

travel

■ **ONTARIO:** Great places to visit close to home

Just like a Norman Rockwell painting

GEORGE BAILEY
Special to The Standard

LINDSAY, Ont. — Lindsay is the main gateway to the Kawartha Lakes tourist region lying between lakes Sturgeon and Scugog. It's the seat of government for the City of Kawartha Lakes and is one of the 16 communities that make up this one-tiered city.

When I arrived early, I found Kent Street (Lindsay's main street) parked with few cars and the gold light of the morning sun bathing the century-old buildings that frame both sides of the street. There were a few workers perched atop ladders, painting old buildings in pastel colours. The entire downtown looked like a Norman Rockwell painting.

The renovated city hall and the fire hall were the first to fall under the lens of my camera. The old provincial jail remains as it was when it was built a century ago. Anchoring one end of Kent Street is the renovated (everything is renovated here) 682-seat, 1893 Academy Theatre (www.academytheatre.ca -1-877-888-0038). The billboard had a large selection of shows for folks of all ages. When I peeked inside the building, like the outside, it had charm.

It was time for an early breakfast and I found a winner. Janes Kountry Kitchen was a stand-out. Not only were the bacon and eggs, homefries and coffee good, but the conversation with the locals at the table beside me was an added bonus. They told me about the nearby Saturday farmer's market. This proved to be a real farmer's market — no trinkets or dollar store items. It was real food grown by real farmers and sold by real farmers whose families had worked the land for centuries.

I headed back to Kent Street to check out some of the stores that were beginning to open.



Kent Street in downtown Lindsay, supposedly the widest street in Canada.

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I made this city that I fell in love with my home-base while I explored outlying villages.

The House Next Door

A self-catered bed and breakfast

I couldn't have picked a better place to lay my head for the evening. From the moment I was met at the door by owners

Niki Worton and Cathy Caissie, I felt right at home. These ladies live in the house next door. I was fortunate to have the completely-renovated 1910 home to myself for the evening. It was immaculately clean, reasonably priced at \$75 (\$85 for two) with an award-winning manicured lawn and

garden. I sat on the back porch and watched the sun go down after a busy day of exploring (www.bbcanada.com/the-housenextdoor, telephone 705-328-2389).

Bobcaygeon

Take time to visit outside of Lindsay where you'll find a mix of slow-down-and-look vistas. A real leaf-peeping drive in the fall is to drive north along Highway 36 to the lazy summer village of Bobcaygeon.

More than 1,700 farm families still work 370,000 acres of farmland in the City of Kawartha Lakes, making this a part of the area's economy.

This little village offers scenic charm as you walk along the quaint main street and explore its nooks and

For More Information

www.explorekawarthalakes.com or 1-866-397-6673

How to get There from Niagara

It's about a three- to four-hour drive from Niagara (I stop for garage sales along country roads). Your best bet is to check with the local Ontario Tourism Centre.

Those using their GPS can type "4 Victoria Ave. N. Lindsay." If you don't want it to take you by way of the expensive Highway 407 toll road, ask the GPS to take you on a toll-free route.

crannies along the Trent-Severn Waterway.

Fenelon Falls

Along County Road 8, meander towards Fenelon Falls where you can see a mini-cascading Niagara Falls tumbling seven metres into a rocky gorge. This hamlet was founded on the lumber industry that built dams and sluiceways to transport logs downriver. Today it's a popular boating and fishing area. I ran into three young men from Grimsby who have been coming here to fish for years.

"I started coming with my parents and it seemed natural to continue to visit as I grew older," said Neil Wenniger "Any place in the Kawarthas is a prize."

I couldn't agree more.

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