Israel has stepped up attacks in Gaza in the
1 day ago

Reuters

Commander who was filmed killing civilians in Sudan is back in combat, sources say

A Sudanese paramilitary commander who was arrested late last year following global outrage over videos of him executing



News CTV News

U.S. was an 'hour away' from launching attack on Iran: Trump



Asia Times

Myanmar's resource curse fueling its forever war

Myanmar's war is often described as a clash of ideologies, ethnic identities and competing visions of the state.

1 day ago



Peacefulness in Bancroft

OPP respond to threat report and fake gun incidents at high school in Bancroft, Ont.

By [Adam Beauchemin](#)

Published: April 15, 2026 at 3:37PM EDT

OPP 1 min. read

Long-awaited answers for family and community as OPP lay murder charge in 1991 death of Apsley woman

By [Mary Milne](#)

June 24, 2025

OPP have laid a first...

CTV NEWS

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Warrant issued for Toronto teen in connection with shooting in Bancroft

By [Ted Raymond](#)

Published: June 08, 2026 at 11:25AM EDT

Bancroft OPP charge one person with assault after complaint over weekend

By [My Bancroft Now Staff](#)

February 3, 2026

Bancroft OPP have charged one person after a member of the public arrived at the local detachment Saturday night after an assault from the previous day.

PRINCE EDWARD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Incident at North Hastings High School over two consecutive school days

Trends in Canada - polarization

2023 data



AUGUST 2023

Far and Widening

The Rise of Polarization in Canada

BY JUSTIN LING



44%

of young adults believe the political stability of Canada is threatened moderately by the political division of its people

