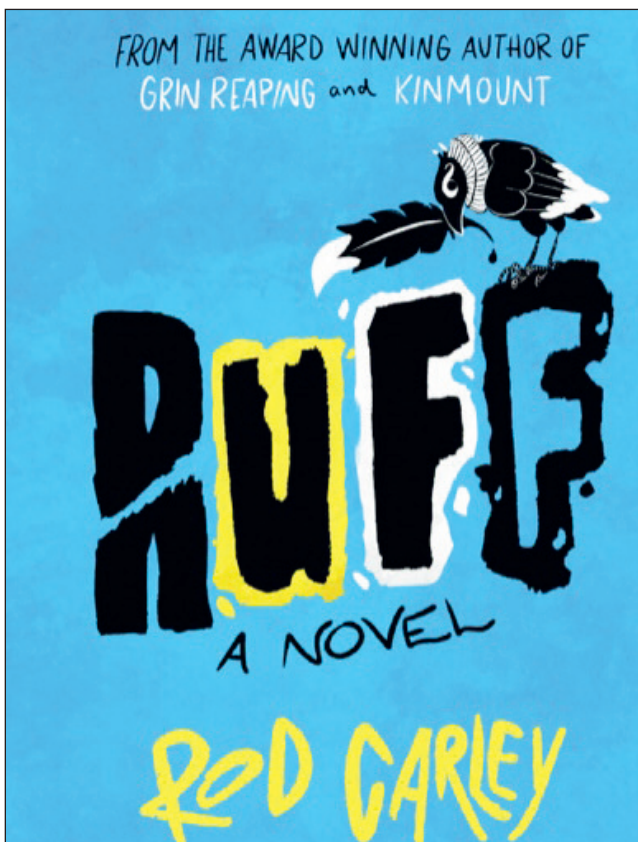


The Lakefield Literary Festival has an exciting line-up of six amazing authors attending our events this July. Over the next several weeks the Festival has partnered with the Lakefield Herald to introduce you to our authors and their books which will be featured over the weekend of July 17 and 18. All tickets are on sale now, available online and at Happenstance Books and Yarns in Lakefield. For more details, visit [lakefieldliteraryfestival.com](http://lakefieldliteraryfestival.com)

# A Look at the Lakefield Literary Festival Authors

## Ruff by Rod Carley

BY JOHN BOYKO



Ruff exploded onto the Canadian literary scene in 2025, becoming an international best-seller. It won the Silver Medal for Best European Fiction from the Independent Publisher Awards and was long listed for the Leacock Medal for Humour.

Ruff is rife with side-splitting humour, eye-rolling puns, vicious wit, and laconic charm. In 1600s London, we find William Shakespeare struggling to meet the King's challenge to compose a play to commemorate the recent death of the Queen. The bard, however, is suffering a bad year, complete writer's block, a mid-life crisis that robs him of confidence, and all made worse by a plague ripping through the city. Young rivals besmirch his reputation as they curry favour with the King.

While immersed in the Elizabethan world, readers grin at the recognition of current cultural references and scraps of Shakespearian dialogue which our poor playwright fails to understand or properly absorb. With Shakespeare slowly forming the play's concept,

he struggles with existential angst, notions of gender, the meaning of love and loyalty, and the confluence of art and commerce as he tries to create a play that is respectable literature while sufficiently popular to put bums in the seats to save his nearly bankrupt theatre.

Should women be allowed to act? Is ghost writing a respectable career? Are ideas once expressed fair game for anyone to augment their work? And should the King have so much power in the first place? These and other questions swirl as the reader giggles through the fast-moving story, cheering on Shakespeare, and aching to help him see the winning lines and storylines that are right before his eyes.

We see Shakespeare not as a superhuman and the world's greatest poet and playwright but, in Carley words, "a paunchy middle-aged man...average like a used car salesman, average like a chimneysweep, average like a pig farmer—not the Lord Chamberlain's chief poet." And through the portrayal and the challenges against which he struggles, we laugh our way into respecting Shakespeare even more.

Ruff is part historical fiction, part satire, and wholly, shamelessly funny. Before Ruff, author Rod Carley was already well known for having written three other best-selling and award-winning humorous novels including Grin Reaping, A Matter of Will, Kinmount. As with Ruff, each of his other books was rich with Carley's wry appreciation of story, character, and his vivid imagination.

