



## **R.D. Lawrence Place**

Minden Hills Cultural Centre

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### **Tales of Sapsucker Ridge performed at book launch on July 28.**

Minden: Award-winning newspaper columnist Neil Campbell turned his life on its head when he abandoned the city for a life in the Haliburton woods with The Brown Dog Jiggs. An account of their lives together, *Cell Phones and Sap Buckets: Six Years on Sapsucker Ridge*, will be launched on Wednesday, July 28, in Minden, Ont.

The book was in the editor's hands when The Brown Dog and Neil learned that one of them had been declared Ontario's best weekly newspaper columnist. They celebrated with champagne and liver treats.

Sapsucker Ridge is the name Neil gave to his 50 acres of sugar maples in Haliburton County on the southern edge of the Canadian Shield, about 100 miles northeast of Toronto.

Neil says the decision to retire from The Globe and Mail to move to the cabin he built himself, remote from the nearest public road or hydro line, was the gamble of a lifetime.

"I was retiring and moving to a life as different as possible from the one I had been leading under circumstances that meant, for all practical purposes, there could be no turning back," he said.

"Moreover, I would be living with a dog for the first time and I had no idea whether I was a good enough person for that. Three major life changes, all at the same time."

*Cell Phones and Sap Buckets*, illustrated by Charlie Teljeur, is a selection of Back of Beyond columns first written for the Minden Times that best reflect Neil's love of his new life.

Snapping turtles, flying squirrels and jumping mice, autumn landscapes and winter snowstorms, harvests of firewood and maple syrup, and a sifting of clues and memories from the hard-scrabble farm life of Haliburton's early years are all fodder for Neil's collection.

But the star of *Cell Phones and Sap Buckets* is The Brown Dog Jiggs, a Smooth Collie whose adventures and misadventures fill up the book and Neil's life.

How important is he? When Neil left him out of four columns in a row, folks with worried faces stopped him on the street to ask him what had happened to Jiggs.

Neil grew up in farm country northwest of Kitchener, Ont. He attended what now is Ryerson University and worked for newspapers in Richmond Hill, Oakville, Owen Sound and Edmonton as well as for The Canadian Press and The Globe and Mail.

The Brown Dog will be at the launch to shake a paw. Neil will talk about his book and his life on Sapsucker Ridge. There will be readings by Jeralyn Craden, Rick Lowes and Tim Nicholson. Neil and artist Charlie Teljeur will answer questions about their work together.

The event starts at 7 p.m. in the Common Room of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre in the village of Minden, just across the bridge. You can fill up beforehand from a Book Launch Dinner menu at the Dominion Hotel. For further information call Sheryl Loucks at 705-286-2298 or e-mail Sheryl Loucks at [rdlawrenceplace@mindenhills.ca](mailto:rdlawrenceplace@mindenhills.ca).

*R.D. Lawrence Place has a mandate to foster a love of reading, promote the art of writing and deepen respect for natural heritage. It is located at 176 Bobcaygeon Road at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre which includes the Agnes Jamieson Gallery, Minden Hills Museum, and Minden Library. The centre is owned and operated by the Township of Minden Hills.*

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Media Only: For interviews call Neil Campbell at 705 457-7158 or email [neilcampbell@xplornet.ca](mailto:neilcampbell@xplornet.ca).



Agnes Jamieson Gallery – Minden Library Branch – Minden Hills Museum – R.D. Lawrence Place  
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