38%

of young adults believe political division in Canada will increase

Peace is normal

War and violence have always been abnormal



Professor Wim Laven

Stories of Peace Awards

Village Playhouse

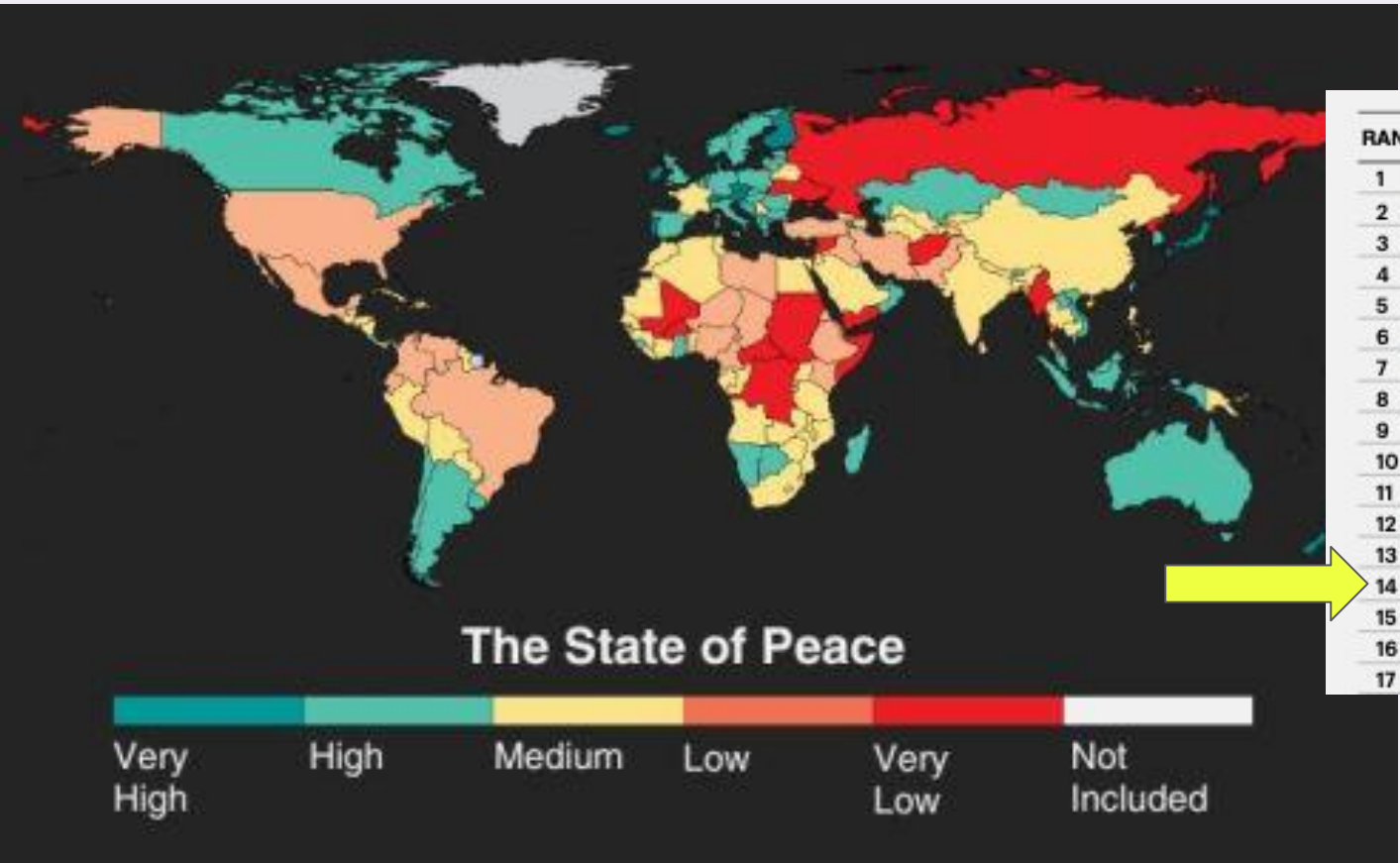
Sept 2023

The normality of peace, abnormality of war

- Disagreement and conflict is normal
- War is abnormal
 - Combatants need training and live with PTSD
 - Most countries are not in war
 - Overwhelmingly people hate war
 - News focuses on the new and the unusual

Canada is the 14th most peaceful nation

Source: Global Peace Index, 2026 (Institute of Economics & Peace)



RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	CHANGE
1	Iceland	1.161	↔
2	New Zealand	1.343	↑ 1
3	Switzerland	1.363	↓ 1
4	Slovenia	1.369	↑ 2
5	Ireland	1.371	↓ 1
6	Austria	1.421	↓ 1
7	Portugal	1.427	↑ 1
8	Singapore	1.435	↓ 1
9	Finland	1.478	↑ 1
10	Japan	1.489	↑ 3
11	Denmark	1.504	↓ 2
12	Malaysia	1.513	↓ 1
13	Czechia	1.517	↓ 1
14	Canada	1.525	↑ 1
15	Hungary	1.538	↓ 1
16	Bhutan	1.546	↑ 2
17	Netherlands	1.566	↔

CRIME

Toronto homicides on pace for record low, but progress 'fragile,' advocate warns



By **Prisha Dev** • Global News

Posted December 18, 2025 10:46 am · Updated December 30, 2025 12:11 pm · 4 min read



Toronto is finally seeing its lowest homicide rates in more than five years. However, experts warn the downward trend is fragile and will require continued effort. **Steve Russell/Toronto Star via Getty Images**

News definition:

- What is new; and
- What is unusual

Peace is normal
and therefore not
newsworthy

Canada's contributions to peacefulness

Not peaceful

- Colonization
- Weapon exports
- Support for war

Peaceful

- UN Peacekeeping, 1956
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
- Montreal Protocol on Greenhouse gases, 1967
- Ottawa Treaty on Landmines, 1997
- Support people escaping conflict (but not all people equality)

We believe that we must learn from the good and the bad and the nuanced complexity of history

What drives peace?

Drivers of peace

- Inclusive, well-functioning democracy
- Fair access to services and resources
- Fair access to healthcare and support services
- Affordability of food, housing
- Educated population
- Independent media

Drivers of conflict

- Unfair systems
- Undemocratic processes
- Environmental harm

The importance of healthy ecosystems and environmental protection

“Findings consistently show a significant positive association between environmental harm and military conflicts”

Source: ***War and warming: The effects of climate change on military conflicts in developing countries (1995–2020)***

Authors: Jeremy Ko, Professor Harry F. Lee Ph.D, and Chun Kai Leung PhD

Published in: Innovation and Green Development Volume 3, Issue 4, December 2024



Environmental harm drives war



Search 360info

Politics

Why water scarcity is a key factor in Syria's protracted conflict

Published on January 6, 2025

Water control has become a central tool in Syria's conflict, as both the state and external actors target vital resources for leverage and power.