**LAKEFIELD LITERARY Festival**

Books and Tickets available at Happenstance Books & Yarns

Pick a Colour by Souvankham Thammavongsa will be featured on July 18 at 3 p.m.

Tickets also available online at [LakefieldLiteraryFestival.com](http://LakefieldLiteraryFestival.com)

# Lakelands Public Health Releases 2025 Annual Report

Lakelands Public Health marks its first year of operations following the historic merger of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit and Peterborough Public Health on January 1, 2025, with the launch of the Annual Report.

The merger brought together people, programs, systems, and services to create a unified public health organization dedicated to improving and protecting the health of communities across the region. Throughout 2025, Lakelands Public Health focused on building a strong foundation while continuing to deliver essential public health programs and respond to emerging community needs.

"Mergers — and changes of any kind — are never easy, but they are sometimes necessary," said Dr. Thomas Piggott, Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer of Lakelands Public Health. "Our first year has gone better than I could have expected because of the leadership of our Board of Health, support from the Provincial Government, and, most importantly, the dedication of our staff who have embraced the opportunity to build Lakelands Public Health for generations to come."

During its first year, Lakelands Public Health worked to harmonize policies and procedures, strengthen internal operations, modernize digital systems, and foster a shared organizational culture rooted in integrity, respect, service excellence, equity, and community partnership. Staff across all divisions demonstrated resilience, collaboration, and innovation while maintaining

continuity of service for residents.

The Board of Health, led by Chair Ron Black and Vice Chair Cecil Ryall, played an important role in guiding the newly merged organization with a collaborative "Lakelands first" approach.

"This first annual report marks an important milestone for our new organization," said Chair Ron Black, Board of Health Chair for Lakelands Public Health, and Deputy Mayor for Selwyn Township. "Following the merger, our focus has been on the important work of harmonization, aligning systems, and strong, steady leadership through change while keeping the needs of residents and communities at the centre of every decision. This report reflects not only what we have accomplished in our first year, but the commitment we share to protecting and promoting health across the region."

The organization also received significant support from the Provincial Government, including investments to support the merger, address program capacity challenges, and make upgrades to buildings and information technology infrastructure.

Community partnerships remained central to the organization's success in 2025. Guided by a spirit of collaboration and advocacy, Lakelands Public Health worked with municipalities, healthcare providers, schools, Indigenous communities, social service agencies, and community organizations to strengthen local

responses to complex health challenges and advance shared priorities across the region.

Looking ahead, Lakelands Public Health remains focused on continuous improve-

ment, innovation, and excellence in delivering impactful public health services that improve the health and well-being of all residents across the region.

## Letter to the Editor: Out with the Old

Continued from page 4

Due to the failure of the township to produce up to date financials it seems the project is to be funded wholly by Douro-Dummer tax payer levies. And yes at the meeting members of the public in attendance who had signed up were allowed to speak for five minutes each to offer comments/input on the project, but were not allowed to ask any questions that council would even consider answering. However, unfortunately, it seems it was already a foregone conclusion this project was going ahead, albeit, no drawings had been provided by the company from Belleville, Ontario that Council had already decided to award a contract to. When one councillor spoke up and said he "didn't know what he was voting on as there were no

drawings" the mayor went ahead reading an already prepared motion to accept the spending of over eleven million dollars and award the contract to the Belleville, Ontario company and guess what, the entire council voted it in at the end of that supposed special public meeting. How can that possibly count as good governance for the township of Douro-Dummer?

As a resident of Douro-Dummer for the past 37 years I am glad this is an election year. Based on the past history of this project, which was deemed necessary as far back as 2015 but never moved forward by past council members when the cost was three million dollars not 11.1 million, it's time that we the taxpayers in Douro Dummer vote and make a clean sweep of council.

We as taxpayers (elect/hire) council to (serve/work on our behalf) and represent our needs as our employees. Our tax dollars pay their salary. So it's time to take our (township/company) back and have council/employees work collaboratively with us including us in major decisions rather than not allowing us to even ask questions when we attend council meetings. It's time for change and the election in October is our chance to get this moving in the right direction. We need new fresh ideas from like minded dedicated members of our community to represent us going forward. Out with the old let's together bring on the right people our future depends on it.

Respectfully,  
Marilyn Turton  
Douro-Dummer