

| [HOME](#) | [SUDBURY NEWS](#) |

Laurentian architecture student-built canoes on display

By: Jonathan Migneault - Sudbury Northern Life | Dec 14, 2014 - 8:15 PM |



From front, Laurentian University School of Architecture second-year students Sophie Mackey, Maxine Blais, Alex Gunnewiek, Ali Modl and Denis Lemieux worked nine hours per week for a month to complete the birch bark canoe they are holding over their heads. Photo by Jonathan Migneault.

AdChoices 

GET CLOUD WITH NOTHING TO HIDE.

Bandwidth included.
 Storage included.
 Total access, control, and transparency, included.

[LEARN MORE >](#)

SOFTLAYER
 an IBM Company

Most Popular

- Gas prices dip below \$1 a litre in Sudbury
5 comments · 33 minutes ago
- No job was offered to Olivier to quit, Loughheed says
56 comments · 7 minutes ago
- Opposition blast 'cynical' move by Thibeault
16 comments · 1 hour ago

Second-year students built two different canoes

When Maxine Blais found out she and her classmates would be building a birch bark canoe during their second year of architecture school, she was a little skeptical.

“I was a little apprehensive because I was wondering about the connection between this and architecture,” said the Laurentian School of Architecture student. But that hesitation vanished once she learned about the materials they would be using.

RELATED ARTICLES

- [Architecture students fishing for bids on latest project](#)
- [For your homework: build a birchbark canoe](#)

Blais and around 30 of her classmates designed and built the canoe over the course of a month, dedicating nine hours each week to the project.

They worked with cedar for the canoe's skeleton, spruce roots to tie pieces together, and, of course, birch bark to create the outer shell.

Marcel Labelle, a Métis elder from Mattawa, and master canoe builder, was their instructor.

He taught them how to bend the wood to their will, and better understand the material they will go on to use in buildings when they become architects. “We learned how the material has its own mind.”

While Blais and her peers worked on a birch bark canoe, around 30 other second-year students tackled its more modern cousin, made of space-age carbon fiber.

Pound for pound, carbon fiber has 10 times the tensile strength of steel. It is the primary material used in high-performance canoes for competition.

Gergely Lanci, the commodore at the Sudbury Canoe Club, taught the second group how to build the carbon fiber canoe.

Lanci said his students were also hesitant at first, and questioned how building a canoe would help them become architects.

But he said they too changed their minds once they started the project.

The Latest

Gas prices dip below \$1 a litre in Sudbury

Byelection to replace Thibeault not certain

Living Nativity comes to life Dec. 20

Bigger introducing From the Ground Up-2025

Christmas poem reflects on Sudbury's political scene

Bantam A Lady Wolves go 2-2 at classic tourney

Stack to unveil Moose replacement Dec. 18

New Silver Hills LCBO opens Dec. 19

Sudbury food co-op poised for expansion

Opposition blasts 'cynical' move by Thibeault

Article Tools

Report a typo

Contact the Editor

Sign-up for our Newsletter

- [Police respond to excessive force accusations](#)
370 comments · 23 minutes ago

AdChoices

GET CLOUD WITH NOTHING TO HIDE.

Bandwidth included.
Storage included.
Total access, control, and transparency, included.

LEARN MORE >

SOFTLAYER
an IBM Company

Local Business Directory



Kia Sudbury Motors
Visit our website today!



Valued Home Improvement At Your Service
Visit our website today!



Yves Paquette Piano Service
Visit our website today!



Don's Cabinets
Visit our website today!



Roy's Furniture
Visit our website today!

“If these students understand the construction method of a canoe – why we are doing things a certain way – they are very easily able to apply it on a larger scale, or use it as a component on a building,” Lanci said.

Once they had their plan on paper, the students built a skeleton for the canoe using aircraft-quality structural foam strips.

They then covered that skeleton with several layers of uni-directional carbon fiber. Excess resin was removed, the canoe’s edges were trimmed, and they later added finishing touches, including seats.

Laurentian School of Architecture director Terrance Galvin said the canoes, and ice huts his students built last winter, were deliberate curriculum choices to represent northern culture.

“Tackling small projects like the ice hut or the canoe ... what's nice for the students is they're not doing something abstractly,” Galvin said. “They get to build it, and now they're standing around with their families and there's a sense of completion in a fairly short time.”

Both canoes were on display at the school Saturday.

Students' family members, and local dignitaries, including Sudbury Mayor Brian Bigger, were on hand to see the finished products.

Galvin said the school plans to donate the birch bark canoe to the Wahnapiatae First Nation.

5 5 13 0
Like Share Tweet g+1 Print Email



Jonathan Migneault

Staff Writer

@jmigneault

Reader's Feedback

NorthernLife.ca may contain content submitted by readers, usually in the form of article comments. All reader comments and any opinions, advice, statements or other information contained in any messages posted or transmitted by any third party are the responsibility of the author of that message and not of NorthernLife.ca. The fact that a particular message is posted on or transmitted using this web site does not mean that NorthernLife.ca has endorsed that message in any way or verified the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of any message. We encourage visitors to NorthernLife.ca to report any objectionable

0 Comments

Northern Life

Login ▾

Sort by Newest ▾

Share ↗ Favorite ★



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

✉ Subscribe

Ⓓ Add Disqus to your site

▶ Privacy

Northern Life

158 Elgin St.
Sudbury, ON
P3E 3N5
ph: (705) 673-5667
fax: (705) 673-4652
Google Places
Send Feedback

News

Home
Local News
Police & Court
Sports
Lifestyle
Business
Blogs
Letters to the Editor
Photos
Videos

Newspaper

Home Delivery
Advertise
Staff
Contact
Facebook
Twitter
RSS
PDF Edition
Newsletter
Privacy Policy

Community

Events
Obituaries
Classifieds
Community Builders
Awards
Influential Women
Awards
Northern Ontario
Business Awards
40 Under Forty Awards

Features

Feature Publications
Horoscopes
Crosswords