Extreme weather events such as floods are increasingly severe in many parts of South Sudan, which contributes to internal displacement, exacerbates conflict-related displacement (including from Sudan) and increases population pressures in host areas.

March 2025

Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet

South Sudan*

South Sudan is one of the least peaceful countries in the world and one of the most vulnerable to climate change. Rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns have led to both drought and flooding, impacting river flows and the groundwater availability and water quality for a population highly reliant on agriculture and pastoralism. Decades of violent conflict have also eroded the population's coping capacities. Weak governance and the lack of infrastructure further undermine the capacity of state and social institutions to adapt to climate change. Beyond the existing tensions between armed groups in South Sudan, the adverse effects of the war in Sudan are exacerbating a complex and persistent humanitarian crisis.

- Climate change is severely affecting livelihoods in South Sudan, with intercommunal conflict and violent cattle raids exacerbating the challenges it poses. People increasingly rely on foraging and humanitarian aid to survive.
- Extreme weather events such as floods are increasingly severe in many parts of South Sudan, which contributes to internal displacement, exacerbates conflict-related displacement (including from Sudan) and increases population pressures in host areas.
- Floods and landmines impact the safety of displaced people and land-grabbing prevents their return.
- The economy remains heavily reliant on oil exports, leaving it vulnerable to global markets. The limited revenue and lack of technical skills of the transitional authorities affect the prospects for national climate action.

Efforts to achieve a solution to South Sudan's political conflict continue. Progress on implementing the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), which established the current transitional government, is limited. The planned political

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and other UN and partner agencies should coordinate to strengthen the linkages between local peace agreements and the implementation of climate change adaptation initiatives in communities. Additionally, UNMISS should help ensure that the development of adaptation efforts is peace-positive and locally driven.
- UNMISS should collaborate with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other UN entities in the region, including the Climate, Peace and Security Hub in the Office of the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, the Special Envoy to the Great Lakes region and the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), to explore opportunities for strengthening conflict-sensitive disaster risk reduction by scaling up in collaboration with regional, national and subnational authorities. This can build on existing regional early warning systems, such as the Nile Cascade Committee Flood Forecasting system.
- UN agencies, funds and programmes, and their partner organizations, should explore opportunities for supporting South Sudan's peace process by addressing the environmental impacts of conflict and harnessing environmental entry points for building trust. This could involve technical dialogues on climate-informed economic diversification and securing climate finance for developing economic

UNPI

sipri

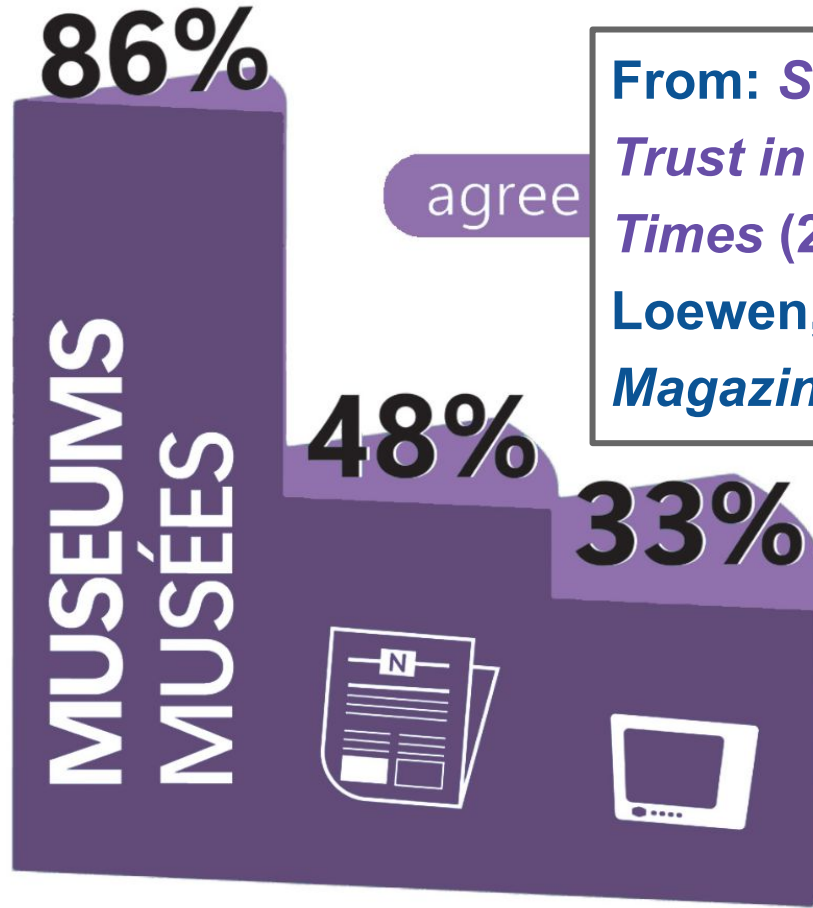
What can we
do to advance peace?

