

# Artist holds his first show at 84

By DAVID PATERSON

Staff

MN May 29, 2013

Clarkson resident Albert Spavins is one of those people who seem to have lived a half-dozen different lives.

To generations of Mississauga school kids, Spavins is the educator who taught them math, English or Canadian history. To his friends and colleagues, he's a passionate humanitarian and environmental activist.

He also served in World War II, had a stint in the radio repair industry and found time to win a national championship as the coach of a junior field hockey team.

But there's also another side to him: he's an artist, and a unique one at that.

Spavins produces works that incorporate lines from famous poems alongside countless tiny shells he has collected personally and arranged meticulously. It's an unusual juxtaposition, and one that's fascinating.

Now, at age 84, Spavins has put his works on public display for the first time in an exhibition that runs at Lorne Park Library until May 31.

And while his works contain lines drawn from British poets like Robbie Burns and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and even lines from the *Bible*, Spavins says he's not trying to convey a message in the writing.

"I'm not a philosopher," he says, adding that he's drawn to lines by their rhythm and tone.

The shells, though, do carry a message. Each has been picked personally by Spavins from a beach he has been visiting for many years on

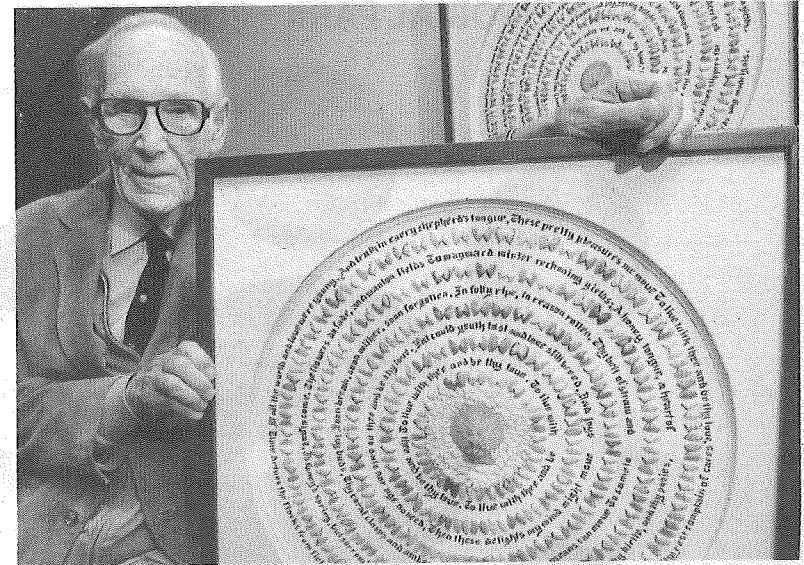
Sanibel Island just off the Florida coast.

"Millions of people walk the beaches of Florida and California every year and they tread on these beautiful things and pass over them without even seeing them. I thought this is a way to bring people's attention to the fact that there's so much beauty on the beaches," he says.

Though this is Spavins' first public exhibition, he's no newbie to the art world. He has been producing works for over three decades.

And his unusual style? That leaps from a desire not to ruffle feathers in his marriage. His late wife, Joan, was herself an accomplished artist whose works are in the city archives.

"She was an impressionist," says Spavins. "Because she was a painter, I didn't want to paint and be in competition with her, so I decided I would do something quite different."



Albert Spavins shows a piece of his art on display at Lorne Park Library.  
Staff photo by Fred Loek