Royal City Men's Club

RCMC Newsletter

April 2026

April 2nd.

Ajay Heble: From Idea to Institute: Building a Field (and a Community) Through Improvisation

Presentation:

In this talk, I'll draw on my experiences in founding The Guelph Jazz Festival and the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation (IICSI) at the University of Guelph to trace the emergence of a new field of scholarly inquiry and to narrate how IICSI (our Institute) has evolved into a central source for the collection and dissemination of research on the social implications of improvisational practices.

Bio:

Dr. Ajay Heble is University Professor Emeritus in the School of Theatre, English, and Creative Writing at the University of Guelph. He was the founding Director of the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation (IICSI), a position from which he retired in September 2024. His research has covered a full range of topics in the arts and humanities and has resulted in 16 books published, numerous articles or chapters, and over 100 graduate students and post-doctoral fellows trained and mentored. He was the founding Artistic Director of the award-winning Guelph Jazz Festival and Colloquium (he served in that capacity for 23 years, retiring in 2016), and is a founding co-editor of the peer-reviewed journal Critical Studies in Improvisation/Études critiques en improvisation (www.criticalimprov.com). Dr. Heble was also responsible for bringing Nuit Blanche to Guelph between 2010-2013, expanding Guelph Jazz Festival programming to a 24-hour format and extending performances into unexpected places—all in the enlivened setting of an all-night community spectacle. He is also the founding Artistic Director of IICSI's Improvisation Festival.

An accomplished pianist with a long background as a performer, he released his first CD, a live set of improvised music with percussionist Jesse Stewart, in 2001. His improvising quartet The Vertical Squirrels can be heard on three recordings on the Ambiances Magnétiques label. Dr. Heble is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2023 Killam Prize in the Humanities, one of Canada's most prestigious research awards. In 2024, he was named a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Longer bio: https://www.uoguelph.ca/arts/sotec/people/ajay-heble

10am. To be followed by Live Questions.

April 16th. 2026
Brenda Pomerleau: Rescue Me Dogs

Presentation:

Save Me Dog Rescue

Foster Liaison

Community Engagment.

Save Me Dog Rescue was started in September 2012. It is a registered charity with approximately 120 volunteers.

I joined the rescue with my first foster August 3rd 2019. Joined the board May 2022

I would like to chat about where our rescue dogs come from, what is required to be a foster home, screening involved in finding a forever home. How people can help, dogs we've saved, board members and available dogs.

Personally I am an entrepreneur involved in the restaurant business. I volunteer at the Women's Prison in Kitchener and am a proud Board Member of Save Me.

10am. To be followed by Live Questions.

April 30th. 2026
Renee Van Acker: T.B.A.

Bio:

Rene Van Acker is President of the University of Guelph, bringing decades of leadership experience as a scholar, administrator, and advocate for agricultural innovation and education. Previously serving as Professor and Dean of the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC), Dr. Van Acker was appointed Vice-President Research and Innovation (VPRI) in 2024. His contributions to U of G reflect a dynamic vision for institutional growth and excellence across research, education, and community engagement.

As Dean of OAC, Dr. Van Acker advanced a transformative strategic plan, Our Shared Priorities, and led the development of OAC's first infrastructure master plan in over 40 years. Under his leadership, OAC launched Canada's first Bachelor of Indigenous Environmental Science and Practice program and introduced or revised more than a dozen course-based master's programs, bolstering academic offerings and revenue. His initiatives also included OAC's first experiential learning strategy and Planning for Tomorrow, which expanded undergraduate enrolment by 50 percent.

Dr. Van Acker's impact extends to building platforms for research and innovation. He co-founded the Arrell Food Institute and the Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming while contributing to major projects such as the Guelph Turfgrass Institute, Bioproducts Discovery and Development Centre, and Honeybee Research Centre. His fundraising efforts have secured over $100 million for OAC, including 27 chairs and professorships. As VPRI, Dr. Van Acker spearheaded initiatives to strengthen U of G's research infrastructure, including advancing national innovation programs and establishing international research partnerships. He introduced a visioning process for the agriculture and food sector and developed a first-ever infrastructure priorities list for ARIO to guide investment in agri-food research.

A respected scholar, Dr. Van Acker has published over 160 peer-reviewed works with an h-index of 41 and remains an active faculty member, supervising graduate students and co-teaching OAC's capstone course. A proud U of G alumnus, he holds BSc and MSc degrees from the University of Guelph and a PhD from the University of Reading, UK.

Dr. Van Acker's service to U of G and beyond includes leadership roles in academic governance and organizations such as the Rural Ontario Institute and the Deans Council, Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Medicine. His collaborative approach exemplifies a commitment to advancing institutional excellence and addressing global challenges.

10am. To be followed by Live Questions.

Messages : Future Meetings

May 14th.

Eric Nost: Political Ecology & Environmental Governance

May 28th.

Emma Allen-Vercoe: Missing Gut Microbes from the Amazon Jungle

Coffee/Breakfast 9:30am

April 9th. and 23rd.

RCMC Live Coffee Morning

9:30am at

Uptown Grill
694 Woolwich St.

The Boathouse
116 Gordon st.

Activities & Event

April 15th. Axe Throwing

June 11th. AGM and Members Luncheon

July 11th.42nd. Street
Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge 2pm

June 24th. Tour: Waterloo Flight Centre 10am
Optional Lunch

August 22nd. Nashville Music Scene
Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge 2pm

Oct. 24th. Murder on the Orient Express
Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge 2pm

See activities desk for more details

Other News

There is a new What's New section on the Home page of our website. This will give you quick links to any new information which has been posted on the website.
f you have any new content for the website, please send to Ritchie Zelk at edna.ritchie@sympatico.ca

Membership

Please send any updates to your entry in the Membership Directory, including any change in email address, to **Martin Alderwick;** 519-763-6939 malderwick6939@gmail.com

Members are encouraged to invite male friends and acquaintances to our meetings.