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Small Town Big Ideas series returns with Canadian author

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Shelburne residents will have the opportunity to listen to and ask questions about pressing topics impacting the current zeitgeist with the return of the speaker series ? Small Town Big Ideas.

Launched earlier this year, Small Town Big Ideas is a speaker series hosted by the local organization CanHist and sponsored by multiple small-town groups in Dufferin County. The series looks to welcome some of Canada's most innovative thinkers to the community to speak intimately with local residents on various topics such as history, politics, environment, gender equality, and journalism.

Speaking with the Free Press, Neil Orford, co-creator of the event, said the idea for the series came from the want to bring community members together to have discussions in-person rather than through social media and online discourse.

?In many cases [social media] forces us to think very quickly and forces us to form opinion that are presumptuous and not fully formed. To have top public intellectuals, who have a wealth of research and experience on topics, come speak to us in-person give us the capacity to reflect upon a lot of the issues and listen to one another, which is extraordinarily important,? said Orford.

The first season of the Small Town Big Ideas speaker series featured known global affairs columnist Gwynne Dyer and freelance political and climate journalist John Lorinc.

?We felt very buoyed by the response that we got, which Gave us the confidence to go ahead and plan for six speakers in the second series,? said Orford. ?We certainly felt there was a buzz that came out of each of those evenings and that people wanted more of this kind of thing.?

The second season of Small Town Big Ideas will focus on various topics presented by some of Canada's top authors and intellectuals including military history, reconciliation effort with Indigenous Peoples, environmental movements with water resource protection, Canadian journalism, and gender equality.

Elizabeth Renzetti, a bestselling Canadian author and journalist, will be the first guest speaker to kick off the second season of Small Town Big Ideas.

Renzetti is a former columnist for the Globe and Mail, where she wrote a popular opinion column and feature stories. In 2020 and 2023 she won the Landsberg Award for reporting on gender issues.

Renzetti will be releasing two new books in 2024: Bury the Lead, a mystery novel co-written with Kate Hilton, and a work of non-fiction about gender equality called, What She Said: Conversation About Equality.

?It would be hard to argue that she's not one of Canada's top journalists and now top authors as well. She's just an amazing writer,? said Orford. ?What resonated with me always was the power of her voice and reasoning. She's a tremendous observer and has a great eye for what's going on and a good sensibility for how the issues are playing out in communities across the country.?

The conversation with Renzettti will be held on Oct. 30 at the Museum of Dufferin (MoD). Tickets can be purchased for $20.

To learn more about the Small Town Big Ideas series or to purchase tickets for the event visit ? www.canhist.ca.