Some step to advance peace

- Learn to navigate nuance
- Learn tools for non-violent communications (this is a learning event, thanks!)
- Build community (the Gemboree is this, thank you!)
- Foster a healthy planet and respect for nature
- Create space for peaceful learning (thanks to those who already support the peace museum)

Promoting peace and
environmentalism in difficult
times

Are museums,
daily newspapers,
television
a credible source
of information?



From: *Sources of Trust in Uncertain Times* (2022) Caroline Loewen, *Muse Magazine*

A nice secondary benefit of museums

Engaging with arts and culture can slow biological aging as much as exercise, study suggests

MAY 14, 2026 ▾

By Jack Guy



Educating and informing

Universities

- Top down learning
- Available to those who can afford

Museums

- Self-paced learning
- Available to general public, all ages
- Should be easily accessible

Typically both in urban centres and to somewhat inaccessible and aloof. **We are neither**

About the Canadian Peace Museum

The Canadian Peace Museum

- Is a non profit and registered charity.
- Promotes peace, environmentalism, democracy, and a fair society.
- Proudly based in beautiful Bancroft.
- Grassroots, minimal government funding.



19 Valleyview Drive, Bancroft



19 Valleyview Drive, Bancroft

Our space and our events

- Hosts book launches, learning, music, community groups, seed exchanges.
- Informs people about local conservation, ecosystem, and environmental protection.
- Supports local groups that get food to our neighbours.



CanadianPeaceMuseum.ca/events

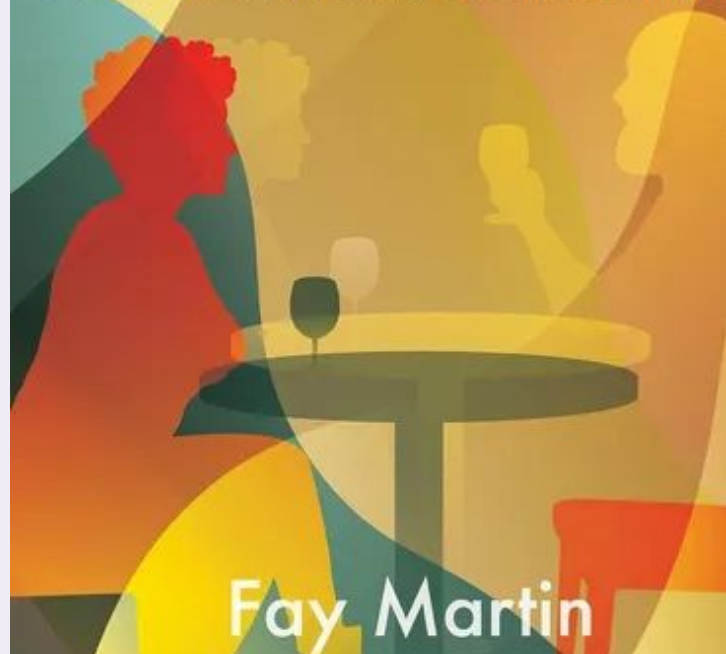


CANADIAN
PEACE MUSEUM



Dementia Widow

A Memoir about Love, Death, and Survival



Fay Martin

TWAS A SUNNY DAY BOOK LAUNCH!



