

The Story  
of  
**THE PIE-EYED MONK**

in  
Lindsay, Ontario  
by  
Joan Abernethy

---

***“Ut Laetificet Cors”<sup>1</sup>***  
***(That the Heart Might be Gladdened)***

Early in the sixth century, Benedict of Nursia penned *The Rule*, later known as *The Rule of St. Benedict*.

Saint Benedict, described by Pope Gregory as “a gentle, disciplined abbot”, established his authority as a hermit and later directed the monks of the twelve monasteries he founded to earn their own keep and donate to the poor.

As beer was safer to drink than water contaminated by sewage, it was served to everyone - children and travellers included - as a beverage. The monks needed to be financially independent to comply with *The Rule*, so they became brewmasters; they made craft beer and sold it to their congregants.



Memorial of St. Benedict, abbot - July ...  
catholicculture.org

**Over the years, beer became synonymous with material and spiritual sustenance, warm hospitality and a glad heart.**

**It was this rich heritage of monastic breweries - community service, hospitality and sustenance - that inspired Aaron Young and his partner, Jennifer Boksman, to found the Pie-Eyed Monk Brewery in Lindsay, Ontario. They wanted to link the past to the present.**

**What better way to link the past to the present than with the 7,000 year-old modern favourite pizza pie that originated in Sardinia and was made popular by American troops stationed in Italy in WWII?**

**In addition to beer, the Pie-Eyed Monk serves signature wood-fired pizza pies.**



***A Pie-Eyed Monk Brewery Pizza Pie***



Kawartha Now, 2017

**Aaron Young was born in North York and, when he was an infant, he moved to Iceland where he was raised until the age of fifteen. As a teen, he moved back to Canada with his family and settled in Lindsay, Ontario.**

**Unbeknownst to his future partner, Jennifer Boksman, Aaron attended the same high school as she did - Lindsay Collegiate and Vocational Institute (LCVI). Outside of school hours, Aaron shot pool at McCombs Billiards located in the Baker Building on Cambridge Street North in Lindsay, the future site of the Pie-Eyed Monk.**

**When he was 30, Aaron travelled to America and got to know his grandfather, Frank Yeomans, who fought for the Iceland allies in WWII.**

**Jennifer Boksman was born in Toronto and, like Aaron, moved to Lindsay in her youth. An artist and community-spirited entrepreneur whose work hangs in galleries all around the world, Jennifer also built a local business as a professional photographer and became a well-respected leader and philanthropist in our community.**

**Jennifer served as the acting curator of the Lindsay Art Gallery for two years and as a director of the board for another three. Like Aaron, she developed a deep love for Lindsay's unique heritage and architecture.**



***“When the moon hits your eye  
Like a big pizza pie ...” 2***



**Fate, common interests and a shared vision brought them together. Aaron and Jennifer met over drinks in downtown Lindsay and realized they saw the future through the same heritage lens and that they shared a passionate community-forward focus. They became partners in love, in business and in heritage development.**

**Between the late 1980s when Aaron and Jennifer began dating and 2018 when they founded the Pie-Eyed Monk, the two heritage-minded entrepreneurs kept their eye on the Baker Building, dreaming about what they would do with it if (when) it was theirs.**

**The Baker Building was built between 1868 and 1974 by C.L. Baker to serve his**



produce business and the surrounding community. Located near the train tracks, Baker stored his goods there for pick up and for delivery to the surrounding community and to sell in his corner store.

Over the next 150 years, the Baker building changed hands many times, hosting the Watchman-Warder Newspaper, Frost&Frost Law Firm, the Baker Business College, and McCombs Billiards.

But by the mid-20-teens, the fate of the Baker building had become insecure. Heritage buildings are notoriously expensive to maintain and it was no different; it needed significant investment to remain structurally sound and socially relevant.

Aaron and Jennifer recognized the opportunity to realize their dream and they seized it.



They wanted to save the building and to contribute to the community they loved. They bought the Baker building and recruited local investors to help them obtain their vision for a craft brewery in downtown Lindsay that would invite tourists, attract

investment, and grow the downtown economy.

Jennifer, the artist, named the business for the Trappist monks who first commercialized beer to gladden the heart and bring the community together over common purpose. She envisioned a hospitality at the core of the community where residents and visitors could enjoy shared epiphanies at the intersection of local heritage and current events. The Pie-Eyed Monk Brewery was born!

The 17,000 square foot historical building was a challenge to renovate but Aaron and Jennifer recruited heritage-minded investors and builders to restore the Baker building to maintain the original design details while equipping it with the modern amenities (like an elevator) needed to help it succeed as a modern commercial venture.



Photo: Jennifer Boksman Photography.

To stay true to their interests in local community and economy, Jennifer and Aaron hired as many local contractors as they could. Woodville owner of Invent Art, Dan Kitchen, did the branding and Aaron negotiated with the Cannington High School mentorship program for materials to be sent to the school where the students manufactured the brewery's tables.

Original craft beers were named for local investors Brad Bird, Don Brown, Pat Murphy and Jennifer Boksman.

The facility hosts a wrap-around patio, a brewery in the basement, a main-floor restaurant and stand-up bar, a second-floor events space for 150 guests, and third-floor private accommodation. It is a beautiful space.

Aaron says the learning curve was quite steep but as Jennifer counters, "it was fun". They put heart and soul into restoring the heritage property at 8 Cambridge Street North in Lindsay, Ontario and to make it a shared community space where patrons might enjoy a heritage craft beer experience reminiscent of the Trappist Monks, after one of whom - the Pie-Eyed Monk - their business was named.

Aaron and Jennifer give fair credit to the City of Kawartha Lakes whose staff they say were great to work with. But it is Jennifer and Aaron's vision for community development that deserves notice. They took leadership initiative to pioneer a heritage economy.



Pie Eyed Monk Brewery owner wants to be part of a healthy business ecosystem. Photo: Jennifer Boksman Photography.

**As ongoing directors of the Pie-Eyed Monk Brewery, Aaron and Jennifer note that in a time when mega box stores are forcing small businesses to vacate downtown spaces all across North America, the Pie-Eyed Monk is a success for the whole community. Kawartha Lakes is fortunate to enjoy the legacy of their vision and their labour.**

---

- 1. the motto of the Trappist Monks**
- 2. “That’s Amore” by Harry Warren and Jack Brooks, 1953**