DATE: SAT, NOV 15TH, 2025

TIME: 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM

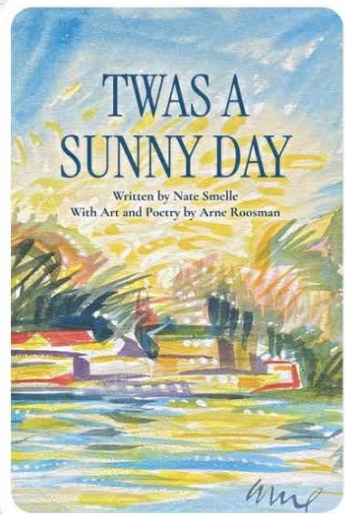
LOCATION:
THE PEACE MUSEUM

19 Valleyview Drive, Bancroft, Ontario

JOIN US FOR AN INSPIRING
AFTERNOON CELEBRATING THE
RELEASE OF TWAS A SUNNY DAY —

a powerful chronicle of a century of stories
told through the life and art of Estonian-
born painter Arne Roosman, as reflected by
Canadian journalist Nate Smelle.

From a childhood in Estonia, through war-
torn Europe, to the quiet beauty of rural
Ontario, this book captures the humour,
resilience, and creative spirit of an artist
shaped by history and forever chasing light.



ALL ARE WELCOME!

ENJOY STORIES, ARTWORK, BOOK
SIGNINGS, AND REFRESHMENTS.



*"I had to have it on a sunny day. On the worst days the sun had
to shine, or else I wouldn't have been able to live through it."*

— Arne Roosman



Other activities

- Support to Well-being North Hastings
- A community garden
- Our annual Stories of Peace award



Another benefit of museums

- Tourism is important to Bancroft, each tourist we attract brings \$270 per day of value to the local economy (stores, gas stations, hoteliers, restaurants).
- Tourism to the U.S. is declining. Attracting international tourist is an opportunity to advance rural development without taxing local people.

“...museums play an important role in addressing contemporary social issues. By strengthening creativity, a sense of belonging and civic engagement, museums have the power to contribute to the economy, social capital and the well-being of a local community.”

**A GUIDE FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS,
COMMUNITIES AND
MUSEUMS**



Our collection and building

Symbols of peace





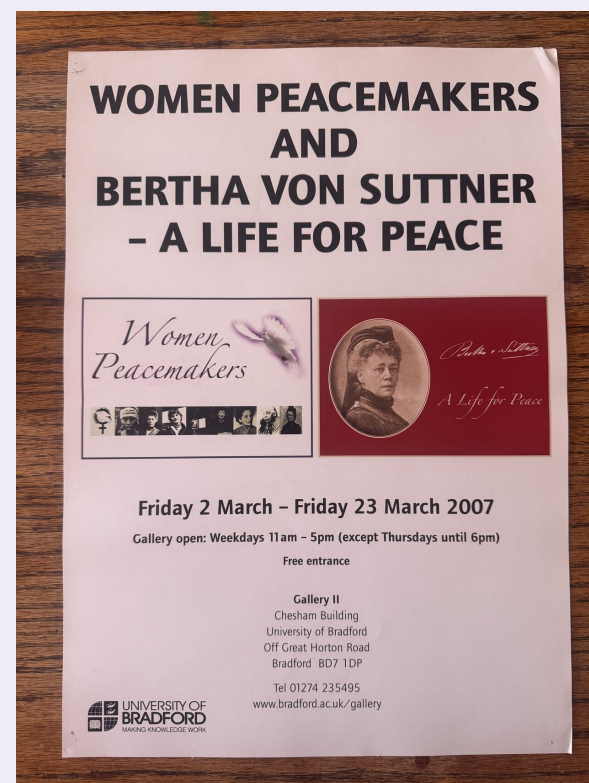
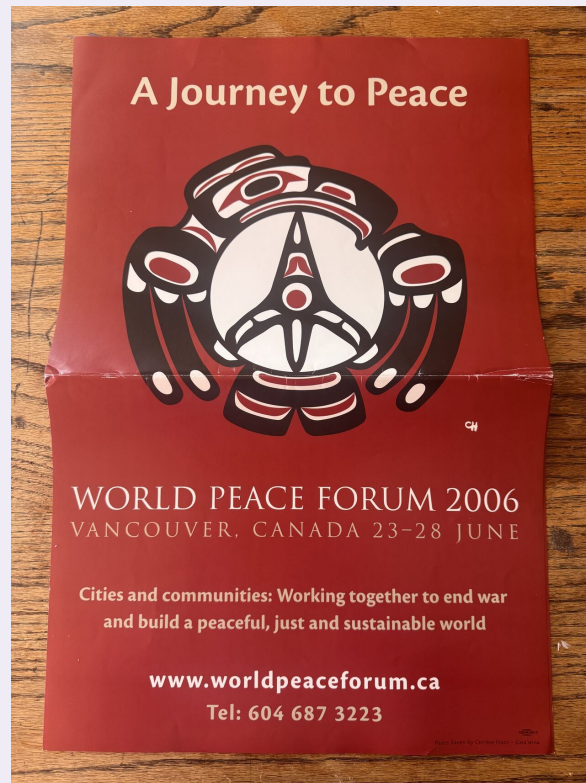
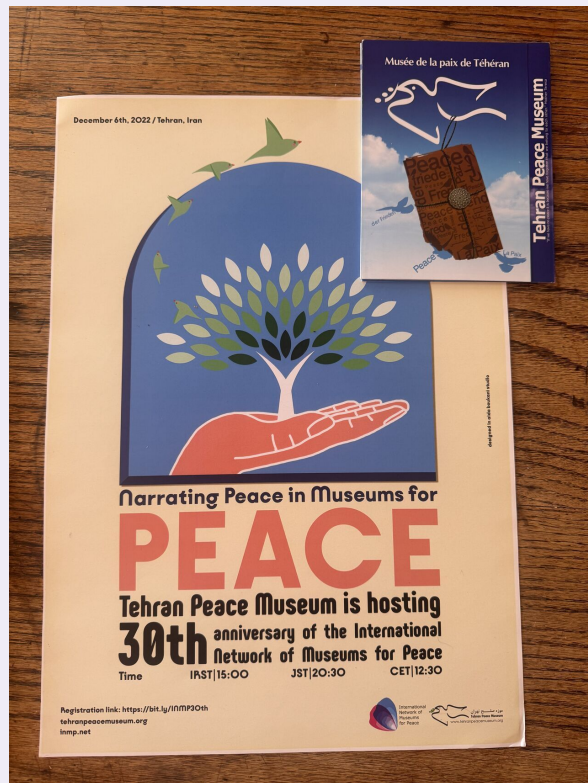
PeaceWomen Across the Globe
 FRIEDENSFRAUEN WELTWEIT
 "نسوة من أجل التسليم عبر العالم"
 Femmes de Paix Autour du Monde
 Женщины мира за мир на земле
 MUJERES DE PAZ EN EL MUNDO
 Mulheres pela Paz ao redor do Mundo
 DONNE DI PACE NEL MONDO

ピースウーマン—国境を越え平和をつくる女たち
 全球和平妇女

1,000 Faces of Peace



Peace posters





CANADIAN
PEACE MUSEUM





CANADIAN PEACE MUSEUM



Video tour of the Canadian Peace Museum (3 minutes)



Website link: <https://canadianpeacemuseum.ca/building>

Renovations are ongoing

Our volunteers



Our community garden

The Peace Garden





Wetlands

Our Community
Garden, designed
by local
Algonquin artist
Sherry Crawford

Concluding comments

- Peace promotion is important and increasingly urgent
 - Globally, Canada is influential
 - Locally, the need is rising
- We're fundraising for renovations. **We need your help!**
 - We need \$120,000 for Phase 1
 - Room sponsorship options range from \$5,000 to \$50,000
 - Smaller donations of \$20 to \$250 fuel renovations
 - We love monthly donors

Questions and comments welcome

Any questions?

Presenter: Chris Houston



CANADIAN
PEACE MUSEUM



To donate & learn more: CanadianPeaceMuseum.ca
We are on Facebook, Instagram etc